

tions of Naawpoort, and getting ready to move at any minute. The horses are fairly well in heart, but seem to feel the climate and do not feed well; trust this will mend: we have lost fourteen in all, and ten are more or less sick, but we have plenty of mounts yet for our men. Trooper Hunt is being returned to New Zealand from the Cape. Just received orders to advance on to the Arundel Plain, bivouac all night, as the enemy has been reported in that direction. Sergeant-Major Rogers and the farrier-sergeants have done excellent work. The work done by the men, considering all, is very good. The field rations are not at all a welcome, but they are settling down to it. They must get used to it. There are no means of transporting any extras for them.

I must recommend to your notice the great amount of work done by the shoeing-smiths: they have under great difficulties done a great amount of work, and are shoeing our mule teams. Bandoliers and Webley revolvers have been issued, also reins instead of head-ropes, and many other articles which you will learn of in due course.

ARUNDEL, 21ST DECEMBER, 1899.

I have the honour to report to you that we have worked our way up to Arundel, and have been here now since the 8th December, having been pushed up from Naawpoort to cover the advance to occupy Arundel, bivouacking at nights. On the following morning advanced in support of the Carabiniers (6th Dragoon Guards), the New South Wales Lancers coming up afterwards, and pushed on to Taaibosch, held by the Boers with riflemen and four guns. A general advance was made on this. The Imperial Mounted Infantry mistook some directions, and I had to order fifty men of No. 1 Company, under Captain Davies, to extend and line a low-lying line of kopjes. This was done, and, as the event developed, they were ordered to change their position and occupy another higher kopje. From there the enemy held on oblique to their right. About 900 yards a fire was opened on the Boers, who replied, but retired to another post about 1,200 yards. Three Boers were either killed or wounded as they retired. These positions were maintained during the day, a dropping exchange of fire being kept up while the reconnaissance continued. In the meantime the guns opened a long-range fire on the supports. Several shells fell quite close while we were moving into cover. All were steady and cool under the fire, and Colonel Porter, 6th Dragoon Guards, who was in command, expressed his satisfaction. General French was also present in the afternoon, and was much pleased.

*Saturday.*

Another advance was made to work round the enemy's right, but very little work was done from then to the 18th, the time being taken up with active patrolling, rapid turnouts with Artillery and mounted men to shell points, &c. Patrols several times fired on, one wounding a horse on leg ridden by Saddler-Sergeant Harris.

The Contingent has been kept very busy, and the horses have somewhat fallen away. On the 18th, at 3 a.m., the two New Zealand companies, with eight guns R.H.A., started to move on a reconnaissance round the left of the Boers on Taaibosch. The General Officer Commanding (General French) and his staff accompanied the reconnaissance. At about 6 a.m. the guns opened fire on Jansfontein Farm, where a sergeant had been killed and a trooper wounded and left by the 6th Dragoon Guards a few days before. During the shelling it was necessary to dispose No. 2 Company to protect the rear and right of Artillery by occupying a line of kopjes in that direction. Part of No. 1 Company had to be pushed on to a big kopje on extreme right of farm. After shelling, the farm was occupied by enveloping it by about seventy men of No. 1 Company. The Artillery, being then under shell fire of enemy, drew back. General French and staff now came up to farm to view the laager and camp, which could be plainly seen on the high hill of Taaibosch in the distance, 4,000 to 5,000 yards away. While in this state numbers of the enemy were seen moving rapidly from kopje to kopje to envelop our position. Shortly afterwards a heavy fire was opened, and our men held well to their positions; but as more of the enemy kept coming up and enveloping us, the General, having satisfied himself, ordered us to retire on to the guns. This was no easy task, but, thanks to the steadiness of the men, we got the division from the far kopje retired on to the farm. Lieutenant Lindsay was in charge of it, and behaved well. I placed a small party to open a covering fire to assist this retirement; this did some damage to the Boers. The fire from the enemy was a perfect hail by this time, and they fired four shells (which, fortunately, did not burst) into the farm at this time.

Whilst these parties were coming in a horse in a group held by a No. 3 was shot dead. Private 44 (S. R. Bradford) was reported killed in a nullah close by a wire fence, which latter hampered us very much. I collected the men under the best cover available, and from there we attempted to occupy another kopje, but while doing so the scouts reported more Boers on that flank rapidly coming up. The General ordered me to retire the whole. This was done in an open interval, and at a steady pace. We moved to flank so as not to mask our guns, which opened fire to cover us. Trooper Maunder was slightly wounded in the wrist, and four horses had slight bullet-wounds. It is simply marvellous that ten or twelve were not killed. On rejoining the Artillery the reconnaissance was marched back to camp, and we have been resting since, as the General said we had been overworked for the past fortnight.

On the Red Cross going out to recover the body of S. R. Bradford, it was found he had been badly wounded, and had been removed to the Boer hospital. Information was also gained that the 6th Dragoon Guardsman was also there and getting well. The staff remarked that the affair was evidently a trap, and that it was only the excellent scouting of the New-Zealanders that enabled us to withdraw in safety, and still allow them to gain the information they did.

On return to camp General French directed me to inform the men how entirely satisfied he was, and that, as he had personal opportunity of seeing them under fire, he had every confidence in the Contingent.