

Royal Scots Fusiliers and the 1st Battalion Royal Welsh Fusiliers remained as garrison of Krugersdorp, under Barton, the remaining two, the 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers and the 2nd Battalion Royal Fusiliers, being railed to Pretoria. In Hart's Brigade a wing of the 2nd Battalion Somersetshire Light Infantry had remained at Vryburg, while the other wing with the 2nd Battalion Royal Dublin Fusiliers and one Field battery, formed the garrison of Heidelberg, under Hart; the 1st Battalion Border Regiment and the 1st Battalion Connaught Rangers marching to Irene Station. Mahon's mounted troops, with the Imperial Light Horse and one battery of Horse Artillery, were also moved to Irene.

13. On the 22nd June, a Boer commando 700 strong, with three guns, attacked the post on the railway at Honingspruit, north of Kroonstad. The enemy were driven off by a force from Kroonstad, after having destroyed three culverts and broken up the line. Lord Methuen was ordered to move his column from Heilbron towards Honingspruit, and after clearing off the enemy to take up a central position near Paardekraal, so as to cover the railway from the east.

14. On the 25th June, a large convoy under Colonel Brookfield, Commandant 14th Battalion, Imperial Yeomanry, left Kroonstad for Lindley.* This column was engaged with the enemy, 1,500 strong with two guns, throughout the 26th and 27th, but Colonel Brookfield succeeded in bringing the convoy safely into Lindley on the evening of the latter day. The casualties were two men killed, two Officers and fourteen men wounded, and five men missing.

15. On the 27th June, the post on the railway near Roodeval Station was attacked, but the enemy were repulsed by a detachment of the Shropshire Light Infantry and the West Australian Mounted Infantry, with the aid of a 15-pounder gun on an armoured train.

16. On the 20th June, Lord Methuen reported from Paardekraal that he had captured 8,000 sheep and 800 head of cattle, and that the enemy had withdrawn eastward; and 2nd July he arrested at Welgelegen Andries Wessels, a prominent Boer member of the Afrikander Bond. The next day he captured 6,000 sheep and 500 oxen, the property of the enemy, near Paardekraal. On the 8th July, Mr. Blignaut, State Secretary of the Orange Free State; Mr. Dickson, Attorney-General; and Mr. van Tonder, member of the Council, surrendered at Heilbron.

17. Early in July a force consisting of Mounted Infantry details, about 1,200 strong, under the command of Colonel T. E. Hickman, D.S.O., was organised at Kroonstad, to assist Lord Methuen in protecting the railway. The enemy having been pushed back by the combined movement of the troops under Hunter, Clements, and Paget, Hickman's force was no longer required south of the Vaal, and on the 11th and 12th July, it was railed from Kroonstad to Pretoria. For the same reason on the 12th July, I directed Lord Methuen's column, which had moved to Lindley, to march to Kroonstad, and thence proceed by rail to Krugersdorp.

18. By 20th June, 4,000 rifles had been collected by Baden-Powell from the Boers in the

Rustenburg district, but shortly afterwards signs of unrest were apparent north of the Magaliesberg, and in the country between Rustenburg and Mafeking. At first only a few scattered parties of the enemy were reported to be in the field, and in order to break them up Baden-Powell was directed to leave a small garrison at Rustenburg, under Major the Honourable A. H. C. Hanbury-Tracy, and to march eastward with the remainder of his troops to Commando Nek. Orders were also given for Carrington's force to concentrate at Mafeking, detachments being left to guard the principal drifts across the Crocodile River, namely, Baines, Rhodes, and Victoria Drifts. On the 5th July, definite information reached me that a commando under Delarey, 2,000 strong, with four guns, was threatening Rustenburg from the north-east, and that Oliphant's Nek, 10 miles south of that town, had been occupied by the Boers. Baden-Powell was then holding Commando and Uitval Neks, with his headquarters at Rietfontein, south of the Magaliesberg and between the two neks. His force consisted of 450 mounted men, a Canadian Field battery, and two Mountain guns. Lieutenant-Colonel C. O. Hore was at Elands River, 40 miles west of Rustenburg, with 400 Imperial Bushmen, two Field guns, and one Maxim. Having arranged to relieve the detachments at Commando Nek and Uitval Nek by troops from Pretoria, I ordered Baden-Powell to return to Rustenburg. On the 7th July the Boers attacked that place, but were beaten off, Hore's column making a rapid march and reinforcing the garrison towards the end of the engagement. Baden-Powell reached Rustenburg the next day, but a large commando remained in position 6 miles to the south, which he was not strong enough to deal with.

19. Meanwhile, at the beginning of July, the enemy assumed an aggressive attitude towards the east of Pretoria, and the following dispositions were made to prevent them from getting round our right flank and interrupting railway communication with the south. Mahon's troops, with the Imperial Light Horse, one battery of Horse Artillery, and two battalions from Hart's Brigade (the Border Regiment and Connaught Rangers) were ordered to Rietfontein, 6 miles east of Irene. The column was strengthened by Hutton,* who assumed the command. On the 8th July it was further reinforced from Krugersdorp,† Hutton advancing on that date with his mounted troops to Rietvlei. On the 9th July French was sent from Kameeldrift to the south of the Delagoa Bay railway,‡ and on the 11th, in co-operation with Hutton, he engaged the enemy and pushed them back to the east of Bronkhorst Spruit. The next day French was directed to return to Pretoria with three battalions and two 5-inch guns, while the 2nd Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry was moved from Irene to Derdepoort, and the 1st Battalion Suffolk Regiment from Irene to Tigerpoort.

20. When Baden-Powell left Rietfontein for Rustenburg, Commando and Uitval Neks were occupied by the Scots Greys with a battery of Horse Artillery, and the Waterval post north of Pretoria was held by the 7th Dragoon Guards. The Scots Greys were subsequently reinforced by the 2nd Battalion Lincolnshire Regiment,

* 800 men of the Imperial Yeomanry and Colonial Corps, a wing of the 2nd Bn. King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, and the 3rd Bn. the Buffs, with four guns of the City Imperial Volunteers, and two of the 17th Battery, Royal Field Artillery.

* 1st Brigade of Mounted Infantry.

† Royal Fusiliers and Royal Irish Fusiliers; one Field battery, and two 5-inch guns.

‡ Carabineers, Inniskilling Dragoons, and 8th Hussars.