

As the war progressed so implements of war etc. Improved - Tanks Guns, Rifles, automatic rifles etc. In the early days we had to struggle.

There are any number of areas in the desert where one has to drive with care. Over these soft spots one has to go over quickly without having to change gear, for the slightest pause in changing allows the wheels to sink. Then what a job to get out. I had one experience towards the Catara Depression. We tried to dig the car out but had to spend the night there and be towed out the next morning. On this occasion I saw the bad spot and said to the driver, "Don't hesitate to change gear, just drive". He thought he knew better and so we stuck. He had his lesson. We later moved to another camp just outside Alex, Amarya, from where the men were allowed to go into Alex on a pass but had to be out of the town by seven p.m. according to Divisional Standing Orders. These orders were however slightly altered as I shall relate as the result of a Court Martial Case of which I was President.

Having got into Alex, it was a great temptation for the men to stay on a while but it was on account of air raids that they were to be out. The military Police, when they found anyone in Alex after seven, they arrested them and they were later prosecuted.

For some reason, I suppose because I had had a lot of experience of Court Martial procedure, I had my fair share of doing duty as President with two or three officers as assistants.

In all cases if the accused was found guilty by the Court the finding was referred to the Divisional Legal Officer, who in our case was Professor McKerron of Rhodes University who either confirmed the sentence or cancelled it. In a case of Not Guilty you told the man at once. I mentioned above that the Divisional Order regarding the times on pass in Alex were altered. I well remember the circumstances. A Warrant Officer was charged with being in Alex at 11 p.m. This was the last of five cases of which I was president that day. For a Warrant Officer to be under arrest is a serious matter as he, if found guilty, would no doubt, in addition to sentence, lose his rank. Well, this man was defended by a well known Barrister who later, after the war, became a Judge of the Natal Court, Fannan. In his defence, Fannan claimed that the Divisional Order did state that all had to be out of Alex by 6 p.m. but there was no mention of when a person may go into the town and therefore, defending council maintained, the accused was quite within his rights to enter the town at 9 p.m. as he claimed he did. Under the circumstances, I said I quite agreed and that the Warrant Officer was not guilty and dismissed the case. Major. McKerron, the legal adviser mentioned earlier, was at first not in agreement with my dismissing the case but he later, on hearing the full details, admitted that I was right. The result was that the Divisional Order now read that no one was allowed in Alex between the hours of 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. I had many interesting experiences in commanding our cosmopolitan Regiment.

We had men in all walks of life, Magistrates, Lawyers, etc. in the ranks and article clerks as officers.

On parade and in action there was the officer and the man but off the parade ground and in their dugouts and tents we were pals as we knew each other in private life.

By using tact, I found that in most cases of trouble among the men one could iron matters out. Take the case of Bud Brownlee, a Magistrate who was made a Lance Corporal and given charge of some men on a job. The one chap got annoyed and told Bud a few things.