

Demonstrate the principle of war that most influenced the battle of Paardeberg

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The battle of Paardeberg was fought between the British and the Boers during the South African Second Boer War of 1900 (Rickard). The British went to war with approximately 15,000 troops while the Boers only had 4,200 men. However, the Boer defenses were quite formidable and the British had a difficult time against them. The Boers were better armed and this gave them an advantage that saw them repulse many British assaults. However, at the end, it was the British who claimed victory (Miller and Vandome 5).

There are many things that could have turned the tide in British's favor, and one of these things was utilizing the right military strategies. For instance, the British used the military principle of concentration of effort. Objective of effort is a military principle that requires that all military operations should be directed towards a clearly defined goal or attainable objective. In this case, the sole objective of the British army was to defeat the Boers and destroy their will or ability to continue fighting.

To achieve their objective, the British were well equipped in terms of manpower and weaponry (Gilman 20). They had more than 3 times the size of opponents' troops. Having a large army that far outnumbered the opponents was a good tactic to achieve the objective of completely wiping out Boer aggression. To reach the objective, the British army also had to secure some important points for safety and logistical reasons. The relief of Kimberly prior to the Paardeberg victory proved worthwhile to the British efforts in defeating the Boers (Miller and Vandome 41). Lord Roberts was the British commander who oversaw the relief of Kimberly and the capture of Bloemfontein, which was a Boer stronghold.

Another plan that was in line with Britain's objective to destroy the enemy was the plan to abandon the railway link to the coast (Gilman 34). Cronje, the Boer military leader had not thought that the British could actually leave the railway line that served as a link to the coast and out of South Africa if they were defeated. However, the British did abandon the railway link and this enabled them to attack the Boers with very little resistance. Another factor that played to British's advantage was the fact that the Boer army was greatly slowed down by the presence of children and women (Miller and Vandome 59). The British army under Roberts had a clear goal in mind and nothing, not even the civilians inside Boer camps could make them slow down on their advances.

The British never wavered even once on their sole objective of defeating Cronje's army. Their commander, Roberts was a good military strategist and he was able to lead his men to resounding victory after laying siege on Boer camp for eight days (Rickard). In fact, due to precise planning by the British army and their Canadian allies, Cronje and his men were taken completely by surprise on the night of their defeat. They had not anticipated that the British would attack them so soon. With a clear objective, the British army was able to win an important battle and this would later help build morale within the other British forces fighting elsewhere during the Boer war.

Works Cited

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