

In addition, there were large numbers in rear and on our right flank, but what number I am unable to state, nor have I been able since to obtain any accurate information; but from the report of the officer commanding the rear-guard, and from the statements of the Boers themselves after the action, I do not think that from 1,200 to 1,500 would be overstating their numbers. The Boers sent forward a flag of truce half-way between the lines, and I walked to meet it.

The bearer handed me an English letter, signed by Piet Joubert, and countersigned by other Boers, requesting me to wait at the spot where I then was until a reply had been received to an ultimatum that had been sent to Sir Owen Lanyon. I told the interpreter I could not do so, as I had orders to proceed with all possible dispatch to Pretoria, and that I had no wish to meet him hostilely.

He said that he would take my message to the Commandant-General, and I asked him to let me know the result, to which he nodded assent.

Almost immediately, however, the enemy's line advanced. I ran back as fast as I could, ordering the leading company to skirmish, but before they could open out to more than loose files a murderous fire was poured upon them, which was as hotly returned. The fire lasted for less than a quarter of an hour, when observing that all the officers and about two out of three of the non-commissioned officers and men were either dead or wounded, I ordered the cease fire to be sounded, and hoisted a flag of truce to save the lives of the remainder.

In the meantime, fighting was going on all along the line of wagons up to the rear-guard, about 200 Boers firing a volley within 430 yards, then dashing up to the wagons, shooting the oxen, particularly the leading ones, and killing or wounding a great many of the men in charge.

Immediately after the flag of truce was hoisted, Commandant Joubert came forward and shook hands with me, saying he was sorry to see me wounded. He then ordered the remainder of the men to surrender their arms, accoutrements, &c., together with all the wagons, to proceed to their camp, some distance off, promising, however, that all the private baggage should be returned; he also allowed 18 men to be left to attend to the wounded, and the remainder, about 40 non-commissioned officers and men, and Captain and Paymaster Elliott, A.P.D. (not wounded), to proceed to their camp *en route* to Heidelberg, where he was proceeding the same afternoon with his army.

Our casualties are as follows:—

Killed.

94th Foot.—Captain Nairne, Lieutenant MacSweeney, mortally wounded, died in a few hours; Lieutenant and Adjutant Harrison; 59 non-commissioned officers and men (including 6 died since action).

Army Service Corps.—2 non-commissioned officers; Conductor Bancroft.

Wounded.

94th Foot.—Lieutenant-Colonel Anstruther, dangerously; Lieutenant Hume, severely; 82 non-commissioned officers and men (the greater part of whom severely); the wife of Serjeant-Major Fox, severely.

Army Service Corps.—Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Carter, dangerously; Conductor Egerton, slightly; 2 non-commissioned officers.

Army Medical Department.—Surgeon Ward, slightly.

Army Hospital Corps.—2 privates.

All horses were killed or taken.

With regard to the losses of the enemy, it is difficult to give an accurate estimate. The Provost-Serjeant tells me he counted 27 bodies in one farm and 17 in another waiting for interment. But the Boers are very reticent on the subject, and I fancy a great many more were killed.

I regret exceedingly the disastrous termination of the engagement, but I trust that it will be considered I did right in surrendering when I did; outnumbered as we were, we could have no chance of success in continuing it.

I also regret that the whole of the Orderly-Room, Paymaster, and Quartermasters' books, &c., have been taken, but I am informed by Commandant Prinsloo, in command here, that they, together with the private property, will be returned.

All the officers present at the engagement behaved well, particularly Lieutenant and Adjutant Harrison, who encouraged the men to the utmost of his power until shot through the head alongside me; also Lieutenant Hume, who commanded his company very efficiently. Orderly-Room Clerk Maistre and Serjeant Master-Tailor Pears, in the absence of officers, carried the colours, and showed good service in hiding them in a wagon.

Serjeant-Major Fox and Quartermaster-Serjeant Earle (both wounded), rendered, in the absence of officers, able assistance, and Serjeants Newton and Hook indefatigably exerted themselves in bringing in the wounded and burying the dead all through the night and the following day.

Deputy-Assistant Commissary-General Carter, Conductor Egerton and Transport-Serjeant Bennett, Army Service Corps, were simply indefatigable. They were all wounded, Mr. Carter very severely, three places, and Serjeant Bennett dangerously, and I am very much afraid that his wounds may entail loss of his thigh.

Conductor Egerton, though wounded, volunteered to walk into Pretoria to obtain medical assistance, and also to carry in the colours, which he had judiciously torn from the poles and wrapped round him under his coat.

Mess-Serjeant Bradley volunteered to accompany him, and having obtained a safe conduct, they started, and I believe delivered the news about 4 a.m. next morning, having run the distance of 42 miles within 11 hours.

It was exceeding fortunate that Providence spared our only Medical Officer and his Assistant Surgeon. Ward's work can hardly be described. It was endless for 48 hours; until assistance arrived, he had not one moment to himself.

In conclusion, I have only to bring to notice the conduct of the men, which was admirable.

They were as steady as rocks, and consoled themselves for the surrender with the thought that the tables would be turned before long.

The Boers are very sorry at having wounded a woman, and the minute after the arms were laid down, they became most obliging and civil. They offered to get us everything they could for our comfort, and it was not a hollow promise.

Every day they come in numbers, bringing milk, butter, eggs, bread, apricots, &c., and if a man goes to any of their farms they at once, without payment, give him anything he wants.

I have, &c.

(Signed) PHILIP R. ANSTRUTHER,
Lieut.-Colonel,
Commanding 94th Regiment.