



SUPPLEMENT
TO
The London Gazette
Of FRIDAY, the 21st of MARCH.

Published by Authority.

FRIDAY, MARCH 21, 1879.

War Office, March 21, 1879.

THE following Despatch, with its enclosures, has been received by the Secretary of State for War from Lieutenant-General Lord Chelmsford, K.C.B., Commanding the Forces in South Africa:—

From Lieutenant-General Commanding in South Africa to the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for War.

*Fort Pearson, Lower Tugela,
February 14, 1879.*

SIR,

1. THE letters to Colonel Pearson (a précis of which I forwarded to you last mail) safely reached him at Ekowe. One of the two messengers returned with a packet of letters, but unfortunately the second one, to whom was entrusted Colonel Pearson's answer to me, has not come in, and I have reason to believe he was killed. This is unfortunate, as I am not aware when or by which road Colonel Pearson will come.

2. I am glad to find from Assistant Commissary-General Healy that Colonel Pearson has supplies sufficient for his whole force until end of March.

3. My information also goes to show that there is only a force of some 5,000 Zulus between him and this place, so he can force his way through if he desires to do so.

4. Colonel Law, C.R. Artillery in South Africa, has just arrived from Helpmakaar to take command of this post until Colonel Pearson returns. Two companies of the 99th arrive here to-day from Stanger; the garrison here will then be—Imperial Mounted Infantry, 90; Natal Mounted Volunteers, 180; within reach patrolling the border: five companies the 99th; two companies the Buffs; and the detachment from H.M.S. "Tenedos."

5. The news appears well founded that the Zulu main army have returned to their kraals for a short time, but will be reassembled by the new moon, when, I have no doubt, fresh action will be taken by them.

Constant threats of raiding into Natal are received, which tends to alarm in Maritzburg, Durban, &c.

I consider a raid very possible.

6. No fresh news has been received by me from Colonel Wood since I wrote last.

7. The expected reinforcement to the Naval Brigade from H.M.S. "Boadicea" has not arrived, owing to outbreak of small pox on board, and it is very doubtful when it will be landed in Natal.

H.M.S. "Active," with the Admiral on board, is lying in sight off the mouth of this river, ready to assist in any way.

8. I shall remain here a few days longer in hopes of communicating with Colonel Pearson.

9. I have the honour to forward the report of Lieutenant Cochrane, 32nd Light Infantry, also a statement of a Zulu deserter, on the events of the 22nd January, which I would suggest should be appended to the documents already forwarded, relating to the Court of Inquiry.

I have, &c.

(Signed) **CHELMSFORD,**
Lieutenant-General.

Enclosure A.

From Lieut. W. F. D. Cochrane, 32nd Light Infantry, Transport Officer, No. 2 Column, to the Assistant Adjutant-General, Head-Quarters, Pietermaritzburg.

Pietermaritzburg,

SIR, *February 8th, 1879.*

IN compliance with your request, I have the honour to give the account of the battle of Sandhswana from my own personal observation, and from the information which I have received from reliable sources.

On the morning of, the 20th January, 1879, No. 2 Column, to which I had been appointed Transport Officer, was stationed as follows:—

Nos. 1 and 3 Battalions of the 1st Regiment Native Contingent, and one Mounted Troop under Captain Cherry, 32nd Light Infantry, at Krantz-kop; No. 2 Battalion of the same Regiment,

under Major Bengough, 77th Regiment, near Sands Sprint, five troops Mounted Men, Russell's Rocket Battery, and two Companies of the 1st Battalion 1st Regiment Natal Native Contingent, at Helpmakaar.

Colonel Durnford was commanding this latter portion in person; Capt. Shepstone and I were with Colonel Durnford. Early on the 20th Colonel Durnford marched to Rorke's Drift, crossing the river by means of the Pont, and establishing himself in a camp about half a mile from the river. Here we remained during the 21st. Capt. George Shepstone rode to Sandhswana Camp and returned same day.

Lieut. Smith Dorrien rode also to the camp, and returned with a despatch on the morning of the 22nd instant.

Colonel Durnford was on the road to the Dutch farms, on the Biggarshorg, for the purpose of commanding the Dutchmen's wagons when the despatch reached him.

I was with Colonel Durnford, and he remarked to me, "Just what I thought; we are to proceed at once to Sandhswana. There is an Impi about eight miles from the camp, which the General moves out to attack at daybreak."

Colonel Durnford returned to Rorke's Drift Camp at once, and marched for Sandhswana at about 7.30 or 8 a.m.

My orders were to see all the wagons inspanned, start them all off, and hand them over to Conductor McCarthy, and then join Colonel Durnford. I complied with these instructions, and arrived at the Sandhswana Camp with Colonel Durnford about 10 or 10.30 a.m.

Having made all the necessary arrangements for his Column, Colonel Durnford took over the Command from Colonel Pulleine, 1st Battalion 24th Regiment, who gave him a state of the troops, which were:

2 Guns, Royal Artillery, under Major Smith; 5 Companies, 1st Battalion 24th Regiment; 1st Company, 2nd Battalion 24th Regiment; a few mounted men, and, as I understand, some of Lonsdale's Contingent, numbering about 250 (of these numbers I am not quite certain), and the verbal orders, which were, "*To defend the camp.*"

The news was, that a number of Zulus had been seen since an early hour on the top of the adjacent hills, and that an attack had been expected; and in consequence, the following disposition of the troops had been made:—The Natives of Lonsdale's Contingent were on outpost duty on the hills to the left; the guns were in position on the left of the camp; the Infantry were turned out, and formed in column in the open space in front of the General's tent.

The wagons, &c., were inspanned. Constant reports came in from the scouts on the hills to the left, but never anything from the men on the top of the Sandhswana Hill, that I heard. Some of the reports were, "The enemy are in force behind the hills on the left." "The enemy are in three columns." "The columns are separating, one moving to the left rear, and one towards the General." "The enemy are retiring in every direction."

Upon this latter report, Colonel Durnford said he would go out and prevent the one column joining the Impi, which was supposed at that time to be engaged with the troops under the General. He asked Colonel Pulleine to give him two Companies of the 24th to go with the Natives.

Colonel Pulleine objected, stating that he did not think he would be justified in sending away any men, as his orders were "*To defend the camp.*" Colonel Durnford said, "Very well! perhaps I had better not take them. I will go with my

own men." Previous to this, Colonel Durnford on hearing that one column of the enemy was moving towards the left rear, had reinforced the baggage guard (which at that time consisted of one Company Native Contingent), with one troop of mounted Natives; and I understand that Captain George Shepstone was sent back with this party. Colonel Durnford now sent two troops on the hills to the left, under Captain Barton, Natal Native Contingent, and took with him to the front the remaining two troops, and Russell's Rocket Battery, with a Company of the Natal Native Contingent under Captain Nourse, as escort to the battery. Going at a canter, the Rocket Battery and escort were soon left behind. Having proceeded between 5 and 6 miles, a mounted man came down from the hills on the left, and reported that there was an immense Impi behind the hills to our left, and he had scarcely made the report when the Zulus appeared in force in front of us and to our left; they were in skirmishing order, but 10 or 12 deep, with supports close behind. They opened fire at us at about 800 yards, and advanced very rapidly. We retired some little way, taking up a position in a "donga," or water-course, of which there are several, across the plain in front of Sandhswana.

We retired steadily in skirmishing order, keeping up a steady fire for about 2 miles, when we came upon the remains of the Rocket Battery, which had been cut off and broken up; there was a hand-to-hand engagement going on with those that remained. The left wing while retiring was wheeled up to the right and drove the Zulus back, who were not in very large numbers just there at that time. It appears that Captain Russell, whilst following up with the Battery, perceived some of the enemy on his left, he fired three rockets with some effect, this was followed by a volley from the Zulus, the Native Contingent retired, the mules were frightened, and disorder was caused. The enemy seeing this ran down the hill and attacked the Battery. Captain Russell was killed. As the mounted men retired towards them, the Zulus ran back to their cover. The retreat was continued until we arrived at a "donga," about half a mile in front of the camp. Here a few mounted men, Carbineers, Natal Mounted Police, &c., reinforced our right. A stand was made here, but we were eventually driven in, and the camp was taken from the left. It appears that the mounted men on the left became engaged on the hills about the same time as we were engaged on the flat, and I was informed that they held the Zulus back; but my opinion is that the right of the enemy were only engaging the troops, and did not intend to advance until their left had worked round; and I believe also that Captain Shepstone (who, after the arrival of the baggage, took the troop of mounted natives he had used as escort, on the hills to the left) rode down to the camp, and asked in the name of Colonel Durnford for assistance. This Colonel Pulleine gave him by detaching two Companies of the 24th, a little to the left front.

These, together with the mounted men and Lonsdale's Contingent, fell back into the camp, and, in spite of the artillery fire and the steady musketry of the infantry—who were in good position amongst the stones and boulders to the left, and left centre of the Camp, and who stood their ground most gallantly—the enemy steadily advanced. A general move was made towards the mountain, to take up a last position, but it was too late, the Zulus were too quick and fleet of foot, they caught up the men on foot before they

could reach the new position, completely overpowering them by numbers, and assegaing right and left.

The guns moved from left to right across the camp, and endeavoured to take the road to Rorke's Drift; but finding this in the hands of the enemy turned off to the left, came to grief in a "donga," and had to be abandoned. There was not time to spike them. Major Smith was wounded, but managed to get down to the Buffalo, where, I understand, he was shot.

A few mounted men and a good many natives managed to escape from the camp, but had to ride hard over very rough country to the Buffalo River, a distance of about five miles, under fire from the enemy the whole way. The ground was so bad for horses that the Zulus on foot were able to run as fast as the horses could travel. I should judge that more than half the number that left the camp were killed before they arrived at the Buffalo, and many were drowned, there being no drift, the water running rapidly, with large boulders and deep water alternating.

The officers who escaped consulted together on the road, and decided to form a laager at Helpmakaar.

The fighting lasted from about 11.30 a.m. till 1 p.m., as near as I can judge.

There must have been at least 15,000 Zulus, besides the Reserves, and I should compute the numbers killed at from 2,000 to 2,500. The Zulu system of attack, as represented in the Zulu pamphlet, is easily traceable. The main body being opposite the left centre of the camp; the horns thrown out to the left rear and right front. Had the Zulus completed their scheme, by sending a column to the Buffalo River to cut off the retreat, not a man would have escaped to tell the tale.

As far as I am personally concerned, when I got back to the camp with the mounted men who had now been driven out of the "donga," I found that the enemy had rushed the camp from the left, and were engaged hand to hand with the Infantry, who were completely overpowered with overwhelming numbers. I saw that all was over. I made in the direction which I had seen taken by the mounted men, guns, Royal Artillery, and the Natives on foot. I was cut off by the enemy, who had now reached the line of retreat; but with a good horse, hard riding, and good luck, I managed to reach the Buffalo River. The Zulus seemed perfectly fearless; they followed alongside, having desperate hand-to-hand fighting with those retreating, mostly our Natives on foot. Many of the enemy were killed between the camp and the river. On several occasions they were quite close to me, but I was fortunate enough to escape whilst others dropped at my side. They fired at us the whole way from the camp to the river, but having mounted the bank on the opposite side we were safe.

I made for Helpmakaar by order of Captains Essex and Gardner, and assisted in forming a laager.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) W. F. D. COCHRANE,
Lieut. 32nd Light Infantry,
Transport Officer, No. 2 Column.

Enclosure B.

STATEMENT OF A ZULU DESERTER REGARDING THE SANDHILWANA BATTLE.

The Zulu army, consisting of the Ulundi corps, about 3,000 strong; the Nokenke Regiment, 2,000 strong; the Nkobamakosi Regiment,

including the Uve, about 5,000 strong; the Umcityu, about 4,000 strong; the Nodwengu, 2,000 strong; the Umbonambi, 3,000 strong, and the Udkloko, about 1,000 strong, or a total of about 20,000 men in all, left the military kraal of Nodwengu on the afternoon of the 17th January. It was first addressed by the King, who said:—

"I am sending you out against the Whites, who have invaded Zululand and driven away our cattle. You are to go against the column at Rorke's Drift, and drive it back into Natal; and if the state of the river will allow, follow it up through Natal, right up to the Drakensburg. You will attack it by daylight, as there are enough of you to 'eat it up,' and you will march slowly, so as not to tire yourselves."

We accordingly left Nodwengu late in the afternoon, and marched in column to the west bank of the White Umfolosi about six miles distant, where we bivouacked for the night. Next day we marched to the Isipezi military kraal, about nine miles off, where we slept, and on the 19th we ascended to the table land near the Isihlungu Hills, a march of about equal duration with that of the day previous. On this day the army which had hitherto been marching in single column divided into two, marching parallel to and within sight of each other, that on the left consisting of the Nokenke, Umcityu, and Nodwengu Regiments, under the command of Tyingwayo, the other commanded by Mavumingwana. There were a few mounted men belonging to the Chief Usirayo, who were made use of as scouts. On the 20th we moved across the open country and slept by the Isipezi Hill. We saw a body of mounted white men on this day to our left (a strong reconnaissance, was made on the 20th, to the west of the Isipezi Hill, which was probably the force here indicated). On the 21st, keeping away to the eastward, we occupied a valley running north and south under the spurs of the Ngutu Hill, which concealed the Sandhilwana Hill, distant from us about four miles, and nearly due west of our encampment. We had been well fed during our whole march, our scouts driving in cattle and goats, and on that evening we lit our camp fires as usual. Our scouts also reported to us that they had seen the videttes of the English force at sunset on some hills west-south-west of us (Lord Chemsford with some of his staff rode up in this direction, and about this time, and saw some of the mounted enemy). Our order of encampment on the 21st January was as follows: On the extreme right were the Nodwengu, Nokenke, and Umcityu; the centre was formed by the Nkobamakosi and Mbouambi, and the left of the Undi Corps and the Udkloko Regiment. On the morning of the 22nd January there was no intention whatever of making any attack on account of a superstition regarding the state of the moon, and we were sitting resting, when firing was heard on our right (the narrator was in the Nokenke Regiment), which we at first imagined was the Nkobamakosi engaged, and we armed and ran forward in the direction of the sound. We were, however, soon told it was the white troops fighting with Matyana's people, some ten miles away to our left front, and returned to our original position. Just after we had sat down again, a small herd of cattle came past our line from our right, being driven down by some of our scouts, and just when they were opposite to the Umcityu Regiment, a body of mounted men on the hill to the west galloping, evidently trying to cut them off. When several hundred yards off they perceived the Umcityu, and, dismounting, fired one volley at them and then retired. The Umcityu at once jumped up

and charged—an example which was taken up by the Nokenke and Nodwengu on their right, and the Nkobamakosi and Mbonambi on the left, while the Undi Corps and the Udkloko formed a circle (as is customary in Zulu warfare when a force is about to be engaged) and remained where they were. With the latter were the two commanding officers, Mavamingwana and Tyingwayo, and several of the king's brothers, who with these two corps bore away to the north-west, after a short pause, and keeping on the northern side of the Sandhswana performed a turning movement on the right without any opposition from the whites, who from the nature of the ground could not see them. Thus the original Zulu left became their extreme right, while their right became their centre, and the centre the left. The two regiments which formed the latter, the Nkobamakosi and Mbonambi, made a turning along the front of the camp towards the English right, but became engaged long before they could accomplish it; and the Uve Regiment, a battalion of the Nkobamakosi, was repulsed and had to retire until reinforced by the other battalion, while the Mbonambi suffered very severely from the artillery fire. Meanwhile, the centre, consisting of the Umcityu on the left centre, and the Nokenke and Nodwengu higher up on the right, under the hill, were making a direct attack on the left of the camp. The Umcityu suffered very severely, both from artillery and musketry fire; the Nokenke from musketry fire alone; while the Nodwengu lost least. When we at last carried the camp our regiments became mixed

up; a portion pursued the fugitives down to the Buffalo River, and the remainder plundered the camp; while the Undi and Udkloko Regiments made the best of their way to Rorke's Drift to plunder the post there, in which they failed, and lost very heavily, after fighting all the afternoon and night. We stripped the dead of all their clothes. To my knowledge no one was made prisoner, and I saw no dead body carried away or mutilated. If the doctors carried away any dead bodies for the purpose of afterwards doctoring the army, it was done without my knowing of it; nor did I see any prisoner taken and afterwards killed. I was, however, one of the men who followed the refugees down to the Buffalo River, and only returned to the English camp late in the afternoon. (This portion of the prisoner's statement was made very reluctantly.) The portion of the army which had remained to plunder the camp did so thoroughly, carrying off the maize, bread stuffs (*sic*), and stores of all kinds, and drinking such spirits as were in camp. Many were drunk, and all laden with their booty; and towards sunset the whole force moved back to the encampment of the previous night, hastened by having seen another English force approaching from the south. Next morning the greater part of the men dispersed to their homes with their plunder, a few accompanying the principal officers to the king, and they have not reassembled since.

Correct translation,

(Signed) N. DRUMMOND, H.Q. Staff.