**MR4/25/64 Transcript of a Boer War notebook by an unknown soldier (possibly 1St Battalion, Manchester Regiment)**

**March 1900**

Enlisted on **17th of March 1900** (Tuesday).

**April 1900**

Taken into hospital on **17th April** with chronic Pneumonia and Emphysema .

**October 1900**

Discharged from hospital on **6th October**.

Served out with battalion on **16th October**. It was Wednesday.

Sailed from Southampton on **17th October**.

Landed at Queenstown (Cork, Ireland) to take on more troops and sailed on **19th October**.

Reached Madeira on **22nd October** and took on coal and water.

Sailed again on the **23rd.** One man of the Welsh Regiment died on **25th October** and was buried at sea on **26th**.

Passed Cape Verde Island on **26th October** and crossed the line on **28th**.

**November 1900**

Landed at Cape Town on Monday **5th November**. Went on shore and got to Maitland Camps on **6th** (Tuesday).

Made the ascent of Table Mountain on Sunday **18th November**.

Left Cape Town for Pretoria on Tuesday **20th November** at 5pm. Stopped at [Wellington] At 7.30pm then travelled all night and stopped at Magersfontein on 21st.

Stopped at Beaufort West for tea at 5pm. Travelled all night and reached De Aar at 7am on **22nd November**.

Passed 50 Boer prisoners at 10am and passed about 50 more at 12.15pm and reached Naauwpoort Junction at 2.30pm to re-victual and stopped at Colesberg and then went onto Norvalpont for tea and landed here at 10pm Thursday. Stayed there all night on account of line being damaged by Boers.

Left there at daylight on **23rd** and passed an armoured train, also another 50 Boer prisoners and landed at Bloemfontein at 6.30pm. Miles distance 749. Detrained and did sentry over baggage and got tea at 9pm on 23rd November and slept over baggage. Got to camp at Bloemfontein at 10.20am on **24th**.

On guard for the **26th November** for 24 hours.

Left Bloemfontein on **27th** in charge of 12 men for Pretoria. Reached Kroonstad at 2pm and stayed an hour for dinner. Left and stayed at Viljeonsdrif all night. Crossed the Vaal river at 5.30am on **28th** and had to change trains at Elandsfontein at 10.30am after leaving town about 30 miles there is little within rifle shots of each other and guards on every bridge along the line. Distance from Bloemfontein 291 miles.

Reached Pretoria on Thursday and riding horses out on **30th November**. Started work on **1st December.**

**December 1900**

Went to the funeral of Col. Chapman at 6am on **1st December** in the pouring rain.

On **23rd December**, received orders to prepare to go to a battery. We left Pretoria in an open cattle truck at 9.45 for the 19th Battery in Newcastle. Got to Elandsfontein at 2.30pm and stayed in the station all night. Left there by the 8.30am train on the **25t**h in a coal truck. Got bully and biscuits for dinner at Heidelburg where we stopped an hour and got to Charlestown at 9.30pm. Changed trains and got to Newcastle at 1am on **26th** passing Abajuba and going through Lang’s Nek Tunnel.

**January 1901**

On **5th January 1901** left here with section to escort a convoy to Utrecht and escort one back on 9th January.

**February 1901**

Left Newcastle at 2.50 on **11th February** and got to Umbana at 5.30pm and camped in the open and left there for Utrecht at 3pm on **12th**. Got to Utrecht at 6pm where we camped all night moving at 5.30am on reconnaissance and got in sight of Boers and guns came into action. Chased the Boers for three hours. When we returned to Utrecht, helped to capture wild ponies and looted a homestead of a rebel Boer.

Stayed in Utrecht for repairs and for the convoy to come up; the convoy being the largest that had travelled the country. General Burn Murdock in command got to camp 10 miles out of Utrecht and harnessed up at 3 am. on **16th** in pouring rain and then stayed till mist had risen, here we commandeered a large boar which we cooked in our canteens, fell out laughing and joking all though the rain. The fog continues all day, commandeer two sheep. They are killed, cooked and eaten in an hour.

Left camp at 4.45 on **17t**h, and get run over both legs by ammunition waggon and taken to 1st RD ambulance. On the **18th** go to a field hospital at the camp Burghers Laager and re-joins my section the same day which then moves onto the Berg. Here a dense mist prevails and everyone is wet through. Sleep at night without having a dry stitch. Section then moves off and camps again after a five hour march through nicks and passes in pouring rain; this having rained now for 5 days being now the **20th February**

16 Boer prisoners are here brought in, and bags of loot captured. On **21st** rain still continues and none of us have a dry stitch. For dinner we had geese and ducks and enjoyed it although wet. Boers are reported surrendering all over the place.

**Friday 22nd**, rain still continues and it is now out in orders that as provisions are scarce, we are to kill all sheep and cattle that we want, mutton chops and leg of mutton and vegetables for dinner.

**23rd** got harnessed up at 7.30 to move off but order is cancelled and ponies out the first time in 8 days.

**24th** the sun is still out and it is a treat to have dry things on, this camp is Elando.

**25th** the convoy get on the move to meet (Major) General Dartnell, we get in touch with [?] column at 5.30pm after a 7 hours march along a very bad road crossing the [?] river.

**26th** leave here and recross the river and return to Potgulers Hock stay here in which place we are to garrison until the whole of the convoy are through; gathering oranges and pomegranates on 28th

**March 1901**

**March 1st** harnessed up at 4.30am. Boers reported on the Berg. They return at night, the Boers having scooted.

**March 3rd** rains again start.

**March 5th** received mail. Moved off from this camp at 1.30am on the **9t**h and get to camp again on the **10th** where we stayed until the **14th** moving off at 6am and halts at 10.30 at Pivaans Poort. Here the guns came into action and there are 2 men wounded, one killed of 1st RD. Guns again in action on the **15th.** Leave Pivaans Poort on **23rd** for One Tree Hill where we refit for flying column. Leave One Tree Hill on **24th** and got to Dundee on **28th.**

Leave Dundee on **30th** at 7 and reach Dannhauser (where we looted a farmhouse) at 2pm which place we leave at 7am on **31s**t and get to Ingagane at 1.30pm where we stay the night and leave at 7am to reach Newcastle at 11am on April **1st**.

**May 1901**

**May 24th** left Newcastle at 3pm and got to Konisberg at 8pm. Left Konigsberg at 2.30am on **25th** for the Drakensberg via the Mullers Pass and again left these at 3pm for Konigsberg leaving there for Newcastle at 9am on **26t**h.

**June 1901**

**June 17th 1901** Leaves Newcastle at 9.30am and get to Volksrust at 2pm then missed the train and had to camp out without the kits. Left Volksrust at 4.30am on **18th** and got to Standerton at 12 noon. Got dinner there, then got to Elandsfontein at 7.30pm, got our kits and left there at 4.30am on **19th** and got to Pretoria at 8am. At 10 take a walk to the town and have a look at Kruger’s house. Leave Pretoria at 1.15pm and reach Middleberg at 9.45pm. Leave there at 12 noon on **20th** and reach Machadodorp at 4.30. Here we have tea, leave at 5pm and reach Waterval Boven at 6. Stay here all night, leave at 6.15am on **21st** and reach Kaapmuiden at 6.30. Leave there at 9.30am and reach Barberton at 1.30 on **22nd**.

**July 1901**

Leave here for Komarti Poort on **July 15th** at 8am and reach Komati at 3.30pm.

**December 1901**

**December 20th Friday**

Leave Barberton at 6am and reach Waterval Boven at 9pm. Raining heavy. Leave here and reach Pretoria at 6pm Saturday.

**Monday 23rd** leave Pretoria at 7.30pm and reach Elandsfontein at 10.15pm.

**24th** remounts arrive here numbers 130

**25th** Christmas Day Troops receive pound tin each of Duff and one stick of tobacco and quart of beer free.

**26t**h [?] horses and leave at 3pm and reach Standerton at 4am on 27th. Leave Standerton on **30th** and proceed out 4 miles out to concentrate the column and march off again on **January 1st 1902.**

**January 1902**

Receive mail of three letters and parcel and halt and form camp about 10 miles out.

**January 3rd** advance guard of Canadians and 73 Battery in touch with enemy and have two men wounded. They capture 6 horses and saddles.

8th One Canadian and one man of 3rd Battery captured and shipped. Rear guard in action all day and one man of Ennis Dragoons killed and two wounded and two native scouts wounded. One of the wounded dies. Passed Boer hospital in which are 13 wounded Boers and one Sister wounded.

**15th** leave camp at 4.30am and at 10am until 3pm again on the march and only go 6 miles. At 5pm we halt till 9pm and watch the moon go down and it starts raining heavily. Waggon gets stuck. We stand all night by the wagons in the rain and move off and form camp at 4.00am on 17th, rest until 2pm and form camp again at 7pm.

Leave camp at 4.40 and halt at 11am, raining heavily all the time. Reach Reitz on **25th** at 6pm and leave here at 9am on **29th** and go about 10 miles and halt at 1pm and have dinner and march again at 2.30pm.

Enemy ‘snipering’ all day. Halt again at 7pm. Reveille **Thursday 30th** 4.30am, march off at 6.30am. Halted at 11.30 till 3pm, halted again at 7pm, marched 30 miles. Fall in at 11.30pm and retraced our way back to the place we halted at mid-day. Surprised a laager and captured 23 prisoners and 16 wagons and Cape Earls with teams and brought in several families. Enemy sniping all day into camp but no casualties.

**Friday January 31st** march off at 11.30 and proceed a few miles and cross a bad drift. It took two hours for the convoy to cross and halted at 7pm.

**February 1902**

**Saturday February 1st** Reveille at 4.30am, march off at 6am, halted outside Harrismith. Pitched camp at 11.30am. Went in for supplies and remounts.

**Sunday February 2nd** Reveille at 5.30am. March off at 4pm and go a few miles to left of Harrismith and gone on outpost.

**Monday February 3rd** Reveille 4am. March off at 5.30 and crossed Elands river bridge and halt at 10 till 1pm; halt again at 6pm

**Tuesday February 4th** Reveille 3.30am. March at 5. Advance guards came in touch with Boers and guns fired a few rounds and enemy clear away. Halt at 10am till 2pm; halt again at 6.30pm about 8 miles from Reitz

**Wednesday February 5th** Reveille at 4.30. March off at 6 and halt at Reitz at 9am. Had to go and chase Boers who were seen driving cattle away; captured about 200 cattle but Boers got away. Go back to camp where convoy had halted at Reitz. March again at 1pm. Convoy going along line of block houses. Halted at 7 and pitched camp. All the units on outpost.: 6 men to a post and Officers as well on outpost

**Thursday February 6th** March at 6am in extended order 5 columns in line and halted at 12 till 2pm; march again at 2pm. Boers seen in front with convoy capture a good deal of livestock and gun fire about 30 rounds at enemy. Halt at 7pm, all hands on outpost distance travelled 40 miles.

**February 7th** off at 5.30am; halt at 11am till 2pm. Fire at Boers at long range. Outpost at night. The enemy at night try to break through the outposts but are driven back; losses in killed or wounded not known but 157 prisoners captured and a lot of horses left dead on the ground

**Saturday February 8th** off at 6am. Hear guard firing nearly all day. Halt at 4pm ; all on outpost. De Wet escapes through block houses ; finished the drive and 320 prisoners captured and 9 surrender besides a lot of cattle and wagons taken

**February 9th** Reveille at 6am and march off at 3pm and proceed 10 miles to [?]

**Monday 10th** Reveille at 6. March off at 11am. Halt at Heilbron at 6pm

**Tuesday February 11th** Reveille 6am and stay outside Heilbron

**Friday February 14th** Reveille 5.30am. March off at 9am; halt at 1pm at railway line

**Saturday February 15th** Battery on outpost. Stand to at 3.30am. March at 2pm; halt at 5pm

**February 16th** Reconnoitering patrol at 4.30am. Column marched at 6am. Halt at [?]. All units on outpost

**Monday February 17th** Stand to arms at 3.30am. March off at 6am and cross the Wilge River. Halt at 12pm. March again at 2pm; column in line for drive. Halt at 6pm and all on outpost. Heavy firing about 2am for ½ hour

**Tuesday 18th** Stand to at 3.30am. March at 6am. Capture a lot of horses and cattle the guns are in action for ¼ hour. Halt at 12 and march at 3pm. Halt at 7pm all on outpost. A little firing between 12 and 1am

**Wednesday 19th** Stand to arms 3.30am. Reconnoituring patrol at 11.30 and returns at 2pm. All units on outpost at night

**Thursday February 20th** Stand to arms at 4.30am Column march at 6am; halt at 1.15. Outpost at 6pm

**February 22nd** Stand to arms at 3.30am. Column march at 6am. Enemy firing all day. Halt at 11am at Vrede. March at 1pm. Halt at 6pm, all on outpost

**Sunday 23rd** Reveille 4.30am. March at 6am. Boers in force in front; guns often in action. Halt at 1.30pm. Go on outpost at 6pm. About 11.30pm Boers try to break through the outposts driving a great herd of cattle in front of them. Firing started at 12 and lasted until daylight. 20Boers left dead on the field and their total casualties unknown. Ours about 100 and 11 killed outright. Over 11000 head of cattle and 1000 horses captured. [?] and two Field [?] killed, two hundred reported to have got through

**Monday 24th** Column halt for the day. Enemy in front and near 19 Battery observation past all day. Column on outpost at night

**Tuesday 25th** Stand to arms at 3.30am. March at 6am, Boers in front, guns in action. Halt at 3pm. Outpost at night.

**Wednesday 26th** Stand to arms at 3.30am. Burn down De Villiers Farm. Halt at 1pm. March again at 3. Halt at dusk and all on the outpost

**Thursday February 27th** Stand to arms at 3.30am. March at 5am. Search the hills round Harrismith and camp, result of the drive: 759 captured, 50 killed and 100 wounded; 20000 head of cattle and 2000 horses and 12000 sheep; a great deal of ammunition and arms

**Friday February 28th** outside Harrismith on outpost at night

**March 1902**

**Saturday March 2nd** at Harrismith, go to hospital

**Sunday 2nd** Reveille 5.30am. March 7.30am and halt at Elands River bridge at 1pm

**Monday 3rd** Reveille 5.30am Still at Elands River

**Tuesday 4th** Reveille 3.30am March off at 5.30, halt at 12noon. March at 2pm, halt at 7pm. Column on outpost

**Wednesday 5th** Stand to arms 3.30am. March at 6am and halt at 11am. Capture 3 guns and some ammunition. March at 2pm capture I maxim complete with 200 rounds of 15 pdr. ammunition. Halt at 6.30. All on outpost…