

We were now to be given two weeks leave - the Regiment to travel in two batches. The first were to be under Colonel Page and on his return I would accompany the remainder to East London in special trains. The arrangement was excellent and we all I think deserved the break even if only two weeks.

It was while Page was away with the first batch that I was sitting in the Orderly Room one evening making arrangements for one of our young lads who was to have an appendix operation, when in walked a Padre who introduced himself as the new Regimental Chaplain, Jon Maund. He was replacing another parson, Green, who we got rid of because he took no interest in the welfare of the men; never visited them in hospital but spent his time parading his uniform in the town. I welcomed this Padre and asked to be excused for a minute while I - having explained the position - wrote to the lad's parents. He immediately said, "Excuse me, Sir, but isn't that one of my duties?". I said, "Well you are Padre, a man after my own heart, please take over your duties". He wrote immediately and then we adjourned to the mess tent and had a good talk. The Adjutant then took over and had him settled and made to feel at home. Now that Padre I saw in action at Bardia where he walked about tending to the wounded and eventually earned the Military Cross. Today Johny Maund, as he was fondly known to us all, is the Bishop of Basutoland.

It was while here that I was detailed with three other officers and fifty other ranks to proceed to Durban to escort a batch of eighty civilian enemy subjects from Tanganyika who would be landing from a ship in Durban. The chaps were as keen as mustard to be at last in contact with the enemy. These P.O.s were duly entrained and put eight in a compartment, with all lights on. They would have to sleep sitting. However, I must say they were well treated for the first thing was to see them in batches to a dining saloon where they were well fed; our troops eventually fed in batches from about 10 p.m. The train was a non-stop through Pretoria to Baviaanspoort, the internment camp, where we handed them over to their new guards.

We then went on manoeuvres in the Bechuanaland Protectorate, our base being Kanye, where I have mentioned my Dad was once stationed and our dining room was a bucksallover over a tented wagon. So it was to be in country I knew very well.

We camped in the Pareng valley just beyond the large Native village of Kanye. The exercise was to prevent the Durban Light Infantry and other units invading the Protectorate. The boundary between the Protectorate and the Union was the Molopo River or rather now the valley down the centre of which ran a wire fence. The surrounding country is very thickly wooded. It was here that the Brigadier Thompson was very inquisitive and asked who the native was that I had in my tent. "Well Sir, that is Chief Bathoes of the local tribe who had been asked by my brother the District Commissioner at Serowe to call on me. We had been known to each other for years." There was no comment. Later he said he was going to tennis at the local District Commissioner's home. He was quite surprised when I said that I too was going to visit my old friends the Potts. Other people I met there and spent an evening with were the Taylors who were traders there. Then there was Dick Rowland, the son of the Revd. Rowland, a missionary who married the daughter of the native chief at Mafeking. Dick was a very fine man and married very late in life, I presume to avoid having children who might be coloured. He was a thorough gentleman.

Well, we started on the manoeuvre ourselves to enter the Union instead and the idea was to enter by way of Pitsani where there is a causeway. I said I thought that would be a bad move and explained that we could move through the bush by road along the Molopo valley, drop the fence for a short distance and enter. The Brigadier looked doubtful as to a road until I explained that I had been brought up in that area and knew the road and would act as guide.