

90th Light Infantry, one of the hardest working and most deserving non-commissioned officers I have ever met with.

Connected with the vedette duties, I wish to mention a circumstance which I think reflects great credit upon Captain Sherrington, Native Contingent, and the undermentioned men, viz. :— Corporal Adams, Native Contingent, Privates Whale, Robson, Higley and Keys, 99th Regiment, and Trooper Garlands, Victoria Mounted Rifles.

The vedettes, shortly after our arrival at Ekowe, were daily annoyed when they patrolled in the morning, before finally taking up their posts, by the fire of a party of Zulus from a high hill. It was believed that this party took up their position very early in the morning, and Captain Sherrington and the above party volunteered to go out at night and lie in wait for them behind some rocks near the top of the hill, being utterly ignorant, however, of the number of the Zulus.

I consented, and this little expedition resulted in 3 Zulus being wounded (though not so seriously as to prevent them making good their escape), and the vedettes never being annoyed from this hill again.

In fact, no Zulu was ever afterwards seen there. I must not conclude this letter without publicly acknowledging the devotion to their duties of the Reverends R. Robertson and A. Walsh, Church of England and Roman Catholic Chaplains, respectively. The former was also my political assistant, and I owe him many thanks for his valuable advice and information upon all subjects connected with Zululand.

I have, &c.

C. K. PEARSON, Colonel,  
Commanding No. 1 Column.

*Report on Fort Ekowe.*

THE following report is drawn up from the diary of Captain Wynne, R.E., commanding 2nd Company Royal Engineers. This diary closes on the 11th March, 1879, since which date Captain Wynne has been on the sick list; from the 11th March to the 4th April Captain Courtney, R.E., continued the diary :—

No. 1 Column, under command of Colonel Pearson, reached Ekowe about noon on the 23rd January, 1879.

Ekowe lies about 1½ miles off the main road from Tugela to Ulundi. It is a Norwegian Mission Station, but has been abandoned for several months. There are three thatched buildings, built of brick and plastered, one a dwelling-house with verandah and several small rooms (on plan X).

One a school-room (marked Y on plan), and a third containing a workshop and stores (Z on plan).

There is also a church built of the same materials but with a corrugated iron roof with a vestry at the east end (Q on plan). An open shed lay to the north of these buildings but was destroyed during the construction of the fort; a small out-house to the north of the dwelling-house (W on plan) was worked into the parapet at the north-east angle of the fort (on plan). These buildings lie within a space 120 yards by 80 yards, on ground sloping from west to east, the church being on the higher ground, and the dwelling-house, with a good garden of orange trees on the lower part of the slope, at the bottom of which was a stream of good water well supplied by springs from all sides.

This stream runs in a south-east direction, and

is met by another small watercourse on the south side of the station.

On the rising ground beyond the junction of these two streams stood a dwelling-house with a garden of orange trees, &c., and on the south side of the watercourse stood another smaller house.

There was also a dwelling-house on the high ground to the south-west of the fort and about 250 yards distant; these three last-mentioned houses were all demolished and the materials utilized in the construction of the fort.

The valleys of the streams and the neighbouring kloofs were wooded and thickly grown with under-wood.

The station stands high as regards the neighbouring country generally (about 2,000 feet above the sea) but is commanded by hills from 400 to 1,200 yards distant on the north and south sides.

To the west of the church at a distance of 70 yards, the ground falls suddenly and forms a deep kloof, the sides of which were covered with bush. The approach by the branch from the Tugela road is along a narrow ridge running a short distance from north-west to south-east, past the station; otherwise the ground falls away from the station on all sides.

This station was selected as a dépôt for stores for the supply of No. 1 Column, and also of the others after concentration on Ulundi. It was chosen (from description only) on account of its position as regards distance from the Lower Tugela, the ample supply of water and the healthiness of the site, but chiefly because of the existence of buildings ready for occupation as storehouses.

When the position was examined after the arrival of the Column, it was pointed out that in itself it was weak and subject to great disadvantages in a military point of view, and that had materials been brought for the erection of a store, it would have been far preferable to have selected the more open and commanding ground to the north of the station.

As, however, shelter for the stores was required without delay, and there was no good material immediately available for building, it was decided to include the station buildings within the area of the fort, and minimise the defects by constructing traverses and parados.

The work of clearing the ground was commenced on the afternoon of the 23rd instant, and continued for a considerable time afterwards, as it was not possible to burn the bush, and all had therefore to be cut down.

It was proposed to leave a garrison of 400 men with two guns. The trace decided on had a perimeter of 450 yards, which was undoubtedly too great, but it was impossible to reduce it, and at the same time include the buildings, without entirely neglecting military considerations. As it was, the west face was too retired to command the nearest slope of the deep kloof on that side, and the valley of the stream on the north side was not thoroughly exposed to fire.

The plan accompanying this report shows the trace adopted, also the profiles of the parapets and ditches. The general relief of the work was 6 feet, but at the re-entering angle on the north face it was increased to 8 feet 6 inches, running to 7 feet at the north-east angle and to 6 feet at the north-west angle. At the south-east angle a stockade was constructed 17 feet high, with a double tie of loopholes, so that the undefended ground on the valley to the south could be searched by a few marksmen.

Work was commenced on the 25th January,