

Diary, 23 Oct-11 Dec 1899, while attached to the Highland Division, which was decimated by the Boers at the Battle of Magersfontein. With transcripts

Publication/Creation

1899

Persistent URL

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/nhakmmeq>

License and attribution

You have permission to make copies of this work under a Creative Commons, Attribution, Non-commercial license.

Non-commercial use includes private study, academic research, teaching, and other activities that are not primarily intended for, or directed towards, commercial advantage or private monetary compensation. See the Legal Code for further information.

Image source should be attributed as specified in the full catalogue record. If no source is given the image should be attributed to Wellcome Collection.



Wellcome Collection
183 Euston Road
London NW1 2BE UK
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722
E library@wellcomecollection.org
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

1899

RAMC 1153/1 (1)

Oct: 23rd

Left Southampton about 6 pm. S.S. Aurania
with H.L.I. 11th Co R.I. 250 m. I & Mrs B Co
Anchored below netley - Thick fog.

Oct: 24th

11 a.m. Fog lifted. Hawarden Castle just
astern. Passed the Needles about 12.
Lovely day

Oct 25th Another fine day - a little roll

Oct 26th Still fine and calm.

Oct 27th Saw four flying fish.

Passed Madeira - All covered in clouds -
in the evening

Oct 28th Lots of flying fish and a whale.

Oct 29th Getting very hot. Food very good.
Man overboard at night - Threw

lighted lifebuoys - Drained

Oct: 30th St. Vincent 8 a.m.

Crowds of niggers rowed in boats at once -

Diving for pennies - & selling fruit -

Coal barges loaded with niggers came up -

Very leisurely coaling -

H. M. S. Dædæm lying close to us -

Went ashore - Town very dear - very hot -

no trees - all volcanic -

Cricket match between Telegraph people & R. E.

In the evening read news of wreck of Lady Smith

Bluejackets sent over to coal - Great enthusiasm

awful night of heat & coal dust -

Oct 31st - Amusing scene with niggers -

still coaling - 1800 tons on board

Ordered to leave at once 4 p.m. -

Three transports arrived in the night -

steamed out between them & the Dædæm

Great cheering & a very fine sight -

Coaled at night - Self & everything
black -

1800 tons on board & ready to leave

Oct 31st at 4 p m.

The Mongolian - Oriental -
& Pavonia arrived to coal -

Steamed out between them & the
Diadem most enthusiastic scene

Auld Lang Syne & other tunes aboard

Got outside - still calm & very hot.

Nov 1st Calm & very hot -

Nov 2nd Rolling a little.

Nov 3rd Passed equator in night -

into the S. E. Trade -

Nov 4th

" 5th all the same sort of days

" 6th hot in morning & midday -
cold at night -

" 7th

Nov^{8th} stiff breeze. pitching
rolling as ship is tight

Nov^{9th} Passed the castle line
mail steamer close to us -
pitching heavily.

Nov^{10th} Very rough -

Nov^{11th} calmer - in sight of land.
Table mountain looking very
fine in the distance -

Entered the bay about 11-a.m.
+ waited pilot -

Passed the Yorkshire going to Durban
with Troops.

Got into the docks - alongside the wharf -
a difficult business with so big a ship.
were ordered to disembark at once and
proceed to De Aar! just south of the Orange
River.

Line cut out of hill side in a wonderful way - curious rock cuttings & doubtful looking banks & bridges.

Hill sides bare rock mostly. covered with odd looking cactuses & some very pretty stuff like heather.

Reached the Triangle - at 1.30. Men got hot water for soupo tea - Had lunch.

Passed two pickets of Cape Mounted Police - very smart looking fellows.

Went on down hill to Townsriver large camp of C. M. P. guarding water supply.

Farmers about said to be disaffected.

Reached Malgasfontein for dinner.

Men all fed. - J. D. Logan asked Gen. Wauchope & officers in train to dine with him. Excellent dinner viz. Liquor - cigars. exceedingly kind of him - Heard that the train

might be fired on in the night armed 4
picket of R.E. on train

again very cold night

Nov: 13th. Reached Victoria ^{Camp of Dep: of H.L.I.} Wed. ^{afternoon}

through a very rough bit of line at 9.30 a.m.

Stopped for breakfast. Hot tea & soup for the men

Left at 10.45 a.m. On the top of a plateau

4000 feet up land covered with a heathery

looking growth. Passed several strich

farms. Enormous flocks of sheep and

goats to be seen here & there watched by

natives & a few

Reached De aar at 2.45 p.m.

R.E. went on to Orange River

Got our kit out - & pitched a camp - Very

hot & dusty - Curious whirlwinds of dust -

Yorkshire L.I. here - 1 batt: R.A. - Large

numbers of mules & Ponies & tons of stores

Got dinner at station -

Taunted guard - + went to bed v. tired.

It: cold in night: Blankets fell off. & wind blowing through tent - Hardly slept at all -

Nov. 14th

Got up early - + looked round the place - still very cold - Sun high about 8 a.m. and becoming warmer - Very hot by 10 a.m. Had breakfast + paraded + told off the men to their stations.

Got some lime juice & oranges - at a store. Food rather expensive, especially anything fresh.

Very hot in the middle of the day. Half the Goldstream Guards went through to Orange River -

Heard that there were very few Boers at Belmont -

Nov 15th Slept better - extra blankets \5
and night a little warmer -

Dilled the men - Day very hot
with a slight thundershower -

If we bucked up about our transport
I think we might get on to Grange River
but our G.O. seems to prefer to stay with
Genl. Wauchope & his brigade, to which
we rightfully belong.

Nothing to do most of the day - wrote
letters & read.

Nov 16th Rest of Goldstream & Scots Guards
went through - Day very hot indeed -

Tried to get our horses from the
transport lines, but didn't manage
it. Watched them branding the
mules - Heard that the Stationmaster at
Richmond had been shot as a spy, but
doubt it -

Nov: 17th - Awful dust storms -

Black Watch here - Very hot in middle of the day & getting very sick of the air. Telegram in afternoon to leave at 8 a.m. for Orange River on

Nov 18th - Very pleased -

Up at 4 a.m. - Struck Tents and packed - got to station, and had to wait two hours whilst Goldstream Grand train to which we were attached had breakfast - Our men packed in open cattle trucks - damned shame - no other corps w^d be treated so -

Got to Orange River St: at 2:30 - Very hot - and a great bustle of mules - horses, wagons everywhere -

Our camp across the bridge - The men marched over at once and

I was left with a fatigues to throw
over the baggage - met several fellows
I knew.

Did not get wagons over till 6 p.m. owing
to the Guards Mess. stuff blocking the
bridge - Started about 6:30 -

awful crush on the bridge - Took
45 mins. to get over - and then started
cross country for our camp. Could not
find it in the dark - got in at ten
dead tired - and got well cursed
for my pains - Went to bed and
slept like a top.

Mon 19th Found ourselves behind the
Guards camp next to No 7. ~~Hospital~~
Had Breakfast - Selected a rice pony -
Went into Station to try & get a
chagul & some limejuice - Water & had

Got to bed early - & had a good night
Nov 20th fresh Thunderstorm in the night
Dust laid & much cooler -

Orders came to put all heavy baggage in the
train at the bridge end & that we
were marching out at 1.30 next
morning. 1 waterproof sheet & $\frac{1}{2}$ a
blanket per man - Officers to wear
no badges of rank or medal ribbons -
Buttons to be dulled -

Infantry Officers to carry rifles sharp & to
like the men -

Was sent to get our ambulances at
12 a.m. at the station - Very hot -
Very dry - Very exasperating -
Did not get back to camp till
5.30 P.M.

P.M.O. & Burchell to dinner. Tent to

17
Struck - Order to leave at 1.30 a.m.
cancelled - to 4.15 a.m.

Lay on ground + slept an hour or
two.

Nov 21st - Marched out 4.30 a.m. in
rear of the ninth Brigade -
5th Fusiliers Northampton - York & L.I..
L. N. H.

Baggage etc followed us -

mules rather unmanageable at first
but reached Wittebult all right about
11 a.m.

Camped there close to railway -
Gstrich farm.. excellent water -
about six miles from Belmont
Farm which can be seen from the
Kopje behind the camp.
Slept under a wagon and was

bitten by a centipede in the back -
Caught him in my shirt - great
pain for several hours

Nov 22nd - Got up early, washed & shaved -
Day very hot - Got orders to move
off at 1 4:30 p.m. to Belmont Farm
Artillery galloped out at 3 p.m.
great cheering -

Column marched in six lines -
ourselves behind the ninth brigade -
Baggage in centre -

Watched the shells from the guns ahead
bursting over Belmont Station -
Got to camp at 7:30 - Pitch dark -
awful confusion - General in an
ambulance. Did not get to bed till
12 p.m. Slept on a stretcher -

Up at 1:30 a.m. Mules in parade

Nov: 23rd Sent to get the general ambulance
& P.M.O.s - One stretcher rotten canvas -
remarked upon by Lord M.

Started at 3 a.m. took the other ambulance -
Pitch dark - moved out to the right &
found ourselves in the firing line of the
guards waiting for daylight -

Turned back and came out on to veldt -
on the road to Belmont Station just as the
artillery began to shell Table Mountain
far below the railway -

Ninth Brigade moving round to the left to
attack Table Mountain - Dutch position very
strong one a line of kopjes - $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 miles -
with all ranges etc marked - absolutely
no cover for our men -

Nearly moved up to station with wagons &
stretcher bearers - Terrible firing - 6 a.m.

mounted orderly came down to us for ambulance -
I went off with three & found seven wounded
men behind the railway embankment - Sent
men back to F. H. at Belmont Farm -

Moved off along the embankment - met Major Buckell.
Ordered along the embank: to pick up more wounded -
then to go up to the foot of one of the kopjes where
a lot of wounded were collected -

Did so - passed several dead bodies & a lot
of mules & horses belonging to R.A.

Got up to kopje with two stretcher squads - About
50 wounded & several dead lying together -

Horrid sights - almost wished I was a peaceful
pill with a brass plate -

Got off the wounded officers - and dressed
& morphined most of the cases - All crying
out for water - Great number of
severe wounds - Very few able to sit up -

10 a.m. firing ceased except for a few (9)
stray shots overhead - very hot -

got my wounded back to the station
as rapidly as possible - mostly Scots Guards
& badly hit - Several wounded Boers
brought down - Very grateful for any
kindness done to them -

All wounded back at station & F.A. by 2 p.m.

Very hungry & thirsty myself and fagged out.

Goods shed & railway platform full of
wounded - nearly all bad cases -

Dressed a lot of cases in station shed -

I was left in charge of it for the night -
very much done up.

Railway line repaired by R.E. & new
Telegraph laid - Trains came into the
station soon after the action -

Our loss about 230 - Boers about $\frac{1}{2}$ -

Nov 24th - up early - Saw some of the Boer
doctors - mostly commanded Englishmen -

Hospital Train came in about 10.30 a.m.
Heard that the cavalry had failed to cut off the
Boers retreat & that between 3000 or 4000
were on the kopjes - expecting to hold them
for about a fortnight.

Got $\frac{1}{2}$ bott. fizz on train - breakfast
reunion & saw some papers a month
old -

Train holds 92 cases lying down - but
150 of the slightest were put into it and
it was sent down to Grange River to
return in the evening -

Saw Chopping & heard that the armoured train
with R.E. ten miles up the line had been
fried - by artillery whilst repairing water supply
& that one officer & two mounted Inf; were wounded -

Our ambulances sent to bring up wounded ¹⁰
for train from Belmont pass - self ordered
with three Ambt: which did not go to
join the column on the march at 3.30 p.m.
Did so - Column not ready till about 5 p.m.
Marched to Zitspan - good water - camped
reported all headquarters
Lay down under wagon - A.D.C. came round
to say General wished to see me - went round
& found him much exercised as an action
was expected next day about removal of
wounded - was given 60 Northampton blankets
for stretchers - Ordered to be ready to start
3.30 a.m. Lay down - got no sleep as
mules broke loose -

Nov 25th got into my correct place behind
mounted troops and after marching about
four miles saw the rest of the Beaver Co:

coming up behind having left Belmont at
1.30 a.m. with a F.A.

Ninth Brigade marched straight across
grasspan - a broad open plain with
plenty of grass on it - saw partridge bustard -
hares, antelope -

Guards kept to left towards railway some
way behind -

Long row of kopjes in front - on the left of the
line rising into a high peak and extending
to the right for about four miles - ending in
three rough peaks joined behind by a ridge -
When about four miles away saw smoke
of Boer gun from kopje on left - firing
apparently at armoured train -

Two naval guns along railway line replied,
but failed to silence them -

Boers threatening our right in force -

with another gun 'mounted' on the end Koppie firing occasionally -

The whole brigade then made a right turn and marched along parallel to the Boer position - for about three miles and then turned to the left round the end of the three rough Koppies - from which a tremendous fire was kept up -

We came along behind them & met several staff officers galloping down for the guards who were by this time about six miles from where the fighting was likely to be -

The 75th field Batt: then began to shell the first of the 3 Koppies with shrapnel - & the infantry moved up in 3 lines in skirmishing order under cover of the guard - Marines leading - & then charged the central Koppie which they took & finally drove the Boers out of the place - The cavalry

failed to cut off the Boer retreat though
hundreds of them were seen streaming off
the hills - The artillery got a few shells into them
or killed a few -

When the action commenced we made a dressing station
about 350 yds from foot of the 1st Koppe - Healy
went on behind the guns with the stretcher Banners &
left ambulance a little way below him -

I was sent off with a message to him & met a
M. I. Sergeant who wanted a doctor to dress a scout
who had been hit by a shell $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles away - got some
dressings & galloped off - found him hit by a shell just above
the ankle - splintered the tibia. Lots of bullets flying about
galloped back to dressing station and moved
nearer in to the Koppe - all the wounded belonged to
our brigade which had by this time moved on -
Our field hospital was on the railway line
 $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles behind us - Healy got all the

12

wounded sent down to us from the hill by 4:30 p.m.
mostly ~~seriously~~ shot in three or four places -
Res. Art. lost 46 out of 48 men - Dressed most of them
ran short of water 5 p.m. - sent off cart -
Began to get wounded back to 7. ft.
Mules done up - 9:15 p.m. self done up -
No water - 76 wounded - no ambulances -
Sent in orderlies - Got rid of 32 more wounded &
had to camp out with 44 all night in the open
field - Water cart arrived about 11 p.m.
Wounded continually asking for water etc -
Put on night duty - they tried -

Nov 28th Got up - Dressed 11 remaining cases which
had not been done - P.M. O. sent ambulance of
No 1 B. Coy to assist us - Got wounded back
by 12 noon - Ordered to join 7. ft. ourselves
Arrived there - stayed two hours - ordered
to join brigade - Mules done up -

could not find the way - arrived in camp
9: p.m. - awfully tired
Got some good water & ate a tongue.

Nov 27th

Moved off at 4.15 a.m. in rear of Brigade.
Passed graves of naval & marine officers killed Nov 25th.
Fertile veldt - great fun among niggers with
hoses put up by leading hoops.
Passed "Honeyrest Kloof" where we expected a
fight - followed the line for about five
or six miles then turned sharp to the right
for 100 miles and reached some large
water pans. Camped about 11 a.m.
Had a bed made in a wagon & went to
sleep at once - Slept the whole day -
Ordered to move off at 5 a.m.
Do not think the Boers less at Belmont
& Grootfontein more than $\frac{2}{3}$ of ours.

Wounded Boers many of them glad to get away
They wear their everyday clothes - best suit -
with a broadbrimmed hat with in many cases
a yellow or red ribbon round it signifying
the commands they belong to or whether from
Free State or Transvaal -

Captured their hospital & medical stores at
Onkelin & about 40 wounded men -
a lot of ponies were killed there

Now only 5 or 6 miles from Tadders
River - said to be only 500 or 600 Boers
there - & railway Bridge broken

Nov 28th A.S. Hdr's arrived in night - marched off
without food from previous night - as also nearly
all other regts:

Marched out - guards on night - 9th Brumby's -
ourselves behind 9th B: After about 3
miles - heard some firing on the extreme

right and a battery of artillery moved off & joined in. Could not see anything after about $\frac{1}{2}$ hr: moved on firing having ceased & were told the Boers had moved off towards Jacobsdal - This was only a feint on their part - and our men marched confidently on towards Modder River Village - which could be seen about 3 miles ahead and trees all the way up the river - Our mistake soon became apparent, as a terrific fire soon began; at first on the right and gradually extending to the left about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles - The Boers evidently had numerous guns - quick fivers - Nordenfeldts & one 46 pounder ?? by the bridge which threw two shells within twenty yards of us & nearly hit the armoured train.

14
Healy with ambulances went on the right
of railway behind A. & S. Adams. - whose kilts
showed up very much. He & bearers lay
down behind a protecting ridge about
200 yds from Boers - but well within
range of their fire -

all our field batteries & the naval
guns were going away - & the infantry &
Boer small arm fire were at times incessant
Watched the 75th field battery go into action in
front of the village - beautifully done -
Was sent for to attend a wounded mounted
infantry man - shot through the shoulder -
Brought him in on my pony -

Fire still continued, but mostly artillery & dual
None of the Boer guns silenced - as they could
not be seen - nor the whereabouts of their trenches
This went on all day and it was impossible

for the ambulances to go forward -
One of our Beavers shot through thigh -
Wounded began to come in slowly to dressing station,
mostly Art. Hds. (grt.) - Most of the wounds received by
men lying down as the ground is part of the
village was flat without so much as a bush
to screen our men -

Firing went on all day mostly artillery with
at times bursts of rifle fire -

About 5 p.m. heard that the L.N. 4 & 6 & 7 & 8 I
had succeeded in crossing the river below the
bridge -

As night came on wounded came in faster
& faster - Sent some milk & brandy down to
Healy who had bad toothache -

Firing from artillery went on till after 10 p.m.
Numbers of men of diff. regts. stayed to our
camp lost - utterly done - & without water -

15

Last ambulance came in about 2 a.m. with 4 men
from shelling accident outside our camp -

Slept on ground tired out.

Nov 29th - 4.30 a.m. 6 guns fired at village - no
reply - found to be evacuated -

1 Fresh Battery D. H. 4-I came up evening before.

Sent ambulance to fetch wounded from houses on
the right where they had been all night.

F. H. - pitched close to trains.

Moved Beamer Coy down to Bridge-end -

Village - corrugated iron houses - riddled by
shrapnel bullets - shells all over the place -

Boer benches cleverly placed all along the river
bank - with trees behind to screen them.

Ordered to go to a house $\frac{1}{2}$ mile on left of
line for wounded - got there about 1.30 p.m.

after crossing two miles of the battle field -
Dead bodies + dead horses lying all

over the place - Burying parties out -
Reached house which had been held by Boers -
riddled with bullets - It had been taken by
a bayonet charge led by Lord M. who was
wounded shortly after getting in the R.S.H.'s
Found Crisp & Tupper looking awful weeks
& 27 badly wounded men - Had a whiskey
& soda & began to get the wounded away -
Major Burchell came up & said there were
more wounded across the river - Waded across
a dam - with some orderlies & found
chopping with some wounded men & several Boers
Got volunteers from L.H.L. to carry them across -
Went up village to look in and found several
bodies in the potato gardens - no more wounded
Looted 2 a sack of new potatoes - French Beans & canisters
Crossed river again & found two men & two
wounded Boers - stole about - Left orderlies &

16

Started back for camp which I reached about
6 p.m. fairly fagged -

Camp by railway station - Headqn: 1st fl^o hq:
in excellent hotel - Lord M. there -

Tried to get some beer but couldn't
made my bed in a wagon + lay down -
Two absent bearers reported at 11 p.m. that
they had left them two wounded men at the
house alone -

No food - my haversack - instrument case -
water bottle - stolen or lost - probably the niggers
very sick about it all -

Nov 30th Got up 4 a.m. Transferred ambulance
went over to house + found two wounded Breb.
very much in want of water - one since dead -
shot through the head - Brought them in -

Got Breakfast 7.30. a.m.

8 a.m. Went to bed + slept till 4 p.m.

Heard that there were about 11000 Boers here &
Grogge's Steps were present. That they had allowed
the guards to come within 200 yds before they fired
and as there was no cover they did a lot of damage
Our casualties about 500 killed & wounded -
Boers probably hardly half - but several bodies
found thrown into the river.

Men hanging horses etc to-day as the stink
is awful - Engineers starting to patrol
the river & make railway cutting & bridge
etc for train over river -

Two end pieces of railway bridge are taken
down & girders have fallen in & become bent.
As S.H. dies terribly sun burnt back of legs
etc can hardly walk from lying on their
faces -

Heard that the Boers left the place early in

the night, expecting a night attack - 17
& that they came back in the morning
& took away their guns as none was made.
Also heard that they did not intend to fight
here unless Croyce had come down & made
them -

Dec: 1st - Slept most of the day & got our tents
& stores - Rations very good - excellent jam
frozen mutton - fresh beef - fair bread -
rum & lime juice occasionally -
All sick sent back to Orange river by train
at once -

Dec: 2nd - got up early to exercise pony -
Sent by the P.M.O. to get blankets &
stretchers for a supply train -
Firing 3 miles out. 1 N.I. officer & 2 men
wounded -

Dec. 3rd Slept most of the day - Very hot -
with a scorching wind.

$\frac{1}{2}$ Black Watch arrived - some Lyddite guns
+ 12th Lancers -

Dec 4th - Took out pony to exercise early -
Heavy firing four miles ahead between
patrols - Dutch firing their big gun
from the hills - Engineers bridge
nearly over river -

Arrival of Major Murray's F.H.

Dec 5th Got dysentery of a sort pretty badly -

Tried a variety of remedies -

First train came across river in the evening

Seaforth Hds arrived

Dec. 6th Laid up in bed with D. Tried Ipecac.

etc. but stopped it to some extent in
evening with chlorodyne -

18

Dec 7th Feeling pretty weak. Not quite well -
Got fresh milk & two eggs for breakfast -
V. good. Big 4.7 naval gun arrived across
river - Taken up to Gansu's hut by 32 oxen -
awful night - terrific thunder & rain -
Gent. Wauchope & rest of highland
side arrived -

Dec 8th Heard news from Kimberley of
sortie & loss of 27 men - by a dispatch rider -
Our searchlight not properly understood by
them - Expecting to be ordered to advance
any moment - Allotted rooms at
Wilson's Hotel for our heavy baggage -
Horse trailers to remain behind -

Thunder again

Dec 9th Naval gun taken up hill to Gansu's
hut about two miles out & fired
Several rounds of shell Lyddite & shrapnel -

at Boer position about 4 miles distant 19
Boers occupy a block of kopjes through
which the line passes - extending about
4 miles to the rt. of the line & many miles
to the left - On the rt. of the line the Boer
position ends in a kopje with flat top -
coming out into a point towards the river -
There are trenches all along the bottom of
the kopjes & several out from the kopje on
the right towards the river -

The long distance shelling said to have
killed 1 horse 1 man -

Dec 16th Hear that 9th Brigade is to be left behind
to look after this place. The regiments are
about the best here but very weak -

Men very disappointed -

Orders for Highland Brigade to move out
with 1 blanket & waterproof sheet & piece of rations

for five days to try & force the way through
to Kimberley.

High Br: marched out about 4 p.m. in
terrific rain. Halted about 4 miles out.

Guards Brig: marched out about 1.30 a.m.

I was ordered to take two ambulances out
to Ganga's hut behind Naval gun. and
sleep out for the night.

Boer position heavily shelled all the
evening.

Slept in ambulance; very wet in the
night.

Dec: 11th up 4 a.m. Naval gun fired

first 4.15 a.m. Terrific artillery
fire about 6 a.m. - Could see all shells
Lyddite & infantry shrapnel bursting
quite plainly.

6 a.m. relieved by Major Hanley.

Heard terrific infantry firing towards
the big Kopje on the right -

8 a.m. Capt. Healy came up - so I & Major H.
went down to breakfast - Suddenly ordered
to take the rest of our ambulances and
the F. A. buck wagons & go out fast
as possible to bring in wounded from the right.
Met many wagons coming in & heard that
there had been a terrible mistake & that
the Highland Brigade had been very severely
cut up -

9:30 a.m. reached Col. Hartley's dressing
station - Lots of wounded - Filled several
Buck Wagons & ambulances into highlanders
mostly Seaforth's - Lots of men skulking
in bushes

was then sent forward to advanced collecting

station with all remaining ambulances & ~~up~~ ^{up} ~~ports~~ ^{ports} -
staid there all day. Very hard work - no possibility
of getting any of wounded, as they were right
up to the Boer trenches where they were
first surprised in quarter column in the
morning -

Heard that Genl. Wauchope & Col. Goode were dead.
Very tired - being weak after d: got some
handy, but no food -

3.30 p.m. Had to retire as H. Brig: retired -
Great difficulty in getting the men to form
up again - Crowds of men trying to
get water from the ambulances -

5.30 - Started back to M. R. with stretcher
squads - Shells then bursting over the
Brig in front - which was once more
ordered to retire

7.30 p.m. Got in very done & disheartened

at this point became too lazy to
write any more - Don't let anybody
but family see it -

Written in pencil by
M. H. G. Dele - in Africa -
Inked over by P. M. Marsh -
Mordoun vicarage.

Oct 23rd 1899. Sheet (1)

Left Southampton about 6 p.m.
S.S. Aurania with H. L. J. 11th Co B. H.
250 N. 1 & 1/2. 3 B. Co. Anchored below
Netley. Thick Fog -

Oct 24 - 11 a.m.

Fog. Lifted. Harwarden Castle just astern
Passed the needles about 12 lovely day -

Oct 25th. Fine day. a little roll.

Oct 26th Still fine & calm -

Oct 27th Saw first flying fish. Passed
Madeira. All around in clouds in
the evening -

Oct 28th. Lots of flying fish & a whale -

Oct 29th. Getting very hot. Food very good
Man overboard at night. Threw lighted
Lifebuoys. Drowned -

Oct 30th St Vincent 8 a.m. Crowds
of niggers rowed in boats at once.
Diving for pennies & selling fruit -
Coal barges loaded with niggers came
up. very leisurely coaling. H. M. S.
Diadem lying close to us. Went ashore
Town very dear, very hot no trees all
volcanic. Cricket match between telegraph
people & R. P. In the evening read news
of evac: of Ladysmith - Bluejackets sent
over to coal. Great enthusiasm awful night
of heat & coal dust -

Oct 31st Amusing scene with nippers. Still coaling 1800 tons on board. Ordered to leave at once 4. p.m. Three transports arrived in the night steamed out between them & the Dradem great cheering & a very fine sight. Coaled all night. Self & everything black. 1800 tons on board ready to leave Oct 31st at 4. p.m. The Monodian Oriental & Paronia arrived to coal steamed out between them & the Dradem most enthusiastic scene. Auld song dyne & other tunes. Got outside & still calm & very hot.

Nov. 1st Calm & very hot.

Nov. 2nd. Rolling a little.

Nov. 3rd. Passed equator in night. into the S. E. Trade.

Nov. 4th.

Nov. 5th All the same sort of days.

Nov. 6th. Hot in the morning & midday

Nov. 7th Cold at night

Nov. 8th Stiff breeze pitching & rolling as ship is light.

Nov. 9th Passed the Casteline. Mail steamer close by pitching heavily.

Nov. 10th Very rough.

Nov. 11th Calmer in sight of land.

Table Mountain looking very fine in

the distance. Entered the Bay about 11. a.m. & waited pilot. Passed the Yorkshire going to Durham with troops. Got into the docks alongside the wharf a difficult business with so big a ship. Were ordered to disembark at once & proceed to St. Aar. just south of the Orange River. Very busy trying day - getting baggage out of ships. N. L. I. off first several men broke loose into the town. They are to guard the line while troops are being sent up. News of Col. 1st Falcons death at Belmont of Gen. Greyson with Mr. J. L. Lemaire behind till their horses are ready. N. L. I. paid train off about 8.30. 2nd Batt. 10. 15. We entertained about 12 midnight. Left at 1.45. very cold night. Slept in a compartment in 1st class. Nov. 12th. Sunday lovely morning glad to feel warm. Country fairly fertile in valleys up to Worcester. Barley, wheat, oats, fruit. Breakfast at Worcester at 9. a.m. very fresh & good porridge & eggs etc. Started on a long up hill journey gradient 1 in 40. at times only going 4 miles an hour. Fine cut out of the side

in a wonderful way - curious rock
cuttings, & doubtful looking banks
& bridges - Hill sides bare rock
mostly covered with odd looking
cactuses & some very pretty stuff
like heather - Reached the Quibble
at 1.30. Men got hot water for soup
& tea. Had lunch. Passed two pickets
of Cape Mounted Police, very small
looking fellows - Went on down hill
to W. River. Large camp of C. M. P.
guarding water supply. Farmers
about said to be disaffected. Reached
Matasfontein for dinner, then all fed.
J. D. Jagan asked Gen. Wauchope & officers
in train to dine with him. Excellent dinner.
My figures cigars exceedingly kind & warm
Heard that the train might be fired on in
the night. Armed picket of R.E. in train.
again very cold night.

Nov. 13th Reached Victoria. Wed. Camp of
Dep. of N. d. S. after passing thro' a very
rough bit of line. At 9.30 a.m. stopped
for breakfast. Hot tea & soup for the
men got at 10.45 a.m. On the top of a
plateau 4000 feet up. Sand covered
with a heathery looking growth. Passed
several ostrich farms. Enormous
flocks of sheep & goats to be seen
here & there watered by natives -
Reached De Aar at 2.45 p.m. R.E.
went on to Orange River -

Sheet 2.

Got our kit out & pitched camp - very hot & dusty! Curious whirlwinds of dust - Yorkshire d. I. here 1 Batt. RA. Large numbers of mules & Ponies & tons of stores. Got dinner at station - turned out guard & went to bed very tired - D. Cold in night - Blankets fell off & wind blowing through tent & hardly slept at all -

Nov. 14th

Got up early & looked round the place still very cold - Sun high about 8 a.m. & becoming warmer - Very hot by 10 a.m. Had breakfast & paraded & told off the men to their stations - Got some lime juice & oranges at a store - Food rather expensive especially anything fresh - Very hot in the middle of the day - Half the Cold-stream Guards went thro' the Orange River - Heard that there were very few Boers at Belmont -

Nov. 15th

Slept better, extra blankets night - a little warmer - Tilled the men - Day very hot with a slight thunder shower - If we bucked up about our transport I think we might get on to Orange River - But our C.O. seems to prefer to stay with Gen. Loucheux & his brigade - to which we rightfully belong. Nothing to do most of the day wrote letters & read

Nov. 16th -

Rest of Coldstream & Scots Guard went through. Day very hot indeed. Tried to get our horses from the transport lines but didn't manage it. Watched them branding the mules. Heard that the Station Master at Richmond had been shot as a spy but doubt it.

Nov. 17th Awful dust storm. Bkly water here. Very hot in middle of the day. Getting very sick of D.C. Telegram in afternoon to leave at 6 a.m. for Orange River.

Nov. 18th Very pleased up at 4 a.m. struck tents & packed got to Station, had to wait two hours. Whilst Coldstream Guard train to which we were attached had breakfast. Our men packed in open cattle trucks damned shame. No other Corps will be treated so - Got to Orange River at 2.30. Very hot. & a great bustle of mules horses weapons everywhere. Our camp across the Bridge the men marched over at once & I was left with a fatigue to bring over the baggage. But several fellows I knew. Did not get weapons over till 6 p.m. owing to the Guards mess stuff blocking the bridge. Started about 6.30 awful crush

on the Bridge. Took 45 mins. to get over. & then started cross country for our camp. Couldn't find it in the dark. Got in at ten dead tired. Got well cursed for my pains went to bed & slept like a top.

Nov. 19th Found ourselves behind the Guards Camp

Had breakfast. Selected a nice pony went into station to try & get some lime juice. Water was bad. Got to bed early & had a good night.

Nov. 20th Great thunderstorm in the night. Dust laid & much cooler.

Orders came to put all heavy baggage in the train at the bridge end & that we were marching out

at 1.30 next morning. Waterproof sheet & 1/2 a blanket per man. Officers

to wear no badges grant or medal weapons buttons to be dulled.

Infantry officers to carry rifles straps etc like the men. Was sent to get our ambulances at 12 a.m. at the

Station. Very hot, very dry, very ~~exasperating~~. Did not get back to camp till 5.30 p.m.

P.M.O. & Burchell to dinner. Tents struck order to leave at 1.30 a.m. cancelled to 4.15 a.m. day on / round & slept an hour or two.

Nov. 21st Marched out 4.30 a.m.
in rear of the 9th Brigade - 5th Fusiliers
Northampton York: & J. & N. V. Baggas
etc followed us - Mules rather
unmanageable at first but reached
Wittebut all right about 11 a.m.
Camped there close to railway -
ostrich farms - excellent water,
about six miles from Belmont
Farm which can be seen from the
Kopje behind the camp. Slept
under a wagon & was bitten by a
Centipede in the back. Caught him
in my shirt, great pain for several hours.

Nov. 22nd Got up early, washed &
shaved, day very hot. Got orders to move
off at 4.30 p.m. to Belmont Farm
Artillery falloped out at 3 p.m.

great cheering. Column marched
in six lines ourselves behind the 9th
brigade - Baggas in centre. Watched
the shells from the guns ahead bursting
over Belmont Station. got to camp
at 7.30. Piled dark awful confusion.
General in an ambulance. Did not
get to bed till 12 p.m. Slept on a
stretcher - up at 1.30 a.m. Mules in
yard.

Nov. 23 Sent to get the general ambulance
& P.M.O.'s One stretcher 2 others, canvas
remarked upon by Ford M. started at
3 a.m. Coet the other ambulances
Piled dark moved out to the right &
found ourselves in the firing line of the

Sheet (3)

guards waiting for day light -
Turned back & came out on to field
on the road to Belmont Station just
as the Artillery began to shell Table
Mountain far below the railway
9th Brigade moving round to the left
to attack Table Mountain. Dutch
position very strong one a line of
Kopjes 2½ or 3 miles with all the
ranges etc marked absolutely
no cover for our men - Heavily moved
up to station with wagons & treacher
bearers. Terrific firing 6 a.m. Mounted
orderly came down to us for ambulance
I went off with three & found seven
wounded men behind the railway
embankment sent men back to
F. Nat Belmont Farm. Moved off
along the embankment. Met Major
Burchell ordered along the embankment to
pick up more wounded & then go up
to the foot of one of the Kopjes. There a
lot of wounded were collected -
Did not pass several dead bodies
& a lot of mules & horses belonging
to B.N. Got up to Kopje with two
stretchers squads about 50 wounded
& several dead lying together - Horrid
sights. Almost wished I was a peaceful
pill with a brass plate. Got off the
wounded officers & dressed and
morphine most of the cases. All
crying out for water. Great numbers
severe wounds very few able to sit
up - 10 a.m. firing ceased except
on a few stray shots overhead very hot

got my wounded back to the station as rapidly as possible mostly Scots Guards & badly hit. Several wounded Boers brought down - very grateful for any kindness done to them - All wounded back at station & F.A. by 2 p.m. were hungry & thirsty myself & gapped out, good sheds & railway platform full of wounded nearly all bad cases - Dressed a lot of cases in station & was left in charge of it for the night. Very much done up - Railway line repaired by R.E. & new telegraph laid. Trains came into the station soon after the action. Our loss about 230 Boers about 2 - Nov. 24th, up early, saw some of the Boer Dr. mostly commanded by Englishmen. Hospital train came in about 10.30 a.m. Heard that the Cavalry had failed to cut off the Boer's retreat & that between 3000 & 4000 were on the Kopjes expecting to hold them for about a fortnight - Got to both puz on train kept steak & onions, saw some papers & a wounded man - Train holds 92 cases lying down but 150 by the slightest were put into it & it was sent down to the Orange River to return in the evening - Saw Choppe & heard that the armoured train

with R.E. ten miles up the line - had been fired by artillery whilst repairing water supply & that one officer & two mounted Inf. were wounded - Own Ambulances sent to bring up wounded for train from Belmont farm - Self ordered with 3 Amb. which did not go to join the Column on the march at 3.30 p.m. Did so. Column not ready till about 6 p.m. Marched to Juitopan, good water camped & reported at headquarters lay down under wagon - A.D.C. came round to say General Wicket had been brought & found him much exercised as an action was expected next day about removal of wounded - Was given 60 Nonkampen blankets for stretchers - Ordered the ready to start 3.30 a.m. lay down, got no sleep as mules broke loose -

Nov. 25th Got into my correct place between mounted troops & after marching about 4 miles saw the rest of the Beers Co. coming up behind having left Belmont at 1.30 a.m. with a F.W. Nuthi Brigade marched straight across Graspan a broad open plain with plenty of grass on it - Saw Partridge, bustards, hares & antelope. Guards kept left towards railway some way behind - long rows of Kopjes

in front on the left of the line rising
into high peaks & extending to the
right for about four miles. ending
in three rough peaks joined behind
by a ridge. When about 4 miles
away saw smoke of Boer gun
from Kopje on left. going apparently
at armoured train. Two naval guns
along railway line replied but
failed to silence them. Boers
threatening our right in force with
another gun mounted on the
end Kopje firing occasionally.
The whole brigade then made a
right turn & marched along parallel
to the Boer position for about 3 miles
& then turned to the left round the
end of the three rough Kopjes from
which a tremendous fire was
kept up - we came along behind
them & met several staff officers
galloping down for the guards
who were by this time about six
miles from where the fighting was
likely to be. The 5th Field Bats then
began to shell the first of the Kopje
with shrapnel & the infantry moved
up in 3 lines in skirmishing order
under cover of the guard. Marines
leading & then charged the central
Kopje which they took & finally
drove the Boers out of the place.
The Cavalry failed to cut off the

Sheet (4)

Boer retreat through hundreds of them
were seen steaming off the hills, the
artillery got a few shells into them
& killed a few. When the action
commenced we made a dressing
station about 350 yds from the foot of
the 1st Kopje. Dealy went on behind
the guns with the stretchers Bearers &
left an ambulance a little way below him.
I was sent off with a message to him &
met a Mr. Berpeant who wanted an
doctor to dress a scout who had
been hit by a shell 1 1/2 miles away.
got some dressings & salloped off
found him hit by a shell just above
the ankle splintered the tibia. Lots of
bullets flying about salloped back
to dressing station & moved nearer
in to the Kopje. All the wounded belonged
to our brigade which had by this
time moved on. Our field hospital
was on the railway line 4 1/2 miles
behind us. Dealy got all the
wounded sent down to us from
the hill by 4.30 p.m. mostly shot
in three or four places. Art. lost
46 out of 48 men. Dressed most
of them from short of water. 5 p.m.
sent off cart. Berpeant set wounded
back to 7.8 miles down up. 7.15 p.m.
self done up no water - 36 wounded
no ambulances - sent in orderlies.

It was of 32 more wounded & had
to camp out with 44 all night
in the open veldt. Water carts arrived
about 11 p.m. wounded continually
asking for water etc. Put on night duty.
Very tired -

Nov 20th - Got up dressed 11 remaining
cases which had not been done
P.M.B. sent ambulance of No 1
B.Co. to assist us. Got wounded
back by 12 noon. Ordered to join
F.A. wounded arrived there. Stayed
two hours. ordered to join brigade
mules done up - could not
find the way arrived in camp
9 p.m. and fully tired - Got some
food water & ate a tongue -

Nov. 21st. Moved off at 4.15 a.m.
in rear of Brigade passed graves
of naval & marine officers killed

Nov. 25th - Fertile veldt - great fun
among nippers with hare & penk
up by leading corps - Passed
"Hony, duck & loof" where we expected
a fight followed the line for about
five or six miles then turned sharp
to the right for two miles & reached
some large water pans. Camped
about 11 a.m. Had a bed made
in wagon & went to sleep at
once slept the whole day. Ordered
to move off at 5 a.m. Did not
think the Boers were at Belmont

& Graspan more than 2 years
wounded Boers many of them
glad to get away. They wear their
every day clothes best suit, with
a broadrimmed hat with in many
cases a yellow or red ribbon
round it signifying the command.
They belong to or are from Free
State or Transvaal. Captured their
hospital & medical stores at Muelin
& about 140 wounded men a lot
of ponies were killed there. Now
only 5 or 6 miles from Modder
River said to be only 500 or 600
Boers there & railway bridge
broken -

Nov 20th A.M.S. Adts arrived in
night marched off without food
from previous night - go also
nearly all other regts. Marched
outwards on right of the Boers left
ourselves behind of the B. after about
3 miles heard some firing on the
extreme right & a battery of
artillery moved off & joined us.
Could not see anything after
about 1/2 hr. moved on firing
ceased & were told the Boers had
moved off towards Jacobsdal -
This was only a feint on their

part & our men marched confidently
on towards Modder River village
which could be seen about 3
miles ahead & there all the
way up the river. Our mistake
soon became apparent, as a terrific
fire soon began, at first on the
right & gradually extending to the
left about 3 1/2 miles the Boers
evidently had numerous gun-
sight & fliers - Nordenfledts & one
46 pounder?? by the bridge which
threw 2 shells within twenty yards
of us & nearly hit the armoured
train. A few ambulances
went on the right railway
behind a S. A. A. whose kilts
showed up very much. He &
bearers lay down behind a
protecting ridge about 2000 yds
from Boers but well within
range of their fire. All our
field batteries & the naval
guns were banging away & the
infantry & Boer small arm
fire were at times incessant
watched the 75th Field Battery
go into action in front of the
village - beautifully done. Was
sent for to attend to wounded
mounted infantry man -
shot thro' the shoulder - Brought him
in on my pony. Fire still

Sheet 5-

Continued, but mostly Artillery
duel none of the Boers gave diligence
as they could not be seen -
nor the whereabouts of their
trenches. This went on all
day & it was impossible
for the ambulances to go
forward. One of our Bearers
shot through thigh. Wounded
began to come in slowly to
dressing station mostly A. & S. H. & Co
(91) Most of the wounds received
by men lying down, as the
ground is part of the village
was flat without as much as
a bush to screen our men -
Firing went on all day mostly
Artillery with at times bursts
of rifle fire - About 5 p.m.
heard that the L. H. L. & H. L. J. had
succeeded in crossing the
river below the bridge - As
night came on wounded came
in faster & faster - Sent some
milk & brandy down to Dealy
who had bad toothache
Firing from Artillery went on
till after 10 p.m. Numbers of men
of diff ages strayed to our camp
lost - utterly done & without water -

last Ambulance came in
about 2 a.m. with 4 men
shot by accident outside our
Camp - slept on ground tired out.

Nov. 29th 4.30 a.m. 6 guns fired
at village - no reply found to be
evacuated - 1 Fresh Battery W.41
came up evening before - sent
Ambulance to fetch wounded
from houses on the right where
they had been all night & H
pitched close to trains - Moved
Bearers Co down to Bridge end
village - Corrupted iron houses
riddled by Shrapnel bullets
shells all over the place
Boer trenches cleverly placed
all along the river bank -
with trees behind to screen
them - ordered to go to a house
1/2 mile on left of line for
wounded - Got there about
1.30 p.m. after crossing two
miles of the battle field dead
bodies & dead horses lying
all over the place - Burial
parties out - Reached house which
had been hit by Boers riddled
with bullets - It had been taken
by a bayonet charge led by
Lord M. who was wounded
shortly after getting in the Artillery

Found Crisp & Lupper looking awful
wrecks & 2 badly wounded men -
Had a Dicky & Soda began to get
the wounded away - Major Burchell
came up & said there were more
wounded across the river -
Waded across a dam with
some orderlies & found chopping
with some wounded men & several
Boers - Got Volunteers from
L.D.L. to carry them across - Went
up village block for & found
several bodies in the potato
gardens no more wounded -
Got to a sack of new potatoes -
French Beans Carrots - Crossed
River again & found 2 men & 2
wounded Boers still about
gave orders & started back for
Camp which I reached about
6 p.m. fairly fagged - Camp
by railway station Headqu. in
excellent Hotel - Ford M. there - Did
not get some beer but could not make
my bed in a wagon & lay down -
Two absent bearers reported at
11 p.m. that they had left their two
wounded men at the house alone
no food, my haversack, instrument
case & water bottle stolen or lost
probably by rippers - very sick about it all

Nov. 30th. Got up 4 a.m. The Spanner
ambulance went over to house
& found two wounded Boers.
Very much in want of water
one since dead shot thro' the
head. Brought them in - Got
breakfast 7.30 a.m. 8 a.m.
went to bed & slept till 4 p.m.
Heard that there were about
11000 Boers here & Cronje & Steyn
were present. That they had
allowed the Guards to come
within 200 yds before they fired
& as there was no cover they
did a lot of damage - Over
Casualties about 500 killed
& wounded - Boers probably
barely half but several bodies
found thrown into the river -
men bring horses etc to-day as
the stink is awful - Majors
starting to patrol the river & make
railway cutting & bridge etc for
train over river - Two end piers
of railway bridge are taken
down & girders have fallen in
& become bent as they are terribly
sunburnt back of legs etc
can hardly walk from going on their
faces -

Hear that the Boers Sheet (6)
left the place
early in the night, expecting
a night attack & that they
came back in the morning
& took away their guns as none
was made then -

Dec 1 Slept most of the day
& got our tents & stores -
Rations very good, excellent
jam - frozen mutton, fresh
keef fair bread - rum - & lime
juice occasionally - All
pieces sent back to Orange River
by train at once -

Dec 2nd. Got up early to
exercise pony - sent by the
P.M.C. to get blankets &
stretchers from a supply
train - firing 3 miles
out 1 N.L. Officers 2 men
wounded -

Dec. 3rd Slept most of the
day very hot with a scorching
wind - to Black Water arrived -
some of the G. & 12th dancers -

Dec 4th Took out pony to exercise
early - Heavy firing from

miles a head between patrols
Dutch firing their big gun
from the hills - Engineers
bridge nearly over river -
arrival of Major Murray & H
Dec 5th Got dysentery of a
sort pretty badly - Tried a
variety of remedies - First
train came across river
in the evening - Seaport also
arrived -

Dec. 6th Laid up in bed with
D. tried opiac. etc, but stopped
it some extent in evening
with Chlorodyne -

Dec 7th Feeling pretty weak -
not quite well got fresh
milk & two eggs for breakfast -
v. good - By 47 naval gun
arrived across river - Taken
up into fangas but by 32
Dec 8th awful night terrible
thunderstorm rain - Gen. Loch
of Highland B. arrived

Dec. 8th Heard news from
Kimbberley & some loss of
27 men - by a desperate

order - Our searchlight not
properly understood by them
Expecting to be ordered to
advance any moment -
Allotted rooms at Wilson's
Hotel for our heavy baggage -
I ^(Lieut. J. J. J.) Marked to remain behind
Thunder again -

Dec 9th - Naval gun taken
up hill to fangas but about
2 miles out & fired several
rounds of shells & darts &
shrapnel at Boer position
about 4 miles distant
Boers occupy a block of
kopjes through which the line
passes - extending about
4 miles to the right of the line
& many miles to the left -
On the right of line the Boer
position ends in a kopje
with flat top - coming
into a point towards the river -
There are trenches all along
the bottom of the kopjes &
several out from the kopjes
on the right towards the river -

The long distanced shelling said
to have killed 1 man -

Dec 10th Hear that 9th Brigade
is to be left behind & look after
this place - The reinforcements
are about the best here
but very weary men very
disappointed. Orders for
High: Brigade to move on &
with 1 blanket & waterproof
sheet a piece & rations for
five days. to try & force the
way through to Kimberley -
High. B. marched out about
4 p.m. in terrific rain. Halted
about 4 miles out Guards Brig:
marched out about 1.30 a.m.
I was ordered to take two
ambulances out to Langenshoek
behind Naval gun & sleep out
for the night - Boer position
heavily shelled all the evening -
Slept in ambulance very
wet in the night -

Dec 11th Up at 4 a.m. Naval
gun fired first 4.15 a.m. Terrible
Artillery fire about 6 a.m.
Could see all shells & duds
& sharp net bursting quite plainly

Sheet (7)

6 a.m. relieved by Major
Stanley. Heard terrific infantry
firing towards the big Poppe
on the right. 8 a.m. Capt.
Healy came up - so I & Major
H. went down to breakfast.
Suddenly ordered to take
the rest of our ambulances
& the 7th Back Wagon & go
out fast as possible to
bring in wounded from
the right. Met many
wagons coming in & heard
that there had been a terrible
mistake & that the Highland
Brigade had been very severely
cut up - 9.30 a.m. reached
Col. Hartley's dressing station
lots of wounded filled
several Back Wagon and
ambulances with Highlanders
mostly Seaforth's lots of men
killing in bushes - was then
sent forward to advance collecting
station with all remaining

ambulances & weapons staid
there all day - very hard work
No possibility of getting any
of the wounded as they were right
up to the Boer trenches where
they were first surprised in
quarter column in the morning.
Heard that Gen: Van der Merwe
& Col: Conde were dead; very
tired - being weak after I
got some brandy but no food.
3.30 p.m. Had to retire as Brig
Great difficulty in getting
the men to form up again -
Crowds of men trying to
get water from the ambulances.
5.30. Started back to M. B. with
stretcher squads - Shells then
bursting over the Brig: in
front which was once more
ordered to retire - 7.30 p.m.
Got in very done & disheartened
at this point became too lazy
to write any more - Don't let
anybody but family see it

Oct 23rd 1899-

Diary of
M. H. S. Fell R. A. M. C.

Left Southampton about 6 p.m. in
the S. S. Aurania with the Highland
Light Infantry - 11th Co R. E. 250
Infantry & No 3 Bearer Co. Anchored below
Netley - Thick fog -

Oct 24th

11-a.m. Fog lifted - Hawarden
Castle just astern - We passed the
Needles about 12. Lovely day -

Oct 25th Another fine day - a little
roll -

Oct 26th Still fine & calm.

Oct 27th Saw first flying fish -
Passed Madeira - all covered in
clouds - in the evening -

Oct 28th Lots of flying fish and
a whale -

Oct 29th Getting very hot - Food very good - Man overboard at night - Threw lighted lifebuoys - Drowned.

Oct 30th. St Vincent - 8 a.m.

Crowds of niggers rowed out in boats at once - diving for pennies & selling fruit - Coal barges loaded with niggers came up - very leisurely coaling - H. M. S. Diadem is lying close to us - Went ashore - Town very dear. very hot - no trees - all volcanic - Cricket match

between Telegraph people & R. E. In the evening read news of Lady Smith - Blue jackets sent over to coal - Great enthusiasm - awful night of heat & coal dust.

Oct 31st. Amusing scene with niggers still coaling - 1800 tons on board.

Ordered to leave at once - 4 p.m.
^(Mongolia - Brazil - Patagonia)
Three transports arrived in the night.

Steamed out between them & the Diadem - great cheering & a very fine sight - most enthusiastic scene. Auld Lang Syne & other tunes sung - played by the bands - Got outside still very calm & very hot -

Nov. 1st Calm & very hot

Nov 2nd. Rolling a little -

Nov 3rd. Passed equator in the night - into the S. E. Trade.

(Nov 4th all the same sort of days.
" 5th hot in the morning & mid-
" 6th day - cold at night -
" 7th -

Nov 8th Stiff breeze - pitching and rolling as the ship is light -

Nov 9th We passed the castle line mail steamer, close to us and pitching heavily -

Nov 10th Very rough -

Nov 11th Calmer - in sight of land - Table Mountain looking very fine in the distance - Entered the bay about 11 - a.m. & waited pilot. Passed the Yorkshire going to Durban with Troops.

Got into the docks, alongside the wharf - a difficult business with so big a ship - We were ordered to disembark at once and proceed to De Aar. just south of the Orange River - Very busy trying day getting baggage out of ship -

H. L. J. off first - several men broke loose into the town - They are to guard the line while troops are being sent up - Got news of Col. Keith Falconer's death at Belmont. Guy Gregson with M. J. to remain behind till their horses are ready. H. L. J. first train off about 8.30.

2nd batt: at 10-15. We entrained about 12 mid night & left at 1-45

Very cold night - slept four in a compartment in great coats -

Nov 12th Sunday - Lovely morning - glad to feel warm sun - country fairly fertile in the valleys up to Worcester - Barley - wheat - oats & fruit - Breakfast at Worcester at 9 - a.m. Very fresh & good porridge eggs etc. - Started on a long up-hill journey - gradient 1 - in 40 - at times only going up miles an hour. Line cut out of hill side in a wonderful way. Curious rock cuttings & doubtful looking banks & bridges - Hill sides bare rock mostly covered with odd looking cactuses & some very pretty stuff like heather - Reached the Triangle at 1-30. Men got hot

water for soup & tea - Had lunch.
Passed 2 pickets of Cape Mounted
Police - very smart looking fellows.
Went on down hill to Tova's River -
large camp of Cape Mounted Police -
guarding the water supply - Farmers
about said to be disaffected. Reached
Matjesfontein for dinner - Men
all fed - J. D. Logan asked General
Wauchope & officers in the train
to dine with him - Excellent dinner -
fiz - liqueurs, cigars, etc. - Exceedingly
kind of him - Heard that the train
might be fired on in the night -
Armed picket of R. Engineers in train.
Again a very cold night -

Nov. 13th Reached Victoria West Camp
of Dep. of H. L. J. - after passing through
a very rough bit of line - at 9-30 a.m.
stopped for breakfast. Hot tea & soup for
the men - Left at 10.45 a.m. On the

Top of a plateau 4000 feet up, land
covered with a heathery looking
growth - Passed several ostrich
farms - Enormous flocks of sheep
and goats to be seen here - These
watched by natives - Reached De. Kar
at 2-45 p.m. - R. E. went on to
Orange River - got our kit. & pitched
a camp - Very hot & dusty -
Curious whirlwinds of dust -
Yorkshire Light Infantry here -
1 batt^{ern} R. A. - Large numbers
of mules & ponies & tons of stores.
got dinner at station - Turned out
guard & went to bed very tired -
D - d cold in the night: Blankets
fell off & wind blowing through
the tent - Hardly slept at all -

Nov 14th Got up early & looked round
the place - still very cold - Sun high
about 8 a.m. and becoming warmer.
Very hot by 10 a.m. Had breakfast
& paraded & told off the men to their

Stations - Got some lime juice and oranges at a store - Food rather expensive, especially anything fresh - Very hot in the middle of the day - Half the Coldstream guards went through to Orange River - Heard that there were very few Boers at Belmont -

Nov 15th - Slept better with extra blankets and the night a little warmer - Drilled the men - Day very hot with a slight thunder storm - If we bucked up about our transport, I think we might get on to Orange River but our C. O. seems to prefer to stay with Gen. Wauchope & his brigade to which we rightfully belong. Nothing to do most of the day - wrote letters & read -

Nov 16th - The rest of the Coldstream

and Scots Guards went through - Day very hot indeed - Tried to get our horses from the transport lines, but did not manage it - Watched them branding the mules - Heard that the station master at Richmond had been shot as a spy, but doubt it.

Nov 17th - Awful dust storms - Black Watch here. Very hot in the middle of the day & getting very sick of De laar. Telegram in afternoon to tell us to leave at 8 a.m. for Orange River on Nov 18th very pleased - Up at 4 a.m. Struck tents & packed - got to station, & had to wait two hours whilst Coldstream guard train to which we were attached had breakfast - Our men packed in open cattle trucks - damned shame - no other corps would be treated so - got to Orange River Station at 2-30 - Very hot & a great bustle of mules, horses,

wagons, everywhere - Our camp
across the bridge - The men march-
ed over at once & I was left
with a fatigue party to bring
over the baggage - met several
fellows I knew - Did not get
wagons over till 6 p.m. owing
to the guards mess stuff, blocking
the bridge - started about 6-30.
Awful crush on the bridge, took
45 mins: to get over & then started
across country for our camp -
Could not find it in the dark -
got in at ten, dead tired & got
well cursed for my pains -
Went to bed & slept like a top.

Nov: 19th Found ourselves behind
the guards Camp next to two
Field Hospitals - Had breakfast.
Selected a nice pony - Went into
station to try & get a ^(?) &
some lime-juice - Water very

bad - got to bed early & had a
good night - Nov 20th Great thunder
storm in the night - Just laid
& much cooler - Orders came
to put all heavy baggage in the
train at the bridge end & that
we were marching out at 1-30
next morning - 1 waterproof
sheet & $\frac{1}{2}$ a blanket per man -
officers to wear no badges of
rank or medal ribbons -
Buttons to be dulled - Infantry
officers etc to carry rifles straps
etc like the men - I was sent
to get our ambulances at 12-a.m.
at the station - Very hot - very
dry - very exasperating - Did
not get back to camp till 5-30
P.m. - P.m. Officer & Birchall
to dinner - Tents struck - Order
to leave at 1-30 a.m. cancelled
to 4-15 a.m. Lay on ground

& slept an hour or two -

Nov 21st Marched out at 4-30 a.m.
in the rear of the 9th Brigade -

5th Fusiliers, Northhamptons -

Yorks L.I. Loyal North Lancs -

Baggage etc followed us - The mules
were rather unmanageable at first
but we reached Witteputs all right
about 11 a.m. Camped there

close to the railway - at an
ostrich farm - excellent water -
about six miles from Belmont
Farm which can be seen from
the Koppe behind the camp -

I slept under a wagon & was
bitten by a centipede in the back,
Caught him in my shirt - The
bite caused great pain for several
hours -

Nov 22nd Got up early, washed &
shaved - Day very hot - We got
orders to move off at 4-30 p.m.
to Belmont Farm - Artillery

galloped out at 3 p.m. amid
great cheering - The column
marched in six lines, ourselves
behind the 9th Brigade. The
Baggage in the centre -

Watched the shells from the guns
ahead bursting over Belmont
Station - We got to camp at 4-30.

It was pitch dark & the confusion
awful - The general was in an
ambulance. I did not get to bed
till 12 p.m. & slept on a stretcher.

Up at 1-30 a.m. Mules inspanned.

Nov 23rd Sent to get the general's
ambulance & P.M.D.'s - One
stretcher of rotten canvas, re-
marked upon by Lord Methuen.

Started at 3 a.m. & lost the am-
bulance. Pitch dark - moved out
to the right & found ourselves
in the firing line of the guards
waiting for daylight - Turned back

I came out on to veldt on the road to Belmont Station, just as the artillery began to shell Table Mountain from below the railway.

9th Brigade moving round to the left to attack Table Mountain. The Dutch position a very strong one, a line of koppe's of $2\frac{1}{2}$ or 3 miles, with all ranges etc marked. Absolutely no cover for our men. Healy moved up to station with wagons & stretcher bearers. Terrija firing - at 6 a.m. mounted orderlies came down to us for ambulances. I went off with three & found 4 wounded men behind the railway embankment. Sent the men back to the Field Hospital at Belmont Farm. Then moved off along the embankment where I met Major Birchall. Ordered to go along the embankment to pick up more wounded & then

to go up to the top of one of the koppe's where a lot of wounded men were collected. We did so passing several dead bodies & a lot of mules & horses belonging to the R. Artillery. Got up to the koppe with 2 stretcher squads. There were about 50 wounded & several dead lying together. Horrid sights, Talbot wished I was a peaceful "pill" with a brass plate on my door. Got off the wounded officers & dressed & morphiaed most of the cases. They were all crying out for water. Great number of severe wounds, very few able to sit up. At 10 a.m. firing ceased except for a few stray shots overhead. Very hot. I got my wounded back to the station as rapidly as possible, they were mostly Scots guards & badly hit.

Several wounded Boers were brought down - very grateful for any kindness done to them. All the wounded were back at the Station & Field Hospital by 2-p.m. I was very hungry & thirsty & fagged out - The goods shed & railway platform were full of wounded, nearly all bad cases - I dressed a lot of cases in the station shed & was left in charge of it for the night - very much done up - The railway line repaired by the R. E.'s & a new Telegraph laid - Trains came into the station soon after the action. Our loss is about 230 - the Boers about half -

Nov 24th Up early - Saw some of the Boer doctors. mostly commanded Englishmen - The Hospital Train came in about 10-30 a.m. Heard

that the cavalry had failed to cut off the Boer retreat & that between 3000 & 4000 were on the Roppe expecting to hold them for about a fortnight - Got $\frac{1}{2}$ a bottle of fizz on train & beefsteak & onions & saw some papers a month old - The train holds 92 cases lying down, but 150 of the slightest were put into it & it was sent down to Orange River to return in the evening - I saw chopping & heard that the Armoured train with R. E.'s, 10 miles up the line, had been fired on by artillery, whilst repairing the water supply & that one officer & 2 mounted Infantry were wounded - Our ambulances were sent to bring up the wounded for train from Belmont farm.

Self ordered with three ambulances (which did not go) to join the

column on the march at 3-30 p.m.
I did so. the column was not ready
until about 5 p.m. Marched to
Tzintzapa, found good water —
camped & reported at headquarters.
Lay down under a wagon - A.D.C.
Came round to say the general
wished to see me - I went round
& found him much exercised as
an action was expected next day -
about the removal of the wounded -
I was given 60 Northampton blankets
for stretchers - & ordered to be
ready to start at 3-30 a.m. Lay
down but got no sleep as the
mules broke loose - Got
Nov 25th Got into my correct place
behind mounted troops & after
marching four miles, saw the
rest of the Beaver Co. coming up
behind having left Belmont at
1-30 a.m. with a Field Hospital -

The 9th Brigade marched straight
across Graspain, a broad open
plain with plenty of grass on it -
Saw partridge - bustard, hares
& antelope - The guards kept
to the left, towards a railway
some way behind. There was
a long row of kopjes in front -
on the left of the line rising into
a high peak, & extending to the
right for about 4 miles - ending
in 3 rough peaks, joined behind
by a ridge - When about 5 miles
away, we saw the smoke of
Boer gun, from a kopje on the
left - firing apparently at the
armoured train. Two naval guns
along the railway line replied
but failed to silence them -
The Boers were threatening our right
in force, with another gun, mounted

on the end koppe, firing occasionally. The whole brigade then made a right turn & marched along parallel to the Boer position, for about 3 miles & then turned to the left round the end of the three rough kopjes - from which a tremendous fire was kept up. We came along behind them & met several staff officers galloping down for the guards who were by this time about six miles from where the fighting was likely to be.

The 45th Field Battery then began to shell the first of the 3 kopjes with shrapnel & the infantry moved up in 3 lines in skirmishing order under cover of the guard - the Marines leading & then charged the central kopjes which they took & finally drove the Boers out of the place - The cavalry

failed to cut off the Boer retreat, though hundreds of them were seen streaming off the hills - The artillery got a few shells into them & killed a few -

When the action commenced we made a dressing station about 3500 yards from the foot of the 1st Koppe. Healy went on behind the guns with the stretcher Bearers & left the ambulance a little below him - I was sent off with a message to him, & met a

mounted Infantry sergeant who wanted a doctor to dress a scout who had been hit by a shell 1 1/2 miles away - I got some dressings & galloped off & found him hit by a shell just above the ankle, splintering the tibia - Lots of bullets were flying about. Galloped back to the dressing station & moved nearer in to the koppe - all the wounded belonged to our brigade which had by this time moved on - Our Field Hospital was on the railway line 4 1/2 miles behind us. Healy got all the wounded sent

down to us from the hill by 4-30 p.m.
mostly marines, shot in 3 or 4 places.
The ~~Marine~~ Art. lost 46 out of 48 men.
Dressed most of them - ran short
of water - at 5 p.m. sent off the
cart - then began to get the
wounded back to the field hospital.
The mules done up - 4-15 p.m.
Self done up - no water - $\frac{1}{4}$ wounded
- no ambulances - Sent in orderlies.
Got rid of 32 more wounded &
had to camp out with 44 all
night in the open veldt - The water
cart arrived about 11-p.m. The
wounded were continually asking
for water etc. I was put on night
duty - very tired.

Nov 28th Got up - Dressed 11 remain-
ing cases which had not
been done. P.M.O. sent ambu-
-lance of no. 1 Beavers Co to assist us -
got wounded back by 12 - noon.
Ordered to join the F. hospital ourselves.

arrived there & stayed 2 hours -
ordered to join brigade - mules
done up - could not find the way -
arrived in camp 9-p.m. awfully
tired - got some good water &
ate a tongue -

Nov 24th. Moved off at 4-15 a.m.
in the rear of the Brigade. We passed
the graves of naval & marine officers
killed on Nov 25th - Fertile veldt -
great fun among the niggers with
haves put up by the leading troops.
We passed 'Honeycomb Kloof' where we
expected a fight - We followed the
line for about 5 or 6 miles & then
turned sharp to the right for 2 miles
& reached some large water pans.
Camped about 11-a.m. Had a bed
made in a wagon & went to sleep at
once - Slept the whole day - Ordered
to move off at 5 a.m. I do not think
the Boers at Belmont - Graspan more
than $\frac{2}{5}$ of ours - The wounded Boers
many of them glad to set away. They

wear their everyday clothes - best suit -
with a broad-brimmed hat - with
in many cases a yellow or red
ribbon round it, signifying the
Commando they belong to or where
from the Free State or Transvaal -
We captured their hospital & medical
stores at Enselin & about 40
wounded men - A lot of ponies were
killed there. Now we are only 5 or 6
miles from Modder River - there
are said to be only 500 or 600 Boers
there - & the railway Bridge
broken. Nov 28th? arrived in
the night, having marched off without
food from the previous night - as also
nearly all the other Regiments -
We marched out with the guards
on the right, the 9th Brigade on the
left ourselves behind 9th Brigade -
after about 3 miles we heard
some firing on the extreme right
& a battery of artillery moved off & joined

in. We could not see anything - after
about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour, we moved on, the firing
having ceased & were told the Boers
had moved off towards Jacobsdal.

This was only a feint on their part,
& our men marched confidently
on towards Modder River Village
which could be seen about 3 miles
ahead & trees all the way up the
river - Our mistake soon became
apparent, as a terrific fire soon
began; at first on the right
& gradually extending to the
left about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The Boers
evidently had numerous gun-
quick fivers - Nordenfeldts & one
46 " pounder by the bridge which
threw 2 shells within 20 yards of
us & nearly hit the armoured
train - Heaps with ambulances, went
on the right of the railway, behind
the angle & Sub. H. ^{deno} whose kilts showed
up very much - he & the bearers being
down behind a protecting ridge about

2000 yards from the Boers, but well within range of their fire. All our field batteries & the naval guns were banging away & the infantry & Boer small arm fire were at times incessant. I watched the 45th field battery go into action in front of the village - beautifully done. I was sent for then to attend a wounded mounted Infantry man - Brought him in on my pony. The fire still continued but was mostly an artillery duel - none of the Boer guns were silenced as they could not be seen, nor the whereabouts of their trenches. This went on all day & it was impossible for the ambulances to go forward. One of our Bearers was shot through the thigh. The wounded began to come in slowly to the dressing station - Most A. & S. H. ^{done}. Most of the wounds were received by the men while lying down as the ground in part of the village was flat without so much as a bush to

screen our men. Firing went on all day, mostly artillery with at times burst of rifle fire. As night came on the wounded came in faster & faster. We sent some milk & brandy down to Head who had bad toothache.

The artillery firing went on till after 10 p.m. Numbers of men of different regiments were lost & strayed to our camp, utterly done, without water. The last ambulance came in about 2 a.m. with 4 men shot by accident outside our camp. Slept on the ground, tired out. Nov 29th 4-30 a.m. 6 guns fired at the village, there was no reply & it was found to be evacuated - 1 Fresh Battery & the H.L.T. came up the evening before. We sent the ambulance to fetch the wounded from houses on the right where they had been all night. The Field Hospital had pitched close to the trains - moved the Bearer Co down to Bridge End Village. The corrugated iron houses were riddled by shrapnel - bullets - shells - all over the place. The Boer trenches were clearly

placed all along the river bank,
with trees behind to screen them.
Was ordered to go to a house $\frac{1}{2}$ a mile
on the left of the line for some wounded.
Got there about 1-30 p.m. after
crossing two miles of the battlefield.
Dead bodies & dead horses were lying
all over the place - Burying
parties were out - I reached the
house which had been held by the
Boers, riddled with bullets. It had
been taken by a bayonet charge
led by Lord Methuen who was
wounded shortly after getting on
the Argyle & S. H. down - I found Crisp
& Tagger looking awful wrecks &
2 very badly wounded men - I had
a whisky & soda & began to get
the wounded away - Major Burchell
came up & said there were more
wounded across the river - I waded
across a dam with some orderlies
& found Chopping with some

wounded men & several Boers - got
volunteers from the L. N. Tames to
carry them across - Went up to
the village to look for & found
several bodies in the potato gardens -
no more wounded - Looted $\frac{1}{2}$ a sack of
new potatoes - French beans & carrots
then crossed the river again & found
2 men & 2 wounded Boers still
absent - Left orders & started back
for camp which I reached about
4 p.m. fairly fagged - Camp by
the railway station - Had quarters
in an excellent hotel. Lord Methuen
was there - I tried to get some beer
but could not - made my bed in a
wagon & lay down - Two absent
bearers reported at 11 p.m. that
they had left their 2 wounded men at
the house alone. No food - my hammer
sack - instrument case, water bottle
stolen or lost - probably by muggers.
Feel very sick about it all - No 30th
got up at 4 a.m. I spanned am-
bulance & went over to the house &
found 2 wounded Boers, very much in

went of water - one since dead - shot
through the head - Brought them in.
Got Breakfast at 4-30 a.m.
8 a.m. went to bed & slept till 4 p.m.
Heard that there were about 11000 Boers
here & Cronje & Steyn were present.
That they had allowed the guards
to come within 200 yds before they
fired & as there was no cover they did
a lot of damage - Our casualties are
about 500 killed & wounded - the
Boers probably bare half - but
Several bodies were found thrown
into the river - The men are busy
-ing horses etc today as the stink is
awful - The engineers are starting
to patrol the river & make railways
cutting & bridge etc for train over
the river - The two end piers of the
railway bridge are taken down
& girders have fallen in & become
rent - a s. Highlanders terribly
sunk out on the back of their legs etc.
(they can hardly walk) from lying on

their faces - Heard that the Boers
left the place early in the night ex-
pecting a night attack & that they
came back in the morning & took
away their guns - as none was made.
I also heard that they did not in-
tend to fight here unless Cronje had
come down & made them -
Dec 1st I slept most of the day &
got our tents & stores - Rations very
good - excellent jam - frozen mutton
fresh ^{but} meat, fair bread rum &
wine price occasionally - all the sick
were sent back to Orange river by
train at once. Dec 2nd I got up
early to exercise my pony. sent
by the P.M.O to get blankets &
stretchers from a supply train.
Firing 3 miles out. 1 m. Infantry
officer & 2 men wounded -
slept most of the day - very hot with
a scorching wind - 1/2 Black Watch
around, some Lyddite guns & 12th Lancers.
Dec 4th Look out my pony to exercise
early - Heard firing four miles ahead
between patrols The Dutch firing their

big gun from the hills - The Engineer's bridge is nearly over the river - Arrival of Major Murray F.A.

Dec 5th - I have got dysentery of a sort pretty badly - Tried a variety of remedies - The first train came across the river in the evening - The Seaforth ~~th~~ arrived - Dec 6th Laid up in bed with dysentery - Tried ipec etc - but stopped it to some extent in the evening with chloroform - Dec 7th Feeling pretty weak.

Not quite well - got fresh milk & 2 eggs for breakfast - very good - Big 4.7 naval gun arrived across the river & was taken up to Gungahput by 32 oxen - awful night - terrific thunderstorm & rain - few wauchope & the rest of the Highland Brigade arrived -

Dec 8th Heard the news from Kimberley of the sortie & loss of 24 men - by a despatch rider - One searchlight

was not properly understood by them - expecting to be ordered to advance any moment - allotted rooms at Wilson's Hotel for our heavy baggage to remain behind - Thunder again -

Dec 9th The naval gun was taken up the hill to the Gungahput about 2 miles out & fired several rounds of shell, Lyddite & shrapnel at the Boer position about 4 miles distant - ~~the~~ Boers occupy a block of kopps through which the line passes extending about 4 miles to the right of the line & many miles to the left - On the right of the line the Boer position ends in a koppe with flat top coming out in a point towards the river - There are trenches all along the bottom of the kopps & several out from the koppe, on the right towards the river - The long distance shelling is said to have killed 1 man. Dec 10th I hear that the 9th Brigade is to be left behind to look after this place

The regiments are about the best
here but very weak - men very
disappointed - Orders for the H.
Brigade to move out with 1 blanket
& waterproof sheet apiece & rations
for five days to buy & force the
way through to Kimberley - The
H. Brigade marched out about 4 p.m.
in terrific rain. They halted about
4 miles out. The Guards Brigade
marched out about 1-30 a.m. I was
ordered to take 2 ambulances out
to gangers hut behind the naval
guns sleep out for the night. The
Boer position was heavily shelled
all evening. I slept in an ambulance
very wet in the night - Dec. 12th left
at 4 a.m. The naval guns fired first
at 4.15 a.m. There was terrific ^{artillery} fire
about 6 a.m. I could see all the
shells Lyddite & shrapnel bursting
quite plainly - 6 a.m. relieved by
Major Hauley. Heard terrific artillery
firing towards the big kopje on the

right - at 8 a.m. Capt Heaf came up so
I & Major H. went down to breakfast.
I was suddenly ordered to take the
rest of our ambulances

FLAN HOW.

OLVERSTON.

LANCASHIRE.