

machines did 80 miles an hour flat out. Enough about planes and engines etc as later I will mention instruments etc as compared with present day machines. After writing our exams and told that we had all passed we were sent on a weeks leave pending our being gazetted as officers.

Before going further it may be interesting to mention that in the first war to indicate the number of years a person had served Blue chevrons were worn on the right sleeve just above the wrist. For those having served in 1915/15 a red one was worn so that one could tell how long a man had been on service. For instance I had one red 1914/15 and two blue 1916-17 and later another for 1918. There was also a gold stripe worn on the sleeve for wounds.

Perhaps I had better give details of uniforms we were issued with or rather tailored for and for which we received an allowance of £35. The tailor in Reading had apparently made many uniforms and he knew the procedure.

He measured you and made for you - Khaki Baratheia Tunic and Slacks, Khaki Maternity Tunic and Corduroy Riding Breeches, he also supplied brown leather shoes and brown leather tob boots to go with the breeches, waterproof Burberry overcoat, peak cap, and side cap. How they did it at that price I don't know. Anyway, that was the allowance and all I did was sign some sort of a debit note and the tailor attended to collecting his money. All you could buy today for £35 or R70 would be a sports coat and trousers. Then we had an issue of a sleeping bag and camp stretcher.

Well we all duly set off on our two weeks holiday each armed with food coupons with which they were very generous for serving members. As I have mentioned I had been invited by my Uncle Frank Enraght Mooney to spend my leave with them at Honiton in Devonshire. Honiton, the town, was noted for its lace.

I was duly met at the station and taken to Eglands a nice big country house they had. I first handed over my food coupons which they were very pleased to have especially the meat and sugar.. As I did not take sugar in my tea - or have ever since - they said that was a real catch as they were both sweet toothed.

I was most comfortable there and met quite a lot of people as my Uncle said he was proud of his nephew from South Africa. Of him I will write again later.

Uncle Frank was very fond of walking and we went for many long walks. I remember on one occasion we were out walking and a squad of men came down the road towards us and as they came abreast of us there was a loud shout of "Eyes Right" and the NCO in charge gave a smart salute. I at first took no notice as I thought it was for my uncle who they knew, until he said "Geoff they are saluting you. You are now an officer". So I promptly returned the compliment. My first salute.

Near the expiration of my leave I received a telegram addressed to 2nd Lieut. And advised to report to the Air Force Headquarters and would there be posted to a drome for training. I duly reported and eventually was interviewed by the CO who asked me, being a South African, whether I could ride. When I told him I had a lot of experience with horses, he said I would be posted to a fighting squadron depot. It looked as though I was to go off on my own which I later mentioned to him and so he asked me to pick some friend and I chose a chap by the name of Hatfield.

So Hatfield and I set off for our depot, Castle Bromwich, a suburb of Birmingham, and here we were billeted with a private family in High Street a short distance from the drome.

On reporting next morning we were posted to No. 74 training squadron and as our instructor we had a Captain Sowden. Here we were going to find that for some time we did very little flying as there were very few training machines and very few instructors, I think each instructor had about a dozen pupils, they didn't fly all day, that is the instructors. The machines in which we were to be trained were Avro Biplanes with rotary Gnome engines. All machines were biplane but today one never sees a biplane, all monoplanes. The Avro was named after its designer A.V.Roe. When I mention rotary engines these rotate with the propeller./