

3. Firing was now going on in our front, the Boers evidently having been repulsed. Colonel Hall here turned away to his left, and to the left of the Boer position, on the understanding that I should take up a position across the railway line on higher ground, and he would soon communicate with me. This I did, but had great difficulty in taking my heavy ammunition waggons and guns across the railway-line, finally succeeding. I here brought the battery into action to try the range of the extreme depth of the Boer position, but after firing a range-finding shot and not seeing it pitch, I limbered up.

4. Hearing heavy firing on the right of the position, and not having had any communication from Colonel Hall, I determined, if possible, to get the battery in range of the large kopje, which a battery of the Royal Artillery were shelling. The guns not being mobile, and having to cover heavy ground I was unfortunately too late to take part in shelling the top of the kopje, which the Guards carried.

5. I then turned to the left between two kopjes, and found the Boers on the rear kopje firing upon advancing infantry. I immediately got the battery into action, and at 1,700 yards shelled the Boers who were firing on our troops, the practice being excellent. The Boers were very soon silenced and retreated.

6. I received orders from the General to take my guns, if possible, on to a low kopje about 800 yards from my front, so as to shell the retreating Boers from their position. I limbered up and advanced as quickly as possible over very rough ground, and advancing well ahead myself to survey the kopje. I found, when I arrived on top, that it was impossible to take wheels over it, so reluctantly had to give it up. Here my officers, men, and mules were almost dead beat and the battle over. Having watered my mules I returned to camp with the remainder of the troops.

7. At 3 P.M. next day the whole Brigade marched out of Belmont to the railway station, where our guns were entrained. The gun mules were handed over to Colonel Hall to save his horses. The guns and ammunition were left entrained under command of Lieutenant Dean, with his half-battery and officers to guard them. The remainder of the Naval Brigade marched at the head of the column to the next bivouac. At 10.30 P.M. I received orders from General Methuen that next morning the Naval Brigade would lead the attack on the enemy's position, supported by the Yorkshire Light Infantry, the attacking force being under the command of Brigadier-General Money. We paraded at 3 A.M., and marching at the head of the column, came up to the left of the enemy's position at daylight, the Field Artillery engaging the right and left of the enemy's position and shelling the top of the kopjes.

The armoured train with naval guns in rear was steaming up on the left of our advance. I observed one of our guns in action firing at the extreme left of the Boer position, which rested on the railway line. The infantry marching away to the right I had no further opportunity of observing the action of the guns after that.

8. The Brigade was deployed into line single rank four paces interval, and advanced on the enemy's position. The disposition of officers was as follows:—

Major Plumbe, R.M.L.I., in command of the left;
Commander Ethelston, in command of the right;
Myself in the centre.

When in front of the kopje to be attacked the line was wheeled, the right brought up, and the Brigade advanced to the attack immediately. The enemy opened fire on the Brigade at about 600 yards, a very heavy front fire. The Brigade still advanced steadily by rushes, and in a short time a very heavy cross fire was opened from our left flank, but in spite of the murderous fire the behaviour of our officers and men was beyond all praise. They all showed great courage and cool determination. Although losing heavily both in officers and men, I had the satisfaction of seeing, after being wounded and being carried to the rear, our bluejackets and marines in possession of the enemy's position. To give some idea of the heavy fire, several times I saw a man hit three times before he reached the ground, but there was never the slightest hesitation in the advance from beginning to end.

9. After the death of Commander Ethelston, Lieutenant Boyle led his bluejackets into the enemy's position. Captain Marchant also, after the death of Major Plumbe, led his marines into the enemy's position. When the conduct of all officers is of such a quality it is impossible to single out any particular instance, but I may mention Lieutenant Jones, R.M.L.I., who, although wounded in the thigh, did not stop until he led his men into the enemy's position.

10. I herewith embody two reports: the first from Captain Marchant, R.M.L.I.; the second from Lieutenant Deau of his action on the left of the position, which I did not see, as he was some miles off, but he and his officers and men must have behaved excellently to have done what they did.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
R. PROTHERO,
Captain and O.C. R.N. Brigade.
Rear-Admiral Sir R. H. Harris, K.C.M.G.,
Commander-in-Chief.

Royal Naval Brigade,
In Camp at Esland Station,
26th November, 1899.

Sir,
I HAVE the honour to report that the Naval Brigade was in action yesterday morning at the battle of which you have had telegraphic information.

2. The officers, petty officers, non-commissioned officers, and men behaved with conspicuous gallantry, but I regret to inform you that the losses in killed and wounded were exceptionally heavy for the small number of men forming the Naval Brigade.

3. I enclose a report from Lieutenant F. Dean, who was in command of the guns during the action, as I did not see what the movements of the guns were during that stage of the action.

4. The remainder of the bluejackets who were not with the guns and all the marines formed part of the firing line, and were under the command of Captain Prothero.

They advanced with other troops, and attacked a very strong position held by the Boers, who were in large force and had large guns with them. About 400 yards from the foot of an almost inaccessible hill, from which the enemy had to be driven, the line was fired on from two positions, and it was here that so heavy a loss was sustained.

I regret to inform you that at this point Commander A. P. Ethelston, Major J. H. Plumbe, R.M.L.I., and Captain Guy Senior, R.M.A., were killed whilst gallantly leading their men, and Midshipmen C. A. E. Huddart was mortally wounded. Captain Prothero, both before and