

were to converge towards Petrusburg. General Bruce Hamilton's own forces were divided into seven small columns. Colonel Henry's force, recently organised at Orange River Bridge, and the Kimberley column were instructed to co-operate through Wolvekop (near Luckhoff) and Koffyfontein respectively, and a force was detached from Bloemfontein to operate westward from Kaffir River Station.

To block retreat to the north, the country between Bloemfontein and Petrusburg was watched by posts recently established by the South African Constabulary, and the drifts on the Modder River from Abraham's Kraal to Paardeberg were secured by Major-General Knox's troops.

These operations, which were carried out between the 5th and 8th of June, resulted in the capture of 268 prisoners, many wagons and teams were also collected.

Since the middle of June, columns under Colonel Rochfort, Lieut.-Colonels White and du Moulin have scoured the country east of the railway between the Caledon River on the south, and the line Edenburg, Reddersburg, Dewetsdorp on the north. Here they have had numerous minor engagements with the wandering bands under Commandants Brand, Kolbe, and Joubert. West of the railway, Lieut.-Colonels Williams and Byng have continued their clearing operations in the districts of Fauresmith, Jacobsdal and Philippolis.

*Major-General Charles Knox's operations in Central Orange River Colony.*

3. Major-General Charles Knox, returning from the Senekal District, arrived on the railway on the 10th of May, and was ordered to march at once in the direction of Bothaville. This movement was designed to deal with a commando known to be laagered on the Valsch River, as well as to check any parties of the enemy who might seek to enter Orange River Colony, in order to evade our troops then operating in the neighbourhood of Klerksdorp. General Knox's columns left the line Virginia Siding, Holfontein, on the 13th May; a force under Major Pine-Coffin, detached from Kroonstad, moved westward at the same time, along the left bank of the Valsch River. Colonel Pilcher's column led the advance on Bothaville, and found the Boers in position at Alletasdraai, on the Valsch River. After a successful engagement the enemy were driven south-west towards Zandspruit, in which direction they were followed by Colonel Thorneycroft. By General Knox's direction, Colonel Pilcher then pushed on through Bothaville to the line of the Vaal about Commando Drift. A few days later General Knox concentrated his entire force near Bothaville, and thence marched back to the railway.

During the early part of June, General Knox's columns were employed, as already mentioned, in the country west of the railway and north of the Modder River, acting in connection with General Bruce Hamilton's enveloping movement from the south. While operating to the south of Boshof, Colonel Pilcher had several successful encounters with a commando under Jacobs and Erasmus, from whom he took 11 prisoners, 53 wagons and carts and 600 horses.

At the conclusion of General Bruce Hamilton's combined movement, Colonel Henry's column was brought up from Jacobsdal to Christiana, and placed under General Knox's orders for employment in that neighbourhood.

On the 2nd of July he arrived at Bloemhof accompanied by the Kimberley column which had

been sent to co-operate with him, and on the 4th moved to Hoopstad, returning to Bloemhof on the 7th. These operations resulted in the capture of 52 prisoners, 50 horses, 64 vehicles, and some 7,000 cattle. 2 Boers were killed and 15 surrendered to the column.

Colonel Pilcher's column moved at first towards Boshof, and later on Bultfontein, which latter place he occupied at dawn on the 18th of June. From this point Colonel Pilcher advanced in the direction of Hoopstad, while Colonel Thorneycroft, who had moved simultaneously on Bultfontein from the south, escorted the prisoners and captured stock into Brandfort. General Knox next employed Colonel Thorneycroft's troops in searching the bed of the Vet River, west of Smaldeel, where a good number of cattle and wagons were found hidden away. By the 26th of June the columns of Colonels Pilcher and Thorneycroft were concentrated at Brandfort for a short rest preparatory to undertaking further operations to the east of the railway.

On the 1st of July these columns again left the railway in an easterly direction, to take part in a combined operation which is still in progress.

*Major-General Elliot's operations in Northern Orange River Colony.*

4. Major-General Elliot's troops moving east were, on the 7th of May, disposed on the line Villiersdorp-Frankfort-Tafel Kop. From Cornelia, where he arrived on the 9th, General Elliot despatched a force to Vrede; the columns then converged on De Lange's Drift for supplies. 40 prisoners, 5,000 horses and a very large number of wagons and cattle were sent to Standerton.

As the lower drifts of the Wilge River had been secured by Lieut.-Colonel Western's troops, the presence of General Elliot's force about Frankfort and Cornelia had the effect of driving many of the Boers across the Vaal with their wagons and stock, to seek refuge in the hilly country south of Greylingstad. There they were met by the columns under Colonels E. Knox and Rimington, which in anticipation of such a movement had been suitably disposed to deal with it. Acting promptly, these officers attacked and dispersed most of the enemy who crossed the river, and effected the capture of 34 prisoners, 4,000 cattle, including 1,000 trek oxen, 284 wagons and carts, and 5,400 rounds of ammunition.

Having replenished his supplies from Standerton, General Elliot commenced the second phase of his operations. With his left column following the course of the Klip River, and his right extended to the south beyond Vrede, the eastward march towards the Natal border was continued.

In connection with this fresh advance, a strong column from Standerton, commanded by Colonel Colville, marched up the right bank of the Klip River, and keeping abreast of General Elliot's left, thoroughly searched Verzammelberg.

General Hildyard also detached troops from Volksrust and Newcastle to close Alleman's Nek, and watch Botha's and Muller's Passes. On the 19th of May, General Elliot arrived at Botha's Pass, having met with very slight opposition, except on his right flank which was engaged by some 300 Boers near Strydplaats, 20 miles south-east of Vrede. Over 2,000 captured horses and other stock taken since leaving the Vaal, were sent down to Natal.

Learning that several hundred Boers were holding the Witkoppies, a position of great natural strength, and difficult of access, 25 miles