Confidential Diary.

N.B. Please be careful not to lose any of the photos etc.

Transvaal War.

1899 - 1900

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Ladysmith geographically.
View from cliff, South 1 Toned
(Shewing position of some of the Artes Quo, during huge)
Friday 8th Sept., 1899. Secunderabad.

We are ordered to mobilise immediately for active service in S. Africa. To be ready in 2 days. Also the 1st Sherwars. Make up our strength to 172 Officers
(including officers) + 153 horses. 23rd Supplying Battery.


Thursday 14th Sept.

Entrain at Secunderabad, 8 in two special trains. Start off by lands of Lincoln & Chersones.

Friday 15th Sept.

Arrive Wadi Raj Tent Camp. Leave again at midnight. One train somewhat delayed by Camp bell's two charges breaking through bottom of their horse box. Nuit (2 Battalion) was camp and tented under.

Monday 18th Sept.

Embark at Bombay on SS. Salporda. Major had all the tore show off before landing Secunderabad, but found it was a mistake as all horses had to be shod again on board ship by the F.S. (Naval). Walked about 3 of horses on + slung the coat. Saw Scott (who was with me in army class at Tonbridge).
Indian Ammunition Column

Capt. Evans R.F.A.

Medical Officer. Capt. Slayter R.A.M.C.

Vet. Officer. Lieut. Wilson A. M. O.
Wednesday 4th Oct. 1899.

Disembark at Ladysmith. Very sick to find war not yet declared. Shocking bad arrangements for disembarking. Open trucks for horses not broad enough, a nothing on floor to keep them from slipping down. Intemperate reception at Durban.

Thursday 5th Oct. 1899. We arrive at Ladysmith. About 30 hours were blown on the way. + trampled on. Whole of 4 pm had to be shot. Horses in frightful condition. Brigaded with 42nd & 53rd (2nd Boer War).


42nd RFA.

Major Gwilt Brown.

Capt. James Batman.

Lt. J. H. Grobb.

Ina Bonhalle.

Lt. Hawkieling.

53rd RFA.

Major Aldby.

Capt. Thwaites.

Lt. Panum.

Grb. Stobart (Command) Higgins.

* joined battery in Africa.


13th Major Davenport.

67th Major Manifold.

69th Major King.
October 12th Thursday.
Hampered up at 3.30 am, aiming to scan of Dutch raid which did not come off. We did not go to bed at all.

Buses send ultimatum - war is declared.

October 13th Friday.

Hear that 9000 Boro with 18 guns from Flanders are in direction of Deew drop. We march out soon after midnight in flying column with 3 deep supplies, under Sir Sec White. Order of march:

N. M. R. N. C. B. M. R.
5th Cameron.

Lw. post Mounted Infantry.
23rd Field 6. 3rd RE.

A. O. 3.

Lw. post Regiment.

15th M. B. R. Q. A.

Devonshire Regt.

½ Batt. Gordon Highlanders.

Buccleugh Co.

Wagons.

½ Batt. Gordon Highlanders.
We go down through Ladysmith over iron bridge, up through Range Post, found very heavy & had two horse down in teams going up the hill in dark. We had to wait by Port Road to till 4 a.m. for infantry & cavalry. Proceeded along Actor Holmes Road for 3 miles, then stuck off north along Blackburn Road another 3 or 4 miles. Here we halted & prepared for action. Beautiful open country for this part of the world. The men intensely enthusiastic as we all expect to have a whale at 'em at last. "Here's a jell for you!" as they came home the first shell. We are now in lines of battle columns, 21st on the right. Cavalry in front scouting and infantry in rear, with of B.M. on left flank. Our wagons go to the rear. The horses have picked up wonderfully, the men all very quiet with look of keen expectancy continually examine the opposite kopjes with the Scots’ sights ... imaginary Bows. The day was lovely set a magnificent view of the Drakensberg in the distance, which reminds me strongly of the Sierra Nevada as seen from S.S. Durna at Daybreak on my way to India. Then eat-up most of the rations.
On the whole campaign.
All due to the criminal ignorance and negligence of our Intelligence Dept. Who are above acting on news received from Colonial troops (who prove a jolly sick better scheme than our regular cavalry). This commando of Boers were certainly the same that we engaged at Fratintione, when they held a much stronger position than any they could have taken up at Dewchop.

* And they eventually invested Ladysmiths held Colenso with something like 40,000. Also having 15,000 near Kimberley & 10,000 opposing Graham at near Matlino simultaneously.
We see afterwards how a too high a frontal attack with all battalions massed would be, against an enemy who scatters smokeless guns hidden on kopjes all around you, so as to envelop you on both sides...
in their hame sacks, and they were very sleepy (they didn't turn in till about 11 p.m.) and unconscious. This is about midafternoon. We move forward to a position under a kopje about 1/4 mile further on. Water and the horses by sub-divisions. The men then feed on bully beef + biscuits (brought out on a truck wagon) & we hear the Boers have not been sighted. We all fall sound asleep for about an hour by our horses. Are ordered to return home about 2 p.m. Very sick. The place was stiff with correspondents on horses + in vehicles. Several snipers shooting at work. We trot home the last 2 miles in good form. Stoves did well today. Evening stable dinner & a very welcome bed in the tin camp. Bennett Belalghi of D.T. tells us the Boers could only place 15000 men in the field this side.*

We hear afterwards from outposts of B.M.R. that the Boers were under there, about 7 miles further on, taking up a position. The B.M.R. officers had been watching them all day, but our Intelligence officers (Major Albert) would not believe them. If we had attacked them in this favourable position at the beginning of the campaign it would doubtless have had a material effect
Movements of this column learnt subsequently.

18th Oct. Moved down towards Colmoo
18th Oct. Marched to heights west of Oran brook

To try to cut off supposed column from Sana Ran. Nothing transpired. Force returned to bivouacked at Colmoo.

19th Oct. Marched to Bocourt, leaving 14th. hills and return to Ladymith.

20th Oct. Line west of Rep. 9th Hil. continue march to

Moor Ruins. Rest of force make night march and

Pursue rain back to Colmoo.

21st Oct. Arrive Colmoo 3 a.m. ordered to return to

Ladymith by rail.


Indian Contingent:

Cavalry. 19th Hussars. 5th Dragoon Guards. 9th Lancers (5 ex)


Infantry. 2nd. Gord. Highlanders. 1st. King Royal Rifles (60)

1st. Devon. 1st. Yorkshire. 1st. Glascow,

* Also British 3 Native field hospitals, bakery companies,

* Also British 3 Native field hospitals, bakery companies,
Tuesday, 17th October.

All kit (except 15. marching order) sent to be stored in the town. Field day in morning. Cavalry start in evening for 48 hours reconnaissance, with 10 M.B. R.G. A (Major Bryant). A Flying Column (under Col. W. Trembley Jenkins) move off south towards Athens to intercept support force of Boers moving in that direction. Composition 19th H.A.R., 53rd R.T.A., Imperial Light Horse, Livestock Regiment.

Battalions again warned to be ready to turn out at 3 a.m. as orders given had to be up by 5 a.m. 21st harnessed up and turned about in stables, then led again.

Wednesday, 18th October.

Ordered suddenly at lunch time to leave the town camp & bivouack in the town near the Iron Bridge. Turned out harnessed up at 5 minutes notice having to leave our lunch. At this had to wait 4 hours in the sun before we moved. We eventually claimed our bully beef & biscuits slept in mud again under the guns & wagons.
Gordon eventually occupied our old camp.

Our escort consisted of Company of Gordons, Capt. Subaltern & Lieut. Murray (whom I knew so friendly), at Elendslaugh the Capt. & Murray were both killed & the senior sub. dangerously wounded.

(Anniversary of Battle of Trafalgar 1805.)
Thursday 19th October

Cavalry return chubs. Tried having as usual seen or heard nothing. We got our tents out of store. Battle at Dundee, repulse of Trusteesal Poors.

Friday 20th October

Our Battn. Some cavalry, Gordons + Devons move out towards Elands Laafig at 11 a.m. under Colonel Hamilton. We again go out fully expecting a fight that return in the evening wet & disappointed to find our camp shifted about 400 yards to the other side of the Road. Capt. Downing arrives + takes over C.R.A. Capt. Runcel in his staff. Officer of Bright (A Batt. R.I.T.A.) has become his galloper. Sgt. was to have been C.R.A. but arrived too late. 42nd + Ammon. Column (Capt. dusty. Lt. Curtis + Evans) are alongside. Sgt. gave us a show in coming down from the hill camp so have double up in Campbells.

Saturday 21st October

Battle of Elands Laafig.

About 9 a.m. Col. Coxhead is sent out in command of a column moving along Newcastle Road in the direction of Elands Laafig. The Imperial Light Horse, 4th Devon, 4th Manchester + Bodel Field Battery had gone out early in morning under Major Sen + Funch.
Col. Crook's Column consists of 42nd Bat'ys. + 2 squadrons
5th Lancers. Walker Staff Officer. Cameron Greely
Officers. At 11 a.m. he receives a message reporting
fighting at 5 k. The force have to return retreat
this side of E. L. Station. The N. F. A. being totally
unable to cope with enemy's guns. The enemy
prove to be 1400 to 2000 strong + have 3 or 4 guns
firing smokeless powder + having very long range.
Guns are invisibly placed on top of a long ridge.
Reinforcements are now sent for.
1:15 p.m. Sir Geo. while orders.
"Enemy occupy position on ridge to south. Govt.
informs to attack and drive them from this position."
1 p.m. we are ordered out as quickly as possible to
reinforce. We start out with an escort of 5 k., and
the 5 i.g. proceed as. The ford on east of
Demons Manchester go out by train. The road is
fearfully heavy + we have to trot nearly all the
way to be in time. We move in battal. column.
By the time we have gone about 7 miles the
horses show signs of fatigue + by the time
we drew up along side of the 42nd we have had
to put in nearly every spare horse + the horses
can only just crawl although the drivers are
Sir Lumley's Charge.

Boer Camp

Bosch position & guns

Line of advance of Boers.

Line of advance of Boers.

Line of advance of Boers.

Low ridge occupied early by Boers.

Range about 2500x

Range about 3600x

Range about 3400x

2nd position

3rd position

1st position

Station

Original Advance

’Not drawn to scale.

Our advance from Ladysmith

To Ladysmith

Flanders Leap
using their whips. Everyone shows intense anxiety as to whether the horses will do it.

As we approach the 42nd (who are in line unlimbered at ammuna supply) on the left of the railway we are passed by 3 trains of infantry, one behind the other, in open trucks who cheer wildly as they see us struggling over the heavy ground. Thansden thinking that Campbell had forgotten to give the order to prepare for action, makes his gunners clinch down the trails, load, this is taken up by all the guns in the battery. We are brought into action first, on the right of the 42nd facing the 1st Boer Camp but do not fire there. One hour gets 5 minutes rest whilst the 42nd fires half a dozen rounds at the Boer Camp, scattering the few men that were in it. We are then ordered to cross the railway on advance over the ridge into action against the low rocky hill held by the Boers. Blevitt now takes command of the battery, Brigade Div, and Campbell commands the battery. We cross the railway & follow the 42nd in battery column, the best way we can with our half dead horses. No sooner is a pair of horses taken out than a spare pair put in, the original pair are hooked into some other
team. It is a beautiful sunny day & we are now approaching the last long ascent of half a mile which will bring us to the crest line whence we can see the enemy's position. I can see the enemy's shell terrifying in the air over this at some retiring cavalry. Never before have I felt so wildly elated & exceedingly happy. I feel I must say, the prospect of one's first battle is glorious & I should think never equalled again. I never again experience the same feeling.

I now see my first wounded man being carried down on a stretcher, but it only makes me keener to have a whack at them. Never for a moment did it enter my mind that the Boers could prove a really tough customer when brought face to face with British pluck & discipline. And I fondly imagine that we were going not only to lick the Boers (as we do) but to rout & punish them & after giving them one or two more similar drubbings to satisfactorily end the war in about a month. No visions as yet cloud my mind of long days of weary writing & passive submission to shell fire, of repulses & victories which have no result & are only worn at twice the waste of gallant lives & of the sickness
and sudden deaths of ones friends & comrades and the alternating hopes & correspondingly of the scarcity of food & the general tiredness of existence that was to be our part. Never have I yet experienced the joy of being tried at by guns we cannot reach from all sides, whilst we are put to calmly shell an apparently empty loophole to "keep the enemy off it." The try advance into action up the slope is an anxious time, as the drivers with their utmost endeavors can only just get a couple out of their poor beasts. My section is on the left, Hanleys the right & Ransdell the Center. Great is my disgust when the lead of number 3 gun goes down & I have to leave them behind & go on into action with only one gun of the section, whilst other teams are put in. There is now no attempt at driving in the line that guns struggle up as they can, whilst things are still worse in the weapons. My gun (proport No. 4) and one of Ransdell are the first to reach the crest line we are greeted with tree shell, one falls clean into Ransdell's gun, severely wounding J. Smith & Pound who are on the limber box & axle box seat respectively. We come into action about 200 yards beyond the crest line on the night of the 42nd who were in
action but have not as yet apparently fired. First I would here point out that we have been sent into action without any orders, without even being told where the enemy's guns are, and apparently without an escort. We have never been warned to keep clear of a low ridge on our right front which is crowded with Boers and only 2000 distant. A state of considerable confusion now reigns for several minutes. We are totally unable to discover where the enemy's guns are, until after about 10 minutes Sgt Ellis sees a flash. We are being pounded with a very heavy and accurate fire that luckily, singularly, is ineffective, fire from the guns, and rifle bullets are whistling through the battery, we know not whence.

To add to the confusion the ammuni-tion have gone to the rear before the weapons can get up over the heavy ground. For some time we are short of ammunition. Then the 42nd, not being able to see the target are unable to get the range as Sgt Ellis finds up No 3 gun (now No 6).

G'm'ahra the firing number is wounded and falls off. He has the company in his hands at the time and coming into action we are unable to find...
I also noticed this at Sommealshop on moon- 
ful Monday. Thus we had no less that 5 batte-
ies in line each trying to range independently. It was 
absolutely impossible to distinguish one's shell under 
these conditions. Surely it would be best to tell 
off one battery to do the ranging alone under these 
conditions. I should propose the following, 
"When two or more batteries are going intended 
to come into action, keep them against the same 
target, one only charged with the permission 
Shrapnel at the command "Prepare for action." 
The entire ranging should be completed by 
this battery, the remainder waiting to get 
the range & fire given them before loading."

Reasons for the above

(i) Instantly simplifies ranging.
(ii) Prevents a waste of ammunition.
(iii) May, for a time, deceive the enemy as to 
one's real strength of guns & thus cause him to 
commit some folly.

On the other hand people may say "But guns 
should come into action immediately to overwhelm 
the enemy's guns; thus stand unimpaired."

a trench. I eventually return one from MacDougal's no. 7 gun. In going off to Campbell to get the range of target a shell bursts in front of me and myself. The blast shatters me a little and my water bottle saves me a wound. I am covered with earth and fragments but unhurt. When the smoke clears away however, I see Frankly crawling on his hands and knees, his helmet off, blood streaming from his head, looking very white-stared and shouting out "in all right." I shout out--"Hallo Frankly are you hit?" he says --"yes, in all right though." We pursue Campbell who rushes from one flank to the other and a range (which proves very short.) Poor old Frankly insists on continuing in action but evidently doesn't know what he is doing. Now comes a fresh difficulty, it is almost impossible to tell the burst of one man shell from that of the 42. So hence extreme difficulty of parrying. I noticed this also. After Campbell has given one or two ranges I suddenly notice him spin half round and as he turns again I see a crimson stain appearing over his heart and under his left arm pit, I ask him if his heart is sore. "No."
From this feeling he first thought it was a spent bullet which had hit him, but turning to the major said, "I've just had a whack from a spent bullet." The major who was very angry, saying to him, "Oy, there's lots flying about." However in a minute or two he gets very pale and faint, and they have to be carried off in a stretcher.

As our wagons come up, the guns turn most of their attention onto them and do considerable damage. No. 3 wagon, the lead horse (80) has both fore legs blown off and the wagon itself is smashed up. In no. 4 wagon, the lead near lead horse (No. 60) gets a bullet right through his head which eventually lodges beneath the skin of his neck, but never kills him. The conduct of all the men, gunners and drivers all this time is simply splendid. No compassion or mercy. The guns are perfectly laid, the fuzes accurate, shot and a regular supply of ammunition kept up. In the words of Col. Cockshade, afterwards published in the official orders, "The men drilled as if on perfect drill parade." After last Ellis spots the flash of a gun on the right range 800 yds, and before that is beyond the reach of our time fuse.
Quite so, but during the process of ranging with percussion shotshell the guns are as practically as useless as when not firing at all.
Gosnell is by no means incapable of running the battery properly. So as the major now decides to advance the two batteries about 1,000 yards, he sends him to look after the wagons in rear to do the duties of captain. The 42nd advance first and take up a position, whilst we cover their advance by shelling the enemy's guns with percussion shot and shell. Although we are unable at this range to silence them, we keep them pretty quiet and make them shooting erratic. The major then orders Ransdell to take the battery on and select a new position. This he does very well, going on ahead I take charge of the battery, being in the center of where Ransdell dismounts, beyond the 42nd considerably to their right. The 42nd meanwhile cover our advance. The enemy's guns start now as we advance and make it unpleasant for the wagons. This time we come into action in very good style and the 3 wagons come up immediately. The major comes up and takes command to Ransdell's disgust. He proceeds to range the battery in perfect style.
Before we have fired one second pair of time fuzes, the enemy's guns are completely silent, the Gunners running from them. Meanwhile, the rifle fire from one's low kopje on one's right becomes hot, and the constant 'pup' of the bullets past one's head or the 'phut' as they raise little dustheaps at one's feet is decidedly unpleasant. The Major delibates for a few minutes whether our men are on this kopje or not comes to the conclusion they are not, so he turns the two guns of the right section on to it. Very quickly, the rifle fire is practically silenced and we proceed to distribute all over the original hill. Sergt. Ellis spots two Boers on the sky line flags his gun on them, soon is our relation to see them both fall at the next shot. Now our men begin to turn the enemy's flank and gradually take possession of the low kopje on our right, the enemy offering very little resistance. Thus both parties advance again to a third position. Directly we limber up the guns open fire on us again but on coming into action for the 3rd time...
I may here mention, that no staff officer saw no
that the infantry were going to advance & it was
absolutely providential we did not fire on our own
own as they came up from the kopje where the Boers
had been earlier on where we had been shelling. Their
rifle did them one good turn, even if it did make them
a better target for Dutch bullets. About 4 hours of in
we ceased firing after they were getting well up the hill,
we got the order from the staff to cease fire. Evidently a general
needs a much larger & more honest stuff. This was to more
we again quickly silence them, and distribute our fire over the ridge again (range 2400) battery fire 5 seconds. Now on our right front we see a solid wall beginning to advance up the (our) right side of the enemy's position. This we soon see, is our the gendarmes by their fields. The 12 H were advanced from the other side of the same flank, they met and mingled at the crest line.

It is indeed a splendid sight, this slow steady advance of a solid living wall. The gendarmes apparently disdain to take open order, or else they are unable to open out in time. The major immediately orders us to cease fire. Now the whole air is filled with a deafening rattle of musketry. When we cease fire the enemy's guns open again for a few rounds which however fall over thunder that do not fit the range. They then give the advancing gendarmes a round or two, but the Dutch (or German) gunners rapidly dismount their guns as the drums are now making a tumult attack. Up go this gallant regiment to capture the guns. The infantry after a brief but stubborn fight capture the position and two guns, of the enemy. Run for it. About this time a squadron of 5 & 1
Apparent still at Lombard's top on Mountful Monday. This feeling that we might be firing onto our own men has been a constant nightmare to us, & has several times prevented us from peppering parties of Bob's we might have. We have suffered all along from want of orders from head quarters & intelligence about the locality of the enemy.
who originally came out as escort to the battery, manage to get a charge amongst 30 retreating Boers & kill them all. One lancecor speared two Boers who were both sitting on the same horse, and one instead of the two. The Gordons + 121 + very heavily, the Gordons declare that Dargai was child; play to this. The chief cause of their loss was the Boers hoisting a white flag of truce when they were within 40 yards, as soon as our men ceased firing the Boers rallied & gave them several volleys with deadly effect. Just before the infantry advance, rain comes down in torrents and the wounded consequently have a dreadful night.

There is a yarn that the rain brought out many snakes and several of the wounded who were not discovered till next morning were killed by snake bites. Darkness & the pitiable condition of our horses prevents any chance of pursuit & we are ordered to retire to the railway station and bivouac there for the night. The march over the uneven ground amidst pelting rain & inky darkness seems unending. At last we reach the line coming up find a train there, full of wounded & waiting for more before starting back.
to Ladysmith. I hear old Campbell's voice say, 
out & go & speak to him & am greatly relieved to 
find his wound is not dangerous. Manley has 
most pluckily stuck to the battery all this time, 
but as we cross the railway he has to dismount 
& stagger about wounded horse so the Major orders 
him to into the sick train. Poor G. Smith is 
growing terribly, I fear he will lose his leg. 
Wilson tells me he Smiths treached him to shoot 
him when he was first attending his wounds. 
Two horses fall down as we cross the line & die of 
fatigue, two more die during the night. No 3 
wagon has had to be left on the field as it was too 
smashed up to get away. The farrier however has 
had all the ammunition taken out, but the men 
kit on it, for some reason, are not removed. 
We form up the other side of the railway, about 1 
mile south of the station in battle column. We 
are all lined up together with the other battery 
the Naval Field Battery, the 1.44 & 5 6.5s in a 
fearful muddle. The horses of course are not 
unhorsked. The men eat their bully beef & biscuits 
with which go do we. The men although tried out 
cannot keep for excitement, they are so full of back
It is very funny to contrast this, with the behavior of the men after subsequent fights. They felt so used to it, that they never for thought of discussing it afterward, but would go sound asleep without displaying the slightest interest, taking it all part of the daily work.

In spite of the Bows saying they were outnumbered, our actual fighting numbers were not more than:

- R.A. (2 batteries) 80 fighting men.
- Infantry (4 squadrons) 1000 men.
- Cavalry (1 squadron) 150 men.
- I.L.H. about 300.

Total 1530

Bay 1600 at most, and the Bows themselves confess to having 1500 men. Their position was enormously strong. None of our volunteers except the 12.4H and the S.O.G. took any part in the actual battle, they only did the morning reconnaissance. It was a gallant fight, well earned victory, if only we had followed it up instead of retiring to Ladysmith.

The Manchester did work in support of the Gordon during the attack, so cannot be reckoned in the actual fighting time.
and so pleased with themselves. Dr. Pauling is exceedingly proud of having had his horses felled them off by a shell, as a fact all the men think them quite select horses and greatly elated. We try to entice the horses by teams at the station (13 miles off) but find about 200 horses being continued there from Cairo in bunches so have to give it up as a good thing. However I determine to make an effort to catch my faithful Quick and start off through the dark to find him. The ground is awful soft, I start for a battery I can see, after wandering 3 miles I suddenly fall into a denje about 5 foot deep, Quick springs and makes away, I disappear into the darkness. I give him up for lost with him my second appointment. After wandering about for nearly an hour in the dark & by dint of great shouting & after falling into several more pits, I regain the battery & tell my great satisfaction that my old horse has also done so. I feed my horse & myself & lie down in my cloak on the ground with Ramus & try to sleep through the rain. The infantry occupy the after camp & find plenty of good grub & the boys some of the men get a good bit of coin by way of loot as well. Our position during the night was most
It is worthy of note that the Battle of Elanderapy was fought by the Indian Contingent. The Manchester were the only regular troops not in the Contingent they came from Gibraltar. The others, viz. 2 batteries, Gordon, Devons, 52 Lancers 5th O.G.s were all from India, as were also the doctors & ambulance parties, stretcher bearers &c.

* But had been out in the country a year or two.
precarious, if the enemy had attacked we should have been in a terrible plight as we were some way off the infantry and main body of cavalry. Our horses were dead that we didn't had no idea of the surrounding country and had no pickets or outposts. Everyone was asleep except the ambulance parties.

The march from the last position in action to where we were bivouacked is worth a word. We had to cross fire so suddenly that these guns were still loaded with time shrapnel. Being afraid that the shells would explode with the jolts of the guns over the rough roads the major ordered these 3 guns to follow behind the battery in line with the muzzles directed. We tried to explore the shells by bumping the trails on the ground but it had no effect. The battery straggled out to a frightful length, as the first gun was trying to keep within sight of the 2nd and the 3 last guns kept halting to try to get rid of the shell, also the horses were half dead. It was a most miserable job. I kept riding from Ramsden who was in rear to manley in front to try to keep touch. It was so dark that some of the guns were
out of sight of the wagons following them, and my horse kept stumbling over rocks and holes. I think it was the worst bit of riding I've ever done. The battery must have spread over half a mile or more & I began to fear the trail would get cut off. Just in the darkness, so I dropped connecting files (copper, zinc, tinfoil, ground sconce) between the same wagons. Then when the head of the column reached the toll crossing there was a ‘jam’ we had to wait nearly an hour. No one seemed to know exactly where we were going, so it struck me we should be in a jolly plight if 20 Boers were to have laid for us in the dark as we had no occult & the supernumeraries were out on the loose, so I don’t think the supernumeraries had any ammunition. The wire cutters carried by the ground sects were much used during the whole day and during this night march.

Sunday 22nd October 1899. We are ordered to march home at 2.30 a.m. and get the teams together the best way we can. We put most of spare horses into wagon teams, so that we have 8 horses to a team. The march home is a repetition of the night march from the scene of battle. One of the wagons in rear got stuck owing to a bad hole falling in crossing the railway.