

end of page 54-  
to put it out of  
its misery. It is  
a hard thing to  
shoot a horse  
which has served  
you well and to  
which you have  
become attached.  
Thus/

Thus many horses were left dead and many saddles discarded and the men who were unable to get mounts were sent back to some depot. There were however so many chaps going down with fever and some with cold feet that it was usually quite easy to get another mount. A few remounts were however sent up from time to time. The poor infantry following tell of the awful stench they had to put up with at times. But many dead horses I am sure were cleaned up by lions, jackals, vultures etc. and this saved them quite a lot of hunting.

I personally rode about sixteen horses during my service with the 3rd. and later 4th. S.A. Horse. I was always lucky in being able to take over a horse belonging to some chap who owing to sickness or some other malady had to be sent back to some depot or R.A.P. (Regimental Aid Post)

After three days at Lol Kasol we set off across a vast most uninteresting plain until we came to a shallow lake near the Rift Valley where the horses were able to make up with very fine feeding of green grass and good water to drink.

Later as the enemy retired they practiced the black earth tactics by burning the grass and so there times when, on arriving at a stop one had to attend to your horse first to find some feed and as we usually found this to be near some river there was usually grass too green to burn. So having seen to your friend, your best friend, you set to and cooked whatever you mess had. Might be unga meal obtained from the natives plus perhaps meat from a sheep several of you had bought at about five shillings. We too manage to now and again shoot a buck as there was any amount of game about. Yes we certainly lived on the land. Apart from the unga, a kind of maize meal, there were monkey nuts and even some of their home cured and very strong tobacco. There was one thing of which we were very short of, and we missed very much in cooking, salt. Another item in short supply was matches. My flint lighter became useful but there were times when you saw a couple of chaps carrying smoking bits of wood with which to start a fire later. I should mention that there were also sweet potatoes.

We were now and again held up by the enemy using delaying tactics leaving a small party in some well chosen position. This was to enable their infantry to get ahead.

We were now travelling along the Rift Valley and on one occasion were held up at a place called Abrahams Heights. Here the enemy held a strong position on the Heights which was in the line of our advance. We were held up for a day and a half before they cleared out on the second night, out into the wooded country. We climbed out of the valley on to the heights where we thought it was about time we had something to eat, and the various little groups began to stoke up and cook a bit of food. I remember we had just about got ready to braise a bit of meat when up came the old General van Dventer, Putties as we called him, in his car and in his gruff voice- he had been wounded in the throat during the Anglo Boer war- said "Kom Kerels, Ons moet Rij. Yella kan moera ect. Sal op en stoort aan". Well there was nothing we could do but move and take and eat the half cooked meat. Mind you that meat was good, nothing like a brai-brai. I can still hear that order from a very fine man, who we all respected and followed. We had been warned that we could now expect a little rain which lasted about six weeks. And the little rains came and as one man remarked 'If these are the little rains I hope I am not here for the big rains' These were probably the Monsoons that we hear of.

So the rains came and it rained and rained and rained and my old great-great coat was never dry. I was fortunate in picking up another ground sheet after I had lost mine in a skirmish. We used to cut a few branches to act as a mattress on which we placed our sheets.

The Germans had a much better one than ours for having buttons and holes down one side two of their men could join their sheets and with a couple of sticks make a useful bivvy tent. I did later bag a German ground sheet.