and the rear section gets left behind for some time owing to this accident, & eventually the whole column has to be stopped to let them catch up. The Natal Field Battalion annoy me considerably by constantly chipping in between the lead sections, they seem very full of tricks although they never took part in the fight at all. It is a very weary seven march & I get cramps in my legs, so dismount & walk my horse, however I find my old knee so rheumatic that I can't keep up even at this slow walk I have to mount again. By the time we get home it is quite dark and people are about. We are very disgusted at the absolute want of enthusiasm shown by the townspeople as we come in, only one party (headed by an apparently drunken man) cheers at all. Oh how we relish our tents and breakfast, when we have finished washing & feeding the poor horses who badly need it. The rest of the day is spent in resting. We hear of the fight at Dundee & the first news makes it a glorious victory. & says nothing of the final retreat from the town and of the fresh lot of Boers coming on, and the Long Tom Shelling Dundee, the panic time a'c. We hear that the reason we were hurried back from Elandsbaag
They then went home and made a solemn public declaration that their father had died, simply because of our brutality and utter neglect. This is the Boer call over.
today instead of occupying it and following up the
triumph of the victory, is that the staff are afraid of
a rapid advance on Ladysmith by the Cape com-
mando of Boers coming from the free State. We hear
that all night & this morning wounded are being
brought in in the trains, the churches & Town Hall
have been converted in to hospitals and are all full,
& the surgeons' tents very busy. The poor Gordons lost
heaviest. Capt. Dick Cunningham was wounded & about 7
other officers & about 4 officers killed. Amongst the
wounded Boers brought in were Capt Schiel (Gunner)
and Judge Koch (who died in hospital). His two sons
asked for permission to return with his body to Pretoria
& it was granted. They were proficient in their thanks for
the way he was treated & our kindness, & in saying
goodbye to Trahern (who had treated him) we were
moved to tears of gratitude. They say they will publish
our kindness in Pretoria. The ambulances are at
work all day today, and Doon accredited brings in
the two captured guns, which are finally placed in
our gun park for repairs. They are the latest pattern
Maxim - Nordenfeldt quick fire, 12 lb. Shell & fixed am-
munition, range up to 6,000 yards & have 200 feet per sec
higher muzzle velocity than our guns. The wheels however
are very thinly and ill adapted to travelling rapidly
over rough ground. All except a few officers are in
English. We get a certain amount of ammunition but
very few shrapnell. The fuge defeats everyone, Kineaid-
Smith (subaltern RHA) says they are the two genes
captured from him in the Jamison raid. 53rd Bally
return home.

Tuesday Oct 23rd

Visit Campbell & Manley in hospital, both doing well.
Make acquaintance of Major Simpson (14th) shot through
Leg. We hear disquieting rumours of Dundee force.

Wednesday 24th Oct 1899

A force goes out in morning in Pepworth direction to
fight a force of Boers Free State Boers, who are evi-
cently moving across to intercept the now retiring
Dundee column. Most of the troops that go out are
those that did not partake in the Elandia battle fight.
The Glascotties, Rip Liverpool Regt, Volunteers,
19th Horses, 42nd & 53rd Battinrs go out. We are fear-
tfully sick at not going, though do not grudge the 53rd
their first fight. The 42nd were chosen as their horses
were in the best condition. We hear the firing of
gun till 3 p.m. and the troops return about 6 o'clock.
We are somewhat disappointed to find they didn't
capture any positions or guns, but had checked the Boers
He & Manley are both eventually invalided home. Interview with Manley appears in St. James Gazette.
and driven prevented them from coming on, they also drove them off the main position by artillery fire, but we did not occupy it. It is called the affair of Intimacy. The Gloucester make a rash attempt (without orders) to capture one position, lose their Colonel (Witford Walter of Tunbridge—I think) and the men are driven back in some disorder through the batteries. The batteries come under a very heavy rifle fire most of the day from Bowa only 1200 yards distant. Perceval (53rd) is wounded in leg by rifle bullet & I am in hospital seeing Campbell friendly, whom he is tending in great pain as it had shattered the bone a bit. Douglas had his horse snatched clean up by a white shell & his horse killed, it only grazed his side. Major Ardy & Staff officer were also reported wounded but they were only grazes. The batteries had to cross a track coming through two white gaps in columns of smoke & the enemy's guns on the hill had the range to perfection, it was a wonder they didn't suffer great loss as the shells poured in thick & well ranged. This not over successful engagement, the news that the Dundee column are on full flight south to join us, with 20,000 Bowa at their tail causes the first depression in the Garrison through only fright. However we
begin to recognise it is going to be not quite such a picnic as we thought. It is luckily lucky for Natal the Indian contingent arrived when they did, if it’s true about the 20,000 Boers with 6 inch siege guns.

25 October Wednesday

Relief of Dundee Column.

We get orders early to go out in direction of Helpmaken + Dundee to meet the Dundee Column. The 5th Lancers, Gordon Highlanders, Manchester + Volunteers accompany the battery. The column is commanded by Col. Aitchison. We cross the Modder River, having passed between Zin Hill + Bulwana and then the colonel having news from a galoper of the proximity of the Dundee column decides to Bivouac for the night. We bivouac the night with nothing but our great coats amidst the most appalling rain I’ve ever seen. We try to keep a fire going with nothing but our great coats amidst the most appalling rain I’ve ever seen. We try to keep a little camp fire alight in our little mess, which is augmented by Forbes (Indian) a Capt'n of 5th Lancers dry our socks & two of the Manchesterers. We sing & drink but Whiskey till 10 p.m. when the Whiskey & fire both go out & we lie down in misery to try sleep in the torrent. I awake about 2 a.m. find I have formed a kind + have 4 inches of water standing round my back. I had selected a spot about 100 yards from the battery to sleep with Forbes, but on waking find him gone, and it
takes me an hour wandering in circles to find the battery again in the dark. At the grey of early dawn the Dundee column begins to come in. I never saw a more pitiable sight. They had been marching almost without rest for 3 days. All their tents and kit left behind with 100 rounds of 15-pdr ammunition. Nothing. The infantry have nothing but their great coats, which were being carried in truck wagons, so the men had marched all night in this fearful rain without them & had not had a bite of food for 18 hours. They look simply too weathered for words, yet all seem wonderfully cheery now they're met us & are looking forward to a good feed & rest in Ladysmith & then to beat the Boers back with us. The column had struggled over miles in tych & were in constant dread of an attack. Rumours would constantly reach the tent that the rear was being attacked, that the guns were cut off &c, & on the whole I was told by Du Port when I met again for the first time since Plymouth the days in his usual cheery mood, it was the most awful time he had ever spent. I am so delighted myself to find no rheumatism or other bad effects from my tremendous wetting, that I'm in splendid spirits,
but find the others in the battery, so wet & weaken'd that they are hard to chew up. However we get a fire in an ant heap & make some cocoa, with which we eat sodden bread & sardines & drink we enjoy. I discover in my wanderings earlier in the morning that the wily No. 3 sub-division (mostly G. Barrels' dray) had kept a fire alight all night, & had some hot tea made with muddy water. I gratefully accept a filthy mug full of this greasy beverage without milk or sugar, and find it simply delicious in my thin condition. I always notice No. 3 look after themselves best of anyone. We still expect to have an engagement with the Bows to cover the Dandar's column's final retirement. Luckily the 19th Hussars were left to watch the Bows at Dintygoni & see they didn't try to intercept, so we get home about midday without further incident, having taken up a position through the guns into action in the neck between Lombards Kop and Balhawa, till everyone were safely through. I better remember looking up at Lombards Kop and Balhawa & thinking, "what an awful thing for Ladymithte if the Bows were ever allowed to take either of these". Which, of course they eventually do.
Friday 27th October 1899

Not all the Indian Contingent nearly ordered out at 10 a.m. under General Hamilton, as the Boers have advanced and taken up a line beyond Modder Spruit stretching away to Blainvill to Pafuri. As we go out through the same old week, we met the 19th Shrews coming in from an early reconnaissance. Purnahwar ride back with me stills me that they had found the Boers in columns of route, driving along a heavy siege gun, they had opened out prepared to charge when a single field gun found fire on them, whereas in his words "Of course we had to retire." It struck me as being rather an overestimate of a single gun, especially considering the mobility and power of distributing over a large area, powered by cavalry. What would happen if we always retired (forming a much more compact target as we do) when one or even half a dozen guns opened on us to which we were not attempting to reply? It is a cold morning as we start and the men seem grow slow inclining to talk and joke them formally. They are beginning to realise that they've got to stick a heavy artillery fire whenever we go out, they are not yet quite got to the absolute calm indifference to danger they ultimately
develop. I think we all feel just a little bit

just before the battle" sort of thing, I know, I do.
We proceed a little further up the slope than we did
on the previous day, & the 3 batteries are halted in
line of battery columns with an ammunition column on
the right, just behind the ridge. The infantry in rear
& cavalry on our flanks. I am glad to see the
hills on our flanks are occupied by companies
of our infantry. Here we stop all day, although the
Col. goes forward with the range fire guns & we expect a
fight every minute. The Col. & Major get well
potted at by the rifle fire, & after it the bullets have
been spitting around him for about 10 minutes, old
Coehed turns round & Blenhiem in his inimitable
surprised stammer "G-d-d bullets", which in such a
tone of pleased surprise, that everyone roars in the
laughter. We are ordered to bivouac again, but
all fires to be out by 10 p.m. This time the night is
time we make ourselves comfortable, Ramsden & I
rig up stretchers as beds & having had a good
meal off bread potted meat, etc. etc., we all go sound
asleep, expecting an enormous battle in the early mor-
ning & by now very keen for it. The men do themselves
well as they loot a "co" devoted Kaffir kraal of two dozen
Chickens. They also find a lot of hay for the horses in it; so altogether we're all very cheerful. I told the Supt. Major that in my opinion, Sir Leo White is sending another force out round behind Pekorrite to drive the Boers onto us, so that we'll wipe 'em out in the morning. Our rest is disturbed soon after midnight by urgent orders to hook in & prepare to go home immediately. We are all, I think, genuinely dis\-gested this time, as we had been looking forward to a most successful engagement under Hamilton whom we all put great faith in, especially as he had held a little meeting of officers & sergeant\-majors first & told us all what he was going to do. His original intention was a night attack about 2 am with the bayonets to be closely supported by the guns immediately it got light, while we were to mind our left flank. We hear the reason of our recall is a supposed attack on Ladysmith from the Free State side, which never came off, so that Col. Knox was responsible for our recall. We arrive in about daybreak & am beginning to feel a bit short of sleep. What will the Boers think of us, coming out to fight & then retreating like this? I must confess to being con- siderably depressed by the silly way we are fuddled about.
Two 4.7 inch naval guns (40-lb shell), 3-lb range
Naval 12 pdr. and two antique muzzle loading 6.3 inch
heavies (range about 2500 yards, 80 lb. shell) arrive by train
from Durban. The naval guns are being set up into
position on Junction Hill.
Sunday 29th October

Quiet. We hear the Bows have occupied a strong line north and east of Ladysmith, have strong positions and many guns are probably in great force. We have received orders issued for the regiment on Monday 30th Oct 1899 "Black Monday"

The order given us are a column command by Col. Caulston consisting of 6 drt. Gloucester Rifles 6 Co. 2nd R.I.F. and 10th M. B. Royal with Major Aird as Staff Officer and two well known local citizens as guides, go out about 10 p.m. on Sunday evening to take up a position somewhere beyond Bello Kopie during the dark. In order to prevent Boer reinforcements from Wokers-Huck and if possible to turn the Boer right flank. There we hear afterwards met with a complete disaster, during the dark the
Infantry ammunition mules stampeded back through the mountain battery, mules & caused them also to stampede. The native carriers were unsuccessful in holding the mules, as the title had been taken out of their mouths to prevent foaming. A lot of the men were knocked silly by the mules & did not regain their senses till next morning when they returned home. Two guns out of the 6 also got home. The remainder of the column apparently took up a position by Nicholson's Neck, where they were right in the midst of the Boro, so bad had been our previous information as to the enemy's position. Here they appear to have had a terrible morning's fight without food, water or even ammunition against overwhelming odds. They waited in vain for reinforcements, eventually were surprised by a large body of Boro flying from Pepworth, who took them in rear & were eventually obliged to surrender having expended all their ammunition & being completely surrounded & shot down like rabbits. Their casualities were:

Killed: 44
Wounded: 76
Taken/Prisoners: 810
Battle of Lombardo Kop.
About 2 miles to 1 mile.
The remainder of us under Rear Adm. Hood, were ordered to the field of battle by 9 a.m. We formed up in rear of 1st Bde., Div. R.A. under Wlad Pickworth. The whole artillery, they under Lt. Commander. [The Naval Field Battery were also out, but after the first advance in to action they found they were out of range, and began to take up a new position closer, but apparently didn't like the shells, so as their guns were prancing unless was allowed to retire & remain under cover of Lombards Keep all day.] We advance along the road to Hag Hill and halted there at (A) about 3 a.m. The infantry displayed to either flanks, & the following is a list of troops engaged.

Cavalry: (Supposed to support right wing, but were dismounted by general order, sent up a house in front of Lombards Keep, with the infantry where they were worst.)

5th Lancers. 5th O.F.S. 19th Hussars. 18th Hussars.

Infantry: On Right.

1st & 2nd K.R.R.
1st Suffolk (Kings)
1st Leicesters.
2nd Dublin Fusiliers.

On Left.

2nd Rifle B.T. (picked up by train from Dublin).

Colonel Carleton's force comprised one extreme left wing.
Artillery

1st Belt Divn

2nd Belt Divn

13th. Belt. R.F.A (who went to continue right beyond boundary)

21st Belt. R.F.A

67th

42

69th

53

Natal Field Belt (did not take part)

Volunteers (who held the surrounding hills, Bulwer, Lombards Kop, Sun Hill ac)

Imperial Light Horse

Boer Mounted Rifles

Natal Mounted Rifles

Natal Carabiniers

All together a force of over 10,000 men.

In front of us we can just see Hag Hill, & recognise there is a sprint between our position & it. We are now in this of Cutley columns. 1st Belt Divn on right, Natal held 3rd on our left. The Wagons are in rear on the road. Where the infantry & cavalry are we don’t know. We discuss in whispers where the enemy’s position is, & one has an uncomfortable feeling that the hill just in front (Hag Hill) may be held by him, but find afterwards it was held by the Gordons Highlanders. The position is not very comfortable as we have seen no infantry or cavalry, except some we passed on the road left behind, seem likely without count.
And somehow everyone seems to be rather gloomy this morning. The men are forbidden to smoke, and we all talk in whispers. Being very sleepy we all lay down by the hoooman full bed asleep. Before going to sleep I have a long talk to poor Macaulay of the 42nd, Bt. & it is the last time I see him alive. We are woken up by Walker, the Adjutant, at about 4 a.m. & ordered to move forward onto Flag Hill in column of sections, as the guides have arrived at Downing we will be in full view of the Breech at Daybreak where we are now. The two Breeches of 1st Bt. Dio, Major Howkton's manifolds go first. Take the right, while Major Wing's battery is taken away by some one right round the other side of Lombard's Kop, but do not see it again during the day. The 2nd Bt. Dio follow after to take up a position in rear of the left of the Hill. The ground is simply awful & we can scarcely get over it, how a weapon gun is not upset by one, as I have great difficulty in keeping my own horse up, why over these rocks. By the time the last battery is across the Sprints it is getting light & I expect every moment to hear the enemy's guns & rifle. At day-break we endeavour to man handle the guns up the hill amongst the rocks to come in to position & indirect motion
with two mines posts. The two remaining battalions of 1st Bde Div move off in direction of 0 and come into action against Long Hill which was to have been the point of main attack; they however find it apparently unoccupied, the Boers having moved their forces much more round to our right being doubtless in possession of some printed orders, & they draw fire from Pequenoth. The 2nd Bde Div then try to come into action against Pequenoth from Hay Hill as I described. The 42nd on the right, have much better ground & open fire. They cannot observe their fire properly & their shell drop nearly 1000 yards short. The 53rd on our left get two guns only into action, but the major seeing it was nonsense trying to come into action in such a position makes a great show of getting our taming boots on, but never lets us fire. We can see the shells bursting from Pequenoth amongst the two Battery of the 1st Bde Div who seem to be having a hot time, & it strikes me that the Boers are bursting their time shrapnel much better than they did at Elandslaagte. I can see a body of cavalry galloping from Tarquinia Road towards E. They get a shell or two amongst them, & gallop back again. The Naval Field Batts, I abate, gallop...
Towards the two batteries of 18. 13 & 8 in, but shortly afterwards I see them gap back again, & they do not appear for the rest of the day. Now we are ordered to get our two (21st & 53rd) batteries off the hill, & with much labour get take ground to the left right, & a advance into action at C, amidst a heavy fire, in front of & to the right of the 42nd. We come into action at about 3800. The 42nd climbs up & come into action again on our right, the 53rd, & still more left. We are now all under a very heavy fire from Pepworth. The hill is so long, & the enemy's guns so well hidden & scattered about that we have the utmost difficulty in picking up the target; the Dragon is also 3 battalions trying to range at once on one target, makes it impossible to observe the effect of one's fire. Everyone is holding different opinions as to where the enemy's guns are, & the Major is very annoyed at suggestions! The Shell are falling thickly about us, both time & piece, & onetrusts in front of one of Ramsden's guns killing 2nd Morgan & wounding G. Andrews. 2nd Morgan is carried to the rear, a horrible sight, with half his head blown off. We eventually siling the guns on the hill, with the exception of an occasional
shot from some fresh gun, or some gun to which the
shrapnel have returned. During the action we see
an occasional vast column of smoke rise from a
large emplacement in the middle of the hill, at
first suppose we have blown up a magazine, but
find eventually it is Long Tom (brick pordayum
firing a 95lb shell) firing. We nick-name him
Long Tom on the spot. The name chip to him.
All this time we have seen no sign of our infantry,
and begins to grow somewhat despised at the
absence of any infantry advance. As far as we can
see we are the only people in the battle, but the
infantry were all living the hills round about.
We grew intensely thirsty, as it is very hot, so we
have been smoking too much, also the men are
very weary with serving the guns continuously
for two hours. The 4-3 I forgot to mention that the
42nd Batt. who were a bit to our right front, were joined
soon after taking up their position by the 1st Batt. [42nd Batt.]
(13th + 67th) The 42nd & 67th remained here throughout
the day like they retired at 2 p.m. After we had been in
action about 1 hour against Peppworth we got communication
which I believe came from the Balloon in Shelly
that there are a lot of Boers behind Peppworth, so we
Here I made a mistake. With the exception of the Gordon Highlanders, every regiment which composed this centre force was sent off gradually by companies to reinforce our right wing, to extricate them from their position. The Boers appear to have concentrated all their infantry (with the exception of those who made prisoners of Carleton's column) on this wing, and to have made every endeavour to turn our right flank and cut us off from Ladysmith. Colonel Grimwood, who commanded our right wing, said his flank would have been turned if the 2nd Battery hadn't been brought up in to action when it was kept the Boers back. The Germans remained on Limit Hill.

The Cavalry, under General French, who ought to have come out well on Col. Grimwood's right flank, were dismantled behind our right flank infantry at 6, and leaving them here there went up theropic to help the infantry. They were not wanted here at all, and Col. Grimwood instead French to take them away to guard his flank in vain.

The 69th Battery (Major Wing's) who were on the extreme right to the south of Luneberg Kop were almost unshelled. They came under a very heavy fire from a Boer 1½ inch automatic gun (since nick-named Pom-Pom) which was completely hidden from them in a thick scrub and at about
increase our range of fire & threw the shell over. This, we suppose, caused the retirement of the party of Boor who came across Col Carleton's column & surrounded them. However no infantry attack was delivered on Pernworth, which might easily have been captured now, had we done so. In fact the whole of our infantry of the centre appeared to have been inactive all day. Col Downey now comes up & orders two batteries off to shell some Bower guns hidden in the scrub to our present right rear, which are doing damage amongst our infantry. The 53rd move off first & come into action at H, they appear to be unable to discover the enemy's guns. We move off in battery column to the rear, closely followed by shell from Pernworth, which has opened fire again as soon as the number of batteries is decreased, we then get sections left which and advance past the 53rd a long way, under a heavy shell fire from our new front. We come into action as we advance a time shrapnel (the last we seen yet) bursts right in front of us, covering the ground with smoky bullets for nearly a square 100 yards. Thinking this was a ranging shot, I fully expect another as we advance over this bit of ground, but am equally surprised to find the next few burst well over us harmlessly. We come into action at D, but cannot discover at all where about the
close range. This gun is, we believe, worked on the
same principal as a Maxim, and fires 2 or 3 pound shells
with the utmost rapidity up to about 3000 yards.
It has a great moral effect. It completely cripplad
Major Wing's battery twice so close that he was
obliged to retire his men under cover temporarily
and get his guns away; the gun nearest the Pom-Pom
had to be dragged away by dragrope, the men being
obliged to crawl out on their stomachs to get to it.
She could see no signs of where the Pom-Pom (which
was fired smokeless powder) was firing from.
So thick was the wood & scrub hiding them, the enemy's shell are coming from (As we were advancing we came through a company of infantry advancing to the support of the infantry of our right who were lining the low ridge in front of us, this is the first infantry we had seen.) We see a lot of stretchers & ambulances returning with dead or wounded from our firing line. We search every bit of the scrub for the guns and occasionally silence them for a time, everyone again has different ideas as to where they are. A staff officer, (Major Seagrave I think) comes up feeling for his horse which has been shot, & we point him out one, as there are lots of ridiculous horses about now, which he catches & proceeds to ride. He remains with the battery until near the end of the fight. An urgent order comes from Col. Quinwood (who is Maj. Blunt) to bring his battery up under Lombards Kop to support his right wing which is being turned by the Boers. We advance to E over some awful ground, great dongas (gullies) tracks & scrubby undergrowth, I cannot imagine how we got through. Nearly all the bits were short of the wagons & guns, feet & several men are shaken up, but luckily no gun is upset. We come into action at E amongst young trees & scrub, and find ourselves well hidden, as the enemy's guns, although they make several attempts, never succeed in finding us.
In front of us, beyond the small stream (small stream) are the lines of the dismounted cavalry, beyond them is a low rocky ridge intervening between us & the Boro position, this is held by our infantry & dismounted cavalry & it is their flank we are protecting. Away to their right front are other rocky ridges which the Boro are beginning to occupy. Having driven our infantry all those who our target is we proceed to drive him into sharpnel all over & beyond the crest twice at about 2000 yards range. When we first come here, there is a very heavy rifle fire from them & bullets whiz through thebattery, but as usual the Boro are carefully hidden behind rocks, but however we speedily silence, the Boro being unable to remain on the crest or advance under such a heavy artillery fire at close ranges. I must stop the narrative of our own actions here to say briefly what was happening in other parts of the field. The 13th Battalion are sent up to a very advanced position at E to extricate the Rifles who have got into a very hot place on the ridge in front. Here the 13th come in for a very hot fire from all sides, & having extricated the Rifles, who I presume to say came back at a somewhat rapid pace & in some disorder, became involved themselves. The 53rd move up from H to bring support & come into action beside them at this low supply.
An anecdote about General Hunter who came up to the 53d at this time. Seeing things were very hot he thought it an occasion to make some common-place remark to Major Abdy that could be overheard by the men. He said " Did you notice those beautiful flowers as you advanced on your right, isn't it lucky it's such a fine day!" Things certainly were looking a bit warm as he said it as shells were bursting in the battery about 10 to the minute, and the Rifles were not rapidly retreating through the guns at times masking their fire, & hardest of all the guns had to fire back where they knew the enemy's infantry were not attempting to fight the enemy's guns that were peppering them so hot.
Here there two batteries remained till all the infantry in front had retired and they themselves were ordered to retire. They maintained a splendid fire with the greatest gallantry under a hail of shells & bullets from both flanks & front, but stuck to their object of excluding the infantry without attempting to silence the guns that were playing on them. Out of the 42 horses the 53rd had up with the limbers, 27 were hit by shell or rifle fire, yet marvelous to relate out of the 36 men up at the guns only 5 were wounded. When ordered to retire, they did so alternately, taking up positions. It was a magnificent sight, no hurry or muddle, the men working the guns like machines. The 13th retired first, the 53rd had a limber broken up by a shell, so had to leave a gun behind. This gun however Capt. Thrope & Co. got back afterwards with a fresh team & limber, galloping up two miles under a terrific fire to a part of the field now covered by our troops; he not only came under the fire of the enemy but also from one man (the Rifles) who had retired in disorder. For this he was afterwards mentioned in despatches. Lieut. Higgins was also mentioned in despatches for stopping behind the retirement & nighting an overturned wagon under a concentrated shell fire. As soon as the 42nd & 67th batteries were
Left alone in front of Pemworth, they began to suffer from fire on fire that hill as they were not sufficient to keep down the fire of all the guns scattered about on it. About 10 a.m. Walker saw a team bringing up a gun onto the hill to enfilade them. He informed the colonel who ordered the 67th to take ground to their right & silence it. Thus they proceeded to do, but unfortunately were slow in coming into action & did not silence it till it had been taking enfilade fire into the 42nd for 5 minutes with terrible effect. Poor Macdougald had just picked up an empty sheepbell case which landed at his feet, saying "This will make a nice souvenir for my people" when a shell from this gun passed between him & amid ships taking his right leg clean off at the hip, he simply murmured "Move me out of the way" & died. Four gunners also were killed & two or three wounded. Capt. Ginge-Batman who was between the guns &IG s4 guns making up casualties had a terrible time carrying away wounded & dying men, some of whom fought him to kill them & was covered with blood. He had several marvelous escapes, once having two horses killed under him during the day, & several shells barely missing him. The 42nd & 67th remained here till the end of the
day, covering the retirement of the infantry & retired
East themselves from that part of the field, as
ordered. Now to return to ourselves. We rapidly silence
the rifle fire on our right front & fire kept up a full time
the two right guns only. We have now time to look about
finish our water bottles & make our solitary meal of
dry biscuit. Down in the plain on our left we can see
the gallant 13th and 67th batteries & by the way the shell
burst am right there one after another, it strikes me
they can hardly come out with a man left alive.
We are filled with admiration for their steadfastness &
Major Haigh is greatly moved with enthusiasm, I ask
him if Fielder of his regiment is out here on any staff
that the map he doesn't think so. To our left front I see
a sight I never expected to. I hope more to again,
our infantry retiring in two & three at the double (the rifle)
We didn't know that a general retirement had been
ordered there, it looked like a "Damn you front out first
It looks to us like a defeat once gloom is cast over the
battery & the sight. The infantry & dismounted
cavalry in front are still apparently holding their own.
We must see the steady retirement of the 13th & 53rd
& notice to our dismay that many dead & ridiculous
horses are left behind & also one gun. We conclude from
This sheet their loss was heavy. The Major is very
conscious to go down the hill and, but cannot as we are
under orders to stay where we are. The Boers having
apparently evacuated the position we were firing at
he ceased fire. He ordered me to get my guns onto
the Kopie our infantry have just retired from. Any
them myself; thinking he means me to take the
section there to cover the retirement. I asked if I was
to put a few shell there before going, when he explained
he only means me to fire on the Kopie first where I am,
so it's not like "death or glory" this time. After I have
fired about a dozen rounds, an urgent order comes
down from Quinwood that the Boers are again coming
round his flank soI unwiring to know why we are not
firing there. So we again turn all the guns onto the
original target. During the retirement of our infantry,
we are much protested by other volunteer officer
who insist that our infantry are Boer troops have
no fire on them. This our artillery do not do. Shortly
after the 13th & 53rd have retired, a staff officer gallops
up who says, that a general retirement has been ordered
that we had better get the last thing away at once, as
the Boers are coming over the hills in front of us. Captured
it and that in a few minutes nothing will be able to
live across the open plain behind us. The Major then
is all said in a loud excited voice, audible to most of
the men. The Major says "he'll see him damned," and
we continue to fire till every cavalry man & foot soldier
has left the ridge in front; when we thin her up and
start away without even an escort. As I see all our
men retreating & we stay on, it strikes me we will be
sacrificed to cover their retreat, & I look to my revolver
bullet (without letting the men see) to suit the load.
The Boers however appear too frightened of the guns to
come over the top ridge evaucated by our men, & we
get away without a casualty. We again have to cross
the awful ground we came over before, again by
some miraculous luck, no gun is about, though we lose
many Saber picks or off the carriages & two or three more
men take tories. Long Tom fires away like mad from
our right flanks but they all fall over, and rifle
bullets & a Dom Dom make bad shooting from our
rear, so we are fairly well hidden by the streel.
When we emerge into the open beyond low hills to stop
a scene of great confusion is presented to us, cavalry,
artillery, infantry & ambulances all mixed up together.
Dismounted cavalrymen are wandering about looking for
horses, & on several occasions I see two men on one horse.
It looks like the retreat of a defeated army—I never remember feeling so despondent. We do not know at the time that the chief cause of the retreat is the news of Carleton's disaster having just reached the town, and a message from Col. Knox that the Boers right wing had taken Carleton's column were advancing on the defended town. Had we known there was some reason for the retreat it would not have dampened our spirits so, but we thought at the time that it is a simple case of defeat by the cursed Dutch farmers, we had been so despised when we came out from India. As far as our right wing was concerned it was a great pity the retirement was necessary, as on the extreme right the Boers were just beginning to fall back on our men to push on. We hear afterwards that the Boers on that part of the field could not understand our movement to the rear as they thought themselves beaten. This doubtless accounts for the battery getting away so easily. Just as we start back along the road to Ladysmith we hear our naval guns (which had just been mounted) at work covering the retreat, and no doubt by their moral effect prevented the Boers from immediately attacking Ladysmith. It is a slow weary march back, as the sun is setting, the farms on the road
constant and our lines overpowering. Walker rode past & told me of poor old Marshall & the 42nd having had a bad time. I met Wood (doctor of 19th. Hursa) & compare this to life at Secunderabad while I knew him. On the way back I discuss the situation with Sgt Ellis, & tell him I am sure it is not as bad as it looks, only we have failed to accomplish our object. When we get to Ladysmith, the Major goes on a head, and as we fully expect the Boers to attack & another big fight on the morrow, Romansin decides to take the battery to the Indian Ordnance & replenish the odd 1,000 rounds we have fired during the day. This we do, to my great satisfaction they kindly give us lunch. I meet Campbell, tell out of hospital for the first time this morning very pale, he was been watching from Junction Hill. Spy Tom appears to have fired several shell during the day into the town near the railway station, to the great consternation of the inhabitants. Unfortunately the Naval guns could not be got ready for action till we started retiring. I also hear for the first time of the loss of the 10th. Mountain Battery (the Gloucester Rifles) which doesn’t tend to cheer one. The whole day seems to have been so mismanaged. No staff officer knew where any regiment or battery was, no orders came.
I remember that on this occasion he told me his whole family history, how he was won't before enlisting to discuss events of an evening with his pals in the village inn, how one night 3 of them said they would enlist to see the world. He had not been back home for 7 years so was looking forward to having many a book over his experiences here in that same village inn. 5th Apr 1930.