

THE MILITARY HISTORY
OF
THE MADRAS ENGINEERS
AND PIONEERS,

FROM 1743 UP TO THE PRESENT TIME.

COMPILED BY

MAJOR H. M. VIBART,

ROYAL (LATE MADRAS) ENGINEERS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



LONDON:
W. H. ALLEN & CO., 13 WATERLOO PLACE. S.W.
PUBLISHERS TO THE INDIA OFFICE.

1881.

(All Rights Reserved.)

CHAPTER XIII.

Expedition to Egypt.—Expeditions at the Spice islands.—Changes in the Corps from 1799 to 1803.—Engineer Corps after the capture of Seringapatam.—Major-General Ross recommends an increase to the Corps of Engineers.—Proposed Establishment.—Distribution of Corps.—Major-General Ross reports on Fort of Seringapatam.—Approval of Colonel Gent's services.—Engineer Corps on 1st January 1803.—Expedition into kingdom of Candy, in Ceylon.—Increase of the Corps of Pioneers, January 1803.

GENERAL BAIRD sailed from India in the latter part of December 1800, with the view of co-operating with the British army in Egypt, and a division of troops from the Cape was ordered to join him in the Red Sea.

His object was to land at Suez, and act according to the circumstances with which he should become acquainted there.

The hope was always entertained that he would arrive in time to assist the European army. Unfortunately the monsoon had commenced before his entrance into the Red Sea in the month of April, and it was found impossible to gain his destination: but hearing at Jeddah of the successes of the English on the 21st March, Baird determined to land at Cosseir, and brave the difficulties of the desert.

The action of the 21st March was fought near Alexandria, between the French under General Menon, and the English under Sir Ralph Abercrombie, in which Abercrombie was mortally wounded,

and the English repulsed the attack made by the French on their lines.

On 8th June, Baird arrived at Cosseir, and found Colonel Murray, Adjutant-General, who had preceded him, and had reached that port on 14th May.

The greater part of the army was still missing, and none of the troops from the Cape had arrived.

Baird employed himself in preparing means for crossing the desert, and in a short time had 5,000 camels.

He set out for Kinneh, arrived 30th June, and arranged for the march of the remaining divisions by establishing posts at different wells, and by digging other wells. It was not till the end of July 1801 that his army had assembled. The collected troops amounted to 5,226.

King's troops	2,838
East India Company's Artillery			448
Native troops	1,940
			<hr/>
			5,226 privates.
			<hr/>

To these must be added—271 officers, of which 53 were natives; 331 sergeants, 125 drummers, 440 lascars, 276 servants (not soldiers), 572 followers (public), 305 followers (private), = 2,320, which makes a total of 7,546, including sick.

Sir Home Popham sailed from the Cape with *Romney* and *Sensible* on 28th February 1801; other vessels left on 30th March; the first arrived in the middle of June, the second on 10th July.

The force from the Cape consisted of 1,200 men.

The Madras Pioneers consisted of 1 captain, 1 jemadar, 4 sergeants, 88 rank and file.

Lieutenant De Havilland, of the Madras Engineers, accompanied the expedition, as well as 1 captain of Royal Engineers,