

Gumburu,
17th April, 1903.

SIR,

I have the honour to report that in accordance with orders I proceeded, on 16th April 1903, with my patrol, strength as per margin*, along the road running west from the zariba; when we had gone about one and a half miles we encountered three of the enemy's scouts; we pursued them, and after going about half a mile came suddenly upon a considerable force of the enemy's mounted men in an open clearing. We opened fire, and in a very short time I found that they were working round my flanks and rear; I retired about 40 yards to a more favourable position and formed a small circle; the enemy were between me and the zariba, and I had wounded men and one killed; a brisk fire was maintained for about three-quarters of an hour, the enemy showing much courage and persisting, one man and horse being killed within 12 yards of the circle, I despatched a messenger to the Officer Commanding Column informing him of our position. We eventually succeeded in driving off the enemy at, I believe, a considerable loss to them. About 10 minutes after the firing was over, Captain Luard, King's African Rifles, came on the scene with his company, and I have no doubt that the approach of this force assisted me materially. A force from the zariba arrived later. I very much regret to report the following casualties:—Lieutenant Chichester, Somali Mounted Infantry, killed. Trooper Hill, Burgher Contingent, and two Somalis wounded; three horses killed, and seven wounded.

Two of the enemy's dead were found on the ground and 13 dead ponies, but I believe they suffered considerably, as most of the firing was at fairly close range, and several were seen to fall from their horses. The enemy being round us some time after the firing was over, I presume they were removing their dead and wounded.

I estimate their numbers at about 200. I have brought to the notice of the Officer Commanding Column, in a separate letter, the good services of Rifleman Miller, King's Royal Rifle Corps Mounted Infantry.

I am, &c.,

G. C. SHAKERLEY, Captain,
Commanding British (King's Royal Rifle
Corps) Mounted Infantry.

To the Staff Officer to Column under
Lieutenant-Colonel Cobbe, V.C., D.S.O.

Galadi,
22nd April, 1903.

Casualty List of 17th April, 1903.

1st Battalion King's African Rifles.

Missing, reported dead—

153 Lance-Havildar Khazan Singh.

52 Corporal Chidwata.

24 Lance-Corporal Kunga.

Died of wounds, 19th April, 1903—

36 Private Sabani.

A. S. COBBE, Lieutenant-Colonel,
Commanding 1st Battalion King's
African Rifles.

Gumburu,
18th April, 1903.

SIR,

I wish to bring to the notice of the Officer Commanding Column the good services of No. 255 Rifleman Joshef Miller, 4th Battalion King's Royal Rifles (British Mounted Infantry).

* British Mounted Infantry, 1 Officer, 4 men; Burgher Mounted Infantry, 1 Officer, 12 men; Somali Mounted Infantry, 1 Officer, 12 men.

On 16th April, 1903, I was in command of a mounted patrol sent out from the Column. We came in contact with some mounted dervishes and were eventually surrounded by several hundred. Rifleman Miller was standing close to me and heard me say that I was going to send a message to the Officer Commanding Column; he immediately volunteered to carry this message. I gave him a letter; he succeeded in galloping through the enemy's line at great risk, and delivered the letter to the Officer Commanding Column.

I have, &c.,

G. C. SHAKERLEY, Captain,
King's Royal Rifle Corps,

Commanding British Mounted Infantry.

To the Staff Officer,

The Officer Commanding Column.

Forwarded to Chief Staff Officer for the favourable consideration of General Officer Commanding. His horse was wounded when getting back.

A. S. COBBE, Lieutenant-Colonel,
Commanding Reconnaissance.

Narrative of the Action of Gumburu on 17th April, 1903, extracted from evidence by Survivors given before Committee of Enquiry held at Galadi and elsewhere.

The force which marched out of the zariba at Gumburu, under Lieutenant-Colonel Plunkett, on the 17th instant, consisted of 48 men, 2nd Sikhs, and a company 2nd Battalion King's African Rifles.

About one mile from the zariba this force met "C" Company of the 2nd Battalion King's African Rifles, under Captain Olivey.

The force then apparently formed square, with the Sikhs in the front face, and marched some six miles further to an open spot, which was surrounded by thick bush.

The distance of the bush from the square is variously estimated from 300 to 600 yards.

The enemy had apparently collected in this bush, and advanced on the square from it.

First horsemen, then foot riflemen, and afterwards spearmen, attacked the square on all sides. The horsemen and riflemen were driven back, but ammunition becoming exhausted, the square was broken by the rush of spearmen.

In spite of the fire of the troops and Maxims, the enemy frequently came up as close as 10 yards from the square.

When the ammunition was exhausted, Colonel Plunkett gave orders for the troops to charge with the bayonet back to the zariba. Previous to this, however, it appears that many Officers and men had been killed and wounded.

Some evidence points to the front face of the square being first pushed back by a rush of spearmen upon the Sikhs, who fought with the bayonet, but re-formed.

At this period of the fight most of the casualties occurred, and from the evidence of witnesses the whole of the Officers were killed, together with the two men of the King's Royal Rifles who accompanied the force.

Captain Johnston-Stewart, before being killed, told those who could to get back to the zariba.

The fight appears to have lasted some 2 hours.

Colonel Plunkett left camp at 9.15 A.M., and at 11.45 A.M. firing was heard in the distance. This would make the scene of the action about 7 miles from the zariba.

The return, at 12.45 P.M., of a Somali, who brought in news that all was over in the square, cannot be accepted as reliable evidence, as he