

Admiralty, May 3, 1881.

THE following Despatch and enclosures have been received by the Secretary of the Admiralty from Commodore Richards, C.B., commanding on the Cape of Good Hope Station:—

Letter from Commodore Richards, C.B., forwarding Reports from Officers on the Action of 27th February, and bringing to the notice of their Lordships the services of Surgeon Mahon and others.

*"Boadicea," off Durban,
March 14, 1881.*

SIR,
I REQUEST you will submit, for the consideration of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, the enclosed reports forwarded by Lieutenant Ogle, R.N., in temporary command of the Naval Brigade at Head Quarters, on the action at Majuba Mountain on the 27th February.

2. In my letter of the 7th inst., No. 53, I referred to the services of Surgeon Edward Mahon. I now submit the interesting narrative of that officer for the consideration of their lordships, feeling sure that his graphic description of the events of the day will be of interest, and that the modest account which he renders of his own performance of duty in action under circumstances of extreme personal peril, as well as of his subsequent devotion to the wounded during twenty-eight hours of privation, will commend itself to their lordships; and I have much satisfaction in recommending Surgeon Mahon as an officer deserving of especial approbation and reward.

3. The conduct of William Bevis, assistant sick-berth attendant, as reported by Surgeon Mahon, I also submit for the especial consideration of their lordships.

4. Lieutenant Cochrane, the officer who was sent out at daylight in charge of a burying party from all corps, reports that he buried on the summit of the mountain fifty-three men in one grave, ten of the number being men of the Naval Brigade.

A Boer Commandant pointed out to him the bodies of George Hammond and Samuel With-eridge, quartermasters, as of men who remained to the last, and died at their posts. Lieutenant Trower's body was also found on the extreme ridge, shot through the chest, temple, and with left hand shattered.

5. There seems (I regret to say from the reports enclosed) no doubt but that the ball which passed through Captain Romilly's body was an explosive bullet. It is the first mention I have received of the employment of these barbarous missiles by the Boers, and was probably an exceptional case.

The wounded men speak in high terms of the kindness of the Boers towards them after the conflict was over.

I have, &c.

FREDK. W. RICHARDS,

The Secretary of the Admiralty, London. Commodore.

Enclosure No. 1, with Cape and West Coast Station Letter No. 67, of 14th March, 1881.

*Camp, Mount Prospect,
March 3, 1881.*

SIR,
I HAVE the honour herewith to forward you a more detailed account of the action on Majuba Mountain on 27th February, 1881, written by Sub-lieutenant A. L. Scott.

I also beg to enclose a revised list of the killed and wounded.

I have heard from Mr. Scott that Dr. Mahon behaved with great bravery and coolness in his

care for Commander Romilly. I myself also have observed that he has been most indefatigable in his duties, and especially, I believe, on the night following the action.

I have also heard that Lieutenant Trower was one of the last to retire, and exhibited great coolness to the end.

I have also with much pleasure to report most favourably the way in which Thos. Pyer, first-class signalman, who was sent out to attend the wounded, performed his duties, stopping out a night and a day, and brought in a list of those he had seen of killed and wounded. He also brought in a few articles which the Boers had not taken from Lieutenant Trower.

All the men in the action behaved with great coolness and bravery, and Mr. Scott says he cannot recommend one more than the other.

Commander Romilly was brought into camp the next morning, and placed in his tent. Lieutenant Trower's body was brought in the same morning. T. Lewis, Krooman, came in wounded, and died during the night. The two latter were buried yesterday at the cemetery; the remainder of our killed were buried on the field. The bodies of General Sir G. P. Colley, and two doctors belonging to the medical staff, were buried at the same time as Lieutenant Trower and T. Lewis, Krooman.

The Naval Brigade have lately sent up two 9-pr. field guns and 21 men under Sub-lieutenant Monckton to garrison a newly erected fort on the hill on our right, distant about half a mile; they have also been repairing and improving No. 4 redoubt close to our camp, in which the rocket tubes and rockets have also been placed; and it is at present intended that our whole force, except those with the 9-prs. and 20 men who work the Gatlings in a small round fort close to, should man this redoubt in case of alarm. Our men with one officer take duty now continually as picquets. We have also to furnish a hospital party; and so our hands are full. I am now commencing to take a list of our losses, which are comparatively heavy, many rifles being missing, together with great coats, waterproof sheets, water-bottles, and haversacks.

I have, &c.,

HY. A. OGLE, Lieutenant.

Commodore Richards, C.B.

[For list of killed and wounded, see Commodore Richards' Return at end of papers. The prisoners were Charles George, Ordinary Seaman; James Pafford, A.B.; D. Mortimer, Cadet Fore-Top.]

Report of the Action at Majuba Mountain on 27th February, 1881.

*Camp, Mount Prospect,
March 1, 1881.*

SIR,
I HAVE the honour to report that 64 petty officers and seamen, armed with rifles, under Commander Romilly, with Lieutenant Trower, Surgeon Mahon, and myself, left the camp at 10 P.M. on February 26, two companies of 58th, 3-60th, and 92nd regiments accompanying us, with Sir G. Colley in command, to occupy Majuba Mountain, on the left front of the camp. The Naval Brigade brought up the rear of the column, and reached the top of the mountain by a precipitous route about 4 A.M. without opposition. The companies of 3-60th rifles were left on a neck of land between the mountain and the camp. On arrival at the top a section of our company was left at the point we ascended, with Lieutenant Trower; the remainder proceeded to the end of the mountain nearest the Boer camp