Saturday 17th Feb 1900. Hear that Roberts has occupied Jacob's Island with leading infantry division. Also French has captured 3 lancers and some prisoners in rear of Eronje. They say Our battleship has been relieved. Later it is officially reported by 2000 cavalry and R.A. too. Eronje in full retreat, both pursued. One of our officers killed and badly wounded. Hurrah for French!!! As I am nursing alone now I have to go down town and buy a number of pots and pans, clothes &c. Hear in the morning that Buller has retired back a second time, a cry the liver. This is a frightful disappointment! He seems like a man of the most vacillating temperament & can't make up his mind to do a thing. After the Suez troop retreat he told his men he would be in Lydgate in a week. That was nearly 4 weeks ago! What must his men think of him? Are we ever
to be relieved, or are we now considered 56. such a minor issue in the game that we are no longer even worthy considering are to be sacrificed to a greater & far more deadly scheme? If it is for the benefit of the war, well & good, let them say so that we may have the satisfaction of knowing we are playing the game by being sacrificed. Or can it be simply because Butler is incompetent & vacillating? If so, it is indeed hard on us! The Buns are sure to attack again soon now. The moon will be gone in a few days, meanwhile we are preparing to give them a warm reception. Time has now been \\nrelieved & make king has been relieved, but Kci nos sommes. Tonight is the first rain for nearly a month, and this continual drought has dried up all the grass & the horses are all crying for want of it. This won't do, as we want the horses to eat, although the poor brutes are too weak for any other purpose; and if the pears don't get their pear to eat, we didn't won't get the gre- pear to eat. Q.E.D. Have issued elaborate

* Erratic false manner. Was not used for another 3 months.
orders to my men in case of a night attack. We have a ridge of about 10 acres to defend with 37 men and only 8 carbines between them, only 20 rounds per carbine. The rushes of course are unarmed, but I'll take care that each one has a good stout stick tomorrow, we're always the pricks & sharper.

Sunday 18th Feb 1910. Sounds of a heavy engagement this morning in direction of Cotnuso. Hear that Bullo has entirely given up the attack via Potquito + has gone back to Cotnuso where he has had 3 days fighting (try say mine or too successful) Have an invitation to dine with Scott & one of A56 tonight as they have a lot of beef & a pudding, am to bring my own bread of course. I hold Church Parade this morning at 9 a.m. for the Section. The men as usual turn out wonderfully clean & tidy considering. Take service myself. Have applied for a carbine for each summer & driver & 300 rounds of ammunition per man.

In town I ride down Town. 1st I see Capt Pickwood & tell him horses are in bad condition. He says I may say them on Pithiana Post. I tell him I'm going...
to try for some sandbags at R.E. and to improve my gun positions, but the soup I'll never be able to get any as everyone tries in vain. On to see Major Rice R.E. who immediately points me to the very best canvas waterproof. My gun positions are getting very fine & I mean to make them a model worthy of the battery. Then to the battery & see Ransden who gives me a bottle of mustard oil fortifying a great catch. So across to Anderson's to see Mr. Old Campbell & find he is too ill so see anyone. Anderson is a true friend & is missing him. He gives me a handful of chilis to put in my vinegar ration which is another great catch. Home via Range Port, passing the General at All Arms in route. Dinner with Scott & Co. in the evening. What a feast! Roast坐下 on an ox captured from the enemy, none of your canned stewed tub-ox this time. Pudding made of flour meal & fat (off the ox), plenty of coffee & more bread than I eat in a whole campaign. What a thing it is to be in the A.S.C. I felt quite torpid after my chase. This is the first time for a month I have risen from a meal a rest felt
as hungry as when I started, Bed at 9 p.m.
Some rain during night. Hear that Buller has taken
a position on other side of the river near Etono.

Monday 19th Feb. 1900. An hour before at 8 am
departure at 5.30 a.m. till 5.30 a.m. Turn hors
out to graze at 8.30 a.m., on Rippono Park.
Receive orders at 11 o'clock to send horse & claims
back to the battery, but keep a mounted orderly here.

Arrange for same & transport of driven kites, into
stations foreign at. Glad the horses are going as they
don't do well amongst those hot rocks, & with the cold
night air! No sounds of Buller this morning. Have
managed to get enough cotton tills to continue
smoking for another week, shall be happy as long
as it lasts. What a persistent habit smoking is, es-
pecially when one is half fed! I am feeling as fit
now, in spite of great heat, as I've ever felt in my
life. This air is charming after the town, but hor-
ribly appetising! Rain at night thank goodness.

Tell my message from Buller that he has taken two
positions the other side of the river all "all is gay
spendidly." Rain tonight thank goodness.
Tuesday 20th Feb 1900. Have a parade & teach the junior the use of the new carbine (Lee-Enfield). Bull's heavy guns making great noise this morning again. Have managed to get a board & some paint from the RE thanks to Major Rice, and am going to put up a board with -for Danson Battery Con? etc 2nd Batt RFA.

Comes up, is pleased with work done, but wants another gun pit made facing Caesar's Camp in case it be taken. I apply for men to help. It's rather tough on my 15 summers as they are almost too weak to raise a pick. Major comes up later & also seems pleased. Rained all night, a good thing for the grass. The 4.7" Naval gun to be mounted on Caesar's Camp to engage Long Tom on Bulawayo. Draw some home sausages. Excellent!

Wednesday 21st July 1900. My 23rd birthday. Must have Bull's guns sound more distant this morning. Have reckoned up the promotion list & found none of them have made 50 new batteries. I should get my captaincy in 3½ years time. Pick wood up - want to want another gun but think facing Caesar's Camp. Rot! Dine with Scott tonight, a correspondent comes i who has a dog he's named Bully, because he's so good at
On next page is a copy of film selection of my film club.

...
Friday 23rd Feb 1900. Fever somewhat abated this morning. Didn't rise till 7 a.m. Am trying to arrange to have a guard taken of the men in a gun pit. They say Buller is certainly across the river in 3 places.

Saturday 24th Feb. 1900. Fever better but am feebly weak, however have kept out of the doctor's hands so far. Poor old O'Leary (19th Hussars) is the latest victim of intrigue also Dr. Fraser (Ramsden's Gun) and Pearson (war correspondent). Buller is tiring away still, he has been pounding at them near for 6 days without stopping, & the dull droning roar of distant guns is increasing. What he has done in last two days no one knows. If he has been obliged to fall back again we are up a tree this time, as we've nearly finished our meaty meal & biscuit now (losing to rations having been increased again) and our fond hope of cutting our way out as a last ditch fight is a fond delusion, as the men could hardly get as far as the Boys twice, let alone fight & march over 130 miles after. The horses are worn out. We can't hope to trust for the best. The idea of surrendering from starvation after such a destru-
Defence of four months is too awful to contemplate. I have secured a photographer to take the group, he is coming up tomorrow. The doctors here have reported that the troops in Ladysmith will not be fit for any

15th. Attack on the main line this evening.

The house opposite at 3.30 is level with my room.

Now campaigning for 6 months, so we presume we shall be sent home. General Howard and his staff Capt. have just been up. He was exceedingly pleased at the battery, said the gun en-places was a lesson to the English batteries. I have just been calculating the number of men required to defend Ladysmith as per latest book. It comes to 20,000 men including support and reserves, but this is only calculating our perimeter at 20,000 yards which is an underestimation by the map. We never had more than 10,000 fighting men in Ladysmith since the siege started, and of those at least 1500 must have been employed men who never did anything fighting, until the beginning of Feb when every man (soldier or civilian) was armed and told to
some section of the defence. A sergeant of the 14.4. (who in civilian life is sub-manager of a Johannesburg mine) told me some interesting experiences of his during the wagon still attack on the 6th Jan 35. He was in the exact to the 4.7 Naval gun and was one of the first men wounded that day. He was firing the rounds of the sentries when the attack started at about 2.45 a.m., and was hit in the arm and made prisoner. He remained a prisoner amongst the attacking party all day, and was left to escape when they retired at night. He was well treated and provided with food and drink. The following is an interesting little episode in his own words:

"The first man to treat my wound was a little Dutch parson from Harrismith. He was tremendously plucky in his attentions to the wounded under a very heavy fire, and was the only man I saw near the firing line who was doing so. He came to me after I had found up my wound, offered me a pull at his brandy flasks, but I, wishing to remain..."
in the good books of the Bone, said 'Don't give it to me, take it to some poor fellow who has more need of it.' His only reply was a broad wink and 'Don't be a fool, drink it.' I had some conversation with this plucky little fellow, and asked him how it was he was the only noncombatant.
up at the firing line, why he did not remain with
the other officers & doctors at a safer distanc.
He said "Oh I suppose it's a sense of duty."
"But, I answered," duty is rather a broad word,
evidently your comrades find duty keeps them
elsewhere". "Well," he said, "perhaps it's love of Chief.
His two remarks chronicled were of rather opo.
attitude. I quoted this episode to illustrate the
better side of the caning, hypocritical, Boer character.
The Boers attacking Wagon Hill the Sergeant told me
were all Free Staters and told him repeatedly that
the Free State Transvaal had "sent them again." It also
said that they took the fighting most casually, as
men would retire from the fighting line, sit down
in a dugout, have a feed & a smoke & then return
to close hit more fighting. Try more phlegm, he had had.

Sunday, 25th Feb 1900
usual routine; Church Parade
66. I can scarce restrain my contrainence at the
Solomon chik like way. Sep. Pugsley says all the
crims when I'm reading the service, it reminds
me of old Wicker. My fever is much better in
the morning, but increases later. The photographer
comes up at 10 a.m. & takes 3 gumps in the
right hand gun emplacement. At Pickwood comes up during the performance & first help to
get us. Buller not going at all today.
Scott tells me this morning that a Baffin
summer came through last night & said Buller
had taken all the Colenso heights (this
side of the river) about 500 prisoners & killed a
good many Boers, that the Boers were making
preparations to shift their main camp at
Madder Spruit (East of Lombard Kop) at Pick-
wood did not take quite such a cheery view
of matters, however the ration of
obscure
& meatless meal is still 1 lb. It is extraordinary
the way the A.S. have made provisions last.
When the Siege started the military authorities
had only 40 days rations in hand (full scale)
Since that they have by management, cutting
down, commandeering from civilians & shop-
keepers & substituting horse & mule for ox, made
it spin out to 120 days. It is curious how
easily one gets used to the lack of stimulants.
I don't think I would walk quarter of a mile
to buy a whisky & soda now, at ordinary price.
Lots of other fellows have said the same. The only thing I ever feel I want, is a glass of port or good claret.
after dinner. It's not the same with tobacco, however.
the lack of that is an awful feeling, nearly as bad as hunger. Everyone has a regular school-
boy craving now for jams, tarts, cakes as I'm
sure I shall make a feast of myself the first
time I get hold of a good cake. The ration now is
3/4 lb. biscuit (4 biscuits) to lb. mealie meal. Sister
has presented with a tin of fat (pure slab fat)
issued for greasing the tarpaulins of wagons; so I
too like a king now, have my biscuits paid in
it, & my mealie meal made into a 'peppered' stuff
pudding with it. I've learnt a tip or two about cooking!
In evening rode down to camp & learnt news that dis-
tained me greatly. Poor old Walker is dead & buried, from
his awful illness, three two days. Only this clay last
week I met him & he told me he felt as fit as he'd ever
done in his life. He died after two days illness. They think his death was accelerated by a blow from a shell fragment which knocked him over at Stand's Castle. The gallant fellow never even reported he was wounded, worked like a slave for the next 12 hours. He was the hardest working, most conscientious doctor in Ladysmith, and the kindest most generous hearted fellow. Poor fellow, he leaves a young wife in India. The way he nursed me, through my illness and his subsequent attentions of our column of wounded were alone sufficient to make this a terrible blow to me. We all feel his loss greatly. Although an Irishman, he was doctor to the Gordon Highlanders. I also hear the British have buried two more (Capt. Cameron & Dr. Fraser) during the past week. It's very pitiful! Fraser was a man of iron constitution, who had served 7 years in India, so too could
he boast he had never been a day in hospital. Everyone, (except James Maxwell) are confident about Buller tonight. I hear that Cox (of 19th Shires) is dangerously ill with the old complaint. That makes everyone of this officer's have been sick. They have been a most unlucky regiment! Nearly everyone I meet congratulates my old horse Nick on his good condition after appearance. I think he is kept today are the two best conditioned horses here now.

After dinner, I play 3 parts of piquet with Scott, and as I am on my way to my tent I hear a heavy burst of rifle firing from Observation Hill. About 5 minutes after there is another very heavy short burst, and a bullet coming over, whizzes past me. Evidently a night attack, especially as I fancy I can hear a shot or two from Wagon Hill. I stand the men to arms and see they have their ammunition, get my musket loaded & up to the Battery to have a look around. Everything quiets down, so we go to sleep again, with our boots on & arms ammunition handy. Hear that Campbell is bad, Cameron is better, & no one seems to know definitely about Hoppin, I visit the Colonel he is much better, but still in bed and very weak.
Monday 26th Feb 1900. Baller very quiet again, only hear his guns in distance (apparently faintly) occasionally. I am heartily sick of it all, when is he coming? Hear that the thing last night was all on the Boer's part, they apparently got the 'jumps' - a fire at nothing. I visit Du Port in the morning, see Major Masselot, who tells me he knew Angus very well at Woodchurch (when he was quartered there in the 3rd D.G.'s) and took a great fancy to him. Ever since, thank goodness! Oh we are so sick of this, all of us! They have found a few cigars (cheapest kind 5/- a box in peacetime) which they have served out as a ration of 7 to each officer for 4th each. Hear Steel did news of Roberts in the evening. He has captured Kruger + 8000 Boers, all guns ammunition &c., so he repulsed two attempts to help Kruger killing + wounding 1700 in the two actions. We always said Bob's was the boy for our money; give us a Gunner! Baller believes in preparing for well, country very difficult, will only get on slowly. Oh! if we had Gunner Bob's up here, we should not b
in this typhoid ridden hole now! Tea ration now is stopped. We get 8 oz. biscuit and 6 oz. mealie meal now, instead of 16 oz. head.

Tuesday 27th Feb 1900. "Anniversary of Maguba."
The Boers, somewhat to our surprise, do not celebrate the day by attacking, but remain content to themselvess with much sniping to day. Tennyson is rather more than usual. It is too hot, they have cut down the biscuit ration again as Buller is not expected for another week or ten days. We now get only 4 oz. biscuit (16 biscuits) and 3 oz. mealie meal. This is 1 oz. worse than our usual. Of course it’s had a most frightfully dispiriting effect on the men. It is hard to persuade them Buller has not got a licking. They naturally ask each other “why did he say he would be cut out to be with us last Sunday, if he can’t get in for another week.” Buller is certainly a fool, for the last 3 months he has been telling us he would relieve us in a week or sometimes in 2 days, it is still nearly as far off as he ever was. Why tell us childish things?
Wednesday 28th July 5th 1900. "Relief of Ladysmith"

Am woke up at 1 a.m. by a constant rifle fire in direction of Helsingkar Ridge, so close & turn out. Firing continues without ceasing for 20 minutes, also one of our field guns fires at intervals of about a minute. Evidently a regular attack is in progress. Firing dies out by 1.30 so I return to bed in my clothes. In morning learn it was a party of Boers under Col Knox turning a Zariba round the bottom of Gun Hill & being fired on from Gun Hill by the Boers. The gun was one we had laid ready on Gun Hill. No particulars as yet. Hear this morning that it is official from Roberts about Krönje this army but it didn't take place till yester-day morning (the anniversary of Majuba.) So the first newspaper account was an absolute lie. Pieces of photos come up, rather good. Gun Howard orders that during the present serious reduction of rations, all working parties in his section are to cease. Pickwood comes up this morning & wants the new sun pit completed, in spite of this. He is the most depressing beast I've ever met, says we shan't be achieved for
another 3 weeks, suggests poss to visits of the Bows
taking Caesar’s Camp & Riflemen’s Post. Bah!!!

5 p.m. At last we are relieved !!!

at 5 p.m. I go over to Scott to play piquet, we have
just sat down when we are disturbed in our
play by the now unexpected sound of the Naval
4.7 inch on Core Redoubt firing like mad. We
rush out to see what is happening & find that
both he and all the guns on Caesar’s Camp
are busy flaying at long Tom of Balwana, who
is himself silent. Also the howitzers on Waga
still open fire on middle hill & the 12 p.
on Knip’s Post fires on Surprise Hill. What can
be the meaning of this fierce bombardment
of ours! Someone suggests that
they are trying to move long Tom away, but
this is such an old old stale game, that it is
scarcely worth a thought. However with the
aid of glasses we distinguish a tripod gun on
him & oh! splendid shot, a shell knocks
it to pieces. It is evident they are trying to
get him away. Just then an orderly from
head quarters rides up with a memo. for
Scott, and tells us that a helix from Buell came through at noon, saying “Defeated the Bons severely yesterday, they are in full retreat, my cavalry are pursuing as well as bad roads will permit.” We don’t believe him, it’s too good. However late or I go down to see Tyler the news is confirmed. The Bons are offer it in every direction!”
yesterday, when we were gunning at not hearing Bull’s gun. He was inflicting a sure defeat on them. What a Majuba day for England! That fearful disgrace doubly wiped out on its anniversary! From Kemp’s Pot come the news that the Boers are swimming home from the Blaubank side as thick as bees. For four months the calendar months (from today) the Boers have tried every artifice to get us to-do, and thank God, although we started with 40 days provisions, here we are, on the verge of being starved out, relieved on the anniversary of Majuba! Harry told the men the glad news, I go to my tent, and realize for the first time the full majesty and grandeur of our prayer books, Te Deum. I am not sure to reading it through in a new light, as I write now (6.30 pm) the cheers of the garrison are rising from the different camps mingled with the stirring sounds of ‘God save the Queen’ from many a lusty throat. And yet, even this occasion has its sad side. It is pitiful to think of the many we knew and called friend,
who had shared the hardships of the siege with us, some of them up to nearly the very end, and who now, instead of rejoicing with us at our deliverance, are sleeping their last sleep in the sadly overcrowded little cemetery. I cannot help thinking of Digby Jones, Dennis, Ava, Cotton, Orleans, Macdonald, with your dear_unlocker, Slavin, Mitchell, and (last of all to leave us) poor old Walker. There are hundreds of others, worse luck, but those 9 entered to such an extent into one's daily life, that it seems terrible they should not be with us to shout a
and enjoy the fruits of victory. It seems impossible to gaze on those # hills surrounding us, not imagine them covered with blood by the infamous Boer. It's a dreadful disappointment that we cannot go out in flying columns & hold a hand, but when the question "How many horses have you fit for a days marching & a fight?" was sent to our head quarter, the answer, as regards the horses, was ten. This Majuba day has been worth months more of the hardships we have had to put up with.

Later, Belita still I learn that the enemy at 6.30 was caused by the arrival of 1000 mounted infantry volunteers (11.45 a M.R.) who were the first of the advanced guard to come in. They came in via the neck between Bulwana & Caesar's Camp absolutely unobserved. A terrific thunderstorm about 8 p.m. This will harass the Boers trying to get away their guns and weapons. It looks like a special intervention of Providence! This journal is nearly ready for posting home now. If in parts, it has as gloomy aspect, any
only excuse is it was written during a gloomy and depressing time. Although I made simple notes throughout the war, I did not start writing this diary till the middle of January. January & February were indeed gloomy months too, death & sickness all round, & the watchfulness of want of food. Starved & starved.

The stagnation of a prison life, and the gloomy custard that would force it's way, occasionally at Buller's successive repulses. All this must tend to make parts of my diary somewhat depressing reading, & it is the only excuse I can offer for it. The siege lasted 119 days.

Thursday 1st March 1900. A flying column is detailed to go out at 10 a.m. (about 24th two late) along the Newcastle Road, the 52nd & 67th Battalions in it. O'Port has to take my two guns as his cannot be got off King's Post, so I and my take his place for the day, on King's Post. We 1 am ordered to tie all over Thornhill Kop, as the Leicesters are going out to make a reconnoissance in that direction. I do so, & the Leicesters occupy both it, a surprise hill without opposition. In the distance I saw first independent command in action.
I see hundreds of Boer Waggons & men breaking all day toward Van Riebeek. By Sir Howard's orders, I take a gun out of its emplacement & try to reach them, but although I try the trail I cannot do so by 2000 yards. If only the flying column had gone out this way! They go out to Pepworth to find it occupied by a few Boers, which they proceed to shell. The batteries were within 1500 yards of the Boer rifles & came in for a heavy fire. Only casualty, however, Col. Pickwood was shot through thigh. The infantry too weak to advance further so return home. I take my men back to Dawson Battery. Boers have got away all their guns during the night. Leicestres find a desolate Boer camp & store behind Surprise Hill & Bella Kopjie. Buller comes in & puts back again.

Friday 2nd March 1900. I ride down to Battery in morning to learn news, which is nil. Two R.A. majors ride in. All Buller's force are now more disgusted with him than we are. They say it was not his doing that we are behind. In fact, he wanted to order a retirement on Wednesday, but other officers wouldn't have it.
They say, if he'd an ounce of bush, they'd have captured all the Boer transport after the fight. He has made no attempt since to keep in touch with the Boers, has not yet even ascertained whether the main Colenso road is clear. Supplies very slow coming in. Had two or three Egyptian cigarettes given me, they were heavenly. They say he has disgracefully mismanaged the whole show. No orders, everything casual, a happy-go-lucky. Some trip was an utter want of management. One of his orders was "Tomorrow at day-break the army will cross by the pontoon bridge." No orders as to what order they were to come in or how from up or where to go after or anything. Result was 20,000 men jumbled together, struggling to get across next morning, under a commanding fire of Boer guns from 4 positions.

I will close this diary now, hoping it may, in some respects, make up for the want of news in my letters, and may be of some little interest to those for whose benefit it was written.