

Typed transcript of Holt's diary of service during the Boer War in South Africa, 1899-1900, with a plan of Ladysmith and a photograph of the hospital staff at the defensive wall built during the siege of Ladysmith

Publication/Creation

1899-1900

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LADYSMITH



To David

This is a diary kept by your Great grandfather, Major General Sir Maurice Holt KCB. KCMG. DSO, who joined The Army Medical Service (later became The Royal Army Medical Corps) 30th September 1886.

In reading the diary you may wonder why a doctor made so many notes about gun fire. Possibly the reason is that as a medical student at King's College Hospital he had joined The Royal Naval Artillery Volunteers - later absorbed into the R.N.V.R. I have a copy of R.N. Artillery Volunteers London Brigade Orders of November 1884 "Prize Competitions H.M.S. Aron Class Firing-Heavy Gun at sea- Best Shot No IV Battery Gunner M.P. Holt" His certificate of Discharge is dated H.M.S. Rainbow 22 Nov 1886 -at his own request. If you ever come to London you will find King's college is in The Strand. King's College Hospital was north of the Strand where now are the premises of Messrs W.H. Smith.

By remaining at Ladysmith, the British Force ensured that the Boers did not get down to Durban and other ports. In 1899 there was no motor transport, nor motor roads as we know today. Bulk supplies went by railway and thence distributed by horse or ox drawn wagons. There were supply dumps at Ladysmith, which caused that place to be selected as the base of the British force composed of troops stationed in Natal and those sent from India. On arrival in South Africa Lord Roberts' strategy was to ignore the beleaguered places and to advance into the Free State and The Transvaal thus causing the Boers to withdraw to protect their homes. Great grandfather had been stationed in Natal 1889- 1895 and on the outbreak of the war still had many friends in Natal. After serving at Home for a year he was posted to India and stationed at Deolali. Early in 1899 he was M.O. in charge of troops aboard R.I.M.S. Olive taking a Battalion of 60th Rifles from Bombay to Durban. The return voyage another regiment was taken to Mauritius and thence a third (Rifle Brigade) to Calcutta. Opinion in South Africa was that war was inevitable with the two Boer Republics.

Of those mentioned in the Diary:-
Cedricington 11th Hussars -MPH had been MO with that Regiment in an expedition to North Zululand in 1895.
Bruce - later Major General Sir David Bruce. He did great work on Sleeping sickness, serving on Commissions on this disease in 1903 and 1908-10. As his wife used to help him in his work people used to say that Government got two peoples work for one.
Mrs MacDonal (Mrs MacDonal) was Matron of Gray's Hospital, Pietermaritzburg. She was the widow of an Indian Civil Service man and was appointed Matron largely on account of her ability to talk Hindustani, then needed for the hospital medical staff.

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Mrs Mac (Mrs MacDonald) was Matron of Gray's Hospital, Pietermaritzburg. She was the widow of an Indian Civil Service man and was appointed Matron largely on account of her ability to talk Hindustani, then needed for the hospital menial staff.

It may be recalled that the labour on the sugar plantations of Natal was almost entirely indentured labour imported from India. Mrs MacDonald was my Godmother. Some years after the Boer war she was murdered with a carving knife by an Indian who ran amok. Julian - was in MPH's batch that joined The Army Medical Service. Posted to K - refers to a letter sent Great grandmother. 21st Oct 1899 - Battle of Elandslaagte - the lamps were candles. 3 November "Picconi" - name of MPH's pony he took from India.

In those days horses were not issued to officers. Their mounts were their own property.

9 November The Prince - later King Edward VII

12 November Northey (60th) - afterwards General Sir Edward Northey and one time Governor of Kenya

17 November Colonel F. Rhodes brother of Cecil Rhodes.

7 December Royal I Fusiliers - R. Irish Fusiliers

16 December The Lyre) Ladysmith Lyre, a news sheet

23 December Dartnell - an old friend in Natal Carbineers.

6 March WJB - refers to my mother's uncle, formerly of The East India Company's Medical Service, Madras Army, is Dr W.J. Busteed.

Ten volumes of "Archives of Surgery" which have been accepted by the Royal Army Medical College, Millbank are endorsed "M.P. HOLT from W.J.B."

Grace is MPH's youngest sister, still alive 1960



H.B. Holt

General Sir Maurice
and Lady Holt, with
their eldest Great-Grand
child, David Arthur
Holt at Farnborough
1948.

1899.

- 8 September Received Wire from P.M.O. warning to be ready to take charge half of 26th British Field Hospital.
- 9 September Wire to say 24th British Field Hospital vice 26th.
- 19 September Joined Hospital on way through, and left DEOLALI at 8.30 p.m.
- 20 September Arrived BOMBAY. Put Hospital in "ELLERA". Was taken off ship to sail in later one. Horse and Pony, syce, tent sent by "ELLERA".
- 22 September Embarked in "PANDUA". Codrington, 11th Hussars and Crawford, Army Veterinary Department on board.
- 28 September Ship stinks badly.
- 3 October Sighted "City of London" - Transport.
- 5 October Reached DURBAN 11 a.m. Made the land bit to southward. Berthed alongside 5 p.m. Orders for XIX Hussars and self to go to Cape Town tomorrow. Rest disembark here. H. Martin on "Sutlej". Five transports in harbour.
- 6 October Orders to disembark here. Also XIX Hussars. Left DURBAN 3 p.m. Saw P. Badock at Pietersmaritzburg.
- 7 October Arrived at LADYSMITH 9 a.m. Had lunch and stayed rest of the day with Bruces.
- 8 October 24 British Field Hospital arrived Ladysmith in morning.
- 9 October Opened Mess.
- 10 October On duty. Checking equipment all day. Julian goes to Glencoe.
- 11 October During afternoon had section parades. Evening saw off Hospital train. Sir George White V.C. and staff arrived also Exham.
- 12 October Posted to SAH and to Mrs. Mac. Free States said to have come over the border. Force of three Regiments Cavalry, three batteries go out to reconoitre. Porter went with 5th Lancers, riding Kellie's Horse 50 miles.
- 13 October Boers said to be only 35 miles off. Brassards from Mrs. Bruce. The reconnoitering force returned seeing nothing of the enemy.
- 14 October 11th British Field Hospital arrived in afternoon.
- 15 October Pope (11th Br. Fd. Hosp.) dined with us. Accidental gunshot wound abdomen. Helped Bruce. Tested sterilisers etc. in afternoon.

4
16 October

Before breakfast three hours drill with British Cd (?).
Afternoon C & D Sections with Porter & H.G. Martin moved down to town. A & B are to remain with Cavalry and Artillery.

17 October

Posted to K. Took over No.33 Hut for Cavalry and Artillery sick. Rumour that Boers have got by towards Pietersmaritzburg. Flying column to start at 3 a.m.

18 October

Quiet morning. In afternoon struck camp and moved down to town. 2 ox wagons to alongside C & D (Sections?).

19 October

Buntine says Carbineers has skirmish with Boers. Thinks Willie Galway lost as he is still missing. The skirmish covered greater part of yesterday afternoon. Report that Boer who had enlisted in I.L.H. found to be a spy and shot.

20 October

Went out, up to Newcastle line with force. Boers said to retreat as we advanced. Caught four prisoners. No casualties. Engagement at Dundee Garrison turned Boers out of position. Much loss. We got back to camp at 6 p.m. Cold wet day.

21 October

Elandslaagte fight. Sent out at 5.30 p.m. with order to bring in all wounded. Started work at 6 p.m. Battle not quite over. I went on all night. Lamp went out at 4 a.m.

(There is a blank in the diary. Possibly consequent upon attending)
(to the casualties from the Elandslaagte Battle.)

2 November

Got out certain articles of new equipment from Med Store to open an operating room in Proctor's house. Consisting of new surgical panniers - fracture box - ether - bandages - W.P. sheeting and many smaller details. This will enable us to keep the things out and ready for use without interfering with regular Field Hospital Equipment. Several bits of shell dropped in and around the hospital today. One weighing 17 lbs just 13 yds in front of Martin's tent. Egerton R.N. shot through both legs by shell - operated on - double amputation - but died same night.

3 November

Shelling town resumed soon after 7 a.m. and went on almost incessantly all day. I lunched with Bruces at Royal Hotel and whilst there a shell fell into and burst in the room of a cottage next to the Hotel, passing thence into the dining room, breaking windows, crockery etc. Though many people were lunching, nobody was hurt beyond Balfour (Vol Doctor) who has a slight tap on the back of the head and cut hand from flying glass. Then in the afternoon shrapnel began to burst over and in the Field Hospitals, scaring patients, but beyond Senior Asst. Surgeon getting a tap on the shoulder from one bullet, no harm done. A shell fell to the ground near one of the tents, passed through it and stopped, did not explode and hurt nobody. Went for a short ride on Picconi with Martin. Met Buntine. Heard that Charles Tannton had been shot dead today through chest. Two other Volunteer Officers killed. Dined with Currie. All Volunteer Medical Officers in favour strongly of moving hospital and I suggested the race course or near it, as the Rooms will be available - with Red Cross Flags it will be respected as Neutral. Hyslop and others fall in with it. Hyslop came over after dinner to see Carter and Martin.

3 November (contd)

Carter and Hyslop came into our tent and met P.M.O. there and after discussions decided that he (P.M.O.) would go up at once to see the G.O.C. and suggest that Hospital be moved tomorrow (if practicable under flag of truce) out of fire. It will mean a great deal of hard work but should hardly be impracticable - in fact I see nothing insuperable in it provided Boers concur.

Piccone very fresh. All the horses and ponies very much startled by shrapnel that tore along the road just by them. The shrapnel bullets banged the top of Proctor's house like heavy hail.

4 November. This morning Bateson went to JOUBERT (Boer Commander) with letter re: moving Hospitals. He says he was not allowed to go beyond the outposts, and was given a letter to bring back. Said he was fired on as he rode back just as he passed a Squadron of 5th D.G's, but not hit. Did not know contents of reply. We made some preparations towards getting ready to shift camp, while the dooley men are digging a sort of shelter trench for patients. The first scheme on Joubert agreeing to recognise neutrality of Hospital Establishments and sick outside the town was that all Field Hospitals should go to INTOMBI SPRUIT - leaving one section of each hospital in town. Preparations made. Porter and I tossed for choice, - won and told him to go out, but eventually decided that he goes for 1st week and I for the second. At 10.30 p.m. P.M.O. came round to say that sick and tents go out - but personnel and equipment of all British Field Hospitals stay in. No 11 is to stay on Market Square and No 24 to go up to old camp. The day has been one of suspense as to whether we are to move or not. I had to return the extra equipment I got for the operating room in Proctor's house.

5 November. Began before daylight to pack up hospitals - sick - Station Hospital - No 12 F.H. and Volunteer Hospital to go to INTOMBI SPRUIT some four miles down the line. Everything else going fairly well. The first train with tents and stores ran off the line owing it is said to a collision with a stray ox. - so that it was after 2 p.m. before the first train with sick left for new site, and then I heard on my way up to camp from Stuart Wortley that a wire had come in to say that no food or water there and no tents up. The work went on all day and we did not get our last wagon up till dusk. The dooley bearers and dandies had to go out to new Hospital and have not returned yet.

The town hall like other buildings were in extraordinary state of disorder when the sick had all been taken out.

Our new site that Porter chose seems particularly well hidden and there are several places where we ought with any luck to get perfect shelter, under some rocks from fire in all directions but from one west and little south.

Pope - No 11 Hospital digging pit to hide in, behind Baster's House, which they have commandeered. All towns people's horses commandeered today and towards evening every supply shop had been commandeered, so that buying provisions has ceased. All the same we managed to buy 37/- worth.

6 November. With exception of 3 shells somewhere to the East of our new position, a quietest day. No work. All sick apparently going to No 11. In evening rode down to town to get some Boric Acid etc., All sorts of rumours

6 November (contd)

but it seems certain that Colenso Bridge is blown up and Colenso Garrison withdrawn to Estcourt. They apparently had a rub with Boers on Friday last. It is said that the Basutos have risen and crossed into Free State. This was stated last week and is now said to be confirmed. No doubt the Boers are moving their guns and changing positions. We feel much better being up here than when in the town.

7 November. Boers are pounding the town and naval guns hard all day. Said that once they knocked sights off Naval Big gun - but evidently soon repaired as after an interval they began pounding the Boers and put in three shots before 'Long Tom' replied. Rumours of Buller and of troops reaching Pietersmaritzburg reassuring. It is said that Buller was to be at ALIWAL NORTH yesterday and to be joined by a Division there today - Hope it is true. But it is said we cannot be relieved here till another 14 days. Am told by G. Martin, who went down to town for Doolies that a shell burst in Baster's stables, killed Pope's horse - Carter's horse died shortly afterwards and another one (? Cameron's) not likely to live. Our part of the camp undisturbed till about 6.p.m. when some shells passed over us and burst in the middle of our old camp from a gun on Signpost Hill on Pietermaritzburg Road. Hard at work all day building a shelter for patients on bank of river - which when finished should be shell proof, it is hardly likely that a whole shell will come there unless from a gun to the North - which has not yet fired this way if at all. Early morning, Raymond came to see us - then later went to see 2nd 60th. Saw Green (Adjutant). On duty today so was not out of camp. A shell is said to have gone through the Convent. No news from Bruce or others at INTOMBI SPRUIT - Some say our camp is in a very bad place, others say nothing can touch us. The latter seems as true as the former. Am told the Conductor of Transport to the Manchesters was shot last evening for treachery - If true will scare other conductors, who seem a very doubtful lot taken on the whole. Some rifle firing took place about 5 a.m. One man of the 18th Hussars brought in about 6 with G.S.W. Shoulder and Scapula. No other casualties came to us during the day.

8 November. There was a little big gun firing today. We were hard at work all day making a shelter for patients. It should be shell proof when finished.

No particular rumours today reached us. The Naval gun is said to have capsized a Boer Gun at first shot. Long Tom is said to be on BULWANI and two Lydite shells are said to have prevented its shooting today.

A sailor was brought in this morning with a shell wound opening up the shoulder joint and comminuting the head of the humerus. It was not thought fit to amputate today - nor is this a suitable place to amputate in if it can be helped. Raymond came to see us. The sailor was asleep in a tent near his gun - it seems odd that men should be allowed to use tents during daytime; The shell burst in his tent. There is a large patch of sticky burnt hair and powder on his head. It is a marvel he was not blown to pieces, or at any rate his head.

Some five shells passed over us in the day from a gun to North West - apparently directed at Cavalry who are just ¼ mile beyond us. Our tents were all dropped today as it is likely they can be seen from this gun.

9 November Boers began firing guns over our part of the camp at 18th Hussars at 4.45 a.m. Got up in a hurry, dropped tents and got under shelter. When fire slackened, a little bad breakfast in the shelter. Our own guns (2) began to reply over our heads about 200 yards back - then firing at them coming down the river course - put patients (two) in shelter and all cleared over the rocks - except two Martins who came over later - This firing went on most of the day. - One shell dropping in river bed just alongside our niche - All firing over this part ceased by 6 p.m.

Elsewhere Boers made attacks on Rifles post and threatened the 60th also - in each case driven back by guns firing all day. No casualties came to us, but the Rifle Bde. sent for transport for five wounded - one very severe, an officer of Rifle Bde., but they did not come to us. So far as we know casualties are not numerous.

Codrington appointed to Imperial Light Horse.

Prince's Birthday - Royal Salute (Blank) from Naval Guns and men all round camp cheered for the Prince.⁴ - All this during Boer fire.

There are rumours as to relieving force - but nothing definite.

10 November. Moved camp this morning to a position South of new Hospital in a hollow on top of hill overlooking the river. We were so much in line of fire and just in front of three guns that work was impossible. - Took up our bridge and partly dismantled the shelter taking out pipes and bags.

Thunderstorm soon after getting into camp with small hailstones - On duty today - No firing all day with the exception of 3 or 4 guns in the afternoon. Marked peace after yesterday.

Last night I slept on a ledge of rock above the river - dropping tents in the evening again - warm night. Spent one of the best nights here. In evening had to visit 60th and Rifle Bde. to inform M.Os of new site of Field Hospital. Was told at Rifle Bde. that a night attack is expected. Probably means firing first thing in the morning. Saw Vet. re: Kelly's horse - says it has chronic asthma with cough.

11 November. No firing beyond two of our guns till about noon - probably owing to a heavy wet mist. Then for a couple of hours rather sharp cross firing all over camp. Spent the day starting a new shelter for patients. Very cold day - more or less fine rain at intervals during the day.

It seems that on the 9th there was a bit of a fight for the Manchesters Ridge (Caesar's Camp) - the Boers being well driven off. Reported that Eloff killed. - No casualties on our side today so far as known at present.

12 November (Sunday) No firing today. Spent the day making new shelter which is nearly finished and unless shells come our way should be easily complete tomorrow - made of wrought iron pipes, then two inch planking covered with bags full of tough black earth with as yet only three or four inches of loose earth on top.

Saw Northey of 60th today looking very well with a beard.

12 November (contd.)

General rumour has it that the Boers mean business again tomorrow. They can be seen through telescope on Umbulwana and on hill to the West. - where also can be seen the wheels of a gun, but the gun is said to have been taken away yesterday afternoon.

Rode down to town. Saw Pope and others. The stable in which their horses were killed (2) and wounded (2) shows only plenty of holes in the roof where the shrapnel bullets went out. The shell exploded in the stable.

Everybody seems to have built some kind of protection. Donegan hard at work at a long trench close alongside the town hall. Met Hyslop who says Bruce is still grousing about having to go out to INTOMBI SPRUIT. Had tea with Northey.

13 November. Uneventful day. Some big gun firing early in the morning and at intervals till about noon, then none till evening. One shell came into gully just below our shelter and burst in the mud doing no harm.

Martin in bed all day - seedy. Working at shelter all day - not yet quite finished. On duty today.

14 November. Firing began very early. Went on to work at shelter. The 5th Lancers and some guns went out to attack Blanbank, but came back after firing many rounds - After that outpost of camp was well shelled - no casualties - Martin still very seedy. I saw part of the firing from the hill behind 60th Camp. 'Long Tom' sent some shells near us - evidently meant for 5th Lancers. Told that shells were dropping freely in the town, one in Royal Hotel Reading Room and one into Valentine's old house blowing up dining room. Several others fell near Market Square and Convent. No casualties so far as we have heard.

Very cold day. - wet evening.

15 November. Some six shells were fired by Boers in night, about 12.30. These are the first shells to be sent in after dark. One came in just behind our camp. So far as known no casualties. Yesterday the only casualty was a volunteer asleep in his tent - had his head taken off early in morning.

About 8.30 began to rain and kept on all day, getting very heavy rain towards evening, stopping our work. One shell fired on each side today and sniping at outposts all day.

Very cold. Martin better - put on S. list from yesterday.

16 November. Fine morning - Hot sun - River up.

Up at 10 a.m. only one shell from Boers - two or three from our Naval Guns. Two balloons up this morning, connected by rope or wire. The rest of the day was very quiet only an occasional shot from big guns. During the afternoon the quick firing gun was heard from time to time in the direction of LOMBARDS KOP. A shell is said to have dropped in the railway station - wounding four railway people. Plenty of rumours - we were to have been relieved today but nothing has come of as yet. Authorities are very reticent.

17 November. Nothing new - Colonel F. Rhodes visited camp. Says 13000 men at ESTCOURT - not likely to be relieved for ten days at least - not much firing today. Walked down to town with G. Martin, saw Pope and others of No. 11 (B.F.H.) Been wet since about 4 p.m. Only one shop open in town. Very few people about. Did a little more work at the shelter. Two greyhound dogs of sorts took up their abode in my tent - evidently abandoned by their masters.

18 November. Much firing early part of the day, then again towards 5 p.m. 4 shells came very near our camp, some pieces of the second one falling in the camp. One bit fell within two feet of Martin's boy who was lying by cook-house. - it went over the mess tent where we were at tea. Did some work on the shelter. Went to see Northey in middle of day. Kellie's horse very fresh.

19 November. Last night between 12 and 1 a good many shells flying about none bursting near us. Most of them seemed to be meant for the old camp - some dozen or so bursting there. I saw Green of the 60th yesterday. He said he received on the 15th inst. a note from a gunner dated ESTCOURT 11th inst. saying they were there but no guns so far. 2nd 60th have changed their position

Went down to town in morning to get mess shopping etc., found everything shut, but Steven's Boot Shop. Got a pair of thick black boots, no brown ones to be got in town. Saw Donegan and crew building shelter by town hall. Then saw Pope and rest of No.11 all grousing. Went on to Railway Station re: sleepers and rails.

Evening went town again with Martin - got some mess stores and 16 eggs - first we have had for over two weeks. As usual no firing all day. Saw marks left by shell through Royal yesterday. It seems Dr. Starr - a civilian naturalist has been very careful to keep out of the way of shells etc., living in a hole in the river bank but yesterday went to Royal earlier than usual and was leaning against verandah post when a shell from Bulwana came in through roof, down staircase and out through the front door, taking off both his legs - he died shortly afterwards.

Several people including some ladies live in holes built in the sandy banks of the river, some of which look pretty extensive judging by the amount of sand thrown into the river bed.

Wagon brought up some strut props and few rails for our shelter to be used for strengthening the roof.

Rumours - that Clery and a Division are at ESTCOURT, but waiting for more guns.

- that Naval guns are both at ESTCOURT and at Pietersmaritzburgh
- that Buller is at Aliwal North waiting for transport.
- that Buller is at Van Reemans.
- that we may not be relieved for another two months.

the 1st is the only remour with any probability of truth.

Saw F. Rhodes, Col D. Cunningham and Riddell of 60th both latter doing very well.

10
20 November. Quiet till 11 a.m. when guns began firing, but nothing near us till about 4 p.m. - when 9 shells passed just over our heads into 18 Hussars. Wounded one severely, two slightly. One of these shells went on rocks just above our camp. Then for some time cross fire went on over us for some time from Blanbank and the howitzer, (40 lbs) to the North East.

At work on the shelter, raising the front wall and fixed up struss to the roof.

Rumours - that Buller is in Pretoria gaol.

- that Clery will not move, but that we shall wait till Buller comes round through Free State.

One of the shell wounds came to see us - Scatches on back and thigh. Clothes much cut. Severe contusion back with paralysis both legs coming on some 15 or 20 minutes after injury - evidently either effusion or haemorrhage into cord - much pain. Other case went to town hall. Third one very slight scalp wound.

21 November. Last night at 11.45 a good deal of firing began and went on for about half an hour. Only one shell going over our camp from a gun to the North East.

Firing began early this morning and went on almost continually all day till 1 p.m., then ceased till about 3 p.m. Only two or three came over us. Most of it was sent down into town, and some sent to Rifles post. One man came in with slight shrapnel wound of hand.

Rather warm today - working still at shelter. Flies very bad today.

18th Hussars moved today to lower down the river - in broad daylight in full view of Bulwana - a continuous stream all day.

Rumour - that Buller is a prisoner at Bloemfontein.

Searchlights at work this evening almost due North West over reservoir in same position as last night.

22 November. A good deal of firing all day long - also some musketry nearly continuous over the other side of King's and Leicester Post. Nothing came very near us till just as we had finished Tiffin, when a shell (probably howitzer) burst in front of a Squadron of 5th Lancers some 50 yards from us throwing some bits of shell into our camp. Only man touched was one of 5th who got a skin scratch on the arm.

Reported that a shell got into Town Hall - no patients there all being hidden in Donegan's shelter. Still at work all day on the shelter - putting layer of stones on top and remaking one of the angles, which had been hastily made of loose stone. - very thin at top.

Rather warm day - after dinner very heavy thunder storm over the Berg and seems to be working up towards us rapidly.

Rumours - that Buller has taken Bloemfontein.

- that 5,000 of his men have collared Van Reenan's Pass.

23 November. Firing all day - many sent into town from Bulwana - started new traverse wall to shelter hospital tents.

- Rumours : - that French has passed through Greytown and retaken Dundee
- that Russia has declared war on England.
 - that the tales re Buller are all rot.

Yet it is said that news of his arrival at Bloemfontein was in Dublin Fusiliers Regimental Orders at ESTCOURT.

Boers are said to have sent 6 wounded Dublin Fusiliers to Intombi Spruit Hospital.

24 November. Good deal of firing in the morning - nothing near us - though Kaffirs allowing cattle to stray near Boer Lines - some 120 collared by enemy, though mounted Infantry made attempt to drive them in and getting only about 50. Appears that no Mounted Guard had been sent out with them to prevent their straying too far.

Much shelling of town from Bulwana especially in afternoon - some nine men of Liverpools wounded from sitting out of cover towards evening. Our people do not seem to learn ordinary caution.

Working at stone wall all day, which has now some 2,500 cu.ft. of stone in it.

- Rumours : - that Buller is at Orange River.
- that there was an engagement at Colenso today
 - that we shall be here at least another month
 - that Clery has not got his guns yet, and has only thirteen guns all told, as yet.

25 November. No firing till late in the afternoon, when a few were sent into Town and some to ridge behind 'Old Camp'. Col. Rhodes says fighting stopped during negotiations as to our receiving some refugees from Transvaal which the General refused to take.

Working at stone wall - finished stone and made way up for throwing earth on top.

- Rumours: - that we stay here till Christmas at least.
- that Buller is only on Free State Border.

It appeared in orders yesterday that information has been received that Hillyard is at ESTCOURT, Clery at Pietersmaritzburg and reinforcements are arriving at Durban daily.

26 November. Sunday. Quiet all day with the exception of some three or four shells in the middle of day, supposed to be sent at some Kaffirs digging trench to bury dead horses.

Went to see Northey - returned books and papers - Then to town - Got books from Pope and stores from Commisarist - Saw all in No.11 Br. Field Hospital. They have had a hard time during the week. Met Codrington, Thompson, McNalty came over to our Camp.

Stone wall nearly finished today. Sods put on dome. Dhooley wallahs working all day in relief parties.

Boers said to be putting a gun on MIDDLE HILL.

Rumours : - that Buller is still in Cape Town.

- that a third Army Corps is on way out.

27 November Very heavy firing in the morning, especially from Middle Hill new gun, 6 inch, which takes the Rifle Bde and Riflemens post in reverse - but no damage done so far as we know, beyond one Indian of Commisarist Establishment killed by a shell which passed through New Hospital building now used as Commisarist Store; and one man of 60th whose face was scratched a little by dust thrown up by a shell.

F. Rhodes came up to photograph our wall and the shelter - At work putting turf and mud covering the stone wall - Very seedy. d- started early in morning.

It is said that Boers go home in batches on 10 to 14 days leave to Transvaal. No particular rumours today.

28 November. Rumours: - heavy Boer defeat at Mooi River. Middle Arch of Colenso Bridge blown up. Boers retreated on Colenso - set fire to it and retired. Five runners got in. 5,000 Boers trickling towards Weenen Country - One Commando going by Middle Hill to TINTA. Long train of Boers depart for HARRISMITH BULWANA and 'Long Tom' said to be being removed.

Facts. Big fire seen last night from our Camp towards the South East. I pointed this out as we were going to bed. The reflection was clear enough in the sky. Long Tom or Bulwana not fired up to 1 p.m. but began hard firing at 3.30. - fired three into old camp - then one at Rifle Bde - then three just close over our heads at Tin Town, 1st 60th; then one into Reservoir or near it. Bulwana fired two into town late in afternoon.

The new gun, six inch, on Middle Hill is the duce - fired at Rifleman's post in reverse, at Rifle Bde, into old Camp, behind reservoir, at Naval Guns Takes most of these in reverse. While it was firing over us at 60th, the howitzer fired over us in opposite direction to the road, Blanbank fired a few into camp. Quiet after 5 p.m.

It seems that the news about fight at Mooi River is true - that the Boers retreated and burned Colenso - Buller successful in Free State. Notice

28 November (Contd.) to this effect posted up in town officially. Everybody more chirpy this afternoon, but this new six inch is beyond a joke - working at turfing well.

29 November. Man died last night from ? Enteric Fever. - first death from disease in this hospital.

Lot of Musketry firing other side of King's post last night - stopped about 11 p.m. - Not much firing in the morning - but two shells 2½ inch dropped just over our heads from the North West falling - one between our tents and the shelter, - second alongside shelter - a third one went a little way up the hill beyond shelter - no more - had to stop work on the wall.

5th Lancers and 5th D.Gs. warned to be saddled up ready to go towards Colenso.

Middle Hill not fired all day - It seems that two of our Howitzers and a Naval gun have kept it out of action all day. Just before dusk a shell from Surprise Hill fell near wagons behind Northey's camp and sent alongish piece near our ponies.

Order tonight for a Force to rendezvous at Little Riflemen's Post at 1 a.m. What they are going to do is not certainly known. Porter and G. Martin go - H. Martin and I to be ready with tongas at 8 a.m. if required.

There being no work, today has been the slowest since the seige began.

Keeping Middle Hill gun quiet has been a blessing - he is said to be Long Tom moved around.

30 November. The scheme for last night was cancelled about 11 p.m. First thing this morning very heavy gun firing on both sides especially on ours - then firing kept up on and off throughout the day, getting more vigorous towards evening, after a bit of a thunder storm.

Five shells from Surprise Hill came over just over us and burst just above our shelter - sent apparently at cattle and horses - wounding five horses grazing - then two came to same spot in evening.

Did no work at wall or shelter today owing to firing.

Newsome (Vet) admitted to Hospital today.

No casualties on our side so far as we have heard.

1 December. Considerable shelling this morning - scarcely any in afternoon. One shell wound came in this morning, and one accidental bullet wound. Reported that Kaffir severely wounded in Gordon's camp this afternoon. Two six inch from Middle Hill just over our camp today. A Hollander conductor told me today that there was a fight between a column of ours and Dutch at ULUNDI, and that our column is coming this way, through HELPMAKAAR, this ought to go down amongst the rumours.

Rumour - that Long Tom's breech blew out, killing and wounding five Boers, yesterday.

No work at wall or shelter, Lazy day. Martin and I went down to see Melton Prior - saw him doing a bit of touching up to a sketch.

2 December. Good deal of firing this morning, then a lull till late afternoon, then a large number of shells from Lombards Kops into town. - ours answered very little. Two shell wounds came in today - one of Irish Fusiliers wound in hand and one from 18 Hussars wound in Tibia - both rather severe.

Pope and No 11 also No 18 moved from twon to a small ravine somewhere near Headquarters. Today got in some work at wall - then rest of day at shelter building up inner wall to 7 or 8 feet high.

Lombards Kop gun sent two pieces of shell only some 150 yards short of us. No others came near us today.

It is intended to build a splinter proof shelter to the wall tomorrow.

Said that the Colenso Column were heliographing to us today.

Rumour: - that Buller is in Pietersmaritzburg and that White told Coxhead so.

Young Martin went out to observation hill last night.

Newsome sent to Intombi Hospital this morning.

3 December. (Sunday) No firing at all today - went down to town in evening with Martin.

An amputation through Knee joint (Porter's case) for shell wound. Working at wall all day. Saw damage to roof of town hall. It is said that we were heliographing to ESTCOURT all day. No definite news. Two correspondents visited camp. Martin is to return to us. P.M.O. visited the Hospital for the first time since we came here.

4 December. Went out to Intombi camp to take amputation camp. Leaving camp at 4.15. train started at 6 a.m. - spent day with Bruces - returned 5 p.m. train. Plenty of squabbling there. Nurses give bother, as do convalescent Officers. Very glad we are not there.

Very cold day - most thing seem satisfactory at Intombi. E.P. tents make very good operating tent. Sterilisers etc., all in good working order. It becomes impressed on one that to run anything approaching a decent operating room - the following personnel - whose all and only work should be in the operating room are necessary:-

4 December (contd)

1. A sister or other person who has an aptitude for the work.
2. An orderly.
3. If possible a sweeper, who should touch nothing but refuse.

1 & 2 are absolutely necessary to the proper working of the thing.

Watched Lombards Kop firing till naval ^{hit} gun parapet - then Bulwana fired several - also a high velocity gun from Bulwana.

5 December. Not very much firing today - Cold wet day - In evening rode to town - got no stores - Saw Pope on way home - A shell dropped some 20 yards away as I was crossing Market Square. So far as we can hear no casualties anywhere today. From a NATAL WITNESS dated 30 November that has come through it seems that Boers are South of Aliwal North and our people under ? Sir C. Warren advancing North of Queenstown to meet them.

Boers at Modder River pushed back by Methuen after three engagements last of which lasted ten hours - understood that we lost about 200 killed - we expect to have Clery through in about 12 days.

6 December. Good deal of firing all morning - One or two from Surprise Hill near us - Scarcely any firing in afternoon except what appears to be a new big gun somewhere a long way off - beyond Telegraph Hill.

Warm day - No rumours today.

7 December. Some firing in morning & then scarcely any till towards evening, when a few more were sent in - heard some firing again apparently in distance towards the South. Two cases of shrapnel wounds in from Royal 1 Fusiliers.

Rode down to town in evening - met nobody - got nothing - everybody shut up.

8 December. Last night some Carbineers and I.L.H. went out. - blew up the Lombards Kop 6 inch and 4.7 and brought in a Maxim. At the same time 19 Hussars went out cut telegraph wires and did other damage. Later on 18 Hussars and 5th Lancers went out and got in a bit of a corner - effected nothing and came back with some 25 to 30 casualties. The Brigadier (Brocklehurst) remained on Observations Hill from whence he could certainly see nothing and give no effectual directions !! The 5th Lancers had to retire and when they had come back two miles they were given orders to retire.

During the day - very little firing - Bulwana fired some dozen or so into the town in afternoon.

A letter in English was found on LOMBARDS KOP, saying we could not last out much longer and expressed surprise that people walked about all day notwithstanding the bombardment.

Rode into town in the evening for whisky, soda water, etc.

8 December (Contd) We had three bullet wounds in today - One Lt. Thackwell 18th Hussars entered just below left iliac crest and I removed bullet from under skin in left thigh. (front). Others in and out both in the back. Third one aslight puncture only of neck.

Hot day.

9 December. Absolutely quiet day till evening about 5 p.m. when Bulwana fired three shots, also one or two smaller guns - Rode to Pay Office then to town (soda water etc.) Met Raymond - we were in town when firing began. Had tea with Raymond.

Warm all day.

10 December. (Sunday) Beyond five shells from Bulwana to Cavalry Camp and a few smaller ones absolutely quiet day. - went to town in morning and then up to Manchester Ridge (Caesar's Camp) with Porter.

Church in evening.

G.O.C. published newspaper reports regarding Methuen's three successful fights. H.P. Northcott amongst the killed - also Fryer's brother. No special news about Clery's Column. It seems that Davis, M.O. of I.L.H. was taken prisoner for an hour or two and taken before Boer Commander - He was put on Parole not to reveal anything he saw.

Bateson up to lunch.

11 December. Last night an attack was made on Surprise Hill by Rifle Bde. Burst up one gun - Had several casualties when retiring, about forty all told. Boers admitted this morning to Sloan, 28 killed. There seems to have been a certain amount of confusion on both sides, - certainly one of our men was wounded by Lee Metford - bullet removed from his neck by Porter. 1 Officer killed.

Good deal of firing in the morning, especially by six inch gun somewhere by Telegraph Hill - then peace all day till about 5 p.m. when they began firing again vigorously - one of our 4.7 replying to Telegraph Hill - after which they did not fire.

Went to town - got advance £5 from paymaster (Field) - Saw Northney.

Hot wind greater part of the day.

One six inch fell about 150 yards behind our camp. Air full of rumours and warnings for flying Columns - Two of our (RAMC) officers detained by Boers for several hours, till staff officer sent out with flag of truce to ask reason - Reply that they were being kept to be interviewed by General.

12 December. Beyond one from our naval 4.7 to the Telegraph Hill gun, which is said to have been hit - and two from Surprise Hill early in morning - No firing all day.

Rode down to see Maling in Rhodes house. Everybody expecting immediate developments.

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13 December. Good deal of heavy firing for greater part of the day, especially from Telegraph Hill gun - Bulwana fired some over town - well up towards King's Post i.e., beyond our range.

At 5 p.m. Inspection parade of Hospital packed for moving in 18th Hussars old camp ground. At first assembled in old camp - but few shells from Telegraph Hill caused move to the Cavalry Bridge, after dispersing three shells were sent to the transport wagons, and one from Thorn Hill to the Hospital, which burst in the middle of large number of people. Result one Dhoooley bearer lost an eye, and one assistant storekeeper cut about the face with bits of stone and shell. Others got raps from stone and dust - Self Porter and Young Martin included - all sitting at door of my tent.

Heard a lot of heavy gun firing in morning towards Colenso way - but no news of what it was.

14 December. Firing in morning into town from BULWANA and all day at intervals from Telegraph Hill - only one being sent over towards Town end of the camp.

Only one casualty as far as we have heard - a man of 5th Lancers hit on shoulder.

It is said that our people at Colenso shelled Boers out of this position and are crossing the river today - though we heard some big guns firing down there again today.

15 December Plenty of firing both from BULWANA and Telegraph Hill - nothing very near us. Latter stopped about 11 a.m. Our Howitzers are said to have silenced it. Also heard a great deal of firing towards Colenso. It is said that we have nine inch guns at Colenso.

Rumoured that Gatacre lost his stores at STORMBERG first day. That five Boers that should have kept Surprise Hill gun have been tried and hanged. The Boers say (by means of a flag of truce man) that they will be in Ladysmith on Christmas Day - they think we are very short of food.

Heard of no casualties today - Heavy thunderstorm in afternoon - All servants neglected our tents - everything got wet.

16 December Lot of fire last night about 11 p.m. None of our people out so Boers must have been firing at phantoms, cows or themselves - lasted about 20 minutes. Dignaans Day today - very vigorous bombarding both into town and camp from daylight till about 9 a.m., then practically ceased till evening - when a little took place - Casualties, man of 19th Hussars on Patrol killed, a gunner and a sapper by shell. Valentine's horse had head taken off by shell - one shell went into town hall - Bruces old office.

Went into town after seeing Marling - lot of people about, and every shop open. Saw Maxwell about a set of reprints of the 'Lyre'.

Tales and Rumours:- that Methuen had victory at SPITZFONTEIN, fourteen miles from KIMBERLEY.

- that he killed 2,000 Boers and lost 200 including General Wanchope and fifteen of the 42nd.

16 December (contd.)

Rumours and Tales:- that Buller at Colenso has knocked the Boers badly. No official confirmation.

It is said to be a fact that Boer Ambulances were seen making their way towards Colenso.

17 December. No firing today - An order published today says that Buller has not been successful at Colenso and that reinforcements cannot be expected just yet - Everyone a bit depressed at the news - it is now expected that we may be here another month at least.

Enteric fever is going up apace - some 600 cases of all sorts in Intombi Camp.

Began to lengthen the big wall after lunch today - making a very fair start.

18 December. No news today - heavy firing both morning and evening - One or two from 6 inch coming very near us. In the morning some eight pieces fell in amongst our tents from one shell - doing no harm, though we were standing about.

One BULWANA shell killed four, wounded seven and killed and wounded several horses of Carbineers - no other casualties from town heard of.

One man, Howitzer Battery, brought in in evening - very slight shell wound thigh. Enteric fever grows apace still.

Did a lot of work to wall - extension is 44 feet long.

19 December. No news - heavy firing in morning and again in the evening Made good progress with wall extension - No casualties as far as we know. Everybody very 'down' The general impression now being that Buller has no Big Guns with him.

20 December. No news - but it is generally accepted as true that Buller lost 10 guns and had 750 casualties in his first engagement. It is rumoured that he made a night attack early in the morning and captured seven Boer Guns.

Went to Intombi Camp - taking Gough of 5th Lancers. Everybody there very glum.

Plenty of logger heads - everything seems to be at sixes and sevens - food very short, both for patients and staff. 11 deaths in the last 24 hours (nine from Enteric fever) Wound cases all doing very well. Cold day.

Some new guns (amongst them a new 4.7 on Surprise Hill) at work today - On way back met Currie who introduced me to a Mr. Yorke who is to try and get through tonight - had three minutes to scratch a few lines to K and gave it to Yorke to post.

Town Hall tower hit today also remarkable escape of a N.P. (Natal Policeman) who was shaving. Six inch shell passed between him and his glass,

20 December (contd) bursting some three paces behind him. No casualties today as far as we know. Good progress made with wall and splinter shelter during the day.

BULWANA dropped one in the river bed near our camp and Telegraph Hill dropped some splinters round the camp.

21 December More or less firing Morning and evening - BULWANA - being very busy on the town - managed to hit the General's house and scattered the Headquarters Mess.

Enteric getting worse every day.

At work finishing the wall - said that good news has come in from Buller by Heliograph.

New guns are said to be going up all round - Heard good deal of firing down towards Colenso in the morning.

22 December. A bad day. In the morning while we were at Breakfast a six inch shell fell and burst amongst 5th Lancers alongside us and wounded five Officers - all slight except Colonel Faucett and 1 Sgt. Major - killed four horses. Two or three burst over the dhoolley bearers and we had to stop work on the wall. Another shell killed five Gloucesters and wounded five more.

An order published yesterday says that on 15th inst. Five to Six hundred Boers were killed and wounded. Nothing about our losses.

Enteric fever is still getting worse. We had twenty seven admissions today - most probably Enteric fever.

Good deal of shelling both morning and evening.

Dhanji has fever this evening (He was MPH's Indian Servant)

23 December. No news. Went into town - firing began again unexpectedly about 12.30 Saw Dartnell for the first time - plenty of firing in the evening again Bulwana sent two over our heads which dropped into river just about 100 yards beyond us. No damage done. No particular rumours. F. Rhodes prophesies we shall be here this day month. "Job".

24 December. Peaceful Sunday - Went for a ride with Porter - first, to see Hilliard - then to Caesars Camp. - very nice up there - Can see a long way around. See two separate Boer Camps.

Went to town directly after lunch for soda water. Everything else shut. Young Weld has enteric - Currie goes back to Intombi tomorrow.

25th December. Christmas Day. - which the Boers did not observe - fired at 5 a.m. just behind our camp from Bulwana. None from Telegraph Hill - none of the other guns fired. Hot day. Started building the third section of the wall. Made good progress - P.M.O. and Bateson dined with us - Brought two bottles of champagne chestnuts and their own plates, cups, knives and forks. The pudding was far too heavy - as was expected. General idea of success much brighter, but no definite news.

26 December. Not very much firing - one from Telegraph Hill near us, also one from small gun on Bulwana went over to Tin Camp - working at wall and lengthened pipe verandah.

Warmish day - storm at dinner time - very little rain - News that Gatacre has had a success and that Warren is at SPRINGFIELD and Clery at some place to the East of us. Also that Howitzer battery has reached Frere.

27 December. Good many shells in the morning - then in the afternoon unusually vigorous bombarding all round. Still working at wall rather slowly.

Rumours: - that French has got round and has cut railway at WASCHBANK
- that we shall be out of this by 15 January.

In order today that Gatacre has dispersed a rebel force at Disdrecht - 40 miles East of Molteno.

A shell got into Devons mess at breakfast time. Killed one (Dalzeill) and wounded seven others. - two dangerously.

28 December. Not much firing today - Bulwana did not fire all day - Porter sick with Dysentery - Got orders at 10.15 p.m. to go out to Intombi tomorrow morning for temporary duty. Lot of rifle fire about midnight last night. Supposed to be Dutch only.

29 December. Came to Intombi by morning train to do duty with 26 British Field Ambulance till Morder comes then to help in Bruce's (stationary) Hospital. Only some two hours work in morning - and that only convalescence cases.

Bulwana fired today into town. Our 4.7 each loosed off a round at Bulwana about 11 or 12 p.m.

No news of developments.

First impressions. Every patient should be on a bed or extemporized bed boards to raise them at least eighteen inches off the ground. This could easily have been done with a small amount of forethought.

At least fifty beds should have been prepared before hand in advance of present requirements from day to day.

Tentage very short - tin huts could easily have been sent out - only a matter of scraping together pioneers from the different regiments. Many tents here are absolutely rotten and not weather proof - Steady rain since about 5 p.m. Camp flooded.

All tents where bedsteads are not provided should have been raised; only a matter of labour - which, however, is very scarce.

Hand trolleys from the railway station or stores in town would save an enormous amount of labour carting about Soda Water etc., etc., etc.

30 December. Plenty of work 6 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. and half an hour after dinner. - No sitting down. Most of the underlings are either over-worked or very lazy. Could wet afternoon. Took over Officers wards - Medical and Surgical - Some seventy odd cases, with the exception of five or six all severe.

31 December. At work all day - till dinner at 7. Nothing eventful Price DENT died in morning. At pm Left hemisphere disorganised - piece of shell in brain.

Trephing would not have been of any avail.

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1900

1 January. Plenty of work. Coffin X-rayed, found nothing. All others doing well except Dr. Salmon - enteric fever.

Boers were saluting New Year last night with big guns and rifles. Some heavy guns firing Colenso at 10 p.m. No new sick came in today.

2 January. Examined Coffin under CH CL 3 found track leads across axilla and there are two foreign bodies lying near anterior fold - there incised and removed larger weights 5 oz. $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, jagged. Outer edge of scapula smashed, also humerus as far as three inches below surgical neck. It does not appear that joint is opened.

Nothing else of note - plenty of work - lunch with Currie.

3 January. Settling down to work - Coffin's discharge so bad that cannot dress any other cases.

Rumour: - that Boers have had a hard rub.

Doubtful how much longer we shall be here, 15 or 30 days.

Wet evening.

4 January. Nothing eventful - work all day till 10.30 p.m. Tried to fit up spring beds with bolts sent out too short.

Coffin doing well - Three bad enteric cases - took over fifty beds enteric cases.

5 January. Handed over fifty enteric beds to Dr. Harding. Platt and Russell both very bad all day. Former died at 7.30 p.m. latter at 11 p.m. both from Cardiac failure - small doses of morphia and full dose of strychnine failed to help heart beat.

6 January The spring mattresses to go back - no use without fitted bolts. Coffin doing fairly well.

Boers made apparently very vigorous attack on Caesar's Camp from west side. Began about 3 a.m. and went on all day till dusk. Appears they were driven off Bulwana gun fired about 100 shells nearly all at Caesar's Camp. Also some shelling at Devon Post. There was very heavy musketry kept up more or less all day. No news from Colenso.

7 January. The attack on Caesar's Camp was very determined but unsuccessful, began soon after 2 a.m. Boers got in behind our pickets it is said, before being discovered - were driven off and then made another attack after daylight but cleared off by 5 p.m. Were followed down to valley - our losses very heavy and Boer losses much more so. Dick Cunningham wounded by stray bullet just after leaving camp, before going into action. Codrington wounded ? stomach and arm.

7 January (contd) I.L.H. lost very heavily - They and Gordons did well.

Today we only got one wounded Officer - face wound - not severe. Some five men came to us. Four wagon loads of Boers dead were handed over by our people to Boers this evening just inside Intombi Camp boundary. 20 in each. They all came from N.E. side of Caesar's Camp - known to be very many more. The fight was very severe - expect to hear more news tomorrow. Heavy days work as usual.

8 January. Very heavy day. Nine Officers, fifty three men wounded brought in. Operating theatre going from 8.30 a.m. till 10.15 p.m. Not able to begin regular rounds till 12.45 a.m. at work all day. Discharged Turner.

Nearly all enteric fever doing well - moved Byrne into enteric ward.

Our losses for Saturday said to be 114 killed, 240 wounded - Boers reported at 12 to 13 hundred killed and wounded.

P.M.O. says that Buller will be up in 30 days. 1161 cases in Hospital. Porter improving very slowly.

9 January. Good day's work 6.30 till 7.15 and one hour night visit. No wounded out today - no news about Codrington - message from Gallways by Perreau - Hear that Bird's horse fell with him.

Cases all doing well except perhaps Coffin X-ray Fawcett.

10 January Another long days work - Assisted at disarticulation at Shoulder. Not able to begin ordinary rounds till after lunch, finished at 10.45 p.m. Took out two more pieces probably the last from Coffin's humerus. Orders tonight to rejoin No 24 tomorrow.

Buller confidently expected before next Monday ? is it true

11 January. Handed over cases - did dressings and returned to Ladysmith 5 p.m. No news - lots of old tales. Buller's loss at Colenso it seems was 300 killed 60 Officers killed and wounded - 600 wounded and 300 missing. 10 guns lost much more severe than anything we had.

12 January. Took over some 30 cases - including one compound fracture thigh Operation under ether. Extracted bullet and set thigh - drain (see op. notes) Otherwise nothing to do. Quiet day. Codrington put next to me and handed over.

13 January. Very little firing - rode down to town - Had lunch with P.M.O. and tea with McNulty.

Thigh case doing very well.

14 January. Finished work 12. Went down to Medical Stores. Afternoon rode to Wagon Hill with McDermott - rather too late to see much picked up some cartridge cases - Mauser and Martini - Codrington 99.2

15 January. Nothing much to note, some work - Baden-Powell said to have had a check somewhere up North, and Warren's force said to be this side of TUGELA (river) up Springfield way.

16 January. Nothing eventful - Rumours from P.W.D. that French surrounded and had to surrender near Colesberg - Nothing from Buller today.

17 January. Heavy firing all day from before dawn to evening towards Springfield. No news as to the result - very little firing in Ladysmith today. - On duty - not out - No news of any importance. The tale re French seems to be that some four companies of Suffolk got into a mess a day-break and had to surrender. 20 killed and 30 wounded.

18 January. Heavy firing all day towards Springfield again. Went down town in morning - Saw McNulty - Afternoon rode with Martin to Wagon Hill - saw our shells dropping near Boer Camp about 12 miles away.

19 January. Nothing eventful - Buller said to have crossed Tugela with 1600 men - with the loss of only four - taken 20 Boer prisoners. Heavy firing in Colenso direction. - Telegraph Hill busy all day.

20 January. Nothing much in the way of firing - Telegraph Hill did not fire - Buller's crossing with some 20,000 men said to be confirmed. Also message from Buller to say Ladysmith will be relieved - as if there had been some doubt about it before.

Supplies seem to be running short - Men's and horse's rations further cut down.

Rather warmer day than usual - Storm and cooler in the evening.

21 January. Peaceful day here - but much firing at Colenso.

Very seedy all day then slept on R. arm getting some paralysis. Right forearm extensors - Hot day - violent storm towards evening.

22 January. Some firing from Telegraph Hill - Buller firing on and off all day and at 9 p.m. No news. - Not feeling much better - hand still weak.

23 January. Our guns began all round firing early in morning - Scarcely any reply - Telegraph Hill dropped one in river just near us. One 5th Lancer slightly wounded. Then Bulwana carried on into town rest of the morning and a bit in evening. No fresh news of Buller - who was firing greater part of the day.

Helio through from K. asking if well - able to answer back "Perfectly well".

Got 1 doz eggs for Porter 21/6 - shortly afterwards sold for 31/6 - eight shillings for a pot of jam etc., etc.

Feeling nearly alright again today.

24 January. Nothing eventful here - Buller said to have taken part of Boers Right reverse flank. Guns firing down towards Springfield and Colenso all day.

Young Martin very seedy - Letter from Porter says he is better.

25 January. Telegraph Hill busy in the morning, shelling Tin Camp. Pieces of most of the shells dropping near us, then quiet all day.

We are said to have taken the Boers position - but they got their laagers away early in the morning.

This evening 60 English prisoners are said to be marching towards railway in direction of Modder Spruit.

No news from outside.

26 January. Not much firing except Telegraph Hill in morning. Davies came up to consult on Codrington - Rode to town before lunch, scarcely anyone about Saw Maxwell - Town appeared almost deserted - No news today.

27 January. Telegraph Hill busy in morning - Bulwana fired in evening - first time since Thursday.

It is now understood that Buller got the ridge in daytime but that Boers retook it during the night - if so Buller's second knock.

Rode town in morning, very few people about - only a few soldiers and sailors. Some civilian workshops going violently.

Storm just after dinner.

28 January. (Sunday) Quiet day - no firing here nor heard from Buller Much heliographing said to have come in - All sorts of rumours : that Buller has asked Roberts if he is to push on or wait - men here are no doubt getting played out and a little fit for defence against a vigorous attack.

300 horsesto be shot tomorrow to save rations - In morning rode round old camp - little in the way of damage to be seen from shells. After lunch rode down to town - Got some tobacco (leaf) from ASC. Saw Donegue, Ludlow Melton Prior, Clarke (MP.) Nobody has any news.

29. January. Nothing much in the way of firing except from Bulwana busy on town in morning - Rode down to town before lunch - Nearly everything shut up - Borrowed book from Proctor - No news.

It is said that Roberts is finding things easy in Free State border - which nobody seems to believe.

30 January. Very little firing today - Few shots in Buller's direction heard in evening.

Storm came on 3 a.m. last night - Cold wet day.

26
30 January (contd.) No news but it is said that Buller used words "Shamefully abandoned" re Spion Flop the other night, when cabling home.

Rations arranged to last another 42 days - rations to be cut down - part biscuit issued in place of bread.

31st January. Plenty of firing today, more than usual lately - Heard firing Buller's direction today which did not last long.

No news in so far as we can hear. 5th Lancers mounted squadron brought in their tents to stay alongside us today.

1 February. Nothing new - good deal of firing today especially from Telegraph Hill - few guns heard Springfield way - Davies came up again re Codrington. Decided for present not to aspire.

2 February. Several newspapers have come in and it seems from then that men behaved well enough on Spion Kop day, but that in place of waiting for reinforcements and guns in the evening after lying under severe shell fire all day, they were ordered to retire after dark - so the whole day was thrown away. Lancashire Fusiliers said to have been one of the Regiments that took the Hill. Our losses said to have been 500 killed - It now appears quite indefinite when we shall be relieved - if at all by Buller, who is said to have retreated over the Tugela.

Had a bad night last night - Colic all day.

Changed V I for V R II Curiosities from Dr. Proctor.

3 February. Very little firing all day - feeling much better but still weak - A Brigade said to have crossed at Keals Drift, and we are said to be expecting attack by Ration Post.

Bruce said to be ill.

4 February (Sunday) Quiet day as usual - Rode to town with Harrison - saw George, Donegan, Dr. Proctor - went to church - McPherson preached.

An attack is confidently expected tonight, probably on Ration Post of Observation Hill - all preparations, Medical and others made - seems to be intense disappointment among Colonials and residents at Buller's non-success and tardy relief, also at bad arrangements generally.

Have enough grain to feed two horses for three months at half rationed saved.

5 February. Buller firing all day till 4 p.m., when all firing seemed to cease. An hour or so later a few smaller guns could be heard - all anxious to know whether he has succeeded or not - if not we are probably up a tree.

Bulwana fired a bit but none from Telegraph Hill.



24 ^{MAN} BRITISH FIELD HOSPITAL - LAANYSMITH

This photograph was taken early in February 1900. The wall was 51 yards long by 21 to 23 feet thick - Built by the hospital staff. Both MPM and the younger Martin went down with enteric fever a few days after the taking of this photograph.

6 February. Reported that Mafeking is relieved and that Colesberg (Dutch) has fallen - Buller firing on and off all day - Sounds either more distant or field guns- not large ones. Evening rode to town. Saw eggs sold at two shillings and two shillings and eightpence each. Jam - local make, eight to twelve shillings a pot etc., etc.

Saw Pope on the way home.

7 February. Buller again firing all morning up till about 2 p.m. or so. No news reached us - though a Helio has come through - Some firing at Caesar's Camp today.

Feeling very seedy all day 99.4.

8 February. In bed all day - feverish - Guns heard to Spion Kops way - No news in so far as we have heard.

9 February In bed - put on sick list - fever all day 103 at 10 p.m.

10 February Feeling better today - less headache and bachache 102. No authentic news in.

Rations further cut down - Everybody said to be very depressed.

11 February. Had a bad night, but feeling better now. Pope came over to see Hospital for the first time.

12 February. Feel if anything a little better - bad night.

13 February. No better % still high temperature but no special symptoms.

14 February. No better - no worse, only very much weaker. No abdominal pain or tenderness.

There does not seem to be a word of news known authentically. It is said Buller is building a bridge out of range of guns and that all is going well - but it is duced slow.

15 February. Some good news published in order concerning both Buller and others. Buller it seems it took two hills on ? 5th and has stuck to them.

Am much better today - did not go over 101 during the heat of the day, but ran over 102 in evening. Peculiar result from dose of over 1 oz Brandy - Severe dys.

16 February. Felt much better all day - no news of Buller but Kimberley relieved and French has captured some laagers - Roberts at Jacobsdal.

17 February. Feeling much the same - very weak. Temperature ran up once during the day. Nothing from Buller. Relief of Kimberley confirmed Cronje in retreat.

18 February (Sunday) No better - moved into Foss's house.

The noise of booted louts walking on uncovered board floor is awful after the peace of a tent. It is now given out that Buller retired on

18 February (contd) Colenso after finding that his two positions were under fire from a 6" and 4.7"

19 February. Little better. House cooler than tent but do not get so much draught. In afternoon Bulwana's first eight shots were in this direction - so I intent to get out of this tomorrow. Not good enough to be helpless in bed with these darn things flying about. The whistles bell and bugle all round giving signals are the worst part of it.

20 February. Very cool morning - moved back to camp - duced glad to get back - feel better, very cold day - wanted hot bottle in afternoon.

21 February. Still improving - Normal this morning - Cool day.

Heard Bulwana firing some in Convent direction - two fell near iron bridge - no further news of Buller.

22 February. Still doing well - some good news about Buller who is making progress - Bradbant has taken DOIDRECHT, Cronje almost surrounded 30 miles east of Jacobsdal. Gatacres position much the same. Roberts pushing on to Bloemfontein - report has it that Roberts is already there.

23 February. Improving, getting hungry - Heavy gun firing nearly all day Colenso - up till 4 p.m. then from 5.30 or so till just after dark.

24 February. Feeling better - but very weak. Scarcely any firing at Colenso so far as I can hear, but general idea is that news is good.

25 February. (THERE IS NO ENTRY)

26 February. Doing well - Normal all day - hungry. Some firing heard Colenso way.

27 February. Getting on - shaved today - Grand news last night about Conje. Definite 1700 killed and wounded, 8,000 prisoners including Cronje wagons stores and everything.

LATER. the news re Cronje was false - as a matter of fact he did not surrender till this morning, it is now said, and so far nothing is known as to his killed and wounded, nor numbers.

28 February. Still normal. Our guns firing in the afternoon at Boers working at getting Bulwana guns away with a derrick. Boers seen in retreat all day, and our guns busy on them. Am told that helio from Buller to say knocked them hard yesterday (Majuba Day) and following up.

A party of Imperial Light Horse and Carbineers managed to get in from Buller's side this evening - Great cheering all round.

1 March. Boers trecking all day - our guns firing at them. They got Bulwana Gun away at 3 p.m. yesterday.

Buller himself and 13th Hussars said to have come in. Cavalry said to be harrying boers - no doubt about their being in retreat.

Post goes out at 3 p.m. today. Codrington came up. Wagons expected in tomorrow, and so the seige is at an end.

1 March (contd.) Am going on well - put on some clothes and sat up in a chair for an hour for the first time. Posted to K. Post going at once.

2 March. Buller passed through Intombi yesterday and is still here today.

Sat up for 1½ hours.

3 March. Rations already improving - some bread today - had my first tub today for over three weeks. - A.1.

Lot of Buller's troops came in. Ladysmith Garrison lined the road - moved Hospital in to Tim Camp - a rotten change - Saw Todd, who is P.M.O. Buller's Cavalry Brigade. 1st Dragoons, 13th and 14th Hussars and "A" R.H.A.

4 March (Sunday) Going on alright - don't seem to pick up strength very quickly.

Boers said to be entrenching on BIZZARSBERG.

Buller's force all out beyond and in Ladysmith. Line not open yet. Received papers from W.J.B. - Pope came in - sent two bottles of beer. Jones joined Hospital - brought me a big tin of Dried eggs - got some cigarettes from Martin.

5 March. Gaining ground - no news - Everything seems to be in a bit of a muddle. We don't know whether or not we are going down country.

Pope, Todd and Codrington came to see me.

Wrote out Codrington's wound certificate - to be copied and sent to him through office.

6 March. Going on - first bread today - big mail in last night. - Letters from K. (Oct & Nov) W.J.B., Grace. Also received writing case from K. (this is now in my possession) and valise from W.J.B.

Cronje's loss seems to have been terrible.

This morning three large mailbags of newspapers, magazines, books, etc., busy all day opening them.

7 March. Finished opening picture papers only - cannot tackle rest yet.

Only news is that this Hospital is to be moved to Colenso in ten days time.

Had lot of pain in evening - could take no food - weighed 8st. 10 lbs.

8 March. Lot of trouble today - but feeling better in evening - taking little less food, but better towards evening.

9 March. Much better - only wanting more food - All Field Hospitals are rapidly getting choked, and as yet none are able to get down country. Most of Buller's force gone on - reported skirmish at Elandsgate.

10 March. Getting on but slowly - Quaker oats for the first time.

11 March (Sunday) Got clothes on in morning - went to pay visit to Carter. Afternoon walked to Raymond's quarters - sent horse for Vallancey to see - no news beyond what is in papers - that Roberts has them (Boers) on the run.

12 March. Going ahead - small piece of bread and butter. No news - beyond seeing Pietermaritzburg newspaper - that Roberts is keeping Boers on move at Ofontein. No news from Natal front - Note from Vallancey to say that he will take the horse for £40.

13 March. Still no news - Nothing from Vallancey. Some thousand convalescents are to go to Mooi River. A convalescent Medical Officer wanted to take charge - which could not be a bad job, but I am not fit yet.

14 March. Weighed 8 st. 11 lbs. gain 1 lb only.

No news beyond papers - Kruger and Steyn have asked for peace - conditions refused by Salisbury. A Boer force is still entrenched in a British Colony and still besieging a British town (Mafeking) !! Hail Storm.

15 March. Had bad night - had to get up 1 a.m. and then an hour after vomited - apparently result of eating a small piece of calves head and some potato. Still a little pain this morning which lasted all day.

16 March. Feeling alright again. No news beyond newspapers.

17 March. No news - getting on A.1. Ate meat for the first time.

18 March. Feeling much stronger - walked with Martin to where our Howitzers were. about three quarters of a mile. No news beyond report that Mafeking is relieved.

19 March. Am on full diet - went to town in tonga. Paid some bills for mess. Got box from Tathams - went Bank, etc., Came back tired at 3.15. Evening went for a ride on PICCONE. Put in application for three weeks leave.

20 March. Leave received this evening - Rode to town on PICCONE - felt very tired.

Hot wind and plenty of dust all day.

21 March. Weighed 9st. 4 lbs. - increase 7 lbs.

7.40 left Ladysmith on leave for three weeks.

(This leave was spent in Pietermaritzburg with friends)

A matter of interest against the date 7 April, is that he wrote to Holt and Co. the Bankers in London, about sending pay to India.

14 April he was again admitted to Grey's Hospital in Pietermaritzburg - discharged on 19 April and returned to Ladysmith on 25th, and still noting some Cardiac pain.

1 May. Ordered to proceed at once to Hospital Ship Dunera, left
Ladysmith next day.

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