

4. Remember the soldier's week consists of seven days. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work and on the seventh do all the odd jobs.

5. Honor thy King and thy Country; keep thy rifle well oiled and shoot straight, that thy days may be long in the land which thy friend the enemy giveth thee.

6. Thou shalt not kill—Time.

7. Thou shalt not adulterate thy mess tin by using it for a shaving mug.

8. Thou shalt not steal thy comrade's kit.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy comrades, but observe discreet silence on their outgoings and incomings.

10. Thou shalt not covet thy Sergeant's post, nor the Corporal's nor the Staff Major's, but do thy duty and, by dint of perseverance, rise to the high position of Field Marshal.

RECOLLECTIONS OF AN OLD TROOPER

(Continued)

For some time I have been intending to write about one or two of my old troop-mates who are really worth remembering, if only for the lesson they can convey to us.

When we left Canada for South Africa our troop sergt.-major was a man named Chalmers. He joined us from the R.N.W.M.P. All the contingents that left Canada at that time contained a quota of policemen. I believe 10% of the strength were allowed to volunteer for active service at one time. They were a fine lot of men, picked men in every sense of the word, belonging to a corps with a world-wide reputation for absolute efficiency in their particular line of work. We were glad to welcome Chalmers, although he was a stranger to all of us.

Of course he and all of our N.C.O.'s had only acting rank, and were not confirmed for one year, when they drew the back pay of their rank if still holding it. In passing, I might give you the rates of pay existing in the S.A.C. at that time. There were three grades of troopers, 1st, 2nd and 3rd class, 7s., 6s. and 5s. per day respectively; corporals, 7s. 6d.; sergeants, 8s., sergt.-majors and staff-sergeants 10s. 6d. Lieutenants drew £400 a year, and captains £500 to £600, according to command. Fairly liberal were they not?

Chalmers made a good N.C.O., and things went on in the customary groove for about six months. Then something happened. We were stationed at the time at a farm called Hout Kop, about twelve miles from Vereeneging. (The peace conference between Lord Kitchener and the Boer generals was held here). There is a drift across the Vaal River at this place, and this was a favorite spot for the Boers to cross into the Transvaal, the Losberg mountains only a few miles away, being a safe retreat.

We had at Hout Kop about 200 men with another hundred at Vlakfontein, about six miles east of us. Boers were seen every day but never in force. As we expected to remain for some time, we built a fort, using stones and boulders which we found to hand in abundance. In the exposed position we never thought of pitching tents until our fort was completed. We simply made a laager of our wagons, baggage, etc., posting a strong guard with outposts.

The men stood at arms from about 3 a.m. until daybreak. This was always the favorite time for a Boer attack. They rarely, if ever, attacked at night. This fort took some building. It was in the form of a rectangle about 150 yards long by 50 wide, built with stone walls to a height of five feet, with a parapet of sandbags, also well reinforced with sandbags around the loop holes, with a good barb-wire entanglement. It was impregnable except for artillery fire. From the top of the parapet, sloping to the ground, we laid sheets of galvanized iron for a roof, and the men slept in this shelter practically at their posts.

I often wish the Boers had attacked that fort, but nothing doing. They waited for us to come to them and then they got us good and plenty.

But I started in to tell you of Sergt.-Major Chalmers. One morning after the fort was completed, Chalmers, accompanied by Geo. McNee, of Ottawa, upsaddled and started out on an independent scouting expedition. According to Chalmers' story they must have covered eight or ten miles, when they approached a large sheep kraal (corrall), these things are dotted all over the veldt, and the custom is for the kaffir herdsmen to drive their sheep into them each night to protect them from the jackals, a pest somewhat resembling our coyotes.



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