

Commanding Tochi Valley Troops, to the Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, 1st Brigade, Tochi Field Force.

IN paragraph 10 of my first report* on the affair of 10th June at Maizar, the rapid manner in which the reinforcements, under Lieutenant H. S. de Brett, Royal Artillery, came up was brought to notice, and also the fact that the enemy was finally beaten off with the new ammunition then received.

2. In addition to the very important service thus rendered, I have now ascertained that Lieutenant de Brett behaved with great personal gallantry at the time.

When he met the force, then closely pressed by the enemy, he found only one serviceable gun, but no sponges. This gun he served himself, ramming the charges home with a sepoy's rifle, without sponging out between the rounds; and he would not allow this most dangerous work to be done by any one else until a sponge had been improvised by wrapping a pugree round a lance.

3. The value of the fire thus maintained in finally dispersing the enemy was remarked in the above-quoted report, but the very gallant part that Lieutenant de Brett took in the service of the gun having only just come to light, I feel that it would be an injustice not to lay more stress on the importance of the part he took generally in the work of the afternoon, and I would ask that the General Officer Commanding may now bring his energy and gallantry to the notice of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief.

4. It is necessary to explain that Lieutenant de Brett was unable to bring out with the reinforcements the two guns which had remained in camp at Datta Khel as all the gun and carriage saddles were with the Maizar party; it being Captain Browne's wish to make all his gun mules, some of which were young and new, take an easy share in carrying the guns.

No. 360-A., dated 12th August, 1897, endorsed by Brigadier-General C. C. Egerton, 1st Brigade, Tochi Field Force, to the Assistant Adjutant-General, Tochi Field Force.
Forwarded.

No. 725-A., dated Camp Sheranni, the 16th August, 1897, Memo. from Major-General G. Corrie Bird, Commanding Tochi Field Force, to the Adjutant-General in India.

IN forwarding this correspondence I would support the application that the same may be added to Lieutenant-Colonel Gray's despatch No. 230, dated 16th June, 1897, and at the same time beg to bring the very plucky action performed by Lieutenant de Brett, No. 6 Bombay Mountain Battery, to the favourable consideration of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief for some special distinction and reward.

The fact of the gun coming into action would seem to have materially assisted in extricating the escort retiring from Maizar from its perilous position and to have caused the dispersion of the attackers, and this would not have occurred but for the plucky course adopted by Lieutenant de Brett in loading the gun at the risk of his own life.

* Tochi Garrison, No. 230, dated 16th June, 1897, to Assistant Adjutant-General, Punjab Frontier Force.

No. , dated Sheranni, the 25th July, 1897, from Captain O. C. Williamson, Royal Artillery, Commanding No. 6 Bombay Mountain Battery, Tochi Field Force, to the Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General, 2nd Brigade, Tochi Field Force.

I HAVE the honour to bring to the notice of the General Officer Commanding 2nd Brigade the following facts, which I trust may be represented to the General Officer Commanding Tochi Field Force for such action as he may think proper:

Lieutenant H. S. de Brett, Royal Artillery, 6th (Bombay) Mountain Battery, went out from Datta Khel with ammunition for rifles and guns and about two companies of infantry to the relief of the troops retiring from Maizar on the 10th June, 1897. Owing to all the gun and carriage saddles being with the Maizar party, he was only able to take out ammunition.

He met the force near Sheranni, but found only one serviceable gun and no sponges, and the enemy were at the time closely pressing our men.

He proceeded to load the gun, and did so for the first three or four rounds personally. He personally rammed home the charge, using a sepoy's rifle. There was no means of sponging out between rounds.

It is needless for me to explain the imminent danger Lieutenant de Brett stood in while performing this duty, and I consider it an act of gallantry worthy of being brought to notice.

Ultimately the difficulty and danger of not sponging was got over by using a sowar's lance with a pugree round it.

I should have known nothing of this had I not in the course of conversation elicited the facts now related. There was no other British officer present, and Lieutenant de Brett himself kept it quiet.

I wired to Mr. Gee, C.S., now on his way home as soon as I learnt the facts, and he states he remembers Lieutenant de Brett ramming home with a rifle at the time above stated, and there are non-commissioned officers and men of the battery who can testify to it also.

No. 249-A., dated Camp Datta Khel, the 27th July, 1897, endorsed by Brigadier-General W. P. Symons, C.B., 2nd Brigade Commanding Tochi Field Force, to the Assistant Adjutant-General, Tochi Field Force.

FORWARDED. I trust that the General Officer Commanding Tochi Field Force will agree with me that this is the record of great gallantry in action on the part of Lieutenant de Brett, Royal Artillery, and that the Major-General will find himself able to forward it to higher authority with an expression of his commendation.

India Office, December 7, 1897.

VICTORIA, R.I.

WHEREAS it has been represented to Us that it is expedient that Deputy Commissaries, Assistant Commissaries, and Deputy Assistant Commissaries of Departments in India should be commissioned as such:

Our Will and Pleasure is that—

Commissions shall be granted to all Officers of these grades in the Service at the date of this Our Warrant, and to all Warrant Officers sub-