

total distance from Poplar Grove to 48 miles in 49½ hours.

At 9.15 a.m., on the 13th, a start was made for Bloemfontein, and the Brigade arrived and bivouacked within 3 miles S.W. of the town, at 7 p.m. On that day a distance of about 16 miles over heavy ground. Total distance from Poplar Grove, 64 miles in 75½ hours.

Considering the nature of the country and the weight of the guns, a forced march of this distance has necessarily entailed exceptionally hard work, and the energy, zeal, and cheerfulness of the officers and men of all ranks has been beyond praise. With often considerable distances between places where water could be obtained, and on reduced rations, not a single murmur has been heard and no men fell out.

The town of Bloemfontein having surrendered on the 13th instant, on the 15th the Naval Brigade was moved to a bivouac close to the town, where it now remains.

During the night of the 6th instant your telegram directing the return of the officers and men of H.M.S. "Powerful" was received, and the contents communicated to the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief, as early as possible the following day.

Owing to the operations then in progress and the subsequent rapid march, arrangements for their transport was not at the time possible.

They will be sent to Simon's Town as soon as communication is re-established.

The general conduct of the men has been very good indeed, and the health of the Brigade is good.

I have, &c.,

JOHN E. BEARCROFT, Captain.
Commander-in-Chief,
Cape Station.

Naval Brigade, Krugersdorp,
28th August, 1900.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to report the proceedings of the Naval Brigade under my command for the month of August as follows:—

On the 1st August De Wet occupied the country between Vredefort and the Rhenoster River, his back to the Vaal River, the centre of his position being the Wit Kopjes, some 15 or 20 miles S. of the Vaal. He also held Rhenoster Kopje, some 20 miles S.W. of Wit Kopje, and the kopjes at Rhebokfontein.

Our force consisted of the Naval Brigade and Somerset L.I. on the extreme left at Wonderhenvel facing Wit Kopje and with Rhebokfontein on their left; there working to the right, the Northumberland Fusiliers, 2nd Cavalry Brigade, Dublin Fusiliers, Derby Regiment, 28th Field Battery and Section pompoms, Marshall's Horse; and round towards Vredefort, Colonel Ridley's M.I.

The 2nd Cavalry Brigade occupied a kopje some 6 miles to the S. of Wonderhenvel. General Hart was then in command, the Naval Brigade forming part of his Brigade. Lord Kitchener arrived later. On 1st August a skirmish took place to S.W., a couple of battalions moved out with No. 2 gun, but returned without fighting. Sniping between outposts frequent.

2nd August.—Northumberlands left to join Colonel Ridley. General Moore arrived and occupied Rhenoster Kopje.

4th August.—Detached No. 2 gun with half the ammunition wagons, under Lieutenant Ferguson, to join Colonel Ridley.

General Knox attacked Rhebokfontein at 9,000 yards, shelling Boers as they retreated across the

plain to back of Wit Kopje. Also fired a few rounds at Boer position on Wit Kopjes at 5,000 to 7,000 yards. Number of rounds fired, 15.

5th August.—Widkel's Drift on Rhenoster N.W. occupied by General Brabant. 3rd Cavalry Brigade moved E. and occupied ground between Colonel Ridley and ourselves.

7th August.—Received orders to prepare to attack Boer position early on 8th. At 9.30, having received information that De Wet has crossed the Vaal, struck camp, and proceeded to join General Hart. At 1 p.m. advanced into enemy's position (advanced scouts suffering a few casualties), which was unoccupied. Proceeded to Bloemfontein, 10 miles, and bivouacked at 5 p.m. Lieutenant Ferguson rejoined on arrival in camp with No. 2 gun.

9th August.—Marched at 6 a.m., 15 miles to Modderfontein through Pariys, arrived and bivouacked at 5.30. The force halted at 11 a.m. for three hours to graze oxen.

10th August.—Marched at 5 a.m., arriving at Lindeque Drift, 5 miles, at 7.30. Bivouacked in order to allow 2nd Cavalry Brigade column to cross the river first. General Hart's Brigade was here joined by the Canadians and the Northumberland Fusiliers. The infantry proceeded on the march at 9 a.m., but the drift was not clear for the Naval guns till 1.15, when the Brigade crossed and marched to Cosburg, 14 miles, arriving and joining the infantry at 7.30. Put three more nuts in gun wheels.

11th August.—Marched at 6 a.m., 18 miles, to Gatsrand, arriving at 3.30. The direction of the march had been toward Banbis Station, but about 1 p.m., De Wet having been reported to have crossed the line at Welverdiend, the course was altered towards that place. Several bad drifts had to be crossed on this march, which was made against a gale of wind and blinding dust. Soon after camping a veldt fire swept through the camp, burning several of the men's things and setting two ammunition wagons on fire. These latter were happily extinguished before any damage was done.

All nuts on wheels were found to have sheared, and eight new ones were put in.

12th August.—Marched at 3 a.m., arriving at Welverdiend, 14 miles, at 9.45. Found here the Cavalry, Mounted Infantry, and General Smith-Dorrien's Brigades, all of whom left shortly after.

The wheels of No. 1 gun were now so bad, being retained on the bosses by the nuts only, most of which had sheared, that it could go no further, and it was accordingly left behind for repair with Mr. Cannon, 28 men, and 100 rounds of ammunition. The remainder of the Brigade proceeded at 3.30 to Blaauwbank, 6 miles, arriving and bivouacking at 5.45. De Wet was engaged on this day about 20 miles to the westward by Lord Methuen.

13th August.—Marched at 5 a.m., 7 miles, crossing a drift, and bivouacking at 8 a.m.

The left wheel of No. 2 gun was here found to have developed the same defects as those of No. 1 gun; from this time, therefore, advantage had to be taken of every halt to repair, put in nuts, &c. The force again proceeded at 11 a.m., and marched to Schoolplats, where it arrived and bivouacked at 3 p.m., 10 miles.

14th August.—Marched at 7.30 to Klip Kraaz, 15 miles, arriving at 3.45 p.m. A halt of two hours was made at 11.30.

Passed on this march two Boer ammunition wagons blown up with contents.