

The Kaffrarian Rifles were to be attached to the 4th South African Brigade under the command of Brigadier Hearn, ex Cape Town Highlanders. The other Regiments in the Brigade were the 2nd Durban Light Infantry and the Umvoti Mounted Rifles under the command of Colonel Wendt and Colonel Guy Le'Strange respectively. They were to form part of the 2nd S.A. Division under Major General de Villiers. Members of the 4th Brigade wore three flashes on the upper sleeve. Regimental Flash, K.R.S. Red and Green Diamond, small yellow round flash indicating 4th Brigade and a small red flash indicating that they had volunteered for foreign service.

Prior to the Regiment being called up all had given the option of signing for foreign service and only five, for business and family reasons did not sign, the remainder signed.

In 1935 there were only two officers who had seen active service, these were the C.O., Colonel Lewis and myself. The Regiment had therefore to rely on men who had completed their four years training to accept commissions and in several cases we found later that they were fine parade and social chaps but no heroes. This we experienced at Bardia when two or three had to be taken out of action. Battle is a terrible experience and one feels sorry for those poor chaps who could not take it.

However, there were some first class officers and other ranks too. Of the whole Regiment there were only three of us who had seen active service, and that was in the first war, Lez Wylie and myself, ex R.F.C. and other Units and Gavin Leighton who served with the 1st S.A. Brigade in France and was a P.O.W. Well, on the 20th June 1940, the Regiment had assembled at the Drill Hall ready to entrain for Maritzburg in two trains.

On this morning, shortly before we were due to march to the Station, I had an urgent phone call from the C.I.D. to say that their C.O. together with the Railway System Manager wished to see the C.O. and myself at once. When they arrived they informed us that a message had been received that the train would be sabotaged. It must be remembered that in the Regiment we had a number of men of German Descent, descendant of the old German settlers in British Kaffraria, as the Border was then known but they were all loyal and true South Africans. However, everything was sorted out to the satisfaction of all concerned, how I am not prepared to say or rather may not tell. This scare was very possibly some one thinking of the Hex River rail disaster in which the Regiment was involved in 1914.

There was, however, to satisfy all, a Pilot engine with a few trucks to travel ahead of our train as far as the Bethulie Bridge.

Well we set off with the troops for the first train with which I was to travel and we seemed to have the population of East London on the square and adjoining streets. What a wonderful send off. The chaps full of life and as cheerful as though they were going to a big football match. The accommodation was very good, four men to a compartment and the senior officers: the C.O.; myself and the Adjutant each in a compartment and two for an orderly room. On the way we were allotted our regimental numbers from the group supplied by the Defence Department. Starting from 8866 which Page took and I had 8867 and the Adjutant 8868.

Our Regiment of really first class men, eventually arrived after a very pleasant trip to Maritzburg and went into camp with the other members of the Brigade at what was known as Oribi Camp.

Here we went under canvas and met our opposite numbers in the D.L.I. and Umvoti. Now we were to start training in real earnest which was badly needed.

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