

force was in position there, but apparently in no considerable strength. I therefore ordered Major-General French, commanding the Cavalry of the Natal Force, to move out by road at 4 A.M. with five squadrons of Imperial Light Horse and the Natal Field Battery, followed at 6 A.M. by half battalion 1st Battalion Manchester Regiment, with railway and telegraph construction companies by rail. Major-General French's orders were to clear the neighbourhood of Elands Laagte of the enemy, and to cover the construction of the railway and telegraph lines.

16. On arrival near Elands Laagte, the station buildings were found to be in possession of the enemy. Our Artillery opened fire on them, while a squadron of the Imperial Light Horse, under Major Sampson, moved round to the north of them. The enemy at once replied with artillery, and thus disclosed his main position on a commanding group of hills, about one mile south-east of the railway station. This position proving too strong and too strongly held to be dealt with by the force then at Major-General French's disposal, he retired his troops out of fire, and reported to me by telephone. I sent out to him reinforcements, consisting of one squadron 5th Dragoon Guards, one squadron 5th Lancers, and the 21st and 42nd Batteries Royal Field Artillery, all of which moved by road, and of the 1st Battalion Devonshire Regiment, and five companies Gordon Highlanders, which moved by rail. I also sent out Colonel Ian Hamilton, C.B., D.S.O., to take command of the Infantry portion of the force.

17. As the reinforcements gradually reached him, Major-General French pushed forward again, throwing out one squadron 5th Lancers and four squadrons Imperial Light Horse, under Colonel Chisholme, to the right to clear a ridge of high ground parallel to the enemy's position, from which he considered that an attack could best be developed. This movement was well carried out, the enemy's advanced troops being driven back, and the ridge gained.

18. One squadron 5th Dragoon Guards, one squadron 5th Lancers, and one squadron Natal Mounted Rifles, under Major Gore, 5th Dragoon Guards, were sent forward from our left with orders to turn the enemy's right flank, harass his rear, and be ready to take up the pursuit. At 3.30 P.M. I arrived on the ground in person, but left the executive command of the troops engaged still in the hands of Major-General French.

19. At this hour the ground selected as the first Artillery position having been cleared of the enemy, the Field batteries advanced and opened fire at 4 P.M., at a range of 4,400 yards. After a few minutes the enemy's guns ceased to reply, and our guns were turned on a party of the enemy who were annoying our artillerymen with rifle fire from our right flank at a range of 2,000 yards. This fire quickly drove back the Boers, and the infantry advance commenced.

20. The Infantry had been brought up in preparatory battle formation of small columns covered by scouts. The 1st Battalion Manchester Regiment led with a frontage of 500 yards; the 1st Battalion Devonshire Regiment and the 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders followed in succession. Finding the line of advance was leading too much to the south, Colonel Hamilton, C.B., D.S.O., commanding the Infantry Brigade, diverted the Devons more towards the north, while the Gordons remained in reserve between the other two battalions. At 3.30 P.M. the 1st Battalion Devonshire Regiment crested a ridge from which the enemy's position could be clearly seen. The

general position of our infantry was then as follows:—

The 1st Battalion Devonshire Regiment, with a frontage of 500 yards, and a depth of 1,300 yards, were halted on the western extremity of a horse-shoe shaped ridge, the opposite end of this horse shoe being very rough and broken, and held by the enemy in force. The 1st Battalion Manchester Regiment had struck the ridge fully 1,000 yards to the south-east, just at the point where it begins to bend round northwards. The 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders were one mile in rear.

21. The 1st Battalion Manchester Regiment received orders that as soon as the enemy's guns were silenced, they were to work along the crest of the horse shoe and turn the left flank of the enemy. The 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders were to support them, and the 1st Battalion Devonshire Regiment were directed to move right across the open grass plain separating them from the enemy, and to hold him in his position as much as possible by their fire. As soon as the 1st Battalion Devonshire Regiment began to move forward, the enemy reopened their artillery fire on them, but owing to the very open formation adopted, the loss at this period was slight. The 1st Battalion Devonshire Regiment pressed on to about 900 yards from the position, opened fire and maintained themselves there, holding the enemy in front of them till 6 P.M.

22. Meanwhile the batteries advanced to a range of 3,200 yards, and again silenced temporarily the Boer guns, while the 1st Battalion Manchester Regiment and the 2nd Battalion Gordon Highlanders, working along the ridge, had a sharp encounter at the point where the horse shoe bends round to the Boer position. The enemy were forced slowly back along the ridge, fighting as they retired.

23. The Manchesters and Gordons, with the Imperial Light Horse on their right, continued to press forward, losing but few men until a point was reached about 1,200 yards from the enemy's camp. Here the ridge became, for 200 yards, flat and bare of stones, while to the north; where the Boers were posted, it was very rocky and afforded excellent cover. Our men, well led by their Officers, and strengthened by their reserves, crossed this open neck of land in brilliant style, but the losses here were heavy, the reserves were all used up and the units were completely mixed. Moreover, the enemy's camp, which was evidently his final position, was still 1,000 yards distant. At this moment the enemy's German contingent, who had been out on the west of the railway trying to capture our trains, reinforced the Boers and Hollanders along the ridge. The enemy became much encouraged, and from this point up to the extreme end of the horse-shoe ridge, where it overlooks the enemy's camp, the struggle was bitter and protracted. Our men worked forward in short rushes of about 50 yards. Many of the Boers remained lying down, shooting from behind stones until our men were within 20 or 30 yards of them, and then sometimes ran for it and sometimes stood up and surrendered. These latter individuals were never harmed, although just previous to surrendering they had probably shot down several of our Officers and men.

24. At length the guns were reached and captured, and the end of the ridge was gained, from which the whole of the enemy's camp, full of tents, horses, and men, was fully exposed to view at fixed sight range. A white flag was shown from the centre of the camp, and Colonel Hamilton ordered the "cease fire" to be sounded. The men