

swung round to the left, after surmounting Pieter's Ridge, about 1 o'clock, to take the other hills in flank, I could not see how far they had got, and would not fire in front of them.

I believe, however, this was admirably done by the 12-prs. and the other two 4·7-inch guns on Hlangwani.

The Scotch started with their bagpipes, and the Irish whistling and joking, and the battle was half won before they started.

The other battalions were not near me.

Just about this time the news came of Cronje's surrender, and the cheering of the various units as the news reached them did them no harm either.

The first hill taken was on the right of the line; they then swept round to the left, other troops going out from the railway line, and front face towards the fortified summit before mentioned previously attacked by General Hart.

It was a wonderful sight to see our men in the open creeping up to the trenches where lay the Boers, who kept up a tremendous fire on them till they got within 100 yards or so, and then the sight of the bayonets was too much, and the Boers stampeded, followed by the soldiers doing a record 100 yards.

I witnessed a very fine instance of discipline when the leading troops, after at least eight or nine hours' hard fighting, topped the right edge of the summit; the Boers, who had stood till that moment evidently behind the ridge, threw down their arms, and, on the officer in advance holding up his hands to stop the men firing, they ceased instantly. Even the men raising their rifles to shoot lowered their rifles without having fired.

Before dark the whole range was taken and held.

On the 28th, I moved with two 4·7-inch wheeled mountings across the pontoon bridge, and bivouacked that night on the site of the previous day's battle.

On 1st March, at 7 A.M., I moved with the whole force on Ladysmith. Lord Dundonald, with some cavalry, had ridden into Ladysmith the night before.

I expected fighting before we got past Umbulwana, but the enemy had all gone, and we reached our bivouac here about 11 A.M.

Eight 12-prs. from across the river joined me during the day, under Lieutenants Ogilvy, James, and Halsey.

In the afternoon I rode into Ladysmith to see Captain Lambton, and found him and all his Brigade looking very ill and worn. All his Lieutenants, except one, were in hospital, and many men were sick.

One of the platform guns was moved when we left, to the position on Hlangwani vacated by the 4·7-inch guns, and they are now both about to return to Chieveley.

I received your letter *re* the turning over of the naval guns to the R.A., and have communicated it to the General Officer Commanding.

Lieutenant Burne, with the two guns left at Spearman's with General Warren, proceeded thence to Springfield, where he remained till after I left Chieveley. They had some fighting with a Commando of the enemy whilst there, the details of which I have not yet heard.

There was only one casualty in the last two days in this Brigade, viz., a white bullock driver, bullet wound, leg.

The guns at present are disposed as follows:—

- 2 4·7-inch at Nelthorpe, near Ladysmith.
- 2 4·7-inch on their way back to Chieveley.
- 2 4·7-inch at Chieveley.
- 1 6-inch at Chieveley.
- 8 12-prs. at Nelthorpe.
- 2 12-prs. on their way to Chieveley.
- 6 12-prs. at Chieveley.
- 2 12-prs. at Mooi River.

During these operations the work has often been very arduous, harder, perhaps, on the heavy guns than on other portions of the force, as, after firing and working the guns all day, it was frequently necessary to trek with them or place them in different positions, entailing the dismounting and remounting of the guns, &c., during the night. It is a great pleasure to me to say that every man worked day and night with the greatest zeal.

Of the officers it is hard to sufficiently express my appreciation, and it is in no way invidious to mention one or two, more especially as their particular duties involved harder work perhaps than others.

I would first record the untiring zeal, ability, and coolness of Commander Limpus, as well as his very great service in locating the enemy's guns, surveying the lay of the country over which we were operating, and taking ranges, &c. Every spare moment during the whole of the operations he employed in this manner, often walking long distances for these purposes when greatly fatigued. He also kept his eye glued to the telescope, as usual, during the hottest fire, when many shells passed within a few yards of him.

In the former of these services he was ably assisted by Lieutenants Ogilvy and Hunt.

Lieutenant Ogilvy was most of the time separated from me with a battery of 12-prs., but I visited his guns in nearly every position, and found that he was always keen and efficient in every respect. There was simply nothing to do but leave him alone, I being perfectly easy in my mind that every order he received would be carried out in the best possible manner.

Lieutenant James with two 12-prs. also has proved himself a most gallant officer and full of resource. He has been all the time in the very forefront of the fighting with his guns, no position being too difficult for him to reach and to bring his guns into action with promptitude.

Lieutenant Hunt has acted as Brigade Major, Quartermaster, and Chief of my Staff rolled into one—as well as commanding a 4·7-inch gun, often being up the greater part of the night with paper work after long fatiguing days. His services have been invaluable to me.

Staff-Surgeon Lilly and Surgeon Lomas were indefatigable, and on the spot instantly to attend our wounded under an exceedingly hot shell fire.

Lieutenant Chiazzari, of the Natal Naval Volunteers, has been most useful, especially in getting into working order and working the punts across the river, both at Potgeiter's Drift and Colenso, by which all the troops crossed.

I must also mention Mr. Hutchinson, midshipman, who has acted as my A.D.C. He has been most useful and hard working, often spending the greater part of the night finding his way across the difficult country with messages. He had many very narrow escapes.