

still on the high ridge above Chingai 2nd, along which he attempted to retire in a direction which diverged from the line of retreat of the main body of the force. Soon after the retirement commenced, a message was received from him stating that he was hard pressed and could not rejoin the main body, whereupon Brigadier-General Jeffreys ordered Major Campbell with six companies of the Guides Infantry, to go to his assistance, which they did about 4 P.M., a short time being taken up in assembling the companies, which were in extended order.

21. The fact of this movement having to be undertaken so late in the afternoon was a most unfortunate occurrence, since Brigadier-General Jeffreys had to wait until the safety of the Guides and Captain Ryder's detachment was assured, and the consequent delay at that time of day made it impossible for him to reach camp before dark.

22. The Guides, under Major Campbell, most successfully and gallantly relieved and brought off Captain Ryder's detachment, which had suffered heavy losses. The combined detachments did not, however, succeed in rejoining Brigadier-General Jeffreys, being prevented by nightfall and a thunderstorm which came on about the same time. Ultimately they made their way to camp without further loss, arriving about 9 P.M.

23. Meanwhile, as soon as the safety of Captain Ryder's detachment was certain, Brigadier-General Jeffreys continued his retirement towards camp. So long as daylight lasted the enemy kept at a respectful distance from him, but as it got dark they got bold, and the ground being broken and difficult, they were able to bring a hot fire to bear on the troops, while a heavy thunderstorm, which came on at dusk, greatly increased the difficulties of the situation. Ultimately, however, by about 8.30 P.M., all the troops had arrived in camp, except Brigadier-General Jeffreys four guns of No. 8 (Bengal) Mountain Battery, a small party of sappers and a few men of the Buffs and 35th Sikhs, who got separated from the rest in the darkness.

24. About dusk Brigadier-General Jeffreys, then about three miles and half from camp, decided to occupy a neighbouring village, called Bilot, for the night, chiefly with a view to sheltering the battery mules with him from the enemy's sharpshooters; and while he was engaged in arranging this, the thunderstorm before referred to came on, causing sudden and complete darkness. In the consequent confusion the troops got separated, and only the detachments above detailed remained with Brigadier-General Jeffreys. He proceeded to occupy and entrench a re-entering angle of the village, part of which was burning, while the rest was soon occupied by the enemy, who fired on the General and his detachment from behind walls at a few yards range, inflicting serious losses in men and animals. This state of things continued, in spite of several gallant attempts to clear the village, which were led by Lieutenant T. C. Watson and J. M. C. Colvin, Royal Engineers, until the arrival about midnight of Major J. F. Worledge, 35th Sikhs, with two companies of the Guides and two of his own regiment. After this the enemy were easily driven off and gave no further annoyance during the night.

25. Major Worledge had left camp about 5.30 P.M. in obedience to an order from Brigadier-General Jeffreys, and on joining the General about dark had been sent to find and support the Guides under Major Campbell. Failing to find the Guides in the dark, Major Worledge tried to retrace his steps to the General, but only succeeded in finding him after the moon rose about midnight, although he had been close to him for some time

previously without knowing it. Brigadier-General Jeffreys ultimately reached camp at 8 A.M. on the 17th, some of the troops there having been sent out to his assistance, and returning with him.

26. I regret to have to report that a large number of casualties occurred during these operations, as will be seen from the attached return, namely, killed—two British officers,* two other British ranks, 31 native non-commissioned officers and sepoy, and one follower; wounded—five British officers,† nine other British ranks, three native officers, 92 other native ranks and three followers; missing—three sepoy; being a total of 151 killed, wounded and missing. In addition 48 horses and mules were killed, wounded or missing; and one gun was disabled through the breaking of its axle.

27. The behaviour of the troops throughout this trying day was very good. The steadiness and discipline shown by the 1st Battalion of the Buffs, under Lieutenant-Colonel Ommanney, were admirable, while Brigadier-General Jeffreys has specially commended the gallantry with which the Guides Infantry, under Major Campbell, brought off Captain Ryder's detachment of the 35th Sikhs, carrying the wounded on their backs under a heavy fire. He has further strongly endorsed Major Campbell's favourable mention of the courage and judgment shown by Captain G. B. Hodson and Lieutenant H. W. Codrington, of the Guides, who commanded the companies of the battalion which were chiefly in contact with the enemy; the gallantry of Surgeon-Captain J. Fisher, Indian Medical Service, who made a most determined, though unsuccessful, attempt to take medical aid to the wounded of Captain Ryder's detachment through a hot fire; of Surgeon-Lieutenant E. L. Perry, Indian Medical Service, of Jemadar Sikandar Khan, of the Guides, and of several non-commissioned officers and sepoy of the same corps, regarding whom I have had the honour to make a separate communication.

28. Brigadier-General Jeffreys has also described in very favourable terms the gallant and valuable work done on this day by Captain Cole and his squadron of the 11th Bengal Lancers. He has commended the conduct of Captain W. I. Ryder and Lieutenant O. G. Gunning, 35th Sikhs, who were both wounded, and of Jemadar Narayan Singh, Havildar Ram Singh and Sepoy Karram Singh,‡ of the same regiment. He has also brought to notice a gallant act of Captain A. H. C. Birch, Royal Artillery, Commanding No. 8 (Bengal) Mountain Battery, and his Trumpeter Jiwan, in rescuing a wounded sepoy of the 35th Sikhs; as well as the distinguished gallantry of Jemadars Nawab and Ishar Singh and several non-commissioned officers and men of the same battery, in regard to which I have made separate communications to you.

29. Brigadier-General Jeffreys further refers in the strongest terms of commendation to the gallant conduct of Lieutenants T. C. Watson§ and J. M. C. Colvin, Royal Engineers, and of the handful of men of the Buffs and No. 4 Company, Bengal Sappers and Miners, who spent the night of the 16th-17th with him in the village of Bilot.

* Lieutenant A. T. Crawford, Royal Artillery; Lieutenant V. Hughes, 35th Sikhs.

† Lieutenant F. A. Wynter, Royal Artillery; Lieutenant T. C. Watson, Royal Engineers; Captain W. I. Ryder, Lieutenant O. G. Gunning, Lieutenant G. R. Cassels, 35th Sikhs.

‡ This man's case has formed the subject of a separate communication.

§ Twice wounded in attempting to clear the village.