

It is particularly requested that the names of the Gentlemen to be presented be *very distinctly written* on the Presentation Cards delivered to the Lord Chamberlain at the Levée, in order that there may be no difficulty in announcing them to His Royal Highness.

The State Apartments will be open for the reception of Company coming to Court at half-past one o'clock.

HOPETOUN,
Lord Chamberlain.

War Office, May 4, 1900.

THE following Despatch has been received from Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, V.C., G.C.B., &c., Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa:—

No. 26.

From the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa, to the Secretary of State for War.

*Army Head-Quarters, South Africa,
Camp Paardeburg,*

MY LORD,
February 23, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to submit for your Lordship's information a Despatch, dated Rensburg Camp, 2nd February, 1900, from Lieutenant-General J. D. P. French, Commanding Cavalry Division, describing the operations of the force under his orders in the vicinity of Colesberg from the 15th December, 1899, to the 25th January, 1900.

2. I consider that Lieutenant-General French showed marked ability and judgment in constantly harassing the enemy and driving them from one strong position after another, without exposing his men to heavy loss.

I concur with the General Officer Commanding in thinking that the discipline, courage, and endurance of the Officers, non-commissioned officers and men employed in these operations are deserving of high commendation, and I am glad to observe that the Royal Horse Artillery and New Zealand Mounted Rifles appear to have specially distinguished themselves.

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

Enclosure 1.

From Lieutenant-General French to the Chief of the Staff, South Africa Field Force, Cape Town.

SIR,
February 2, 1900.

IN continuation of the despatch forwarded to you on the 14th ultimo, describing the operations of the force under my command up to that date, I have the honour to forward a further report of such operations since that time, for the information of the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, South Africa.

I have throughout kept in view as my objective the instructions given to me by General the Right Honourable Sir Redvers Buller on leaving Cape Town, which were to seize and hold Naauwpoort and whenever possible to push on and gain possession of Colesberg.

After the various minor engagements which I repeated before, I obtained complete possession of the Arundel position and established my head-quarters there on Saturday, 16th December.

From this date till 29th December, when the enemy finally evacuated his position in my front and retired on Colesberg, every opportunity was taken to worry him and harass his flanks and rear. These operations were fully reported each night

by telegraph. I was often able to bring Artillery fire to bear on convoys moving backwards and forwards along the enemy's communications with Colesberg, and repeatedly drew him out under the fire of our guns, fearing threats against his line of retreat.

I wish particularly to bring to notice the excellent conduct and bearing of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, commanded by Major A. W. Robin, on one of these occasions.

On 18th December I took them out with a battery of Horse Artillery to reconnoitre round the enemy's left flank, and determined to dislodge him from a farm called Jasfontein lying on his left rear. The guns shelled the farm, and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles then gained possession of it. But the enemy very suddenly brought up strong reinforcements and pressed on us with his Artillery. Our Artillery had been left some way behind to avoid this latter fire, and I had to send back some distance for its support, during which time we were exposed to a heavy musketry fire from the surrounding hills. The conduct of the New Zealanders was admirable in thus maintaining a difficult position till the Artillery caused the enemy to retire.

About the 27th December the enemy began to show signs of yielding to this continual pressure on his flanks and rear, and on the 29th finally evacuated his position and fell back on Colesberg. As these movements were chiefly carried out in the night, and the enemy has great mobility, it was impossible to harass or intercept his retreat.

At daybreak on the morning of the 30th December, I left Arundel with a small force of Cavalry and Artillery to reconnoitre towards Colesberg. We found the enemy in possession of that place.

The town is situated on very low ground, it is surrounded completely by a mass of high, steep kopjes, which are so placed as to flank one another. The place is, therefore, a natural fortress of great strength.

These hills form a kind of "square," and at each corner there are outlying kopjes within rifle range of the main position. About 2,000 yards west of the centre of the western face is a hill called "Kols Kop," of great height, commanding the whole country for many miles round. It stands quite isolated in the centre of a large plain.

In order to make the enemy show his hand, I brought the guns into action opposite the southern face of the position. This drew the fire of the Boer Artillery, and showed them to be holding the south-western corner. I therefore occupied a group of hills about 2,000 yards south-west of this corner, and there established an Artillery position, supported by some Cavalry and Mounted Infantry. This is one of the positions we still hold and is known as "Porter's Hill."

I then returned to Rensburg Siding and chose a position, with that point as a centre. This position I occupied and partly entrenched during the day, and then I moved my head-quarters, leaving a detachment to hold Arundel. At dawn on Sunday, 30th December, I made a close personal reconnaissance of the western face of the Colesberg position. From what I observed and reports I received, it appeared to me that a night attack based on Maiders Farm (about 5 miles W.S.W. of Colesberg) would probably give us possession of two of the outlying hills on this western face, and pivoting on these would enable us to push mounted troops along the flanks of the position, and perhaps seize points which would compel the enemy to evacuate the town