

gloom over the whole camp, and I am sure it will be participated by many through India.

Casualty Return of Killed and Wounded at the Capture of Konoma on 22nd November, 1879.

British Officers.

General Staff—Major O. R. Cock, D.A.A.G., mortally wounded; died on 23rd.

44th Native Infantry—Colonel J. M. Nuttall, C.B., slightly wounded.

44th Native Infantry—Lieutenant R. K. Ridgeway, severely wounded.

44th Native Infantry—Lieutenant H. H. Forbes, severely wounded.

Native Officers.

44th Native Infantry—Sub-Major Nurbir Sai, killed.

44th Native Infantry, Subadar Mahaboola Khan, slightly wounded.

44th Native Infantry—Jemadar Rajman Rai, slightly wounded.

Numerical Return of Rank and File.

43rd Native Infantry—2 killed. Total 2.

44th Native Infantry—14 killed; 3 mortally, 15 severely, 7 slightly wounded. Total 39.

Followers—1 killed; 2 severely wounded. Total 3. Total 17 killed; 3 mortally wounded, 17 severely wounded, 7 slightly wounded. Total 44.

J. L. NATION, Brigadier-General
Commanding Naga Hills Field Force.
Camp Suchema,
29th November, 1879.

Dated 26th November, 1879.

From Lieutenant E. Raban R.E., Assistant Field Engineer Naga Hills Field Force, to the Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General Naga Hills Field Force.

I HAVE the honour to forward herewith a rough sketch plan* showing the defences of Konoma. I regret that I had neither the time nor the instruments necessary to enable me to make a regular survey of the position. Nothing but a very detailed survey would convey an adequate idea of the strength of the place.

2. The village of Konoma occupies a camel-backed hill at the end of a spur from the Burail Mountain Range. The position is extremely strong naturally, and the Nagas have shown wonderful ingenuity in improving, to the greatest possible extent, their natural advantages; the result was a position, which in the absence of guns of position, was simply impregnable from the north (the direction from which the attack was made) except to a determined assault. In point of fact, the very determined assault made under the Brigadier-General's own command failed to drive the Nagas from the main position, even after it had been shelled for several minutes at a range of about 100 yards by the 7-pr. mountain gun; and though the position would without doubt have been captured the next day, had the Nagas not evacuated it, the fact that it would have required two days to capture the place shows how strong it was.

3. The slopes of the hill-side being exceedingly steep, the houses of the village are built on terrace sites, half excavated in the hill and half built up with the spoil. The terraces are riveted with stone walls, which are often as high as 10 or 12 feet. Up the crest of the hill terraces are similarly cut wide enough to allow of one house being built on them, and the crest has thus become a series of long narrow steps bounded in some

places by the terracing at the sides, and at others by the steep slope of the hill.

4. The defences occupied the highest part of the hill, and extended some way down the camel-backed slope on each side. They were most carefully constructed, so that the interior of each could be commanded by the fire of the one above it.

5. The path of the assaulting column was closely confined to the crest by the very steep terracing and by most elaborately constructed entanglements and arrangements of pangies; and on the approach, thus confined, a very heavy fire was maintained from most carefully constructed loopholed defences. The loopholes were perfect examples of what they should be. It was impossible to fire in any but the right direction from many of them, and the men using them were entirely under cover.

6. The first portion of the regular defences (A) consisted of two houses on a terrace with a stone tower between them. On the stone tower had been constructed a lofty watch-tower of timber and stone. Nearly all the thatch had been removed from one house, and on the other it had been carefully covered with planks to render it bullet and fire proof. The approach to the terrace was by a very elaborate, covered, narrow spiral staircase (B), up which one man only could advance at a time. The height of the revetment of the terrace at the lowest part (near B) was about 10 feet, but a wall of stones, planks, and earth, about 6 feet high, had been constructed round the houses on top of the revetment, so that the effective height of wall as a protection from assault was about 16 feet. The front of the position was well flanked. This position was captured by the 44th Native Infantry, under Colonel Nuttall, C.B., comparatively early in the day by assault, through and over the staircase, I believe. No advance beyond this point was accomplished during the day, and it was occupied by the troops at night.

7. From A the position rises in a series of high terraces, the walls of which were carefully constructed and loopholed to the central post (C) at the top of the hill. Each terrace was thoroughly swept by the fire of the one above it, except just at the foot of the revetments which were sometimes not under fire. It was impossible to work round to the flanks to avoid the fire, as on the east the hillside was too steep, and was moreover enclosed by a stone wall, and on the west the ground was completely enclosed by the strong walls of planks and earth shown in the plan, which were too strong to be removed under fire without proper tools; moreover, the ground below the west wall was thickly set with pangies and entanglements, so that any advance there could only have been made at slowest possible pace under heavy fire.

8. The difficulty of the attack from A up-hill is shown by the fact that an assault delivered in the evening under the personal direction of the Brigadier-General and led by nine British officers failed even though the 7-pr. mountain gun had been shelling the first terrace (D) for several minutes from one of the houses at A. Had it succeeded, the troops would have found themselves on a terrace swept by fire from above, and it would have been necessary to push on the assault at once from terrace to terrace until the central post at C was captured; it is very doubtful whether there were enough officers and men present to allow of this being done, for three British officers fell in the unsuccessful assault.

9. From C the ground falls again to the south; here there were three defensible barricades on

* Not published.