

World War 2 memories

And my tiny part in it.

I was serving in the Army, and was stationed at Markeaton Park in Derby. It was a holding camp, where troops were assembled before being sent overseas. Now it was my turn for a cruise, after my name and number appeared on the notice board to report to the office for instructions. With others I boarded ship at Avonmouth and after four weeks swanning around the Atlantic, dodging the submarines, we finally landed at Takoradi in the Gold Coast in British West Africa, now known as Ghana. It also went under the name of "the White Man's Grave" at that time.

I was sent to an Army repair workshop, located in the village of Teshi, 7 miles from the capital Accra. Part of our duties was to escort convoys moving through the colony. We received a message one day that a group of missionaries had a broken down truck in a village 60 miles away. Off we went and completed the repairs, and decided to stay overnight.

That night the missionaries held a meeting to teach the Africans about Christianity and to make converts. The gathering was very lively, and questions and answers shot back and forth between the missionaries and the villagers.

One memorable question was asked by a young villager, a bright lad. He said, "You say that we are all brothers, if this is so, why is it that we are of different colours, black, white, and yellow". Aha I thought this is a good one.

The Missionaries were not put out at all, they were well drilled. One of them gave the following reply. One day in the Garden of Eden, God was walking around and saw that the people working there were covered in sweat and dust from their labours. He asked them to stop their work and wash in the pool and then rest.

The pool was not large enough to take all the people at once. and so God split them into three groups. The first group was sent into bathe and came out clean and with a white skin. These people God said would be called Europeans.

The second group was now sent into the pool, but now the water was not so clean and plentiful. When they came out their skin was a brown colour. These people would be called Middle Eastern or Asiatics or Palestinian, (Christ Was a Palestinian).

The last group took their turn, but there was hardly any water left, and what remained was very dirty. There was only enough to stand in and the workers could only wet the palms of their hands. The Missionaries explained that this is why people are coloured and why an African has white soles to his feet and also the palms of his hands are white.

This is a true story of that night.

I was there.

Cpl. G Grant
Acting unpaid.

By Gerald Grant
Local Seaside Historian

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