

On the night of the 18th, General Spens had detached the 14th Mounted Infantry, under Major Bridgford, to search a number of farms which lie near the junction of the Vaal River with the Kaffir Spruit. Major Bridgford marched all night, and at daybreak encountered a party of Boers whom he chased ineffectively for a long distance. Then, whilst his men were scattered on a wide front, as a result of the pursuit, he was suddenly attacked by the enemy in very superior force. The casualties were heavy, and some of our men were taken prisoners. The remainder of the party, under Lieutenant Stirling, Dublin Fusiliers, whose behaviour appears to have been most creditable, fought their way back to the nearest point on the Standerton-Ermelo blockhouse line. On the arrival of General Spens with reinforcements the prisoners were recovered, and the enemy, who were under Commandant Britz, were found to have retired out of reach.

No time was lost, however, in organizing a pursuit of the commando, and by the 28th of December the columns under Generals Plumer and Spens and Colonel Pulteney were assembled in the neighbourhood of Amersfoort with a view to combined action. Touch with the enemy was soon gained to the west of Amersfoort, and on the 28th General Spens captured 7 prisoners near Schuilplaats (185). Commandant Britz was then chased to the south towards Platrand Station, where 24 more of his men fell into General Spens' hands; 100 of them escaped, with several casualties from the fire of our blockhouses, to the south of the railway line, and the remainder, broken up into small parties, turned north along the Vaal River. Our pursuing columns then marched back in a north-easterly direction to co-operate with General B. Hamilton towards Beginderlyn and Rotterdam.

Whilst these operations were in progress in the extreme east, an isolated party of the enemy, some 200 strong, succeeded at the beginning of December in penetrating through the line of South African Constabulary posts, into the protected area to the east of Springs. Since then they have been constantly pursued by the mounted troops of Colonel Allenby's column and Brigadier-General G. Hamilton's Cavalry Brigade. Over 60 of the enemy are now in our hands, and others have surrendered to the Constabulary. Of the prisoners taken, 34 were captured by the Carabiniers under Major Butler on the 18th of December, near Schoongezicht, to the south-west of Brugspruit. A further success was achieved by Colonel Allenby's troops on the 5th of January near Bultfontein (217), to the north of Beihal. Upon this occasion, the 13th Hussars under Major Williams, who had returned to the east of the Constabulary posts, effected the surprise at daybreak of Commandant Breytenbach's laager, and took 11 prisoners (including the Commandant), 200 horses, 600 cattle, 50 mules, and 6 carts. The capture of Commandant Breytenbach was entirely due to Captain Tremayne, 13th Hussars, who, better mounted than his men, pressed on alone after the Boer commander, and obliged him to surrender.

To the north of the Delagoa Railway line, operations against the enemy have been conducted by columns under Colonel Park and Lieutenant-Colonel Urmston, who, during the latter part of the month co-operated in the vicinity of Dullstroom in a search for the members of the so-called Boer Government, who were reported to be in hiding in that neighbourhood. The two columns converged upon Dullstroom from Lydenburg and Belfast respectively, Colonel Park being attacked on the night of the

19th of December when encamped at Elandspruit on his way to effect a junction with Colonel Urmston. This attack, which was delivered by a strong force under Commandants Muller, Trichardt and Krieger, was repulsed after several hours' fighting, in which 1 officer and 7 men were killed, and 5 officers and 24 non-commissioned officers and men were wounded. Eight of the enemy dead and 3 dangerously wounded were left upon the ground, amongst the former being Commandant Krieger and Field Cornet Malan. Colonel Park then continued his march, arriving on the 21st of December at Dullstroom, where he established communication with Colonel Urmston's troops, who were halted at Zwartkoppies (190).

From the 21st to the 25th of December, the two columns continued to work from Dullstroom, being engaged daily in their quest, which involved them in continual desultory skirmishes with small bodies of the enemy.

On the 22nd of December, Lieutenant-Colonel Urmston almost succeeded in his object, as he occupied a Boer laager some miles to the north of Dullstroom, from which the Boer Government had fled in a Cape cart only a few hours previously.

The persistent prevalence of dense mists seriously impeded the work and finally caused the abandonment of further operations, and on the 26th of December the two columns returned to the railway line at Belfast.

3. In the Northern Transvaal, to the west of the Pietersburg Railway, the columns under Lieutenant-Colonels Colenbrander and Dawkins continued to act together until December 21st.

On the 11th of December they were at Zandriverspoort (315), and on the 13th effected, in that neighbourhood, a joint capture of Commandant Badenhorst and 22 of his burghers, who, in trying to avoid Colonel Colenbrander's troops, fell into the hands of Colonel Dawkins' Mounted Infantry.

On the 21st, Colonel Dawkins' column returned to the railway at Nylstroom, where it was entrained on the 26th for Harrismith to reinforce General Rundle's command.

Colonel Colenbrander marched south after parting with Colonel Dawkins. He moved in the first instance to the Rooiberg, and thence to the neighbourhood of Jericho (190), near the Crocodile River, where 60 prisoners, with a quantity of stock, were secured. On the 22nd, he reached Haman's Kraal Station, and four days later again left the railway to operate in the vicinity of Rustenburg, where he arrived on the 1st of January. Since that date he surprised a Boer laager, located at Waterval (319), to the west of the Magaliesberg, a skilful march through Magato's Nek on the night of January 4th having enabled him to capture 29 prisoners, after an engagement at dawn in which 5 of the enemy were killed. This Officer also put in a timely appearance in the neighbourhood of Waterval on the 9th of January, where he encountered a party of Natives, under Chief Linchwe, about 2,000 strong. This party was moving down to endeavour to re-capture stock stolen from him the previous month by General Kemp. As, however, any further advance of Linchwe's would have brought him into the neighbourhood of a number of Boer women and children, with possibly deplorable results, Colonel Colenbrander directed the chief to return to the Pilaudsberg, which order he obeyed forthwith, much to the relief of the families of the enemy scattered throughout the district.

4. Between the 10th and 21st of December, the columns under Lord Methuen and Colonel Keke-