

**WITH THE MOUNTED
INFANTRY IN SOUTH AFRICA:
BEING SIDE-LIGHTS ON THE
BOER CAMPAIGN 1899-1902**

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With the Mounted Infantry in South Africa: Being Side-Lights on the Boer Campaign 1899-1902
by F. M. Crum

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F. M. CRUM

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**With the Mounted Infantry in
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WITH THE
MOUNTED INFANTRY
IN SOUTH AFRICA

*Being Side-Lights on the Boer Campaign
1899—1902*

BY
MAJOR F. M. CRUM
1ST KING'S ROYAL RIFLES

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1903

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NOTE

The following pages have been printed from my diary, and from letters written home during the War in South Africa. I shall be pleased if they are found in any way interesting to friends, notwithstanding the great number of accounts which have already appeared.

F. M. C.

MALTA,

Jan. 1903.

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PART I

TALANA AND DUNDEE HOSPITAL

THE detachment of the 1st Batt. King's Royal Rifles to which I belonged had been stationed in South Africa since January, 1896, so that when the war did come, in 1899, it was no surprise to us. Indeed, on our departure from India, many men were heard to express their intention of "pulling Mr. Kruger's whiskers," and very soon after our arrival at the Cape we started field days and training in South African warfare. General Sir Wm. Goodenough fully realised the possibility of war with the Boers, and trained the troops under him particularly in stalking and shooting, which he foresaw would be so important; yet, being anxious to do nothing in the way of hurrying matters, he used the term "South African" warfare, and forbade the words "Boer" warfare.

General Goodenough was succeeded by Colonel Morgan-Crofton, and later by Sir William Butler, and they too kept the troops employed, laying particular stress on the necessity for intelligence

in individuals and on good shooting and stalking. So convinced were all ranks that they were training for the real thing, that we listened keenly, and profited greatly from serving under these commanders.

On May 5th, 1899, great excitement and a feeling of a coming ultimatum were caused by the correspondence between Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Reitz. On Sunday, May 7th, we sailed from Cape Town, and joined the other four companies of the battalion at Maritzburg under Lieut.-Col. Gunning, arriving there on the night of May 11th. At Maritzburg we were kept busy soldiering, and all ranks showed a keenness which could only be inspired by the conviction that war was coming. It took a long time coming. For about four months we were in a continual state of suspense. We rushed at the morning papers every day—when the news looked like peace we were greatly depressed; when war seemed certain we were in tremendous spirits. We congratulated ourselves on being one of the regiments on the spot, and our only regret was lest someone should have to be left behind.

In June Sir William Penn Symonds, from India, took over the command in Natal. He kept us busy with constant field days, taking a special