

I was given a native as an interpreter - though I could speak the language. Off we set and it took about four hours slow moving with that big convoy before going through the fence. We took the enemy by surprise and captured their C.O. and staff and the battle was over in no time. I thoroughly enjoyed being back in this country.

I should have mentioned that in going to Kanye we passed through the boundary at Lobatsi of which one reads some times as the way fugitives from this country flee. At Lobatsi there was a consignment of beer we had ordered and were to take on but this bright Brigadier of ours made us return the beer. He was not at all popular with the troops.

On our return from the Bechuanaland manoeuvre we felt that we were now ready to go North and join in the fray in Egypt.

We were now granted embarkation leave and, as before, we went in two batches. Page with the first and I took the second.

As I have mentioned all our men were volunteers to serve anywhere in Africa. The Defence Act of course lays down that the Units are to be only used in the Union unless, as in our case, they are volunteers. Now the man in the street will ask "Why are our troops serving with the Rhodesians against the terrorists?". These are not Soldiers but Policemen who are helping. Which makes a difference.

Looking back on the Northern Transvaal manoeuvres where we were supplied with clumsy walkie-talkie machines which a man had to carry on his back and usually did not work at a decent range. Now these Talkie machines are used by the police, traffic men, in fact many people, including doctors, who carry a small machine in their pockets and can be contacted at any time.

Another machine of war which improved during the war was the ordinary rifle as we knew it and which was superseded by an automatic weapon. This advance was made in every branch of weapons. Tanks, guns etc., became more powerful daily.

Well, news was received after our embarkation leave that we were to move from Sonderwater and we naturally presumed that it was to Durban to embark for the North. Camp followers - wives - who were still in Maritzburg; on hearing the news, were preparing to leave for home or Durban to say cheerio ...

It was suddenly decided that we should return to Maritzburg for a short while until the ships were ready to embark us. Presumably they were to return from a recent voyage of taking troops North from East Africa.

On hearing this news, I immediately phoned the Creamery Hotel, Maritzburg to reserve a room for my wife. The news spread like wild fire that I had booked accommodation and the wives settled down to a peaceful night's sleep. One wife a Maritzburg Girl was so anxious to see her husband before he went North, that she was sitting on the station waiting. I asked some one to give her the news.

We spent a few weeks at Maritzburg and then began in real earnest to pack. Our advance party, two Officers and twenty other ranks had left about a week earlier to prepare our camp.

A number of Regiments had already gone North and there were quite a few men who had overstayed their leave and missed their Units and there were some who probably decided at the last minute that they did not want to go North, and deserted. Numbers of these had been rounded up and two courts were set up to try them and of one of these courts I was President and so spent quite a lot of the two or three weeks we were in Maritzburg trying these chaps. These chaps, some were sentenced to terms of detention and others were to be shipped to rejoin their Units. Well, we eventually entrained for Durban on the 23rd July 1941 where we were to embark on that very fine ship the Nieuw Holland.

We were taken straight into the dock area which was fenced off. Our women folk were however able to come up to the barbed wire fence to have a last talk and I have a very good snap of myself talking to my wife through the fence which I have labeled 'Coming events'.