

mounted patrol, was posted daily between reveille and retreat, when everyone had to retire within the Fort to prevent any evasion of the orders relative to our water supply, no cattle, horses or cooking (which was all done outside the Fort), being permitted near the stream upon any pretence.

Each Quartermaster had a large fatigue party placed at his disposal daily, and the following routine was invariably adopted.

At reveille the urine barrels which had been provided for the use of the men during the night were carried out of the Fort and emptied into trenches dug the night before at some distance off, and which were filled in at once as soon as this duty was performed.

The places where those barrels had stood in the Fort were then sprinkled with ashes from the kitchens, and afterwards with clean sand, the ashes having been first removed.

The fatigue parties next proceeded to clean up all dirt and litter both inside and outside the fort, and cart it away to the offal pits, the contents of which were buried as far as possible before they were filled up.

The hospital patients were removed daily—those, at least, who could bear removal—to a shelter constructed of boughs of trees, on an eminence near the fort. This arrangement gave them abundance of fresh air, the hospital itself got purified, and the cleaning could be done more effectually.

I have purposely entered into detail in this matter, as I am naturally anxious to prove that no precautions were neglected to keep the fort and its vicinity in as sanitary a condition as possible.

At first the health of the troops was extremely good, but before the end of February the percentage of sick had largely increased, and when we were relieved on the 4th April there were 9 officers and nearly 100 men on the sick list. Some of them are still seriously ill, and 4 deaths have occurred since we left Ekowe. We buried there 4 officers and 21 C. K. P. men.

The chief disorders were diarrhoea, dysentery, common, continued, and typhoid fever; no doubt much of the sickness was attributable to the constant wet weather, and the overcrowding in the fort, the work having been constructed for a much smaller garrison.

The large percentage of deaths were probably due to the want of proper medicines and medical comforts. A state showing the strength of the garrison is herewith attached.

As regards shelter, there was only room in the fort for a very few tents in addition to those required for hospital purposes, and both officers and men lived under the wagons, over which the wagon sails were spread, propped up with tent poles: thus the wagons being all round the parapets, as I have already described, the troops actually lived at their alarm posts, and could be on the banquettes in a few seconds.

The buildings of the Mission Station were handed over to the Commissariat, and just sufficed to store our supply of food.

The church was used as the hospital. By day the picquet duties were performed by a small vedette corps, formed by a few men of the Mounted Infantry and Natal Volunteers, and organized by Lieut. Rowdon, 99th Regiment, and Captain Sherrington, Native Contingent.

I cannot speak too highly of the careful and zealous way in which this responsible duty was done, and which I consider reflects much credit on the officers above named, as well as those under their command. These vedettes were constantly under fire; one was killed at his post;

another, Private Carson, 99th Regiment, was attacked by about a dozen Zulus, who crept up near him in the long grass. They shot off two fingers of his right hand; he had a bullet through each thigh, and another in his right arm. His horse was also assegaied. He nevertheless got away, retained his rifle, and rode back to the ort. At night or in foggy weather the outposts were withdrawn, and each company furnished a guard with two or more sentries. Natives were also distributed along the parapets, their eyesight being so good.

As regards the oxen, we had several hundred head, besides a number of mules and horses. On our first arrival at Ekowe, there was an abundance of grass close to the Fort, but it soon got eaten down, and the cattle had to be driven further off, till at last there was nothing for them to eat nearer than between 2 and 3 miles distant.

This, of course, necessitated strong guards, and the greatest care and vigilance had to be exercised by the Transport Officer to prevent their straying and getting captured.

The cattle was my chief source of anxiety, more especially latterly, when they had to go so far for their grass. No attack, however, was ever made upon them by the Zulus, who contented themselves with firing upon them from long distances, much too far generally to cause any damage.

Very soon after our arrival at Ekowe we found ourselves being gradually cut off from all communication with Natal, though occasionally a native messenger was persuaded to run the gauntlet through the enemy.

Between 11th February and 2nd March we had no communication whatever with the Lower Tugela, but on the morning of that day we had the happiness to see signals flashed to us from that neighbourhood.

At first we were unable to reply, but Captain Macgregor, Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General, whom I placed in charge of the signalling arrangements, soon got an improvised heliograph constructed, and when the weather permitted we were able to communicate with Natal daily.

Our information regarding the movements of the Zulus was absolutely nil, and so many men being daily employed on the entrenchments and cattle guards, besides having but a very few mounted men and scarcely any natives, I consider it only prudent to remain on the defensive, and therefore, with the exception of burning all the kraals in our immediate neighbourhood, and sometimes sending foraging parties to the nearest mealie and pumpkin gardens, we confined our attention almost entirely to strengthening the fort and guarding our numerous cattle.

The Chief Dabulamanzi—a half-brother to Cetawayo—had a military kraal near Ekowe, which I thought it would be desirable to destroy, but it being 7 miles distant and unapproachable, except over country more or less covered with bush, I considered it would not be right to attempt it, except with a comparatively large force. Accordingly, on the 1st March, I started at 2 A.M. with 450 men and 1 gun Royal Artillery, and reached the vicinity of the kraal a little before daylight. The Zulus were completely surprised, and if we had only possessed a good body of horsemen we would no doubt have killed or taken prisoners a great number. As it was, they ran off to the neighbouring hills, and I fear we did them but little damage. The military kraal consisting of upwards of 50 huts were, however, completely destroyed, besides 3 others which we burnt on our way back. Returning,