

Edith, when I told her said 'But surely you don't have to go so soon'. "Well, Edith I am keen on getting home and this is a very good chance. We are, I know, both disappointed but Lorna and I will be back in five years time". That was when my next overseas leave would be due and as you will learn we duly kept our promise.

Well early next morning I set off for Victoria Station and duly met the rest of the party. Major Venter had a letter of instructions for me. We were to report to the Marleybone Hotel which had been taken over by the British Military wuthorities. I was to be O.C. ship for the Military personnel and a Naval Officer for the Naval personnel who were to disembark at Free Town.

On arrival at the Marleybone Hotel we were met and treated like Royalty. Our baggage, consisting of one kit bag each, was taken up to our rooms and then suitably labeled. We spent two days here living as though we were in a first class hotel. We were very well treated and the personnel could not have been kinder.

My friend Ellison Mc Cartney, whom I have mentioned before, who had arrived in London a few days before us and somehow found out I was at the Marleybone Hotel, arrived to say cheerio, as he had been told by Brighton that I was leaving shortly, - the real English Gent, Striped Trousers, morning coat, Bowler and umbrella. I was very pleased to see him again as we seemed to have got separated after our release as he was billeted with the Imperial Officers and we Colonials were kept together.

We duly set off for Liverpool where we embarked on the Royal Mail Ship "Andes" a new vessel recently completed and commissioned.

Instead of the usual cabins there were large dormitories with two and three tier bunks. I was fortunate as O.C. Ship to be berthed in a four berth cabin with two Brigadiers but was even more fortunate as the Brigs did not arrive and so I had the cabin to myself. On board we had a very nice military doctor who I knew had got married the day before we sailed and so, as I only wanted the cabin for sleeping in I told him they could have the use of it all day. He seemed most grateful.

While there was Americans on board, and there were about half a dozen, drinks could not be served. Why, I do not know. Poor Bob Catteral was keen on his spots and so asked if I could not get special permission, to be recommended by the doctor, that, after the stiff time we had had we might be allowed one tot each. However, this was ruled out as I knew Bob, he would have bought the rest from the chaps.

We had dined and were not due to sail for another couple of hours. At about nine o' clock I heard my name called "Will Colonel Nettelton kindly call at the Pursers Office as soon he is free". Doing nothing I went along right away and on arrival at his office was told that about fifty South African Native ex P.O.Ws had arrived aboard for repatriation and would I please see them.

I called Lieut 'Bush' Pringle, an officer farmer from Cradock, and we went into the hold where these chaps were. All the ratings and other ranks were accommodated in the holds as on all troop ships. When we got to deck where these Native ex - P.O.Ws were and before I realised what had happened one of them ran up to me and I thought was going to hug me he was so excited. He was Hery my Batman, who had left East London with us. I spoke to him asking how had fared and then after a short talk welcoming them and saying how pleased we were that they had come through. I told them that Lieut Pringle would be in charge and if they wanted anything or had complaints they were to advise him.

There were quite a number of other South Africans aboard including WAAFS and other units. The one WAAF was married to Mr Moorshead a local - East London - Surveyor and was going out to join her husband. She was an English girl.