

# Military Notes



Photo: Jane Plotz.

## CAPT. STANLEY S. BELCHER

—who is now serving with the South African Artillery "up North."

It was in 1928 that Stanley Belcher joined the Transvaal Horse Artillery and received his commission three years later at the age of twenty-three. He rose to the position of Captain, but resigned from the Defence Force in 1937. On the outbreak of the present war he joined the Heavy Artillery.

## 1,492 SOLDIERS BILLETED IN APRIL

### An Appeal for Blankets

The Sisterhood Billeting Bureau, which is stationed at the Soldiers' Rest Room, Jewish Guild (under the auspices of the S.A. Jewish ex-Service League), provided 1,492 beds for soldiers during the month of April.

With the oncoming winter more blankets will be needed. Donations of blankets may be sent to the Sisterhood Billeting Bureau, or to Temple Israel.

### Recruits for Armoured Fighting Vehicle Corps Wanted

According to a statement issued by the Department of Defence, more and more men are required to man the vehicles of one of the most important military branches, the South African Armoured Fighting Vehicle Corps.

Qualifications for the A.F.V. Corps are physical fitness (the medical category must be A1) and an educational standard not lower than Standard VI, while mechanical ability and the possession of either a motor car or motor cycle driver's licence are recommendations. Recruits must be between the ages of 17 and 40. Recruits can be examined or attested at all magistrates' and recruiting offices throughout the Union.

## NEWS FROM NAIROBI

### A Seder "Up North"

IN our issue of the 25th April, we printed an account of the preparations which had been made in Nairobi to enable the Jewish soldiers there to celebrate the Festival of Passover in traditional manner. The following letter, received from "L.F." (a Jewish private stationed in Nairobi), describes the synagogue service and seder banquet held on the night of Friday, 11th, the success of which was largely due to the tireless efforts of the Rev. N. Menachemson, Senior Jewish Chaplain with the Expeditionary Force, and the ladies of the Nairobi community.

"L.F." writes:

"Last year we were at home, at 'seder' with our families. This year, although we are thousands of miles away from our families, we were brought together for an evening—an evening more inspiring than any 'seder' I have ever seen. Men and women in khaki, we sat in a large hall in Nairobi enjoying our 'seder' and forgetting just for a moment the war. We forgot the war as we listened to the inspiring words of Padre Menachemson. . .

"We were all one large family at the 'seder'—men who have just come 'down the line,' men who served in the last war, boys who have just come 'Up North.'

"At 6 p.m. on Friday, 11th April, we attended an impressive service at the Nairobi synagogue, conducted by Padre Menachemson. The synagogue was so packed that it held twice the number of men and women it was ever intended to accommodate.

"At 7 p.m. we were at the Memorial Hall for the 'seder.' The hall was beautifully arranged—the whitest of white linen, polished cutlery, flowers, candles, the flags at the end of the hall. And, wonder of wonders, each soldier present found on a plate in front of him all the traditional spices: Zroa, Boiled Egg, Moror, Charosos, Karpas, and Salt Water! We also had Arba Kosos, and last but not least, 'Kneidlach.'

"The indefatigable labour of the local ladies certainly bore magnifi-

cent fruit. They must have felt pleased with the results of their days and days of hard and often unpleasant work.

"There were about 500 men and women in khaki in the hall, apart from the members of the Seder Committee. The 'Kiddush' was said and when it came to the memorable 'four questions,' Pte. Lipman, who is 16½ years old, went up to the dais and asked them. The 'seder' was conducted and explained by Padre Menachemson, songs were sung, and the evening came to a close all too soon with the 'Hatikvah,' 'Die Stem,' and 'God Save the King.'

"Only one toast was proposed during the 'seder,' that of Padre Menachemson and the ladies responsible for the catering arrangements. It was proposed by Capt. H. Krafchik, and followed by the singing of 'For He's a Jolly Good Fellow.'

"Owing to the efforts of Padre Menachemson, matzoth and wine were provided not only for those in Nairobi, but also for those in the desert and the bush. . . matzoth, wine and a copy of the 'Passover Convoy,' a publication prepared specially for the occasion, and containing a message from Padre Menachemson, suitable excerpts from the 'Haggadah, a number of Hebrew and Yiddish songs and the three anthems.

"Thus the Jewish troops in East Africa were reminded of their Judaism, their traditions, and their aspirations on 'seder' night."

## Artists Needed for Concerts for Soldiers

### AN APPEAL FROM MR. HAROLD MILLER

Artists are urgently required for the concerts for soldiers held at the Jewish Guild every Sunday afternoon. Mr. Harold Miller, Entertainment Officer of the S.A. Jewish ex-Service League, who is responsible for the organisation of these concerts, and who has done excellent work in providing first-class entertainment for soldiers on leave in Johannesburg during the week-end, is anxious to secure the help and co-operation of as many artists and musicians as possible.

Many of the lads who are doing their bit attend the concerts regularly, and look forward to them with

the greatest eagerness. The difficulty therefore, of providing different programmes from week to week, should not be minimised. Numerous artists and concert parties have given willingly of their talents and services at these Sunday afternoon concerts, but a far greater number of performers and entertainers than those available at present is required. Mr. Miller feels that if professional artists and musicians knew of the pleasure that the soldiers derive from the Sunday afternoon entertainments, they would come forward in greater number to do their bit for the lads who are doing their bit for all of us.

## DISTINGUISHED SOUTH AFRICAN PILOT KILLED IN ACTION

Flight Lieutenant Brian Van Mentz, D.F.C.



The Air Ministry announces that Flight Lieut. Brian van Mentz, D.F.C., has been killed in action.

IN October of last year news was received that this gallant young South African airman had been awarded the D.F.C. for distinguished service. (A report of this award appeared in the "Zionist Record" of 1st November, 1940).

Flight Lieutenant van Mentz was born in Johannesburg in 1916, and was educated in London. In 1936, he joined the Royal Air Force, receiving a commission two years later.

From the moment war was declared, he was engaged in operations against the enemy, and when decorated in October last year, he had destroyed six enemy aircraft, and probably accounted for three others. Some of the aircraft were shot down during the intensive operations in France.

According to an announcement made by the Air Ministry in regard to this performance, Flight Lieutenant van Mentz led his section, and at times his flight, with skill and courage, and showed great determination in pressing his attacks against large enemy formations.

The death in action of this courageous young flying-officer adds another name, which will not be forgotten, to the South African roll of honour in this war.