

Boer War memories, by Lieutenant Colonel F.A.B. Daly

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BOER WAR MEMORIES

Lieut-Colonel E. A. B. DALY, C.B.

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Hester Biography



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R.A.M.C
MUNIMENT
ROOM

Review by "The Army, Navy and Air Force Gazette,"
London, November 5, 1936.

THE BOER WAR

Daly, C.B.

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Boer marksman
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Daly has published
volume. They
compliment.

Pott, Lieut.-Colonel,
Private Secretary.

TO D.D.M.S.

Received from

S.C.A.

Major W.E. TADDALE C.B., C.B.E., M.C., M.B.

With the Compliments of
D.D.M.S. SOUTHERN BRAND.
KHS

Professor C. Lovatt Evans
26 Jul 50.

Physiology Section

C.D.E.E.

Porton.

Before throwing away I occurred
to me this might now have acquired some
historical value e.g. for General Sutherland

TO D.D.M.S.;

S.C.A. received from
Major Gen W.E. TYNDALL CB, CBE, MC, MB,
DDMS SOUTHERN Command. KHS

With the Compliments of

Professor C. Lovatt Evans

26 Jul 50.

Physiology Section

C.D.E.E. Porton.

Before throwing away it occurred
to me this might now have acquired some
historical value e.g. for Communist Subversion.

Review by "*The Army, Navy and Air Force Gazette*,"
London, November 5, 1936.

THE BOER WAR.

"Boer War Memories," by Lt.-Col. F. A. B. Daly, C.B.
56 pp. (Wilke, Melbourne. 8s.)

"Boer War Memories" is a faint and pleasant echo of times that were deemed stirring in their day. The author, who served with the R.A.M.C., was left behind at Dundee when our troops evacuated that town, found himself in charge of wounded men, both Boer and Briton, and under the command of the former. He ministered to both with self-sacrificing and impartial devotion, according to the ethics of his high calling, under great difficulties overcome by resourcefulness and helped also by his sense of humour. There is that story of the Boer marksman showing off; he aimed at a dog some 300 yards away, the dog never stirred at the first shot and trotted away at the second. After that Colonel Daly and his orderly withdrew lest the marksman should look round in search of a larger target—the doctor stands six foot four.

Now, at the hearty age of 80, Colonel Daly has published his "Memories" in a handsomely bound little volume. They have gone into a third edition, and deserve the compliment.



Government House, Melbourne.

24th August, 1936.

Dear Sir,

I forward hereunder, for your information, copy of a letter received from His Excellency the Governor-General:—

"With further reference to Your Excellency's despatch dated 28th May, 1936, I am now in a position to advise that the King has been pleased to accept Lieutenant-Colonel F. A. B. Daly's book, 'Boer War Memories.' Will you please convey to Colonel Daly His Majesty's sincere thanks for his kind thought in sending him a copy of these interesting reminiscences of the Boer War?"

Yours faithfully,

E. H. Pott, Lieut.-Colonel,
Private Secretary.

Lieut.-Colonel F. A. B. Daly,
Erin's Rest, Portsea.



1890

1891-1892

1914

Copyright © 1994

الحمد لله الذي جعلنا من عباده المخلصين

1894-1895

Copy of Letter received from General Hertzog, P.C., Premier
of the Union of South Africa, and who previously served as
a General Officer in the Boer War.

DS/MN
Kantoor van die Eerste Minister,

Prime Minister's Office,
Capetown, 23rd March, 1936.

Dear Sir,

General Hertzog wishes me to thank you for your letter of
5th February, and the copy of your "Boer War Memories,"
which you so kindly sent him. He has read the book with very
great interest, the more so as he can vividly recollect some of
the incidents recorded therein.

Yours faithfully,

copy of signature

H. J. van der Merwe
Private Secretary.

Lieut.-Col. F. A. B. DALY, C.B.,

Erin's Rest, Portsea, Victoria, Australia.

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Astron - Biography

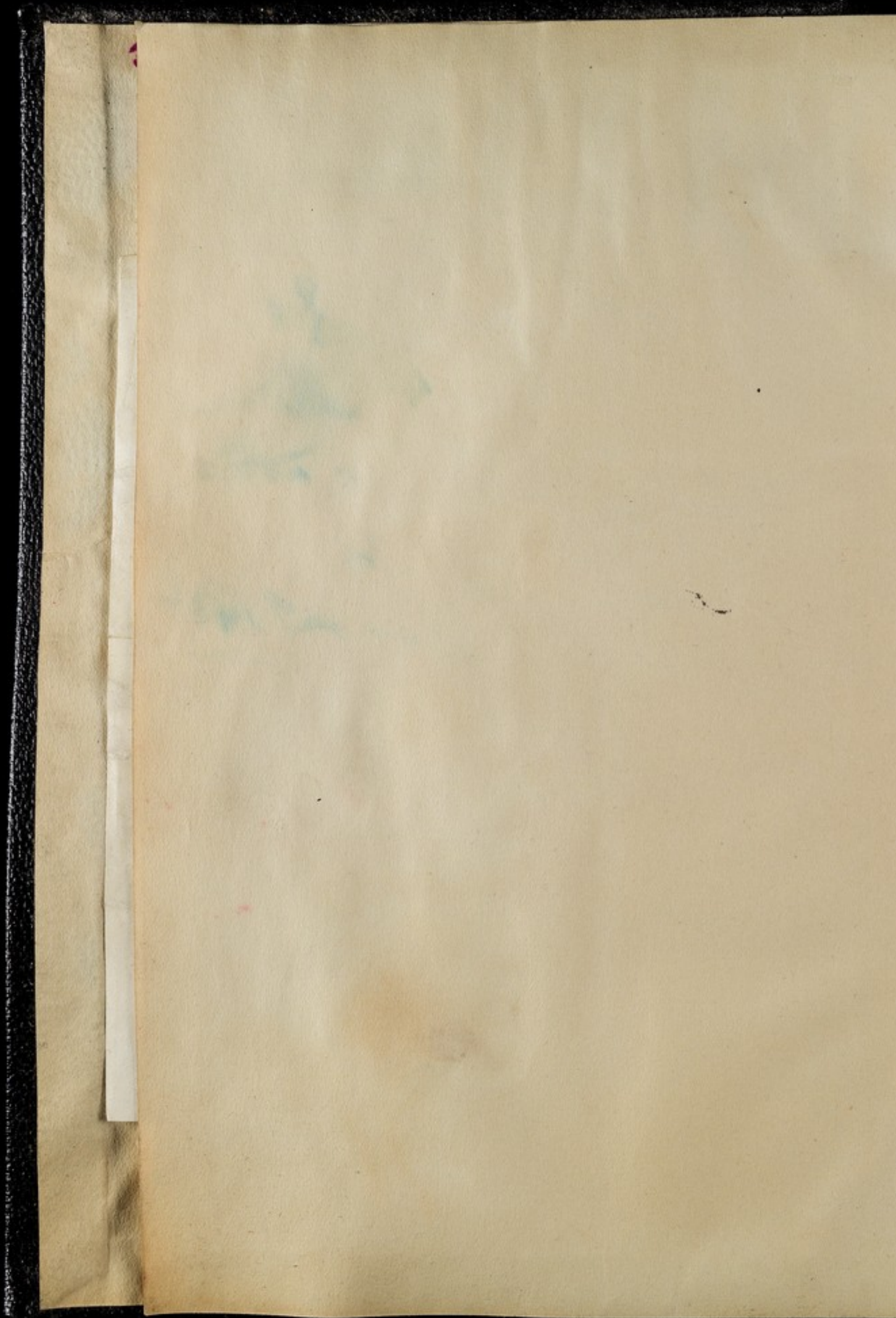


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R.A.M.C.
MUNIMENT
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The Ranc

Officers Mess

London

with the authors

Complements

Dec 19th 1935



War Office,

14th August, 1935.

*Published with the permission of
Sir R. J. G. C. Paterson, K.B.E., C.B.,
Deputy Under-Secretary of State for War.*

First Edition, May, 1935.

Second Edition, November, 1935.

SECOND EDITION.

BOER WAR MEMORIES.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Boer War Memories

Personal Experiences

By

Lieut.-Colonel F. A. B. DALY, C.B.

Fellow Royal College of Surgeons, Ireland;
Bachelor of Surgery and Dip. State
Medicine, University of Dublin.
Late R.A.M.C. British
Forces.

On the Early Stages of the
Boer War, 1899-1900.

Picture of Swedish Mission Chapel

From the "Illustrated London News,"
and their published report,
dated Feb. 10, 1900.

Picture of Trophies

presented to Australian Club, Melbourne,
by the Author.

MELBOURNE:
Wilke & Co. Pty. Ltd., Printers, 241 William Street
1935.

R.A.M.C.
MUNIMENT
ROOM

Don't be a fool

Don't be a fool

Don't be a fool

Don't be a fool

Don't be a fool

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Don't be a fool

Don't be a fool

Don't be a fool

Don't be a fool

P R E L U D E.

Many years ago, when I was in the British Royal Army Medical Corps, I was asked to write a record of my experiences at Dundee, where I was officially ordered to remain to look after the dangerously wounded officers and men, and thus I fell under the control of the Boer Forces.

However, I was excused doing so, as I pointed out that such a report might cause jealousy amongst my brother officers. Also I stated I knew that very excellent reports had been submitted by the P.M.O. of the war. It was then suggested that I should write an account after I left the service, as I was the only one who could do so.

Now, as I have reached the age of 80 years my span of life must be limited. I am now recording events which have always been vividly fixed in my memory.

Boer War Memories

CHAPTER I.

I believe the immediate cause of the last Boer war was "the Jameson Raid" (1896), as before that the Boers were satisfied with the peace terms made after the Majuba disaster (1881). From that period to the outbreak of war, October 20, 1899, the Boers secretly began to arm, and with the assistance of a foreign power were instructed in the art of warfare, turning their country farmers into efficient soldiers.

All kinds of deceptions were employed by them to get arms to their country through Delagoa Bay, in Portuguese territory. Military equipment and boxes were labelled pianos or other harmless goods.

At that time it was openly stated by them that they intended to annex Natal and drive the hated English into the sea. Their great object was to obtain a harbour, as they had not one in their own country, being completely cut off from the sea by Portuguese territory and Tongaland.

Boer War Memories

The Natal Government, realising their position, requested the Home authorities for reinforcements, and thus a battalion of the Royal Irish Fusiliers was selected. I received orders to join the troopship at Southampton, and to be in medical charge of this regiment.



Boer War Memories

CHAPTER II.

We left England in September, 1899, and about October 11, 1899, we arrived at Durban, our passage being via Suez Canal and east coast of Africa. There we disembarked at once, and proceeded by train to Ladysmith military camp, arriving there late at night. Next morning at daybreak we again proceeded by train to join the forces at Dundee.

This military camp was situated on a plain about quarter of a mile north of the town of Dundee, with lofty mountains on its three sides; that of Talana was on our north-east.

After our arrival the forces camped there were the following:—Four regiments of infantry, of one battalion each, viz., King's Royal Rifles, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Leicester Regiment, and Royal Irish Fusiliers; two batteries Royal Field Artillery, 69th and 13th; one Cavalry Regiment, 5th Royal Irish Lancers; a detachment of Army Service Corps, a few ordnance, and 10 natives from an Indian field hospital.

Besides the above a special camp existed in the town of Dundee for General Sir Penn Symons,

Boer War Memories

K.C.B., and his staff, which included part of the Cavalry Regiment; the other part remained in our camp.

There were in this camp No. 18th British Field Hospital, four medical officers and one Major R.A.M.C. as P.M.O. In the main camp where I was stationed all the troops were housed in bell tents, and the officers' lines were placed north of the camp, and thus nearest to Talana Hill.

Now the procedure adopted each morning, everyone had to be on parade at 4.30 a.m., no lights whatever were allowed, so all had to dress in the dark. This was done with the object to deceive the Boers and not give them the position of our camp.

All on parade had to wait until the Brigade Major and his staff had arrived from the headquarter camp. Then he gave orders to dismiss the combined parade, stating that there would be no attack of the Boers that day. This dismissal always made me free for other duties.

Boer War Memories

CHAPTER III.

On October 20, 1899, being about seven days after our arrival, the Brigade Major had dismissed the parade, and the horses of the field batteries had gone to get water at a spruit south of our camp. As I was walking to my tent a Boer shell whistled over my head and burst with great accuracy in the men's lines.

This shelling continued, and from information I received afterwards the Boers thought they were killing hundreds of our men, while in reality they were only smashing tent poles. However, our scouting must have been very defective for the Boers to shell with such accuracy.

After this event confusion raged. The first man killed was a gunner* who was watering his horse and a shell took the top of his head off. Shortly after that our field batteries got in position, and in a short time silenced the Boer guns on Talana Hill.

Now I shall make no further remarks about this battle, as it has been fully reported by other writers, beyond stating that the battle commenced at 5.30 a.m. and ended at 2 p.m. Talana Hill was taken by a frontal attack.

* See Appendix I.

Boer War Memories

CHAPTER IV.

Personally I was given the bandsmen of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, who were trained by me in first aid on the voyage out from England, and they were very efficient.

Further, I was greatly assisted by their bandmaster, who accompanied us out to South Africa. Had war been declared he would have been left behind in England because he was a civilian and not an attested soldier. However, I was glad to have him, as he had great influence over his men, and afterwards he set a fine example when working with me in the battle area.

Our great difficulty was handling the heavy panniers, medical and surgical, as they had to be carried by these orderlies on to the field where the attack was in progress. The mules for this duty were not available. This greatly delayed our movements, and our attacking forces had reached the shelter of a wood before we practically had started.

Boer War Memories

A dressing station was established in a donga at the rear of the wood above mentioned, and up to then all casualties were attended to. Fortunately our party received no injuries, as most of the bullets seemed to be flying too high. The Boers kept firing from the top of Talana Hill with no objects clearly in view owing to a heavy mist and rain. This state of the weather was a disadvantage afterwards, as it saturated the face of the hill, and made it far more difficult for our men to climb. In many places I noticed holes and slides where stones and earth had given way under our soldiers' feet when charging up.

All casualties were attended to about 3 p.m., when the battle was over. I received written orders for these bandsmen to return to headquarters at once, but I was to remain on the field until I received further orders. At about 6 p.m., it getting dark at the time, the P.M.O. came personally to see me. He then informed me that he had decided to leave me behind at Dundee in charge of the dangerously wounded now housed in the Swedish Mission Chapel and other rooms.

The following information he gave me:—

(1) That the whole force was retiring to Ladysmith.

(2) That four privates from each infantry battalion had been sent to act as orderlies. They were men of the best character, and volunteers.

(3) I then asked him for another medical officer; this he refused. Then I asked for an N.C.O., or

Boer War Memories

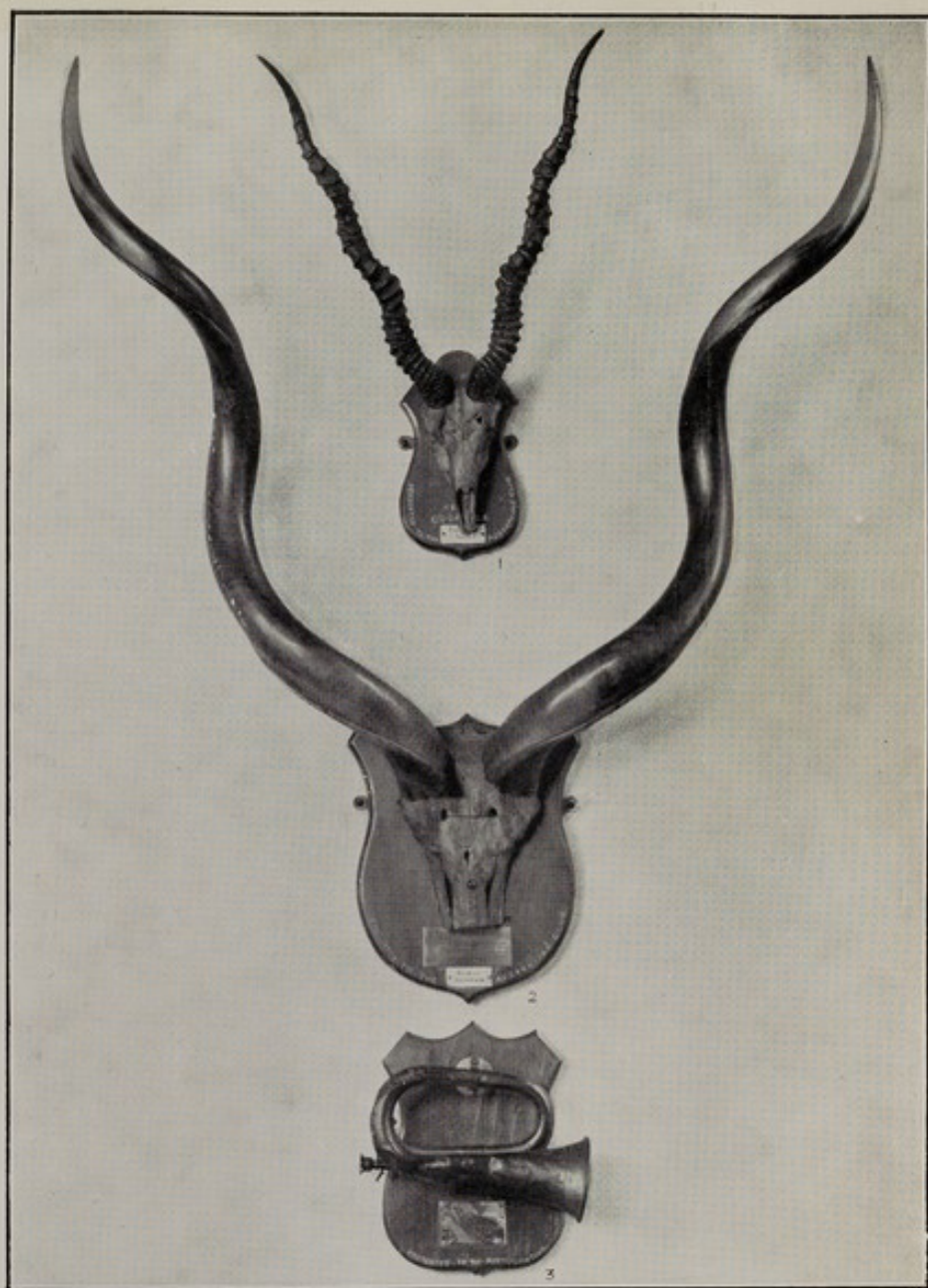
orderlies of our corps who were trained men; this he also refused, though I suggested he could easily obtain them from the British Field Hospital under his command.

(4) Then I asked him where I was to get the provisions and necessary stores. He replied that I could get everything required from the camp they had just vacated.

(5) I asked him what about the Boer wounded. He replied not to handle any. This I thought very bad advice, and I made up my mind to get all I could, as I was sure it would be to my advantage. As events turned out afterwards I was quite correct in doing so.

On parting we shook hands. He then followed the retiring troops and I walked back to the Swedish mission, and to a place to which I was an utter stranger.



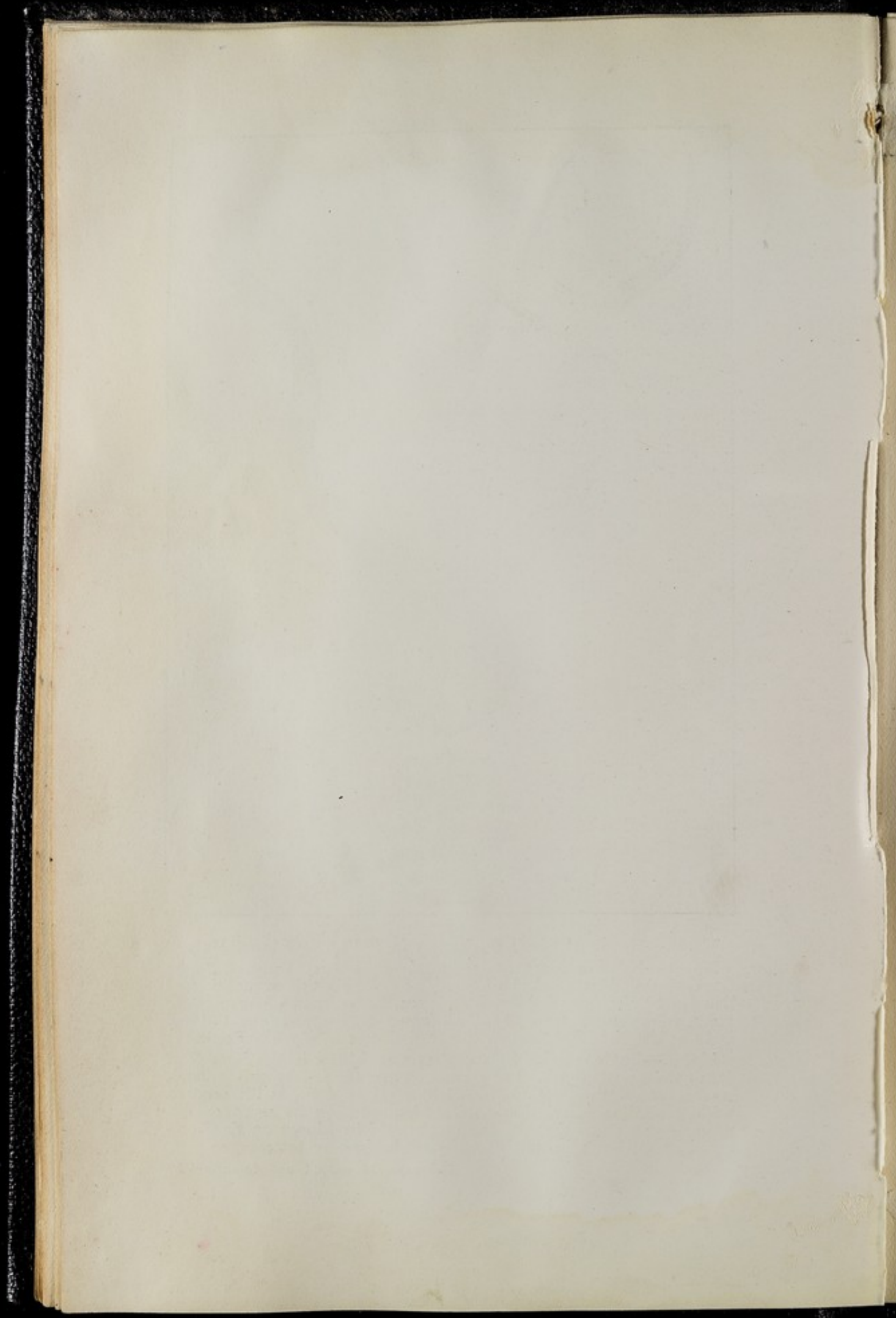


No. 1.—Horns of Black Buck shot in India by Colonel Daly.

No. 2.—Koodoo Horns. Presented to Colonel Daly, C.B., by General Botha as a token of good will during the occupation of Dundee by the Boer Forces, December, 1899. Span of horns from point to point, 3 feet. From information supplied to Colonel Daly at the British Museum, this constitutes a World's Record.

No. 3.—Bugle carried by the first man killed in the Boer War (69th Battery, R.F.A.). The trumpet, also carried by this gunner, was returned to his C.O. by Colonel Daly, C.B., at his request, with a similar inscription on its edge, and, on its acceptance, a promise was made that the trumpet would be blown on the Commanding Officer's parade, as long as the battery lasted.

(See pages 13 and 31 and Appendix VI.)



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CHAPTER V.

When I arrived at this mission station the sight was an appalling one. All the wounded were lying shoulder to shoulder on the floor of the building, some delirious. All were wet from exposure from the rain, which was falling all day, and their uniforms were marked with mud and dirt off the battlefield.

Up to my arrival apparently nothing whatever had been done, and those there told me that before doing anything they considered it best to wait until my arrival.

Now the first thing I did was to interview the sixteen men who had been sent to me as orderlies, and I gave them separate orders, four of the King's Rifles to make a field kitchen in the open ground of our enclosure, and to dig a pit for rubbish. Camp kettles had been sent, so hot water was provided for four men whom I told to use it for the wounded, and clean some of the mud and dirt off their clothes and faces.

Boer War Memories

Then myself and the remaining eight men, on getting a hand cart, we all proceeded to the main camp to get the very necessary supplies we were so much in need of.

Now when we got to our old camp we found it strongly guarded, and the Boer guard positively refused to allow us to enter the camp; though I pleaded that I wanted food for their sick and mine, they would not allow any entry whatever.

Now this refusal put me into an awful position. However, as I knew "necessity has no laws," I noticed on my way up a waggon and a span of sixteen bullocks, and I could see no one near, so I determined to get one of the beasts. It turned out a fairly easy job, it being very dark and wet at the time.

Fortunately I had a butcher by trade amongst the orderlies. The job was done, the animal brought to the mission enclosure, and cut up in quarters, and the skin, hoofs and horns buried in the pit already made at my cookhouse.

That night beef tea was made, and rump steak provided for all those who could eat it.

I took the precaution to warn all my staff that should a Boer make any inquiries next morning re the loss of a bullock, they were to adopt an attitude of complete ignorance, and to have no conversation with him whatever, but to send him at once to me, and then I would do the talking. Well, next morning I was addressed as follows:—"Sir, can I speak to you?" I replied, "Yes," adding,

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"what is your trouble?" He answered, "I have lost one of my bullocks, and I have failed to find it." I told him I was very sorry, but I could not see how I could help him. Shortly after my interview he was seen driving away with his span, originally 16 bullocks, now one short. So thus making a satisfactory ending to my procedure of the night before.



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CHAPTER VI.

On my return to the mission I got a great surprise. Sixteen men of the Town Guard of Dundee had turned up fully armed and with two boxes of ammunition. These I ordered them to bury at once, and to hide away their rifles in some outhouse.

Now, as these men knew all the run of the town, I ordered them to go there at once, and bring me back a supply of bread, sugar, tea and tinned foods, and they returned with a good haul. With these I was all right for that night; all the wounded were washed, fed and cared for, but still they only had the floor to lie on.

The medical and surgical panniers my natives had brought in from the battle area, and from them I got medical and surgical dressings.

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CHAPTER VII.

The next complication that happened was that upwards of 40 women and children had arrived. I asked them why they came; they replied to get protection from the Boers. I told them that I had no food, and that it would be far better and safer for them to return to their homes, as leaving them only left their houses for looting when the Boers returned.

They took my advice and departed. At this time a local doctor and his wife had come; the former remained. He was in a very nervous state and in terror of the Boers, as he knew he should have previously offered his services to the English, and not have remained behind.

The Boers considered everyone who did so should be shot, calling them *Africanders*. However, he helped me looking after the sick and wounded, but he had no initiative whatever. I virtually had to tell him everything I wanted done. On two occasions he positively refused to visit sick Boers, and I had to go. It would have been bad policy to have refused.

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In fact, I made it my duty for all the time I was in Dundee (with the exception of the 11 days of close arrest as subsequently recorded) to be useful to the Boers by attending to all their sick and wounded, so that by doing so our stay at Dundee would be prolonged until the promise made by our departing troops (October 20, 1899) would be fulfilled—viz., "our relief."

Unfortunately this never came off, but through great luck, with the aid of my identity cards (how they were obtained is recorded later on), I and my staff were transferred over their border.

Next morning at daybreak, October 21, 1899, I had a parade of my staff. Sixteen of them were the soldiers originally sent, and the remainder the sixteen of the Town Guard. I divided them into sections, one for equipment and the other for food supplies. I told the men on parade that I held myself responsible for all their actions. Further, I made them understand that they would only have a limited time, as I was sure the main body of the Boer forces would certainly return by the next day, and subsequent events proved this to be actually correct.

When I started at daybreak on October 21, 1899, to obtain food and equipment and food for my sick and wounded, I remembered how a medical officer in the Afghan War of 1879 was treated. He took supplies for his sick from the native bazaar to the value of £400. He was compelled by the Indian Government to refund from his monthly pay this amount. Knowing this I determined to take in

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thousands what he took in hundreds—the sum being so large, though not over my requirements, that if the British Government adopted similar measures my pay would never cover the amount.

Everyone worked hard all day and night, and by that time I had stored sufficient food for 200 men for six months. The other section of my staff had obtained bedsteads for all the sick and staff, also bedding and clean clothes for the sick. The shirts I got were of all colours, and besides the above everything was got necessary for the comfort of the sick.

I told my men that for any goods taken by my orders, if the owner was present, I would give a receipt, but these were found to be very few, as nearly everyone had run away when the war started, leaving their prosperous town with their well-stocked shops open to everyone.

The following incident I now record, as it shows the true character of the members of the Town Guard, and that their action in obtaining supplies was mainly personal:—Two of my regimental orderlies succeeded in obtaining a flock of turkeys, all splendid birds, and under my direction they were shut up for the night in one of the houses in our wired-in compound. Next morning I was informed that they all had disappeared. After a search they were discovered in a dwelling outside our compound where some of the Town Guard had slept. So I visited them at this house at once and accused them of taking ours. They replied that they were other

Boer War Memories

turkeys, not mine. Well, I told them, it does not matter who owns them, I must have them for my hospital. About 15 minutes afterwards I returned with the two regimental orderlies who originally had found them. To my surprise all the turkeys had gone, and then I was told the original owner had turned up and taken them away. I knew this was a lie, but I could not disprove it. However, a month afterwards I heard through an indirect source that the Town Guard orderlies had eaten their last turkey. Chapter X., page 32, shows how unreliable these men were, and at no time did I trust them or give them any responsible duties to do.

I may mention now that I had two badly wounded officers, but they had no discomfort, as they were given comfortable quarters at once, occupying the bedroom of Rev. Minister of the mission. This was built for a Kaffir hospital, which was empty of sick or staff when I arrived to occupy the place. Only empty houses existed.



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CHAPTER VIII.

I still have a vivid visual remembrance of seeing, on October 22, 1899, at about 2 p.m., a large number of Boers, raising a cloud of dust, galloping in our direction.

When they arrived at our entrance gate many of them dismounted, but before entering their leader addressed me by name in rather an aggressive manner. He said: "We know you have some of our wounded in your hospital. Now we want to find out how you have treated them."

Many of the Boers then entered the ward. At first they would not believe that the sick men were British soldiers (chiefly owing to the fact that they had been supplied from the town with coloured shirts). The Boers insisted that they were Afrianders, and as such, they intended to shoot every one of them for not joining their forces. Finally I convinced them that they were really British soldiers.

They then asked for their own wounded, and I had several of them in this same ward dovetailed

Boer War Memories

between our men. These they questioned closely, of course in Dutch, and when they found that they had received every care, exactly the same as our own men, the Boer commander at once became civil, and thanked me. He then added, "Can I do anything for you?" I replied, "Please give me a pass to search for food in the town and private houses."

Then they all left to loot the town, where I afterwards made a personal visit, and no words of mine can describe the confusion prevailing. Here Burghers obtained fresh outfits, while old boots, hats, clothing, half-opened tins of jam and tinned meats, and draperies were scattered in heaps everywhere.

In my search of vacated private houses I got all kinds of luxuries, such as pillows, bedspreads, crockery, glass, lamps, kerosene and numerous other useful articles. Also amongst these I got an excellent typewriter; the use I made of this will be related later on. The owners of these houses ran away leaving their breakfasts untouched on their tables. Also I relieved dogs that were tied to tables, etc.

A Boer magistrate on October 25, 1899, was appointed, and after that date nothing could be taken without his personal permit.

During his command in less than a fortnight he had disposed of everything from the town shops and burnt all rubbish, and anything of value was carted away into their country. No damage whatever was done to buildings. The owners wisely be-

Boer War Memories

fore leaving left all their doors and windows open, so only the contents were handled.

Further, I may add before I and my party left for Pretoria, the site of the large camp, acres in extent, which our troops on their retirement to Ladysmith had abandoned, was completely cleared of all the valuable military stores. These were carted to Dundee railway station, and thence by rail to the Transvaal. There was not even a tent peg left. Personally I lost everything except what I stood up in, and I was especially unfortunate, as I was the only individual who did not get back to the camp owing to the P.M.O.'s order to remain on the field until his arrival. I had no food until late that night, when I sampled the rump steak previously mentioned, and it seemed quite palatable.



Boer War Memories

CHAPTER IX.

Towards the end of the first week I was asked to go to a camp of the Boers to inspect an artillery Boer officer who was badly wounded, and the Boer doctors wished to amputate his leg. I consented, and two horses were sent to my hospital, one for me, the other for an orderly with a white flag.* I at once recognised the horses, as they had British saddles and belonged to a cavalry regiment of ours.

On the ride out to the Blood River (10 miles from Dundee), where their camp was, we passed large numbers of young Boers riding five abreast. My orderly told me that they had been mobilised to join the forces at Ladysmith.

There is very little doubt that if the Boers had delayed their first attack for a few days they would have had a sufficient number to have annihilated our whole force. Our troops did the right movement to retreat to Ladysmith.

When I arrived at the Blood River I was at first brought to an officers' mess and given refreshments. There, to my surprise, I noticed that all were

* See Appendix IV.

Boer War Memories

foreigners. However, they all seemed to understand English, and one, on behalf of the others, informed me that they had been all members of "The Foreign Legion," and had joined the Boer Forces in an advisory capacity. Then they asked me a lot of questions, chiefly about the strength of our troops before they left Dundee on retreat to Ladysmith, and also of the number of the guns of our artillery. To all these questions I gave evasive answers, and not till I told them that I was a new arrival did they cease questioning me.

During the conversation I first learned from them that there had been a rear guard action at Elanslaati, which was a very fortunate event for me, as it delayed the masses of the Boers from returning to loot the town of Dundee, and gave me greater opportunities of obtaining supplies for my unit. Further, I was told that the English people were only a race of land grabbers, who would soon learn a lesson that they would never forget.

I was amused during the time they were questioning me to hear one of the listeners (in a stage whisper) say the following of me: "Oh, he is a very stupid fellow and knows nothing."

Then on leaving I proceeded to the tent where the wounded Boer officer whom I came to see resided. He was suffering from a shell wound of his left leg below the knee. I assured him if he came to my hospital I would save his leg. This move he gladly accepted, and the next day I had him carried in to my hospital by my Indian bearers. He stood the journey well.

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Before the Boers arrived on the afternoon of October 22, 1899, to loot the town, I made a visit to the Dundee Hotel, which from its outward appearance seemed to have been a prosperous establishment, but here I got a surprise, as the owner, before leaving on the outbreak of hostilities, had smashed every bottle containing any liquor. Needless to add, my visit was a complete failure. After the arrival of the Boer officer previously mentioned while he was under treatment in my hospital I easily got all the extras I required.

On November 10, 1899, the condition of this Boer officer was so improved that he was fit to travel. So a special train with an ambulance carriage conveyed him to Pretoria. Before leaving he obtained for me a flock of 297 sheep. Before that date I could always get sheep from abandoned farms in our vicinity.

For the information of my readers this number of sheep may appear to them to be more than my requirements, but such was not the case. For after their arrival the Boer commander arranged that in addition to supplying my unit I had to supply several of the families left behind in Dundee. Further, my flock of sheep was guarded daily by four of my native Indian bearers, each with a white flag, and at night herded in our enclosure. We always kept the number of sheep up with straying animals.

Boer War Memories

Further, I am sure on his return to Pretoria this Boer officer must have spoken very highly to General Botha of what I had done for him. About ten days afterwards Chris. Botha, a brother of General Botha, arrived with a present for me of a splendid pair of koodoo horns from the largest antelope ever shot in the Transvaal, also a letter was sent asking me "to accept the same as a token of good will during the occupation of Dundee by his forces."

These horns General Botha prized very much, having them, before he gave them to me, hung up in his own house for seven years. The animal shot was considered the "King of the Forest."

Some years ago I presented these horns to the Australian Club, Melbourne, where they will remain for all time. They were measured with those at South Kensington Museum, and they have proved to be world size.

On my visit to the Blood River, described above, speaking to my orderly I asked him whether the Boers were as deadly shots as formerly. He replied, "Probably better." He suggested a demonstration at the expense of a dog sitting some 300 yards away. He then stopped a large number of Boers, and these men selected a marksman, who knelt and took careful aim. At the first shot the dog never moved; at the second shot it ran away. This failure caused a commotion amongst the Boers, whereupon my orderly whispered, "Don't laugh, but come away quickly or they might shoot you." With a straight face I said "Good-bye, boys," and rode away.

Boer War Memories

CHAPTER X.

On November 1, 1899, the members of the Town Guard, who up to that date had been doing their services satisfactorily, came in a body to my office at 9 a.m., and they informed me that they would not do any more work except I guaranteed them payment at the rate of 5/ a day to each man.

I told them at once I could not agree to such terms. I said I could recommend payment, but that would have to be passed by the British military authorities. They even refused this offer. So I told them to come to my office at 9 a.m. the next morning, and if they still refused to do any work I would hand the whole lot of them to the Boers.*

Well, next morning they completely surrendered, and each signed a written document that they willingly gave their services, without any payment, to my unit, on the only condition that I gave them the protection of the Geneva convention and fed them.

* See Appendix IV.

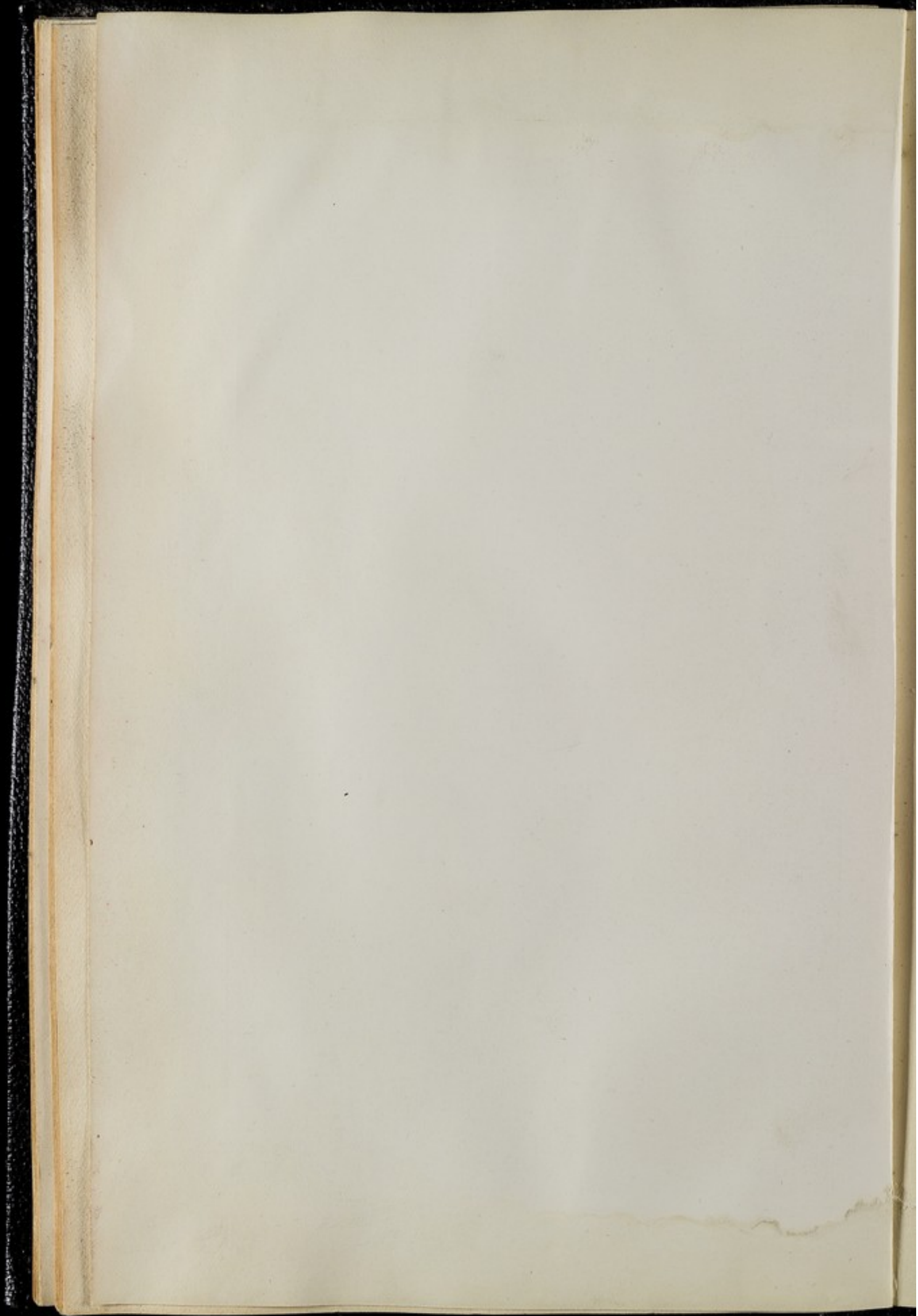


A RESTING-PLACE OF FRIEND AND FOE

From a Photograph by Mr. G. Lynch.

Enclosure containing the graves of fifteen British and four Boers who died of wounds received at the battle of Dundee, October 20.
Erected by Major Daly, R.A.M.C.

(see page 15 and Appendix V.)



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I may add now, a little time after our return to the British Forces these very men, after stealing this copy, sent to Lord Roberts an awful letter against me, accusing me that the treatment they received afterwards was cruel and dreadful, and that, for men who had worked so hard to care for the sick and wounded, was disgraceful.

Officially I was asked if I had made any agreement with these men. I at once produced the duplicate which they had all signed. From the first I kept this document in my pocket, for I did not trust any of them. They quite forgot about my having a duplicate, or they never would have dared to have written such lies. Their action was pure spite, and as they got fully paid when I sent in their names they had no just grievance. Needless to add, I got rid of them as soon as I could.



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CHAPTER XI.

Towards the end of November, 1899, the Boers paid a visit to my hospital with a hand cart and an armed escort, and demanded foodstuffs, which they knew I had. Their visit had been anticipated, and one hut which was situated in the middle of our hospital enclosure was always used for issue of supplies, while in reality 80 per cent. of the stores were hidden away under the floors and ceilings of other buildings.

The Boers took away one-third of what was in our store, remarking at the time that they did not see why we should be living on the fat of the land and they without. To put them off their guard, I kept constantly asking for foodstuffs, which I never got.

At this time the Boers had some reverse at Ladysmith, and they compelled me to give them most of my surgical dressings; they promised to give in return any amount from Pretoria. This promise they never fulfilled, and so short was I towards the

Boer War Memories

end of my stay that ordinary sheepswool had to be used, washed several times in perchloride of mercury, to replace antiseptic dressings.

During the first week at Dundee I received orders to put up two ambulance Boer officers, and on visiting them I found them drunk, and, seeing one of their identity cards on the floor, I put it into my pocket. Next day these officers left, so I had this card copied exactly, using the typewriter which I referred to previously.

The wording was first in Dutch, and secondly in English, so I simply reversed the order, and afterwards gave each man of my staff one, duly signed. By these alone I finally got my whole party across the border out of Transvaal territory.

After their departure I was called to see the state in which these two Hollander ambulance officers had left the comfortable quarters of a resident, whose house was outside our enclosure, which I had given to them for their use. The mattress on each bed was cut open from end to end, and also all the pillows, and the rest of the furniture smashed.

The orderly of the town guard, a former resident before he came to me, told me that it was the custom for Boers to hide their valuables in beds, etc., so when these officers found nothing they smashed everything in spite.

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CHAPTER XII.

During our stay in Dundee we had several inspections by Boer officers, who came to find out whether I had any recoveries fit to be sent to Pretoria. Their object was to increase the number of prisoners there. This move all our men dreaded, so all acted according to my suggestions, to remain in bed, and do the doleful, and this action of theirs always succeeded.

This was the first war where the high-velocity smooth bullet was used, and thus cases through ignorance were marked dangerous, while really they healed quickly, and thus were wrongly named originally.

The old Snider bullet previously used caused great damage by smashing bones, while the other often went through without damaging the tissues.

I mention these facts, as I had a few cases who came under these conditions, and really I had some trouble to make it appear to the Boers that I had no recoveries. We always kept hoping that the

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English troops would relieve us, but that never came off.

Another annoyance was the arrival of the excursion trains, chiefly of Boer women, who came to see the British wounded, and I had to use the greatest tact in handling these people, and they never learnt anything from the patients; all they got was a groan.

Another time I succeeded in bluffing the Boers was when a Dutch patient had given information about the rifles of the Town Guard. So that these would be of no use to them, I removed all the bolts. They missed them and asked me why. I at once replied that these rifles, two at a time, had, with the addition of a soldier's blanket, been used as stretchers, and the projection made by the bolts caused them to be thrown away before we left Talana Hill, and, curious to add, they were quite satisfied.

It would have been fatal if they had searched our buildings for them, for then they would have found out about our foodstuffs. I was very lucky to have bluffed them for that reason.

Early in December, 1899, the Boer authorities sent into my hospital for treatment a case which they diagnosed "small-pox," which really was only a case of measles. Knowing how frightened the Boers were of any infectious diseases, I promptly fixed a yellow flag on each corner post of our enclosure, and by this means I stopped all medical or other inspections by the Boer authorities.

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On one occasion a Boer leader visited my hospital to see the wounded officer who was brought in from the Blood River, and as he assumed quite a friendly attitude when leaving, I asked him to what did he attribute our success at Talana Hill. He replied at once that "in his opinion it was due to your superior artillery, which after silencing our guns poured shrapnel over the top and face of Talana Hill." He further added, "I was present at Majuba, and there my men had practically no artillery to contend with, but only to pick off each soldier by rifle fire as they were climbing the hill." However, he further added that "this success of yours is only a very temporary one, as we have now all your attacking force locked up in Ladysmith, and I await the result with confidence for our final victory." To this naturally I made no reply.



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CHAPTER XIII.

About the middle of December, 1899, everyone in the hospital enclosure was placed under close arrest and confined to the railed-in compound of the Swedish mission, which equalled about an acre in extent. It contained a mission chapel, used as the principal hospital ward, and several other detached buildings, which were situated on the east and south sides. These were used as an office and housing for my staff.

During Christmas-time a terrible amount of drunkenness and rowdiness existed in the Town of Dundee, and evidently our Guard got drink and became offensive, and on two occasions they were seen pointing loaded rifles at me, so I walked direct to them and remonstrated. They were all Hollanders and hated us. On reporting the matter, we got a Boer guard, and the trouble ceased.

At the end of December, 1899, I received sudden orders to proceed with my staff and patients to Pretoria, and the same day a train arrived with

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ambulance carriages in its front portion and third-class carriages behind. The Boer ambulance men handled all the patients, while they locked us up in the third-class division of the train.

Before this transfer above mentioned I received an order from the Boer authorities at Pretoria to send them a complete list of the patients under my care, and I truthfully stated that, with only a few exceptions, all were very serious cases, and most of them suffering from multiple wounds, some followed by abscess and parts of bullets still embedded in the tissues. Two cases of paraplegia, one case of rheumatic fever, an absolutely helpless patient, also a few amputations.

When we arrived at Pretoria railway junction neither myself nor any of my staff were allowed to bid farewell to men we had nursed so long. It was a very pathetic sight; some of the wounded were crying, and it was a scene I could never forget.

I know that a full report of all cases of ours handled by our medical officers doing duty at Pretoria after my party and I were put across the border, is in existence, which will prove that the statements I have made now from memory are quite correct.

The Boer authorities at this time also asked me for a copy of the identity cards which they knew each member of my staff had.

Before our end of the train was allowed to start, I had to give a guarantee to the Boers that none of my party would ever take up arms against them

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and would remain with me until the end of the war. I am sure the reason they asked for the above was that, after their inspection, they had found amongst my party sixteen soldiers in British uniforms; but, as they all had identity cards similar to those their own ambulance orderlies had, they allowed the train to start for Koomati Poort, the entrance to Portuguese territory.

I consider it was a very gracious act on the part of the Boer authorities to put us over the border, but then one must understand that on our arrival in the British lines we had no military secrets to disclose, as our movements at Dundee were restricted to that area, and while there we were constantly informed of Boer victories, and always that the English had suffered heavy losses. We were very glad to learn on arrival in our own lines that these statements were illusionary and devoid of any truth.

I may add now that months after joining the British lines my guarantee was questioned by the C.O. of the four orderlies of the King's Royal Rifles, and finally this was referred to the Secretary of State for war, Mr. Broderick, and he at once ruled in my favour.

On arriving at Koomati Poort I at once wired to the British Consul, asking him to make arrangements for housing myself and a party of 42 orderlies. I was put up in his house, and my men at a hotel.

On our arrival at Delagoa Bay great kindness was shown to all of us. After a few days H.M. Ship

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Widgeon was placed at my disposal, and after nine days of a most pleasant trip we landed at Durban, about January 11th, 1900.

After our arrival my party and I were posted to No. 1 Station, Field Hospital, which followed General Buller's advance for the relief of Ladysmith and the reconquest of Natal. After that I was posted in charge of No. 18 General Hospital, of 1000 beds, and P.M.O. Volcrust sub-district, and there my staff and I remained until the end of the war.



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CHAPTER XIV.

Some months after my return a Royal Commission was sent out from England to investigate the losses of our people by the war at Dundee and other towns.

For all goods taken by the Boers, wholesale prices were paid; but for those taken by the military, retail prices were paid. This distinction caused a lot of trouble, especially to myself, as all doubtful accounts were sent to me for confirmation.

The Royal Commission President was Chief Justice Romer, and I was the first witness to appear before this Committee. The President asked me the following question:—

“On whose authority did you remove from the town and private houses in Dundee food and equipment for the comfort of your sick and wounded?”

I answered: “My Lord, on my own authority, as I had no one else to ask.”

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He at once replied as follows:—"We congratulate you on your action, and absolve you from all blame." Then all shook hands with me, and I left with the satisfaction that I had done well.

Some time afterwards I was sent down from 18 General Hospital at Charlestown to settle a claim made by a storeholder at Dundee, who persistently stated that a large amount of stores was taken by me for my hospital at Dundee. Knowing this to be false, I would not pass his account.

I must add that this store was the furthest away from my hospital, and, as I could get all I wanted from stores nearer, I knew I was not the cause of his losses.

Arriving at his store with an Army Service Corps officer as a witness on my behalf, on entering his store I told the storeholder that I had come to pay an account which you say a Major Daly owes.

I asked him then: "Do you know him?"

He replied: "Indeed I do, and he is no class."

"Well, then," I told him, "we will now go to your office, and will go over your account," and we all sat down at his table.

I asked the officer with me: "Do you know this Major Daly?"

He replied: "I think I do," in a doubtful manner.

So I turned to the storeholder, asking: "What is this Major Daly like?"

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He said: "He is a medium-sized man with a heavy black moustache and a bald head."

I at once stood up, 6 ft. 4 in. in height, and, taking off my helmet, I replied: "I am Major Daly, and my hair is still there."

The storeholder collapsed on the floor, and it took a jug of water to revive him. He asked for mercy, and said that he knew he was a very wicked man. I told him that he would probably be in gaol soon, and we left. It is needless to add that his account was not paid at retail prices.

Personally, I reported this scene to the General at Pretoria, and it caused the greatest amusement and laughter to all present.



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CHAPTER XV.

My rescue of regimental drums is worth recording. During the greater time of our stay at Dundee, when the Boers were removing the spoils of war from the military camp, many of the bullock waggons passed close to our enclosure, and on one of them I noticed two regimental drums. So I went out with the hope of rescuing the same. One was the big drum of the 1st Battalion of the Royal Irish Fusiliers, the other a battle drum of the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

On speaking to the driver, I asked him what he was going to do with these drums. He replied that he was taking them home for his small boys. Knowing how very superstitious old Burghers were, I told him he was doing a very wrong act, for if he brought them home bad luck would surely follow. He at once went to the back of his waggon and pitched them on to the veldt and told me to take the damned things away.

Their parchments were broken, and many of us made bookmarkers from them. Mine has been sent

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by a lady in Melbourne to an officer of one of the regiments above noted now living in Ireland.

On leaving for Pretoria, as previously reported, I handed these two drums to the Rev. Mr. Nauranius, chaplain to the Swedish Mission, and after this town was recaptured he handed them over to a Major Kelly on behalf of the Imperial authorities.



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CHAPTER XVI.

In conclusion, I beg to add that, though nearly thirty-five years have passed since the events recorded, my visual remembrances were my guide, for when leaving Dundee for Pretoria myself and party were allowed no personal baggage, except General Botha's present, and the two panniers.

For the information of my readers, after the war General Botha became a great friend of England, and before his death was made a Field-Marshal in our army.

Now I hope those who read this account of Dundee will realise my very difficult position as a young officer, without any previous experience, either written or otherwise, to guide me. I had to work for all; no one would take any responsibility whatever.

Finally I beg to report the wonderful assistance I always got from the sixteen regimental orderlies. They were always loyal to me, very attentive to the patients, and, above all, loyal to their Queen and country. In great contrast to the other sixteen orderlies of the Town Guard, who did their duty reluctantly, and their main object in coming to me was to save their own skins.

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ADDENDA

I seemed to move under a lucky star. For instance, on one occasion, accompanied by an orderly with a white flag, when returning from one of my visits to a sick Boer at an outlying farm, when nearing Dundee we were shot at by a Hollander Boer, who fortunately missed us by a few inches. On investigation afterwards by the Commandant at Dundee, the man acknowledged shooting at us. For this I received official apologies!

For the information of my readers, I mention the following incidents, which were only in a remote way connected with my record of Dundee:—

During the war, when I was P.M.O. of 18 General Hospital, I had to inspect large numbers of sick and wounded Boer prisoners en route to St. Helena, and on one occasion an old Boer asked for a private interview, which I at once granted. He implored me not to send him to St. Helena, as it would kill his old mother. He further stated that he had done duty around Dundee, and he knew how kind I had

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been to all sick Boers while I was there, otherwise he would never have asked me to grant him this favour. I kept him back, and he never was sent to St. Helena.

Now, I thought that ended the incident; but no, after the war was over I was stationed for a few years at Standerton, in the Transvaal, and one day, to my surprise, this old Boer turned up, and then in my office he informed that he had come personally to thank me for my kindness to him at Charlestown, where my previous hospital was situated. But before leaving he made me promise that I would pay him a visit.

So a day was fixed, and I drove to his home, which was about 10 miles over the border of the Orange Free State, and I can never forget the welcome I received on arrival. A very large number of Boers had assembled, all of whom I had to shake hands with.

Next day, while there, a large shoot was arranged, which was very successful, resulting in a great number of large and small game being shot. Before leaving, this kindly Boer told me to be sure and pay him a visit again soon, and also to bring with me one of my officers. At his request we did visit him several times, and generally returned home with a bag of game consisting chiefly of the larger and smaller bustard (splendid birds), guinea fowl, wild duck (several varieties) and deer in season. These visits became very popular in our garrison, as

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generally we had a surplus to give away. My transport there and back was my four-wheeled buggy drawn by two mules sufficient for all requirements. At his request I visited him several times, and on one of them I brought to his attention two shell holes on his verandah roof, and I asked him why he had left them still there.

He replied that they were caused by pom-pom shells, and he intended to always leave them, as it reminded him of how England had generously treated him by giving him back his farm.

On my last visit, when I told him I was going home, he replied:—

“Tell England that the Orange Free State will always fight for her, but never against her.”

P.S.—I greatly regret that my memory has failed me, and, though I have a visual remembrance of his homestead, and his verandah roof with the pom-pom punctures, I am unable to remember his name. I have sent a copy of this book and also a covering letter to the editor of the “*Friend*,” an influential paper in the city of Bloemfontein, South Africa,

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asking him if he would kindly make inquiries in the vicinity named on page 50, and if his identity was established to forward my book to him or his relations to show that my brother officers and myself have not forgotten the kind welcome we always received when visiting his home.

In conclusion, the writer hopes that readers of these memories will understand that the period under review is limited from the time when war was threatening to January 2, 1900, when he and his party rejoined the British Forces.

The events recorded have not previously been published, as they cover an episode which the writer is the only person qualified to relate.

F. A. B. DALY,
Lieut.-Col. late R.A.M.C.,
British Forces.

Portsea, Victoria,
November, 1935.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX I.

This gunner mentioned on page 13, he being the first soldier killed in the Boer War. I was present when he was being buried in a shallow grave, with a number of civilians. Noticing that he had his bugle and trumpet on, I jumped into the grave and took them off and hid them under a house at Dundee, taking care it was dark at the time, and that no one saw me doing so. When Dundee was recaptured by our forces I paid a visit there to recover the bugle and trumpet and also a double-barrelled sporting gun from under the house where I had planted them. The owners of the house had returned and they at once came out to see what I was doing. I told them that these articles were placed by me under their house during the occupation of Dundee by the Boers. They seemed very disappointed that they had missed getting them. I told them that "ignorance was bliss," and they had nothing to regret.

Some years afterwards, when stationed in England, I received a letter from the officer commanding the 69th Battalion R.F.A., then stationed at Rawal Pindi, 1906, to the following effect:—"I believe you have two trophies in your possession. If you give us one, I can assure you that such a gift will be greatly appreciated by us all."

Appendix

I replied by letter at once, offering whichever they liked, and they chose the trumpet, and asked me to have engraved on each its history and to guarantee the same, so that in years to come their identity could always be traced.

Finally, I got a letter of thanks, which also stated that this trumpet would always be blown on the commanding officer's parade as long as the battery lasted (see Appendix VI.).

This bugle I have presented to the members of the Australian Club, and it has been placed under the Koodoo horns previously presented by me.

APPENDIX II.

Copy of letter, original in my possession, from a loyal Boer farmer living near Dundee. His conduct I brought to the notice of the military authorities on my return to the British lines, and he received an acknowledgment, and thanks for his action.

Copy of letter of James Payne, dated 2/12/99:—

Major Daly.

Dear Sir,—On account of my health, I prefer to be near the hospital. I am prepared to place my waggon and oxen for the use of the hospital, and two milk cows, also five head of cattle for slaughter, all free of expense.

Yours obediently,

(Sgd.) JAMES PAYNE.

Appendix

APPENDIX III.

Abbreviations:—

- R.F.A.—Royal Field Artillery.
C.O. means Commanding Officer.
O.C.—Officer Commanding.
P.M.O.—Principal Medical Officer.
Paraplegia—Total paralysis.
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APPENDIX IV.

Africanders.—A term used by the Boers for British subjects who remained behind in a British colony, who neither joined the British forces nor previously the Boer army. Some of these I was told were shot. So when the Town Guard surrendered (see page 32), I knew, and they knew, what might be their fate if they acted otherwise.

There was one British subject who fought both with the Boers and the British forces. He was discovered by me when at Charlestown General Hospital. I was inspecting a draft of sick and wounded patients on their way to the Base, and I recognised him as the Boer who rode with me carrying a white flag on my way to the Blood River (see page 28). This man confessed that he had fought with the Boer forces until he saw that they were losing, then he joined the British forces, and then he added: "I have been recognised by you, wounded besides, and thus gained nothing." This man was then sent back under arrest, and I had to send a full report; but I never learned how his case ended.

I may add for the information of my readers that the Boer forces as a rule did not wear any uniforms; only some of their officers, so that made it more difficult to recognise men clothed in British uniforms.

Appendix

APPENDIX V.

GRAVEYARD AT DUNDEE.

Readers will be much interested in the illustration of the churchyard at Dundee, in which are buried fifteen of our men who died of wounds received at the battle of Dundee. In the same graveyard lie four of their Boer enemies, who succumbed to fearful injuries in spite of the assiduous care of the Royal Army Medical Corps. As we know, the slain are usually buried on the field of battle; it is the wounded who are carried off the field and then succumb who lie in the shadow of a church-tower. However, there was no graveyard enclosure attached to this little church near Dundee, and the railing, as well as the crosses marking the graves, are due to the pious care of Major Daly, of the R.A.M.C. Major Daly took care that the nineteen wounded men whom his corps could not save, in spite of all their efforts, should at least have all the sanctities of Christian burial, with simple crosses to tell the name and designation of the fallen. So here they lie, Briton and Boer, side by side, and at peace.

APPENDIX VI.

Since the first publication of this book I have received from the O.C., 69th Battery, R.F.A., now stationed in India, a confirmation that their voluntary promise of 1906, as per Appendix I., para. iv., is still being carried out.

Copy of Letter from O.C. 69th Batt., R.F.A.

Lucknow, India.

August 5, 1935.

Dear Colonel,

*We have received your book, and we are grateful
Your trumpet still stands in our officers' mess (off
duty), and is sounded on all ceremonial parades.*

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) O.C. 69th Battery, R.A.F.,

Lieut.-Colonel. B Kingzett

