

very heavy loss, and in addition to the guns not being able to render me very great assistance, they would run a good chance of being captured.

6. In any case I had to be prepared for a second heavy action at Spytfontein, and a blow dealt to the enemy's centre at Majesfontein would render any future fight at Spytfontein easier than any success on their left flank could have done.

7. The reconnaissance work had been extremely difficult on account of the large amount of wire between the two rivers, whilst on the north side of the Modder, owing to the enemy's entrenchments, the Cavalry had not been able to advance any great distance.

8. My orders were to relieve Kimberley, and the longer I remained inactive the stronger the enemy would become in my front. Therefore, on the day my last reinforcement arrived I decided to continue my advance to Kimberley, and attack the Majesfontein Kopje.

9. With this purpose I gave orders for the kopje to be bombarded from 4.50 P.M. to 6.40 P.M. on the 10th December with all my guns, including the naval 4.7-inch.

10. At daybreak on 11th December the southern end of the kopje was to be assaulted by the Highland Brigade, supported by all the guns, their right and rear being protected by the Guards Brigade.

11. Judging from the moral effect produced by the guns in my three previous actions, and the additional anticipated effect of lyddite, I expected great destruction of life in the trenches, and a considerable demoralizing effect on the enemy's nerves, thereby indirectly assisting the attack at daybreak.

12. In accordance with the orders issued, of which I attach a copy, the Artillery on the 10th fired with accuracy and effect on the kopje, and the trenches at the foot from 4.30 P.M. to 6.45 P.M.

13. The night march was ordered for 12.30 A.M., the bearings and distance having been ascertained at great personal risk by Major Benson, Royal Artillery, my Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General (A). The distance is  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and daybreak was due at 3.25 A.M.

14. About half an hour after the Highland Brigade marched off it came on to pour, a heavy thunderstorm accompanying the rain. The down-pour lasted until daybreak.

15. The Brigade was led with perfect accuracy to the point of assault by Major Benson. The advance was slow, even for a night march. Major Benson, with a compass in each hand, had frequently to halt on account of the lightning and rifles affecting the compasses.

16. I may remark that two rifles went off by accident before the march commenced, and it is pretty clear flashes from a lantern gave the enemy timely notice of the march.

17. Before moving off, Major-General Wauchope explained all he intended to do and the particular part each battalion of his brigade was to play in the scheme. Namely, that he intended to march direct on the south-west spur of the kopje, and on arrival near the objective before daybreak the Black Watch were to move to the east of the kopje, where he believed the enemy to be posted under shelter, whilst the Seaforth Highlanders were to march straight to the south-east point of the kopje, with the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders prolonging the line to the left; the Highland Light Infantry to be in reserve until the action was developed.

The Brigade was to march in mass of quarter columns, the four battalions keeping touch, and if necessary ropes were to be used for the left

guides; these ropes were taken, but I believe used by only two battalions.

The three battalions were to extend just before daybreak, two companies in firing line, two companies in support, and four companies in reserve, all at five paces interval between them.

18. What happened was as follows:—Not finding any signs of the enemy on the right flank just before daybreak, which took place at 4 A.M., as the Brigade was approaching the foot of the kopje, Major-General Wauchope gave the order for the Black Watch to extend, but to direct its advance on the spur in front, the Seaforth Highlanders to prolong to the left, the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders to prolong to the right, the Highland Light Infantry in reserve. Five minutes earlier (the kopje looming in the distance), Major Benson had asked Major-General Wauchope if he did not consider it to be time to deploy. Lieutenant Colonel Hughes-Hallett states that the extension could have taken place 200 yards sooner, but the leading battalion got thrown into confusion in the dark by a very thick bit of bush about 20 to 30 yards long. The Seaforth Highlanders went round this bush to the right, and had just got into its original position behind the Black Watch when the order to extend was given by Major-General Wauchope to the Black Watch. The Seaforth Highlanders and two companies of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders were also moving out, and were in the act of extending when suddenly a heavy fire was poured in by the enemy, most of the bullets going over the men.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hughes-Hallett at once ordered the Seaforths to fix bayonets and charge the position.

The Officers commanding the other battalions acted in a similar manner. At this moment someone gave the word "Retire." Part of the Black Watch then rushed back through the ranks of the Seaforths. Lieutenant-Colonel Hallett ordered his men to halt and lie down, and not to retire. It was now becoming quite light, and some of the Black Watch were a little in front, to the left of the Seaforths.

19. The Artillery, advancing to the support of the attack, had opened fire from the time it was light enough to see.

20. No orders having been received by the Seaforths, the Commanding Officer advanced the leading units to try and reach the trenches, which were about 400 yards off; but the Officers and half the men fell before a very heavy fire, which opened as soon as the men moved. About ten minutes later the Seaforths tried another rush, with the same result. Colonel Hughes-Hallett then considered it best to remain where he was till orders came.

21. Meanwhile the 9th Lancers, the 12th Lancers, "G" Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, and Mounted Infantry were working on the right flank.

22. At 12 midnight on the 10th the 12th Lancers and Guards marched from camp, the former to join the Cavalry Brigade, the latter to protect the rear and right of the Highland Brigade. Considering the night, it does Major-General Sir Henry Colville immense credit that he carried out his orders to the letter, as did Major-General Babington.

23. A heavy fire was maintained the whole morning. The Guards Brigade held a front of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles. The Yorkshire Light Infantry protected my right flank with five companies, three companies being left at a drift.

24. Captain Jones, Royal Engineers, and Lieutenant Grubb were with the Balloon section, and