

The health and conduct of the men under my command has remained excellent.

I have, &c.,
JAMES FERGUSON, Lieutenant, R.N.,
 O.C. Detachment Naval Brigade.
 To Commander W. L. Grant, R.N.,
 O.C. Naval Brigade.

Royal Naval Brigade, Barberton,
 Sir,
 24th September, 1900.

I HAVE to report as follows:—

The two 4.7-in. guns under my immediate command remained in position near Belfast, the one $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles N., and the other $\frac{3}{4}$ mile S., of the railway station until the 5th inst., when I received orders to leave one gun in position N. of the station, and to send the other immediately to join Lieut.-General French at Carolina.

I accordingly detailed Major Marchant, R.M.L.I., to remain at Belfast with one gun, and marched at noon on 5th September with the Headquarters of the Brigade, E Company and Black Watch as escort, and the other gun, 10 miles to Van Wyk's Vlei, where I joined Lieut.-Colonel Spen's 2nd K.S.L.I.

6th September.—Marched with convoy at 5.30 a.m. for Carolina, and camped at 6.30 p.m., 12 miles.

The force under command of Lieut.-General French—consisting of French's Scouts, Royal Naval Detachment with one 4.7-in. gun and E Company 2nd Black Watch as escort, one section 66th Battery R.F.A., 1st Cavalry Brigade, 4th Cavalry Brigade, Mahon's Brigade, 2nd King's Shropshire Light Infantry, 1st Suffolk Regiment—remained at Carolina on 7th and 8th September.

9th September.—Marched at 5.30 a.m. with the column towards Buffels Spruit, 17 miles. The advanced guard were in action during the afternoon, and at 4 p.m. the 4.7-in. gun was placed in position on a kopje commanding the drift over Buffels Spruit, and ordered to be in readiness to cover the advance on the following morning.

10th September.—The enemy having retired, the advance was continued, camping at 5 p.m. Distance 9 miles.

11th September.—Marched at 6.45 a.m., 18 miles over heavy country with many drifts, camping at 5.30 p.m. near the Cavalry Division.

12th September.—5 a.m., moved forward 2 miles and placed gun in position on Vaal Kop. 8.15 a.m., proceeded, and at 10 a.m. placed gun in position to command the road over Nelspoort Pass, the Cavalry and Horse and Field Artillery being in action clearing the pass, which was occupied about 3 p.m., and I was directed to bivouac on the position.

13th September.—Dismounted the gun on to a spare wagon, and moved the camp nearer to the foot of the pass.

14th September.—Sent half the wagons with double teams of oxen over the pass, the incline being about 1 in 4 for a short distance near the top.

15th September.—3 a.m., proceeded up the pass with the gun and remainder of the wagons, camping at 6.15 a.m. At 4.30 p.m. I placed the gun carriage in position at the head of the pass, and prepared to mount the gun.

16th September.—Mounted the gun for defence of pass. The gun remained in this position until 4 p.m. on 18th September, when, a further advance having been ordered, the camp was moved 1 mile to the eastward, over a steep rise in the ground.

19th September.—Marched at 5.30 a.m. about 8 miles over indifferent roads to the head of a steep decline (the "Shoot"), with a very rough and uneven road.

When half-way down the steel plate of left gun wheel partly sheared close to the metal bush. The remainder of the descent was accomplished without further accident, and the force bivouacked about 15 miles from Barberton at 3 p.m. Total distance travelled, about 14 miles.

20th September.—Marched at 5.30 a.m. As the fracture in the plating of the gun wheel was increasing, the gun was dismounted at 8.30 a.m. on to a spare wagon, and after a halt for feeding the oxen, the march was resumed at 1.30 p.m. At 2 p.m., the plating of the wheel completely sheared, and the mounting collapsed in the road. The cradle was then lifted out of the trunnions, a spare wagon wheel fitted on the axle in place of the broken one, and the mounting successfully taken the remaining 8 miles into camp, which was reached at 8 p.m.

22nd September.—Two spare wagon wheels having been procured, the remaining iron wheel was taken off, and the gun mounting placed on them as a temporary measure.

23rd September.—Camp was moved to a suitable place for putting the gun in position for the defence of the town, and the gun mounted and prepared for action.

The journey from Belfast to Barberton has been over exceptionally heavy country, with bad roads, steep pitches both up and down, and many drifts, which have caused a heavy strain on the gun wheels, culminating in the collapse of one wheel on the 20th instant, the other showing signs of cracking in the same way.

It is estimated that a total distance of about 830 miles had been covered before the fracture occurred.

The detachment of the Royal Naval Brigade under my immediate command remains at Barberton, and to the best of my knowledge Major Marchant, R.M.L.I., with the other 4.7-in. gun, remains at Belfast, while the two 12-prs., under Lieutenant Back, R.N., are still with the 11th Division.

I beg to especially bring to your notice for favourable consideration the zeal and energy of S. Colville, armourer, O.N., 108,207, in fitting and adapting wagon wheels and brakes for transporting the gun mounting after a break-down. He has worked indefatigably day and night, and his ingenuity and resourcefulness with the scanty appliances at command are most praiseworthy.

The health of those present is very good, and the general conduct of the men has been very good.

I have, &c.,

JOHN E. BEARCROFT,
 Captain.

To Rear-Admiral Sir R. H. Harris, K.C.M.G.,
 &c., &c., &c.,
 Commander-in-Chief.

Naval Brigade, Krugersdorp,
 Sir,
 30th September, 1900.

I HAVE the honour to report the proceedings of this Brigade since August 29th, as follows:—

On August 29th, the whole Brigade was at Krugersdorp, Mr. Cannon having returned with his party and No. 1 gun from Pretoria, where the gun wheels had been repaired. The wheels of No. 2 gun were still under repair at Krugersdorp, and could not be ready for many days.