

stuck and wounded who had been left there had not been in any way disturbed. On the afternoon of the 24th October, Rundle, in an interview he had with Prinsloo and some other representatives of the Bethlehem commando, told them of ex-President Kruger's flight, and generally explained the situation. Commandant Prinsloo, however, decided that hostilities must go on, and that he was bound to do his part in maintaining the struggle.

31. Rundle left the 1st Bn. Worcestershire Regiment, a section of the 79th Battery, Royal Field Artillery, and the 62nd (Middlesex) Company, Imperial Yeomanry, under Lieut.-Colonel Gakes of the Worcestershire Regiment, to garrison Bethlehem, and on the 26th October he marched with the rest of his force on Harrismith.

About three miles out of Bethlehem, Rundle found the Boers strongly posted across the road, and on both flanks; an engagement ensued, and it was only after fighting all day that Lieut.-Colonel Golightly, with the Hampshire and Gloucestershire Companies of Imperial Yeomanry, and two companies of the Grenadier Guards, succeeded in driving the enemy from the kopjes they were holding to the north of the road. As soon as this was accomplished, Major-General Campbell, with half a battalion of the Grenadier Guards and half a battalion of the Scots Guards, covered by the fire of our guns, attacked the very strong position held by the enemy to the south of the road. The attack eventually proved successful in spite of a very stubborn resistance by the Boers. Our casualties were three killed and 17 wounded.

Harrismith was reached on the 30th October, and, with this place as his head-quarters, Rundle has been doing good work clearing the district with a small mobile column, and at the same time provisioning the garrisons of Vrede, Reitz, and Bethlehem.

32. From this, my final despatch, I have been obliged, on account of its great length, most reluctantly to omit many interesting incidents, and to leave unrecorded many gallant deeds. As it is, I feel an apology is due for the almost inordinate proportions which this, as well as my former despatches, have assumed, owing to the vastness of the country over which operations had to be carried out, the length of time to which they have extended, and consequently the great number of events, going on in different places simultaneously, which have had to be described.

33. The magnitude of the task which Her Majesty's Imperial troops have been called upon to perform will perhaps be better realised if I give the actual number of miles of the several lines of communication, each one of which has had to be carefully guarded, and compare with the well-known countries of Europe, the enormous extent of the theatre of war from one end of which to the other troops have had to be frequently moved.

The areas included in the theatre of war are as follows:—

	Square miles.
Cape Colony	277,151
Orange River Colony	48,326
Transvaal	113,640
Natal	18,913
Total	458,030
Rhodesia	750,000

And the distances troops have had to travel are:—

By land—

	Miles.
Cape Town to Pretoria ..	1,040
Pretoria to Komati Poort	260
Cape Town to Kimberley	647
Kimberley to Mafeking ..	223
Mafeking to Pretoria ..	160
Mafeking to Beira. . . .	1,135
Durban to Pretoria ..	511

From these tables it will be seen that, after having been brought by sea 6,000 miles and more from their base in the United Kingdom, the Army in South Africa had to be distributed over an area of greater extent than France (204,146 square miles) and Germany (211,168 square miles) put together, and if we include that part of Rhodesia with which we had to do, larger than the combined areas of France, Germany and Austria (261,649 square miles).

And it should be remembered that over these great distances we were dependent on single lines of railway for the food-supply, guns, ammunition, horses, transport animals, and hospital equipment, in fact, all the requirements of an army in the field, and that, along these lines, bridges and culverts had been destroyed in many places, and rails were being constantly torn up.

35. As stated in my Farewell Order*, "the service which the South African Force has performed is, I venture to think, unique in the annals of war, inasmuch as it has been absolutely incessant for a whole year, in some cases more than a year. There has been no rest, no days off to recruit, no going into winter quarters as in other campaigns which have extended over a long period." In illustration of this I may mention that Lord Methuen's column marched 1,036 miles between the 14th May and the 2nd September, covering, on one occasion, 125 miles in 115 hours. The 2nd Cavalry Brigade (Broadwood's) marched 1,200 miles between the 29th April and the 28th August. The City Imperial Volunteers marched on 75 days, between the 16th April and the 23rd August, the total distance traversed being 1,018 miles, and the average length of march 13½ miles. The Brigade of Guards at the commencement of the war formed part of Methuen's force destined for the relief of Kimberley. In February it joined the Head-quarters of the Army and took part in the march to Bloemfontein and Pretoria. In September, it was at Komati Poort, and now, November 1900, it is guarding the drifts over the Orange River, close to where it was a year previously; having meanwhile marched from the most western part of the Orange River Colony to the most eastern part of the Transvaal.

The Imperial Light Horse, the Border Regiment, the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the Connaught Rangers, and the Brigade Division of Artillery attached to Hart's command, after taking part in all Sir Redvers Buller's battles on the Tugela and the relief of Ladysmith, were brought round to Kimberley to aid in the relief of Mafeking. Since then they have been over the greater part of the Transvaal, and part of them (the Connaught Rangers) are now on the Orange River engaged in frustrating the Boers in their attempt to invade Cape Colony.

36. These instances, out of many which might be brought forward, show how severely the troops have been taxed, and how admirably they have responded to the call made upon them. Nor has their discipline, or their conduct when engaged with the enemy, been less praiseworthy

* Dated Johannesburg, 29th November, 1900.