

expected to arrive in a fortnight. Having no spare horses or positions for these officers, I issued rail warrants for their return to the Cape, and a letter to the Chief of Staff (Colonel Trotter) at the Cape explaining my action, as we were to march next day. Thus these officers will await the 2nd Contingent, for duty with the guns.

*9th February.*—Ordered to move out and form part of a large Cavalry and Mounted Infantry column (Mounted Infantry under Colonel H. Hannay) at 8 p.m. All transport reduced one-half, so tents and large portion of valises had to be left at Orange River with a small detail. Bivouacked for few hours before daylight, and at daylight moved on to Rannah, on the border of the Free State.

*10th February.*—Afternoon, moved out as a detached force with Mounted Infantry, N.S.W. Mounted Rifles, division Rimingtons, and N.Z.M.R., under Lieut.-Colonel De Lisle. Marched till 11 p.m. Bivouacked one hour's march from supposed position occupied by enemy. Object: to keep enemy engaged, to allow a large supply-column of five miles length to pass the other side of hills to the next station.

*11th February.*—Moving just at daylight. The N.Z.M.R., acting as Cavalry on the exposed flank, searched two farms, reconnoitred the hills, and on arriving at a farm under Boer position were fired at. Then I spread them on a screen reconnaissance, and reported two kopjes occupied, from which we were fired at; only one horse slightly wounded. On Colonel De Lisle receiving the information we were withdrawn, and he attacked about five miles of front with an inadequate force. The N.Z.M.R. were dismounted, and pushed on to occupy the farm and gaps, and act on the left of Mounted Infantry of the right attack. Dismounting my men we pushed on, extended line, occupied farm, formed on left of the Imperial Mounted Infantry, and advanced by rushes. The Mounted Infantry got stopped, and along with them we lay for four hours, with little cover, exposed to fire, and returned same. Orders were sent to retire slowly. This was done, and we then learned that the left attack had been a failure, and the losses were about thirty killed and sixty prisoners taken. We remained till dark, being ordered to form rear-guard on the march to next camp at Ronypan. Before leaving, and as dark was coming on, a movement was noticed among the Boers, who were searching the low ground with ambulances, and about a score of the Bedford Mounted Infantry seemed as if escaping. I strengthened our rear party under Lieutenant Lindsay, and they succeeded, by moving toward the enemy, in bringing away twenty-three men and one captain, the Boers not seeming to care to press after them with our mounted men in sight, as I also brought the rest of the Contingent into view, as if ready to attack. The Bedfords were suffering very much from want of water, and we had to put them on our horses till led horses could be stopped from the main body to mount them, which was two hours afterwards, and pitch dark.

The enemy opened with two guns on the force late in the afternoon, killing several horses and two men. No casualties occurred among the N.Z.M.R., as when retiring under fire the men kept well in hand, and worked back by small parties, as directed. All officers and men except horse-holders were engaged.

*12th February.*—Reached Ronypan about 2 a.m. Bivouacked at 9 a.m. Left with the now increased column for Ramdain. Our transport again changed and reduced, and much had to be left behind. Long and trying march to Riet River Drift. Bivouacked with 1st Cavalry Brigade.

*13th February.*—Started 7 a.m. morning afterward with a large convoy and ammunition column for De Keil Drift, on the Modder River. No water all day. Grass fires numerous. Wells and dams dry or destroyed. Arrived at drift 5 p.m. Terrible heat. The troops there were still engaged with the enemy, and the sound of guns—rifles and Maxims—continued till dark. I believe the proper name of this drift is Middle-bosch. Were ordered to form part of Colonel Alderson's Mounted Infantry Brigade, although the commander of 1st Cavalry Brigade asked for our 173 men to be left under his command. Here we learnt we were part of the flying column for relief of Kimberley, about five thousand mounted men—R.H.A., Cavalry, Mounted Infantry, R.E., and telegraph-men.

*14th February.*—Left at 10 a.m. Three days' forage and rations on man and horse. Please imagine the Christmas-tree appearance and weight our horses carried. Valises, &c., all left here, and we all went on with what we stood up in. A fierce engagement took place as we moved out, the troops remaining at this place engaging the enemy with R.H.A., two lyddites, and infantry and the order for the flying columns was to push through under cover of the force engaged, and go on with the march. Shells hissed and rushed through the air. Rifle-fire and Maxims all round, and our Cavalry charged up the plain, and killed a number of the enemy who attempted to bar the way. Several small kopjes had to be cleared, but by dash, &c., at 12 noon the column was clear, but the little transport allowed had to remain behind. Marched all day under burning sun. No water, and many alarms. From a rising piece of ground, in the distance were seen the housetops of Kimberley, and away on our left another part of our force was seen converging on Kimberley, and about equidistant away. Movement, even with tired men and horses, became more rapid, and the higher parts were soon occupied. While halted (during the occupying of a Boer laager, or post) the retiring Boers opened fire from a small gun on the Mounted Infantry Brigade, of which the N.Z.M.R. was on the right (the exposed) flank. I had ordered open interval in company columns massed. Two shells dropped among the columns, but the angle of descent was so great that they buried themselves in the soft veldt, and exploded without harm. Three more fell further to the left among the Queenslanders and Mounted Infantry. Four guns, R.H.A., opened, and the enemy bolted in hot haste. March was resumed, and the outskirts of Kimberley entered, and we bivouacked at dawn about a mile and a half from town, and Kimberley was relieved (15th instant). The last day's route of the column could easily be followed by the dead horses, kits and rifles on the road. Many horses dropped and died at the dams from exhaustion, heavy burden, and want of water.