

carry out patrols to watch the activities of the enemy who might try and work round our left flank thus threatening our lines of communication. It was thought that the enemy was getting information as to our activities and strength from a couple of priests left in Kondoa. They would thus know that we had a number of men down with malaria which would account for their building up their force for an attack. A native was actually caught leaving Kondoa with a message for the German commander giving full particulars with regard to our troops. This message was shown to van Deventer who decided that the native should be allowed to carry on and deliver the message as, the General guessed, that the Germans would most likely be unaware that three Infantry Regiments would be with us in a few days.

I should have mentioned that when the enemy retired from Kondoa they took up a strong position and we watched our three 14 pounder guns shelling them. But when they first pulled out General van Deventer was with us and said in Afrikaans "If you want to shoot Askaris, now is your chance at 1000 yards". So we got stuck in but could not see the result. Later they could not stand any more from our guns and started withdrawing in small batches of fifty and sixty at a time but having to go through sodden mealie fields they could not run but walked out in long columns and the artillery had a wonderful time following each batch with shrapnel.

For years I had been prone to attacks of Malaria which I had first contracted as a young man in the Bechuanaland Protectorate and I now went down with a bad attack. Becoming delirious was unable to join a patrol going out early the following morning. Some one else was detailed to take my place. I felt terrible and could not care what happened. It was however a blessing in disguise for of the nine that went out only four came back the others were taken prisoner in an ambush.

The three Infantry Regiments: 10th, 11th and 12th eventually arrived after a most exhausting march from Arusha and they wasted no time in taking up a defensive position as an attack was expected. They had with them their transport of two wheeled Indian garries drawn by two oxen. Many of their oxen had died - Fly. I saw one garry being drawn by an ox and two men who were taking the place of the ox that had died that morning.

As I have mentioned these chaps wasted no time in preparing their defenses and were all ready for the attack which took place a few days later. It was after dark that enemy forces were seen approaching and then with a fan fare of bugles they opened fire and tried to advance but our fire held them. The fighting was fierce but at about midnight they realized that they could make no head way and so decided to retire with their bugles sounding the "Retreat". The bugles I think must give them Dutch courage, for they were fond of hearing them. Our chaps were, fortunately, very well positioned and as a matter of fact were ready to counter attack with the bayonet of which no one is fond. They must have suffered heavy casualties but ours were very light and among the few killed was Major Humphrey of East London.

Our troop was now allocated a position on a hill on our left flank but I was not able to accompany them as I had suffered another attack of fever. I joined them a few days later and found that our position was quite close to that of the Germans who held the high ground across a valley. This was developing into a static state and all we had to do was look out for any movement of the enemy and in this we had to be very careful for while we were looking for targets they were too. Yes they too were playing the same game. I remember standing near some rocks on the look out for a tiresome sniper when something said "Move". And as I did so there was a ping and a bullet struck the rock where I had been standing. Bower then said "Geoff put your helmet on the rock" no sooner said than done and a bullet knocked it off. The sniper thinking he had got his man moved and Bower accounted for him. The next day an Indian battery arrived and soon drove the enemy out. The enemy were now withdrawing but, with so many sick, it was not advisable for us to move and also we had to give the Infantry time to recover after their long march and for supplies to be brought up.

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