

with credit to all concerned, resulting in a practical expansion of Empire, and such rewards as are deserved will no doubt be granted in due course.

I have, &c.,
R. MOOR,
High Commissioner.

Enclosure.

From Lieutenant-Colonel A. F. Montanaro, Commanding Aro Field Force, to the High Commissioner, Southern Nigeria.

Final Despatch Aro Expedition.

SIR, Old Calabar, April 5, 1902.

The Aro Field Force was composed of:—

Artillery.—

1 Four-gun 75 M/m battery.

1 Four-gun 7-pr. battery.

Infantry.—

A Special Corps of Scouts.

11 Companies.

The detail of the above being:—

Northern Nigeria Regiment, West African Frontier Force, 317 of all ranks.

Lagos Battalion, West African Frontier Force, 262 of all ranks.

Southern Nigeria Regiment, West African Frontier Force, 1,150 of all ranks.

Special Service Officers, 14.

Special Service Non-Commissioned Officers, 2.

Civil Officers attached, 28.

Carriers, 2,334 (of whom 235 were specially enlisted gun carriers).

The above includes the personnel of the two Batteries of Artillery.

2. The active operations were divided into several phases.

3. My first objective was to subjugate all the 14 Aro families composing the Aro tribe.

4. Aro-Chuku, the capital of this tribe, and the chief centre of the Long Ju-Ju fetish worship, was supposed to be about 12 miles W. of the Cross River and 15 miles N. of Itu. I therefore brought four converging columns to bear upon the capital so as to drive the enemy before me into a corner.

5. My dispositions were as follows:—

No. 1 Column, consisting of 16 Europeans, 300 Native rank and file, 1 M/m gun, 1 Maxim gun, 35 gun-carriers, and 548 general carriers, under the command of Captain A. T. Jackson, Worcester Regiment, concentrated at Oguta on December 1st, with orders to march to Oweri.

No. 2 Column, consisting of 19 Europeans, 451 Native rank and file, 2 M/m guns, 2 Maxim guns, 126 gun-carriers, and 350 general carriers, under the command of Captain (local Major) A. M. N. Mackenzie, Royal Artillery, concentrated at Ungwana, on November 18th, with orders to advance into the Afofia country, and cut off the Abams, Eddas, and Ahofias from co-operating with the Aros.

No. 3 Column, consisting of 20 Europeans, 375 Native rank and file, 1 M/m gun, 2 Maxim guns, 62 gun-carriers, and 500 general carriers, under the command of Brevet Major (local Lieutenant-Colonel) A. Festing, D.S.O., Royal Irish Rifles, concentrated at Akwete with orders to march to Oweri, join issue there with No. 1 Column, and then proceed as a combined force under Lieutenant-Colonel Festing to Bende, there joining hands with No. 2 Column.

No. 4 Column, consisting of 19 Europeans, 1 Native Officer, 479 Native rank and file, 1 M/m gun, 1 7-pr. gun, 1 rocket tube, 2 Maxim guns, 13 gun-carriers and 225 general carriers, under the command of Captain (local Major) W. C. G. Heneker, Connaught Rangers, concentrated at Itu, with orders to make feint advances towards

Aro-Chuku, and so cause the enemy to keep the bulk of his forces in the corner of the country where the capital lay.

6. No. 1 Column left Oguta on December 2nd and marched to Oweri, arriving on December 5th, and meeting with no opposition.

7. No. 3 Column left Akwete on December 1st and met with much opposition two days out in the Ehebia-Ogwe district. The enemy had prepared elaborate entrenchments parallel to the road and stockades across it. These trenches were from three to four feet deep, with head-cover provided by logs. Dense bush grew on either side of the path, but good scouting to the front and flanks discovered the trenches, and the enemy were invariably outflanked. The millimetre gun played on the stockades rendering them untenable. As the column advanced the enemy retired into walled compounds lying off the road, and these had to be assaulted in turn and taken at the point of the bayonet. This desultory fighting continued for three days, during which time the troops suffered much from want of water, the sole supply being from water holes, which were tenaciously defended by the enemy.

On reaching the town of Ono-Ekechi, on December 4th, the column was met by armed friendlies, who informed Lieutenant-Colonel Festing that the enemy had fled eastward.

On December 9th, No. 3 Column joined issue with No. 1 Column at Oweri.

Our casualties during the three days' fighting were as follows:—

Captain Iles, 3rd Battalion Yorks Regiment, severely, and Captain H. F. Fraser, 21st Lancers, slightly wounded; 12 natives severely and 18 natives slightly wounded.

On December 11th, Nos. 1 and 3 Columns, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Festing, marched from Oweri and reached Bende without further opposition, on December 16th.

8. No. 2 Column marched out of Ungwana on December 3rd and occupied Ekoli without opposition.

On December 5th the Edda tribe made an attack on the camp at Ekoli. The enemy was repulsed with considerable loss, our casualties being slight. During the next fortnight the column marched through the Afofia and Abam country. Little or no opposition was met with; fortified camps were made at Esiugu and 'Nde-Okori, where a junction was effected with Nos. 1 and 3 Columns on December 18th. Strong garrisons were established at Bende and Esiugu. No. 2 Column then returned to Ungwana, and on the 20th December embarked in canoes and proceeded to join No. 4 Column up the Enyong River, becoming incorporated with that column.

9. The result of a reconnaissance up the Enyong River on November 28th decided me to make this my main line of advance, and a camp was formed at Esu-Itu on the 29th of that month. This advanced post was attacked by the enemy in force on November 30th. He was repulsed, and in his retreat was enfiladed by the guns of the gunboat "Jackdaw." On December 7th and 8th several reconnaissances in force were made in the direction of Aro-Chuku, determined opposition being met with, but the enemy was badly beaten on every occasion, notably on the 8th December, when Okorogi's Farm was captured and burnt. The following is a description of this action.

The Scouts, 4 sections of Infantry, 1 M/m gun, 1 7-pr. gun, and a Maxim, under the command of Major Heneker, marched out of Esu-Itu on the morning of December 8th. At a distance of 1½ miles from camp the enemy was discovered by