

marched seven miles to Mafeking, which place we entered at 3.30 A.M. on the 17th of May, 1900. Shortly after daylight it was reported that the Boers were clearing out of all their laagers on the east of the town. At 8 A.M. Colonel Baden-Powell ordered out the troops, and we shelled and pressed for a short way, but the horses were too beat to do much. However, we captured one gun and a large quantity of ammunition and other stores, and by 11 A.M. there was not a Boer near Mafeking.

I cannot say what the Boer losses were in either engagement, but from what I have since heard I believe they were fairly heavy. I saw one man at Kraaipan who assisted in burying 22 Boers on the 14th May.

I estimate the number of Boers engaged against us on the 17th of May at about 2,000.

I cannot speak too highly of the behaviour of all ranks, more especially the Royal Horse Artillery and Imperial Light Horse, both during the march, which was long and tiring, and during both engagements. The march was rendered the more fatiguing by having an active enemy on our flank always looking for an opportunity to delay and harass us, and thus rendering scouting more necessary, and extra work on men and horses.

The following farmers were very useful to us and rendered us every assistance, viz., Mr. Keely, Mr. Lamb, Mr. Brodie, and Mr. Wright. The latter had our wounded (25) from the engagements on the 13th May, 1900, in his house, and was most kind in many ways to them. All the above live in the Marotzani district.

I brought into Mafeking five wagon loads of provisions and hospital stores, equalling 10,500 lbs.; also 17 bags of flour and 81 head of cattle (these latter, viz., flour and cattle, were captured on the march), and handed them over to Ordnance Corps Stores, Mafeking. I at the same time sent for 200 more cattle and 1,000 sheep to Vryburg: they duly arrived, and I handed them over about the 23rd May.

B. MAHON, Colonel,
Commanding Mafeking Relief Column.
Mafeking, 23rd May, 1900.

No. 16.

From Field-Marshal Lord Roberts to the
Secretary of State for War.
Army Head-Quarters, South Africa,
Pretoria, 1st August, 1900.

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to forward, for your Lordship's information, a despatch, dated 29th June, 1900, from Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Warren, describing the operations in the vicinity of Faber's Put on 30th May.

2. I consider that the force under Lieutenant-General Warren's command was ably handled, and that the troops displayed great steadiness and gallantry when attacked by the Boers.

3. I support Sir Charles Warren's recommendations on behalf of the Officers, non-commissioned officers, and men whose names he has brought to special notice.

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

From Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Warren,
Military Governor of Cape Colony, North of
Orange River, to Chief of Staff, Head-Quarters,
Pretoria.

Attack on Faber's Put.

SIR, Blickfontein, 29th June, 1900.

1. AFTER having occupied Douglas, on 21st May, I found that the whole country west of Vaal River was occupied by rebels, encamped in a great number of laagers, and frequently shifting from place to place, so that it was difficult to obtain any clear estimate of their numbers, the estimate of the Intelligence Branch varying from 700 to 2,000 within a 50-mile radius, it has since been apparent that the numbers are not less than 1,000.

2. Our objectives were the townships of Campbell and Griquatown, which stand on a raised plateau, about 400 or 500 feet above the level of the Vaal River; this plateau is terminated on the east by a steep ridge, about 400 feet high, running 50 or 60 miles north-east and south-west, at a distance of about 10 to 12 miles from the Vaal River. Roads pass up from the river on to the high lands through various deep kloofs, which a few resolute men could defend against a considerable number, and the only point where I considered we could attack without a very heavy loss was at Tweefontein, where the position could be turned by a flank movement; but this position was very difficult of access on account of the thick thorn bush covering its front, as well as the dense bush on the plateau between it and Campbell. The whole country for miles round is covered with bush, more or less thick, with kopjes every here and there presenting excellent positions for defence and ambushade.

3. The only good position that could be selected as a base for an attack on Tweefontein was that of Faber's Put, where there was plenty of water, and a hollow surrounded by hills where horses could be kept more or less secure from musketry at long ranges.

4. I began to concentrate my force at this place on the 27th May, about 10 miles east of Tweefontein, and was unable to move forward owing to delay in transport of food which did not arrive until the night of 29th of May, accompanied by an escort of 50 Infantry. This convoy must have arrived shortly before the enemy, on their way to attack us at Faber's Put, passed across the road.

5. Ridges encircle Faber's Put to the north-east and west, while a shallow valley runs from the water through the garden to the south. The north and north-west is the front of the position, and the south is the rear, facing on the Vaal River. There are two farm houses about 800 yards apart at north-east and north-west, and the Infantry picquets occupied the whole of this front, the Infantry being bivouacked near the north-east farm house, where were also my head-quarters; the men of the Intelligence Branch and Warren's Scouts and some Infantry were at the north-west farm house, while the Yeomanry and Artillery were in the hollow occupying the kraals around the water and northern portion of the garden, providing the picquets on the ridges south-east and south-west.

Daylight was at this time at 6 A.M., reveillé being at 5.30 A.M.

6. On the night of the 29th the rebels collected at Campbell from several points, and arranged for an early morning attack on Faber's Put, in three parties, under De Villiers, Ventner, and Forster. One party, under Forster, to attack the Infantry camp and head-quarters farm house, composed of men from the northern part of Ha