

Column under his command from Barkly West to Mafeking, and the relief of the latter place, in conjunction with the force under Colonel Plumer.

2. The operation entrusted to Brigadier-General Mahon was conducted by him with conspicuous ability and energy, and I would draw special attention to the skill which he displayed in evading the enemy, who had arranged to dispute his advance along the main road, by deflecting his line of march to the west. Credit is also due to Brigadier-General Mahon for the dispositions which resulted in the defeat of the Boers on 13th and 16th May, and opened the way into Mafeking.

The admirable behaviour of the troops during the march and in action contributed most materially to the successful issue.

I would especially bring Colonel Plumer's name to your notice. His hearty co-operation at the right moment was of immense value to Colonel Mahon.

I am also informed that Mrs. Abrams, an Englishwoman living at Taungs, rendered valuable assistance by giving information to Lieutenant-General Hunter and Colonel Mahon, and I would add that the native chief Molala of Taungs did excellent work by supplying horses and runners during the siege of Mafeking.

I have, &c.,  
ROBERTS, Field-Marshal,  
Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa.

From Colonel B. Mahon to Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald Hunter, K.C.B., Commanding 10th Division.

IN accordance with orders received from you I left Barkly West on 4th May, 1900, in command of Flying Column for relief of Mafeking. We reached Spitz Kop on 5th May and from the top of a hill there I could see your engagement to the east near Rooidam, a party of the Boers you were engaged with seemed to be moving north-west in the direction of our road, I moved the Imperial Light Horse and Royal Horse Artillery so as to intercept them, but they turned east and we did not come in contact.

I despatched Captain Rickman with one squadron Kimberley Mounted Corps to join you.

The next Boers we came across were at Taungs, where a patrol of ours chased them as they were leaving, and picked up a portfolio, which one of them dropped, with their latest telegrams, one of which stated that Young Cronje with his commando was moving north to intercept us at Pudimoe.

From Pudimoe there was a Boer commando marching parallel to us on our right flank.

In the Pudimoe district we arrested several rebels and seized a number of rifles, also sheep, cattle, and some horses; between Pudimoe and Vryburg no Boers were seen, but we made some more prisoners and seized several rifles and some stock.

At Vryburg I left Mr. C. St. Quintin in charge and gave him powers of acting magistrate, and Mr. P. Gethin as his assistant. I left our sick at Vryburg under charge of Dr. Nugent.

I also left the live stock we had captured and our sick horses and mules under charge of Mr. P. Gethin. No Boers were encountered until the 13th May between Brodie's and Wright's Farms, north-west of Koodo's Rand; the Boers here had an ambush in thick scrub, which was strongly supported from Koodo's Rand (at Koodo's Rand Nek they had several guns in position); they made a determined attack, but

we beat them off after 45 minutes' fighting; all troops behaved excellently.

From what I have since heard there were 900 Boers there with four guns, viz., 500 who had marched up parallel to us, and 400 which had come from Mafeking to intercept us; the two forces joined on the 12th.

We crossed the Marotzani at Dr. Smart's Farm and had difficulty in watering, as we had to dig in the dry bed of the river for it; but, although it took 8 hours to water the force, we managed it all right; we marched from Marotzani direct to Jan Masibi on the night of the 14th and reached the Molopo (lots of running water) at Jan Masibi at 5.30 A.M. on the 15th, and there met Colonel Plumer's column, which had also just arrived after a night march.

We all rested on the 15th, as both men and animals required it.

I formed the force into two brigades, 1st Brigade under Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer, 2nd Brigade under Lieutenant-Colonel Edwardes.

We advanced at 6.30 A.M. towards Mafeking, along the north or right bank of the Molopo, in two parallel columns at half a mile interval, the convoy in the centre and slightly in rear.

Plumer's brigade on the right and Edwardes' on the left. At Sani's Post, about 12.30 P.M., firing was heard on the left front, and I advanced Edwardes' brigade; Plumer's at the same time advancing along the river; the convoy following on the road in rear of and between the two brigades. As we advanced I found that the Boers had taken up positions all around us, and had five guns and two pompoms in positions in different places.

The convoy rather impeded my movements, as it was under shell fire, and the Boers were trying to attack it from both flanks and also from the rear, so I had to strengthen both my flank and rear guards, at the same time I continued my advance on Mafeking; the Boers retiring from our front and keeping up with us on the flanks. Our Artillery, especially the Royal Horse Artillery, were making very good practice. At 4.40 P.M. I ordered Colonel Edwardes to bring up his left and turn the Boer right flank, this movement was entirely successful. At 4.40 P.M. I had a message from Colonel Plumer to say his advance was checked on the right by a gun and pompom fire from the White Horse (Israel's Farm). I ordered the Royal Horse Artillery to shell the house. They soon silenced the gun, but not the pompom. I then sent Captain Carr with the Infantry to take the house, which they did, and captured one wagon and a lot of pompom ammunition. It was by this time getting dark, or I think they would have got the pompom.

At 5.45 P.M. all firing, except stray shots of the rear guard, had ceased, and the Boers had retired from all parts. I advanced two miles nearer Mafeking, and formed up the force, with the exception of infantry, which I reinforced with 50 New Zealand Infantry, and left holding the White Horse. The Boer fire was very heavy at times, and their guns very accurately laid. I attributed the smallness of our casualties to our very wide front and loose formation, and to the excellent way in which our Artillery was served, especially the Royal Horse Artillery, as they never gave the Boers an opportunity of getting fixed tenure in any positions which allowed them a close range fire, and partly to the defectiveness of the Boer shells, very few of which burst.

At 11 P.M., after first ascertaining by patrol that the road was open, I ordered an advance on Mafeking. We started at 12.30 A.M., and