

before Queen Victoria gave the British half to Kaiser, her nephew, and so the mountain was entirely in German Territory. The slopes of the mountain are very fertile and just beyond the boundary on the British side is more or less desert.

We eventually arrived at Voi where there was a very large camp where there were many troops including eight South African Infantry Regiments. 5th. 6th. 7th. 8th. 9th. 10th. 11th. and 12th. the first four having been sent to France, and the 1st. 2nd. 3rd and 4th Mounted regiments and in addition there were of course regiments of Artillery and Supply and Ambulance as well.

Barring our way was a very strong enemy position held at Taveta, a hill. This strongly held position had been attacked some little while earlier by the infantry advancing across open country in a frontal attack. They had a very thin time and had to retire, having many casualties.

The supreme commander at that time was a British General and for some reason they always preferred a frontal attack. And as we know these tactics cost them dearly during the Anglo Boer War at Magesfontein where the guards went in to attack practically arm in arm and were forced to retire in disorder. Then there were the disasters at Modder River, Spion Kop and Stormberg to quote a few. As the result of frontal attacks - folly.

General Smuts had now taken over as supreme commander and we were now to see different tactics by him, General van Deventer and other S.A. Generals and senior commanding officers. And so for the next move. Taveta was well pounded by the artillery while the Infantry supported by Mounted troops carried out the right and left hook as it became known then and later in the 1939 War.

There was however no movement of the enemy troops at Taveta for the reason that the enemy had withdrawn to another strong position Latema Reata nek where they were strongly entrenched. This was a pass through the mountains and a position to attack. However the infantry went in and the artillery gave support firing to keep the enemy heads down.

I remember my troop was standing by a battery of guns firing into the enemy position in case there should be a move forward.

Now to force the enemy to withdraw two mounted Regiments were ordered to do a long flanking movement round the mountain to Kahe where there was a bridge across the river where we found later was mounted one of the Koningsberg guns.

This movement was to take time but far better than risking the lives of many men in a frontal attack in the Nek. As soon as the enemy realised that his lines of communication were being threatened they would no doubt pull out.

We were told to have a good feed and rest while we could as it was not known when we would again feed or rest.

We started off just after midnight, each man carrying a .303 rifle, two bandoliers of ammunition, a ground sheet and an overcoat. With us we had about a dozen mules carrying boxes of ammunition. We were moving along in this thick bush in proper commando style on this fine moonlight night trying as best we could to keep in touch. Presently the lions, probably smelling all this fresh meat, began to roar and kept up for some time coming closer and closer. For some reason they did not interfere at all. However presently one of the mules broke loose and went off ending up as food for the lions. It would have been useless to chase after it.

The horses and mules had never heard lions before and probably neither had the majority of men. The roar of a lion as I have experienced, is more frightening out in the wild than in a cage. We were making for the lower slopes of Kilimanjaro and so on to the Moshi - Dar es Salaam railway.

Well we eventually struck the Lumi River just after first light and here we bumped into a fairly strong enemy position or rather force on the move. They held out for some time across the river and fired on us but fortunately the Native Askari is not a very good marksman they usually fire high. We eventually fixed bayonets and started wading across the river which was not very deep, not quite knee deep.

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