

**Letters from Edmund P. Hewitt, with the RAMC in South Africa, to his brother, Jack Hewitt, Indian Public Works Department**

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U.B. Very best

Thanks for your great  
kindness in lending the money & we  
shall be awfully good of you & we  
- towards our expenses.

16. ARGYLL MANSIONS,

ADDISON BRIDGE,

W.

Jersey.

August 24<sup>th</sup>/98

Tuesday

Dear Jack.

I thought I would  
write and let you know  
that I am getting on well, in  
fact am feeling quite well  
again only somewhat shakely.

Mother & self arrived here  
on Sat. last; we left  
Southampton on Friday  
driving to the docks in a Cab.

a German type - something  
like her brother the German Emperor.

Some of the Princes at Netley  
are going to try and get me  
attached to one of the Guard's  
Hosp: in London, but I'm  
afraid there is no vacancy. If  
I got it, it would be splendid  
as I could live with Mother at  
the flat.

Punch comes late here so will  
miss next Friday's mail.

I will write again soon and  
let you know how I am getting  
on.

Best love from us both.

Yours affect: brother  
Edmund Hewitt

Reflected on 28.1.00



No 2 General Hosp:

Hyuberg.

Dec: 19<sup>th</sup> (Monday)

Dear Jack.

Here I am in S. Africa after a good passage of 3 weeks. We had fine weather the whole time - the feeding was very good but we were too crowded up. I went out with the 1st Yorks (19<sup>th</sup>) - they were a very nice lot of fellows. When we arrived here we were ordered to hand over all our equipment to the Beaver Co: & we were sent off for duty at the Stationary Hosp: here. This place is about 9 miles from Capetown and is very pretty. There are two Hosp: here each with

about 400 wounded, & there is another one about 4 miles off. I have a tent to live in and I meal at the Mess. I am fairly comfortable but am keen on getting up to the front - I am in hopes of doing so later on. We have some awful bad cases here and are kept very busy indeed.

It is not at all too hot here - just nice with cool morning and evenings. Cape Town is not a bad place but is very expensive. I hope I do not have to do a tour here; I would rather get on to India after

this business is over - which I suppose will be about a year hence.

The Dutch people are very disliked about here and I don't think it would take much to make them rise - I believe they are all armed to the teeth. Even some of the resident English are in sympathy with the Boers - you can't blame them too much as they say they were betrayed in 1813 and may be again. We have several hundred more wounded coming in this afternoon so I shall be kept busy for some hours after lunch.

If you write address me:

Lieut Mewitt

Field Force

S. Africa.

as I may be moved any time.  
I am sending this to your agents  
as you may have left Akoyapen.  
I will write to you as often  
as I can and shall be glad  
to hear from you. I have not  
heard from home since  
coming out here.

I must close now.

Good bye.

Your affect in the

Edmund Mewitt

Wrote on 12 Dec.



Field Force

S. Africa.

January 1<sup>st</sup> 1900.

Dear Jack.

I hope my last letter came safely to hand. Soon after I wrote it I got orders to join the Beavers Coy who took all our stores, and one of their officers was sent to Wynberg in my place. I am now stationed with them at Green Point Camp; it is close to the sea and about two miles from Cape Town. Very good frames run past the camp and we get into the Town in about 20 minutes.

There are other troops here and we have one large mess for all the officers. Amongst them here is Capt Fowler R.E. who was for some time a prisoner amongst the Afidis, during the Chitral affair; he is an exceedingly nice fellow.

We are expecting to go up to the front every day and I can't understand why they keep us here. I have practically nothing to do and shall be glad to get some work.

We had some very heavy rain a couple of days ago but bar that the weather has been magnificent. This is much

hotter than Hyberia and very dusty, but the heat is nothing very much, and I don't feel it so much as a hot summer in England.

I have not heard from home since I left England. I have had letters from Holt's but that is all.

I do hope I go on to India when this business is finished. It is much too expensive a place for the likes of me.

We had an alarm in camp last night. They began firing rockets in honour of the New Year and we took it for a signal to muster. The Dutch are expected to rise



and three guns from the Fort is the signal for all troops to get under arms. Besides the rockets all the steamers sounded their horns and the din was something too awful. They kept it up for  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour so I am not likely to forget the advent of 1900 for some time to come.

I hope old Bobs will make things hum a bit. Bullets and the others seem to have messed things considerably.

Best wishes for the New Year.  
Yours affect brother  
Edmund Hewitt.



Potfontein  
Jan 27<sup>th</sup> 1900

Dear Jack.

I forget when I wrote last so I shall probably repeat the story of my doings somewhat.

I think I told you that I had been sent to a Bearer Coy after all. I was in camp near Capetown until the 8<sup>th</sup> Jan. On that day we entrained for the front at 5.30 p.m. and arrived at a place called Penseburgh on the 16<sup>th</sup> at 7.15 a.m. There were 4 officers and we had two ordinary first class carriages in which were <sup>each of</sup> two bunks that got deck up

during the day. He had our men  
at the different stations. We stopped  
at for the purpose, and the journey  
was not at all uncomfortable.  
I have to discard my gun as it  
does not work at all well & only makes  
me swear. I travelled up with a man  
named Wilson of the 18<sup>th</sup> Hussar - one  
of the Franky Coyt Lt - he was a very  
nice fellow & an amusing companion.  
Nothing of interest happened during  
the journey. At Weas we had 110  
mules, 8 horses and 20 Blacks  
handed over to us, so our train  
was quite an imposing one. At  
Rensburgh we found we were attached  
to Gen. French's cavalry brigade.  
On the 12<sup>th</sup> we were visited by a plague  
of locusts - it was a most extraordinary  
sight to one like myself, who had  
never seen anything of the sort before.  
He stayed at Rensburgh until the

16<sup>th</sup> and were very busy getting everything  
into working order. On the 16<sup>th</sup> we marched  
(the officers of course are wounded) 40  
Shingenfontein and arrived there at  
8 p.m. Just as I was turning in at  
10.30 I was told I would have to turn  
out with an ambulance at 3 a.m. to  
look for some wounded New South  
Wales Lancers who had been cut off.  
I went out with an ambulance &  
a patrol of 20 men. They pressed on  
ahead & came in touch with the enemy.  
After a little firing, by which no damage  
was done, the patrol retired & I went  
on to see what I would find. I found  
11 dead horses (4 Poor Fones) one dead  
Sgt-major of Australian horse, whom  
I buried, & a badly wounded Corporal  
of the N. S. W. Lancers, whom I brought  
back; he was shot through the neck, his  
jaw was broken, & he had another

wound through the chest. He had been lying out in the cold all night & he died soon after I got back. I saw a lot of Beavers about 200 yards off, in a farm, but they did not interfere. They rest of the Landers, an officer & 12 men were presumably made prisoners. On the 18<sup>th</sup> I was detached from my Beaver Coy with 20 men, & 4 ambulances to go with an advance column to occupy another Camp, so here I am with a separate command in a very charming Camp. There is a large pond close to the Camp and we can get a good swim whenever we want. The troops here consist of two guns, the Carbineers, Household Cavalry, N. B. H. Landers & a company of the Yorks Reg. The latter are next to me in Camp & the 2 officers, & myself live together in my tent - (feed them)

I came out with the Yorks so am  
lucky to have old friends wait for  
me. We have plenty of fresh meat  
& bread every day and are quite  
comfortable. I have my compact  
bed, table, chair & bath & am  
quite luxurious. So far I have only  
been one day on Powell's beef.  
We are not doing anything here at  
all. In fact they are marking time  
all round for the next 3 weeks to  
give Bob's time to look round &  
get up reinforcements. Colerberg  
is our objective but the Poles are  
defenders in great strength. We  
may be shelled & attacked here

any day. They have one or two  
very good guns hereabouts &  
are splendid shots.

The temperature is very pleasant.  
We shot during the day, but  
too much so, and quite cold  
at night & early morning.

I am writing this in spare moments.  
I don't know how long it will  
have to wait for the mail.

I have only had 2 letters from  
home & have not received a  
stamp. Please send me. It is an  
awful shame robbing a fellow on

active service like that.

I have no stamps & no means  
of getting any so you will have to  
pay for this letter yourself. It  
will only be a penny.

I think I have told you everything  
of interest and will now close.

Yours affec<sup>t</sup> brother

Edmund Hewitt

Address me:

Lieut E Hewitt  
R.A.M.C.

109 Coy, Beares Coy  
Cape Colony

Field Force, S Africa



Bloemfontein  
Orange Free State.  
March 17<sup>th</sup> 1900.

C109 Coy, Beavers Coy  
Cavalry Division

Dear Jack.

I last wrote to you on the 27<sup>th</sup> of January and that was the 3<sup>rd</sup> letter I had written to you in S. Africa. Last time I heard from Mother she said you had only received one. I will now give you a short account of my doings.

I left Potchefstroom Feb 1<sup>st</sup> & marched 6 miles back to my Beavers Coy at Slingsfontein. Next day we marched to Rensburg (15 miles). On the 3<sup>rd</sup> we left Rensburg & marched 24 miles, and about 9 miles next day brought us into Naanpoort.

We stayed there until the 8<sup>th</sup> & then entrained for Methuen's camp at Modder River, arriving there at 10 p.m. on the 9<sup>th</sup>. We had a saloon carriage and were very comfortable.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> the whole Cavalry Div: started at 2 a.m. & marched to Ram Dam - 21 miles. We left all our tents at Modder and only carried a minimum of luggage.

Feb: 12<sup>th</sup> Ram Dam to Riet River = 19 miles.

The Boers shelled us a bit & tried to prevent

us crossing the River but they soon retired. I had to go out for one or two wounded & came under fire in doing so. I had a splendid view of the operations from a big kopje. <sup>out</sup> The gunners kept pounding away and drove our own cavalry away & I am sure prevented them from capturing a Boer gun.

Feb. 13<sup>th</sup>: Piet River to Klip Drift on the Modder River = 28 miles. Some firing but no damage.

14<sup>th</sup>: Rested. We were shelled by the Boers and several shells dropped near our wagons and 2 or 3 right in the cavalry lines, but they did not burst well & no damage was done.

15<sup>th</sup>: Left camp at 9.45 a.m. When about 3 miles out we came under shell fire. I rode out to Lt. Battery R. HA, who were being shelled, & found they had about 8 wounded. Just as I got up a shell burst, killing an officer & wounding 1 man & several horses. The Battery then galloped off & got the wounded near

away; I then got a small cart & put the dead officers on it. I was fired on whilst doing so & the gunner with me had his horse wounded. Two shells dropped close but burst away from us; another one nearly hit the ambulance wagon. One bullet just whizzed past my ear. I was so busy that I did not at all realise that there was any danger at all. We picked up about 40 wounded & got left behind but we managed to find our way into Kimberley; we did not go right in but put our wounded into a farm about 6 miles out. Next day we took them into Kimberley.

The whole march was very trying - excessively hot the whole time. Horses dropped by the hundred every day. I have a native pony that nothing seems to tire. Kimberley looked very flourishing and did not show much signs of the siege. I had a very good



dinner at the Club.

Feb: 21<sup>st</sup>. Left Kimberley & marched about 25 miles, arriving next day at Kooder's Rand drift. The next few days were very unpleasant owing to heavy rains & thunderstorms.

Feb: 27<sup>th</sup>. I conveyed sick into Paadeburg and was down at Cronje's laager when they surrendered. It was on either side of the River & was full of dead animals - the stench was something too awful. Sixty dead & 200 wounded Boers were found that day and a lot more dead next day. We bagged 6 guns & about 4000 men. I spoke to several of the prisoners - they were all very sick of the war.

March 6<sup>th</sup>. Joined infantry at Bob's headquarters at Oosfontein.

March 7<sup>th</sup>: Marched at 4 a. m. The Boers were driven along for miles from some very strong positions. We arrived at Poplar Grove at 9 a. m. (22 miles) March 10<sup>th</sup> We marched to

Petrusburg - about 13 miles. One man was sniped there and I went out and brought him in.

March 11<sup>th</sup> - Marched to Driekop - about 15 miles.

March 12<sup>th</sup> To Venters Vlei about 23 miles.

13<sup>th</sup>: Marched about 14 miles into Bloemfontein. We had no fighting these last few days, during which our Brigade (the 3<sup>rd</sup> Cavalry) were separated from the rest of the army.

We expect to rest here comfortably for about 3 weeks. The Free States keep coming in with their arms, but heavy fighting is still expected. The Boers are said to be entrenched at Kruisstad, which is some way up the line.

This is quite a small place - hardly as big as Kimberley - Most of the shopkeepers are English, or British colonials, & most of the notices etc are in English.

I have given you the best account I can of my doings and will fill up gaps in my next.

Mother tells me you have been moved - Wacca I believe is the place - but, from her writing it might be Docea. I will send this to your agent. Please excuse want of stamps - I cannot get any here.

It is pleasant to be in peace and plenty, once more. I had been

without cigarette for some days when I arrived here, & only had some very strong pipe tobacco. I have laid in a good store here. He hopes to get the rest of our kit up soon.

We were on half rations most of our long forced marches, & it was rather trying as one gets a tremendous appetite out here. We used condensed milk instead of jam or butter and very nice it is - I prefer it to jam now. Bully Beef I never got to like but the big, hard biscuits are splendid. We only had  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs per day. the greatest privation of all. We were nearly a month without being able to receive or send letters. So far I have been in

splendid health and have  
really enjoyed the campaign  
so far.

We all hope to get a star for  
Kimberly and clasps for  
Paadeburgh and Bloemfontein.

Please write and let me know  
how you are getting on. I dare say  
you have written - I have lost a  
lot of letters but they have  
come all right lately.

It gets very cold here at night  
& early morning.

I will write again soon.

Your affect brother

Edmund Mewitt.

P.S. I have put my proper  
address at beginning of letter.

Coy. Boy, Bears Coy.

Cavalry Division.

April 5<sup>th</sup> 1900.

Blumentein.

Dear Jack.

My last letter to you was dated 17<sup>th</sup> March. A good deal has happened hereabouts since then and we have had our share of disasters. We remained quietly here until the 24<sup>th</sup> when the Brigade was suddenly ordered to march to Glen Liding, 20 miles up the line. We arrived about 6.30 p.m.

Next day we crossed the River, and in the evening I went out to look for some wounded. I got lost in the dark and had to get back as best I could, which I somehow succeeded in doing about 9.30 p.m. We brought the wounded in next day.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> we had a fight some 16 miles out. I was attached, for the day, to the Carbineers and I accompanied them into action. We were for 1 1/2 hours under a heavy fire from four guns and we all had narrow escapes. A pom pom shell burst under my horse, but the only damage was a slight bruise of the fingers. One man & 3 horses were killed & 3 <sup>men</sup> wounded. He also came in for rifle fire but tho many bullets went all round us no one was hit. The Carbineers say it was the hottest time they have had. I did not feel comfortable at first but when I had the wounded to look after I was all right. The rapid beating over our heads was the worst part of it. To show you what a state the Cavalry are reduced to

by loss of horses I may mention that the Carbineers had 75 mounted men in action this day. Next day we marched back to our old camp at Bluefontain. 31<sup>st</sup>. Sudden orders to move out as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cav. Coy had come in for a last time & lost 7 guns. Marched out about 10 miles & bivouacked. Next day we marched another 10 miles. In the morning I went out to the Boers & brought in a wounded Tommy. They were nice enough but bragged a bit of what they were going to do. They told me as a great secret that the Russians were attacking India, & that 10,000 Russian had landed in Weligoa Bay. A poor young Chap of ours was killed when the guns were taken. He had checked & removed four wounded men, & was engaged looking after a wounded Officer when

he was shot through the head. He was a nice chap (about 9 months service) and died a noble death.

A thunder storm has come on with heavy rain & has somewhat damped this letter.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> we moved back here where I hope they will leave us for a time.

In this Brigade with 2 Regiments they can now mount about 200 mules.

We heard this morning that 500 mounted Infantry had been captured 12 miles off - we are wondering what will be the next disaster as they generally go in triplets. However the end must be the same but it will renew the Boer courage and delay matters a great deal.

The enemy are in strong force all round here and the Naval guns, on a hill just above us, have been firing at intervals all day.

I still continue in good health, but

in common with everyone else here,  
shall not be sorry when it is over.

We get on very well indeed with the  
swells in the Cavalry. How on earth  
Army men can treat us as half  
Civilians after this I don't know.

We share all their dangers and  
have already had many Officers  
killed & wounded.

I must say the Boers are a plucky  
lot and will probably fight to the  
last.

I have just had letters from  
Mother and Clara. I should very  
much like to hear from you,  
so please write when you have  
time. I wrote a long letter to Alfred  
the other day to congratulate  
him on his wedding.

Clara has given me your news



address so I am sending this  
direct.

I will write again soon.  
Good bye.

Your affect brother.

Edmund Meier

E. Hewitt

R. C. C.

"2" Bat R. H. A.

"Q" not two.

Dear Jack.

I heard last mail from Mother that you were engaged to be married and I write to offer you my heartiest congratulations. What a pity I am not on hand to act as your Best Man. You have all gone and left me in the cold and there I am likely to remain unless an heir comes my way, but at present I am more likely to run up against something harder in the shape of Poms or Mauser bullets.

I am now attached to "2" Bat R. H. A. They are an excellent lot of fellows and I am very comfortable with them and as much at home as if I had served for years with them. I have already been under fire with this Battery as I went up to help them

Blainfontain

April 17<sup>th</sup> 1900.

on the day we got into Kimberley. They are the Battery who saved all their guns but one when the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cav. Bde got into the mess the other day. Gen. Colville made an awful ass of himself that day as he could have recovered all the guns and given the Boers a drubbing. Instead of pushing on he fell back, directly the Boers opened fire on him. He arrived in plenty of time and had 7000 men with him.

We are all hoping that the worst of the fighting is over now and that the Boers will soon give in. They have, for some reason or other, gone South. They have already had a severe handling and we ought to be able to cut them off and get round them.

There are, or were, about 9000 down there.

As far as is known at present, we shall move on from here this day week. At first it was rumoured we should go Laagerbrand way, but now they

say we shall go up the Railway, but I think it is all guesswork.

We have had a tremendous lot of rain lately, but have been comfortable enough as we have had our tents for the last fortnight. These, however, will have to be left behind once more when we move on, but the rains are supposed to end with April. It is getting infernally cold now and promises to be very uncomfortable in that respect later on. The only consolation is that the Boers will feel it more than we do as they carry much less kit. They never campaign in the winter if they can help as they cannot get water on their farms and always trek away with their horses and cattle in search of it.

There is an enormous camp round here now and it seems to grow larger every day. There are quite 80,000 troops round and about Pilsbampfontein.

Water has become somewhat scarce

here since the Boers captured the waterworks, and I can't make out why they don't turn them out, but I suppose Bobs has something up his sleeve. I fancy he wants them to settle down comfortably and then to get round them. In the same way he has let them trek away South.

Mother tells me that you say you have written to me, but I have not as yet received any letter from you. I wonder whether I shall be kept here or sent on to India. I hope it will be the latter as I don't like the prospect of five more years out here.

It is nearly five months now since I slept in a house; it would be very funny getting between sheets again and using a chamber pot.

The inoculations against Enteric seem to be bearing fruit. It does not protect against an attack, at least many inoculated ones have gone down

with it, but they nearly all get well. I wonder if they will do anything for us after the War. Everyone says that the Ralls have done exceedingly well, and those of us with Beavers Coy, Regiment etc have taken our full share of the dangers incidental to a campaign. Hard work is beginning to tell on many and a lot of our fellows are getting bowled over now, including my late C. O. who, I am afraid, is going in for Enteric. Sick chaps of the Cavalry Division have now gone sick and one was killed, so that it is pretty hard work for the survivors.

I had a bad bilious attack the other day but otherwise I still keep very fit.

I got my Queen's chocolate the other day. I am eating the chocolate - but am going to send the box

home to Mother, as she expressed  
a wish for it, and I am only too  
glad to send her anything. She  
must be very anxious about me  
but I avoid saying anything  
about being under fire. The worst  
of it is she sees that R. A. M. C. men  
are killed and wounded.

Well - good luck to you both.

I am sure you will be happier  
as a married man. You have led  
too lonely a life out there in India.  
Please introduce me to my future  
sister-in-law and tell her I look  
forward to making her acquaintance  
at no distant date.

Our Revvie - old chap. I will write again  
soon.

Your affect brother

Eddie.

May 8<sup>th</sup> 1900.

Q Post: PMA.

2<sup>nd</sup> Cav Bde.

Dear Jack,

The last time I wrote to you was the 17<sup>th</sup> April last and we have had some stirring times since. We joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry Bde on the 24<sup>th</sup> at Bloomfontein, about 5 miles from Bloemfontein.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> we left at 4 p. m. and marched about 12 miles to Kransky Kraal.

April 30<sup>th</sup> left at 6 a. m. and had a fight of some hours duration and had a bad time of it.

We were watering the horses when the Boers opened fire from four guns and maulers but the guns managed to shut them up.

We were not allowed to light fires that night and had no food all day.

He marched again on the 1<sup>st</sup> and shelled a lot of Boers retreating from Heperer. That was good fun as they did not fire back. He had a rest on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and resumed our march North on the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> we fought a pretty little battle and sent the Boers flying from some very strong position.

The Cavalry held them until Gen Hamilton's infantry came up. The Boers are supposed to have suffered heavily and we lost about 20 - mostly wounded.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> He marched to Winburg

without meeting any Boers. They could have caused us a lot of trouble on the way, but presume they had had enough of it for the time being.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> we marched 7 miles North and have remained here ever since. The Boers are in some force about 13 miles North on the Zand River. Bobo is up here with a lot of infantry and will give Mr Boer snuff if they don't bolt pretty soon.

We expect to move on again to-morrow and will probably get part of the force across the River in an unexpected quarter, and so get behind them. I hope it comes off as it will almost



settle them, tho I do not think  
the Transvaal will give in until  
we have taken Pretoria.

We get very cold nights now and  
it is beastly turning out at  
4. a. m. in the morning. When we  
are on the march we are sometimes  
a whole day without food, and  
last week we were 48 hours with  
only a couple of biscuits and  
a bit of chocolate. I shall be  
jolly glad when it is all over.

I am keeping very fit and am  
not putting on flesh.

Good bye. I will write again soon.  
I have not heard from home  
since the 17<sup>th</sup> April.

Your affect brother  
Edmund Hewitt

Kronstad.

May 14<sup>th</sup> 1900.

G. Pat R. Ma.

2<sup>nd</sup> Cav: Oide.

Dear Jack.

I have just received a letter from you dated March 5<sup>th</sup>. It is the first that has turned up and I was delighted to get it.

I entirely agree with your doctor in the matter you spoke about - two or three years is generally considered sufficient. I also agree about the keeping up of Religion, although I am sorry to say I also have been bad that way.

I have been under heavy fire over and over again, and in common with everyone who cares to tell the plain truth, feel in a beastly funk every time. Of course we all perform our due work and do not show it.

I wish the beastly war were over, but

I am very glad I came out. I don't think the war can last very much longer. The Boers bolt now very quickly and do not seem to have much fight left in them.

The last time I wrote was the 8<sup>th</sup>. On the 9<sup>th</sup> we trekked once more, and on the 10<sup>th</sup> we had a big fight when crossing the Zand River. The cavalry chased a convoy in the evening but they got away in the dark, and we only captured five wagons. They fired on us with three guns when chasing them, but they shot badly and did no damage.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> we proceeded on our way once more and occupied Beutenburg. On the 12<sup>th</sup> we came on here where we found Robs with the main

body of the Army.

I believe we move on once more to-morrow, North East towards Steilbrom.

There is a great deal of sickness amongst the troops, but personally I keep as fit as ever I was in my life.

I don't know whether they will send me on to India after the war, but I shall do my best to get there, and hope to be at your wedding yet. I believe we are to get a star for the Relief of Kimberley, so I shall have two medals and several clasps, as I have been in most of the engagements since Robs came out. Our column (I am Hamilton's) have done all the fighting on the way up here.

We get frightfully cold nights now  
and one has to be very careful as  
it is very hot during the daytime.  
We have been doing very well in the  
way of food, when we get a chance  
of having meals, as we manage  
to procure turkey and chickens,  
butter and eggs, from the farmers.

Bobs has been round  
inspecting this morning. What  
can they do good enough for  
him at the end of the war.

I must close now as the mail  
is off.

Best of luck.

Your affect brother

Edmund P Hewitt

A. J. at N.A.  
2nd Cav Bde.

Swart Root  
Irene siding  
Practonia.

June 7<sup>th</sup> 1900.

Dear Jack,

I started this letter on the above date but sudden orders to move cut it short, and it has consequently lost a mail.

The last letter I wrote was on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May from Kroustad.

We left this latter place on the 15<sup>th</sup> but only marched about 8 miles.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> we covered about 28 miles and next day reached Lindley

where we had a bit of a fight.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> we had a quiet time at Lindley and did some

necessary washing for ourselves and clothes. We managed to replenish

our mess stores a bit but could not get much.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> we were on the move again

and had another fight but the  
Boers soon bolted.

May 21<sup>st</sup> marched about 12 miles.

May 22<sup>nd</sup> we captured Steilbron and  
chased a convoy capturing 15 weapons.

May 23<sup>rd</sup> marched 12 miles.

May 24<sup>th</sup> 18 miles and come up with  
Boers and the main army near the  
Railway.

May 25<sup>th</sup> marched 16 miles and next  
day we crossed the baal at Boschbank  
drift. We were not opposed by a single  
man.

May 27<sup>th</sup> marched about 14 miles.

May 28<sup>th</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ 12 miles.

May 29<sup>th</sup> marched 16 miles & bivouacked  
at Wankop where Jannezon surrendered.  
There was a big fight this day  
but the 2<sup>nd</sup> Cav. Bde did not take  
much part in it.

May 30<sup>th</sup> we marched to Florida,  
a suburb of Johannesburg.

May 31<sup>st</sup> I visited a couple of gold mines.  
They had not been working for some  
months so that they were both full  
of water, and it will require a month  
or more to pump them out.

June 1<sup>st</sup>. I paid a visit to Johannesburg  
and had a jolly good lunch. It  
is a very good sort of town for South  
Africa, but of course most of the  
shops were shut. I went in early  
again next morning and had  
breakfast and lunch there.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> we moved on again and  
marched about 16 miles. Next day  
we did another 16 miles and had  
another small fight.

May 5<sup>th</sup> Pratoria surrendered and  
we marched through the town  
and about 8 miles to the East, along  
the Welagoa Railway line.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> we moved back to a place  
called Irene siding on the Railway.

running south. On the 8<sup>th</sup> we came here (Swavel's Post). There is a long ridge ahead of us occupied by a strong force of Boers under Botha. They are continually sniping at our outposts, and they have managed to kill one trooper of the Life Guards. What on earth they keep on for I cannot imagine. They made a very poor show both at Johannesburg and Praetoria. At both places they could have caused us a lot of trouble. It gets colder and colder now and bivouacking without tents is anything but pleasant and we are all very sick of the show.

I have not the slightest idea what the next move will be but I suppose we shall have to trek for miles yet.

Remounts for the cavalry & gunners  
are needed very badly indeed. This  
Battery have had to leave two  
guns at Pretoria through want  
of horses. I believe that the 3<sup>rd</sup> &  
4<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Brigades under French  
can only muster about six  
hundred mounted men.

The men are in rags and have  
had no warm clothing issued  
to them. One Infantry Brigade  
had to leave 400 men at Pretoria  
because their boots were absolutely  
worn out.

This Command (Sir Hamilton's)  
have not had any mails since  
it left Bloemfontein, and the last  
letter I received from Mother  
was dated the 17<sup>th</sup> of March or  
thereabouts.

Boob led the Foot Guards into  
Pretoria. These fine fellows have



not find a shot since Magersfontein. The Household Cavalry were rather disgusted. I did not think much of them when they first came out but I now consider them splendid, and they have had a tremendous lot of fighting. Of the other two Regiments in this Brigade, the 12<sup>th</sup> Lancers are very good indeed, and the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars very bad. I don't mean they are cowards but they are such infernal fools at scouting. They do not spread out enough and do not push their scouts far enough ahead of us. We are always coming in for warm receptions when they are the leading Regiment. This country is not half as good as the (late) Orange Free State.

It is very rocky and barren. I have only just marched through Pratoia so cannot say much about it. There ~~were~~ seem to be some nice buildings there and one or two good Hotels. I don't know when this letter will get away. I thought it better to write when I am resting here and I can't say when another opportunity may come. It is some time since we were able to send letters. I am afraid Mother will have worried a bit at not hearing from me but I warned her that it would be so. I am feeling a little bilious to-day. We are only accustomed to breakfast (generally at 5 a.m.) and dinner at 7 p.m., and with

lunch and tea thrown in, one eats  
too much.

I must close now. I hope when  
our mails do arrive that they  
will bring a letter from you.

Best of luck. Give my love to  
the future Mrs Hewitt.

Your affect brother  
Edmund Hewitt

Heidelberg  
Transvaal.  
June 24<sup>th</sup> 1900.



Dear Jack.

My last letter was written on the 10<sup>th</sup> from Swavel Poort. We left on the 11<sup>th</sup> at 6 a.m. and came in for about the warmest time we have yet. As we advanced we became uncomfortably aware of the fact that we had wedged ourselves right amongst the Boers and we soon heard their bullets whistling about our ears. We kept on our way and were soon greeted by shells from all directions. Two of our guns came into action and we then found we had planted them about 300 yards from about 400 Boers. They were also behind us and if they had been even decent shots they must have shot everyone of us down. Less of the men were soon dropped and I

had my hands full. I got them altogether and got my cart up as a protection for them. Light rounds of case chanced them from our front - but they then started to work round our left. The gallant 12<sup>th</sup> Lancers then charged and drove them back, whilst the Household Cavalry charged those in our rear and the guns were saved. Besides the men 18 of the horses were shot, including one of my ponies - not the one I ride! When the guns retired I managed to get the wounded back. I looked after them for the next two hours during which time we were vigorously shelled, but the only damage done was a bit chipped off my helmet, and it was also knocked off my head but not damaged. The nearest bullet that passed my way went through my haversack and wrecked a small tin of cigarettes. The Major has very

kindly sent in my name for "mention". He hung on to our position like grim death and luckily the brave Boers were content with shelling us - their shells did no damage and quite amused us. Next day we sat still and got shelled, and the Infantry came up and kicked the Boers out of quite the strongest position they have been in yet. The fact of our being where we were was that we prevented the Boers getting on Ian Hamilton's flank. If we had retired they could have extended right round and made their position almost impregnable. Some of their shrapnel burst well but on the whole their shells were very poor. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Div. Pde had 10 killed and 40 wounded out of about 400 men engaged. A Boer Officer told me, a few days back, that the two days fighting cost them about 50 in

killed alone and that they also had a "great number" wounded.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> we moved on once more and bivouacked at Kaal Station near the famous Bronkhorpsfontein.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> we had a rest and on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> marched back to Pretoria.

The 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> we most of us spent in town and I got some capital meals at the Hotels. Pretoria is not a bad sort of place. There are two very good hotels, a good club and a large swimming bath. The Barracks are most palatial, much more commodious than any of ours. Each man has a cubicle to himself, and the whole place, including the Stables, is lighted by electricity. The shops are not up to much and of course were very poorly stocked.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> we marched once more and on the 21<sup>st</sup> arrived at a place called the "Springs", where there are some




coal mines.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> we reached Nigel - good gold mines. He had a small fight and killed one and wounded two Boers, and captured about 30. He had no loss whatever.

Yesterday we spent chasing Boers but they went like blazes. He got another dozen prisoners.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> we had a good deal of rain and the cold was intense. The 22<sup>nd</sup> was colder still and our lives became an absolute misery. There has been quite a severe frost the last few nights.

We are having a rest to-day and I believe to-morrow also. Then we proceed



on our weary way to Frankfurt and from  
there to Kroustad.

We are still without our mails and it  
is now nearly two months since we  
received letters or saw a newspaper.

He often wonders what is going on in the  
outside world. Our news of events in  
other parts of this country is almost as  
scant.

This Brigade is now reduced to about  
~~300~~ 400 mounted men of whom 300 are  
10<sup>th</sup> Hussars. This latter Reg: runs itself  
well. The latest thing in "sayings" is  
"The 10<sup>th</sup> don't fight."

Good bye. The best of luck.

Your affect brother,  
Edmund Hewitt

Orange River Colony  
July 29<sup>th</sup> 1900.



Dear Jack,

I am still without any letter from you and, as Mother also does not hear from you, I am afraid you must be busy.

I think the date of my last letter to you was June 24<sup>th</sup> and was written from Heidelberg. We left that place on the 27<sup>th</sup> and recrossed the baal at Billensclorp on the 29<sup>th</sup>. We continued our march and reached Frankfurt on July 1<sup>st</sup>. We left Frankfurt on the 4<sup>th</sup> and arrived at Reitz on the 6<sup>th</sup>. On the 8<sup>th</sup> we reached Bethlehem and remained there until the 15<sup>th</sup>. On that day we had to be off once more in order to chase Dr. Hel. He was supposed to be surrounded.



but most of his force, with wagons & about 5 guns got out.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> we had a fight with him but he got away from us.

He came up again with him on the 19<sup>th</sup> and had a running fight until dark.

On the 24<sup>th</sup> we arrived at Trade Fort and had another sharp fight in which we took six wagons and twenty prisoners. He has been knocking about this neighborhood ever since. We have occupied some hills and we are not strong enough to attack or surround him.

We are all very glad of a rest as we had marched continuously for ten days in which we covered about 120 miles and had three

fight. None of the men in this Bat were hit our only loss being three horses killed, but we all had more or less narrow escapes from bullets. In the last fight one passed between the heads of another fellow and myself as we were chatting.

We have had a fair number of casualties (30 in the last fight) but we have buried 20 Boers.

I don't know when it will all end. We are very short of luxuries now. Milk & jam are finished and candles have almost given out. Butter is quite conspicuous by its absence. My clothes are all in rags. The one consolation we have is that the worst of the cold weather appears to have passed.

Although we are only 12 miles from  
the Railway we are only getting  $\frac{3}{4}$   
rations.

Thank goodness I still keep very  
fit but am very sick of the show.  
It does not look as if I should be  
in India by December, in time  
for your wedding.

Clara wrote the other day and appears  
very pleased at getting a letter from  
Lileen.

Yesterday and to-day have been  
very warm so I have had two  
good baths & feel all the better for  
them. They are quite out of the question  
when the weather is cold.

Well good bye & good luck.

Yours affect brother  
Addres

Kunigerdorff:  
Trauevaal  
August 25<sup>th</sup> 1900



Dear Jack,

I have just received a letter from you dated July 2<sup>nd</sup>. So sorry to hear you have been seedy - I was afraid you were as Mother kept saying she had not heard from you and she appeared considerably worried.

I am glad you find me a good correspondent. I always like to let you know how I am getting on.

The war hangs on, and I don't see how it will end. We have failed to catch De Wet and he seems able to do what he likes. I don't think much of Kitchener as a general as he ought to have caught him twice over. I last wrote to you on July 29<sup>th</sup> since when we have covered miles. I believe in years to come, this Brigade

will still be found wandering about.

On August 1<sup>st</sup> De Wet was supposed to be hooking it and off we had to go.

He found he had not moved so came back to our former bivouac having marched about 25 miles for nothing.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> we had another march out of about 12 miles.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> a report came in that De Wet was crossing the Vaal & off we went again.

This time it was true, & we marched about 8 miles in pursuit.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> we marched about 20 miles & shelled some of his wagons.

Next day we crossed the Vaal & marched 18 miles.

August 10<sup>th</sup>: 22 miles to Holverdient Station on the Johannesburg-Potchefstroom line.

It blew a hurricane all day and the dust blinded us. Worst day we have yet experienced.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> we marched 24 miles & on the 12<sup>th</sup> 20 miles.

August 14<sup>th</sup> we left at 2 a.m. we but had only covered about 6 miles when the Boers opened fire & we had to wait for light. He had a bit of a skirmish but nothing came of it.

All this chase Methuen was ahead of us and he knocked friend De Wet a good deal.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> we left De Wet & went off to rescue Col. Horne and a convoy. 22 miles that day & eight the next brought us up to him. Of course the Boers bolted when they heard we were coming. Horne had about 400 men & one 7 pounder & a muzzie revolver. The Boers were about 2000 strong with 8 guns but they were afraid to do more than shell. Our chaps were wonderfully well entrenched but suffered a good deal. They had about 400 oxen & horses shot and the stench was something appalling. Camington went to rescue them some time ago but the Boers opposed him so he went back & said Horne had surrendered.

We had a rest on the 17<sup>th</sup> but next day started for this place. It took us four days of 18, 20, 19 & 17 miles each.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> we rested here but yesterday 200 Boers scared a chap down the line & off we had to go. We did the 25 miles in no time but found the Boers had gone. In fact they had made no attempt to attack. To-day we marched back here again.

We stop here to-morrow and march on to Pretoria the day after. They promise to refit us here but that is an old yarn. You never saw such a sight - as officers & men are - absolutely in rags. The men of this Battery have had no new clothes since they left England in February.

I hope I don't have to go to China as you suggest. I have had enough campaigning for a time. I think I shall be sent on to India but not for some months yet?



Pretoria  
Transvaal  
Sept 10<sup>th</sup> 1900.

Dear Jack.

I last wrote to you on the 26<sup>th</sup> since when we have had a nice easy time of it, and in consequence I have not much to write about.

We left Krugersdorp on the 27<sup>th</sup> and marched about 14 miles. We were attacked by about 200 Boers who were apparently hanging about to see if they could scoop up any of our wagons. We managed to kill a few of them without any loss to ourselves. We also burnt a farm.

Next day we continued our march and arrived at Pretoria about 5 p.m. since then we have had a glorious rest and I can assure we are all enjoying it immensely.

There is plenty of cricket here but I have not summoned up enough energy to play and have confined myself to umpiring. The Pretoria XI are strong but this Boer managed to defeat them.

Boers seem to be busting the Boers up at Lydenburg but I still think there are months of work here yet. The Boers are in small parties all over the country and always run away from a strong force. They wait about for small parties and amuse themselves blowing up the line, and burning trains. Some of them are even hanging round close here and I suppose we shall be turned out to chase them off.

They have divided both countries into districts now with plenty of troops about. They are to collar all cattle & forage and burn all farms belonging to the Boers still on Commando. No passes are given now and all Boers caught are sent down. There is no doubt that Boer's proclamation was a mistake as all the Boers who took the oath are out

fighting again. An oath does not seem to be of any value at all to the pretence of signing hypocrites.

We found very few stores here and everything is very dear. I will give you a few examples.

Cabbages 5/- each. Cauliflowers 3/6.

Potatoes 3<sup>d</sup> each. Spring onions ditto.

Five Castle cigarettes 10/- per hundred.

English tobacco not obtainable.

Very bad lunches & dinners at the Hotels and clubs cost 5/- each meal.

We managed to get a cow the other day but she only gives us about two pints a day. You cannot get matches here but they are selling at 1/- a box in Johannesburg.

It is ever so much warmer now and the days of biting cold and frosts are over. We get a great deal of wind which makes things very unpleasant. I borrowed a tent from the Field Staff which I share with the Major. It is quite a luxury.

I am in hopes that they will send some of us off to India soon and I have applied to be one of them. This country would soon ruin me in peace times. I wish I could get out in time for your wedding. November I think you said. We have not had any mails for some time now. I am particularly anxious to hear from Mother and am hoping for good news about Alfred.

I had a beastly bilious attack the other day but am now as fit as ever again.

They don't seem in a hurry to send us on any other job, and as far as we can hear we are to have an easy time of it. I am sure we deserve it and I hope it is true. I don't want any more fighting.

The mail does not leave until Wednesday so I will leave this open until then.

August 12<sup>th</sup>. No letter from home by this mail. Good bye. Love to Eileen.  
Yours Edith



Rustenberg  
October 8<sup>th</sup> 1900.

Dear Jack.

Very little has happened since I wrote to you last on Sept 11<sup>th</sup>. We stayed in Pretoria until the 23<sup>rd</sup> and so got a good long rest at last. There was not much to be done but we played a good deal of cricket and gossiped in the club. Being five miles out we got a certain amount of exercise by riding into town every day.

We were all very sorry when we had to move once more on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. On that day we marched about 16 miles and bivouacked at Nitral's Nek where the Lincolns and Greys had their unfortunate disaster. This Boer victory started all the Boers about here up in

arms again. It was again due to want of proper precautions by our people, in other words, incompetence of the Officer Commanding. Next day we marched through Commando Nek and halted after doing about 14 miles. On the 25<sup>th</sup> we did 18 miles, and another 14 miles next day brought us to Rustenberg. We had one small fight on the way but the Boers ran away even quicker than usual and none of our men were hit. They allowed our scouts to get within about 60 yards of them but they did not even hit a horse.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> we did a 20 mile march after some Boers but they were conspicuous by their absence.

On Oct 1<sup>st</sup> we moved out again and next day came across a small commando. We took a few prisoners, 20 wagons and a lot of ammunition.

This was a very fine day for we marched about 42 miles and got little food or rest. We had some breakfast at 11 a.m., our first meal, and dinner at 9 p.m. We marched back here next day and have had a peaceful time since. We leave again to-morrow at 5 a.m. There are about 1000 Boers in this neighborhood but they are in small parties and very difficult to come at.

We are in the beginning of the Bushveldt here. It is a very rich soil with plenty of water for about a mile or two round, but further North there is nothing but scrub & malarial, and no farms for miles.

It has been very much hotter of late, - but a tremendous storm two days ago and has left it much cooler, in fact quite chilly.

I don't know when we shall have

finished with it all. I wish they would send me on to India soon. I believe I am certain to go on there from here.

I have just heard from Mother but am still without a letter from you.

Mother seems to have enjoyed herself very much at Bembridge. I am glad that they asked her down there as it seems to have done her a world of good. What with Alfred's bad go of Enteric and my campaigning she has had an anxious time of it and seems to have worried a good deal.

I wonder if we shall meet soon in India. I do hope they will give me a little leave there to go and pay you a visit.

Give my love to Norah. Best of luck to you.

Yours affect brother  
E. Hewitt

Borhoek.

Oct 30<sup>th</sup> 1900.

Dear Jack.

I last wrote to you from  
Rustenberg on the 8<sup>th</sup>. Since then we  
have been at the same old game  
of marching and counter marching.  
On the 9<sup>th</sup> we marched 16 miles, on  
the 10<sup>th</sup> 20 miles and on the 11<sup>th</sup>  
another 20 miles. This brought us  
back to the place we bivouacked  
at on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Next day the  
Household Cavalry left us for  
Pretoria and, as we all thought  
then, for home. Since then the  
authorities have had a row  
with the newly formed Police and  
no troops are being sent home.  
The dispute arose from their

suddenly reducing the Police pay from 107. 65 57- per diem.

On the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> we wandered about destroying crops and wagons. On the 17<sup>th</sup> we rested and on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> we went on destroying expeditions. On the 21<sup>st</sup> a force of Boers was reported to be somewhere

West so off we went and marched 35 miles to a Raffia town called Magato Stadt. Next day we went a few miles further West and then returned to Rustenberg, a jaunt of 25 miles. We left Rustenberg again on the 24<sup>th</sup> and went back to Magato Stadt. Next day we did not march so I had a look over the native town. It consists of mud huts and is kept nice and clean. The kraals are much cleaner and less smelly than the average

Dutch farmhouse. About one third of the people are Christians the missionary being an awful black-guard of a German. He charges £2 for the marriage service and has made a small fortune.

On the 26<sup>th</sup> I left in Medical charge of a small force that was sent to occupy Poshnek pass, about 9 miles west of Magato. He bivouacked on a kopje and had to send a mile for a water. He always knew where it had got half way by the smell it gave forth. He had no fresh meat with us so we had to put up with Bully Beef for every meal. Bully is awful stuff in hot weather. It is more like a conglomeration of boots laces than anything else I know of and about as nourishing. However our hard biscuits blow you out enough if you can eat enough

of them. He rejoined the Brigade here yesterday - about two miles East of the pass. Various rumours are flying about but I think the Powers know about as much where the Boers are as a blind mule. I'm not sure I wouldn't back the mule - his power of smelling is somewhat stronger. I have given up all idea of getting away from this incessant marching and can sympathise now with the wailing Jew. We have two great pleasures viz eating and sleeping. Both events are often hard to come at.

It is difficult to say when the War will end; all fighting may be over in six months.

I suppose you will be a happy Benedict when you get this.

Please give my love to Eileen.

Yours affect  
Edith

Address as before. Sterkstroom.  
Rustenberg District  
Fruwvaal.  
Nov: 12<sup>th</sup> 1900.

Dear Jack.

You don't deserve to get such a regular correspondence from me, but I forgive you for not writing in view of the fact that you are engaged. We are still birds of passage and are busily engaged pacifying this district. This consists in burning or eating all the crops and collaring all the Boers we can. It is, so far, a very safe game for they never fight and only rarely snipe. It is some time now since we were under fire, and we are all glad not to have to add to our experience in that line. I have applied to be sent to India as soon as possible but it will pay

me better to stay here until Dec: 15<sup>th</sup>.  
This will give me a year on active  
service for which, I believe, I shall  
receive double "batta", which will  
probably mean another £50. I don't  
think there is much chance of my leaving  
before that date.

Since I last wrote on Oct 30<sup>th</sup> we have  
marched about one hundred miles  
in the district, and in conjunction  
with Gen: Paget have captured  
about a hundred Boers.

There has been a good deal of  
sickness amongst the men, mostly  
Malaria which is however of quite  
a mild type. Typical ague I have  
not seen yet. We have had only  
about four cases of Horse sickness  
so far, but have lost about a  
dozen horses from some poisonous  
plant they eat whilst grazing.  
We are getting deuced hot weather

varied by heavy thunderstorms.  
We were joined yesterday by about  
200 New Zealand Mounted Infantry  
and two Elswick 12-pounders so we  
are a respectable force again. The  
Elswick guns have a range of 10,000  
yards and are quick fivers. They  
are much the same gun as the  
Naval 12-pr.

There are still no signs of the War  
finishing, but the bad knock  
our old friend Dr. Wet got the other  
day ought to sicken some of them.  
Delaney is our particular chum in  
these parts and he is an adept  
at running away. Botha has  
also been on a flying visit here  
but has gone back North again.  
Delaney says he is going on for  
another eight years but I think  
he will have precious little food  
or ammunition by that time.



I have not heard from Home for  
two mails now and I have quite  
forgotten when I heard from you  
last. I suppose you will be a happy  
Benedict by the time you get this.

It is very unfortunate I could not  
be present to help to turn you off.

I am very worried at not hearing  
from Home lately, as I am very  
anxious to hear how Alfred is.

He was getting on well when I heard  
but relapses are common in Euteria.

We write soon as I am anxious to hear  
how you are getting on.

Love to Eileen.

Your affect brother

Eddie

Rustenburg.

Dec: 19<sup>th</sup> 1900.

Dear Jack.

Here it is within six days of Christmas and we are still at the old game in this unhealthy district, only more so.

I think I wrote to you last on the 12<sup>th</sup> November. I don't know whether I told you that I received an invite to your wedding. As the invitation did not arrive until after the joyful event was celebrated I could not avail myself of it.

We have marched 300 miles since I last wrote to you but have always drifted back here at intervals.

We have had about six fights but none of them very serious

and our total casualties have been one killed, and about a dozen wounded. Honours undoubtedly rest with our opponents. Botha and his army have come down from the North and attacked a convoy of ours. They bagged about 200 weapons but suffered pretty severe losses in so doing. There were very few men guarding it and they had to come through a very nasty position. It was a disgraceful affair and the only bright feature was the defence of two guns by Capt Farrell R. F. A. He had only 12 infantry men and had all his gunners but two killed or wounded. The remains of the Infantry surrendered after exhausting their ammunition. The Boers said they would rather have captured the guns than the

convoy but had not pluck enough to rush them.

Their next success was on the 13<sup>th</sup> when 2000 Boers attacked Clements and captured his camp and 200 prisoners. It was a well carried out surprise but <sup>they</sup> lost heavily and over 135 killed. We have been here the last four days expecting to be attacked every day. We have to be up and ready at 4 a. m. every morning. I don't know why they have left this Brigade alone as we are now very weak, and have only about 600 mounted men. This is due to much sickness amongst both horses and men. We have had a lot of rain but shall get much more next month.

I am afraid that all hope of my going to India must be given up.

I have been a year at the same work and quite expect to be roaming about six months hence, unless a bullet or disease bowls me over.

Three of us, the Major another & self, were nearly done for by one of our own picquets the other day, who opened fire on us at 500 yards. Luckily they were 10<sup>th</sup> Hussar but even they made some fairly good shooting before we galloped clear.

I am livenish to-day but the above is not exaggerated.

They at last sent out tents for the Brigade, by the last convoy, and they were all burnt. I had a tent for a couple of weeks but gave it up to the Hoop: who are very short of them.

We have got very short of tobacco and cigarettes again and we are also out of all books, so things are rather dull with us. We are now on  $\frac{3}{4}$  rations with every prospect of a further

reduction to a half or quarter before  
Christmastime, so we shan't  
overfeed ourselves on that festive  
occasion.

We are marching off again to-morrow  
but where to and what to do  
I know not. I have rather a job  
now on fighting days as I am  
in charge of the 12<sup>th</sup> Lancers in  
addition to the Battery and  
have to be all over the place.  
I had a letter from Alfred  
by the last mail we received.  
He has quite recovered from his  
Enteric and is back at work  
again. He seems to have a  
very good sort of Boss and he  
is not required to get under full  
steam until he is quite strong  
and well again.

I wonder if I shall ever hear from

You again. You have not been  
a good correspondent to me in  
my exile. I hear very little from  
Home and only get one paper  
sent by Clara. Mother writes  
fairly regularly and sends me  
some tobacco now and again.  
Best love and luck to you  
both, and a prosperous New  
Year.

Yours affect brother  
Edmund Hewitt

No 6 General Hoop:

Johannesburg. ? 1901.

Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup> 1900.

Dear Jack,

I have had to succumb at last - and am present - an inmate of the above named Hoop.

I last wrote to you on Dec: 19<sup>th</sup>. We had some exciting times just after and were in daily expectation of being attacked by strong forces of the enemy. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> we left the Rustenburg District and marched south. We had a long fight - but did not suffer much damage. We came under some very hot fire and I had some very narrow escapes whilst going to the assistance of two the 5<sup>th</sup> Hussars. Several times they got my range and put bullets all round me so I had to take cover for a while. Next day we marched on to Welverdiend, which is on the Johannesburg - Potchefstroom line. We covered 34 miles marching until 10 p. m.

He managed to do ourselves well on Christmas day as O'Pat gave us a plum pudding and a bottle of port, and our servants produced a turkey and some potatoes.

He marched on the 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> and arrived at Potchefstroom on this last date, covering about 76 miles. The last three days were awful as it rained tremendously and the lightning was awful. He stayed in Potchefstroom until the 4<sup>th</sup> but made two expeditions after cattle. I should have told you that we brought in, when we first arrived, 10,000 sheep & 6000 cattle; I should think that you could have heard our column miles away. The wire at night was awful. On the 4<sup>th</sup> they put us into trains and ran us up to Elancsfontein, the junction of the Johannesburg and main line. The officers had luxurious quarters in the guards van. He got to our destination at 9 p.m. and were delighted to get a very good dinner at the Station.

Next day we moved nearer Johannesburg and camped about four miles from the town. Most of us were soon in the "Golden City" getting some decent grub inside us, likewise drink. On the 8<sup>th</sup> it poured day and night and I got a bad cold which soon had hold of my chest. I also went in for a pretty severe go of fever. I did not improve so they packed me off to Hospital and I have been in bed, on milk and beef tea ever since. The fever has left me now but I am as weak as a Rat. The chap looking after me says it's quite possible I have a mild go of Entere but I don't agree. He argues that I'm too run down for an ordinary Bronchitis but he forgets the months of exposure and starvation. I weighed in Potchefstroom the other day - 9 lb. 12 lbs instead of 12 St. However he says I shall not be out of Hosp for two or three weeks and says that I shall



require ~~some~~ good long leave. These I'm with  
him in HQ. I shall try and get a trooper  
(Med. change) for home and put in a few  
weeks here. Not much chance I'm afraid  
Reserved for Civilians and seniors  
who have squatted in one place the whole  
time.

I wish they would give me some food.  
I've had enough of starvation to last  
me a lifetime.

If they won't give me a trip home I shall  
go back to the boat. They don't like my  
successor and are yelling for me to go  
back, very flattering but I want a rest.  
I hope you are both in the best of health.  
Love to Eileen.

Yours affect brother  
Edmund Stewart



Convalescent Camp:  
Rondebosch.  
Capetown.  
April 15<sup>th</sup> 1901.

Dear Jack.

What a villain you are.  
You have not written to your war  
worn, broken down brother for  
ages.

When I last wrote to you I was in  
Hospital at Johannesburg, and  
I am sorry to say I am still  
unable to do any duty. I have  
been leading a slow, monotonous  
existence of late, so I can only  
write about my health, the only  
thing I have to think about now.

I left Johannesburg on the 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Feb: at 7.20 a.m., on a month's  
sick leave to Capetown. I had  
a very pleasant and interesting  
journey to Durban, where I arrived

at 10 p. m. on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. I did not get a view of Majuba, as we went through the tunnel in the dark, but I saw Ladysmith, Dundee, Glencoe and most of the battlefields of Natal. I had the advantage of a cicerone in the person of a K. R. R. chap who had been in most of the Natal fights. The train went very slowly so I had plenty of time to observe the features of the country. Natal is a nice, green looking country, but thank goodness I had not to fight there. I marvel how how Buller ever got through at all.

I struck a very good Hotel at Durban. Splendidly situated on the top of a hill, good food, very clean, and only 10/6 a day.

I should have liked to stop over in Durban but I had to obey orders and go on to Capetown and back to Johannesburg.

I sailed from Durban on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March, in the Hospital ship Avoca. A very nice ship (British India) and a good table. We came in for heavy weather and I was a bit sick, but not very bad. We arrived in Table Bay at 6 a. m. on the 4<sup>th</sup>, and I was ordered to the Convalescent Camp, Rondebosch, about twelve miles from Capetown. Up to this I had been getting on well and I continued so for another week. At Johannesburg they swore I had Influenza but I maintained it was Malaria contracted in the Bushveldt. At Rondebosch I went in for regular attacks of Ague, absolutely typical ones, Cold, hot, sweating and then normal temp. This pulled me down tremendously, and, as my

leave was nearly up, I applied for light  
duty at the Base. I went before a  
Medical Board who pronounced  
me unfit for any duty. As I had  
some Bronchitis, as well as the Ague,  
they ordered me to Matjesfontein,  
otherwise I should have gone home.  
I arrived at Matjesfontein a week  
ago and have to remain until  
the 6<sup>th</sup> May. There is a fairly good  
store here and about five houses  
and a Railway Station; all around  
is the beastly Karroo (stubble & filth)  
and hills. The only excitement is  
the morning, up country mail, and  
the down, evening one. I was never  
duller or more miserable in my life.  
My only consolation is that I am  
improving in health. My Bronchitis  
has gone, and the Ague attacks  
are slighter and at longer intervals.  
The army here consists of a bona

a Railway Staff Officer and about twelve men. There are about a dozen in the Hotel but no one I care about. The few friends I made have all gone away.

This place is about eleven hours journey by rail from Capetown, and is owned by an ex-railway porter named Logan. He has just left for England with his family and a team of South African cricketers.

I cannot tell you anything about the War, but am still of opinion that it will last about another twelve months. They say we are near the end, but on what grounds I know not. We have certainly ~~been~~<sup>been</sup> doing very well lately but there are still about 18,000 determined villains to

wipe out yet, and we are only  
killing and capturing about  
1000 a month, and not always as many.

Now wake up and let me  
hear how you are getting on.  
How sad to lose dear old Auntie  
Counie. She always seemed to be  
so strong and well, and I was  
surprised to hear that she  
was so ill.

Good bye. Best love to you both.

Your affect brother.

Edmund Meuth.

P. S. A piano above and a squalling  
baby on the verandah, with both  
the fond parents (Jews) talking  
not to it. Ma wheels the Pram &  
Pa, a dashing Captain of the Railway  
Pioneer Reg, with clanking spurs, acts  
as escort to the Cowoy.