

Army mealtimes in the South Africa campaign.

From Dr Adrian Greaves

The following appendix to Horse Guards, General Order No. 104 of 1878 for use in South Africa follows;

Instructions for preparing for use and cooking Preserved Meats, drawn up by the Staff Officer Superintending the Instructional kitchen at Aldershot, by command of His Royal Highness, the Field Marshal Commanding in Chief.

The Australian and American preserved meat issued to troops having already been cooked, must on no account be heated for any length of time when being prepared for use. The vegetables should be prepared separately, and the meat added only sufficient time before serving to warm it through.

The following recipes, the ingredients of which are proportional for messes of 22 men each, if carefully prepared, afford a variety of dishes in palatable form:-

MEAT PIE. *Ingredients* - 16 lb. of meat, 5 lb of suet, 1lb of onions, 2 oz of salt and 2 oz of pepper. Mode- make the paste, cut up and stew the onions with any jelly from the meat added, cut the meat in dices, place it in a baking dish, add the cooked onions, season with pepper and salt, cover with a light crust, and bake in a quick oven for 20 minutes.

STEW. *Ingredients* - 16 lb of meat, 2 lb of carrots and other vegetables, 1 lb of onions, 2 oz of salt and 1 oz of pepper. Mode- cut up the vegetables and onions, place in the boiler with sufficient water to cover them, add some jelly from the meat, well season with pepper and salt, and stew gently, keeping the lid on the boiler closely shut till the vegetables are tender, then add the meat; let the whole simmer for ten minutes and serve.

CURRIED STEW. *Ingredients.* The same as for stew, with 1 oz of curry powder and 1 lb flour added. Mode as for stew, mix the curry powder with cold water into a smooth batter and add it to the stewed vegetables with the meat. Simmer for ten minutes and serve.

SEA PIE. *Ingredients.* The same as for stew with 5 lb of flour and 2 pounds of suet or dripping added. Mode – make the paste, preparing cooked vegetables and onions as for stew; when the vegetables are tender add the meat, cover the whole with a light paste, and boil or steam for 20 minutes. A thickening of flour is an improvement. The most suitable vessel in which to make this is a warren's cooker.

TOAD-IN-THE-HOLE. *Ingredients* - 16 lbs of meat, 5 lb of flour, 1lb of suet or dripping, 6 eggs, or equivalent in egg powder, 1 pint ale. Mode – cut up and cook the onions, prepare the batter with eggs and milk if possible, if not, with beer and water, season it with half the salt and pepper. Grease the inside of a baking dish, pour into it half the

batter and place it in the oven; when the batter sets place it on the meat, cut up, and the cooked onions; season with the remainder salt and pepper, pour the remainder of the batter into the dish so that it just covers the meat, and bake for 15 – 20 minutes in a quick oven.

POTATO PIE. *Ingredients* – 16 lb of meat, 20 lb of potatoes, 1 lb onions, 3 oz of salt, and a half oz of pepper. Mode – cut up and stew the onions with jelly from the meat added, boil or steam the potatoes, and mash them. Grease the inside of a baking dish, line the sides with a portion of the mashed potatoe and place the meat and cooked onions in the centre, season with pepper and salt, cover over with the remainder of the mashed potatoes and bake until the potato cover is brown. As the potatoes absorb the moisture of the meat and render it dry, about 2 pints of gravy prepared from the liquor in which the onions were cooked should be poured into the pie after it is taken out of the oven.

HUNTER'S PIE. Is prepared in a similar manner to the Potatoe (sic) Pie but the top is left uncovered. Both these pies should be baked in a quick oven.

District Order No. 6 23 April 1879.

Free rations will be issued to Scripture Readers Martin and Williams, these officials will remain in Durban until further orders.

From member Cam Simpson.....

Captain Howard Hutton's (Adjutant, FLH) diary entry dated 13th January written at Blood River: *'I hear privately that both Wood & Buller warned Lord Chelmsford that he was not taking precautions enough & he laughed at them'*.

From member Mark Caswell....

I discovered an interesting fact about Isandlwana - David Niven's grandfather (William Degacher) was killed there.

