

THE JOURNAL OF ARTHUR AARON BOSS, 1879.

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from

Mr. Stanley Boss,

Crest Hotel,

7, Abel Road,

Berea,

Transvaal 2198.

February 22nd 1879 -----

Left Dordrecht in charge of waggon at 1/4 to 9 a.m. to proceed to Barkly --- ordered to return back sharp --- ordered to proceed to Aliwal --- order counter-manded, left town for Palmitfontein 1/4 past one. Outspanned at 1/2 past 6 at the stables.

Run the cutter for peaches at Vanzyl. Taken charge of two invalids, Peach & Develing. (1).

Windy night towards ^{London} ---town --- slept in the veldt without tents. Young Jenner amusing the men with his peculiarities. Very heavy mist towards morning.

Sunday morn 22/2/

1/2 past one a.m. men getting up in Camp --- making coffee --- returned to bed again & slept like a brick.

Packing up to start on our journey at 1/2 past 6 a.m. --- Very cold & misty.

Outspanned close to Jamestown --- proceeded on our journey.

News first received that Mooirose (2) has turned all whites out of his country.

Started from Hatting's place at 10 to 11 a.m. Exchange of comrades, Dixon in place of Webb. (3).

Very dusty travelling, almost choking. Arrived in James Town at 10 to 1 Mid-day. Will stay at James Town until Queenstown and Tarkastad Troops arrive. Ordered to prepare myself in light marching order --- Jenner & Grosbendtuer got drunk, both quarrelling over an empty French bottle.

Left James Town at 3 p.m. --- encamped for the night little beyond James Town at 1/4 to 6 p.m. Made bed for Develing --- expect to sleep better tonight.

Started from last Hatting place at 1/4 to 7 on the 24/2/79. Halted at Van Plaasters --- had a good feed of peaches. Cleaned Bit and Stirrup Irons on 21/1/2/79. First horse guard since leaving Town, Monday 22nd from 2 p.m. till 6 p.m.

Very hot. Just thinking what people are doing in Town.
February 22nd/79.

Horses troublesome --- Joined by Queenstown and Tarkastad Troops at 1/4 to 4 p.m. Queenstown and Tarkastad Troop left again at 4 p.m.

Oxen lost had to go without waggon --- Bought break at Van Plaasters for Troop. Picked up stragglers of Queenstown & Jamestown Yeo.

Splendid fun --- Parkes too proud to carry food on his horse for himself. Captain takes compassion --- gave two loaves of bread for mess. Arrived and joined other Troops at Vuur Nchta (4) at 1/4 to 8 p.m.

Tuesday 23/2/79.

Horse guard from 2 a.m. till 6 a.m. Am writing my diary while doing guard --- Horses troublesome. Ordered to clean Riding equipment for Saddle parade on 24/2/79.

Commencement of hard times --- had to make breakfast of dry bread & black coffee, also had to take same socks off from feet & wash them & waited till dried in the sun.

First saddle parade on the 23/2/79 at 5 p.m.

Tuesday evening.

Just heard that A. B. C. D. Troops have to take Mooirooses Kraal --- expect to have some fighting on Tuesday night --- singing in Camp --- Camp quite alive. Oxen turned up Wednesday.

28/2/79.

Left last Hattings place at 1/4 past 6 a.m. Enjoyed first meal since leaving Town. Left Kraai River at 1/4 to 11 a.m.

Offsaddled again at 1/2 past 1, Mid-day

Yeo's dancing Schottiches just before saddling.

First rain 26/2/79.

Arrived in Herschel at 8 p.m. Complaints being made to the Captain of food & groceries being stolen from the men.

Left Herschel Thursday morning 27/2/79 at 1/2 past 8 a.m.
Offsaddled again at 1/2 past 10 a.m. at the Magistracy. Will stay
in Herschel till next day 5 a.m.

Under orders of Dr. Everitt (5). First dissatisfaction
among our men. Captain Everitt wishes our men volunteering to
guard horses sooner than being (ordered).

Encamped in with G. & I Troops. (6). Miserable lot of men.

Thursday 27/2/79:

Pitched Tents for the first time. Heavy shower of rain ---
Furious hail storm. Tents leaking.

First Irish stew 24/2/79 --- enjoyed it very much.

Friday 28/2/79:

Started from last Hattings place at 5 a.m. & joined the
Tarkast & Queenstown Troops on the line of march for the first time.

Country beautiful & Crops splendid.

Offsaddled again at 8 a.m. Started on journey at 1/2 past 8
a.m. Road very dusty and tiresome for riders. Saddled off again
at Sterk Spruit 10 a.m. to 12 a.m.

Captain Everitts commands --- wish him to the Devil ---
Drawling sort of cuss.

Expect to reach Palmitfontein to-night.

Order read out to warn the men about disobedience of orders.
Michaelis fined 2/6 for disobedience. Horses picketed for the
first time --- fed them on mealies --- horses refused to eat them.

Gaw, Dugmore, Bishop, Burns --- waggon escort. I pity the
poor Devils --- Started in advance of waggons.

Friday --

One dare not speak a word without being questioned. Fellows
very inquisitive.

Sitting down on the grass eating peaches. Generally last in
getting fire to burn & coffee made --- can't make it out.

Paich & Develing examined by Dr. E. --- All well.

Arrived at Palmitfontein at 6 p.m. Thank Goodness. Just heard that the Camp expects to be attacked & had 40 men on guard.

On the evening of the 27th. Turned out to be a false alarm.

Jolly place Palmitfontein --- quite charmed with it.

Firewood etc. scarce --- have to pay through the nose for the stuff --- ruination to a poor Devil that only earns 4/- a day.

Was shown our position should the Camp be attacked.

Order read out to the effect that we have to keep guns & ammunition close to our beds in the night --- that all must be ready at a moments notice & have to make entrenchments for ourselves.

Saturday March 1st:

Woke up this morning about 4 a.m. half frozen --- weather very cold towards morning.

Horse guard again at 10 a.m.

Had to take bread for the Mess --- confounded hard work --- 400 men with Police at present in Palmitfontein.

Was washing myself in the river when all the men were called suddenly into Camp & 6 men told to get themselves in readiness for 3 days patrol. Have just heard about 600 Mooirose niggers are close to our Camp. An order read out that all the men are to keep themselves in readiness at a moments notice. Great excitement in Camp --- expected to be attacked.

Another order read out that the alarm may be sounded any minute & that the men were to take their position shown to them.

Alarm sounded --- the whole camp called out and placed in skirmishing order. Turned out to be all humbug --- simply trying the men to see how quick they can get in order. Horses saddled up --- should the enemy retreat we would go after them & pepper them properly.

It was amusing to see the different expressions of our mens faces when the alarm was sounded. Grosbendtuer was warned previous to the alarm --- 3 days patrol --- he was also told to

leave the Field --- was only to anxious to get away --- his face was as white as a sheet --- one or two of our principal men also changed colour. Any amount of bragging among our men --- am rather anxious to see how they will turn out.

Infernal horse guard again from 10 a.m. till 2 o'clock --- rather tiresome work --- one gets worked to death what with fatigue work & horse guard, & out-lying piket.

Sunday 2nd:

Pitched Tents --- things scattered in all directions --- eight men are obliged to sleep in one Tent --- very little room left when boxes, & saddles are packed away in the Tents.

Monday:

Picket again from 1/2 past 3 a.m. Tuesday till half past 3 Wednesday morn. at the Telle close to the Junction of the Orange & Telle Rivers. (7). The whole of the 48 hours guard, without any sleep. Weather very miserable. Went to see the Junction of the Telle & Orange Rivers --- splendid sheets of water --- have to guard the Drift so that no Kaffirs shall pass. Kaffirs attempting to pass very cheeky & Inquisitive --- was told by one Basuto that they intend to come to-morrow --- that would be Thursday 4/3/79 --- for not allowing him to pass to buy Tobacco.

Another Basuto said he heard that we intend attacking them, & asked when that would be.

Off saddling & saddling every hour, so as to prevent the enemy from crossing the Telle --- confounded hard work. Rain the whole time. I almost dread the evening as I shall have to do Mounted patrolling the whole night without any sleep. Dash it.

Tuesday 3/3/79:

Two evenings after the Cape M. Rifles were on the same work in the night when two of the men were fired upon --- one fellow had such a fright that he ran away & left his cap behind him. While relieving one of No. A Troop the poor Devil was fast asleep on

horse back & lost his gun.

Tremendous lot of cattle knocking about. Kaffirs knocking about --- sneaking out of all places.

Have just heard that one of our principal men when the alarm was sounded while loading his revolver he let more than half of them drop.

Country splendid across the Telle --- mealies tempting but dare not touch them --- feel miserable leading such a life.

Have had no chance of taking off my clothes before going to bed. I get that tired at times that I squat down anywhere.

Tuesday 4/3/79:

Shall have the finest dinner since leaving --- Fowls, potatoes, Mutton & Beef all mixed together --- can't say what they call it --- Christened the stew the Telle stew.

Relieved from Mounted piket by the James Town men --- never felt so pleased in my life. I managed to keep awake but from that time I had the hardest job imaginable --- at one time my chums had to wake me so as to prevent me falling from my horse --- and rested my head on the saddle & dozed off again.

Wednesday:

One of the wounded picket came to the Captain & said of (?a) lot of Basutos are at the drift. Captain & the men strengthen'd the piket. Captain very restless little did he think that we should be attacked so soon.

Wednesday afternoon --- about 5 we heard shots firing from the Telle drift --- scarcely a moment after the alarm was sounded by the James Town Trumpeter. The men rushed to their places armed & found it was real instead of false. Ridwell's men were the first on the Field --- Then the Police which came in time otherwise Ridwell's men would have been cut off to a man. After the Police came the Queenstown men, & half our men only which had the pleasure of standing still while all the other men were potting at the

niggars. The fight lasted for about an hour & a half. 15 niggars can be accounted for killed besides the wounded. I do not know how many --- the accounts seem to be contradictory. On(e) half of our men acted as the reserve. I never saw such a lot of men more anxious to wire into the niggars. The Captain had as much as he could do to restrain them --- they wanted to clear off in all directions. I was amused at one old fellow --- he said each shot that was fired at him there was only a sheet of paper between him & hell. Jones is the man's name --- he said if it had'ent been for him a portion of the James Town Troop would have been cut up. A Fact.

The niggars jumped old Jones's horse --- he said he never ran so hard in his life as when the niggars chased him --- he borrowed Storey's horse, gun, & ammunition & went back again to have a shot or two more before they cleared off. Towards the close of the fight it was astonishing to see where all the niggars came from & little did we expect to see them bolt out of the mealie land in all directions. The niggars fought well. I took them to be about 450 in all. Two wounded on our side are progressing favourably --- a niggar sergeant & one white man, named Kelly.

Com^d Griffith (8) turned up with 2000 Tembus just about the commencement of the fight --- one lot of niggars attempted to take us upon our extreme left when they saw 100 of Griffith's men they turned back.

Wednesday 6th:

Surrounded on all sides by niggars --- should they attack the Camp we shall have as much as we can do. Three of the enemy we saw killed for certain --- managed to capture one gun.

Thursday:

Return of Parkin from patrol of 6 days --- he said he had it pleasant while with Badger (9).

Getting more ship shape now. Camp looks like a little

village.

Friday 8/3/79:

Horse guard again 2nd Relief from 10 a.m. till 2 p.m.

Dysentery commencing among the men --- dosed R. Best with castor oil.

Aliwal & Burghersdorp Troops crossed into the Enemy's Country for the purpose of searching the Hut(s) to see whether there were any dead niggars in them --- found instead a little Kaffir alive, about 3 years old --- deaf & dumb left by his parents at the time of the fight. The youngster must have been without food 2 days --- he was fed as soon as he was brought to camp & ate as much as a grown up boy.

Mounted order --- Infernal work --- have to keep my horse saddled up should there be an attack I have to ride to where the horse(s) are grazing & bring them to Camp & help to saddle up --- poor Boy.

At 4 p.m. the whole of the Camp consisting of 5 Troops A. B. C. E. F. about 200 men had mounted drill & went through a little skirmishing so as to give us an idea of what it looks like with a large body of men.

It was fine sight seeing all the men together. 4 men out of each Troop which made 20 in all were obliged to go into the Enemy's Country to get the waggon that was captured by us & had to load it up with Fire wood & Mealies for the men.

Saturday:

Confounded horse guard. Had a tin case for a pillow on Saturday night to sleep upon, really enjoyed the luxury.

Bitter cold --- had frost on Sunday morning.

Went to a Concert on Saturday evening given by the Burghersdorp & Aliwal men.

Fine fun seeing the men of other Troops quarrelling all day long. Our men pull very well together.

Sunday:

Had to cook for nine men, Captain including --- beastly hot work.

Serg.^t Major Hamilton in Hospital --- was sick after drinking Kaffir milk.

Monday 10/3/79:

Was ordered to be one on a foraging expedition in the Enemy's Country --- got 3 waggon loads of dung-wood. Mealies. Poultry & peaches --- was fired upon by the Enemy --- was ordered to cross the river as soon as possible for fear the Enemy should attack us. Splendid musical Band & Singing on Monday night --- Burghersdorp Band quite an acquisition to the Camp. A. B. & C. played E. F. G. a game of cricket, the former winning by 18 runs.

Tuesday 11/3/79:

Queenstown men captured 5 horses from the enemy the spoil to be divided between the whole regiment.

Wednesday 12/3/79:

Mounted out lying picket again from from 1/25 p.m. till 1/25 a.m.

Kaffirs seen on Spy Kop about 30 or 40 men about 12 a.m. --- was amused at Murray as soon as he found that he had to do picket in the night took ill suddenly.

Thursday 13/3/79:

Had foot drill. Michaelis stood 6 bottles of Beer in honour of getting three weeks leave.

Friday 14/3/79:

Horse guard again --- went with Captain F. & White for a bathe in the Orange River --- enjoyed it immensely.

Fine fun --- Michaelis put two fowls in the pot for dinner -- when the time came to take them up they had gone elsewhere. Arrival of 51 Volunteers mostly Dutchmen from James Town & Aliwal District at 8 a.m.

Barkly Yeo. turned up at Palmitfontein on Friday afternoon
--- they number 45.

Men dissatisfied with Captain --- will not allow us to go
anywhere without him being with us --- treats us like a lot of
school children. Murray pretends to be short sighted --- the other
day while on picket duty he managed to see a white man amongst the
enemy about 600 yards distant.

Saturday 15/3/79:

Blooming fatigue work again carrying bags of mealies etc.
Minto's Troop turned up 104 men in all at 5 p.m.

Cricket Match.

Between the Officers & Men --- the former winning by five
wickets. Captain F. supposed to be gone made a fool of himself
blackguarded P. the whole of the game. P. refused to play second
innings. C. used bad language to P. the men jeered C. he lost his
temper & wired into D. for cheering the Troopers while playing.
Splendid fun.

Sunday:

Made pudding for dinner quite a success.

Monday 17th:

Left Palmitfontein for Mooirose's stronghold at 1/2 past 9
a.m. --- off saddled at Silver Spruit at 1/2 past 12 a.m. Left last
Hatting's place at 10 past 5 p.m. on Monday evening for two days
patrol.

Weather threatening --- rain commenced at 6 a.m. & kept on
till 10 a.m. --- on Tuesday we were ordered to take a blanket with
us & had to make the best of it the whole night long in the rain.
It was astonishing to see how Jimmy slept, he simply threw himself
down & slept the whole night long in a pool of water --- he looked
very seedy the next morning. Young James looked about the worst
of the lot. I slept for about 3 hours until I found I could not
manage it any longer. The rain saturated the blankets properly ---

when I arose I found that I had slept in a pool of water also. Badger & one or two others kept awake the whole night. At 7 a.m. on Tuesday an express came to Captain Fleischer (10) to say that we were to come back & occupy some straw huts until the rain had passed over & get rations for three days --- we made a fire in the hut & had to clear out quickly on account of the smoke --- when I came out my eyes were as sore as possible. Murray thought he had found a mealie pit in front of the hut he was in but to his surprise he found a skeleton of a child instead.

Two of the out lying pickets came in to say that they heard a lot of horsemen coming on --- we thought that the enemy was going to attack us in the Dark. I was glad they did not as we were all perished from the cold & rain.

Thursday:

Digging entrenchments around the whole camp --- rather hard work --- Silver Spruit Camp water about 1/2 mile from Camp & wood about 5 miles --- received letter from A.C. on 30/3 (?2)/79. Sent one 20/3/79 to A.C.

Friday:

Ayliff (11) secretary for Native affairs & Fleischer rode Inspector turned up at Silver Spruit Camp.

Saturday:

The whole of the 2nd Reg., a portion of the 3 R. Police & Fingoes & about 1000 of Moshesh's Men ordered out for 10 days patrol to start from Silver Spruit Camp 1/2 past 4 a.m. remainder of 3rd Reg. to take possession of our Camp until we return.

Fletcher & Ayliff I believe will go with us the whole way. It is Ayliff's intention to rout out the whole of Mooirose's people.

Sunday 23rd:

Left Silver Spruit Camp at 1/2 past 5 a.m. for Mooirose's stronghold & halted at 1/2 past 8 a.m. on top of a mountain where we had a little brush with the Enemy. I believe if there was one

shot fired at the Kaffirs in the Cave there were about 1200 shots & not one shot doing any damage.

We managed to capture about 19 horses & about 40 to 50 bucks Taintons Fingoes (12) assegaied about 3.

I am writing this while watching a Cave, where there are supposed to be about 50 niggars. Austin & his men intend storming the Cave while we keep up a steady fire. I had scarcely taken my covering when a bullet whizzed over my head & made me jump.

Sunday 23/3/79:

Murray turned as white as a sheet at the first outset of the Fight & A. D. as soon as a shot was fired he fell down flat on the ground. I was amused at the C. he applied for 10 days leave & seemed anxious to get it. The night before he started he said he had not made up his mind whether he should accept it or not. The next morning he was three sheets in the wind. I asked him what he intended --- he said homewards as I expected. The men seemed very glad that he had gone home & wished him to remain there.

Kaffir fighting does not suit me. There is too much climbing. I sprained my ankle climbing down a break neck place of a mountain after the Kaffirs.

Horse guard again --- 3rd relief.

I was mistaken with the abovementioned Cave, 10 of our men Volunteered to storm the Cave with Lieut. Badger & Captain Nesbitt (13) of the Barkly Troop & to their surprise they found the Cave filled almost with women. I can say for a fact about 64 niggars & 20 women. Our ten men had hard work of it & did their work like Britons --- storming the Cave --- killing the niggars took about 2 hours. After the principle work was done then the Barkly men came to our assistance. Dixon captured 64 horses & goats. One poor Sergeant of the Tarkastaad Troop (Moldoon) was shot, & died about an hour afterwards, also Thompson of the Barkly Troop got wounded through the arm. The opening of the Cave appeared very small from

a distance. The men tell me that were in former wars, they never saw such an ugly place. I believe if the men had known, how the place was situated they never would have ventured with such few men into the Cave. Commandant-General Griffith was pleased with the way our men conducted themselves & Captain Nesbitt made a small speech, and said he would feel proud to lead such a lot of men as our's --- that's a feather in our Caps, & hoped that our & his Troop could always be together.

I can now account for the bullet that came so close to my head. I thought they could only fire from where I was sitting watching & writing my Diary. I was in front of the Cave.

Sunday 23/3/79:

S. Spruit Camp.

Tarka Staad & Queenstown Troops were ordered to take the place first --- they turned back because they did not like the look of the place. I went into the Cave and I think, it was Providence that brought our men safe through.

Seeing the dead niggars about 27 in all, it made me turn away with a beastly feeling. It is believed that a son of old Mooirose was shot in the fight (14) & two of his grandsons were killed. They tried to get the Fingoes to storm the place first but they refused.

Monday 24/3/79:

Silver Spruit Camp.

Muldoon buried with Military honors at 12 a.m. Left Muldoon's grave at 20 past one p.m. Crossed the Buffalo River at 5 p.m. --- Off saddled at 1/2 past 6 p.m. about one hours ride from Mooirose's Kop.

Tuesday 25/3/79:

Left the next morning at 6 a.m. & off saddled again at 1/2 past 7 a.m. Saddled up again about 1000 yards from Mooirose's stronghold at 2 p.m.

Mooirose's Mountain.

Wednesday 25th:

Enormous droves of cattle --- Horses & Sheep captured from the Enemy. Enemy entrenched so well that I believe C'mdt Griffith thinks it advisable to wait for Brabant's men (15) & the Canons, otherwise if the Yeo's have to storm the stronghold there will be too many lives lost.

Raining at 3 p.m. --- made tents of our blankets --- slept quite jolly & warm.

Thursday 27th:

Horse guard 2nd Relief --- have to live upon mealies & meat, no bread --- feel home sick. sticking in front of the stronghold, tires one properly, pickets are sent about 300 yds in front of the stronghold, so as to prevent the Enemy from coming down. Firing from both sides all day long one gets so accustomed to the firing that scarcely any notice is taken of the firing.

We go to bed & sleep as jolly as if we were in Town but have to lie upon the grass instead of feathers little troubling ourselves about the danger.

Friday 28th:

A flag of truce was seen on the top of Mooirose's stronghold at about 1/2 past 6 a.m. About 12 a.m. C. Troop was ordered up to take the mountain, about 300 yds from the top.

The Colonel, Comdt. Griffith & Ayliff sect. for Native affairs, followed up behind to see what Mooirose wanted. One of Mooirose's spokesman said the Chief wanted peace which was not granted Comdt. Griffith said to Mooirose's counsellor.

Friday

Through his spokesman the only way Mooirose could make peace was by giving himself up with his counsellors which I believe Mooirose wanted more time to consider which was not granted by Griffith --- all hopes of Mooirose making peace is past.

Saturday 29th:

Miserable again --- tents leaking, have to make use of our blankets for tents.

Sunday:

Horse guard 1st relief.

Rain towards sun-down.

One of the Barkly Yeo's was boasting of his swimming saying he was brought up by a river --- went for a swim in the Orange River --- the stream carried him down a little distance to a whirlpool & was drowned.

Tuesday April 1st/79:

Slight showers of rain.

Picket duty.

Wednesday 2nd:

From one of the sharp shooters on Mooirose's mountain.

Thursday 3rd:

Outlying picket Duty in the night.

While doing my guard was thinking about friends in Town --- the Kaffirs rolled a stone down the Mountain which made me jump out of my skin almost.

Friday 4th:

Infernal Horse guard 2nd relief.

Saturday:

Escort to the guns, had to work till 12 mid-night in taking the Cannons to pieces & carrying the ammunition across a cutting in the Mountain --- hard work. (16).

As stiff as possible from Saturday's work.

Monday:

Picket duty & horse guard --- it never rains but it pours. Order read out that the 3rd regt. police D. E. F. & G. Troops are to storm Mooirose's Mountain on Tuesday morning at day break. Infernal shame. A. B. C. & D. are to be

Monday ---

the reserve --- our men are very dissatisfied with being kept back --- they have to console themselves with the Cave fight.

Griffith very unpopular among the regts. They call him an old woman because he dallies so long over anything.

Tuesday 8/4/79:

The Ball was opened at 1/4 to 6 a.m. on Tuesday by the Cannons --- short shell & rockets which continued playing for an hour & a half when the storming parties which consisted of the C. M. Rifles under Captain Grant (17) & the 3rd regt. under Colonel Minto advanced under a heavy fire. C. M. Rifles leading splendidly --- great praise they deserve --- they were the admiration of the whole field.

Tuesday ---

E. F. & G. Troops of the 2nd were the support of the storming party & A. C. & D. 2nd Regiment were the reserve --- at 1/2 past seven we advanced always keeping close to the supports until one of the Captains lagged to long behind. The Colonel told him to advance & asked him why he dallied so long --- he said he had hurt his foot & could go no further. The Colonel turned round to Captain Nesbitt who had command of us & said we had better advance which we did with a great hurrah & some of us were with the storming party, before any of the 3rd regmt. came up. While still advancing under a heavy firing from the Enemy, Corporal Crole of our Troop got a bullet wound through the arm, fortunately not serious.

I can say scarcely had I stayed an hour & 1/2 when about 6 of the C. M. R. got shot from the fearful cross firing from the Kaffirs & what unmanned me most was seeing one of

Tuesday 8th

the C. M. Rifles shot down by one of our own men. The poor fellow was watching a port hole quite calmly, for about an hour --- had

not some of the 2nd Regmt. fellows come in time to support the police I believe they would all have been cut up to a man.

The night before the attack I had an argument with one of the men that was on guard with me, about the Kaffirs throwing stones down upon us --- he said one need not be afraid of stones as they could be seen, & one could get out of the way of them.

I had a little experience in that way, before I came down from the Mountain 2 stones hit me in the same place on top of my head --- which I took very little notice of but the third finished me altogether. I saw the stone coming --- it was about the size of a gallon pot. I did my best to get away but was no go, it sent me flying from where I was sitting and cut a deep gash on my head & made the blood flow like a young river. I immediately went to the Dr. & had it sown up. We could not make way to the first Rifle pit which ever way we tried --- one of the men went to fetch seven shells thinking to blow the first pit down with one of them --- he threw one shell in thinking to blind them --- the Kaffirs threw it back again --- he lit the second shell & held it too long --- the shell exploded & blew the poor fellows hand completely off. I never saw such a sight before & never wish to see it again --- after that another policeman was shot, his comrades, in assisting to get him away, was shot down also --- that is how so many got wounded, in assisting to rescue the wounded. Poor Terman was shot through the side & had his revolver shot away from him also --- he had to remain in a Cave till night in pain, as it was too dangerous to attempt to get him out. Another place there were two policemen wounded, both calling for the Dr. --- they were told that the Dr. could not get to them as it was too dangerous. The poor fellow groaned piteously --- it was heart rending to see such sights.

The only yeo that was shot seriously was one of the Queenstown men named (Broad) and a Burghersdorp man slightly wounded.

Lieut. Read of the 3rd Regmt. (18) shot dead through the head --- his comrades seeing him fall left him there & cleared off.

Casualties.

11 C. M. Rifles wounded.

2 R. do Rifles killed.

1 died while having his leg cut off.

1 of Letsea (19) son shot dead while running down the mountain.

1 3rd Regmt. killed.

3 do wounded.

3 2nd do wounded.

In returning from the mountains we came down much quicker than going up. The bullets came whizzing about us like hail.

One of the C. M. Rifles that was shot dead, could not be got out & was left behind. The next morning the Kaffirs had him on top of one of the Rifle pits.

Friday 11/4/79:

Camp fatigue.

Wound on my head much better.

1/2 of Brabants men arrived at Mooirose's mountain 110 men at 4 p.m.

False alarm again. Imagination of the Barkly picket --- got frightened at something & roused the whole Camp. I was lying snug in bed at the time & blessed them for rousing me out.

Saturday 12th:

Horse guard again 3rd Relief.

Mooirose hoisted the white flag & wanted to know how the women and children were to get good washing day --- tedious work.

Names of the killed and wounded ---

No. 4 Troop C. M. Rifles.

Captain Surman wounded.

private Boucher do.

No. 5 Troop C. M. Rifles.

private Pascha four wounds & died afterwards.

Corporal Martindale died from wounds.

Wounded --- Sergt. Edwards & Crole --- Privates Rogers ---
Brown.

Artillery ---

Sergts. Scott & Private Morley ---- wounded.

2nd C.M. Yeomanry ---

Dordrecht --- Corporal Crole --- wounded.

Queenstown --- Private Broad --- wounded.

Saturday 12th:

Lieut. Read of Graaf Reinat killed & 3 others wounded.

A son of Letsea killed.†

Sunday 13th:

Day picket again --- or sharp shooting. Hard work climbing the Mountain, wish I had olf Mooirose, by the back of his neck, would teach him English for making me climb his mountain so often.

First (Felt?) seedy & home-sick.

Expect the Captain to turn up to-day. Men astonished at his audacity, waiting until all danger is past. I remember a remark of his, one of the men said he was a button short from his coat. Captain said nevermind, as long as he wasn't short at any fight. C. said if he caught any man running away he would shoot him with his own hands --- so much for buttons.

Tuesday 15/4/79:

Went to Thomas's Camp with pack horses for Tents. Miserable work. Tents falling from the horses.

Captain Fleischer arrived at Mooirose's Camp about 5 p.m.

Wednesday 16/4/79:

Horse guard 3rd Relief.

Thursday 17/4/79:

Outlying picket duty --- while crossing about a space of about 20 yds to the Mountain, the picket was fired upon which made us as if for our lives. The first shot that was fired we took very little notice of but when they came quick & close we thought it was quite time to hook it.

Friday 18/4/79:

Cutting grass for bedding made rather a soft bed --- for the first time for many a week but could not sleep --- can sleep better on uneven ground, & a stone for a pillow.

Saturday 19th:

Dixon's horse was found dead in a sluit, must have been kicked by another horse, was sent flying over a Krantz & broke his back.

Commandant Griffith & Ayliff left Camp to see about some petty chiefs who wish to surrender.

Sunday 21/4/79:

Horse guard 1st Relief --- First severe frost.

Poor Parkin home sick.

Monday 22nd:

Picket duty --- Black frost -- very cold.

Comdt. Griffith & Ayliff returned, the parties are school Kaffirs who wish to surrender. They say that Mooirose compelled them to fight otherwise he would have killed them all --- they ask for their cattle that was captured. I believe the old woman Griffith will give their cattle back.

The Captain bought 10/- worth Tobacco for the men, almost ruination. I have noticed a difference since his return, he seems more sociable, must have been spoken to by some one of his queer ways.

Baking fat cakes.

To the Editor of the Frontier Guardian:-

Dear Sir,

Seeing an account in some of the papers of the Cave fight of 25th March, 1879 & the principal left out allow me the pleasure in giving you an account of the Fight. We left Silver Spruit Camp at 1/2 past 4 a.m. for Mooirose's stronghold & halted at 1/2 past 8 a.m. on top of a mountain where we had a little (skirmish?) with the enemy --- we then took to the Cave. We then exchanged shots with the Enemy up till 1/2 past 2 in the afternoon when Captain Nesbitt of Barkly called for Volunteers from C. & D Troops, that is Dordrecht & Barkly to storm the Cave. The men from both Troops responded to the call without a moments hesitation.

When the storming commenced A. & G. Troops were having their dinner. The fight lasted until sundown --- we captured 89 horses, 300 sheep & goats & counted 50 Kaffirs dead. It was a horrid sight to see the dead lying about. In one place I saw eight lying together, & another place 3 in fact they were lying all about in two's & three's.

Mooirose's Mountain ---

Tuesday 23/4/79:

Preparing for two days picket round the mountain.

Wednesday:

Left for two days picket for Mooirose's Mountain --- had to carry bedding & food & climb up very steep path's to get to our destination.

Weather very changeable --- used pick & shovel to make bed.

Andrew & I was thinking how nice it would be if we were back again in town.

Wednesday 24th/79:

The two Miss Surmans! arrived here at 1/2 past 3 p.m.

They looked very much put out.

Thursday 24/4/79:

Rolling stones down the Mountain for pastime & amusement. C. came up to where we were & looked as white as a sheet, evidently climbing does not agree with him.

Friday:

Relieved from picket by Aliwal men at 11 a.m.

Horse guard 1st relief.

Saturday 26th:

Capture of 4 prisoners by the Basutu's --- they were sent to Aliwal with reims round their necks & had to keep pace with the horses trot. Captain Nesbitt returned from 3 days patrol & captured about 4000 head of cattle. Captain Davis (20) of the Basuto's captured a young Kaffir who tried to escape from the Mountain. The young niggar said that Mooirose did all the execution the day of the attack of the Mountain & that they were running short of food.

Sunday 27/4/79:

Day picket duty 1/4 to 9 a.m. --- am basking in the sun on the mountain after being all night there.

Tuesday 29/4/79:

Washing day.

Wednesday 30th:

Horse guard 2nd relief:

Poor Parkin quite restless & uncertain whether he will get leave --- could^{nt} eat.

Great excitement in Camp at about 7 p.m. --- report came in that about 15 Kaffirs escaped from the Mountain.

Thursday:

Leave granted to Copeland, Parkin, Mountjoy, Scott --- & the Captain --- seems strange that he should clear off when there is every probability of a fight. Some one stole the Captain's Brandy

--- was in a great state of mind about it --- fine fun --- the joke about Camp is Who stole the Captain's Brandy?

Saturday:

Horse guard 2nd relief --- before relieved from guard I heard that the Kaffirs intended coming down from the mountain to take 1 of our cannons away --- little thinking they would attempt coming down. The alarm sounded at 1/4 to 11. The Kaffirs came down from the mountain & attacked the picket. I was sound asleep & did bless the Kaffirs for rousing me --- some of the fellows as soon as the alarm was sounded put only their Ulster's on, it was fine fun to see the excitement --- Captain & the men running in all directions to support the picket. Captain Nesbitt of the C.M.R. declares he saw from 45 to 50 niggars & shot one of them --- to my belief the picket must have been asleep or else how could the Kaffirs come in amongst them before the picket were aware of them. Two policemen were wounded, one of the two died from the effects of the assegai wounds the next day. Through the carelessness of the C.M.R. the work will be much harder. Comdt. Griffith has aroused himself a little & gives the proper orders. It reminds me of an old saying, Locking the stable after the horse is stolen.

Gardner --

Very busy when note arrived --- have no books, if very bad will send prayer book to learn his catechism --- will hear him on Sunday --- wish many happy returns of the day.

Hutchons ---

Many thanks for mending comb --- broken again.

Miss Surmans ---

Two seidlitz powders & packet of cocoa (Saturday).

Sunday 4/5/79:

Outlying picket duty --- more care is taken in placing the picket in proper places. Sleep is almost out of the question while on picket after Saturday's nights affair. I had just dozed off to

sleep after being relieved from sentry go. I must have slept soundly. One of the Fingoes that did guard also came close to me & called me about 3 times before I awoke & asked whether he could fire a couple of shots at the Enemy, as he could see them passing backwards & forwards up the mountain. I was thinking had it been one of the Enemy instead of the Fingo, there would have been very little left of me.

I have just heard that the Captain was nine sheets in the wind at Thomas's Camp. On his road him (home?) he ---- the service & said he would not return again. At Palmitfontein he did likewise, & gave Hayward a couple of clouts & apologized the next morning to Hayward, Commissariat Officer (21). I hear Hayward has reported the Captain to the Colonel. Our men feel disgusted with the Captain & wish he would keep his word.

Went on Monday to visit some Friends of the C.M.R. On my return home at 8 a.m. I came down a short cut. One place I had to slide down on my back for about 10 yds & fell in with a Basutu picket. They mistook me for one of the Enemy & was just about firing at me when they found out who I was they burst out laughing --- like their impudence.

Had Curry stew with Ted Wylde for dinner & stayed with him until almost sun-down. Left Wylde & went over to Sergt. Lambert No. 4 C.M.R. & had dinner with him --- also dough boy stew --- left for Camp at 8 p.m.

Tuesday 5/4/79:

Borrowed 5/- from Lieut. Leach (22) to pay for sketch of Mooirose's Mountain.

Weather very cloudy --- feel as if I should like to be at home again.

Washing day.

To write to G.M. about my watch.

Wednesday:

My dear Miss Surmans,

Pardon me if I intrude on this your privacy on the occasion of this your sad bereavement. I have long known you both & I could not conscientiously allow this opportunity to pass without expressing my heart-felt sympathy.

My dear Miss Surmans,

although I speak individually allow me to say that I convey the sentiments of the Troop & many would fain express their wishes as I have done were they privileged to do so. Your father has endeared himself to many in this Troop & most particularly in the gallant and soldier-like act on the occasion on which he met his death wound.

May God in his providence overlook all for good in the humble prayer of your Sincere friend,

A. Boss.

Captain Surman (23) died at 10 a.m. after nine days suffering. The poor Miss Surmans are dreadfully cut up --- it is heart-rending to see them.

Wednesday:

Wrote two letters to Town --- one for G.M. & A.C. --- received letters Mrs. C.A.C.

Horse guard 2nd relief.

Thursday 8/5/79:

Raining slight showers..

Borrowed 10 shillings from P. Paech to buy mealies for horse.

Friday 9/5/79:

Weather cloudy.

Fun abroad --- Helly & Paich fighting.

Camp fatigue --- struck tents & had general clearing up.

Bet with paymaster Davis (24) that the mountain would be ours by the 15 of this month.

Outlying picket duty tonight.

Slept miserably that night --- feet as cold as ice.

Saturday 11th:

Sharp shooter & fatigue --- helped to fill sand bags for battery.

Sunday 11th:

Pudding for dinner.

Horse guard 2nd relief.

Sunday night ---

Should there be an alarm my place is to look after the horses --- I'm glad.

Monday:

The Miss Surmans left this morning for Revd. Ellengerger (25). They intend staying there for a short time.

Wednesday:

Wrote letters to Mrs. C. & A.C.

Picket duty --- very cold & windy.

Thursday 15/.

Received 4 letters J.B., J.P., A.C. & an English letter from the old people (26).

Captain Brabant & his reg. left this morning for 4 days patrol.

Looking at about 300 Busutus returning from a patrol. They are singing and dancing the war dance --- kicking up an awful row.

Friday 16:

Horse guard 1st relief.

12 pounder Cannon arrived here from the Free State at 5 p.m.

Saturday:

Outlying picket duty --- almost frozen towards 3 a.m. on Sunday morning.

Sunday:

Trail of the big gun --- broken Church parade for the first

time at Mooirose's Camp.

The trail breaking of the big gun will no doubt keep us here three weeks longer --- unlucky campagne this altogether.

Successful patrol of the first Regt. --- killed about 25 Kaffirs & captured about 80 prisoners & 200 women & children. Colonel Brabant had to use dynamyte to smoke the niggars out of the caves --- 5 men wounded on our side.

Tuesday:

Horse guard for the whole day.

Wednesday:

Sharp shooter.

Friday 23rd:

Preparation for sports for Queens Birthday --- had a tug of war with the Queenstown Troop --- won twice out of three times --- sports very dull.

Sunday:

Escort of Scotch Carts to Thoma's Camp. Arrival of the Burghersdorp Burghers at dusk.

Went to enquire about box & Ulster, **not** suit, awfully sorry especially about the coat.

Monday:

Finest fun --- I have seen for a long time the Burghersdorp had to take this place which we call the saddle. No sooner the Burghers came within range the Kaffirs opened fire upon them & made them run as if for their lives. The Burghers were saying they will show the Yeo's how to take the mountain.

Tuesday:

Arrival of the Fort Bauafort Burghers --- left for 4 days patrol at 10 past 1 for the caves. Off saddled at 5 p.m. at Kraals.

Maluchila Caves.

Friday:

Colonel had decided to bore the Caves & blast them if possible before storming.

Order countermanded. Fingoes stormed the Caves being promised all the spoil. They worked well & got close to the cave where all the Kaffirs were relieved. The Fingoes hemmed them in as we thought, however they all escaped during the night with the exception of six & about 1 hundred women & children --- Went to see the Cave, quite surprised us all. The cave is about 100 feet square & 10 feet high --- we killed about 6 Kaffirs & captured 26 horses. At about 12 mid-day we saddled up & gave chase to the escaped niggars killing two & scattering the others, about 70 in number all over the country --- we should very likely have got them all had the country been flat instead of mountainous --- we followed them for about ten miles along the Dragensberg.

2nd relief horse guard.

Sunday 1st June:

Burning the grain & breaking down the Caves we have put the fear into the Baphuite --- for the future they will keep clear of the caves.

Left Matushila's Cave at 10 a.m. for Mooirose's M. --- arrived in Camp about 3 p.m. --- heard that the Kaffirs attacked the picket on the saddle again.

Monday 2nd:

Excitement in Camp this morning. Kaffirs trying to get cattle up the Mountain --- they got 40 head up in the night & had to leave 4 behind which they could not manage.

Tuesday 3rd:

Bombarding the Mountain --- 12 * Cannon doing good execution
Heavy rain towards evening.

Went to a singing concert in A. Hutchons's tent --- very fair.

Wednesday 4th:

Still bombarding the mountain. Great excitement in Camp with reference in taking the Mountain --- general opinion is will be taken easily.

Rev^d. Giddy (27) held service on Wednesday praying that we should all come back unhurt.

Thursday 5th 1879:

1/2 5 a.m. in readiness for storming the Mountain 75 of the 1st Yeomanry; 50 of the C.M. Rifles; 25 Beaufort Burghers are to be for the storming party's. 5 Troops of the 2nd Yeomanry to be the supports. 25 of the 1st Yeo. the whole of the 3rd Regmt. & 200 Basuto's under Captain to storm the mountain from the back.

We started from the Camp at 6 a.m. and reached the foot of the mountain at 1/4 past 6 a.m. --- the advance was sounded at about 7 a.m. --- we then made a rush for the first schaanze --- with a murderous fire the fellows were falling around me --- one bullet passed pretty close to me knocking a piece of stone off from a rock & hit my right ear which made me hesitate for about ten minutes.

Got three months leave. Left Camp on 23rd June --- arrived in Town on the 29th.

((((()))

In this fashion the journal of Arthur Aaron Boss terminates but had he remained in the area of operations he would probably have lost other bets on the date that Moorosi's mountain was taken, for the resistance of the Baphuti was not only fierce but heroic. In both September and October parleys were held on the mountain between Moorosi and Cape officials but no results were achieved as the basic demand of the white delegates was for the unconditional surrender of Moorosi himself.

Then on October 27th, 1879 Lieutenant-Colonel Z. Bayly of the Cape Mounted Rifles was sent to take over command of the force. (28). Bayly had undertaken the reduction of the strong-

hold under certain conditions the first being that he should not be interfered with and the second that his unit, the Cape Mounted Rifles, only should participate. (29). Although artillery was in short supply Bayly obtained three guns and a small mortar. He maintained a steady bombardment of the mountain for several days with the mortar being especially prominent. In this fashion the formidable Baphuti schanzes were demolished and their gallant defenders slaughtered from behind. Then on the night of November 19th to 20th the final successful storming of the mountain took place. Whilst the attacking force suffered virtually no casualties the Baphuti were absolutely annihilated. (30). Thus ended a campaign that should never have been undertaken, one which the Cape administration had, in effect, engendered by their treatment of the various Basuto tribes and their allies.

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REFERENCES:

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