

to speak Afrikaans fairly well although most of my squadron spoke English. This First Mounted Brigade of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th South African Horse was under the command of General Japie van Deventer, a fine old soldier who had been wounded through the throat during the Anglo Boer War. To digress for a while, it was during that war, for which I was doing research work for the history of the Kaff Rifles, that the British troops including the K.R.'s were chasing Boer Commandos round about Cradock, Graaff-Reinet and Barkly that these included such men as Smuts, van Deventer, Kuhn, Reits, de Jager etc and now in this war I was to fight with them against the Germans. Real soldiers and men of the Commando type they were and this type of fighting they carried out in the East. There was never a case of "Fall in form fours" etc, it was a case of "Rij k&euml;rrels", and you followed your officer for he knew what was expected of him if it came to action. Yes, I had met them in print and now I was to meet them in the flesh and very proud of it too. Smuts was supreme commander in East Africa, van Deventer of the mounted brigade and he later took over from Smuts and was knighted, Kuhn O.C. 3rd Horse, de Jager 2nd, Brits 1st and Hartigan 4th. There were, however, others of whom I have written, who were rebels at the beginning of the war, Kemo, Maritz, Hertzog.

On arrival at Roberts Heights we were shown to our quarters and were to do quite a lot of drill which was to prove so unnecessary later when these mounted regiments adopted the real commando type of war to which they were so used - "Op saal en rij" was to be our drill.

As I had already done a lot of parade ground drill in the S West show I found the drill most boring and so one day the orderly room called for someone to type. I was only a novice but volunteered and was taken on. I was no typist but was fairly fast on figures. The typing I was given was typing the nominal roll and the chaps details. Well, we eventually entrained for Durban where we embarked on a large passenger vessel and set off for Mombasa. There were no subs in this area so we had no escort. After some days of most uncomfortable travel in a packed ship we arrived in Mombasa and after disembarking entrained straightaway for Nairobi where we were to camp and receive our mounts. It was a long and hot journey but most interesting as it was new country. Heavy forest country and then out into large open plains where we saw all types of wild game, Elephant, buck and even a pride of lions, the first many of the chaps had seen in the wild state. The country just teemed with game. Now and again the train would stop where wood choppers had been busy piling up wood which these trains had to take on as there was no coal in those days. As the train did not travel at any great speed many of us travelled on the carriage tops and were then able to see more of the Indians working on the railway, building it. You have all probably read a book called man-eaters of Tsavo which tells the story of this portion of the railway building. If you have not, well get a copy from your library.

Eventually, after a most, for me, interesting journey we arrived in Nairobi and were taken out to our camp which had been pitched by the advance party which had left the Union a month or so before us. The camp was about four miles out of Nairobi on the Game Reserve. I think it was the Makabi Reserve where people today motor to see the lions which take very little notice of people in cars.

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