

A Science Service Feature

Released upon receipt
but intended for use
November 2, 1935

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed Oct. 26, 1935

WAR IN HOT CLIMATES

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman
Authority on Meteorology

In the history of warfare there are many parallels to the hardships lately inflicted upon the Italian invaders of Ethiopia by the torrid climate. The French suffered terribly from the heat of the Egyptian desert in 1798, when, it is recorded, even such intrepid soldiers as Lannes and Murat threw themselves on the sand and gave way to despair.

Lord Wolseley's autobiography contains some harrowing accounts of hot-weather campaigning in India. Describing a march in May, 1858, he says: "I came across a picket of the Seventh Hussars whose appearance was appalling. Two of its three officers lay helpless under trees with wet towels round their heads, and the men, in an exhausted condition, lay in twos and threes under whatever shelter they could find..... Before we were fairly started the division lost heavily in men disabled by heat-apoplexy, of which many subsequently died. During the march men, stifled from want of air and by the dense dust they inhaled, fell out by dozens, while the enemy's cavalry, sweeping round our flanks, fell upon the dhoolies filled with soldiers in every phase of sunstroke. The rebels killed many, decapitating them as they lay unconscious."

In the year 325 B. C. Alexander the Great, on his return from India, led his troops across the deserts of Baluchistan. Arrian, in his account of this march states that "the blazing heat and want of water destroyed a great part of the army especially the beasts of burden, which perished from the depth of the sand and the heat, which scorched like fire, while a great many died of thirst."

(All rights reserved by Science Service, Inc.)

SCIENCE SERVICE
2101 Constitution Ave.
Washington, D.C.