

cate that the site was well chosen, and the fort well entrenched.

I have, &c.,
N. G. LYTTELTON, Lieut.-General,
Commanding Natal.

Dundee,
5th October, 1901.

Report on the Defence of Colonel Kekewich's
Camp at Moedwill, 30th September, 1901.

From Major-General Mildmay Willson to the
Adjutant-General, Army Headquarters, Pretoria.
Krugersdorp,

Sir, 6th November, 1901.

I beg to forward Colonel Kekewich's report on the attack on his camp on the morning of 30th September, 1901, which seems to have been most carefully arranged by the Boers, and carried out with the greatest rapidity and determination. I regret to say that our losses have been very heavy both in Officers and men, but it will be seen from the report that all ranks behaved in a most gallant manner, and although the attack was, to a certain extent, a surprise, and the fire very heavy, there was no panic or flinching of any kind.

The picquets held their ground till they were almost annihilated, and thus enabled the remainder to get under arms.

Colonel Kekewich, I am told, behaved splendidly, and, by his example, largely contributed to the successful repulse of the attack. He was wounded in three places, none of which, I am glad to say, are serious. I beg to bring his gallant behaviour to your favourable consideration, and also the names of the different Officers, non-commissioned officers, and men mentioned in the various reports.

I have, &c.,
MILDMAY WILLSON, Major-General,
Commanding West of Johannesburg.

Report on the Attack on Colonel Kekewich's
Column at Moedwill (639), on 30th Sep-
tember, 1901.

1. The column, approximate strength as per margin,* left Waterval (396) at 5 a.m. on the 29th and arrived at Moedwill at noon the same day.

2. The camp was pitched on some rising ground on the right bank of the Selons River, and from 800 to 1,000 yards east of the drift where the river is crossed by the main road from Magatos Nek to Zeerust. The camp faced west, its left resting on the road and its front being about parallel with the river. The mounted troops were on the right, the Artillery in the centre, and the Derbyshire Regiment on the left.

3. Outposts were thrown out as follows:—

The Derbyshire Regiment with 1½ companies held the drift in front of the left of the camp, and extended from there round the left and left rear, up to, and including the main road in rear of the left.

The mounted troops took up the line from this point with two squadrons extended round the right and front of the camp and joined up with the Infantry outpost on the drift.

4. The supply column, with refugees and prisoners, and with an escort of 1 company Derbyshire Regiment, and 1½ squadrons Scottish Horse, of which ½ squadron only was mounted, left the force at 7 p.m. on the 29th on its way to Naauwpoort, via Magatos Nek to refill.

Thus the force left in camp consisted of:—

4 companies Derbyshire Regiment—about 350 rifles.

* 5 companies Derbyshire Regiment—400; 8 squadrons—560; 3 guns 28th Battery; G 2 Section pompoms.

6½ squadrons (Imperial Yeomanry and Scottish Horse)—about 450 rifles.

3 guns, 28th Battery.

G 2 Section Pompoms.

5. Special orders were issued for patrols to be sent out from each picquet an hour before dawn, and two special patrols of a troop each were ordered to move out north-west and south-west, starting at 4.30 a.m.

6. No signs of the enemy had been seen on the march from Waterval to Moedwill, and, except for a small party of Boers reported to have been seen near Buffelshoek (10), the country in the vicinity appeared practically clear.

7. The first sign of attack was a few rifle shots heard at 4.40 a.m. from the north-west, down the river; these were subsequently found to have been fired at a patrol going out from the left or most southerly picquet furnished by the Devonshire Imperial Yeomanry.

The firing rapidly grew heavier as the enemy, in considerable force, pushed back the patrol, and came upon the Yeomanry picquet, every man of which was either killed or wounded.

Having thus established themselves to the east of the river, they opened a very heavy fire along the bank to the south; on the camp and to the north-east on another Imperial Yeomanry picquet, which soon had almost, if not all, its members killed and wounded, including the officer in command of it.

I may mention here that the right bank of the Selons River all along the front and north of the camp is high and steep, and appeared to offer a formidable obstacle to an attack.

8. It would appear that the enemy had collected in large numbers in the bed of the river and in the broken and bushy ground, of which there was much to the north-west of the camp, across the river.

9. Meanwhile the alarm had been given, and by 4.45 a.m. all were a-foot, advancing out of camp and reinforcing the picquets, except a small party of the Derbyshire Regiment remaining to guard ammunition, &c.

10. The enemy had now pushed up the river, outflanking the Derbyshire picquet holding the main drift, and, after a very gallant resistance in which all but one man was killed or wounded, occupied their position.

11. The whole of the actual camp was now under a hail of bullets, principally from the west and north-west, to which it was impossible to reply with good effect owing to the tents and loose animals, and to the difficulty in the dim light of distinguishing friend from enemy. All ranks, however, seemed to realise that they must get out at once into the open towards the enemy, to obtain a field of fire; this they did under various officers, and meanwhile our guns, Maxim and pompom, and such outposts as were not surrounded, kept the enemy off.

12. A strong body of the Derbyshire Regiment under Major Watts moved out east, on a report being made by Captain Watson, Adjutant, Scottish Horse (since died of wounds), that a large body of the enemy were working round from the north to the east or rear of the camp. It was now growing light, and as this reported movement of the enemy was discovered to be not well founded, Major Watts, who had been joined by Major Browne of the Border Regiment, with a number of men he had collected, such as servants, cooks, orderlies, &c., being satisfied as to the safety of the east, swung his men round to the north and advanced with fixed bayonets against the enemy in the bushes. As he did this a large number of men of the Imperial Yeomanry