



TROPICAL MEDICINE IN PORTUGUESE AFRICA: CONTRIBUTIONS OF AMÉRICO PIRES DE LIMA.

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Abstract

During the Great War, the university teacher and military doctor Dr. Américo Pires de Lima (1886-1966), took part in the expedition of general Ferreira Gil to Mozambique (1916-1917), as medical lieutenant and head chief of the Hygiene and Bacteriology section. Upon his return to Portugal after a year on duty, recalling his experiences and difficulties in Africa, he became one of the most critical voices about the complete improvisation of operations and serious failures throughout the campaign.

Regaining its scientific writings and book "Na costa d' África" (1933), it is possible to draw up some important judgments about Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in the events of 1914-1918 – transportation services, troop selection, health care and hygiene principles and organization, nourishment, diseases, etc. – evocative of the many health risks that had happened on colonial campaigns, without being properly secured by the General Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces.

In a country so proud of its colonial identity and history, in opposition to the high mortality rate at the african front of that period, the deliberations and instructions that Dr. Pires de Lima defended in order not to repeat so fatal errors, however, took quite some time for some of those measures to be implemented...