

crossing drift and bivouacking on top of a hill, with guns in position at 4.45. Enemy's fire on this day was very heavy, and we again suffered. Distance marched, 16 miles; oxen lost, three.

27th May.—Proceeded at 6.45, and marched till 5.40 (19 miles), halting at 2 for one hour to close up rearguard who were then fighting, and to water oxen.

Two bad drifts had to be crossed, and 11 oxen fell out.

Rearguard fighting was proceeding the whole day, two R.F.A. guns assisting rearguard. Naval guns did not come into action.

28th May.—Proceeded at 8.30. About 10.30 came into action against enemy in position all along our front (Roodepoort) at 2,900 yards, and fired 24 rounds. Infantry advanced and occupied position on our front and left, action still continuing heavily on our right. Enemy then opened with two guns further in their rear on infantry advanced in front. Brought up Naval guns to enemy's original position in front, and opened at 5,000 yards. Enemy's guns quickly withdrew, after which rounds were fired at intervals and as necessary in different directions at various bodies of the enemy; fighting was then general all round the compass. Total number of rounds fired, 43. Placed guns in position for the night, and bivouacked on the ground at 5 p.m. One ox lost, and 6 miles covered.

29th May.—Moved on one gun at 6 a.m. with wagons, leaving the other temporarily in position in rear, and put it in position 3 or 4 miles ahead. Enemy were then in position across our front and all along right flank, and fighting proceeded in rear most of the day. The Naval guns were moved throughout the day into positions on the line of march, singly or together, and in front or rear, according to orders, and according to the position of the enemy. Both guns came into action about 10 a.m. against enemy posted on Spitzkop and adjoining heights, with three guns, which were then shelling our advancing troops from their right flank. Fired 10 rounds at 7,000 yards. The enemy's guns then ceased fire, and did not again open till 3 or 4 p.m., when all but the rearguard had passed. The Naval guns had in the meantime been withdrawn, without exposing the teams, and without the knowledge of the enemy, for at any rate some time, and proceeded on the march deflected to the left as opportunity offered and as the ground was cleared.

Arrived and bivouacked at Heilbron (17½ miles) at 7 p.m., having lost 15 oxen.

30th May.—Moved guns into position about 9 a.m. above town. Lost two oxen.

Marching in state was the same as that when leaving Winburg, no casualties having occurred in the Naval Brigade, and oxen having been replaced from day to day as opportunity offered.

As few rounds as possible were fired from the Naval guns during the above operations by order of the Lieut.-General Commanding, owing to the urgent necessity of husbanding ammunition.

Number of rounds remaining, 488, composed as follow:—Common, 85; shrapnel, 143; lydite, 260.

The behaviour of the men has been beyond praise.

I have, &c.,

W. L. GRANT,

Commander, R.N.

Captain Bearcroft, R.N.,
Senior Naval Officer,
Orange Free State.

P.S.—The following Divisional Order was

issued by the Lieut.-General Commanding on the occupation of Heilbron:—

"The Lieut.-General Commanding wishes to express his thanks and appreciation to the troops under his command for the magnificent work which they have done on the march to Heilbron, which he will not fail to bring to the notice of the Field-Marshal C-in-C. at the earliest opportunity. It is only due to the endurance and pluck shown that, in spite of five days opposition, the column has been enabled to reach its destination on the day appointed by Lord Roberts.

"By order,
"A. A. G."

Submitted to the Commander-in-Chief for information.

This letter was received by me on 5th July, 1900.

JOHN E. BEARCROFT, Captain.

Naval Brigade, Pretoria,

5th July, 1900.

Royal Naval Brigade, Pretoria,

SIR, 9th June, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report as follows on the engagement of the 4th instant:—

The Naval Brigade attached to the 11th Division marched from Waterval towards Pretoria at 6 a.m. on the 4th of June, and on crossing "Six Mile Spruit" the guns were ordered forward.

At 12.30 the guns were being placed in position on a rise in the ground about 5 miles from Pretoria, when the enemy opened fire from some kopjes on the left front, and Commander Spencer de Horsey was struck on the left ankle by a shrapnel ball or segment. This was the only casualty among the Naval Brigade during the day.

The 4.7-in. guns were brought into action under fire, and opened on the fort and town at ranges varying from 7,000 to 9,000 yards. Shortly afterwards "sniping" commenced from the right front, and a few rounds of shrapnel were fired at short range, the two 12-pr. guns being brought to bear on them. The detachments of the "Black Watch" and Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders, under Captain Richardson of the latter regiment, detailed as escort for the guns, materially assisted in dispersing the snipers with long range rifle fire.

The shell fire and sniping on the part of the enemy having ceased, and the Guards Brigade having advanced to clear the ground, the two 12-pr. guns, under Lieutenant Back, R.N., were pushed forward to cover the advance and clear some kopjes on the left front, which was successfully accomplished by well directed shrapnel fire. These guns were under rifle fire at about 2,000 yards for about two hours. The two 4.7-in. guns continued firing at long range till dusk, when all firing ceased; the 12-pr. guns were withdrawn to the position of the 4.7-in., and officers and men bivouacked at the guns.

At daylight on the 5th June the guns were again prepared for action, but information was received that the town had surrendered the previous evening, and at 8 a.m. orders were given for the guns to be brought into Pretoria.

During the engagement one of the enemy's shell burst immediately under the muzzle of one of the 12-pr. guns without doing any damage, presumably owing to its falling in soft ground.

Where both officers and men of all ranks showed conspicuous coolness and courage in bringing the guns into action under a galling