

From Major-General C. E. Knox, Commanding  
Kroonstad, to Lieutenant-General Kelly-Kenny,  
Commanding Lines of Communication.

SIR, 16th June, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to forward report from the Officer Commanding detachment of troops stationed at Zand River, describing an attack made on his post yesterday.

I am glad to say that owing to the careful arrangements made for defence of the post by Lieutenant-Colonel Capper, commanding Railway Pioneers, and Colonel North, commanding 3rd Battalion Royal Lancaster Regiment, the attack failed.

I beg to bring both these Officers to your favourable notice.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES E. KNOX, Major-General,  
Commanding Kroonstad.

Virginia, 15th June, 1900.

To General Knox,

WE were attacked at daybreak yesterday by Muller and Boerman's commandoes, said to be 800 men with one or two pompoms, one Maxim, and, I think, one field gun, but this is uncertain. We had to hold rather an extended position, our left being in trenches on very broken ground, and in thick scrub, which there was no time to clear. The enemy got in this scrub, and gave some trouble by sniping. The garrison consisted of four companies 3rd Battalion Royal Lancasters, under Colonel North (about 250 fit for duty), and four companies Railway Pioneer Regiment, under Major Seymour (about 300 fit for duty), together with 25 men, Royal Irish Regiment (Mounted Infantry), under Lieutenant Davenport (16 fit for duty). The attack was most pressed and determined on our left, and was held most steadily by No. 3 Company, Railway Pioneer Regiment, under Lieutenant W. Mitchell, Railway Pioneer Regiment. Fighting was continued on all sides until about 11 A.M., when it quieted down, and the enemy had practically retired by the time a body of 170 Yeomanry, under Lieutenant Crane, arrived from the south at about noon. We had no opportunity of making a counter-attack, being practically surrounded in a very extended position, and I did not consider it advisable to attempt to follow up the enemy with the Yeomanry alone. The troops behaved very well and steadily. The Railway Pioneer Regiment in the advanced trenches on the left especially were most cool and collected, engaging the enemy at very close quarters. They were for part of the morning surrounded by the enemy in the scrub, but never lost their heads, and the enemy were ultimately driven out of the scrub by an advance through it of a line of reserve, Railway Pioneer Regiment, aided by half company of Militia.

I regret to report that our losses were—

Killed.

- Major Seymour, Railway Pioneer Regiment.
  - 250 Lance-Corporal A. E. Smith, No. 3 Company, Railway Pioneer Regiment.
  - 56 Private A. Miller, No. 3 Company, Railway Pioneer Regiment.
  - 366 Lance-Corporal A. Matthew, No. 3 Company, Railway Pioneer Regiment.
  - 632 Private H. Dant, No. 3 Company, Railway Pioneer Regiment.
  - 386 Private T. B. Varker, No. 3 Company, Railway Pioneer Regiment.
- Dangerously Wounded.
- Lieutenant J. Clement, No. 2 Company, Railway Pioneer Regiment (since dead).

Company Sergeant-Major H. Pitt, No. 3 Company, Railway Pioneer Regiment.

6845 Sergeant Gray, 3rd Battalion Royal Lancaster Regiment.

Seriously Wounded.

Lieutenant W. Mitchell, No. 3 Company, Railway Pioneer Regiment.

639 Private Ross, No. 3 Company, Railway Pioneer Regiment.

4733 Lance-Corporal Jackson, 3rd Battalion Royal Lancaster Regiment.

1898 Private Montgomery, Royal Irish Rifles Mounted Infantry.

1632 Private Ruddy, Royal Irish Rifles Mounted Infantry.

Missing:

(Prisoners, believed to be uninjured.)

731 Private Bourne, Royal Irish Rifles Mounted Infantry.

5420 Private Driscoll, Royal Irish Rifles Mounted Infantry.

I cannot speak too highly of Lieutenant W. Mitchell, a young Officer, who was wounded in both thighs about 6 A.M., in going from one trench to another to encourage the men, and remaining throughout the day in the most exposed trench, keeping his men (22 in number, scattered among several small trenches) calm, and cheering them up, ordering them not to waste ammunition, &c. I attribute to his example, and the very steady conduct of the men of his Company in the advanced trenches, who suffered severely (one holding three men had one killed, and one holding five men had two killed), the fact that our losses were so comparatively small.

I especially deplore the death of Major Seymour, whose loss will not only be felt by us as a regiment, but by the whole of South Africa. He was killed while advancing with the extended line through the bush, to clear out the snipers. Four dead Boers were found in a donga, within 40 yards of No. 3 Company's advanced trenches, and two were found on our right outside the Militia trenches.

The enemy's loss is known to be these six, and it is probable that some more were hit. We took nine prisoners, of whom one was wounded. I sent off a son of the wounded man with a letter to Commandant Boerman, asking him and advising him to give up his arms. It is thought that the commando is retiring on Senekal. I sent an engine down last evening to try and open communication with the south, but up to the present, 7.30 A.M., have not heard of it. The telegraph wires were broken. I am sending to Doornspruit this morning to ascertain if the party there are all right. I regret to report that most of my men were killed with explosive and soft-nosed bullets, and I have in my possession a number of explosive and soft-nosed bullets taken from the dead, and from the bandoliers of prisoners who have surrendered.

I have the honour to inquire if the prisoners in whose possession they were found should be shot, as I am unaware of the orders of the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief on the subject.

J. E. CAPPER, Lieut.-Colonel,  
Officer Commanding Troops, Virginia.

No. 15.

From Field-Marshal Lord Roberts to the  
Secretary of State for War.

Army Head-Quarters, South Africa,

MY LORD, Pretoria, 9th July, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to submit for your Lordship's information a report, dated 23rd May, 1900, from Brigadier-General B. T. Mahon, D.S.O., describing the march of the Flying