

of the promoters of rifle prize-meetings, whether it would not be well at times to insist upon the rifle used being exactly in its native state, as issued by the authorities, namely—guileless of “nigerine,” mathematically exact white lines, “defined” sights, adjusted verniers, barrel-coolers, and all such paraphernalia. Less might, under these circumstances, be heard of Brobdingnagian scores on the part of a few competitors, but the general average might not thereby be very seriously impaired. In any case it would be well to assimilate the conditions of shooting at prize rifle-meetings with those which would be required in actual warfare; that is, if the safety of the country, in case of invasion, is to be left chiefly to the Volunteers. I can only assert my conviction that the Volunteers as a rule are wretched shots, and the sooner the country realizes the fact the better it will be for everybody concerned—on this side the channel.—“MILES” of the *Manchester Courier*.—*Volunteer Service Review*.

THE OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE BATTLE OF CUT KNIFE HILL.

The following is an extract from the *Canada Gazette* of the 11th July:—

BATTLEFORD, May 26, 1885.

SIR,—I have the honor to forward herewith for the information of His Excellency the Governor-General and yourself, Lieut.-Col. Otter's despatch, concerning his engagement with Chief Poundmaker and his band on the 2nd of May last. Though Lieut.-Col. Otter made this attack under a misunderstanding of my orders on the subject, he and his men seem to have done their duty well, and are deserving of great praise, and had the force been larger the consequence might have been more decided.

I have the honor to be, sir, your obedient servant,

(Signed) FRED. MIDDLETON, Major-General,

Commanding Canadian Militia and Forces in the Field, N.W.T.

From Lieut.-Col. Otter, Commanding Battleford Column, N.W.F.F., to Major-General Middleton, Commanding Militia of Canada.

SIR,—I have the honor to report that having learned on the 29th ult., from my scouts, that a force of Cree and Stoney Indians, numbering about two hundred men, were camped near the reserve of the former tribe some thirty-eight miles from here, and subsequently that Poundmaker the Cree chief was hesitating between peace and war, the latter eventuality depending upon his being able to obtain assistance from Big Bear's tribe, I felt it necessary that definite action should be taken in order to make Poundmaker declare himself and prevent a junction of the forces of the two chiefs.

I determined on a reconnaissance in force, and left Battleford on Friday the 1st inst. at 3 p.m. with the following troops, viz:—

75 Mounted Police, of whom 50 were mounted, Captain Neale.

80 “B” Battery, R. C. A., Major Short.

45 “C” Company I. S. C.; Lieut. Wadmore.

20 G. G. Foot Guards, Lieut. Gray.

60 Queen's Own Rifles, Captain Brown, including the ambulance corps of the same regiment.

45 Battleford Rifles, Captain Nash.

One Gatling gun and two 7-prs. belonging to police, the latter being selected as being more easy of transport than the 9-pr. guns, and a train of 48 wagons to carry men, rations and stores.

Halting at 8 p.m. I waited nearly four hours until the moon rose and then pushed on through the night, reaching at day-break the enemy's camp, which was seen on the higher of two hills partially surrounded by a wide ravine, with a large creek running through it. Crossing the creek our advanced guard, the scouts and police, were almost at the top of the lower hill before our presence was discovered and the general alarm sounded. Hardly had our scouts gained the crest of the hill when the advanced part of the enemy was met, who opened fire upon our men with vigor. The police immediately extended on the brow and the guns, supported by “B” Battery, were pushed forward into the same line, opening fire with shrapnel on the camp. The Indians, who had evidently been taken by surprise, very quickly gathered themselves together and attempted to surround us; so large was their force that it required the whole of ours to be placed in the fighting line to meet the attack. Taking advantage of the cover afforded by the many small coulees and ravines surrounding our position a most vicious and determined cross fire was poured in upon our men, which at first proved most destructive owing to carelessness in exposing themselves. Soon, however, we followed the example of our foes and made the most of any cover that was obtainable, and in point of accurate shooting quickly demonstrated our ability to cope with them.

The disposition of our force was as follows:—In the centre of the front line and just behind the brow of the hill was the gatling, flanked on either side by a 7-pr. brass gun, all under the personal supervision of Major Short, ably assisted by Captain Rutherford. The support of these guns consisted of the garrison division of “B” Battery, immediately to the rear resting in a slight declivity were the horses of the police and the wagon train; these were so well placed by Capt. Neale that only two casualties occurred through the day, viz., the loss of two horses, one of the wagon train and Captain Rutherford's charger. On either flank of the artillery were the police, to the right and right rear was “C” Company and detachment of Guards; to the left, lying on a lower ledge of the hill and extending nearly to the creek, was the Queen's Own, and protecting the right rear and ford was the company of Battleford Rifles. The positions thus described were with some slight changes retained by these corps more or less throughout the action.

Shortly after the fight became general, a rush was made by the enemy for the gatling, but was sharply repulsed by a party from the Police and Artillery gallantly headed by Major Short, and four Indians killed.

The trail of one of the guns now unfortunately gave way, rendering that valuable arm practically useless; excellent practice was, however, made by the other guns, assisted whenever opportunity offered by the gatling; the other gun shared a similar fate later in the day.

Our men had now fairly settled down to their work, and in the most cool, collected and praiseworthy manner went about forcing the enemy to abandon their numerous points of advantage and cover.

The right rear which took in the ford was menaced and a part of the Battleford Rifles under Captain Nash, assisted by individual men of “C” Company, Governor's Guards, and Q.O.R. with Constable Ross (chief scout) of the Police undertook to clear the coulee at that point; this they did most effectually, capturing four ponies whose riders were shot by them.

A similar duty had now to be performed on our right rear, which was entrusted to parties of the Queen's Own and Battleford Rifles, and proved one of the sharpest brushes of the day. The enemy's fire here was, however, only partially subdued, as there remained a few men whom neither bullets nor shells seemed to reach, and who were only dislodged at the end of the day by sending Ross with his scouts by a long detour to the rear and flanking them.

At eleven o'clock, that is, six hours after the beginning of the engagement, our flank and rear were clear, but the position we occupied was not tenable over night, while both guns were practically useless through broken trails, and the wounded required proper attention. Further, the object of the reconnaissance had been accomplished, inasmuch as he had declared his intentions, but Big Bear, or at least his men, had effected a junction before my arrival, as the number of the enemy was fully five hundred fighting men, including some fifty half-breeds.

I therefore concluded to withdraw and return at once to Battleford in case a counter attack might be made on that place. Placing the Battleford Rifles on the opposite side with one of the maimed guns, the wagons, dead, save Pte. Osgoode, G. G. F. Guards, whose body had rolled into a deep ravine and could not be recovered, and wounded were taken safely over the creek, followed in turn by the various corps from their respective positions. A few of the enemy on perceiving our withdrawal followed to the edge of the ravine, but were quickly driven back by the gatling under Major Short, which brought up the rear, and two rounds from the 7-pounders with the Battleford Rifles, under Captain Rutherford, both of which rounds had to be fired with the gun bound up with rope and splints to keep it together. The crossing was effected without the slightest loss and the enemy failed to follow, although had they done so much delay and loss of life might have been entailed as the country was favorable to them.

Too much praise cannot be given to the officers, non-commissioned officers and men engaged throughout the whole action for their admirable coolness and gallantry; the circumstances were most trying to raw troops who, without sleep or breakfast, found themselves opposed to a cunning and determined enemy thoroughly acquainted with the ground, adopting a new style of warfare and in numbers nearly double.

Where all behaved so well it is difficult to select those deserving of special mention, but I should not be doing my duty did I not bring to your notice the names of a few whose conduct came under my especial observation.

Major Short, R. C. A., by his pucky charge already mentioned, no doubt saved the Gatling, and throughout the day proved himself the beau ideal of an officer. He seemed to bear a charmed life as he coolly stood in the front lines working his guns.

Sergeant Major Watom, N.W.M. Police, was another whose brilliant example and dogged courage gave confidence and steadiness to those within the sound of his voice.

Constable Ross, N.W.M. Police, our chief scout, was always ready to lead a dash or take his place in the skirmish line, in fact he seemed everywhere and at the proper time.

Lieut. Brock, Q.O.R., most pluckily led the party to clear our left rear, and Sergt. McKell, Ptes. Acheson and Lloyd of the same Corps distinguished themselves by assisting the wounded to places of safety in the face of heavy fire, Pte. Lloyd himself being wounded in this duty.

The ambulance corps of the Queen's own was particularly prominent in answering the numerous calls from the front for assistance, many times having to traverse ground that was raked by the enemy's fire.

Brigade Surgeon Strange, I.S.C., and Surgeon Lesslie, Q.O.R., rendered willing and valuable assistance to the wounded both on the field and in the temporary hospital that was established in the wagon laager.

To my personal staff Lieut. Sears, I.S.C., Brigade Major, and Capt. Mutton, Q.O.R., Brigade Quarter Master, I owe many thanks for their boldness, promptness and assiduity in executing the orders given them.

In Lieut.-Col. Herchmer, N. W. M. Police, I had a most valuable assistant, and not only in the action of Saturday, but throughout our march from Swift Current to Battleford, he displayed the most sterling qualities of a soldier; while the men of his command have time and again proved themselves as invaluable to my force.

Attached I beg to hand you an official list of the dead and wounded, with the causes of their death and nature of wounds.

All the wounded are, I am glad to say, doing well at the time I write.

I have the honor to be, sir,

Your obedient servant,

(Signed) W. D. OTTER, Lieut.-Col.

Commanding Battleford Column.

LIST OF KILLED AND WOUNDED IN ACTION OF CUT KNIFE HILL, SATURDAY, 2ND MAY, 1885.

Killed.

1. No. 907, Corpl. W. H. T. Lowry, N. W. Mounted Police, shot through head and died at Battleford, 3rd May.
2. No. 565, Corpl. R. B. Sleight, N.W. Mounted Police, killed in action, shot through head.
3. No. 402, Constable P. Burke, N.W. Mounted Police, shot through body, died at Battleford 2nd May.
4. No. 93, Bugler Herbert Foulkes, “C” Company, I.S. Corps, killed in action, shot through chest.
5. Pte. John Rogers, G.G. Foot Guards, killed in action, shot through head.
6. Pte. Osgoode, G.G. Foot Guards, missing, seen to be hit and