

I had some very good 'sport as my Dad was a real sportsman and did all he could to make the holiday pleasant and in this way my mother was a good sport and helped as did my sisters. We took advantage of Khama's offer and had one of his waggons and staff and went out a short distance into the desert after big game. I managed to get an Eland and a Kudu; we heard lions once or twice but never saw them. This country might be called a desert but I loved it. The great open spaces of real thick bush. It is ideal cattle country and that is the native wealth. Today of course there are diamond diggings and asbestos and other mineral wealth is being developed.

After three weeks I was keen on being off again to the war so I wired the Union-Castle asking their permission to enlist in a mounted regiment for which recruits were being signed on in Mafeking. In no time I had a reply heartily consenting and wishing me luck, and, as I was enlisting in Mafeking there was no need to report back in East London first. I must say they were very co-operative in helping anyone who wished to join up. In fact, I know, Mr Pollands the Chief Clerk in East London, suggested to some of the younger men to join as there would be plenty of older men to carry on, especially as there would not be so much shipping - most ships were taken over by the Government and there would be very little to attend to.

Before leaving, my Dad and I had another two days camping and I thought that this would be my last chance of shooting game but in this I was mistaken for later in East Africa, where there was tons of game I had all the shooting I wanted. Here we had to live on the land as there was very little motor transport and native carriers had to be used to convey rations to the front line. We, being mounted got far ahead of these supplies and saw very little in the way of regular rations. We would be weeks without sugar, coffee and flour which was usually issued instead of bread which was unobtainable. We had to depend on shooting game or buying sheep at 2/- each from the local natives. There were also monkey nuts, mealie meal from the natives and a few other local eats. One thing we missed very much was salt and we tried all sorts of substitutes such as wood ash but to no use. Matches were scarce too and there were times when we carried a chunk of burning wood on to the next stop then replenished it from another fire. Tobacco we got from the natives - terribly strong but it did. We also carried a small tin of sour dough so that if we happened to get a ration of flour we baked bread under the ashes. We became first class housewives as far as catering went.

Old Khama came to bid me farewell and a safe return and I set off for Mafeking (this was in 1915) and there I spent a few days with old Col Ellenberger while getting my attestation papers fixed up. I remember he bought me my first safety razor from Leonons Chemist Shop. Another thing I managed to get was one of those old flints that the natives used for making fires but unfortunately I lost this early in the campaign during one of our first engagements.

Well, I duly left on my journey for Roberts Heights, now Voortrekker Hoogte, where the mounted men were encamped. The Unit I joined was a Free State Regiment, most of the men from Bloemfontein and Thaba Nchu under Col Kuhn who spoke very little English; in fact, most of the chaps spoke Afrikaans. It was a real commando type of regiment as were the 1st and 2nd, the 4th was mostly Natal. If a chap brought along thirty or forty men he was their Officer. My immediate C.O. was Lieut Campbell, troop commander, and the "B" squadron commander was Capt Gerber, a tough little chap from Bloemfontein, five foot five and in private life a baker. I soon learned to/