

16th February.—Leaving bivouac at 9 a.m., the column we formed, with a wide sweeping movement eastward, turned the Boers out of two laagers; and to see them bolt, and our R.H.A. shell and Lancers charge them, was refreshing after the long spell of kopje-work. Queenslanders and New-Zealanders were ordered to take Macfarlane's Station (that is, De Beer's stud farm, about twelve miles north of Kimberley, and in the line of retreat of the Boers), and to hold the same till relieved. This was successfully accomplished on foot with some firing from the Boers, but the R.H.A. kept shell going till we got close. The attack on it was by two flanks and front. This position two companies of Queenslanders and No. 1 N.Z. held till relieved on Monday, the 18th. No. 2 getting engaged further to the left, returned to Kimberley the night of the 16th instant with the rest of Mounted Infantry.

18th February.—Relieved by Mounted Infantry and Queenslanders. No. 1 Company, with whom I remained, as ordered, to be second in command at Macfarlane's, returned to Kimberley and rejoined No. 2. The horses are really done now, our work having been constant ever since arrival, and no exchanges or remounts yet obtainable, although long promised.

20th February.—The fittest horses were ordered to be ready to march from all units, and all the companies, regiments, and battalions had to form composite companies from their units, those with unshod or unfit horses to remain till shod, remounted, or recovered; thus I had to draw from both companies, and was able to send on eighty-four men and horses. The remainder are here, besides other details, such as ten on transport guard, fourteen men and horses at Orange River, the number of sick making up the balance. These are to rejoin here. The Queensland men here were only able to send on the same number as New Zealand, although their Contingent numbers 270, and they have had 160 remounts since arrival in Africa—a fortnight after we did. Our transport has not yet come up, but is expected to-morrow. I remained here with the New Zealand men at Kimberley, because all our stores, camp equipment, shoes, &c., are in different places, and many of the men are sick. Some advance of pay was wanted, and so as to get these matters of administration and reorganization attended to I considered my duty to the Contingent was here, and it has since proved right. We expect to all be together again in about a week or ten days. It may seem strange the splitting of the units, but even the 6th Dragoon Guards, Scots Greys, 12th Lancers, 16th Lancers, Mounted Infantry, and all the mounted forces have had to do the same.

Again the Contingent has done its work well, and all feel very honoured in having been brought so far to share the hardships of the Kimberley relief column.

Horses.—As you can already see, the horses have done wonders, and the officers have paid great attention to them. The majority are run down and want a longer spell than they are likely to get, but to-day the remount officer hopes to give us forty or fifty to replace our weakest.

Men.—Last report gave a list of men no longer fit for service in this war: three more have rheumatism, but will likely be ready to move with us again. Four were left at Orange River; of these I have not yet heard. Of course, these men are not dangerously ill—only unfit to go on.

Three nights ago, when the brigade was camped in low hollow ground beside a dam, one of those tremendous thunderstorms came on, and in a few minutes the place was flooded. In half an hour it was 6 in. to 18 in. deep all over, and for two hours no one could move. Everything was on the ground, and my papers and accounts, &c., are almost ruined. Dark came on, and shifting in the dark is no joke with large bodies. It will put us to great trouble next pay, but I suppose that is part of war; and many others were worse off.

The paper here states that a third New Zealand Contingent has sailed. If I might suggest, horses should be sent instead of men, for the remounting of Contingents already here.

POSITION OF THE NEW ZEALAND MOUNTED RIFLES ON THE 21ST DAY OF FEBRUARY, 1900.

Headquarters, Kimberley, after Relief March.

Killed in action—

Sergeant Gourley, Troopers Bradford, Connell, Booth 4

Invalided to Cape for New Zealand—

Sergeants Gwatkins and Bond; Troopers Hunt, Hurford, R. Wallace, Jenks, Young, Ryan, C. R. Taylor, Paterson 10

Base, Capetown, storeman—Trooper Coffey 1

Horse hospital—Trooper Ensor 1

Baggage-guard from Middle Bosch (not yet arrived)—

Regimental Sergeant-major Rogers; Sergeant Rockstrow; Corporal McDonald; Troopers McAuley, W. B. Macpherson, Wilson, Hodgen, Hansen, Foster, Dickenson, Joyce, Bartrop, Boucher, Goble, Butler 15

Orange River Hospital—

Farrier-Sergeant Cromie; Troopers Pope, Parkes, Steel 4

Orange River, with horses and part transport—

Quartermaster-Sergeant Berland; Troopers McGabe, Culling, Smith, H. Smith, Palmer, Dick, G. Taylor, Cabot, Aitken, Emerson, Towgood 12

47.