against them every week in November. By the middle of it, we
the side could have raised a team to
serve their turns, so many of us were down with
a dysentry & two of them were dead. Our life was
always a busy one from a subsistence point of view.
Our routine early in December was,

2.15 a.m. Reveille. 3.30 a.m. till 4.45 a.m.

Route march for exercise of horses. 5.30 am to 6.30
pm drill & laying. (honored at 5.30 am) 7 am.

Breakfast. 8.30 am (water & food for duty, U 1/2 meal)

9 a.m. Orderly room. Kit inspection etc. 11.30 am

Water, 12 noon feed & then menu dinner. 12.30 p.m.

Lunch. 4.30 p.m. Water. 5 p.m. - 6 p.m. Stand

for all subalterns. 6.30 p.m. guard mounting.

7 p.m. dinner & bed about 8.30 p.m. If one

was a Regimental orderly officer one had an

addition to turn out the guards (4 of them) once
during the day & once between 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.

Also we took it in turns of 2 hrs throughout the

day to be on duty, watching for an attack on

the boma kaar, at Blomstede post. Should one's

turn for this happen between 2 till 4 p.m., and if

one happened to be Regimental orderly, officer, it

was impossible to get any sleep at all to speak of.
However, Jemadill was abolished about 19th Dec. When the shelling got so thick in our camp and Bluitto Port disappeared early in Feb. In conclusion, we were all very fit till the New Year, and by the middle of Feb. we were all very weak & many very ill. The troops by then & (neither horses or men) had it in them to move 5 miles out of Ladysmith. We always kept our spirits up well, and always were expecting the relief in about a fortnight. We had many bitter disappointments. A few favoured ones managed to get relief messages sent to their relatives & some of the volunteers got letters through by Waffen runners, I tried to

in vain.

Tuesday 14th Nov. 1899. "Second Poggelehurst Affair"

We couldn’t believe our ears when we were warned at dawn to turn out & join the 18th Hunsars for a second outing under Brocklehurst. Surely, they are not going to let this old muddler waste any more precious ammunition.

In order to avoid attention of long term we were ordered to start at 5 am & proceed after the Iron Bridge up the road down to the right to the river, where the 18th Hunsars are encamped hidden from Bulwana, the 53rd go with us. We hear that we go out towards Blaenfontein with 18th Hunsars & 1st H, attract the enemy’s attention towards us & silence his
guns, whilst the 67th (manifold battery) + 53rd go out with rest of cavalry (19th Hussars + 52d Lancers) north from the two camps and cut off a large convoy that has been seen daily moving towards Colenso. No one knows what they are going to do with this huge train of slow-moving transport wagons when it is captured. They couldn't bring it in over 5 miles of enemy's country! Our force is to be the denial or stop. We form up in column of route by the 18th camp, who very kindly give us some cocoa. For some reason the order to move does not arrive, so we wait on in to daylight. About 8 am, we hear that the order has been entirely changed (as per usual) so that all the cavalry (except the 19th Hussars) are to go out to Rhumbuck to capture or destroy enemy's guns. The 53rd is to remain in camp taking 67th's place, 4 guns at Ngwi's Post + 2 at mira (very small hospital). We none of us (especially 18th Hussars) look forward the job, as we know it will be another "Doggle" as expect to get half annihilated by Long Tom or other guns as we cross Range Post ridge. We have to explain to the officers of 18th Hussars how to destroy or disable a gun. We don't get orders to move till 11 a.m. instead of going out under cover of dark as was arranged, a staff officer rides by (Ramsden thought it was the same one as on Black Monday) and says in a loud voice, "Well they decided to go out, we'll get hell from Long Tom as we cross Range Post. About 6 other guns out.
side, I don't suppose half of us will get back." This was overheard by the men. Hanging is too good for such an officer! The 5th O.Gs & 67th Battery so that we follow them with the 14th, 18th batteries, 5th Lancers in reserve.

To our surprise and delight, long Tom doesn't wake up till we are all over the ridge and of his sight. The 67th come into action on Sign Port ridge where they are out of effective range & never discover the Blambank K gun. We wait with an escort of 14th behind. The 18th batteries & 5th O.Gs disappear on our flank & do nothing all day, but watch. We pass behind the 67th & then turning to the left come into action beyond & north of Sign Port ridge, exchange several shells with a gun on Right trice of Blambank, but find we are further off than we thought; so take ground to the right & then advance to just this side of Hay Spurit & come into action at 2700' from the gun. During our advance, get heavily shelled. As usual we silence the gun, the summers hang it & going under cover & distribute our fire over the trice. The 67th passes us, and with the 14th, take up a position on the other side of Hay Spurit & unshackle Blambank with their fire. However, not a single volunteer or cavalryman makes the slightest attempt to take any position or trice & the 14th (with 67th battery) are the only ones to cut off Stnii.
weapons at all. The 14th had dismantled and were on Stew Kopie, firing across at left Kopie from a position which was actually further from the enemy than the 67th Battery were. The 67th were too near, and had some casualties from rifle fire. But On Post being shot through the leg, Two 6 inch guns on middle hill were firing at the batteries, which the Navy tried ineffectually to silence, also Long Tom from Pepeworth tried to find us. "Poggehurt" now gives the order to retire. The 67th limber up and start off. The 14th come off their Kopie and retire, but getting a shell at the rear from this hill, they scatter out in two thirds fairly full stop home as hard as they can. The rest of the cavalry also retire and we are left out alone. The Major on seeing the 14th's method of retiring turns to me and says "They don't mean anything by it, it's only their only pace I suppose." However he determines to show them how it ought to be done, at the same time to "accustom the men to shell fire" (he said). I think myself it was a good deal to steady the wagon drivers after the 1st Poggehunt Episode. Be that as it may, he first line them up, and although we are the only ones left in that plain and under a concentrated fire of 3 or 4 guns, (of which a quick fire) he marches the battery off in battery column at a slow
walk. Directly the Blue’s back sea-notice was up they were back to their guns firing like mad. As soon as we got behind “Sign Post Ridge” [we] will be out of sight of this gun, but he will slow the whole distance with the whole length of the battery broadside on to the gun, he checks one of the ground scouts for trotting up to his place at head of battery. The gun gets 8 shell at no came before we get to S. P. ridge. If we had trotted he could not have got more than two. He has no range to perfection & first his shell right am not up at the twin & pencroix & yet not a soul is hit except by sport fragments. I admit it was a very uncomfortable 2 minutes.

We walk the whole way home, as soon as we come out of coro of Sign Post ridge getting shell from Gnl Stil. Blackburne and Ltn Tom P. Repulis. As we approach Range Post ridge we will become visible to Ltn Tom of Birlwana, and we can see him trotting shell about it, having the range to perfection. Just as the centre section is sub- handled on the sky line there is a tremendous explosion + flash two yards in front of it & just behind the teading section. The shell must have fallen under the majors have + explosions about 2 yards in front of me. I expect to see half a dozen horses & men killed at least & the road to be tracked for half an hour. But when the smoke clears...
away & we have got the dust out of our eyes & mouth. I see that not a soul is hurt and only one horse’s eye cut. My own horse rears up as nearly has me off, & how the Major sits like I cannot imagine. I could never get my horse to Face this spot afterwards he was so terrified. It was the most marvellous thing I’ve seen yet as the shell burst in the midst of the road and must have just passed over the leading section’s heads. A hundred pound shell filled with high explosives! People who were watching from the camps never expected to see most of us again, & could not believe their eyes as we emerged from the smoke & proceed down the hill with the grummers holding up to the day wraps to keep the guns warm to the back. Long Toms the shell after shell at 20, but, although they came two more on the road, never get so near again. We turn off into the scrub to the west of the river, & cross by the hill top, being followed by shell the whole way, but we are all safe now. Nick is so frightened he can hardly lead him & has trust his curb chain. We return to camp amidst congratulations at our safety & thus end a day of wonderful escapes & lost another absolutely useless waste of ammunition. From this date the Boers totality Blantyre, Send Hill & middle still very strongly & make exit in that direction almost impossible.
During the day the 19th Hussars had galloped out from the Tim camp westerly had got a shell or two & galloped home again, never seeing the enemy at all. How a man like Brocklehurst is allowed to command at all, is more than we can conceive! I got a bit of the long Tom shell. The major action is much talked about by the cavalry, & some say it was
a bit of useless swaggery, but I know full well that he had good reasons for doing it, as he has for most things.
Certainly the after effect was to make us very careless of shell fire. I find Mitch has one or two small wounds on his lip.

**Wednesday 15th Nov 1899.** At 12:30 midnight we were awaked by a furious bombardment which apparently did no damage, though waking us all up. Several shell fell very close. Poured with rain today. From this date the signalman's hour to take it in watches of 2 hrs at Bluewater Bay with an
ordinarily in case of an attack, from 6 a.m. till 5 p.m. This is hours duty, continues till 1st Feb 1900, so we dislike it very much as it stops us sleeping during the day as well as getting little sleep at night. It is quite useless.

**Thursday 16th Nov 1899.** A very helpful, a column of boxes upset to take big towards Van Beunano.

**Saturday 18th Nov.** Copeland dies of enteric. Gordon all ordered to take shelter under river bank when Layton fires. Col. won't have it as he thinks it may demoralise the men. Rumour is that an army corps has landed on.

I thrive with 19th dinner slept a good diner. Another midnight bombardment.

**Friday 17th Nov 1899.** Camppitch having raised some green peas & pork, we have a good night. I ask Evans (19th dinner).
Sunday 19th Nov. Quiet as usual. Hard we look forward to 'Ehaffit quiet now! In afternoon attended a sabbath funeral of 42nd batting with Col. Coxhead. Afterwards we have a cricket match v the Press. Maxwell, Brand, Stevens, James Goldman & Mitchell play for them. Result drawn.

Monday 20th Nov. Another midnight bombardment of only two guns. No news. When will Clyp move? Boers are distinctly shelling the Town Hall although it has huge Genoa flag on it.

Tuesday 21st Nov. Turned out at 3 a.m. to go to Ratih Post to take place of 67th who are on a flying column. Two guns under Evans go to river by 10. Inman camp, the rest in open mate of Ratih Post. We take shelter on the tropic, just out of view of all guns. Set some rifle bullet to shell all from overhead. It is frightfully hot here. We haven't a bit of shade, & have to prop it onto trod. Thanks goodness we are allowed to go back to camp after dark. Bulter said to be at Bloemfontein to receive us by de carrier off the Boers. [Boers a lie.]

Wednesday 22nd Nov. The 53rd go to Ratih Post today. One Shell falls into Town Hall & the patriots are taken out into shelter trenches while it "shells". Melton Prior comes to see us & says that Gen. French has recaptured Dundee with cavalry & R.H.A. [Awful lie.] Rumours of Bulter at Bloemfontein confirmed by

(i) Seven of our wounded sent by Boers to Entombi from Colenso, who say it was good to 'im on parade.

(ii) Kaffirs from Basuto land. [Bulman returns from hospital]
Thursday 23rd November. Repulse. Long Tom has not fired for several days; traffic say the breeches blown out, our Navy think they have knocked it out. We went to Ration Post as before under cover of darkness, x turn nig at midnight. This time we make some sun-shelters with blankets. We take it in turn with the 5th. Shelling in town also good deal of damage. Town hall hit again. a wound boy killed. Ashop set on fire & arch deacon Barbers church hit through postch.

In evening a shell comes through Royal Hotel & takes off a poor old doctor's leg (about 70 years old) as we was going to dinner. (He dies shortly. Walker returns from hospital, had a manar squeak from shell in town hall on Wednesday. He says he saw our shell bursting in the distance between Caisers Camp & Balawana. If so we will soon be relieved. [Turned out to be a pass tine].

Friday 24th Nov. Official news that m 205 vis.

Hilary is only at Escorte\?

Clean at marity very

Bow hold Colono have destroyed the bridge.

Ration a camber after the rumore.

Saturday 25th Nov. Ration Post. we get two shrapnell from Blantank into us, one at breakfast one at tea. No one hurt, though Cpt. Judden has his tea bowl smashed in his hands. In future men are placed in a duga behind the hill.
I hear that Timbury and Mafeking are still invested. No news of Bulwer. Ration topic is very unpleasant spot as, if you
stim in any direction near than 5 yards, you get shot
at by shells & rifle from about 2000 yards. It is not
advanced out post in that direction.

Sunday 26th Nov 1899. Neither batting has to go to Ration Post
today, so we have another cricket match v the Pus.
They win by 5 runs. I make 3. A Naval 12 pdr is taken up
to dump in Caesar's Camp.

Monday 27th Nov 1899. 53rd go to Ration Post. Hear another
Long Tom is mounted on Middle Hill. Shell very thick and
our camp today. Fragments through Colonel's office tent,
and native servant of Hayter (our doctor) wounded. Caesar's
Camp is also very heavily shelled today. All in great spirits as
heavy firing has been heard at Colenso, & 3000 Boers are repon-
ted to have moved back. We'll soon be relieved!!

Tuesday 28th Nov 1899. Ration Post a warm time from New-
Long Tom on End Hill who can both see us & reach us.
Hear officially of a successful engagement at More River (10 miles south of Colenso) Hear from Teltu of 18th inst. that:
(i) Kimberley & Mafeking still besieged.
(ii) Warren is at Turrumunna (South of Free State)
(iii) Bullock at De Aar Junction (also for Bloemfontein run by)
(iv) Methum at Naanport (West side of Free State)
(v) Lie about Dundie being United, as Teltu is still South of Colenso.
(vi) Gates at Queenstown.
(vii) Free State Boers dislocated Cape Dutch occupy Alfredville.

Wednesday 29th Nov: Both batteries remain in camp & are told to get ready and marching order. The howitzers silence new long Tom which never fired again. Navy very sick at our doing what they could not, with old guns too. Rumoured all day in town that we are all going out to attack Blaubank tomorrow. Supposed division in Don Camp, as Free States want to chuck it. At 8 p.m. we get printed orders for an attack on Blaubank, (there go straight to Boro,) with infantry & cavalry. Blaubank to be held by Pietermaritzburg. Representations made to Chief by various Ulcows.
that as this has been the talk of the town all day, it will not surprise the Boro we shall fail, so 11 p.m. orders all cancelled. Lucky for us too, as it turned out.

Thursday 30th November 1899. Very heavy bombardment commences at 4.55 as the Boro have got wind of intended attack & have had search lights going all night. Another Lloy Tom opens fire from Gun Hill, firing mostly at our end of town & Caesar's Camp. Very unpleasant having two on side. Hear that Tarbut was wounded by the shelling, on middle hill yesterday. Major Manifold is slightly wounded by shell fire, & Major Wing has his helmet-lit. Garden's keep St. Andrews Day in style. They ask Sir Geo White & Col Coxhead to dinner.

Friday 1st Dec 1899. About 11 am, the Boro send in to ask why we are flying Geneva Flag over Town Hall & before we can reply, proceed to deliberately range out, finally dropping a shell through the roof which kills 1, mortally wounds 1 & wounds 8 others patients. Town Hall is no longer used as hospital, all patients moved to Intimbi. Mother's birthday. I wish I could write to her today.

Saturday 2nd Dec 1899. Lot of Boro bombardment from both Lloy Toms. Shell fall in our mules lines, officers lines & 53rd lines, also fired at cattle watering the horses. We were suddenly turned out at 8 p.m. without warning,
Marched up main street with 3 days provisions. Found that nearly all the garrison had rendezvoused. Wonder if it is to attack Blanque or some other, or if to meet reliving column. Great excitement in town. The fools of civilians all light their lamps & show the Boro Times's something. However after waiting 2 hours, we are marched home & told it was a rehearsal. Bed at 12.

Sunday 3rd Dec 1899. J. Regan dies of typhus.

Heard that Mrs. Fox is very pleased at prompt way sun turned out last night. Staff are arranging orders in which supplies are to be sent up when line opens. We are now quite certain we'll be relieved soon, at any rate before Xmas. Another (the last) cricket match against the poor. Played across the river, as hour or two moved onto old pitch. Pitch so bad that neither side reaches double figures. P'ness win. Result. RA 1. P'ness 1. 1 Tie.

Took everyone back across the ford to camp area on my two horses. Few P'ness call today with Mitchell and throw him, hurting him rather severely. We finish last of our jam today. In evening the whole of our 13th Div R.F.A. are entertained to s'much'd out of doors cold supper by the P'ness at 197 Heydon's boarding house. Hand gave me some of his experiences which are very interesting. He was a student in the Latin Quarter.
Monday 4th December.  Official news today is:

(i) Buller at Mafeking.

(ii) Methuen has defeated the Boers at Bosor in 3 successive engagements. Belmont, Garspan, Modder River. He specially mentions his Field Ambulance for gallantry, at one fight above the other troops. Last fight only 10 miles from Rietvlei, so suppose it is now relieved.

Unofficial news is:

(i) Cawley defeated Boers at Colenso thus saved Tugela. (almost the)

(ii) Bridge at Colenso is destroyed (true)

(iii) We have 24,000 troops now between here and Mafeking. (overestimate at time)

Everyone greatly elated. Troops cheer news & sing of rum to drink Methuen's health. We are now stand 61st 7th Brigade (Hamiltons) as whole of R.F it is to be immediately under O.C. A.A.

Tuesday 5th Dec. Once shell into mule lines. One driver wounded. Ride with Mitchell in evening.

Details of fight at Modder River disappointing, as no guns apparently captured, our infantry did not get home. Methuen describes it as "Bloodiest on record in annals of British history".
Wed 6th Dec 1899. No news, but report says Bows are bucking. Days getting very long. Had tree gun (16 p.m.) fire at 4.30 a.m. Another rehearsal under Brigade, but only battery on duty went (53rd) and goes tin camp at 9.30 p.m.

Thursday 7th Dec 1899. Arrow that Kipling is relieved [absolutely lie] and melancholy, slightly wounded. Shell falls through a garrison tent full of men, causing some. Hear (on good authority) 3000 Bows leaving to reinforce Free State, move to the main camps and some bucking "sick of it". That 3 guns about 6 miles south of Bulwana have been firing. (absolute lie) are woken up at 11 p.m. by adjutant to say we are to turn out at 3 a.m. ready marched in. I go to see Lieut-Maj. Rawlin at 2 a.m., we wonder what in store for us. "Blowing up Gym Hill guns"

Friday 8th Dec 1899. We parade at 3 a.m. as per orders. Two hand reports (but no shell) and are head while we are dressing. We form up in road, ready to move off, all mounted. All sort of rumours flying about. Col Rhodes violets by 4 p.m. says he believes we have blown up a long Tom. Don't believe him. Orders arrive 4.35 a.m. for a tallying to join the cavalry on Newcastle Road (Junction Hill) 53rd, being on duty, start off at a fast trot in battle column.
At 4.45 we got orders that the other battery may turn in.

As so. Very heavy musketry fire & 10mn heard (5am
till 6am) in direction of Pepworth (but much closer) Naval
guns are busy at the Boar guns who are shelling our cavalry
-- the 53rd, but we notice Long Tom of Gun Hill doesn't
fire. Major Grant R.E. comes in to camp & tells us that
Capt Towler & Lieut Turner (R.E.) with the two revolver NCOs
have blown up Long Tom of Gun Hill & a 4.7 howitzer about
2pm. Hear that Tunner went out in charge. Storming
party of 100 14 H. and 100 Carabiniers & 10 mountain gunners
Turner blew up Long Tom & they have brought back his
breech block, rammer & tangent sight. The gunners were
first up & disabled the gun. Towler blew up the howitzer.
They also brought back a Maxim. Our casualties 6 men.

Boas only 1 (they think 2) as they all fled as 2 when one
of the 14H. shouted fire lay-outs. It was beautifully planned
by Tunner & kept perfectly secret, no one knowing till it
was over. Whilst xw & Turner sent out (11pm) to
destroy Modder Spur intal Station. But they only succeeded in
burning two coffee brands & cutting a telegraph wire.
Made a target of it. Rest of cavalry made an absurd
advance at day-break towards Pepworth - found it
more strongly held than anticipated & returned Tony
fired at - a few casualties - 53rd were sent for to
support them, but never fought into action. The 53rd
return to camp about 6:30. We tell the men about Long Tom
and all cheer enthusiastically. 53rd who were halted on sky
line, came in to hot fire from Long Tom & Telegraph Hill,
Thwaltis said he had to "light his pipe to conceal his emotion."
No damage however beyond wounding Major Fox 5 D.9.8 &
killing a horse or two. We get several shrapnell during day from
other Long Tom, a fragment through tent. No one as yet
takes any cover, however, in our camp.
Sunday 10th Dec. 1899. usual quiet taken by Long Tom
firing about 8 rounds into cavalry camp at 11 a.m. as
the 19th troops had left their horses on the lines, instead of
taking them under cover as usual at day break. They
quickly do so. No cricket, as correspondents too busy
writing accounts of Guns Hill. They decide to drop the
Lady Smith &kyne also. Hear that the two 6.3" harrity
are being taken from Wagon Hill to beyond Rough
Post (in river bed) as a new Long Tom has been
put up on Telegraph Hill. [They found it beyond their
range at thour, they kept his fire under somewhat cold
ster silence him.]
Monday 11th December 1899. "Blowing up Surprise Hill battery."

We woke up to hear that Digby Jones RE and part of the 47th (1 killed, 1 wounded) have blown up the 4.7" battery on Surprise Hill. Packet Two Co. Rifle Brigade & some mountain gunners formed stormy party. Boers not so unprepared, so we lost 12 killed 48 wounded & 6 prisoners. Boers apparently fired into each other as our men retired with rifles by one tied some, they admitted to 28 killed. We heard some weeks after from a Boer paper, that they were fearfully sick at these two episodes, several of their officers were taken, disgraced & reprimanded over it. Shot Bevan, who was commanding at the time as Tambut was wounded, was particularly sick, it should have happened just after Tambut had gone away. Four guns of 42nd Battery, Clare Company came to relieve 69th at King's Post as 69th are ordered for Flying column with our two battalions.

Tuesday 12th December 1899. Driver D. L. Driver died of enteric. Such a good driver too. 6:30 p.m. are ordered out for flying column light scale. Expect it is only a rehearsal, which proves true, so back at 10 p.m. Higgins is sent to Intombi Hospital Camp with enteric fever.

Wednesday 13th Dec 1899. Column rejoins communication column. We distinctly hear heavy guns of Releasing Column toward Column. Hurray! Another flying column rehearsal tonight. Infantry practice marching every night.
From: I never see much of the local town. I have not been here in a long time. I have not been back to visit in many years. I have not been back since I was a child.

However, I do remember a few things. I remember the houses and the streets. I remember the people and the sounds. I remember the smells and the tastes. I remember the feelings and the emotions.

I do not remember much else, but I do remember the town. I remember the town as it was when I was a child. I remember the town as it was when I was a teenager. I remember the town as it was when I was an adult.

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We hear that Japan has declared war on Russia.
What cheek! Capt. E. Lambton R.N. says Japan will lick Russians at sea. At 7.40 p.m. orders came for the 42nd guns to return to Cascau Camp at the 69th to go back to their old place. Evidently flaying columns are off for Camp.

Sunday 17th Dec 1899. Very bad news if true. We are told privately that Bulfin failed miserably at Colenso 10 field guns, that Col. Long of Hunt (RA) was killed; that there is no chance of relief for probably 3 months. Can we do it? There is a feeling abroad that we are here to stick it in earnest now. How many of us will come out?

One thing is certain, thank God, we will never surrender.

If the worst comes we must cut our way out, at least some will, others will take a longer journey. We all however, simulate great chivalry to decline the new.

A lot of alarmist rumors are flying about. Some say several more heavy guns are on thinner way from Pretoria to Ladysmith, amongst others two 8 in. guns. Jolly!!!

We hear that several reported victories were mere fables so that Spion Kop was a heavy reverse, the Highland Brigade being cut up. We try in vain to suppress alarmist rumors. I'm afraid the men will know all soon. The civilians are being given arms to take place of dead soldiers. This might be called 'Black Sunday' for the gloom it has caused.
Monday Dec 18th 1899. Rations (man's + beast) reduced.

As we are parading at gun drill at 5.30 am, a shell bursts in the Cavrienu's lines 200 yds in front of us, but fragments whiz through the battery & Campbell's horse is so badly wounded in back that he has to be shot. Another fragment killed a sapper next door & another nearly hit Walker in his tent. We hear that this high-velocity shell struck a horse in the Cavriens Line, exploded & killed five of them in addition to the damage on our lines. Very sad, it is the worst shell that's fallen. We continue gun-drill however.

About 11 a.m. another shell comes in the road just opposite our guard tent & wounds J.R. Law in the head, the fragments whistling through our men's tents. J.R. Law goes to Intensive.

Tuesday 19th Dec 1899. We hear reinforcements leave Cape for Durban. From this date all men are ordered down the river bank when H.T. starts firing until he finishes. Stab men & guard remain in this behind shelters which are promptly closed.

Wednesday 20th Dec 1899. General order is published saying "General Bulter has failed in his first attack on Colenso & the Q.C. feels sure that to his gallant troops will continue the defence of Ladysmith in the same spirited fashion as hitherto; for as the relief is necessary, postponed."
We will! I hear that Colo. Langtry was severely wounded not killed, that Capt. Schouten, Goldie & Schnitzer were killed, two batteries wiped out by infantry fire, having snipped right into the Bows, all their officers killed, wounded or prisoners + 10 guns captured by Bows. Only 2 saved. Our total casualties were over 1000, the whole thing a frightful thunder, terribly depauperated. Add to this two of our own 15 pdr. supposed to be mounted on gun hill & Peabrough. Another 4.7" howitzer mounted on Surprise Hill Bows hail in, "What about 10 guns in exchange for 1 long tom & two howitzers, where is your Buhler man?" A shell from long tom falls in our lines killing 5 men & wounding 1, luckily we were all under cover of rifle tank.

Thursday 21st Dec 1899. Long Tom systematically shelled the God's house at last getting one in, so the head quarters are shifted. No comforting news, except that Bows lost heavily, as well as us, at Colenso. I hear that Metham has fallen back to Modder River so no means relieving him. That 5th Divn has landed at Cape 4 is in route to Attafit, to reinforce him, the 6th are outward bound to reinforce Buller, under serious. That siege artillery is at last, to be sent. Siege prices at auction in town. 4½ t ins of sanding pitch £1/3 each.
Cap. Oursby is on sick list with fever, so Evans leaves the battery to rejoin ammunition column.

Friday 22nd December 1899. Down town in morning with Walker, met Russell who tells us that a large German shell fell amongst the Gloucesters at Helpmaker post, being burst by the edge of a shelter pit, it killed 9 men and wounded five. He was there and saw it, says it was the most awful sight he had ever seen. 3 men were literally blown to little bits. This is ghastly. The poor fellows were cooking their breakfast at the time. Their desire to be a general order that every regiment should have a lookout for the smoke of the gun & all men to get under cover when he fires. The Carabiniers now have a trumpeter on duty who blows "left wheel into line" when he sees the smoke & they all get in to big shelters at once.

A shell from the Surprise Hill howitzer falls amidst a group of the Lancers officers at Stable, wounding the Cdt & 1st Officer & taking out a Sepr. Major's eye.

Saturday 23rd Dec. Rumours that "Boro" & Kitcen are coming out. Horse ration reduced again, 10 qrs. per

Sunday 24th Dec. Ingredients (only flour & currants & sugar) issued to troops for Plum puddings. No such 103 Tatton kindly volunteers to make ours for us, so we send our ingredients across to her.
Monday 25th Dec 1899. "Christmas Day"

The Boers make it plain by bombarding early, that they are not going to let us have a day of peace and goodwill, so we have to give up any ideas of holding sports on the old polo ground. We had got together a try of war & tent peeping team from the battery, but and are sick at it not coming off as the battery are so good at tent-peeping haven always beaten all the other battalions & cavalry squadrons at Sandown and Southampton & sports. What Xmas bells to herald in the glad day! We have church service in May's garden and all the brigade of R & R together under a parson, and Gen Hamilton attends it. The parson preached a dreadfully gloomy sermon contrasting the back side of our present Xmas with the bright picture of former ones, & drew such touching pictures of homes, empty chairs & that half the men were in tears. This is just what we are trying to avoid. We're endeavouring by hard work & strict attention to discipline, smartness of turn out &c, to make the men forget that they are in a peculiar position. & here comes a fellow who rakes it all up with a lot of exaggeration therein. In the evening, The major in addressing the men, thanks them for their good behaviour & "reprimands that owing to the peculiar
Major Carey Davis's 11th. officers set up a Xmas tree for the children of Ladysmith, for which they very properly toy.

Circumstances under which we are placed, we are unable to keep the day in the usual way or do in parades, but trust that when we get away from here we may celebrate it some other day instead.

A message from the Queen is read: "God bless you - is read to the men on parade at Stables, having just been delivered through. "I wish you & all my brave soldiers & sailors a happy Xmas; may God bless & protect you."

The men are deeply touched & we all cheer likewise.

I wish I could get a better message home, but how tired I am. We have a fine dinner thanks to kind friends.

Campbell has got some pork, General Hasting gives us ham.

Mrs. Tatham makes our plum pudding & gives us a little one of his own & an apple tart, a good old Anderson gives us one of his last dozen of whiskey. We try a bottle of Coca Wine as a liqueur but don't like it.

**Tuesday 26th Dec. Heavy bombardment today. Rides with Walker.**

**Wednesday 27th Dec.** Another ghastly shell falls into the Devon Officers' Huts. Killing 2 + wounding 5 officers. We begin to treat Long Town with respect at last.

**Thursday 28th Dec.** About 1 am, fairly heavy rifle fire breaks out in direction of Surprise Hill, but it appears to be only the Bowers who have the junks firing at nothing.
at 4.30 a.m. the Naval guns fire at Door pickets so they leave Bulwara gun. This is the first time for a week our guns have fired at all.

Friday 29th Dec. We again hear distant firing in Colmso direction, but not a word of news from Bully. Amongst other lies, they say Long Tom was turned round and fired towards Colmso.

Saturday 30th December. Hayti is taken to Fortuna with enteric fever. Our sick, wounded, etc in the battery on this morning's state number 59 (out of 172) our dead up to date 4. Altogether only just over 100 fit for duty out 172 we started with. Remarks 0h. Sunday 31st December 1899.

The Boers usher in the New Year with a midnight bombardment, but our naval guns are ready laid in reply. The worst of it is, the naval guns (which have a good moral effect though no actual) are so short of ammunition that they seldom reply to the Boer guns, and the Dutch guns more daring & shell more every day. Since the Gun Hill episode they have made all their positions high fully strong, with sengas, wire entanglements, brushwood abatis & probably land mines. They have wires stretched along the tops which ring bells when caught with the foot,
The whole of Blanbaun, Gun Hill, the rite between Gun Hill & Bulwana & the rite between Bulwana & Caesar's camp, are strongly entrench'd and defended as described. They have search lights on Bulwana & Blanbaun at work every night, & evidently don't mean to be caught again by night attacks.

End of 1899.
Geography of Ladysmith

The importance of Ladysmith is due to the fact that it is the railway junction of Transvaal and the State railways. As a strategical position it has no value otherwise, being commanded on nearly all sides by high hills and being situated in about the hilliest and most difficult part of S. Africa, moreover it is cut off from the South of Natal by the River Tugela, the largest river in the country and difficult approaches. This river flows both south and west of Ladysmith and varies from 12 to 16 miles from the town at its nearest point. The only bridge across is at Colmarr (nearly due south of Ladysmith) but there are docks at Keats and Potgieters (west of Ladysmith). The town itself consists mainly of two parallel roads, with stone houses in width. The River Chip runs round the south of the town from west to east and is crossed by an Iron Bridge Centre at the south and by several docks. The railway station is situated in the north of the town and forms a junction of the lines from Durban, Van Ruma's Pass and the Transvaal. The camp in peace time is of base line and is situated about 1½ miles west of the town. The whole town is surrounded by rocky hills and ridges, but on the east side
This is flat undulating country right for about 5 miles, till you come to the commanding hill called Bulwana which stands about 1000 feet above the level of the surrounding valley. To the South of the town is another large high flat topped hill named Casarea Camp. To the North are a range of small hills named, King's Post, Observation Hill, Leacock Post, Junction Hill, Tunnel Hill & Helpman's kopjes ridges. These formed our northern line of defence. On the South we held Casarea Camp & its outposts Wayne Hill & Maiden Castle. On the West & South West we held a ridge known as Range Post and a detached hill called Rithmann Post, with several minor positions such as, Ration Post, Dawson City, Little Rithmann Post. Due East we trusted to the open veldt and the many branches of the river to protect us. To South West of Range Post was a large open plain cut by a small stream called Hay Spruit (there is also another Hay Spruit N.E. of the town). This plain is known as Long Valley & stretches away towards a ridge of hills on the West usually known as Blantunk & held by the Boers. The main positions of the Boers were as follows. Bulwana & one east. A high flat topped hill about 2 miles long and 8000 yards
Distant from the town, To the North of Bulawana are two hills called Gun Hill and Lombardo Hill, also held by
them. To the South they held a range of hills known
as Colenso ridges which are on a level with Colenso
Camp 4 about 4000 yards from it. West of this a com-
manding line they held two important hills
known as Middle & End Hill. To the west of the
Long valley they occupied a long ridge of hills
commonly called Long Ridge, termed Blanck Bank. This
ridge consisted of (Starting from the South) Laman Hill,
Laman Nek, Left Kopjie, Right Kopjie & Star Kopjie.
Away north west of this, they held a large flat
hill called Telegraph Hill, which commands Rithmano+
+ Kipps Port. The Blanck Bank ridge commands
the whole of Long valley & has to be crossed in order to
get to Rom Rumanis & Colenso. It prevents all entry
to the West. Their North West position was Surprising
Hill which commands Kipps Port & Observation Hill,
away to the N.E they held Pepworth a large
flat topped hill commanding Wellington's kaar ridge
+ the Town. Our Naval guns were posted on Jonathin
Hill (to engage Pepworth) and the Redoubt (a hill just west of
the town, not in the main line of defense) to engage Bulawana.
Helpman's kaar ridge stretching away to the East and
north of Ladysmith we fortified very strongly, as they
were naturally a weak spot and too long
Caesar Camp had too large a face to be adequately
fortified all round with the few men at our dis-
posal. It commands the whole town and if it fell
would practically end the siege. The weakness of our
defences on that side was somewhat compensated
for by the great natural strength of the ground.
Range Post & its continuation Highlander Post are a
low rocky ridge & we had only sufficient men
to hold it from in parts. Regiment Post is a
small detached grassy hill, built off from the rest of
the defences by the river. This we were compelled to
hold strongly. It had a regular fort built on it with
made & stone & earth & several detached posts. The
fort contained 4 guns and the whole was protected
with wire entanglements. Kings Post, Observation
Hill (which was within 1700 yards of enemy) and
Junction Hill were all likewise strongly held & gunned.
When the Boers attacked us on the 5th Jan 91 the
Caesar Camp & Wagon Hill side, they attacked by too,
our weakest point, as at that time our whole
defences were along that huge area of ground con-
sisted of practically one small stone fort for infantry
and be isolated gun pits. Wagon Hill was then practically undefended although an emplacement had been made for a Naval gun. 13th Gun Toward commanded the section of defence comprising, Leicester Post, Observation Hill, Trip Post, Rifleman’s Post + Oamaru City. 1st Gun Hamilton commanded the section consisting of Caours Camp, Wagon Hill + Range Post. Col. Thres commanded the Helpmekaar Ridge + Junction Hill was under Capt. Lambton R.N. + held entirely by the Navy. The defence of the plate east of Ladysmith was entrusted to, Col. Rayment commanding all the volunteers + irregular troops. Towards the end of the siege (July 1900) a second line of defence west of the town was prepared consisting of Convent Hill on the north, Poundbury + Pavilion Hills on the south, but no guns were mounted on them. With very few exceptions all the hills round Ladysmith were exceedingly rocky with precipitous precipices sides. Roads had to be constructed up to them during the night as to ascend many of them otherwise meant crawling on hands & knees. All fortifying work had to be done by night. The greatest credit is due to Col. Knox C.B. R.A. for the extraordinary strength of his defences on Helpmekaar Ridge, which were nearly completed.
Day before the other forts were put in an adequate state of defence. The enemy had guns mounted on all the hills round Ladysmith & there was only one corner of about an acre surface behind Roundhay Hill, where you could get out of sight of all his guns. A hospital camp was formed on the flats between the East End of Cawas Camp & the South end of Bulwana. It was named Infonta & considered neutral ground. There was a large open plain between the town & the old Tin Camp, where the German polo ground used to be. It was well commanded by the enemy's guns to the west of our defences. Sir V. White's Head quarters were on Infonta Hill.