

Great credit is due to Major T. E. Capper, D.A.A.G., for this,

I have, &c.,

CHARLES WARREN, Lieut.-General,  
Commanding 5th Division, South  
African Field Force.

From the Officer Commanding 2nd Bn. Scottish Rifles to the Brigade-Major, 4th Brigade.

Spearman Hill

27th January, 1900.

The Brigade-Major, 4th Brigade,

I would ask the General Officer Commanding if I may be permitted to mention the following names of Officers and men who rendered special valuable assistance on the 24th:—

Major Twyford, who was in the most advanced position with his company, and who rendered me valuable assistance after the death of Major Strong in conducting the retreat from the hill.

Captain Murray, who was killed when initiating an advance in the face of a heavy fire.

Lieutenant Green, who, to encourage his men, rushed forward to an advanced trench, and was immediately followed by the men near him.

Lieutenant Wood, on the retreat being ordered, volunteered to search for Captain O'Gowan (wounded), and carried him, with assistance, to the bottom of the hill.

The following non-commissioned officers and men were mentioned to me as doing special good work during the day:—

1255 Colour-Serjeant Waters, 4012 Serjeant Alexander Macdonald, Corporal George Godfrey, Serjeant G. Cole, 3286 Private Lewis, 2808 Corporal Fawcett, 6186 Private E. Brown.

I have, &c.,

E. COOKE, Lieut.-Colonel,  
2nd Bn. Scottish Rifles.

Potgieter's,

30th January, 1900.

Forwarded. From what I have heard from Officers engaged on the Spion Kop, I am sure that this battalion did excellent service at a critical time.

N. G. LYTTELTON, Major-General,  
Commanding 4th Infantry Brigade.

Potgieter's Drift,

26th January, 1900.

The Brigade-Major, 4th Brigade,

I have the honour to report, for the information of the General Officer Commanding 4th Brigade, that the battalion, now under my command marched from Spearman Hill, at 10 a.m. on the 24th instant, via Kafir Drift, across the Tugela, to take the two peaks on the north of the Spion Kop.

After passing Kafir Drift the Colonel advanced with the right half battalion, to take the more northerly of the two peaks known as Sugarloaf Hill, and ordered me, with the left half battalion, to take the centre hill of the range, which was between Sugarloaf hill and the main hill, which had already been occupied by our troops since early morning.

At about midday each half battalion advanced to the attack, from Kafir Drift, with two half-companies, in firing line, the left half companies of each being in local support, one company finding right and left support, and one company in reserve, all at wide intervals and distances.

The Boers were holding both hills, and the crest line between them, also the trenches, rocks,

and trees from about halfway up right to the top.

On the hill, which the left half battalion was ordered to attack, there was a machine gun in action. The hillside was almost perpendicular in places, so the ascent was made very slowly.

The supports fired over the heads of the attacking line advancing up the spur, the reserves took up the fire when the supports became merged into the fighting line.

The trenches on the right hill were turned, one after another, under a heavy flanking fire, Captain R. H. Beaumont and Lieutenant D. H. Blundell, of "A" Company leading the assault until the former was wounded.

When the right half battalion neared the top the left half directed its fire entirely in support of the final charge of the right half, who rushed the top, led by Major W. S. Kays and Lieutenant R. F. Manley-Sims, of "B" Company, at 4.45 p.m., the Boers only leaving as the men's swords came over the crest line.

The left hill was taken a quarter of an hour later by the half battalion under my command, "F" Company leading, under Lieutenants The Hon. R. Cathcart and H. Wake, closely supported by "H" Company, under Captain H. C. Warre.

Though still under a galling fire from both flanks we were able to stop the fire of the machine guns 150 yards on our front, and also to keep down the fire of the Boers which was being directed on to the right flank of Sir Charles Warren's troops, holding the main ridge of Spion Kop.

About 6.30 p.m. the order came to retire after dark, and the battalion, with the exception of a few men killed and wounded, whom we were unable to bring in that night, recrossed the Tugela by midnight practically unmolested.

The Boer trenches were skilfully constructed by blasting and pick, about 4 feet 6 inches deep. Their fire was directed principally at the Officers. From the summit a Boer camp behind each hill could be seen, and a certain number of Boers retiring.

I have already furnished a list of casualties, and deplore the loss of the Commanding Officer, gallantly cheering on his men close to the top of the hill. I can only attribute the comparatively small number of casualties to the steepness of the hill, and to the skill with which the Company and Section Commanders worked their men.

Had Lieut.-Colonel Buchanan-Riddell lived I feel sure he would have liked to have brought to notice the good work done by Captain and Adjutant Wilson, and to have mentioned the names of the Officers which occur in the above report. The following men were either noticed by me personally, or named to me by their Officers, for coolness and gallantry in the advance:—

Serjeant-Major Hill.

Colour-Serjeant McLoughlin (dangerously wounded).

Serjeant F. Clay.

„ Keenes (severely wounded).

Corporal Allen (wounded).

8209 Private Rowley, "A" Company.

6232 Private Limbrick, "F" Company (dangerously wounded).

7170 Private Ashworth, "B" Company (killed).

Lance-Corporal Muntzer, "F" Company.

I have, &c.,

A. BEWICKE COPLEY, Major,  
Commanding 3rd Bn. King's Royal Rifles.