

1st South African Infantry Brigade, 1915-1916

Indledning

Denne artikel kan læses i sammenhæng med Senussi opstanden, og som baggrundsoplysninger for de enheder, der deltog i nedkæmpelsen af Senussi Opstanden i 1915-16.

1st South African Infantry Brigade (*Brigadegeneral H.T. Lukin 1)*)

Enhed	Tilnavn (= hverveområde)	Chef
1st South African Infantry Regiment <u>2)</u>	Cape of Good Hope Regiment	Oberstløjtnant F.S. Dawson
2nd South African Infantry Regiment <u>3)</u>	Natal and Orange Free State Regiment	Oberstløjtnant W.E.C. Tanner
3rd South African Infantry Regiment <u>4)</u>	Transvaal and Rhodesia Regiment	Oberstløjtnant E.F. Thackeray
4th South African Infantry Regiment <u>5)</u>	South African Scottish Regiment	Oberstløjtnant F.A. Jones



South African Infantry, ca. 1915.

Tegnet af Harry Payne.

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udgivet af Raphael Tuck & Sons "Oilette".

De tre første bataljoner repræsenterede de fire sydafrikanske provinser samt Sydrhodesia, mens 4. Bataljon repræsenterede den store del af befolkningen, der havde rødder i Skotland. Da brigaden i efteråret 1915 forlod Cape Town med kurs mod England, talte den 160 officerer og 5.648 mand.

Alle soldater havde meldt sig frivilligt og var ivrige efter at komme i kamp mod tyskerne.

En stor del af soldaterne stammede fra den engelsktalende del af befolkningen, men de afrikaanstalende soldater, hvoraf en del havde kæmpet mod englænderne under Boerkrigen, gav brigaden et tydeligt sydafrikansk præg.

Bagsiden af kortet indeholder følgende oplysninger:

"South Africa has done well in the present gigantic campaign. She fought the enemy and practically cleared them out of South (West) Africa, and at the same time sent a large contingent overseas to help the Old Country through her hard fight.

The "Springboks", as they are called from the design of their badge, have rendered a good account for themselves, as the enemy can testify on many occasions.

The badge bears their motto in English and Dutch."



Salute of the South Africans

On behalf of the League of the Empire, Princess Christian 7) presented a flag and shield 8) to the South African troops in training in England.

This photograph shows the South Africans marching past the Princess.

Fra Kilde 4

Det blev dog ikke tyskere, man i første omgang kom til at slås mod, men senussierne, idet brigaden i december 1915 blev sendt fra England til Ægypten for at forstærke de allierede tropper dér.

Fra januar til marts 1916 var brigaden indsat i nedkæmpelsen af Senussi Opstanden. Herefter blev brigaden sendt til Vestfronten, hvor den indgik i 9th (Scottish) Division 6).

Ægypten, 1916



*Brigadegeneral Sir Henry Lukin,
chef for 1st South African Infantry Brigade.*

Fra Firtaktsmotorers.

Brigaden deltog i træfningen ved Halazin (23. januar 1916) og Slaget ved Agagiya (26. februar 1916).

Ved Agagiya bestod brigadegeneral Lukin's styrke af:

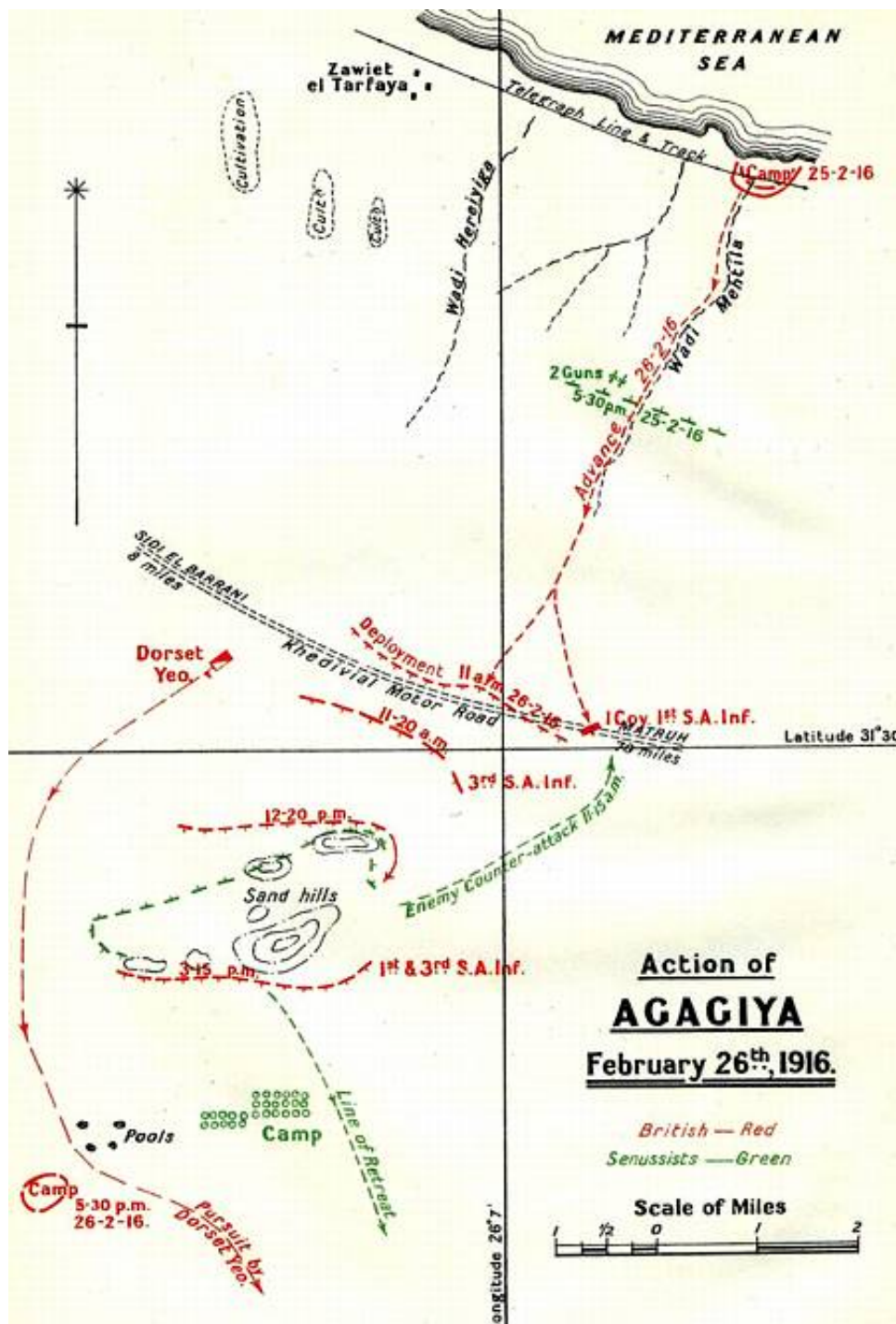
- 1st South African Infantry Regiment
- 3rd South African Infantry Regiment
- Dorsetshire Yeomanry
- Royal Buckinghamshire (Yeomanry) Hussars (en eskadron)
- 1/6th Royal Scots 10) (efterladt til bevogtning af lejren ved Unjeila).
- Nottinghamshire Battery, Royal Horse Artillery (Territorial Force) 11).

From South Africa to Egypt, 3rd South African Infantry (Fra Kilde 4):

"This fighting in Delville Wood 12), although their first in Europe, was not altogether a novelty to the South Africans. Some of them had been with Bohta and Smuts in South West Africa. As soon as these campaigns were ended it was decided to send a detachment of South Africans to Europe.

Volunteers were called for, the ranks were quickly filled, largely with men who had already seen active service, and soon the four battalions of the 1st Brigade were on their way to England. On Salisbury Plain they finished their training and towards Christmas, 1915, they heard that they were about to move. Move they did, but not to France. They left England, in a few days they found themselves at Malta, and on January 10th, 1916, disembarked at Alexandria, where they went into camp.

At this time the danger to Egypt came not from the Suez Canal and the Turks, but from the other side, the west, and the tribe called the Senussi. In February the 3rd South Africans left their camp in order to reinforce the little army serving against them. They went by sea to Matruh, and then marched to Barrani. A short rest followed, and soon came the Battle of Agagiya.



Slaget ved Agagiya, 26. februar 1916.
Fra Kilde 2.

Against the Senussi

The plan was for an attack on the camp of the Senussi at dawn on the 26th, and the 3rd South Africans was the battalion selected to make it.

On the afternoon of the 25th they moved out in fighting array, and soon shells began to pitch among them. The Senussi were as alert as their German allies, and General Lukin decided that the night march must be given up in favour of a daylight one; the enemy was not to be surprised.

Some Yeomanry scouting in front brought word that the Senussi had left their original position for one further back, and a halt was called. The men were ordered to dig themselves in and to have breakfast; then the advance was to continue.

At 09:30 the order was given. The 3rd South Africans were spread out on a front of about a mile; on the right and left of them were some of the Dorset Yeomanry and the Duke of Westminster's armoured cars 13); far in front were some more Yeoman, scouting; above was a single aeroplane; around, as far as the eye could see, was the desert.



*Oberstløjtnant
Edward Francis Thackery,
3rd South African Infantry.
Fra Kilde 3.*

The South Africans advanced, we are told, with admirable steadiness, and after a time were within five hundred yards of the Senussi. Then, a flanking attack on our line having been thwarted, the reserves were thrown in, and all was ready for the final rush.

But for this the tribesmen did not wait. They fell back, and the fight was consequently left to the Yeomanry, who dashed forward and charged them."

1. og 3. Bataljon blev tildelt fanebåndene: Agagiya og Egypt 1916.

Kilder

1. *The Armed Forces of South Africa* af major G. Tylden, City of Johannesburg Africana Museum, Johannesburg 1954.
2. *History of the Great War, Military Operations Egypt & Palestine, Volume I, From the outbreak of war with Germany to June 1917* af generalløjtnant Sir George Macmunn og kaptajn Cyril Falls, HSMO, London 1927.
3. *The South Africans at Delville Wood* af I.S. Uys (South African Military Society).

4. *3rd South African Infantry*, War Illustrated, July 1917. Artiklen er set til salg på Internettet, men scanningen var ikke god nok til at man kunne se datoen.
5. *South African Military Units* (John Dovey). Siden baserer sig i nogen udstrækning på Kilde 1
6. *South African in the Great War* (The Long, Long Trail).

Efterskrift



"Universal" cap badge of South Africa.

Kort nr. 1 i serien Colonial
& Indian Army Badges,
John Player & Sons, 1917.

Med vanlig bramfri præcision omtalte australske soldater det sydafrikanske mærke som *en gedebuk i et køje*.

På bagsiden af kortet er trykt følgende:

The illustration shows the "universal" cap badge of the South African contingent in Europe and East Africa who so loyally rallied round the Mother Country during the Great European War. The badge is worn by all units of all arms in both these forces, which have greatly distinguished themselves.

Enhedshistorier

Den klassiske historie om den 1st South African Infantry Brigade er skrevet af forfatteren John Buchan [14](#)), der arbejdede for det engelske propagandaministerium og senere for den engelske efterretningstjeneste.

- *History of the South African Forces in France* af John Buchan, Maskew Miller, Cape Town, 1921. Bogen er genoptrykt i 1992 i samarbejde mellem Imperial War Museum og det amerikanske forlag Battery Press.

Omtaler af bogen indikerer, at operationerne mod senussierne kun omtales ganske kort. Der findes dog mindst en bog, der specielt omhandler operationerne i Ægypten:

- *With the Springboks in Egypt: A Brief Description of the Work of the 1st South African Infantry Brigade on the Western Frontier of Egypt* af kaptajn Miller, Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, London 1916. Bogen er set til salg via Abebooks.

Per Finsted

Noter:

- 1) Sir Henry Timson Lukin (1860-1925) (Wikipedia).
- 2) Et af bataljonens kompagnier kom fra Duke of Edinburgh's Own Rifles.
- 3) En del af soldaterne kom fra Kaffrarian Rifles.
- 4) Et af bataljonens kompagnier kom fra Witwatersrand Rifles.
- 5) A Kompagniet kom fra Cape Town Highlanders. S
- 6) The Road to St. Julien - The letters of a stretcher-bearer from the Great War af William St. Clair. Brigadegeneral Lukin førte kommandoen over 9th (Scottish) Division fra december 1916 til marts 1918.
- 7) Prinsessen er Prinsesse Helena (1846-1923), datter af Dronning Victoria. Hun giftede sig 5. juli 1866 med Prins Christian af Slesvig-Holsten, der inden ægteskabet blev tildelt titlen Kongelig Højhed. Prinsesse Helena blev herefter Prinsesse Christian af Slesvig-Holsten. Da den engelske kongefamilie i 1917 fraskrev sig sine tyske navne og titler, og antog slægtsnavnet Windsor, blev navnet blot til Prinsesse Christian. Se Princess Helena of the United Kingdom (Wikipedia).
- 8) Flaget var sandsynligvis et Union Jack af silke og skjoldet af sølv. Lignende overrækkelser havde fundet sted til enheder fra Newfoundland, Canada og Australien. Se Link of the Empire (National Film Board of Canada), der omtaler et filmklip med fra en lignende parade, hvor Prinsesse Henry (Prinsesse Christians søster) overrækker et flag og et skjold til soldater fra Newfoundland. Foreningen, *League of the Empire*, ser ud til at have været en interesseorganisation, der arbejdede for samhørigheden mellem de mange dele af Det engelske Imperium.
- 10) Se min artikel Om 6th Battallion, Royal Scots, 1914-1916.
- 11) Se min artikel Om Honourable Artillery Company, 1914-1916.
- 12) Se The South Africans at Delville Wood (Kilde 3)
- 13) Se min artikel Om engelske panservognsenheder i Ægypten, 1915-1916.
- 14) John Buchan er bl.a. kendt for spændingsromanerne om Richard Hanney, hvoraf de to første er *The Thirty-nine Steps* (1915) og *Greenmantle* (1916). Sidstnævnte har en vis relation til kampen mod senussierne, og handler om en fiktiv engelsk efterretningsoperation, der skal modvirke et tysk forsøg på at bemægtige sig herredømmet over Mellemøsten. Bogen