

On the following day we checked lion bait and made an unsuccessful search for Tom's tembo. Was this by chance the same large elephant in the sand wash the day we arrived? We wondered and speculated as we sat around the campfire late that night.

The next morning we left camp at seven. We had scarcely cleared the camp and were approaching the sand wash when suddenly a huge rogue tembo charged past us on our left and disappeared into the bush. Tom yelled, "That's him! That's him!" Lozano slammed on the brakes and exclaimed, "He's a nice one. Grab your gun and let's see if we can find him. He deserves a closer look."

Unfortunately I had the .300 Weatherby barrel attached, anticipating a long shot, perhaps at a sable or an encounter with a lion. I grabbed my silver gun case custom-made for the Blaser. I opened it and immediately took the tools in hand. Ten turns to each of the locking bolts and the barrel was ready to detach from the stock. As I slid out the bolt and dumped the magazine holder, Lozano stood nervously overhead. "Hurry, hurry", he said. Tom stood nearby with a camera and a 12-gauge pump shotgun. I looked at Tom and smiled. Tom was a former Navy SEAL; a Vietnam vet awarded the prestigious Medal of Honor. I had served in the Marines. Both of us had served together as special agents in the FBI. We had both been involved in gunbattles and had long since resolved never to get excited unless the bullets were headed our direction.

In a matter of seconds I assembled the .375 H&H barrel, loaded it with Barnes solids, looked at Tom and Phil and said "Twende," Swahili for "let's go."

Our chief tracker, Today, led the way carrying nothing but shooting sticks, followed by Lozano, me and then Tom. The game scout, who wanted nothing to do with this rogue elephant, remained in the vehicle. Hunting elephants at close distance in dense cover is dangerous business. The game scout was about my age, anticipating retirement in one year and wasn't about to put himself in harm's way.

Shortly into the bush, Today stopped and pointed through the brush. He had heard the elephant. A short distance further and we could

see it standing tall, trunk in the air, its white tusk extending about the length of its trunk or more. It tore a huge branch from the tree.

We moved closer, cautiously and quietly. We had the wind in our favor and I continued to check it with my dust bag. At this time of the morning (about 7:15) the wind near the Luego is unreliable and will shift. As we approached within 35 yards of the huge tembo, I didn't want any surprises and I didn't want anyone to be hurt. The wind was good and the elephant was unaware of our presence. Lozano judged the tusk and I whispered to Tom, "He looks good to me but I'm going on Phil's judgment. I wouldn't want to be in his place at this point and time." Tom agreed. About that time Phil whispered to me, "This is your elephant. Take him behind the shoulder when he gives you a broadside shot and as his front foot extends forward."

We had discussed this beforehand around the fire and I knew exactly where he wanted me to place the bullet. I separated myself from Lozano and moved slowly to the right to find a clearing in the bush for an unobstructed shot once the elephant began to move. Tom was diligently filming the event with a video camera.

I had scarcely moved into position, dropped to one knee and shouldered the rifle when the elephant began to move from left to right at a 90-degree angle, completely unaware of our presence. Just two more steps and the huge tembo would move across the opening, giving me the shot behind the shoulder. Its huge head entered the opening - now just one more step. The elephant stopped. What was wrong? Why did it stop? Can't see the shoulder because of too much brush! What about the head? I raised my rifle aim just as the elephant turned its head my direction. In a split second its ear flared (a warning sign), its head dropped slightly and it lurched forward with all its might.

I estimated the location of its brain, but its head was moving and angled as it charged into the opening. I fired a .375 solid completely through the elephant's head, right front to left rear, and its head tilted left as it surged forward. I chambered the second round without losing my sight picture as I stood to my feet and positioned my second round between the eyes. Within one second of the firing of my first round I heard Tom chamber the 12-gauge as he threw the camera to the ground and Lozano fired a round into the neck of the tembo. As I saw the

huge elephant continue to tilt left and then plunge to the ground, I released my sight picture and looked over my scope at the elephant that was now lying just 30 feet from me. Had it not fallen where it did, it would have been on top of me within two seconds. Its charge had come as a complete surprise and was totally unprovoked.

Phil Lozano, who was standing slightly to my rear and seven paces to my left, exclaimed, "He was bloody coming for you! He was going to kill you!"

Tom stood firm, shotgun in hand, saying, "I don't know what I could do with this popgun, but if he got to you, I was gonna shoot him through the eye and hope that something gets through."

Tom said he wasn't worried as he saw me taking careful aim for the second shot and had already seen the elephant listing to the left as it charged forward. Subsequent inspection revealed the first round was indeed a fatal shot through the brain.

The chief tracker, Today, was standing to the rear as the elephant commenced its charge. Since he had no rifle, Today did the prudent thing and moved rearward, gripping Tom by the arm and encouraging him to move with him. When Tom refused to retreat, Today in loyalty stood his ground. The game scout never got out of the vehicle!

I fired two more rounds into the tembo to assure it was down for the count. At that moment Today let out a scream and, holding his feet together, began jumping high off the ground in celebration. I had noticed from several previous kills that this display of enthusiasm was typical of the natives and particularly for Today, who was the most enthusiastic of all.

In a short while the entire encampment had found their way to the kill site and a celebration ensued similar to that of the leopard kill. There was time for photos of everyone with the elephant. All the camp natives were enthused about having their photo taken with the elephant. This was a particularly big occasion for them and seeing how much it meant to them heightened the experience for me. I was elated. It would be days before the experience of the elephant charge would settle in. The aftermath of the charge and the taking of the elephant, Tom and I agreed, was much the same as the feeling one has after having been in a gunfight. You don't realize the imminent danger until the