

Naval guns on the top of a high hill 6 or 7 miles away, immediately opposite Botha's Pass and 7,000 yards from it.

On arriving in the vicinity of the hill a considerable rifle fire was exchanged with Boers on the surrounding hills, and it became apparent that the hill must be held. General Hildyard, G.O.C., was out there and decided to hold it, sending back for the rest of the Brigade.

Having selected positions for my guns I went back to choose a route by which it was possible to get them up. Just as I left, the enemy commenced firing with guns, and during the afternoon made a determined attack on the hill, but, the leading battalion arriving, they were repulsed.

I arrived back in camp at 4 p.m., and was ordered to start after dark—as the route was exposed to the enemy's gun fire—and, if possible, to get two 12-prs. (Lieut. Burne's) up the hill by daylight, and the 4.7's to the bottom, where they would be under cover of the hill. This we did after a most difficult march, arriving at the bottom at 4 a.m. I halted the 4.7's, and pushed the 12-prs. up to the top. One arrived at daylight. The other broke a wheel and did not get up to the top till we were able later to get another pair of wheels from a limber and adapt them.

Lieut. Halsey, with his two 12-prs. took up a position on a hill near Yellow Boom Farm.

At daylight I pushed on with the 4.7's, and by using three teams of oxen (the guns being dismounted and on waggons) to each item we dragged them up bit by bit, and had them in position by about 2 p.m. General Hildyard was good enough to say it was the record performance of the campaign, and I think it was (excepting getting them down again) as regards gun-placing.

During the afternoon Lieut. Burne broke the trail of one 12-pr., shelling some wandering parties, but by dint of working all night with the Chief Armourer, Restall, H.M.S. "Tartar" (who I cannot sufficiently commend), Antony, Leading Seaman, Natal Naval Volunteers, and Geo. Hooper, Armourer's Crew ("Forte"), O. Hart, Armourer's Mate ("Tartar") and two wheelwrights lent by the R.A., all guns were ready before the commencement of the action.

Next morning, 11th, the action of the taking of Botha's Pass and the adjacent positions commenced by the whole of the guns searching the dongas and ridges up which the infantry would presently approach.

The military 4.7's and 12-prs. were on a ridge lower down and a mile or two on our right.

At 11 a.m. the infantry advanced with the field batteries, Brigadier-General Wynne's Brigade being on the left and Brigadier-General Hamilton's on the right, with cavalry out on both flanks.

General Coke held the hills in rear, including Van Wyk.

They advanced with great rapidity and pushed on over the crest of the hill right along, with practically no opposition.

The enemy's first lines were about a mile beyond the crest. Soon after the infantry were up the real fight began. The enemy opened fire with rifles, pom-poms, and guns, the latter away on the left flank enfilading the advance, which went on unchecked however, driving the enemy from work to work until the whole of the positions were taken. A very fine steady piece of work I should judge.

The Naval guns could only fire at long range

over our advancing infantry's heads, but they were useful and drove the enemy out of more than one work, and also forced a pom-pom to shift. We continued firing until dusk, when the enemy had passed on out of our range. There was no fire on our guns.

About 8 p.m. I received orders that the Naval guns were to be got down the hill during the night. It was bitterly cold, with a dense fog. I waited at the top of the pass till about 11 p.m., and then started a trial trip with the waggon first with all our Brigade on the drag-ropes to ease it down the steepest part about three quarters of a mile off.

They got it down all right, and then had to climb up again with their drag-ropes and repeat the operation 11 times. It was tremendously heavy work for them, but we got everything down to the drift by 4 a.m.

The men worked splendidly from start to finish. At 8 a.m. we went on to another place, and had hardly outspanned to graze the oxen, when we were ordered to proceed up through Botha's Pass with General Coke's Brigade.

We arrived at our bivouac in the Orange Free State just after dark.

Next morning, 10th, at daylight, we moved on to Gransvlei, with the Division Artillery in advance, clearing the hills of parties of Boers in the line of advance.

At 5 a.m., on 11th, we advanced and, taking up a position, fired a few shots at the hills in front to cover the advance of our infantry, and at 11 moved on and came into action on a ridge 5,000 yards in front of Alman's Nek, whence the enemy had commenced to shell our advance.

About 1 p.m. the infantry advanced to attack the position, which was a strong one.

General Coke's Brigade advanced towards the hills on the right, and General Hamilton's towards the hills on the left of the Nek. The military 4.7's and 12-prs. were on our left. Speaking generally they took on the protection of the left attack, and we took the right, while the Howitzer Battery in rear of us also principally shelled the hills on the right. There was little opposition on the left, but some very hard fighting on the right.

The storming of the precipitous and very rocky hills by the Dorsets and Dublins was very fine indeed. They lost pretty heavily—about 100, I think—but took the hills in splendid style before dark.

General Coke next morning thanked me for our assistance, and said that but for it their casualties would have been doubled.

We kept on shelling the hills in advance of our leading troops, and where we saw the Boers thickest, until they all retired. We had a few shells and "pom-poms" around us, but the water-cart was the only thing hit.

Next morning, 12th, we moved on as before. At noon the 4.7's took up a position, and shelled in the direction of Zandspruit Station and the hills in front of the line of advance. The Boers immediately left and trekked away N.E.

The force advanced and bivouacked about 5 miles from this place, where we heard that Laing's Nek had been evacuated.

Thus our flank movement had achieved its object.

Yesterday the 10th Brigade advanced to Charlestown, and we, with the 11th Brigade, came on here.

We have thus been trekking hard and fighting at intervals for a month without intermission.

The health of the men is excellent, though we