

RETURN OF SICK MEN ADMITTED TO HOSPITAL SINCE CONTINGENT ARRIVED, 23RD NOVEMBER, 1899. (Probably most will be invalided to New Zealand.)

No.	Name.	Nature of Illness.
146.	Hunt, H.	Fall on ship.
80.	Young, R.	Fall from horse in action.
143.	Hurford, J.	Heart-disease.
82.	Ryan, J.	Physically unfit; collapse.
19.	Wallace, R.	Hernia (bad).
35.	Taylor, A. R.	Chronic rheumatism, and unfit.
53.	Jenks, J.	Injury, and kidneys bad. (Since dead.)
31.	Paterson, J.	Physically unfit; over age; a wreck. (Since dead.)
6.	Bond, J.	Kick on shin-bone; very bad.
103.	Gwatkins	Pneumonia.
86.	Smith, E. J.	Sunstroke; mentally affected. (Will recover.)
177.	Sutherland	Dysentery and weakness.
64.	Walker, J.	Rheumatism.
112.	Arnold, S.	Typhoid-fever.
18.	Barty, J.	Kidneys (bad case).
65.	Edwards	Fever (supposed typhoid, not developed).
196.	Taylor, J. T.	Dysentery and weakness.
17.	Parkes, W.	Accident, kick; bone injured.
121.	Cabot, J.	Toe to be amputated.

BLOEMFONTEIN, 3RD APRIL, 1900.

Last time I had the honour to post hasty report from detached force, Field-post, Thabanchu, promising more detail on getting at the regimental papers, &c. These details are enclosed herewith, and will show the position and state of the Contingent. I have memoranda on each return, explaining the duties performed since arrival at Bloemfontein to leaving it on the 18th for Thabanchu, and the duties at Thabanchu up to posting last letter to you were reported in same. On the 29th, the telegraph-wire having been cut some days, and no word or orders having been received, and General French having gone back some days before, leaving General Broadwood in command, in addition the forced retirement of three companies of Imperial Mounted Rifles from near Ladybrand before a force of Boers, and constant reports that seven thousand were closing in and upon us, caused General Broadwood to break bivouac and take up a weak defensive position to cover the wagons and convoy retirement to the waterworks on the Modder. These positions were taken up at 11.30 a.m. (30th), and towards nightfall shots were exchanged on the east posts on the nek, six miles out, on the Ladybrand Road, the baggage convoy leaving for west at 2 p.m. The troops held on to the positions till 8 p.m. and the rear-guard till 9 p.m., and all marched all night, crossed the drift on the Modder *en route* for Bloemfontein at 3 a.m. (Saturday, 31st), and bivouacked. Just before 6 a.m., when camp was rousing, the enemy opened on the bivouac and convoy with three guns from hills east of Modder, and rifle-fire commenced across the banks. The shells were well distributed, and all got a fair share, convoy as well. Convoy inspanned, and with two batteries, 10th Hussars, and Life Guards, and Roberts's Horse, squadron each, went on with baggage, the Mounted Infantry Brigade (Colonel Alderson's), comprising 1st and 3rd Mounted Infantry, Roberts's Horse, New-Zealanders, Rimington Guides, being retained to fight a rear-guard action. The convoy getting clear, this force became fiercely engaged with the enemy at close range on the river, Roberts's Horse and New-Zealanders being in reserve. The Boers made a strong attack on the left from the river, and at same time commenced to work round the right, the evident intention being to envelop the small force. A retirement of the Mounted Infantry by successive movement was ordered, each respective dismounted line for fire, to hold on as long as possible. While this was being done a fearful disaster had happened at the head of convoy. Roberts's Horse rode right up and into an ambush, taking with it the head of convoy and guns. A sluit had at this place to be crossed. Whilst this crossing was being effected seven guns were taken, but convoy was stopped and disarmed as they arrived, Roberts's Horse squadron suffering very much. The cavalry had gone out to the flank, and evidently only skirted the ambush. The gunners seem to have done splendidly, and suffered fearfully in defence of their guns. The two that could open fire did so on the Boers taking the convoy. All this happened without the rear-guard covering or troops really knowing what had occurred, we always wondering, during our fight, when the guns would open to help cover us. About this time I was instructed by the staff to send a checking force to the higher ground on our right. A division of New-Zealanders, under Lieutenant Hughes, was accordingly sent; later it was reinforced by another two divisions, under Lieutenants Chaytor and Lindsay, Captain Madocks going up in charge. The strength was 108 New Zealand men, working in one company (four divisions). The remainder, on account of weak horses, &c., and outpost duty, were in camp. These divisions did excellent work, and kept the enemy from being too enterprising in that direction. Shortly after this the original firing-line had retired, followed by the enveloping enemy, and the remaining division of New-Zealanders, under Lieutenant Bartlett, with a squadron of Roberts's Horse, under myself, were left to hold the mouth of the nullahs and sluit running towards the houses and sluit in which the guns and convoy were. Our orders were to hold this place, and cover the saved guns (four) coming out with a few Burmah Mounted Infantry who were with them. The Boers followed these up, as well as following the retiring mounted infantry, and still endeavouring to move round the right flank. Luckily, there was a hollow, which afforded some cover for our horses, and the edge of it for the men. This to be