

Some of the guards tried to get us to hand over watches, rings etc, which they said would in any case be confiscated at the next camp. There was no one to appeal to but we just said 'Nix we will take the chance'. Mind you they must have had thousands of P.O.Ws to handle - there were nearly 30,000 taken at Tobruk and in our camp at Modena we had over 1000 and believe me they are not the easiest people to handle.

Having completed our ablutions we were given soup, bread and a few potatoes and then entrained or should I say we were trucked and off we set. We eventually passed through Munich or Munchen to a place called Moosberg. where they probably had their largest camp or concentration of P.O.Ws of all Nationalities, Indians, Russians, Americans, British and Commonwealth citizens. I was told that there were about thirty to forty thousand waiting to be sorted out for various camps.

I should have mentioned that Page had been sent while in Italy to Sinque or as known Camp Ten so I did not see him again until after the war.

About twenty of we senior officers were taken to a small camp and the rest to another camp. We were to be sorted out, Senior Officers and the older officers to Hadimar and the others to Augsburg.

On arrival at our small camp who should be there on his own but Sniffy Stephenson who I have already mentioned as the Div. Sigs. Officer who wept at Tobruk and said to Klopper 'You cannot sacrifice the flower of South African Manhood, you must surrender'. We always doubted his integrity. Why, we have often wondered, was he flown after the surrender of Tobruk to Germany while the rest of us were taken to Italy.

He tried to be friendly but I saw several officers just turn their backs on him. When asked what he was doing in this camp on his own he told us that - until the capitulation of Italy - the Germans were sending him to Italy to lecture at various P.O.Ws in Germany. Why? we asked. He also told us that the Germans had flown him to the Katine Dip where hundreds of poles, who the Germans contended had been shot by the Russians and were buried in a massed grave. While there he was housed in an hotel. He was later repatriated by the Germans from our Camp at Hadimar certified as slightly mental. I remember a few days before he was due to leave for the Union, he bragged to the chaps that he would soon be back home while we would be here for a long time. He was ostracized and was very glad to be leaving such unfiredly people. He only had himself to blame.

The German Commandant in the camp, allowed us to visit the other chaps and offer the opportunity of joining us. Three of the younger Colonels, de Beer of the Dukes and Grobler and du Toit of the Police decided to go and look after the younger officers which I think was a very good idea. They were eventually joined by Page at Augsburg where he took over from de Beer as S.B.O.

The main thing in a P.O.W. camp is to keep up one's morale and show, by being smart and clean, that we were still tops, To give a small example of this: we were passing through a camp of Other Ranks where the senior man was a British Sgt. Major and a squad happened to be marching us. When the Sgt. Major, spotting officers, immediately gave the order "Eyes Right" and threw a very smart salute. You could almost hear their eye balls click. That was one example of keeping up morale.

After a very slow two days' journey we eventually arrived at Hadimar station. This is a small village about twenty miles East of Koblenz. There were as usual no conveniences on this Truck Express of ours and as soon as we were allowed out of our "Compartments" the chaps settled down to obey nature and there was a very fine show of bare bottoms all along the railway line.