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NOTE.—There are many subjects in Africa, such as Racial Characteristics, Political and Industrial Conditions, Labour, Disease, Currency, Banking, Education, and so on, about which information is imperfect and opinion divided. On none of these complicated and difficult questions has Science said the last word. Under these circumstances it has been considered best to allow those competent to form an opinion to express freely in this Journal the conclusions at which they themselves have arrived. *It must be clearly understood that the object of the Journal is to gather information, and that each writer must be held responsible for his own views.*

CAMPAIGN ON GERMAN EAST AFRICA- RHODESIAN BORDER ¹

I AM afraid it may be expected that I should relate events as they actually occurred on the Rhodesian and German East African borders. But as the campaign in these regions is not yet finished, I cannot give you information—interesting though it might be—that would in any way help a clever enemy. I may, however, make a few remarks, and give a few illustrations from photographs taken on the spot.

It is almost ancient history to allude to the German South-West African campaign, and how well those fine soldiers and leaders of men, General Botha and General Smuts, finished it with a comparatively small loss of life. I say “comparatively small,” but I must not omit to remark that South Africa

¹ This lecture was delivered at a Dinner of the Society held on 17 Feb., 1916. For report of other proceedings on this occasion, see page 275.

then lost one of her most distinguished soldiers—a man of rare tact, ability, and energy—in my late friend Colonel Sir George Farrar, who was killed before the operations had ceased.

But many have not heard that the Rhodesian troops took the German frontier post in German South-West Africa at Shucksmannsburg, in the Caprivi Zipfel strip on the banks of the Zambesi River.

Large quantities of stores, ammunition, mules, and various supplies were captured, when the enemy surrendered.

That part of the country is not of much use to anyone. It is a cattle country; it breeds the largest, most vindictive, and venomous mosquitoes I have seen in a long experience of tropical Africa. In the wet season it is a swamp and unhealthy; in the dry weather the heat is terrific, whilst the sand is deep and uncomfortable to walk in.

We occupied this post for three months, patrolling the country, and on December 5th, 1914, my force, known as the 2nd Mobile Column, was ordered to proceed to the German East African border. I had telegraphic instructions from General Edwards, commanding the Rhodesian Forces, on December 5th, at 12 noon, to report as quickly as possible at Livingstone, which was a ninety miles' journey.

The same day at 3 p.m. I left in a dug-out, paddled by natives. We did sixty miles on the Zambesi in a blinding thunderstorm, for the rains were on. We walked (two native soldiers and I) most of the other thirty miles through heavy mud, and reported at Livingstone at 3 p.m. on the 6th. The column arrived ten days later, having had difficulty with the wagon transport.

We rested, refitted, were given more officers and men, and entrained, with the German mules and our machine-guns, for Sakania, in the Belgian Congo. At Sakania we were met by the ever-courteous Belgian Administrator, who provided transport; this consisted of 700 natives, who carried everything, including heavy supplies of ammunition. Only the machine-guns and machine-gun ammunition were transported by mules.

We marched through the Katanga country, the Belgian

official being with us to the Luapula River. On the south side we were hospitably entertained by the Chef de Poste; on the other side we met a Rhodesian Native Commissioner with carriers, and were not sorry to part with the Belgian porters, who are not accustomed to travel as fast as we do in Rhodesia.

We marched on to Fort Rosebery, where the excellent native administration had provided more carriers; then on to Luwingu, where they were again changed for us by Mr. Goodall, the Native Commissioner. We passed through the White Fathers' station at Kapatu, where they did us very well; and as we were travelling fast and the grass was long, the sole bag in game was an elephant and a few buck, shot by Captain Fair. Eventually we reached Abercorn, the Rhodesian Military and Civil Headquarters nearest to the German East African frontier post of Bismarcksburg, on Lake Tanganyika.

The journey from Sakania was a 430 miles' walk, and it was done without a single officer or man falling out. This march was accomplished in heavy rains; swamps had to be corduroyed, and several bridges had to be erected daily to get the mules over the swollen rivers. The 430 miles was done in twenty days, averaging about twenty-one miles per day. After a few days at Abercorn, Colonel Hodson, who commanded the forces on the border, sent my column to Saisi, which is on the frontier.

Here we occupied and fortified the farm buildings. We made a fort and trenches, and removed long grass, trees, and other cover useful to the enemy. Then we proceeded to patrol, and were practically in touch with the Germans daily. The fact cannot be disguised that the enemy were considerably stronger than we were along the border line, and the same applies to the Nyasaland frontier. But, though they were often ten to one, and much stronger in Europeans, we seemed, by some great good luck, to snatch a victory when defeat had appeared to be almost certain.

For instance, in the early days, the Nyasaland forces, composed chiefly of that fine native regiment, the King's African Rifles, commanded by British officers, inflicted a severe defeat on a vastly superior force at Karonga. I cannot go into details

regarding the many and successful actions, but the Northern Rhodesian forces, composed of the Northern Rhodesian Rifles and the permanent Military Police, lost some excellent officers and men. The Belgian forces, too, lost many good officers, non-commissioned officers and men. The enemy lost heavily, as, being the stronger in European officers, soldiers, native troops, and guns, they were generally the attacking force.

I remember, one night in June, information came in that the enemy were entrenched in force on Mosi Hill, in German East Africa. I wired to Colonel Hodson, who came out with a force to attack. He marched all the next night, and arrived near the German position at dawn. I also marched with a small column through the night.

We found after dawn that the enemy were out looking for us, and that the position was not strongly held, so we took it with my force of Belgian and British troops, and captured large quantities of supplies, and also, later in the day, a convoy of supplies, some excellent wine, officers' kits, plans and maps, and some native levies known locally as Ruga-Ruga. We slept that night in this fort.

Before daybreak we burnt and destroyed the camp. The enemy had laid an ambush on the road we came by, and also on two other roads; but we marched north into his territory, and away from the roads they suspected we should take, and by a circuitous route through the bush got home to Saisi, our rearguard only being attacked. We found Colonel Hodson had had no luck, and had returned the day before to Saisi Fort.

On June 26th they attacked Saisi, and tried to surround the position after dawn. The fighting lasted all day, the casualties being heavy on both sides. At 11 next morning they left us, and embarked on armed steamers on Lake Tanganyika, and that afternoon we buried our own and the German dead.

In the morning we opened some graves in German territory, but found only ammunition concealed and no bodies. The graves were neatly made, but the fact of some ammunition being found near them led to an order that they should be opened. Ammunition is heavy to carry about with carriers,

so if one can hide it for use on another occasion in a grave, or anywhere else, the plan is worth trying.

About this time we also captured large quantities of ammunition, camp equipment, tents, tables, rifles, and other things, which we made use of against the enemy. After this latter attack, in which Lieutenants Dickinson and Allport did extremely good work, it was considered that the enemy would make more serious attempts to occupy Rhodesia. Therefore my little garrison, consisting of Belgians and British native troops, trenched hard daily, and I had some three hundred native carriers working at the forts and entrenchments for three weeks.

Some of these carriers were not satisfied with our design in trenches, and dug themselves in so thoroughly when the shelling started that the earth fell in and buried them. Along the border engagements were usual almost daily, but most of it was fair open fighting, and not that disagreeable trench warfare. You saw what you wanted to get at, and went for it. About this time Major Boyd Cunningham, who commanded the North Rhodesian Rifles, had a very brisk go near Fife. The enemy were almost in his camp one night on patrol, but they were driven off with heavy casualties on both sides.

On July 23rd last year, at midnight, it was reported to me that the enemy were entrenching. They were nearly due then, as they always seemed to attack when the moon was full. Our little garrison were ready, and the attack started at 7 a.m. on the 24th. They surrounded our position at Saisi on all sides with a force estimated at 2,000, with 12-pounder guns and ten machine-guns. Against them I had twenty Belgian and British officers and men and 450 Belgian and British native soldiers, a 7-pounder, a 4-pounder, and two Maxims.

Firing continued night and day for four days, and all our mules and oxen, besides the sheep and goats, upon which we depended for food, were killed by shrapnel.

On the fifth day the German officer in command sent in a *parlementaire* with a note asking me to surrender, and requesting that a fully qualified officer should be sent to discuss terms at the Saisi bridge, which was 900 yards from my

position. He stated that he had captured a large convoy of supplies, and had also beaten back our relief forces, that he knew we had no water, and so on.

I replied that under no conditions whatever would we surrender, and also suggested that, the next time he sent to us, his soldiers might be instructed not to fire on the flag of truce, as they had done on this occasion. He replied apologising for his men firing on the flag of truce, and giving as a reason the fact that a certain part of the field had failed to receive his orders to cease fire.

The officer who brought the note was quite *au fait* with what was going on. We told him of the German South-West African surrender, having heard it but a few days before; but he knew all about it, and before we did. That night they attacked in force by the light of a fairly bright moon, and came on bravely, but they could not get actually to our trenches. The attacking force were about 1,500, a large majority being Europeans, but though we heard them encouraging the Arabs and native troops to charge, they could not get them to do so.

The attack lasted an hour and a half. Various ruses were adopted. They blew the Belgian "Cease fire" and ours also. Firing ceased for a few minutes on our side, but was resumed, and we afterwards ceased bugle calls.

My force had considerable difficulty to get water. It is a hot country, and you want a drink sometimes, and when you want it you want it badly; but they had trenched all round and close to the water supplies at Saisi, 900 yards away, and at the Molembo, 500 yards off. We therefore had to tie some water-bottles together, pack them in grass, and steal down to the river at night a few yards at a time. When they started firing the water parties lay down, for firing at night is invariably high, and when firing ceased the water party stole water, but sometimes we could not get any, despite trying in both directions, so we remained thirsty until the next night, for it was absolutely impossible to get any in the daytime.

Fighting went on until August 3rd, when the enemy had eaten up all his supplies and all ours. He then retired to Lake Tanganyika, embarked for Ujiji, and also marched off by road to Bismarcksburg and New Langenburg. We were

GERMAN TRENCH IN CENTRAL AFRICA.

BRITISH ENTRENCHING AT SAÏSI.

(To face page 211.)

GERMAN NAVAL GUN MOUNTED IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN BUSH.

INTERIOR OF GERMAN GUN POSITION WITH NAVAL GUN FROM KONIGSBERG.

[To face page 213.]

LOOK-OUT ON THE FORT AT SAISI.

N. RHODESIAN POLICE MAXIM DETACHMENT IN BRITISH TRENCHES

[To face page 214.]

too done up to go after them, and were relieved by a battalion of Belgian troops after a few days.

I cannot close without referring to the Belgian forces who so ably assisted us during a long and trying period, and with Major Olsen, who commanded a group of battalions, and to Major de Konnick with whom I am very glad to have been associated.

We had not enough troops to do the job by ourselves, and the Belgian troops helped us to keep off the savage enemy, and on many occasions behaved with conspicuous gallantry.

I had the honour to have Belgian troops under my command almost all last year, and am glad to pay a tribute to the good and energetic work done by them on all occasions, more especially as Monsieur Hymans, the distinguished representative of His Majesty King Albert, is here to-night.

J. J. O'SULLEVAN.