

heavy rain, and by the impossibility of relieving the men holding the line of entrenchments for a period of 16 days, owing to the large perimeter which had to be guarded, and the small force available for the purpose.

5. I cordially support Lieutenant-Colonel Dalgety's recommendations on behalf of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men whose services he has brought to special notice.

I have, &c.,
ROBERTS, Field-Marshal,
Commanding-in-Chief,
South Africa.

From Lieutenant-Colonel E. H. Dalgety, Commanding Cape Mounted Rifles, to the General Officer Commanding, Colonial Division.

Jammersberg Bridge,
29th April, 1900.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report that, in accordance with instructions received from you, I left Aliwal North on the morning of the 2nd April, to take command of the Column consisting of the Cape Mounted Rifles, 2nd Brabant's Horse, and a detachment of Kaffrarian Rifles, and Artillery, which had been ordered to proceed to Wepener and hold the bridge over the Caledon River, at the Jammersberg Drift. I arrived at Wepener on the night of the 4th, and early on the morning of the 5th I moved on beyond the bridge to take up the position which had been selected by Major Maxwell, R.E., and from whom I took over command.

The troops under my command then consisted of one company of Royal Scots Mounted Infantry, part of the Cape Mounted Rifles, 1st and 2nd Brabant's Horse, the Kaffrarian Rifles, and a few of Driscoll's Scouts, in all about 1,600 men; there were also about a dozen Royal Engineers, and the Artillery Troop of the Cape Mounted Rifles, with two 15-pounders, two naval guns, two 2.5-inch guns, and one Hotchkiss gun.

The position I occupied was on the north bank of the Caledon River, and formed a sort of circle, being 6 miles in circumference, with a diameter of about 3 miles. When selecting the position it was not supposed that the rear of the position would be likely to be attacked, and this was, therefore, the weakest portion.

On the evening of the 6th, I received telegrams informing me that the Garrison at Smithfield had fallen back on Rouxville, and then that the Rouxville Garrison were falling back on Aliwal North, so I then knew that my line of communication with Aliwal North had been cut off, and that I must also be prepared to have the rear of my position attacked. Major Maxwell had already sent into Wepener to commandeer supplies, and, in addition, I found a considerable amount of meal stored in Robertson's Mill.

The 7th and 8th were spent in erecting schanzen all along the position, but as, in most instances, there was barely a foot of soil, we had to depend, in a great measure, on stone schanzen.

About 6.30 A.M., on the morning of Monday the 9th, the enemy commenced shelling the position, which was occupied by the troops as follows, viz., the right front by the 2nd Brabant's Horse, left front by 1st Brabant's Horse, and part of Kaffrarian Rifles; the left rear by Royal Scots, Cape Mounted Rifles and

Driscoll's Scouts, and the right rear by the Kaffrarian Rifles, while the guns were moved about as it was found necessary. The weakest part of the position was on the extreme left rear, which was held by the Cape Mounted Rifles, and it was here that the heaviest casualties took place, the Cape Mounted Rifles losing 21 killed and 75 wounded out of a total of 33 killed and 133 wounded.

The attack on the 9th was made in force, and lasted the whole day, while again, on the night of the 10th, another determined attack was made on the position occupied by the Cape Mounted Rifles, the enemy coming up to within 40 yards of the schanzen, and working round and firing into the rear of them. In both of these attacks we lost heavily. Another attack was made on the front face on the night of the 12th, which was also repulsed, and the enemy then contented themselves with shelling the position more or less heavily, while the snipers harassed our men in the schanzen both by day and night, as they pushed forward, killing and wounding a considerable number.

It was found to be impossible to contract our lines or to give up any portion of the position held, so that I had no reserve available for relief and, consequently, for 16 days and nights the whole force was constantly in the trenches, and in the case of the Royal Scots, Cape Mounted Rifles and Scouts, they had nothing but cold food and water during the whole 16 days, while for 3 days the trenches were flooded by rain.

The ammunition, both gun and rifle, was husbanded with the greatest care, and the rifle fire was always kept well under control, while Captain Lukin, who commanded the Artillery, towards the end was only firing about once every $\frac{1}{4}$ hour, while the enemy were firing, on an average, from 200 to 300 shells a day.

I cannot speak too highly of the behaviour of the whole force during this time; all did their work cheerfully and well, although the continued strain was telling on all ranks.

I would wish to bring to your notice the names of Sergeant Roberts, Privates Rawlings and Robarts, and Trumpeter Washington of the Cape Mounted Rifles, Private Thorn of the Royal Scots, and Private Anderson of 2nd Brabant's Horse, who all performed acts of bravery in bringing in wounded comrades under a very heavy fire.

All Officers Commanding corps rendered me most valuable assistance, and I would particularly beg to mention the names of Lieutenant-Colonel Grenfell, Commanding 2nd Brabant's Horse, my second in command; Major Maxwell, R.E., who selected the position and assisted me in every way; Captain Lukin, Cape Mounted Rifles, who commanded the Artillery and did most excellent work, putting one of the enemy's guns out of action; Captain Cantwell, Cape Mounted Rifles, who, after Major Sprenger was killed and Major Waring was wounded, on the 9th and 11th respectively, commanded the Cape Mounted Rifles in the advanced schanzen; Captain Phillips, the Quarter-Master of the Cape Mounted Rifles, who, when two Officers of the Cape Mounted Rifles were killed and five wounded, took command of 50 men and held a most important position; and Captain Grant, Cape Mounted Rifles, Field-Adjutant, who did the work of half-a-dozen men; while Captain Farrar of the Kaffrarian Rifles was invaluable in obtaining supplies from Wepener on the 6th, 7th, and 8th.