

On three separate occasions a 40-pr. shell fell within two yards of him.

I have, &c.,

E. P. JONES, Captain,  
Commanding Naval Brigade.

Rear-Admiral

Sir E. H. Harris, K.C.M.G.,  
Commander-in-Chief.

Enclosures to Letter No. 208 of the 28th March, 1900, from the Commander-in-Chief on the Cape of Good Hope Station.

Letter of Proceedings.

Springfield Camp,

Sir, February 16, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report as follows:— Since being detached from Lieutenant Ogilvy's command I moved back across the Tugela river from the advanced kopjes on February 1st. On Sunday, February 4th, I learnt that I was attached to Sir Charles Warren's Division, and received my orders from him personally on that day on Gun Plateau, regarding the next day's operations; I also interviewed yourself on that day in reply to signal received. On Monday, 5th, my guns were shelling the enemy incessantly all day in conjunction with the feint on the left, and in reply to a Boer 3-inch Creusot and two Maxim Vickers 1½ lbs. I received many directions from both General Warren and General Talbot Coke as to points they wished shelled, and at the end of the day had expended 250 common and shrapnel shell. At 8 P.M. I received orders from General Warren to march at daybreak on Tuesday, and join the Commander-in-Chief at the fort of Zwartzkop; this I did, and though delayed on the hill by wagons and by the 7th Battery R.F.A. coming up, and later, by streams of ambulance in the narrow road close to Zwartzkop, I arrived and reported my guns to General Buller about 8 A.M. at the foot of the kopje. He told me to bring my guns into action and help to silence the Boer 6-inch Creusot, and, if possible, the 3-inch Creusot, which were firing from Spion Kop (position 2) at our field batteries.

As I came into action, and was aiming my right gun at the Boer 6-inch, a shell from it struck 20 yards in front, and covering us with dirt, jumped over our heads without exploding; the shell was plainly visible in the air to me on coming down, and I saw it strike on its side and the fuze break off. The shell was picked up intact at my wagons which were just coming up, by Edward House, A.B., and we have it now. I concentrated my fire on the 6-inch gun at 6,400 yards, and in an hour it was silenced for the rest of the day; this, of course, was effected in conjunction with the fire from the 5-inch guns just in front of me, and from one 4.7-inch on Signal Hill.

During the day my guns also drove back at least two Boer field guns at 6,500 yards, which had been brought down into Krantz Vaal, and which tried to find our range, but just fell short; they shifted position, but were finally driven over the sky line. There was also a 1½-lb. pom-pom in a donga in the valley, which we silenced many times, and at the end of the day had fired some 230 rounds.

On Wednesday, 7th February, we commenced again at daylight; the 6-inch opened a heavy fire on one pontoon (No. 3), and on the field batteries in front of us, which had been pushed forward there before daybreak. My fire was directed solely at the big gun; my No. 2 standing by and firing directly he saw it appear. During the day my ammunition supply was

kept up by direct communication by orderly with the column under Major Findlay. In the forenoon the Boer field guns were brought down again into the valley, and shelled the pontoon, Krantz Kop, and us; they were driven off in an hour or so, but recommenced again later.

In the afternoon more field guns and pom-poms on the burnt kopjes to the left of us, opened a heavy fire on Krantz Kop, but were driven off by our guns, the howitzer battery (100 yards in our rear), and by the naval guns on Zwartzkop.

About 5 P.M. the fire from the Boer 100-pr. was very heavy, and came all round us, the staff, and infantry in reserve, and twice my crews only escaped by lying down. Just at that moment I got the order from Colonel Parsons, R.A., to withdraw my guns by moonlight, and cover our retirement on Gun Plateau. This was done, but the steep hill being jammed with traffic, I did not get up to my old position on Gun Plateau till next morning, when I reported to General Warren.

Between February 8th and 9th I assisted to cover the retirement of our troops over the Tugela, and on the 9th was withdrawn at 11 A.M., and arrived at Springfield Bridge at 3 P.M.

On 10th February, by order of Colonel Burn-Murdoch (1st Dragoons) and the Camp Commandant, I placed my guns in the entrenched camp half a mile beyond the bridge, and up to 14th was employed in making gun epaulments and pits, and finding the ranges.

On 13th February, the Boers appearing in force on the kopjes to our left at 9,000 yards, I rode out with Colonel Burn-Murdoch, and other Commanding Officers, to reconnoitre, and find gun positions; they sniped at us at 1,600 to 2,000 yards, and at the advanced cavalry pickets all night, but next morning, the 14th, after A. Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, and my guns, had been pushed forward, they were found to have retreated altogether, and we surmised them to be a commando of Free State Boers returning to the Free State.

To-day, the 16th, we received news of General French's relief of Kimberley. All quiet in this neighbourhood.

At present I have 500 rounds of ammunition with me, and 300 in reserve, in charge of the officer of the ammunition column here.

I will conclude by saying that I have nothing but praise for the conduct and hard work performed by my men during the last 10 days, especially when under fire; their spirit is now excellent. I should especially mention my Captains of Guns, T. Mitchell, 1st class P.O., and J. Mullis, 1st class P.O., for their hard work, the latter the best and quickest shot of the two. I must recommend E. A. Harvey, P.O. 2nd class, and leading shipwright, as rendering me most useful and clever work on the gun mountings, &c., and for further designs. Of the rest, P. Treherne, A.B.; D. Shepherd, A.B., S.G.T.; Henry House, A.B.; W. Jones, A.B., S.G.T.; Fred Tuck, O.S.; C. Patton, signalman; and W. Dunetall, stoker, deserve special mention. Mr. White, Midshipman, has rendered me useful assistance. Mr. Freeman, conductor, has done very well; and the white drivers, McPheeson and Blewitt, excellently. I find the gun teams of eight oxen under the two latter are very useful.

I have, &c.,

CHARLES R. N. BURNE, Lieut., R.N.,  
H.M.S. "Philomel."

Captain Jones, R.N.,

Commanding Naval Guns.