

manding the Punjab will kindly forward the report with such remarks as he may think fit.

From Colonel G. L. R. Richardson, C.I.E., 18th Bengal Lancers, and Commanding Flying Column, Kurram Valley, to the Deputy Adjutant-General, Punjab Command (dated Camp Shinawari, the 28th January, 1898).

FOR the information of the Lieutenant-General Commanding, Punjab, I have the honour to report that I assumed command at Kohat on the 20th August, 1897.

2. On the 20th August, owing to urgent telegraphic information from the officer on special duty in Kurram, I considered it necessary to form a flying column for prompt action in the Kurram Valley. The Deputy Commissioner, Kohat, agreeing with me, I submitted my plans and general dispositions for the approval of the Lieutenant-General Commanding.

3. Sanction being accorded on 21st August, I concentrated the column, marginally noted,* at Hangu, and assumed command of the Column, with Captain Kennedy, 3rd Punjab Cavalry, as my Staff Officer.

4. I continued to receive disquieting reports from Sadda and Para Chinar. My intention was to move the column higher up the valley, towards Doaba and Surzai, where possibly I could better support the Samana and Upper Kurram. Major-General Yeatman-Biggs, who had in the meanwhile assumed command at Kohat, preferred my remaining at Hangu and issued orders to that effect.

5. On the 25th August I proceeded with two guns of No. 2 Derajat Mountain Battery and the 5th Punjab Infantry to put a convoy of ammunition into Fort Leckhart. The route taken was by Pat Darband and Dhar. No opposition was offered, and there were no difficulties on the road.

6. On the 27th August I saw a large tribal gathering, reported to be Orakzais, with several standards, massed on the Samana Ridge, in the vicinity of the Laka Post, garrisoned by local levies, and whose position appeared to me to be one requiring immediate action on my part. I at once ordered the force marginally noted† under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott, 15th Sikhs, to move out to the relief of the Laka garrison. At mid-day the little force marched out, but at 1 P.M., as the number of standards on the ridge appeared to be increasing, I took a half-battalion, 5th Punjab Infantry, and moved to the support of Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott. About 3 P.M. I could see that Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott's force had crowned the ridge, and at 4 P.M. received the following helio from top: "Laka relieved; am taking garrison with me. Saifuldarra hard pressed; an enemy in force between. Will move to their relief directly." As Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott's force advanced along the ridge, I kept along the base, on his left flank, with the object of possibly assisting him. About 7 P.M. I heard heavy firing in the direction of the Saifuldarra gorge, and was fortunate enough to meet the head of Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott's force coming down the gorge. I was then excellently placed to cover the retire-

* 18th Bengal Lancers; 2 squadrons, 3rd Punjab Cavalry; 4 guns, No. 2 (Derajat) Mountain Battery; 5th Punjab Infantry; 15th Sikhs.

† Half squadron, 3rd Punjab Cavalry; two guns, (Derajat) Mountain Battery; 15th Sikhs; half Battalion, 5th Punjab Infantry.

ment with a half battalion of the 5th Punjab Infantry under Lieutenant-Colonel Jameson.

7. The enemy followed up the retirement for a considerable distance with great vigour, but were well held in check by the rear-guard,—5th Punjab Infantry. Concentrating the entire force on the Hangu-road I marched back to camp, reaching Hangu about 10 P.M., Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott reporting to me that he had successfully relieved the posts of Laka and Saifuldarra, and brought down the garrisons. That night both posts were dismantled and burnt by the Orakzais.

8. I cannot speak too highly of the able manner in which Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott handled his small force. The fact that this force, in the middle of an August day, captured the Samana Ridge, relieved Laka and Saifuldarra, and fought a rear-guard action home, with the loss of 1 sepoy killed, 1 wounded, 1 follower killed, 1 wounded, testifies to the skill with which the operation was conducted.

9. On the 29th August the Hangu Post was largely re-inforced, which permitted my despatching a force, strength vide margin*, under Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott, in the direction of Doaba, reported unsettled and mischievous.

10. Major-General Yeatman-Biggs arrived at Hangu on the 31st August and assumed command, dividing the troops into two brigades. I was allotted the 1st brigade, consisting of the troops marginally noted.†

11. On the 1st September Major-General Yeatman-Biggs detailed me to form my brigade into a flying column and push on with the greatest possible haste to the relief of Sadda and Para Chinar, 70 miles distant, and reported to be in peril and in danger of being attacked on the 3rd September. The disposition of my flying column on the 1st September stood as follows.

Under Lieutenant-Colonel H. A. Abbott (15th Sikhs), at Doaba ‡

Under Colonel G. L. R. Richardson at Hangu:§

12. At mid-day, on the 1st September, I marched out of Hangu for Doaba. The heat was intense, but the gallant officers and men under my command were not to be denied, and marched throughout a desperately hot day, on an open plain, with very little water and absolutely no shade, making Doaba, distant 22 miles, at 10.30 P.M. I had in the meanwhile sent on orders to Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott to push on towards Sadda. It appears that Lieutenant-Colonel Abbott on approaching Doaba the day previously had been opposed; the advanced squadron, 18th Bengal Lancers, under Captain Chesney, was engaged, and killed three of the enemy.

13. On the 2nd September finding the country round Doaba unsettled, I dropped the 1-3rd Gurkhas, under Lieutenant-Colonel Pulley, with orders to remain at Doaba and keep the road open. At 4 A.M. I moved forward with three squadrons, 18th Bengal Lancers, under Captain Eardley-Wilmot, towards Thal, distant 13 miles, leaving orders for Lieutenant-Colonel Jameson,

* 1 squadron, 18th Bengal Lancers; 2 guns, No. 2 (Derajat) Mountain Battery; 15th Sikhs; half Company, Bombay Sappers and Miners.

† 18th Bengal Lancers; 4 guns, No. 2 (Derajat) Mountain Battery; 15th Sikhs; 5th Punjab Infantry; 1-3rd Gurkhas; half Company, Bombay Sappers and Miners; No. 42 Native Field Hospital.

‡ 1 squadron, 18th Bengal Lancers; 2 guns, No. 2 (Derajat) Mountain Battery; 15th Sikhs; half Company, Bombay Sappers and Miners.

§ 3 squadrons, 18th Bengal Lancers; 2 guns, No. 2 (Derajat) Mountain Battery; 5th Punjab Infantry; 1-3rd Gurkhas; No. 42 Native Field Hospital.