

Well we eventually reached the mountain and there the only water was vleis and spring at the foot of the mountain held by the enemy. We had to drive him out of this position before we could get water for ourselves and the horses. I felt sorry for them as we at least had water bottles. Also we could not advance unless we got him out of the position.

The first and the third Regiments were ordered to surround the position and keep up a steady fire to keep the enemy occupied. Some of their weapons must have been old fashioned for one could from some positions see a cloud of smoke and then whrrrr like a sack of potatoes coming through the air. We had to take the best cover we could as we did not have any implements for digging apart from our bayonets and with these not much could be done. I think they might have been running out of ammunition for there was not any very heavy firing. Well on the second day it was decided that we advance up the hill with the bayonet. So after dark we started our advance and it was not easy scrambling up among those boulders and trees. As it began to get light we noticed little white flags all over the place. They had surrendered and were soon assembled at the bottom about 500 of them, mostly Native Askaris.

One or two of the chaps were interested in finding spots where they had seen some of the enemy and hoped they had shot them. We were, however, more interested in seeing to our horses and ourselves with regard to water.

With that thick bush around I am sure quite a number of the natives managed to make good their escape.

I have an idea that during the night their senior officer had contacted our Commanding officer and advised that they were surrendering. The men must have been told of the decision for we were not fired on as we stumbled up the hill when I am sure they could have picked some of us off.

Any way it was quite a thrill going with the bayonet. I have one snap of myself sitting on my little black horse quite close to the foot of the hill and the water where we were able to get a good supply for men and horses.

We were now to have a couple of days rest but it was here too that our troubles started. Men began to go down with fever and the horses began dying of horse sickness.

The malaria is caused by the mosquito but the theory is or was that they also caused horse sickness. It affects their lungs and they battle for breath until they drop. I saw horses trying to climb an ant hill, I suppose to try and get air.

I remember as a young man at Gaborone in the Bechuanaland Protectorate they used to hang bunches of leaves etc. soaked in paraffin as this kept the mosquitoes away.

Well as men were taken ill and had to be evacuated their horses were taken over by men who had lost theirs. Well the saddles were just left and there must during this campaign been hundreds of saddles left lying in the veld.

It was, however, the fly that was going to be our real trouble as far as the horses were concerned. There were areas where areas where the fly was prevalent and the entomologist chaps who we had with us were supposed to know the areas and advise the authorities so that we could arrange to pass through these at night. But I am afraid he had an unenviable job. The fly as we all know cannot fly long distances and require the shade of trees so that out in the open spaces there should be no fly. But as with all maps at that time they were not too accurate and many areas of bush were not shown. So quite often the area decided on for the next halt is in bush country and fly. Too late we find this out. A horse stung by fly shows no sign for some time. Later, however, especially if they have had a bit of rain and their coats become rough and it shows a lack of energy. The animal becomes listless and slow of movement until in the end the only thing is 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/