

With the assistance of the stokers attached to the Naval Brigade repairs were affected by 6 a.m. on 3rd October, and Kaapminden Junction reached at 7.45.

The journey on the main line was resumed at 10 a.m. on 3rd October, travelling by daylight only.

Brugspruit was reached at 6 p.m. on 5th October, and as a party of the enemy were expected to trek across the railway that night between that place and Balmoral, it was decided to push the train on to assist in endeavouring to intercept them.

The train left Brugspruit at 9.15 p.m. proceeding slowly with a mounted patrol in front and a trolley with an experienced ganger ahead to examine the line.

In spite of these precautions, at 10.10 p.m., when about half a mile from the road expected to be followed by the enemy's convoy, an explosion occurred which broke our rail and derailed the engine, fortunately with no casualty except some slight bruises to the fireman, who was knocked off the foot-plate.

Owing to the slow speed and the presence of mind of Barinsky, the engine driver, the train was brought to a standstill within the length of the engine, and without any further damage. No attack was made on the train, and the men slept on their arms in trenches on either side of the railway to guard against surprise.

The engine was replaced and the line repaired by 2.30 p.m. on the 6th October, and the train proceeded at 2.55 p.m., the line having been carefully examined as far as Balmoral.

At 3 p.m., after travelling about 1,000 yards, a second explosion took place, again breaking one rail, but fortunately without derailing anything or causing any casualty.

Owing to the breakdown gang being present, repairs were completed in 20 minutes, and the train proceeded without further adventure.

Pretoria was reached at 9.30 a.m. on 7th October, and the detachments under Major Marchant, R.M.L.I., and Lieutenant Back, R.N., rejoined me.

The Brigade was inspected by Field Marshal Lord Roberts Commanding in Chief at 3.30 p.m. that day, when he was pleased to express his high appreciation of the services rendered by the Naval Brigade.

The Brigade entrained that same evening and proceeded at midnight for Simonstown, where I arrived at 1 p.m. on 12th inst., and the officers and men were dispersed to their respective ships.

I beg again to bring to your notice the ingenuity and resourcefulness displayed by S. Colvill, armourer, in effecting the heavy repair to the gun wheel with the scanty appliances obtainable. I would respectfully submit that this petty officer's services during the whole campaign are deserving of some special recognition.

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

I have, &c.,

JOHN E. BEARCROFT, Captain.

Rear-Admiral Sir Robert H. Harris, K.C.M.G.,  
Commander-in-Chief.

H.M.S. "Monarch" (late H.M.S. "Tartar's"),  
12-pr. Q.F. Battery,  
Gras Kop, Sandspruit.

SIR,  
ON withdrawal from the front, I wish to forward for the favourable consideration of the Commander-in-Chief Admiral Sir Robert Harris, K.C.M.G., a short report on detachment of

H.M.S. "Monarch" (late "Tartar's") men now under my command, and who have served on shore with the Natal Army for over a year. Since my last report to Captain Jones, R.N., the Officer Commanding Naval Brigade, on June 16th after the victory at Almon's Nek, this battery has taken part in the march on Wakkerstroom and its occupation, the defence of Sandspruit and action 4 miles N. of it, with cavalry and other artillery, under General Brocklehurst, M.V.O., which was a spirited little affair, and where the battery earned the commendation of the general on the shooting; later the attack on Gras Kop and its occupation by the Dorsets was covered by these guns and other artillery on July 24th, and drew a heavy shell fire from four Boer Creusot guns in its defence, this battery at that time being led by Lieutenant Clutterbuck, R.N., when I was ill with jaundice, but whom I again relieved on July 27th and have continued since that date in defence of Gras Kop. My guns from here covered the right flank of two separate attacks in force on Comersfoort, the first under General Hildyard on July 30th, and the second under Sir Redvers Buller on August 7th, when the town was taken; we have also covered many reconnaissances and have come into action at long ranges several times against marauding Boers on the plain at the foot of this hill, but hitherto they have not attacked us, as the hill is magnificently entrenched and has been held in turn by the Dorsets, the South-Lancashire, and now the Queen's Regiment. The whole of the intelligence from Gras Kop as to movements of the enemy since the 24th July up to this date has been furnished by my look-outs with our long telescope, and this I need scarcely say has been a considerable and arduous duty for the men under the conditions of violent winds, rain, mists, and storms which prevailed up here (a height of 6,500 feet) since we occupied the hill. These wind storms have destroyed our tents once, sometimes continuing for days, and have caused much discomfort both to ourself and the troops, and I have lost a good many oxen by exposure, and lung sickness. Orders having come for the withdrawal of the Naval Brigade, I can only say I have been well and faithfully served by the officers and men of the detachment under my command, and during these months have formed a high opinion of their excellence as a battery, under the varying conditions of climate, heights, and positions, they have gone through in Natal, the Orange Colony, and the Transvaal. All these men, in spite of much sickness at times have stuck to their work with the Natal Army for a year now, and consequently, I think fully deserve any advancement or reward it is possible to give them, and I am sure H.M.S. "Tartar" may be proud of the men representing her during the war. I wish to bring this general opinion of the men of the detachment, which I hold, to the favourable notice of the Commander-in-Chief, and to specially recommend the following for good service rendered with the guns:—

A. L. Munro, C.P.O. and torpedo instructor (late of H.M.S. "Tartar").

G. H. Epsley, P.O., 2nd class and Captain 1st gun (late of H.M.S. "Tartar").

E. Cheeseman, A.B., S.G. and acting Captain 2nd gun (late of H.M.S. "Tartar").

D. Smith, A.B., S.G.T., Gun Crew (late of H.M.S. "Tartar").

J. Macdonald, A.B., S.G., Gun Crew (late of H.M.S. "Tartar").