

HISTORICAL RECORDS OF THE 8TH SOUTH AFRICAN INFANTRY

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These notes were in the possession of the late Lieutenant-Colonel J. F. Mullins (ex 8th South African Infantry) and have been re-assembled and edited.¹

Introduction

The 8th South African Infantry Regiment was formed for service in East Africa during November, 1915, and was one of the Units comprising the 2nd South African Infantry Brigade, which consisted of the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th South African Infantry Regiments.

The 8th SAI was known as the 'Railways and Workers' Regiment'. One company was furnished by the South African Railways. Major F. H. P. Creswell was largely instrumental in raising the regiment. Lieut-Col A. J. Taylor commanded the Regiment; Major F. H. P. Creswell, second-in-command and Capt E. H. M. Hardiman, adjutant.

The recruitment of the unit was carried out through the whole of South Africa, but the men were largely drawn from the Reef, though a number came from the Cape Province.

The badge of the Regiment was the usual one common to all South African Units, viz a Springbok head circled by a band bearing the motto 'UNION IS STRENGTH' & 'EEN-DRACHT MAAKT MACHT'. The badge was of brass.

On the re-organization of the Regiment for the second phase of the East African Campaign, special authority was obtained through the Director of War Recruiting for a collar badge to be worn by the officers of the Regiment. The badge consisted of a springbok head mounted on the Roman figure 'VIII' and beneath the figure 'VIII' the words 'SA INFANTRY', with a scroll on each side.

The distinguished regimental colour of the 8th SAI was crimson and gold. The flash was a square of crimson and gold, diagonally

divided, crimson uppermost; and worn on both sides of the helmet.

In November 1917 it was announced that His Majesty, King George V had been graciously pleased to appoint Lieut-Col F. H. P. Creswell (**Croix de Guerre**), as Honorary Colonel of the 8th SAI (Railways and Workers' Regiment). As Col Creswell had been instrumental in the formation of the Regiment, his appointment as Hon Colonel was a very appropriate one.

The Regiment served in the theatre of operations immediately on arrival in East Africa in January 1916. The Regiment operated in the Kilimanjaro and Kondoa Iranga areas

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1. These historical records were brought to the attention of the editor by a pupil of his, the grandson of Lieutenant-Colonel Mullins. Lieut-Colonel James Finbarr Mullins, OBE was born in 1879. He was appointed lieutenant in the Rand Rifles on 22 October 1914 and was promoted captain on 30 October 1914. He served throughout the German South West Africa Campaign and was mentioned in dispatches for distinguished service in the field (London Gazette 20 August 1918). After being released from service on 4 August 1915, on the disbandment of the Rand Rifles, he attested at Potchefstroom, joining the 2nd SAI with the rank of sergeant. He was transferred to an officers' training course and was appointed captain in 'C' Company, 8th SAI on 6 December 1915. He sailed with his regiment on HMT Gaika on 17 January 1916 for East Africa. He was severely wounded in the left shoulder and chest in the action at Soko Nassai on 21 March 1916. After a period of recuperative leave he rejoined the 8th SAI in November 1916 and was posted as officer in charge of the Machine Gun Section of his unit, a post he held until the 8th SAI returned to South Africa on the HMT Kinfauns Castle, in February 1917 at the end of the first period of the unit's service in East Africa. Still troubled by his wound, he was granted an extension of leave. He reported at Potchefstroom for duty on 5 April 1917. On 31 May 1917 he was appointed as a Company Commander in the South African Native Labour Contingent and proceeded to France. He rose to the rank of acting Lieut-Col on 22 July 1918 and was awarded the OBE (Officer of the Military Division of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire). The announcement of the award appeared in the London Gazette on 1 January 1919. 'For valuable services rendered in connection with military operations in France and Flanders.'

from January to July 1916, north of the Central Railway.

From August to November 1916 the Regiment operated along the Central Railway line in the Kilimatindi and Dodoma areas. During December 1916 and January 1917 the sphere of operations was south of the Central Railway line in the Iranga District.

The Regiment entered the theatre of operations at Mgerigeri, in the Kilwa area on 27 June 1917, and continued to operate in the latter area until the end of July. From August to December 1917 the field op operations was in the Lindi area.

The First Phase of Campaign — East Africa 1916-1917

Approximately seven weeks' training was carried out at Potchefstroom during the months of November and December 1915 and January 1916.

Rifles and bandoliers were issued to all troops prior to embarkation for East Africa. The bandoliers were exchanged for Webb equipment in July 1916 at Kondoia Iranga.

The Regiment obtained its machine guns on arrival at Kilindini. The compliment of guns for the Regiment was four.

The strength of the Regiment was that of an infantry battalion war establishment, but special authority was granted to the Regiment to take to East Africa, as reinforcements, one reserve company consisting of two lieutenants and 230 other ranks.

During operations in November and December 1916 the establishment of the machine gun section was raised from four to six guns, with a personnel of one captain, three lieutenants and a proportionate number of NCOs and men.

The Regiment left Potchefstroom on 15 January 1916 and sailed from Durban per HMT Gaika on 17 January 1916 and arrived at Kilindini, British East Africa, on 24 January 1916.

During the whole of the East African Campaign it is doubtful if any regiment produced as fine a record of marching as the 8th SAI.

From Maktau they marched to Mbuyuni and then to Serengeti where the concentration for the big advance, which was to finally expel the enemy from British East Africa, took

place. After a few hours there, a long night march brought them to their position within sight of Salaita Hill. From there the march continued to Taveta.

The Regiment took part in the fighting around Kilimanjaro and came into action for the first time at Kitovo Hills on 14 March 1916. The battalion sustained no casualties but probably inflicted loss on the retreating enemy. After the seizure of the Kitovo Hills, the boundary of German East Africa was crossed and they camped at Himo River. After an attack on Unterer Himo, the Regiment marched to Soko Nassai, where they were heavily engaged.

The principal engagement the Regiment participated in during the first phase of the campaign was at Soko Nassai on 21 March 1916. The Regiment, brigaded with the 5th and 6th SAI, under the command of Lieut-Col A. J. Taylor, left Himo River at about 5.00 pm on the evening of 20 March, and marched to 'Store'. On approaching 'Store' they came under heavy indirect fire — the result of a night attack which the enemy was delivering against General Sheppard's force who were at that time in front of them.

On the following morning the Column, consisting of the 8th SAI and 6th SAI and the 129th Baluchis, moved forward with instructions to engage the enemy and drive them out of their positions and secure the road bridge across the Soko Nassai River, and hence the road to Kahe.

The disposition of the British forces was as follows: 129th Baluchis on the left flank, 8th SAI in the centre and 6th SAI on the right flank. The 5th SAI and the 25th Royal Fusiliers were in support. Shortly after 11.00 am the advance was interrupted by heavy enemy fire — machine guns, rifles and quick firers.

The 8th SAI in the centre and partly in the open without cover, bore the brunt of the engagement. The enemy occupied a well-entrenched position on the banks of the Soko Nassai River, and kept up an intense machine gun and rifle fire until towards dusk, when at about 6.15 pm firing ceased. British troops occupied the German positions at dawn the next morning, the enemy having lost severely and retired beyond Kahe during the night.



The casualty list of the 8th SAI, which totalled 118, bears testimony to the strength of the enemy's opposition.²

After the enemy had retreated, the Regiment returned to camp on the Himo River, on 24 March 1916. That day the first reinforcements were received. They consisted of 2 officers and about 200 other ranks and they formed the major part of the reinforcement company which had been left at Moshoti for further training.

At Himo River the Regiment was to winter, but the order to march was given and on 10 April 1916 every available soldier began the long march to Kondoa Iranga. The first portion of this as far as Kumbulum was a period of great stress and hardship, for the rainy season opened the very day they marched out of camp at Himo.

On the appointment of Lieut-Col A. J. Taylor to command a column, Major F. H. P. Creswell was promoted Lieut-Col and took over command of the Regiment on 2nd May 1916. Major J. A. Warwick was appointed second-in-command from the same date. Captain E. H. M. Hardiman was appointed to Lieut-Col Taylor's staff and Lieut F. A. D. Moseley was promoted captain and appointed adjutant, as from 2 May 1916.

From Kumbulum, twelve days hard marching through Lol-Kissale and Ufiome brought the 8th SAI to Kondoa Iranga. Here the Regiment was heavily engaged for three days, 6 to 8 June 1916. 'C' Company under Captain T. P. Atkins did not leave Kumbulum until two days after the Regiment, but hearing that the Regiment was likely to go into action, marched 35 miles in 24 hours in order to reach it, which they did outside Lol-Kissale.

The object of the Regiment's next important engagement, fought at Kondoa Iranga, was to test if the enemy were opposing the British left flank with any determination. On the night of 5 June, Major Warwick, DSO left camp at Kondoa with a party of 200 rifles and two machine guns, and proceeded to the extreme left flank of the British position. On the morning of 6 June the whole of Major Warwick's force, augmented by detachments of the 7th SAI and the 4th SA Horse, seized the major portion of a kopje which was held

by the enemy in unknown force. The position after the seizure was that Major Warwick's party held the western portion and the enemy the eastern, with a saddle or dip dividing the two positions. But the right flank and the rear of the party were unguarded. On the evening of 6 June a further force of approximately 200 rifles of the 8th SAI were sent out in support under command of Lieut-Col F. H. P. Creswell, arriving at dawn the following morning. It was only possible to reach the kopje party via the river bed and this the 8th SAI held to cover the rear of the force holding the kopje. It was impossible to send through food for two days owing to the command which the enemy had over certain portions of the river bed. On the afternoon of the same day the detachment of the 8th SAI got into touch with a portion of the 12th SAI, and the position of the force on the kopje was more secure. On the night of 8 June, the whole of the force on the kopje was more secure. On the night of 8 June, the whole force was successfully withdrawn from the kopje.³

The Regiment returned to Kondoa Iranga where, towards the end of July 1916 a second draft of reinforcements was received. This consisted of approximately 185 other ranks. They had been sent forward from the 2nd SAI Brigade Reinforcements Depot at Himo River. After two months at Kondoa Iranga the Regiment, strengthened by a platoon of the 7th SAI, marched as an independent column to Singidda. The march took 9 days. After two days at Singidda, they left for Kilimatinde: another march of 8 days.

Though the Regiment had a full issue of rations during this period, it fared even worse during the two months stay at Kilimatinde, and the orders to proceed to Dodoma were most welcome. This was another 8 days regular marching, and as usual transport regulated the pace.

2. Summary of casualties at Soko Nassai sustained by the Regiment

Two officers and 22 other ranks killed in action and died of wounds.
5 officers and 89 other ranks wounded.

3. Summary of casualties sustained by 8th SAI at Kondoa Iranga 6-8 June 1916

	Officers	Other Ranks	
Killed	1	1	
Died of wounds	—	1	
Wounded	3	9	
	4	11	Total: 15

On 4 December the first detachment of the Regiment began its longest march, Dodoma to Iranga. The scarcity of water on the road prevented the Regiment moving as a whole. Even though its strength was at that time not very great, as a number of men were already holding outposts around Iranga, the Regiment was forced to proceed in four detachments, the last leaving Dodoma on 10 December 1916. This march occupied about 14 days and before the whole of the Regiment had arrived, orders were received to push forward to a position near Muhanga Mission, the remainder of the Regiment having been ordered to return to Dodoma. The scarcity of rations at Iranga rendered it undesirable to have a single man there above the number required for the actual operations in hand.

At dawn on the morning of 21 December 1916 the Regiment marched from Iranga with supplies and kit carried by porters and donkeys. On reaching Boma Himbu the Regiment stayed there for the night and proceeded the following morning. The whole column moved in single file for no other way was possible along the native tracks. The column reached its appointed position at the scheduled hour — 5.00 am on Christmas day 1916. On Christmas Eve, the Regiment had marched from early morning till dark, uphill and down dale the day long, amidst rain and mud in plenty; and at night they were forced to lie down and sleep in the long wet grass. Never was the spirit of the men better.

The enemy force at the Lukegeta Pass, however, managed to elude the encircling movement of the British forces and by 5 January 1917 the Regiment had returned to Iranga, after a further four days march over steep hills. This had been done on exceedingly scanty rations.

The final march from Iranga to Dodoma was on the homeward journey and was taken slowly and steadily throughout. Both the Rusa and Kisigo Rivers were in flood, but both crossings were safely accomplished and the Regiment arrived at Dodoma on 14 January 1917, the total marching record being almost one thousand miles.

The journey from Dodoma to Dar-es-Salaam was by rail, and took place without notable

incident. On 16 February 1917 the Regiment embarked on HMT Kinfauns Castle for South Africa, where they arrived on 22 February 1917, disembarking at Durban. The Regiment had been absent from South Africa on active service in the first phase of the campaign for 13 months and five days.

The most noteworthy points in connection with the first phase was the almost continuous shortage of rations; sameness of the rations even when available in quantity, the rigours of the climate, intense heat by day and at one period severe cold by night. The inadequate supplies of clothing which reached the Regiment, made it necessary for many to march or be assisted for miles without boots. Many had insufficient garments to cover their nakedness. Above all there were the ever recurring tropical diseases — malaria, diarrhoea and dysentery, with extreme debility which invariably follows. These hardships were always borne with a patience and determination deserving of the highest commendation.

On arrival at Durban, various periods of recuperative leave were granted, but the Regiment re-mobilised on 28 March 1917 for the second phase. The periods of leave varied from one to three months, after which period they had to report to the Camp Commandant, Potchefstroom.

The Second Phase of the Campaign — East Africa 1917

The Regiment re-mobilised on 28 March 1917 at Potchefstroom, after being on recuperative leave. Training was carried out from then until the Regiment left for East Africa in June 1917. A number of men, however, only received a short training. These were the recruits obtained towards the latter part of May and during the beginning of June 1917.

On remobilising for East Africa for the second phase of the campaign, Major T. P. Atkins was promoted Lieut-Col and assumed command of the Regiment as from 28 March 1917, on relinquishment of command by Lieut-Col F. H. P. Creswell owing to ill health. Captain W. J. MacIntyre was promoted major on 1 April 1917 and became second-in-command as from that date. Captain W. T. Stone assumed the appointment of adjutant as from 18 April. On the return of Captain W. T. Stone to South Africa on account of

ill health and subsequent release, Captain C. McMahon assumed the appointment of adjutant as from 20 August 1917.

Rifles, portion Webb equipment and portion bandoliers were issued to the Regiment prior to embarkation in June 1917. On arrival in East Africa, the bandoliers were exchanged for Webb equipment. Eight machine guns and eight Lewis guns were issued to the Regiment on arrival in East Africa, at Kilwa.

On remobilisation for East Africa for the second phase, the Establishment was augmented by the addition of four machine guns, making a machine gun company, consisting of the following complement — one captain, four lieutenants, 61 other ranks and eight machine guns. Authority for this came from General Hoskins. Other additions to Infantry Battalion War Establishment were:

Signallers: one lieutenant; one horse and native groom; 22 other ranks, including one sergeant and four corporals.

Transport: one transport officer — lieutenant; one horse and native groom.

Lewis guns: On arrival in East Africa the Regiment was augmented by eight Lewis guns. These were allotted as follows: two guns per infantry company and crew to man these were drawn from the infantry companies, with one lieutenant to supervise over eight guns.

During this second part of the campaign, 2/Lieut J. H. A. MacAdam, Machine Gun Officer of the Regiment, invented a patent Lewis Gun Filler, which was submitted to the War Office and accepted. 2/Lieut MacAdam presented his Patent to the Imperial Government. The patent is known as the MacAdam Lewis Gun Filler. These fillers were manufactured locally in Dar-es-Salaam and were used in East Africa.

Strength: On the return to East Africa for the second phase of campaign, the Regiment embarked at Durban 900 all ranks, the deficiency below establishment being due to the fact that a number of men were found to be medically unfit at the last moment.

The Regiment left Potchefstroom on 12 June 1917 and embarked at Durban on 14 June and sailed on 15 June 1917, per HMT Anchises. They arrived at Kilwa Kiswani on 22 June 1917 and embarked from Kilwa Kis-

wani on 28 July per HMT Umtata and disembarked at Lindi on 29 July.

At the outset, the second phase of campaign in which the Regiment entered into, promised not only to be strenuous from the point of view of the fighting but also from climatic and tropical conditions. As has been already mentioned, the Regiment landed at Kilwa Kiswani on 22 June 1917, and marched the same night en-route for the main camp at Redhill, Kilwa Kiveghi. Here the Regiment obtained its guns and balance of equipment; and on the morning of 27 June started for the theatre of operations.

The Regiment was originally intended to join Column 2, but en-route orders were received to proceed and join Column 1 at Rumbo. At Rumbo they first came into contact with the enemy. On the night of 4 July at 6.30 pm the Regiment left Rumbo for Beaumont's Post, a distance of approximately 12 miles. The latter place was not reached until about 9.30 am the following morning. This was one of the most strenuous marches the Regiment ever performed. The country travelled over was difficult and the darkness made the task more so, progress being slow and tedious. On the night of the 5th they left Beaumont's Post and marched to within two miles of the Mnindi-Mtshakama-Lindi Road Junction, and at dawn the 8th SAI proceeded to the Junction of the Road. Here half the Regiment was to be in action with the enemy on 6 July. This was the first important engagement during the second phase of the campaign.

The column, to which half the Regiment was attached, was under the command of Colonel Orr and consisted of 8th SAI, Gold Coast Regiment, 2/2 King's African Rifles and an Indian Regiment (Punjabis). The 2/2 KAR were in advance and came into contact with the enemy at dawn, the strength of whom was unknown. The enemy occupied a position across the Mnindi-Mtshakama-Lindi Road, on a ridge cleverly concealed by thick bushes and plantations, with a good water supply in the centre of their position.

At about 10.00 am the half battalion of the 8th SAI, consisting of 'A' and 'B' companies and four machine guns, under the command of Lieut-Col T. P. Atkins, was ordered to cut off the retreat of the enemy across the road leading to Mtshakama-Lindi. To accomp'ish

this, it was necessary for the 8th SAI to move through thick, bushy country, round the left flank of the enemy; a movement which turned out to be far more difficult than was anticipated, as the enemy positions were not only scattered but cleverly concealed in thick tropical vegetation. The half battalion came into contact with the enemy's rear guard at about 11.00 am. When the British forces came into touch with the enemy, they were in a valley covered with thick bush. The British position there soon became untenable, owing to the enemy fire from high ground to their rear. It therefore became necessary to withdraw to the high ground overlooking the valley, and to endeavour to force the enemy from their positions. The difficult task of withdrawing from the valley was accomplished with practically no loss. In the afternoon they were able to locate the last of the Germans' concealed positions from which the 8th SAI drove them out.

The Germans, towards evening, retired in the direction of Mnindi and the British forces occupied their positions. At dusk the half battalion of the 8th SAI returned to the column, after being relieved by the 2/2 KAR.⁴

During these 48 hours strenuous marching and fighting, only a few short halts were possible, and heavy packs had to be carried and worn during this period with the exception of the few short halts.

On the morning of 7 July, the march forward to Mnindi was resumed. The Germans were engaged en-route. From there the column proceeded towards Mtshakama. A halt of two days was made in front of the enemy position at Mtshakama. On the morning of the 17th the column proceeded forward to Mtshakama and found that the main German force had retired leaving a small rear guard to engage the British force. This rearguard was found in well-prepared positions at the foot of the evacuated Mtshakama Hills. The evacuation was no doubt due to rapid flanking movements of the British column. From there onwards until the fight at Narungombe on the 19th, the enemy offered stout resistance against the British forces and contested every yard of the ground.

The fighting at Kihumburu and Narungombe in the Kilwa area on 18th and 19th July 1917 was the heaviest the Regiment participated

in during its operations in East Africa. Not only was the action fought on 19 July very severe, but during the preceding fortnight the Regiment had been fighting continuously, the men having had little or no sleep during that period as numerous night marches had to be made. The intense heat during the day was also greatly felt by the men who had only recently arrived from South Africa. Water was very scarce and had to be conserved during this period.

The Regiment came into action early on the morning of 18 July, and operating with native troops, drove the enemy back slowly until night fall, when their Column (Column 1 under the command of Colonel Orr) and also Columns 2 and 3, camped within two thousand yards of the enemy's position at Narungombe.

Soon after daylight on the morning of the 19th the enemy opened fire on the British troops before they had moved into position for the advance.

The information of the British force at the commencement of the engagement was as follows: two companies of the 2/2 KAR on the right front, the Gold Coast Regiment in the centre and two companies of the 8th SAI under the command of Lieut-Col T. P. Atkins on the left front. Column 2 under the command of Colonel Ridgway CMG, was to operate on the right flank of Column 1 of which the 8th SAI formed a part as has been mentioned. Column 3 under the command of Colonel A. J. Taylor, DSO was to attack on the left flank. Two companies of the 8th SAI, consisting of 'A' and 'B' companies under the command of Major W. J. MacIntyre were loaned to Column 3 for these operations. The plan of action to be followed was that whilst Column 1 attacked the enemy's main position in the centre, Columns 2 and 3 were to move round the enemy's flanks and endeavour to cut off his retreat south. However, natural obstacles and dense bush, supported by stout resistance which the German force offered, robbed the British forces of complete victory, and enabled the enemy

4. The following casualties were sustained in the action:

	Officers	Other Ranks	
Killed	—	1	
Died of wounds	—	3	
Wounded	2	6	
	2	10	Total: 12

eventually to retire under cover of darkness, but not without very severe loss.

The half battalion of the 8th SAI, consisting of 'C' and 'D' companies and Headquarters, under the command of Lieut-Col Atkins, was ordered to advance to support the Gold Coast Regiment on their left flank, and came into action at about 7.30 am. Here the enemy was found to be occupying well concealed positions on the top of a slight incline covering the water. The capture of this water was most important as the Columns were depending on it for their water supply. At about 8.30 am intense enemy machine gun and rifle fire from concealed positions prevented any further advance. The enemy not only showed determined resistance, but delivered counter attacks against the British forces on the whole front. The half battalion of the 8th SAI with the Gold Coast Regiment on their right, were now dug in, and awaited developments from both flanks. Column 3 on the left flank after advancing towards their (the 8th SAI's) front met determined resistance and counter attacks from the German force and were gradually forced back. A grass fire started about mid-day on the front occupied by Column 3, and gradually spread over the front occupied by the 8th SAI. This, with the strong counter attack the enemy delivered, gradually forced Column 3 to retire and thus exposed the left flank of the 8th SAI.

The Germans took advantage of the exposed left flank of Column 1 by attempting to enfilade it with machine gun and rifle fire. Column 2 on the right flank, however, delivered a strong counter attack and entered the German trenches, which had the effect of forcing the enemy to retire from the right flank. 'A' Company of the 8th SAI which was with Column 3 on the left flank, suffered heavy losses during the German counter attacks.

The half battalion with Column 1 under Lieut-Col Atkins also suffered very severely. 'D' Company of this force lost one officer and a number of men in attempting to link up with Column 3. The enemy adopted the tactics of utilising the dress and the signs of the British askari troops, and deceived those men of the 8th SAI who were taken prisoners.

The Regiment lost three machine guns

during the day's action, but subsequently one of these was recovered. Towards dusk, with the exception of an occasional burst of fire here and there, the enemy fire ceased. The British forces had already dug in and consolidated their positions. The dawn patrol of the 8th SAI found that the enemy had evacuated their positions and retired south after having sustained heavy casualties. British forces occupied the German positions at dawn on 22 July.

The 8th SAI suffered very severely in casualties during the day's fight: no less than 33 per cent of those engaged were returned as such.⁵

On 21 July, the 8th SAI received orders to return to Kilwa Kiswani en-route to the Lindi area. During this short period the Regiment had lost half of its strength, fifty percent of this being due to casualties in action.

This strenuous time and the ever recurring tropical diseases: malaria, blackwater and dysentery, was now beginning to tell on the remainder, and though they reached Lindi with approximately 480 men, after three days at that place they were only able to muster 280 men to take forward into the field. There were no less than 110 admitted to hospital in one day at Lindi. From Lindi the 8th SAI proceeded to Mkwaya and joined Colonel A. J. Taylor's column, which consisted of the 8th SAI, 1/2 KAR and Artillery.

The Regiment came into action again as support to General O'Grady's Column in the Tandamuti fight on 3 August 1917. Though under fire the Regiment was not actually engaged there. Reinforcements were received by the Regiment on 6 August, in the form of 2 officers and 48 other ranks; on 28 August, a further 56 other ranks; 1 officer on 11 October and 48 other ranks, including 2 wounded who had rejoined, on 26 October.

During the months of August, September, October and November 1917, at numerous places the Regiment performed arduous and heavy work under most trying climatic con-

	Officers	Other Ranks	
5. Killed and Died of			
Wounds	3	38	
Wounded	9	59	
Missing	2	29	
	14	126	Total: 140

One officer and 20 other ranks were released from the Germans in November 1917.

ditions. This was while participating in the general advance against the enemy in the Lindi area. Through this period the Regiment took part in the operations at C.23 Camp, Narunyu and Mtua. Very heavy demands were made on the limited resources of the Regiment: owing to heavy casualties through sickness, its strength was, at one time at the beginning of November, reduced to the insignificant figure of 72 all ranks!

After the capture of Mtua, the Regiment, owing to its depleted strength, was placed on the Lines of Communication, and from then onwards until its return from Njanjao on 4 December for South Africa, though considerably reduced in number, it garrisoned numerous posts along the lines of communication, and thereby relieved detachments of other stronger units from this task, thus rendering valuable support towards the successful operations against the Germans. These ended in the capture of the larger portion of the remaining German forces in the field.

During this second phase of the campaign, the 8th SAI fared well as regards rations and clothing. Sickness, mostly malaria, however, sadly reduced the numbers of the Regiment. This, no doubt, was due to low-lying and

swampy country in which they operated. At the end, only 15 officers and men of the Regiment, out of a strength of 1 059, had not been admitted to hospital during the second phase of the campaign.

The Regiment embarked at Lindi for Dar-es-Salaam en-route for South Africa on 5 December, and arrived at Dar-es-Salaam on 6 December 1917.

All Imperial Government stores, machine guns and Lewis guns were handed in at the ordnance depot at Dar-es-Salaam. Deficiencies in clothing were made up.

The Regiment embarked at Dar-es-Salaam on board HMT Imgomo for South Africa, on 12 December and sailed on 13 December. The Regiment arrived at Durban on 19 December, and left by train the same day for Roberts Heights, where it arrived on the night of 20 December 1917. The officers and men were then taken to convalescent camps and the demobilization of the Unit was carried out by the Camp Commandant, Roberts Heights.⁶

6. In All Soul's Chapel, St Mary's Cathedral, Johannesburg, the 8th SAI Tablet bears the names of 167 members who made the Supreme Sacrifice.