

After making this preliminary observation, the Ethiopian Red Cross begs permission to reply to these unjust accusations. The first refers to the case we have just mentioned, namely the four soldiers of the Second Blackshirt Division killed in the Tigre on December 3rd, whose bodies are alleged to have shown "wounds made by dum-dum bullets among other wounds". The Ethiopian Red Cross relies on the Italian Government to supply its own refutation, which it duly gives a few paragraphs later in the same memorandum, when it acknowledges that the bodies "were quite unrecognisable at first sight". Thus any ascertainment of wounds, and still more any distinction between wounds caused by dum-dum bullets and ordinary bullets, must have been absolutely impossible.

The second case reported deserves still less consideration. It is stated "that an Eritrean Askari was wounded by an explosive bullet". The memorandum does not venture to assert that this was a dum-dum bullet. It is probable that this explosive projectile was a shell, particularly as the 73rd Italian Communiqué dated December 15th and referring to the Dembeguina fight does not claim that dum-dum bullets were used. Hence it must be concluded that the Italian Government, after reproaching the Ethiopians with shooting at the Italian soldiers with ordinary bullets, is now reproaching them for having fired shells at them.

As regards the soldiers wounded in the Abbi Addi fights on December 18th and 22nd, it should be remarked that the Italian Government does not venture to assert that their wounds were caused by dum-dum bullets. Moreover, the wounds described are exactly the same as those caused by an ordinary bullet. We venture to quote the relevant passages of "Chirurgie de Guerre" by Mauclair, Paris, 1918, pp. 15 and 17, with regard to the wounds caused by ordinary bullets:

"There is a sort of shattering of all the tissues and a veritable focus of mortified tissue all along the track of the wound. This focus of necrosis of the soft and hard parts is complicated by infiltration of the blood in the thickness of the muscle and by bone splinters projected to a great distance through the soft parts; the zone of attrition thus extends very far and these mortified tissues become easily infected.

"The study of the dynamic properties of bullets has shown that, at close ranges of 100, 200 and 400 metres, an ordinary projectile may cause a very serious 'explosive' wound."

As regards the three cases which follow and which relate to the battles of Tansoca, Hananlei and Areri, with the exception of the case of the soldier who is alleged to have had the top of his skull blown off by a dum-dum bullet "fired point-blank", the facts are reported too vaguely to deserve a reply. It is asserted, for example, that "during the battle of Hananlei on November 11th last, the Abyssinians made free use of dum-dum bullets." The number of killed or wounded is not given. As regards the exception mentioned, the photograph attached shows clearly that the gaping hole might just as well have been caused by a sword cut, a shell fragment or even an ordinary bullet. The Italian Government itself indicates that the wound might have been caused by an ordinary bullet, for it states that the projectile was "fired point-blank". According to the passage just quoted, however, an ordinary bullet fired at close range not exceeding 400 metres may cause a very serious "explosive" wound.

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