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## Fast and fascinating Memoir of medical man in Kenya 1914-1932

***On Call in Africa in War and Peace 1910 to 1932. Norman Parsons Jewell.*** ISBN 978-0-9931382-0-1 £35.00

Dr. Jewell died in 1973. This is a beautifully presented book prepared by his grand-children.

Norman Parsons Jewell was born in Lame, County Antrim, Ireland in 1885.

His father, Thomas Jewell, died the following year and the author was raised by his grandparents, in Dublin, where he attended school and later qualified in medicine at Trinity College Dublin (TCD).

It was there that he met Sydney Elizabeth Auchinleck, one of the first women to graduate from ICD, whom he later married.

In 1910, soon after qualifying as a doctor, he joined the Colonial Medical Services and was posted to Praslin Island in the Seychelles as Surgeon and Justice of the Peace.

Upon the outbreak of World War One, he volunteered to join the war effort in East Africa where he was awarded the Military Cross for gallantry.

Post-war, he obtained his Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons (Ireland) and Diploma in Public Health and rejoined the Colonial Medical Service.

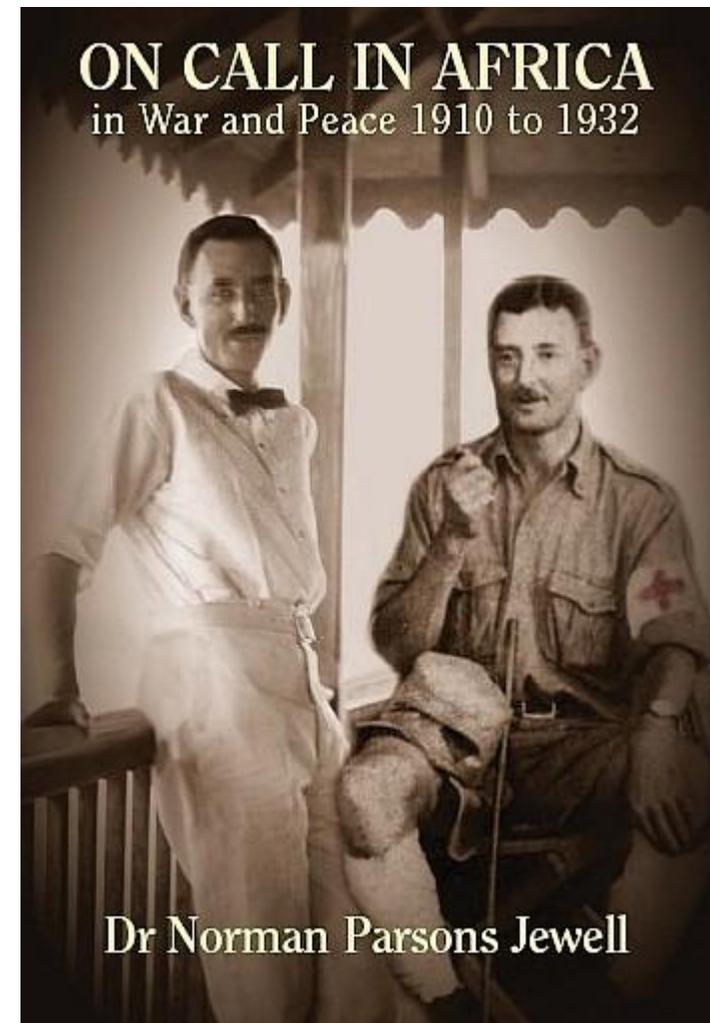
He published a book, *Handbook for Tropical Fevers*, with his colleague Dr William Kauntze and published regularly in British medical journals on his clinical casework.

He remained in Kenya until 1932 before returning to England.

He was awarded the OBE for his services in East Africa.

Back in Britain he worked as a general surgeon in Harrow on the Hill Hospital and consulted in Harley Street until his retirement.

He died in 1973 before his memoirs could be published.



**'On Call in Africa in War and Peace 1910 to 1932' - Norman Parsons Jewell.**

These memoirs are based on the carefully transcribed diaries and handwritten memoirs of Dr Norman Parsons Jewell.

They offer an intriguing view of the life of a young doctor in the Seychelles in 1910.

After four idyllic years in this tropical Eden, Norman waved goodbye to his pregnant wife and two baby sons and set sail for Mombasa, to join the World War One campaign in East Africa.

He was posted, as a Captain in the British Army, to Kisumu on Lake Victoria and then to the 3 East African Field Ambulance.

This took him into German East Africa via circuitous routes and battlefield skirmishes following the famous undefeated German commander, General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck.

Faced with the risk of injury and death from warfare he also battled hunger, recurrent dysentery and bouts of malaria through to 1917 when a particularly bad attack of malaria forced him to return to the Seychelles, via Bombay, to convalesce.

There he met his new daughter who was born in 1915 after he had left for war.

Upon his return to East Africa after six weeks he was posted back to the Field Ambulance and served in the continuing campaign in the southern part of former German East Africa where he was awarded the Military Cross.

Post war, after surviving Bloody Sunday in Dublin in 1920, he rejoined the Colonial Medical Service in the new Kenya Colony and his stories of the development of medicine, managing smallpox and other epidemics, his social surroundings in Mombasa and Nairobi and the people he met provide a fascinating professional and personal picture of life at the time in British East Africa.

This book is based on his diaries and richly illustrated with his photographs before, during and after the war and will be of interest to historians of the period in Africa.

Transcripts of his archived war diaries are reproduced and a section which provides more background to his wife Sydney and the family provides an account of extraordinary lives in a fascinating historical period.

- In his recent review of this work **Edward Paice**, Director of Africa Research Institute (and author of *'Tip & Run: The Untold Tragedy of the Great War in Africa'*) observed:

To call the East Africa campaign a 'sideshow' to the war in Europe may be correct, but it is demeaning. Its scale and impact were gargantuan.



***African warrior in traditional regalia at an 'ngoma' in Mombasa 1920s.***

ALL PHOTOS: COPYRIGHT 'ON CALL IN AFRICA' 2016 BY DR. NORMAL PARSON JEWELL



***Wavell Memorial Gardens were opened alongside Fort Jesus in Mombasa in 1922 with an obelisk in the memory of dead of the 'Arab Rifles' - who 'saved Mombasa from the invading Germans'.***

Above all, as one combatant ruefully reflected, it 'involved having to fight nature in a mood that very few have experienced and will scarcely believe'.

In this context 'nature', to those passingly familiar with the history, usually brings to mind the nerve-racking hardships of bush fighting, the searing heat and torrential rain, or the continual presence of non-human predators.

However Dr Norman Jewell and his medical colleagues were on the front line in the fight against the biggest natural threat of all – disease.

Malaria, dysentery, and other afflictions – many caused by malnutrition – accounted for the vast majority of casualties.

Norman Jewell's memoir gives a riveting insight into the conditions under which medical staff operated.

There is much else of value in this memoir besides the sections that deal with Norman Jewell's war service.

His descriptions of pre-war life in the Seychelles, the arrival of the 'Spanish' flu epidemic in Kisumu at the end of the war, undertaking a mass inoculation against smallpox in Mombasa and life in Nairobi in the 1920s are fascinating and will add to the knowledge even of historians long-immersed in East Africa.

• **John M. MacKenzie** of University of Edinburgh notes:

After the war and another period of leave, spent in his home city of Dublin until the civil war and an assassination threat caused the family's rapid departure, Dr Jewell returned to East Africa and worked in Kenya, in Kisumu, Nakuru, Mombasa and Nairobi.

His descriptions of social and sporting life in these towns up to his retirement in 1932 are truly fascinating, as are his accounts of colourful characters and 'poor whites'.

His architectural photographs and accounts of institutions like clubs, hotels, hospitals, pathology labs and so on are really worthwhile.

He himself enjoyed game hunting and there is an informative section on the development of this 'industry' which grew so strikingly for tourists in the inter-war years.

The three grandchildren who put this book together, Tony, Richard and Sandra, the children of Norman's son John (they modestly only reveal themselves in the Acknowledgements), are to be congratulated on such a thoroughly professional production.

It not only offers a striking, posthumous memoir of both grandparents, but is also of great value as a source for historians of the East African campaign of the First World War and of social and cultural life in East Africa and the Seychelles.

- Norman Parsons Jewell's son was the late Mombasa surgeon, photographer and author **Dr John Jewell** [1912 - 2011] who spent much of his life on the Kenya Coast before a happy retirement in Kent, U.K.



***Duke and Duchess of York enjoying tea on the lawn outside, near the Oval, at the Mombasa Sports Club, 1924.***

*SEE ALSO:*

John Jewell was fascinated by Dhows and Mombasa

*FURTHER READING:*

*Review:* by John M. MacKenzie, University of Edinburgh

*Review:* by independent historian Dr Anne Samson

*Review:* Dr Jewell memoirs help fill in many blank spaces

*ASSOCIATED INFORMATION:*

Wavell, Arthur John Byng [Major]

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The First Edition hardback '***On Call in Africa***'