

to express his full concurrence in the Commander-in-Chief's opinion that the operations, and the manner in which they were carried out, reflect much credit on Major-General Ross and the officers and troops under his command.

KABUL.

No. 2158-A, dated Simla, 19th May, 1880.

From Major-General G. R. Greaves, C.B., Adjutant-General in India, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Military Department.

I HAVE the honour, by direction of the Commander-in-Chief, to forward for the information of the Government of India, the accompanying Despatch from Lieutenant-General Sir F. S. Roberts, K.C.B., V.C., C.I.E., transmitting reports from Major-General Ross, C.B., detailing the operations of the force under his command on the 25th, 25th, and 26th April, in the neighbourhood of Shekabad.

2. These reports describe, in Sir Frederick Haines' opinion, well organized and well and successfully carried out minor military operations, which reflect much credit on Major-General Ross and the officers under his command; while the behaviour of the troops engaged leaves nothing to be desired. His Excellency has, therefore, great pleasure in submitting them for the favourable consideration of Government.

3. The sketch referred to will be transmitted hereafter.

No. 1451, dated Kabul, 4th May, 1880.

From Lieutenant-General Sir F. S. Roberts, K.C.B., V.C., C.I.E., Commanding the Kabul Field Force, to the Adjutant-General in India.

I HAVE the honour to forward a report from Major-General Ross, C.B., commanding the 2nd Division, Kabul Field Force, detailing the operations of the force under his command on the 24th, 25th, and 26th instant.

I would call attention to the judicious manner in which Lieutenant-Colonel Rowcroft and Major Combe respectively, carried out the operations entrusted to them on the 25th instant.

My acknowledgments are also due to Major-General Ross, C.B.

No. 2 C, dated Camp, Saidabad, 26th April, 1880.

From Major-General J. Ross, C.B., Commanding the 2nd Division, Kabul Field Force, to the Deputy-Adjutant and Quartermaster-General, Kabul Field Force.

I HAVE the honour to report, for the information of the Lieutenant-General commanding, that on the afternoon of the 24th instant, some 260 or 300 horseman, said to be well armed and equipped, debouched from the spurs west of Shekabad, and threatened a working party of the Sappers and Miners which was employed near that village, under cover of two companies of the 4th Goorkhas, in improving the road and making it available for heavy guns.

2. It was reported to me that they were moving round with the apparent intention of cutting off the retreat of this party to camp; so I at once despatched a squadron of the 3rd Bengal Cavalry and a troop of the 9th Lancers, under Major B. Cracroft, 3rd Bengal Cavalry, towards Shekabad, followed by a wing of the 23rd Pioneers, under Lieutenant-Colonel H. Collett.

3. On the approach of our cavalry the enemy made off into the hills again; and as it was getting late and nothing more could then be done, the parties retired to camp.

4. During the night numerous camp and beacon fires were observed on the high ridges, distant some four or five miles north-west of camp.

5. Captain J. W. Ridgway, the Political Officer, sent out spies to gain information regarding the assemblage, and the following morning reported to me that Abdúl Gafúr, of Langar, and Aktái Biland, of Rústam Khel (he who recently fired on Captain the Honourable C. Dutton, Assistant Quartermaster-General, when out ree connoitring), were the chief instigators of the gathering.

6. Early in the morning on the 25th instant groups of men and several standards were visible on the spurs and ridges, and later on our picquets were fired upon. Captain Ridgway then got news that the enemy had burnt a Kúchí village the previous evening, because the men declined to join them. He also got information that several bodies had assembled on the spurs over Shekabad.

7. I determined to send out two parties,—one* to proceed direct against the enemy occupying the ridges north-west of camp, and the other† to go via the Shekabad road and attack the left of the enemy's position as soon as the direct attack had developed itself.

8. Both columns left camp at about 11 A.M., the former under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel F. F. Rowcroft, 4th Goorkhas, and the latter under Major B. A. Combe, Deputy-Assistant Quartermaster-General, who happened to be the senior officer with it.

9. Colonel Rowcroft's party got engaged with the enemy at about 11.45 A.M., and he soon succeeded in driving them from point to point, the advance of his skirmishers being covered by a well-directed fire from the two guns of the Hazara Mountain Battery.

10. The country was steep, rugged, and difficult, and the enemy held on tenaciously to several strong positions; but they were eventually turned out by Colonel Rowcroft's able dispositions. They then retired to the extreme high points of the ridge, and it seemed useless to continue the pursuit.

11. During Colonel Rowcroft's advance, tomtoming and beating of drums was heard, and bodies of the enemy were seen assembling on a kotal at the end of a valley leading up nearly due west from camp; and fearing that an attempt might be made to cut off or harass the retreat, I sent for a reinforcement of two guns of No. 6-8th Royal Artillery, and a wing of the 24th Punjab Native Infantry. On the arrival of this party, about 1 P.M., I detached two companies to Colonel Rowcroft's support, and disposed of the rest across the valley so as to watch the gorge.

12. In the meantime, the Shekabad party under Major Combe had turned into the hills and attacked the enemy's left, and succeeded in driving them back to the higher ridges.

13. Brigadier-General C. J. S. Gough, C.B., V.C., who had been watching the movements from camp, very judiciously sent two guns of No. 6-8th Royal Artillery, and the other wing of the 4th Goorkhas on to the high hill lying west of camp (marked "Signal Hill" in the sketch), in order to prevent any advance of the enemy along the ridge leading from the kotal towards camp, on which several parties had already collected; but they were soon dispersed by the fire of the guns from the valley below and from this hill.

* 2 Guns, Hazara Mountain Battery; 2 companies 2-9th Foot; wing 4th Goorkhas; 1 troop, 3rd Bengal Cavalry.

† 3 Companies 24th Punjab N.I.; 1 troop, 3rd Punjab Cavalry.