

devastating the already barren country. On the 24th July, we crossed the Khamba la pass (16,400 feet), and reached the Sangpo (Brahmaputra), our mounted troops having that morning seized both ferries. On the 25th July we reached Chaksam ferry and the same day passed over the river a company of Mounted Infantry and seven companies of Infantry. As our guns could effectively command the north bank of the river, our position was quite secure. To the intense regret of the force and the great loss of the service my Chief Supply and Transport Officer, Major G. H. Bretherton, D.S.O., who had so ably superintended the onerous work of the Supply and Transport Department, was drowned while crossing the river. The passage was completed on the morning of the 31st July, and the same day the advance on Lhasa was resumed. The enemy had fortified several positions between Chaksam and Lhasa, but abandoned all of them as we approached, and the force encamped before Lhasa on the 3rd August, having encountered no resistance since the skirmish at Nangartse on the 19th July.

Posts had been established at Ralung, Nangartse, Pete Jong, Chaksam ferry and Trilung bridge, and the garrisons of those, together with convoy escorts, absorbed 70 Mounted men and 400 Infantry. As about 50 sick had also been left at posts between Gyantse and Lhasa, the effective strength at Lhasa was reduced to 130 Mounted Infantry, 8 guns, 1,450 Infantry and Sappers and 6 Maxims.

6. The fourth and last phase of the operations included the occupation of Lhasa and the withdrawal of the troops after the conclusion of the Treaty, and extended from the 4th August till the close of the operations.

The Lhasa valley is extensively cultivated, but does not produce sufficient for the requirements of Lhasa and its monasteries, and the crops were not yet ripe, so that the food question soon became critical. The Amban and the Tibetan authorities promised supplies, but all the efforts of the Mission to persuade them to act up to their promises proved of no avail, and on the 5th August the troops had only one and a-half days' rations in hand. We could not expect a convoy from Gyantse before the 29th at earliest, so I decided on strong measures and on the 8th August moved out with 900 rifles and 6 guns against the Debung Monastery, which was said to contain 2,000 monks and have ample granaries. I selected this monastery mainly because it was the largest of the three great Lhasa monasteries which were reported to form the obstructive element in the Lhasa Councils. The monks were very obstinate and it was not until the guns were in position and infantry had been ordered to advance that they agreed to our demands. Next day a requisition for a smaller amount was made on the Sera Monastery, and I may say that both these monasteries satisfied our requisitions in full and were paid for the supplies furnished at market rates. The demonstration against Debung also stimulated the Lhasa authorities, and induced them to bring in satisfactory supplies daily. On the 12th August we shifted our camp to the driest site we could find in the marshy environs of Lhasa and the same day the Mission moved into the Lhalu Palace with a guard of two companies of Infantry, and were spared the discomforts of camp life in almost nightly rain. Though the Tibetan authorities had withdrawn their troops from Lhasa itself,

they retained them in small bodies in the neighbourhood, so constant reconnaissances had to be made. From various sources of information I reckoned that if a proportion of the monks could be induced to take the field, the Tibetans could within 24 hours assemble a force of 8,000 to 10,000 men. On the 13th August one of our reconnoitring parties surprised a camp of Tibetans and made 64 prisoners; again on the 18th August a reconnaissance up the Kyichu valley effected the dislodgement of 600 soldiers from the arsenal. The activity of the reconnoitring parties induced the Tibetan troops to withdraw 20 to 30 miles from the capital and reduced the tension.

At the beginning of August I had procured and issued for sick some Tibetan woollen cloth and towards the end of the month, my supply department bought a large quantity to be made into poncho blankets in case our departure should be delayed, as low temperatures and snow were reported on the uplands between Lhasa and Gyantse.

By the 1st September the situation had so far improved that I allowed the troops to pay daily visits to Lhasa City and Bazar, and on the 7th September the Treaty was signed in the Pota La; small bodies of men selected from units composing the Lhasa Column were present at the interesting ceremony as a Guard of Honour.

In consultation with Colonel Younghusband it was decided that the Force should withdraw on the 23rd September. By this time the posts between Lhasa and Gyantse had been stocked with two or three days' supplies for the column, and on the 9th September I sent the Sappers, with one company of infantry, the brigade coolies and five days' supplies for the Force to Chaksam, to arrange for the passage of the Sangpo. The upper crossing, Parti, was found the more suitable, and three ferries were extemporised.

On the 23rd the force marched from Lhasa in one column.

On the 25th Colonel Younghusband, with the bulk of his staff and a small mounted escort, left us and pushed ahead by double marches for India. On the 27th Parti ferry was reached, and so excellent were the arrangements of the Engineers that the whole force was passed over by 2 P.M. on the 29th. The Force marched from Parti to Gyantse in two columns leaving the former place on the 29th and 30th September and arriving at Gyantse on the 5th and 6th October, respectively. The supply arrangements at the posts were excellent and the only discomfort was the low temperature at night which registered 10 to 21 degrees of frost. A survey party with an escort marched independently, and did some useful work between the Sangpo and Gyantse. From Gyantse the escort returns to India in smaller columns and picks up the garrisons of posts *en route*.

7. In all the escort had 16 engagements and skirmishes in which we suffered loss, and the total war casualties amounted to 202, including 23 British officers, of whom five were killed. A separate abstract of war casualties is attached.

8. The Artillery co-operated with the Infantry in a manner which did credit to their training, and I attribute the comparatively small losses we sustained in several of the more important actions to the thorough artillery support afforded to the assaulting infantry.