



Letters from the Horn of Africa 1923 - 1942: Sandy Curle, Soldier and Diplomat Extraordinary

Edited by Christian Curle

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After brief service in the Gordon Highlanders as part of the Army of Occupation of the Rhine post Great War, Sandy Curle sought more adventurous soldiering and in 1923 was seconded to the King's African Rifles (KAR). Aged 23 he found himself in remotest Somaliland in sole charge and the only European for miles. At one point delirious with typhoid he was only saved by the surprise visit of an Indian doctor. Later he served in Kenya and undertook numerous military expeditions.

In 1929 Curle joined the Colonial Service again in Somaliland and Ethiopia. He witnessed the Italians' aggression which led to their invasion of Ethiopia in 1935. A spell in Tanganyika as a District Officer followed and on the outbreak of war he rejoined the KAR and was attached to the Somaliland Camel Corps when the Italians invaded. Hopelessly outnumbered, Sandy and his men withdrew to Kenya by troopship.

His next assignment was to raise, train and command a battalion of Ethiopian irregulars (Curle's Irregulars) and with these he led the reoccupation of Ethiopia winning the DSO and Ethiopian Military Medal.

In 1966 Curle was one of 25 veterans invited by Emperor Haile Selassie to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the liberation from Italian rule.

This is a vivid and fascinating collection of correspondence covering some 30 years of war and uncertain peace.

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