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*War Office, January, 26, 1900.*

THE following Despatches, with their enclosures, have been received from General, the Right Honourable Sir Redvers Buller, G.C.B., South Africa :—

From the General Commanding-in-Chief the Forces in South Africa to the Secretary of State for War, War Office, London, S.W.

*Cape Town,*

SIR, *November 9, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a report from Lieutenant-General Sir George White, V.C., &c., dated 2nd November, on his operations in Natal, which was handed to me yesterday by Lieutenant-General French on his arrival from Durban. It does not seem to call for any remarks from me.

I have, &c.,

REDVERS BULLER,  
General Officer Commanding.

From Lieutenant-General Sir George S. White, V.C., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., to the Secretary of State, War Office, London, S.W.  
*Ladysmith, Natal,*

SIR, *November 2, 1899.*

I HAVE the honour to forward the following report on the military operations in Natal since the date of my arrival in that colony :—

2. I reached Durban and assumed command of the forces in that colony on 7th October, 1899, proceeding direct to Maritzburg. I found the troops, Imperial and Colonial, then in the colony, distributed as under :—

At Pietermaritzburg—1st Battalion Manchester Regiment, and Mounted Infantry Company, 2nd Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps.

At Estcourt—Detachment Natal Naval Volunteers, Natal Royal Rifles.

At Colenso—Durban Light Infantry.

At Ladysmith—5th Lancers, Detachment 19th Hussars, Brigade Division, Royal Artillery ; 10th Mountain Battery, Royal Garrison Artillery ; 23rd Company, Royal Engineers ; 1st Battalion Devonshire Regiment ; 1st Battalion Liverpool Regiment, and Mounted Infantry Company ; 26th (two sections) British Field Hospital, and Colonial troops.

At Glencoe—18th Hussars ; Brigade Division, Royal Artillery ; 1st Battalion Leicestershire Regiment, and Mounted Infantry Company ; 1st Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps, and Mounted Infantry Company ; 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin

Fusiliers, and Mounted Infantry Company ; 6th Veterinary Field Hospital.

With 1 Company, 1st Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps at Eshowe, and a detachment of the Umvoti Mounted Rifles at Helpmakaar.

3. The information available regarding the positions occupied by the armies of the two Dutch Republics showed the great bulk of the forces of the Orange Free State were massed near the passes of the Drakensberg mountains, west of Ladysmith. The troops of the South African Republic were concentrated at various points west, north, and east of the northern angle of Natal. On 10th October His Excellency the Governor informed me that Her Majesty's Government had received an ultimatum from that of the South African Republic, and that the outbreak of war on the evening of 11th October might be regarded as certain.

4. Since my arrival in the colony I had been much impressed by the exposed situation of the garrison of Glencoe, and on the evening of 10th October I had an interview on the subject with his Excellency the Governor, at which I laid before him my reasons for considering it expedient, from a military point of view, to withdraw that garrison, and to concentrate all my available troops at Ladysmith. After full discussion his Excellency recorded his opinion that such a step would involve grave political results and possibilities of so serious a nature that I determined to accept the military risk of holding Dundee as the lesser of two evils. I proceeded in person to Ladysmith on 11th October, sending on Lieutenant-General Sir William Penn Symons to take command at Glencoe.

5. The Boers crossed the frontier both on the north and west on 12th October, and next day the Transvaal flag was hoisted at Charlestown. My great inferiority in numbers necessarily confined me strategically to the defensive, but tactically my intention was and is to strike vigorously whenever opportunity offers. Up to 19th October the enemy from the north were engaged in moving down on the Biggarsberg—Dundee line in three columns. The main column, under General Joubert, occupied Newcastle, and marched south by the road leading thence on Glencoe Junction. A second column, under Viljoen, crossed Botha's Pass, and moved south over the Biggarsberg, cutting the railway from Glencoe Junction to Ladysmith on 19th October at Elands Laagte, where they took up a position. A third column, under Lucas Meyer, crossed the Buffalo