



The London Gazette.

Published by Authority.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 28, 1879.

India Office, January 25, 1879.

THE following Despatch has been received at the India Office:—

GENERAL ORDER by His Excellency the Governor-General of India.

Camp Lahore, dated the 18th December, 1878.

SPECIAL.

HIS Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General has much pleasure in directing the publication of the following despatch, received from Lieutenant-General Sir S. J. Browne, K.C.S.I., C.B., V.C., Commanding the 1st Division Peshawar Field Force, announcing the capture of Ali Masjid on the 22nd November, the first important success of the campaign.

The Right Honourable the Governor-General wishes to express to the troops of all ranks, British and Native, his high appreciation of the manner in which they performed their duty on this occasion.

From Lieutenant-General Sir S. J. Browne, K.C.S.I., Commanding 1st Division Peshawar Valley Field Force, to the Quartermaster-General in India, Army Head Quarters.—(No. 111, dated Dhaka, the 29th November, 1878).

MY message from Ali Masjid on the 22nd instant communicated, for the information of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief, the capture of that place. I now have the honour to submit a detailed account of the operations.

On the receipt at Jamrud of orders to advance the force under my command, it moved in the following order:—

The 2nd Brigade under Brigadier-General Tytler, C.B., V.C., consisting of Her Majesty's 17th Foot, the Guide Infantry and the 1st Sikhs, at 6 P.M. on the 20th instant; followed at 2.30 A.M. of the 21st by the 1st Brigade, under Brigadier-General MacPherson, C.B., V.C., consisting of the 4th Battalion Rifle Brigade, the 4th Goorkhas, the 20th Regiment Punjab Infantry, and No. 4 (Hazara) Mountain Battery. Both these brigades took the same route, via Gudur Lashora to Sapri, the 1st Brigade being ordered to detach a party of 400 men under Major Gordon from Torbai for the Rotas Ridge.

Brigadier-General Tytler was directed to diverge from Sapri to Kata Koosta, a spot two miles behind Ali Masjid, where the defile begins to open, and which is here about 100 yards wide.

The 1st Brigade was ordered from Sapri to make for the continuation of the Rotas Ridge and crown the heights above, and a little in rear of, Ali Masjid.

The route as far as Sapri, which lies through a glen separating the Rotas Mountain from the main Tatara Range, had been reconnoitred previously by the Corps of Guides; but beyond that I was altogether guided by native information. It was a trying and most fatiguing march to Sapri, and the ground beyond proved to be more difficult still.

In my direct attack on Ali Masjid by the ordinary pass road I relied on the co-operation of the 1st Brigade by about one P.M. of the 21st, but as it turned out it could not reach its destination by the appointed time, owing to the very difficult nature of the hill it had to traverse. The Guides and 1st Sikh Infantry, however, occupied Kata Koosta about four o'clock in the afternoon.

Counting on the co-operation above alluded to, I marched from Jamrud at seven A.M., on the 21st, with the remainder of the force in the following order:—

The advanced guard under Brigadier-General Appleyard, C.B.

| | | | |
|---|-----|-----|----------------------|
| 250 | ... | ... | 14th Sikhs. |
| 250 | ... | ... | 81st Foot. |
| 2nd and 3rd Companies | ... | ... | Sappers and Miners. |
| 40 Sabres | ... | ... | 11th Bengal Lancers. |
| I Battery C Brigade, Royal Horse Artillery. | | | |

No. 11 Battery 9th Brigade, Royal Artillery, and remainder of the 14th Sikhs, followed by the Engineer Park; and at half a mile distant the remainder of the 81st Foot, the 27th Regiment Punjab Infantry, E-3rd and 13-9th Royal Artillery. Lastly, the 4th Infantry Brigade, with the Cavalry Brigade bringing up the rear.

No baggage was to leave Jamrud until the following day.

Three days' rations were taken by the troops.

On arrival at the commencement of the road, which was made by us in the Afghan War of 1839-42, and which is known as the Makeson road, the Mountain Battery (11-9th Royal Artillery), with 200 Infantry, diverged to the right, taking a course parallel to the column between it and the high Rotas Range.

Some little delay was occasioned owing to the bad state of the road just beyond Makeson Bridge; and here a picket of the enemy's cavalry was seen on the low hills in front of us. This picket gradually retired as we advanced.