

Elliot returned with his Division to Lindley to replenish his supplies. He arrived there on the 7th January, and on the following day Lieutenant-Colonel De Lisle and Major Fanshawe were again sent out with the fittest men and horses in consequence of a report that De Wet's forces had moved west, and were reassembling about Winterhoek to the south of Heilbron.

Colonel De Lisle and Major Fanshawe remained absent from Lindley for two days, during which time they gained touch with De Wet's rearguard near Slangfontein on the Rhenoster River. After pursuing him by Vecht Kop and Boschkoppe for some distance in an easterly direction, our troops rejoined General Elliot at Lindley on the 10th.

De Wet, who, it is reported, had intended to cross the main line of railway to the west, now fell back once more in the direction of Reitz.

On the 11th January, Colonel De Lisle, with a strong mounted force and a detachment of the 1st Battalion Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, moved south from Lindley to seize the commanding position at Kaffir Kop, to the west of the Lindley—Bethlehem road, in anticipation of the extension of the Kroonstad—Lindley blockhouse line to that point. He remained here until the 28th January, making raids when suitable opportunity offered, and watching to prevent any attempts on the part of Prinsloo's men to hinder the construction of the blockhouses.

On the 15th January, Lieutenant-Colonel the Honourable J. Byng, who had been employed for some time in covering General Elliot's advanced depôt at Quaggafontein (close to Lindley), marched out of the latter place towards Reitz, in which direction, as has already been stated, De Wet was reported to have gone. Colonel Byng moved in the first instance to Fanny's Home on the left bank of Liebenberg's Vlei, where he arrived on the 19th, expecting to be there joined from Frankfort by the columns under Lieutenant-Colonels Duulop and Garratt, which had been placed at his disposal. These troops, however, were unavoidably delayed, and the actual junction, which was effected at Verkyker's Kop, did not take place till the 20th January.

On the following day, Colonel Byng's combined force left Verkyker's Kop for the vicinity of Reitz, and for the next four days were constantly engaged upon all sides with small parties of the enemy.

On the 28th January, General Elliot, with Major Fanshawe's column, also left Lindley for the east, moving to the south of Reitz towards the Harrismith—Bethlehem blockhouse line, while Colonel De Lisle marched simultaneously from Kaffir Kop by Hout Kop in the same general direction.

Colonel Rimington, who had in the meantime been operating in the country to the south of Frankfort and Heilbron, also joined in the general movement to the south-east. He crossed Liebenberg's Vlei from the west at Conventia (398) on the 24th January, and on the night of the 31st marched upon Groothoop (282), where a Boer convoy with 22 prisoners, 16 ox wagons, eight cape carts, and a large number of cattle and horses were overtaken and captured. Colonel Rimington thence moved upon Eland's River Bridge to complete his supplies.

While these movements were in progress, Lieutenant-Colonel Dawkins, with his own column and the two regiments of Imperial Light Horse, had left Tygerkloof, on the Harrismith—Bethlehem blockhouse line on the 25th January, and moving north to Prankop (183), on the south bank of the Holspruit, had there on the

28th joined Sir Henry Rawlinson, who, with his own column, had moved from Standerton, by Roberts' Drift and Tafel Kop, to take part in the operations against De Wet. Thus reinforced, Colonel Sir H. Rawlinson marched south through the country lying to the east of the Wilge River, on the left of Colonel Rimington's line of advance.

On the night of the 29th, Colonel Rawlinson, with a portion of his force, doubled back from near Kaffirstad (163) to Achalia (437) near the junction of the Cornelis and Wilge Rivers, and at dawn on the 30th came upon one of Manie Botha's laagers, when three Boers were killed, and 11 prisoners, 120 horses, 2,900 cattle, 20 wagons, and 25 carts were captured. Our casualties were one officer killed and two men wounded. The fighting force actually engaged in this operation had, in the previous 34 hours, marched 67 miles, and the 2nd Battalion Mounted Infantry no less than 82 miles in the same interval of time.

Colonel Sir H. Rawlinson, after resting one day at Kaffirstad (163), continued his southward movement to the immediate vicinity of Harrismith.

By the 1st February, General Elliot's columns had reached Eland's River Bridge and Tweefontein on the Harrismith—Bethlehem road, and Colonel Barker's troops which had been operating in the country to the north-east of Senekal had arrived at Bethlehem to replenish their supplies.

The object of these movements was, in the first instance, a twofold one. They were designed, should De Wet continue his march to the south or east, with a primary idea of following him up and pressing him on to our posts on the Drakensberg or the blockhouse line between Harrismith and Bethlehem, and with a secondary and carefully pre-arranged plan, in the more probable event of his breaking back westwards as our columns approached, for quietly passing troops to east and south-east of him preparatory to a systematic sweep back to the westward. This sweep, by the maintenance of close contact, with patrols and outposts by day and night along the whole front of our line, would, it was hoped, have the effect of driving the enemy into the strongly-held angle formed by the Wolvehoeek—Kroonstad railway and the Wolvehoeek—Heilbron—Frankfort blockhouse line. It was impossible at first to say which of the two eventualities would arise, and as our columns worked down to the Harrismith—Bethlehem line, where supplies awaited them, Colonel Byng's troops fell into a second position in rear of the general advance to watch for De Wet's anticipated break back to the west.

This probability soon became a certainty, not only did De Wet pass through our columns, but he also came into opportune contact with Colonel Byng who was in readiness for him upon his line of retreat.

On the night of 2nd February, Colonel Byng, who had remained on Liebenberg's Vlei, to the west of Reitz, learnt that a Boer force was rapidly marching north and at no great distance from him. He promptly started in pursuit, and 15 miles to the east came upon a convoy which was guarded, but not strongly, by a portion of De Wet's commando. The New Zealanders and Queensland Imperial Bushmen at once charged the enemy's rearguard with the greatest dash and gallantry, whilst the South African Light Horse, rushing the centre with equal bravery, got well home and completed a very gratifying success. The enemy fled in a westerly direction, leaving in our hands one 15-pr. gun, two pompoms, three wagon-loads of ammunition, 26 prisoners,