

Granted, the majority of the men had received a certain amount of training with the Active Citizen Forces or earlier Cadet Corps, but this training fell far short of the present day requirements of active service. Most of the parade ground work must be cut out, concentrating on Field work, training in the use of automatic weapons and rifle shooting.

The most suitable area for field work was about ten miles out of Maritzburg at Ottos Bluff and here we, on several occasions, camped out for a few days. It was rather a long march but good training especially as there were a couple of long stretches of fairly steep bits of road.

I must say the people of the town were very hospitable and did a lot for us. Here too a few of the married women came to be with their husbands. My wife too was among the camp followers at the Creamery Hotel. The Manager was very good to me - If I spent a weekend at the hotel he only charged for my meals.

Here too, lived my old friend Colonel Ellenberger, in his retirement, on the outskirts of the town. Here he had a very fine home and many of our officers and other ranks were entertained there by he and his wife.

We were later moved to Zonderwater, Pretoria, Premier Mine where we were billeted in cantonements which were very comfortable.

Here there were two ex-South African Springbok Bisley shots commissioned as Captains, Smith and Bodley who were to supervise all shooting on the rifle range which was a fine move. With The Kaffrarian Rifles, however, I being a Bisley marksman, the training was left to me and the two old gentlemen, for they were no chickens, were pleased to have the break. The first thing I did was to pick six of our best marksmen and we got down to zeroing the regimental rifles. This meant that each rifle was tested and the necessary adjustments, on our instructions, were made by the two gunsmiths from Defence. This zeroing of our rifles had a lot to do with our Regiment winning the Inter-Regimental shoot in which nine others took part including the Police - 1st and 2nd Regiments.

We carried out a lot of ground work round about but then took part in a big manoeuvre in the Northern Transvaal, the Jock of the Bushveld country. We left Premier Mine camp, Three Regiments of our 4th Brigade in a big convoy of over a thousand trucks etc. Our destination was Pietersburg, Warmbaths, Nylstroom, Naboomspruit and Potgietersrus. This trip took us two days of travel. It is strange that in such a convoy - and I was in the rear, the vehicles at one time travel at snail's pace and as the front move on, you suddenly find yourself doing about fifty miles an hour to keep up or join the convoy, though it is supposed to move at 30 miles in the hour. You catch up and then have to dawdle again.

Our drivers did very well travelling sometimes at night without lights in that hilly country with passes. The object of this exercise was to intercept opposition troops moving up to this country - apparently to attack - through Barberton and we were to take up a defensive position on the high ground overlooking Barberton.

Before moving off we were informed that our Brigadier Hearn had been put out of action by a land mine and that Brig. (Swanky) Thompson was now to command the Brigade. Personally I think Defence wanted to get rid of Hearn. Anyway the show ended rather quietly as no shots were fired and the fight was called off and we immediately made for Nelspruit where we were to spend the night before returning to Premier Mine. Our chaps had quite a tough time and I fortunately got into the town first and bought up the local supply of beer which worked out at about a bottle and a half per man. This to the annoyance of the other Units. First come first served.