

Letter to Rwd ? Dunkley  
202 Durham St  
Christchurch  
New Zealand.

From JHS? Dunkley.  
H Company  
Tours River Camp  
December 13, 1899.

My Dear Old Dad,

This morning I received yours an mother's letters of 8th November, which you can imagine I devoured and as I have finished my work for the day I was setting down to reply thereto. It is now 10 to 9 and as the last post goes at 9.30 I have not got very much time, but I will do my best. Thank you so much for your kind wishes for my birthday. You will have received my letter saying that I got letters from you? on that day. So will make no more remarks. I have heard nothing of the parcel and papers yet, but hope to do so tomorrow or the day after. I write when I have time, but really I have no news and as I have not the slightest idea when the mails so you must not be surprised if you get the 3 together. I may say that I have received no letters from you for over a month. At least it seems so, I don't know, days and weeks pass without my knowing it. Every day is so much alike. I am so sorry to hear about Aunt Mable's ill health and if you will let me have the address I will write. Regarding Britain not being ready for the fray, England could not sent out troops in too great numbers for if she had it would have been almost amounting to a declaration of was and it was England's game to force Kruger to declare war with us and to counting? about the war I can't. I hear nothing up in this benighted? hole. No letter came from Frank today. he must have missed the mail. There goes the 'first post' I have half and hour to finish before Roll Call and last post. 'Lights Out' is sounded at 9.45. The only bit of news is that I am now a full-blown corporal getting 6/. per month? instead of 5/. Of course I get 2/6 for rations, but I draw this in the shape of food. I get on very well with Major Noodhead?, who is in command here while Colonel Spence is away in Capetown getting recruits. I also get on well with my captain, Capt Mansfield. I am sending you by this post a small book about the S. A. (South African) church which I hope will be of use. I saw it advertised and wrote down for it. I hardly gives sufficient information but take it as a birthday present. It is all I can do. One of our band has promised to get me a Synod report which I will forward at once. I don't know whether this will reach you but it should arrive in NZ near the beginning of February so I will wish you many happy returns of 1st Feb and I hope that next Feb. 1 we will spend together. I see they have no Precentor? in Cape Town Cathedral. What about writing the bishop of C.T. (Canterbury) about it, but perhaps the Synod report will give more information. With regard to E Mather's report about being worked hard. It is no more than the rest of us are doing. We have had some photo's taken and I will send some copies as soon as they come out. We have just heard a report that there has been a big fight in Speksfontien? a suburb of Kimberly and 4000 Boers have been taken prisoner. Of course this is only a rumour. Cpt. Mansfield tells me that we will have a long time on service and that probably we will be mobilised and sent through Kimberly, Pretoria etc. to put the fear of death in ye hart of y<sup>e</sup> willi<sup>e</sup> B<sup>o</sup>e<sup>r</sup>. I hope so. The chaplain attached to us is a very nice fellow called Price and just out from home. He know Worcester well and knows a parson called Chas Dunkley who edits some paper or other. He wanted to know if it was any relation. He also know Coventry. We have just got a new Lieutenant named Phillips who is attached to H. Co. he begins his duty tomorrow and I shall find out what sort of chap he is. Today had a big time "in orderly room" on a man who was out without a pass after Tattoo. He has applied for a Board of Officers. When prisoners are brought in we stand to attention till all is over and sentence delivered by the major and if there is much to say and many prisoners if is no joke I can tell you. I must say goodbye as paper and time flow short. Best love to mother and yourself. Remember me to everyone,

Your old Corporal Son,  
JHS? Dunkley.

Daniels Kuil?  
24 September 1900.

My Dear Old Dad.

Here I am again and of course have very little news. I can't help it. Its no good writing and saying "It's all nonsense your saying you have no news. You are near the front" It's the truth and nothing but the truth. You know far more about the war than I do. Here we are stuck up here away from everyone with a mail once a week. Well yesterday 100 men left here for Kuruman. Capt. Simkins? told me some fighting might be expected there. Of course my usual luck came to the rescue and I was not allowed to go. Why? Because I know about the accounts of H. Co which is now extinct?. Simkins? told me before he left that if he could he would try to get me up with him. I am still in the orderly room here. We expect to get orders to shift at any moment. Our probable destination is Barkley? West. I don't fancy going there very much as it is a Base Depot. I would much rather go to Kuruman. I got a copy of the Guernsey paper from Uncle Bill the other day with the cutting from the "Weekly Press" in it. I suppose it is an answer to the letter I sent him soon after arriving here. By the way I have been a bit seedy lately, a bit run down but I am nearly all right now. The Dr. gave me a tonic which soon put me right. I hear from Billy occasionally, but his letters are never more than a few lines and are evidently meant to say "How do! I'm alright. Hope you're the same. you see I haven't forgotten you" Sammy? is also a bad correspondent. I have heard from him about once in 3 months. I have it is true not written to him often, but consider the difference in our position. He is in a land flowing with pens, ink, and all the facilities for writing, while poor I until a few weeks ago had great difficulty in getting paper. We have got the maxim Palz? here now. By the way. Capt Simkins has written to Colonel Woodhead? recommending me for Lieutenant Sergeant? and Major Lewis has added a line to the letter approving. I hope I may be successful this time. I am in an ambiguous position. Capt Mansfield mount the Stripes? ships? and then mote? asking for conformation. The Col. refused as he said the establishment did not permit of it. I was however told to keep up the stripes which I have done. "It's extremely awkward" I hope to goodness I get it. I also sign as Lt Sgt and frank? the letters I sent away from the Orderly Room (LE?) when there is no officer to frank for me I must now shut up!

Goodbye, Whips? of love  
your loving old Sonny  
Jock

D.E.O.V.R. H Company.  
From J. H. H. Dunkley  
202 Durham St  
Christchurch NZJouws? River Camp  
December 25, 1899.

To Mrs Dunkley

Here it is Xmas day and I am here sitting down to tell you how I have spent the day so far and to wish you all a jolly jolly time of it, even though it will be a long time after ? before you get this, but all the same you know I am thinking of you and know you are thinking of me. Well, to begin, I rose at 6am and attended holy Communion at 7.30 in the Jouws River Church. Our Chaplain celebrated. I got back at 8.15 had breakfast, helped in the orderly room a little and then fell in at 10. for church parade after church. I helped the Orderly Room Sergeant get the presents from Sir Alfred Milner and others ready. these consisted of 1 packet of tobacco, 1/2 packet of cigarettes, 1 bottle of lemon syrup to each tent, and a big lovely cigar. This latter was the gift from Mrs Woodhead, the Major's wife. For dinner we had roast mutton (a very rare article) potatoes (of which I saw none) and plum pudding. The pudding was very good for a camp pudding. After dinner it came on to blow which raised the dust, so I lay down for a nap. When I woke I was covered with sand and my mouth full, the sand had drifted through the door. But I am forgetting, After dinner we fell in and thanked the Colonel. The a telegram was read from the Queen as follows: "I wish you all my brave soldiers a happy Xmas, God protect and bless you all. VR" Cheers were given for everybody and we dispensed. I am now sitting down to write to you after my sleep. I don't know whether I told you that I was of the firing party at General Wauchope's funeral. I have written an article to the "Press" on our camp life and hope to be able to sent photo's of the camp and the funeral along? the new orderly Roomsugeah? is an artist and draws for the Illustrated London News and Sketch. He is going to do a drawing of Colonel Spence, who is an old NZ resident and knew old bishop Harper and Archdeacon Harper and Mr Eltin? well. I will send to the Press and they may give me something for it. I don't know if the article will be of any use. Goodbye for the present.

[same letter; dated 27 December]

After 2 days I again take up my pen to the sound of pipe and drums who are beating tattoo. Well, on Christmas evening I went down to the hotel thadaslapup [they had a slap up?] dinner. The best show? had said leaving Dunbar? I had Lomat? soup, turkey, potatoes and green peas., suckling pig and apple sauce, plum pudding and a cup of tea. I could have had heaps more but did not want it. I then went for a bike ride on a borrowed machine, went and saw some of the telegraph clerks and returned to camp. A short time after getting into bed we were startled by a rifle shot. I at once got up, put on my boots etc and got my belt bayonet and pouch ready and went outside, nothing however, turned up, though it roused the officers and we have heard nothing since. The noise seemed to be about 1/2 a mile away. I am no longer in the Orderly Room, a new sergeant having come from cape Town (the man who draws) so as there was no room for me I had to go. I am now writing in Major Woodhead's tent. I have very little to do, my only duty so far is to make out pay sheets for A company,

I have had no letters from dear old NZ lately, but I expect they would be long. The old mails were advertised wrong or something of the sort I suspect. I hear from Billy fairly often. I hear that our Mounted Company are going to increase their number and I expect if Billy can get off he will join. I should think he might get off fairly easily, as his hand is bad. If he does I shall try to get a transfer into A Co (le?) the mounted section. There the drums go they are playing "Tommy Alrius?" and so on. They are not very much in time and they do not play very well. However the brass band has improved a great deal since we have been up. There are two bands attached to the regiment. The regiment Brass band and the Pipe and drum band or the drums as it is called. The latter is chiefly compose of boys. I am afraid there is no chance for us to go up to the front, though you need not let on that we are safe here as if were in Cape Town. Let people think we are in the midst of danger etc. You know. I will get a medal, though I would like to have at least one bar on it. Anyway, what's done can't be helped. I should have joined the Fourth African light Horse. ? at present. Give my love to all and don't be afraid of long letters. There goes "God Save the Queen" so I must shut up.

My best love to dear old Dad and yourself

Your loving old son

Jock.

List of clothing etc. taken on the steamer "Ruabine" (?).

Seven suits of clothes  
Breeches & leggings  
Over-coat & mackintosh  
Two hats & cap  
Three pairs boots  
Two pairs slippers  
Four pairs pants (2 woollen)  
Two nightshirts (woollen)  
Two sets pyjamas  
Dozen 1/2 shirts  
two dozen collars  
Three pairs cuffs  
Six pairs socks  
Ties, clothes brush  
Hairbrush & comb  
"Workbasket" with sewing articles etc,  
Masonic clothing & books  
Watch, chain & stud  
Two sets cuff links  
Shaving gear  
Two portmanteaus & hat case

\* \* \*

#### Diary

Feb. 10/1900. Left Richmond for Belmont at 6 p.m. & arrived about 11-30 - 14 miles. Felt awfully sleepy & could hardly keep in saddle. Left all our kit behind with the exception of our overcoats. Joined a lot more troops

Feb. 11th. Marched to Ramdam(?) in the Free State about 26 miles & a hot & thirsty march. On arrival we found a lot more troops encamped. Two days feed were issued for men & horses before we started. The meat was in six cartons which made it very awkward to carry & they often dropped off the saddle & I'm afraid most of us helped it off. We have horsebags to carry the cons for the horses which is a very big addition to the weight the poor brute has to carry.

Feb. 12th. Marched at 2am & at about 6am. we heard the guns in front of us come into action. At the first shot we gave three cheers. We were at once moved off several miles to the right at a good pace & half of our squadron (C) was sent across the river to hold the drift. The other half was sent as escort to a battery which took up position on some Kopjes & opened fire. While we were crossing the river the rifle fire of the Boers got rather warm. The bullets came all around us & I cannot image how it was that neither horse or man were not shot. We formed up on the other side of the river under cover of the bank. Extended laid down on the veldt & opened fire. We certainly were in so much danger of being shot by our own men as by the Boers. Capt Majeudie(?) of the rifle brigade who was second in command of "Robert's Horse" did not lie down & the consequence was he was shot. I assisted our Capt. to dress his wounds but I saw it was a hopeless case & he died within a few hours the bullet going right through his body. After an hour or so the Boers cleared out of the Kopje they were in & some of us went & occupied it. At the same time another squadron sent scouts up to another Kopje on the right but they received such a warm reception from the Boers that they immediately retired as fast as they could gallop. We stopped where we were for a couple of hours & then went to the Kopje the Boers had occupied. Our troops went out to scout the hill the Boers had been seen to go behind. It was anything but pleasant as the enemy was supposed to be there but after approaching very carefully we found the Boers retreating. We got back to the camp at dusk.

Feb. 13th. Drew two days rations & then marched without having time to feed to Klip Drift (Modder River)-doing about 28 miles. There was a commando of Boers there but they cleared out when we came into sight hastened by a few shots from our big guns leaving all their baggage behind. We got a lot of loot & fared well.

Feb. 14th. Saddled up early & went out to a Kopje on picquet from which we got a grand view of the skirmishes all around. Before starting in the morning several shells dropped into the camp but no one was hurt. In the evening we heard that Kimberley could only hold out till the 16th & that we must relieve it or die in the attempt. Also they expected a hard fight which would be probably the most important fight in the war. We received two days rations.

Feb. 15th. Saddled at 7a.m. & crossed the river but did not move on for some time, eventually we, with the cavalry division trotted off to some Kopjes from which our guns were shelling the enemy. The artillery fire went on for some time & the Boer shells fell around us a bit thick. It made one's nerves twitch a bit at first to see the shells bursting all over the place & to hear the shots whistling through the air but we soon settled down to it when we saw they did not do much damage. One shell fell quite near us but luckily it did not burst. After an hour or so the Lancers rode out followed by the rest of us & went off at a good pace for 8 miles. when we halted at some well. Our squadron with several others & two guns were left to guard the wells till the infantry came up. The rest went on to Kimberley. We heard we lost 20 men (Germans). A Lancer was shot dead by a Boer when he was only 10 yards away & then threw up his arms & begged for mercy but he didn't get it! We saw two dead men on the way. All the afternoon & night we were on picquet & had a anxious time - as we knew the Boers was all around us & we expected to be attacked every moment. Again we were very tired & sleepy.

Feb. 16th. We went out on patrol & had a good view from the top of a Kopje & saw the Boers returning while our men was advancing. We returned about 10 a.m. when we heard the infantry were following Cronje & his men who had retired from Kimberley. In the afternoon we went out foraging & got mealies (grounded maize) flours, peaches & chicken. We also found plenty of ammunition which we burnt. I found I could still run down fowls - having caught three.

Feb. 17th. On picquet all the morning. We left in the afternoon & joined some others about five miles distant.

Feb. 18th. Did a long march - about 20 miles across country. The latter part we heard guns in the distance. Eventually we came up with our army under French. They had followed up Cronje & got him surrounded in the river (Modder). We halted for an hour & then went off to a Kopje to relieve the household cavalry. From the Kopje we had a splendid view of the infantry attacking the Boers & of the Boer Laager. Our guns blew up three ammunition wagons, but the infantry had to retire with heavy loss. The black watch losing all their officers but two & Canadians had 200 casualties. I believe our losses altogether were from 400 to 500 men.

Feb. 19th. There was an armistice to bury the dead but the Boers fired on some of our men who approached too near their Laager. We were relieved about midday & went back to camp. The horses were awfully done up - not having any food for them.

Feb. 20th. About midday we left with some guns to a Kopje close to the river. The enemy fired on us while we were climbing the kopje but our guns soon silenced them. After doing so they opened fire on a Kopje some 2500 yards across the river. We, with H sqd. were then sent to occupy them. We advanced in line at ten paces apart I being the centre man: only a few shots were fired on us. Was on picquet for part of the night - 2 hours on & 4 off.

Feb. 21st. A cavalry brigade passed us in the morning & shelled the Boers on the Kopje in front of us. Before dawn a patrol had gone out to a farmhouse a little over a mile from us & found one of our own men wounded who had been taken by the Boers on the 18th. He was shot in the neck & wounded slightly by splinters in the stomach but was able to walk back to camp. He told us that two days before the Boers had sent 61 prisoners away. After the cavalry brigade had passed & were about 2 miles from us on the far side of the Kopje in front of us, we suddenly saw a large body of Boers come from the direction of the river & halt under the side of the Kopje for a few minutes & then pass us at a distance of 1500 yards. We immediately fired on them but owing to the distance we only knocked over six. H & D sqd also fired on them, the latter being within 600 yards got 33 while still further on our left they got a warm time from 2 batteries of our R.H.G.(?)'s guns. There's 6 guns to a battery. There was about 1,500 Boers & last of all came two carts which B sqd, who was on our right, made a dash for. When about 1/2 a

mile from the cart a man who we heard was General Schmit? got out of one of the carts & mounting a horse rode off at full gallop, some of B sqd gave chase but their horses were not good enough to catch him. They got back to the carts when 18 Boers came along; our fellows dismounted & gave them beans(?) - killing four, wounding four, & took five prisoners. The remaining five got past them but was intercepted by 4 men of the Lancers who got them all. We saw the lancers charge them & lance the first two knocking over horses as well as men but they took the other three alive. One of the Lancers told me afterwards he had a very narrow escape - for as he was charging one & got within five yards of him, he immediately turned & fired but the Lancer was too quick for him - leaning forward he thrust his lance in the Boer's side. When the artillery opened fire it looked like they would have been annihilated, but strange to say there was only about 160 casualties. Had our cavalry been there I'm sure there would not have been one that would have escaped. We heard from the prisoners that they came from Colesburg to relieve Cronje. We had a good view of the whole affair.

Feb. 22nd. Being relieved we were returned to the Kopje where we were a few days previous. The horses were getting in a rather bad state - not having any cons for a week & plenty of work without having their saddles off or bits out of their mouths for 36 hours. Of course they were allowed to eat grass when we stopped. The English horses were worse than ours and on one march from Riet river there was no less than 63 horses counted dead & ourselves were in a fainting condition. I noticed two or three men fall off their horses through nothing but exhaustion - only getting half rations. I'm pleased to note my constitution served me well. The prevailing disease here is dysentery.

Feb. 23rd. Nothing but fatigues

Feb. 24th. Put in charge of grazing guard.

Feb. 25th. Our troop leader Lieu. Dawson ask me to take the stripes (corporal). Declined.

Feb. 26th. In the afternoon we went out with another party foraging - three officers in charge and when we got near a farm the Boers opened fire killing one horse and taking its rider prisoner. We retired as fast as the horses could gallop - there being about 150 Boers against the 18 of us. About 5p.m. we were ordered to saddle up & were sent to a Kopje - about 1/2 a mile - as we heard Cronje was going to make a bolt. I, with two troopers and officers, went out twice during the night to patrol our part of the river. We had strict orders to challenge everyone and if they did not answer immediately we were to kill. It was rather an anxious time but Cronje and the men did not make the attempt.

Feb. 27th. (Majuba day). Cronje and his men surrendered. 4,200 altogether. 3,100 Transvaalers & 1,100 Free Staters. We were not allowed to go to the Laager. Was told there was any amount of ammunition. Also Cronje had eight men shot for trying to desert. We captured several of his deserters the previous week. Cronje was sent to Kimberley the same day. Mail came in the afternoon which brought me two letters - one from home which was rather interesting - the other from Dot.

Feb. 28th. Went with several others on Kopje picquet. Nothing much to do - only on the look out 4 hours out of 24. Wrote two letters and had my hair "cropped" by Clark.

March 1st. Still on Kopje.

March 2nd. Returned to camp.

March 3rd. Lent my horse to Lieu. Dawson who went off Buck shooting. On grazing guard in the afternoon.

March 4th. In camp all day. Made a miserable job of cooking.

March 5th. In camp all the morning but on grazing guard in the afternoon.

March 6th. Left in the afternoon and went 3 miles as escort to MacDonald's Brigade. Were out on gunports(?) all night - a very dirty night.

March 7th. Marched off 4 a.m. to keep communication between the Highland brigade and mounted infantry on the left flank. French's cavalry brigade got round the Boer position and turned them out. We found the Boers in large numbers who gave us a few rounds of their pom pom (guns) but did not touch us. There was 5 casualties - 2 belonging to B Sqd. the other three to the M infantry.

March 8th. Marched to Poplar's Grove, where we joined the other troops.

March 9th. Had another short march on the road to Bloemfontein

March 10th. Went to guard the right rear but did not come into action. There was a big fight in front and on our left. The Boers were about 15,000 strong but were driven off. 400 of our men and nearly 200 Boers were found dead on the field.

March 11th. Went out in the dark to guard the left flank of the camp till the wagons started. We found another picquet there who had 8 dead and 6 wounded men with them, who, poor fellows, had been out all night without medical aid. Later on we found more dead also a dead Boer. We were sent with Leiu. Dawson to search and bury the dead. But after our officers had searched them, the regulars came and buried them & I must confess I felt relieved. They simply piled stones on them, not having spades. There must have been a very hot battle there - for the bullets and bits of shell were all over the place. We were told the Boers had been up to there old games hoisting the white flag and when our men got up they opened fire, which accounted for so many dead men there. There was a lot of frail and wounded horses about - the latter were shot. Marched off again in the late afternoon.

March 12th. Had another long march and after going several miles we halted to rest and feed, but just as I got my lot half cooked, I was told off with two others to take over some cattern(?) but was only there an hour when we were relieved. I was rather annoyed at first as my food was spoilt. I made up for it when I reached the farm for I spotted a young fowl and immediately gave chase and was not long in catching it. There was also two hidew(?) cows in full milk with the cattle. My milking powers was soon put to the test to the amusement of several officers. Meanwhile the troops had moved on and we did not catch them up till evening and just as we did the Boers opened fire and several dropped quite close to our Sqd. It frightened the horses a bit - otherwise did no damage. We took the Boers by complete surprise - as they expected us on the east of the Bloemfontein frontier and we went south.

March 13th. Sent out scouting and after riding about a mile was surprised to see Bloemfontein. When our men came up we took up our position and the artillery got in action but after firing two or three shots they ceased - not getting any response. It appears the Boers left when we hove in sight and went about ten miles outside. French sent an ultimatum giving them till three pm. to surrender the town but by one o'clock our troops were marching in the town and taking up positions all around. The town having surrendered therefore finishing up - what ought to have been a big fight by nothing more or less than a pic-nic.

March 14th. Bought a pair of riding breaches from Hammonds(?) which I was sadly in need of. I then went and got a clean shirt and asked the Capt. for time to have a bath and change of clothing. I noticed a smile pass his face when I approached and evidently thought my carrying the clothes was a bit of strategy on my part to get off to get a good dip. It was granted. We bought another fowl and had a good feed.

March 15th. On grazing guard there was a private kit inspection in the evening for it was said there had been 50 pounds stolen from the caretakers of the hospital and he thought a 'Robert's Horse' man was the thief - but there was nothing found.

March 16th. Did nothing all day but a little cooking. The officers brought some foods for us from Bloemfontein which helped to swell up the meuss(?)

March 17th. Marched off and camped near the hospital - about 2 miles.

March 18. We did a long march and in the afternoon the rain came down in torrents most of the men getting wet to the skin - as they thought it not worthwhile to take off their coats from the saddle. It was miserable times for we couldn't get wood to make fires some of the Gr(?). I managed to get a fire so Mitchell and myself went and offered them a shilling to boil a billy. They would not take the money but allowed us to boil the billy (pot). We made oatmeal porridge and some cocoa. When we got back we found Littleton fast asleep. On waking him and telling what we had his face beamed with delight. It was a dirty night.

March 19th. Another retched day and night. We marched several miles and camped in nothing but a swamp. Mitchell and myself looked out for a bit of high ground to lie on and turned in together. It was rather a pitiful sight next morning to see horses and men like drowned rats.

March 20th. Reached Thaba'Nchu, an old village of Marolong(?), - a race of Kaffirs nearly extinct. Doing about 8 miles. It was rather a dirty night.

March 21st. Our Sqd. with B. was sent to a Kopje about a mile from the town. The Kaffirs came over from their village which was about two miles and brought any amount of eggs, fowls, bread, milk, etc.. We bought 3 fowls, 2 Dozen eggs, milk, syrup, biscuits, bread, and many other luxuries. I'm afraid we made perfect beasts of ourselves for there was very little left the following morning and for three of us to do that shows that we were no way "crippled about the mouth". My horse was lent to the M.I.(?)

March 22nd. Went in town to have a look around. Was not altogether taken up with the place though there were some nice villas about.

March 23rd. Went back to camp in the evening on grazing guard in the morning wet evening.

March 24. Heard we were going back to Bloemfontein but did not. Had a good bath.

March 25th. In camp all day. Lieu. Dawson asked me if I would mind cutting his hair. I told him it would be my first attempt. He said he did not mind and when I finished it said it was A.I. I did not agree with him on that score.

March 26th. On grazing guard in the morning. We had a 'bathing parade' in the afternoon. I was highly amused to think we had such a parade though I must say some of the men were indifferent regards their skin and had they embraced the, or every, opportunity they would not have had half the vermin on them as they had. I had one in the morning but went with the others in the afternoon knowing that it wouldn't do any harm.

March 27th. In camp all day: cleaned our gear - as there was saddle inspection in the afternoon.

March 28th. In camp

March 29th. Our party (C Sqd.) was sent to a kopje 5 miles NE. of Thaba'Nchu. Was left behind having lent my horse.

March 30th. Exchanged shots with enemy. Outposts driven back. message was sent to Thaba'Nchu camp telling them there were 4000 Boers in sight. Wagons left for Koorn Spruit (waterworks)

March 31st. Enemy opened fire about dawn. Ordered to retire but, by doing so, we rode within 50 yards of the Boer trenches who were disarming our men of the transport and also told us to surrender. Major Beresford who, I think, was in command of us: Halt! "Files about" gallop. I need not say we did. I only went a few yds. when my helmet went off and at the same time my horse was shot and as the poor brute was falling Sergt. Major Garwoods horse came on him which threw him. We went to the ditch as fast as we could and stopped there till the firing ceased. Eventually we were made prisoners. One of them was very excited and we couldn't drop our rifles and baudoles(?) quick enough for him but the others were fairly calm. Afraid we lost heavily - as there was several lying dead where my horse was shot, many wounded and several taken prisoner. 354 all together ie. of different units. The remainder got away to a kopje and opened fire which was kept up for some time. We lost several guns all U battery and one of two but heard they were recaptured. We started off on the march immediately they got us together to Weinburg which they said was about 40 miles but it took 4 days to reach it because we were taken miles out of the way to keep us out of sight of our men. Lost all kit but commandeered blankets and a few useful articles from our wagons. We had plenty of rations but was wild to think we were taken in such a trap made up my mind to try to escape but Lieu. Howe advised me not to as he thought it would make it worst for the others. When we camped for the night. One of our fellows was shot by the Boers because he did not get out of a wagon quick enough for them. Trooper Wake was shot through the hand but was brought on with us.

April 3rd. Reached Wienburg in the evening. When we were taken through the town some of the boys commenced jeering but was immediately stopped by the commandant. The train was waiting for us but was kept there for sometime. Before leaving we had bread mutton and coffee given which we enjoyed I got into a nice carriage only four of us in the compartment and was soon fast asleep - being tired out

April 4th. Had photographs taken in train at Veljoeu's Drift. Arrived Pretoria in the evening. The station was packed with people and I've no doubt they rejoiced to see such a body of "zoo nets"(?).

April 5th. Left Pretoria for Waterfall where we found over three thousand of our men prisoners, some having been there for over three months. We could scarcely move for their being so eager for news. The Boers was very busy putting up sheds for us but were far from finished. Terrible thunderstorm towards evening

April 6th. Got up about 6am having had a good nights rest and went in for a good bath which I was sadly in need of not having had one for a fortnight. There's a good dam and a good supply of water

April 7th. Received loan of shirt which gave me a chance to wash mine. I took two hours to wash three articles but it relieved the monotony. Bought tunic and trousers

April 8th. Turned cook for the day. Breakfast: Mealie(?), meal, rice, bread, butter and coffee. We had stew for dinner with the beef which was to last us (five) 3 days - about 2 1/2 lbs including bone-

also potatoes rice and dumplings. Found it a mistake to mix rice with it - as it caused it to stick to the bottom. Stewed it in the bucket.

April 9th. Anderson cook. We saved the meat from yesterday's meat and stewed it again - it was still frightfully hard.

April 11th. Offered some articles of clothing to the Boers - as we were running short of money. There is a store about 500 yds. from here & when we buy our luxuries, of course lard, jam & butter are considered great luxury! They charge exorbitant prices for their goods.

April 12th. Bought tin of lard (15s.) & some jam. Made some Jam rolls

May 15th. We had 60 pounds sent to us (Roberts' Horse) which came to 22/6 per man also 2/6 from another source = some funds. We were delighted - as all our money and goods was exhausted. We send to Pretoria now for things as we find it is much cheaper. There's several fellows dying of fever.

May 21st. Another 10s. sent to each man in the compound. Oh, it is a gambling den - a second "Monte Carlo". There's about 4,000 of us here now, which brings about 2,000 pounds i.e. when each man gets his ten shillings I'm sorry to note it soon gets in the hands of a few.

May 22nd. Sent to Pretoria for more goods: jam, baking powder, butter and sardines, and wood for fires is getting scarce.

May 27th. Received another sum of ten shillings.

May 29th. Turned into "bed" about 8pm and was not there long before I was awoken by a terrible uproar - our men running about like mad fellows. It appears the officer that was imprisoned at Pretoria received news that our men was near so they told the commandant he had better allow them to go to Waterfall to keep the prisoners quiet. It was a big mistake for "Tommy" (?) immediately came to the conclusion he was a free man and commenced to pull down sheds to burn their beds and a few other things in fuel: they took possession of the whole place. Most of the Boer guards left their post when we found out the mistake our heads were bowed again.

May 30th. The Boer are all back in their places and extra guards are placed around the gate that was pulled down yesterday.

June 1st. All quiet again, tho' there's plenty of rumours.

June 3rd. First thing this morning we saw there was "something in the wind" - the Boers were very busy. A commandant came in camp and told about 1000 men to get ready - as they were going to send them over the border. They immediately got ready tho' I heard the officers told them not to hurry - as they evidently knew what the Boer's intentions were - but they took no notice and were sent off. Luckily our men got possession of the line when they did for it was their intention to get us all away.

June 4th. Thought we heard guns around Pretoria and were rather excited the whole day.

June 5th. Heard our men was quiet near, consequently the whole camp was in a great state of excitement, the men getting on top of the sheds and watching with eager eyes. When about 10 am some of the "Scotch Greys" came in sight and I'm sure you could have heard the cheering for miles around. The Boer guards went and hoisted some white flags and gave up their rifles. I thought we were quite safe but while we were moving about the place a heavy fire was opened on us. 5 of their shells dropped in camp and several quite near us while we were going across the Veldt. Our guns soon silenced them. We only lost two or three men. I with two others walked the whole way to Pretoria - a distance of about 20 miles. On reaching Pretoria we met some of our men who was surprised to see us, thinking I was shot - as someone swore they saw me buried. Capt Blamsgartner(?) also sent a letter to one of my sisters. I was very sorry to think that things had taken such a course, tho' its certainly very kind of the Cpt. to send to my sister believing me to be shot. We slept in a loft the same night - Kaffirs one end we the other.

June 6th. Had a look around the town which I don't think much of - though there is some good buildings. gov(?) Paul's house is quite near the road - with rather dirty surroundings. I'm sure some of our tradesmen's homes would not think of living in such a building. I was informed by a lady that it was "very nice" inside. After breakfast we went and joined the others to a camp near the race course. I could send a message home but could not - the wire being cut between Pretoria and Bloemfontein.

June 7th. Went over to see our fellows of Robert's Horse. There was only a few there, the others were some miles off. Lieu. Finsel(?), who was our sergeant up till the time of my capture, gave me all the news. Capt. Baumgarten(?) was with the Regiment(?) therefore I did not see him. Met Littleton.

June 8th. Got a pass to go into town to get a few things and to send off the message but found the wires still cut. Bought bread meats, fish, etc.

June 9th. In camp.

June 10th. Marched on Pretoria to the "Court of Inquiry" but only Lieu. Horn and Sergt. M Garwood was called - simply a matter of form(?).

June 11th. Went to the camp where our officers was put by the Boers - another such place as Waterfall - wire fencing around it.

June 12th. Was asked to join the Pretoria Mounted Police The money was 10 s. a day and all found. Did not give my name as I thought of going back to Cape Town.

June 13th. Learning we could rejoin our regiment at the expiration of three months - or take our discharge I decided to take it.

June 14th. All that gave in their names yesterday was called on parade for inspection. Several was turned back - the remainder was marched to a large building in Pretoria.

June 15th. In camp.

June 16th. Fifty of us was picked out for special duty but feeling very ill I "went sick" and was sent to a hospital to see a Dr., who said I was dangerously ill with Enteric.

June 19th. Was seen by another Dr. who had me put into a room with four or five others. I was kept from the 16th till the 19th. without any attendance what so ever. Fortunately I could not eat anything. Was kept there several days but, getting no better, I was sent to the "Palace of Justice Hospital" where I was seen by Sir William Thompson (medical adviser to the Queen) who put me on milk.

July 25th. Was told I could get out of bed for an hour or so. I tried it but found my "props" was too weak.

July 26th. Dr. Friel(?) advised me to go by the ambulance train which was leaving the following evening for Cape Town.

July 31st. Left hospital in an ambulance wagon for station where train was awaiting us. Left 9pm.

Aug. 1st. Arrived at Viljeois(?) drift about midday where we heard the line was blown up by rebels this side of Vereeniging - Vereeniging is on the border of the Transvaal.

Aug. 2nd. Left about 7am and with a few hours run we reached Roodeval The station was blown up by Free Staters on June 7th, the same time The "Derby Militia" (?) was cut up. We stopped there for an hour or so which gave Dr. Listless(?) and orderlies a chance to pick up a few things. The sick was not allowed to get out but an orderly got me a piece of an 100lb. Boer shell. Roodeval is about 30 miles this side (Transvaal) of Kroonstad where we arrived the same night. When we heard the rebels had been up to their old games - having blown up the line in three places also stopped and wrecked a train. In the train was the American consul and several of our men. Three, I was told, lost their lives and some wounded. Colonel Slowe(?) (the American consul) got our men away with the exception of all officers whom they made prisoners. The train was flying the "Stars and Stripes" at the time and the colonel Stowe was on a diplomatic visit to Pretoria. I wonder what some American (pro Boers) will think, or say, when they hear the news!

Aug. 8th. Arrival at Wynberg taking 7 days to do the journey, awfully tired. Met Webster.

Aug. 9th. Went to Cape town with Sergeant Watter of the I.G.(?) to see for letters but did not get any.

Aug. 10th. In camp

Aug. 11th. Went to Rosebank to get some clothes but was told by O.C. to get a note from the Dr. at Wynberg - simply to say I was a patient there.

Aug. 12th Proceeded to Rosebank got an outfit and returned to Wynberg. Took portmanteaus back who got a letter

Aug. 13th. Went to Cape Town with Trooper Hamon of the I. Geomany(?) and had a good time.

Aug. 14th. In camp

Aug. 15th. Asked Major Trouss(?) if I was one of the party that was leaving for England Was told they had to get a special sanction in my case from the regiment.

Aug. 16th. An order came out that each patient had to get culs(?) hospital clothing owing to some of the colonels getting drunk which stopped us from getting any more passes which was a great preevance(?)

Aug. 17th. Nothing to do therefore time hung heavily.

Aug. 18th. Young Moodie came to see me having heard I was there through Miss Reid. He was very much cut about his brother and wanted to know every particular. I told him I thought he only lived about two hours after he was shot.

Aug. 19th Met Miss Hull who wanted to know about her brother. Could not give her much news. Only leaving wet(?) TDR(?) the elder, the same day I got released from Waterfall. She was very nice.

Aug. 21st. Mrs. Moodie sent some butter and lemons. It was certainly very kind of her - for the lemons made some very nice drink.

Aug. 22nd. General clear out. Most all my acquaintances left for England.

Aug. 23rd. Miserably dull. Nothing to do or nowhere to go

Aug. 24th. Went to office to see if my Sanction had come. Major Sewer(?) told me it was there but that I should have to pass a "board" ie. to be examined by some medical men.

Sept. 2nd. Received one invitation (open) to take dinner with Mrs. Thuss-hass(?) - 7pm.

Sept. 3rd. Went to get a pass signed by Major Sewer(?) but did not get it.

Sept. 4th. Went to him again and after a lot of explanations got it. Went to Cape Town in the afternoon. Met Boyton had tea with him and spent a pleasant afternoon. He told me Littleton and Kellhole was in Cape Town and had been there a week. Promised to write to him and let him know I was at Wynberg.

Sept. 7th. Littleton's been here and is looking well. Told me he was in the Censor's office at Cape Town and that he had got a commission. Seemed annoyed when I told him I did not require anything

Sept. 8th. Put on roll for England. Wrote four letters: Dot, Ern, Mrs. Wilson re: fur and feathers, and Mrs. Hull(?) declining invitation.

Sept. 13th. Told to get out kits from store and was not long before we were in there as everyone seemed pleased to get into their own clothes. Mrs. Thuss-hall called on me in the afternoon and made me a present of some silver leaves and a walking stick. Also Mrs. Hull's sister-in-law came and wanted to know if I knew a Trooper William who had not been heard of since March 31st. Knew nothing about him but promised I would call and see his father at "Kapelton House", Worcester if I went anywhere near. Wrote Littleton.

Sept. 14th. Left Wynberg around 9 am for station and arrived at Cape Town about 10 am. where the "Vieldonau Castle" was waiting. Looks a nice steamer.

Sept. 15th. Steamed out of the docks about 12.30. There was a little cheering but in a very short time we were lost to sight and sound from those we left behind. Got a rather nice cot and joined a mess of 15 - mostly fellows of the I.G.(?) Arranged with one of the regulars to do our work.

Sept. 19th. Heard that smallpox had broken out on board which upset most of us and to make matters worse one of the "tomevien" (?) who was a bit off his head - jumped overboard. The alarm was immediately given and the steamer stopped but, owing to the darkness nothing was seen of him - 9 pm.

Sept. 20th. The excitement of last evening is cooled down a bit but am told we shall have to call at ascension for lymph(?) as we should all have to be vaccinated. This will throw us 300 miles out of our course.

Sept. 22nd. Lighted Ascension. Looks very barren. Only can see a few houses. Got Lymph(?) and proceeded on our journey. Vaccinated.

Sept. 23rd. Attended church service at 8 and 10.30 am. The Captain - who's a very earnest man - takes a very active part.

Sept. 26th. Reached St Vincent - having called there for coal. Amused to see the niggers dive for money which they very seldom miss. St Vincent also looks very barren but am told its very fertile further inland. Certainly it has a beautiful harbours - sheltered from all winds. As you enter you come quite near the light house - which is built on a high rock about half a mile in circumference and gives one the impression that it was brought from the depths of the ocean by Almighty powers to warn mariners against the awful cliffs. Portuguese is the language spoken.

Sept. 27th. Left about 2 am having taken on several tons of coal and a good supply of water and within a very short time was out of sight of land once more. There were a few sharks. and thousands of flying fish about.

Oct. 3rd. Poor fellow died of asthma and was buried at sea. They wrap them up in sheets and throw the overboard - legs first.

Oct. 5th. After three weeks on water we sighted old England once more. we took the Pilot on board but remained outside all night.

Oct 6th. Several Officers came on board with the Dr. and on their leaving we weighed anchor and got along side the wharf of Southampton and I was on British soil once more after the absence of ten months. Was there for an hour or so then we were sent on to Gosport. Dirty afternoon.

Oct. 7th. Went to Fort Brockhurst to get out Furlough(?) papers but while I was waiting for mine and order came from the Wax(?) office not to send any more men away. Very disappointing.