

INITIATION INTO DOWSING

I am not a Professional Dowser. On many occasions during the past fifty or so years my perceptive abilities have been exercised and recognised in a number of useful ways—mostly divining for water. Many times I have been asked, as no doubt many of you have been asked,

“How did you know you had this gift?”

“When did you first put it to use?”

“Was it because you saw someone else operating or did you read about it?”

“Perhaps some of your family or relations were so gifted?”

For myself I would say by family relationship. Briefly let me put you in the picture leading up to and describing my first dowsing experiences.

After the final evacuation of Gallipoli we were disembarked on the Aegean island of Mudros. Here, in a camp called Sarpi, we paused for a short period to wonder at our deliverance and to collect and reorganise the unit. Soon we re-embarked. The move was urgent owing to the threat by the Turkish and German force to the Suez Canal. We arrived in Alexandria, Egypt, on 2nd February, 1916. For a few days we remained in the Base Camp of Abbasaid where we were reinforced, reclothed and re-equipped. Entraining at Alexandria we were again on the move—en route for Kantara, where we were decanted, encamping on the Sinai side of the Suez Canal. On moving up into the desert it was not long before the supply of water, its quality and quantity became a pressing one. Our daily water ration came from Kantara, by this time some fourteen miles to our rear. This water arrived in ten gallon fantaisies loaded on the backs of camels. It reached our advanced supply points heavily chlorinated, its smell and taste nauseating. After boiling and in tea it was palatable. Otherwise it was quite suitable for watering animals and washing.

The officer commanding our unit*—5th Bn. K.O.S.B.—was most concerned about this situation as it would be some time before the railhead extended into our area. Arrangements were made to examine nearby water holes in the oasis. The supply was however insufficient and too brackish to be palatable. After a long scrutiny of maps he decided to explore certain areas which he had ringed. This was with a view to digging wells and so augmenting our rations with a larger and a more palatable supply of water (Map dowsing was not unknown in those days apparently). Next day a working party made its way to a nearby wadi (dried out watercourse) which was one of the ringed areas. The floor or surface of this wadi was of hard dried mud with outcropping rubble and limestone boulders. The colonel, using his forked stick, got a directional pull which reacted violently as we entered the circled area. Showing me how to hold the stick he instructed me to

come in from the other side of the area. I moved over and came in with the pull on my stick reacting strongly near to his own pinpoint. A stake was driven in and the prediction was that we would get water at 10-12 feet with a flow of approximately 200 gallons per hour. The working party with revetting frames and matting excavated to a depth of ten feet got the water—deepening the well to twelve feet. This water was vetted as reasonably palatable. We put it to good use after chlorinating.

Later and after moving on to another location we tried our hand on the edge of a small oasis. This area the colonel had circled for investigation. I was sent in with the rod and my pinpoint was afterwards confirmed. Here again we had found water at twelve feet depth. This gave us a lot of trouble which we overcame by good revetting. With the Sinai sand for every spade or bagful removed twice as much seemed to run back into the hole. The water was obtained at some 100 gallons per hour—very brackish but suitable for watering animals and washing purposes. Soon I found myself as Officer I/C Welldigging. Up to the time we reached El Arish we found and dug some half-dozen shallow wells. My confidence in the stick was improving. Directional pulls, weak and strong reactions seemed to come naturally. I had much to learn however.

At El Arish we crossed the border into Palestine. The Railroad and waterpipeline now had caught up with the advance of our troops.

Allenby's advance into Palestine was about to commence. At this stage I was returned to my regiment in France and soon found myself in the mud and water of the Somme Front.

It would be most interesting to know how others were initiated into Dowsing, even though it may have been fifty-four or more years ago.

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