



# Boer War Association Queensland

Queensland Patron:

Major General Professor John Pearn, AO RFD (Retd)

1899



1902



## Monumentally Speaking - Queensland Edition

Committee Newsletter - Volume 13, No. 4, Part 1- September 2020

### Queensland Chairman's Report

This is our fourth Newsletter this year (2020) and sadly our final. In numerous newsletters, I have warned, that sustainability is not guaranteed as we may not be in a position to remain operational. For example, the current executive cannot remain at the helm, forever. We are a small association who rely heavily on volunteers, willing members and nominations for office, to ensure continuity.

Prior to last year's AGM (2018-2019), nomination forms and proxy forms were sent to members. Sadly, other than the Executive Committee and our much esteemed Patron, who kindly attended in support, exactly four other people attended the AGM. The disappointing attendance figures were intensified by the fact that no nomination or even proxy forms were received. The year prior (2017-2018) was very much the same. Unfortunately, this would seem to reflect a lack of interest to ensure BWAQ's objectives and the legacy of the 'Fathers of ANZACs' lives on.

It was also at last year's AGM, our Secretary, Pierre van Blommestein, gave notice that he would not be available for re-election 2020-2021.

This year, due to COVID-19 we had to conduct things differently, whilst still adhering to Office of Fair Trading (OFT) Rules and Regulation. Therefore, the committee having determined, mindful of the safety of members, that the meeting and election of office-bearers be held via online and postal means. Hence, I personally went about generating 'Nomination Forms' with a *text box* to enter the nominees' name, followed by a series of *drop-down boxes*, to select the preference of office; thus making things so much easier for our members to complete and respond. I also developed a 'Polling Form' with *drop-down boxes* enabling members to vote for nominees by office. Hence, there was no real excuse not to respond.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> July this year, our Secretary Pierre van Blommestein had a formal 'NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING' accompanied by a 'Nomination Form', distributed to members. His notice clearly explained this year's process and mentioned all positions will be deemed vacant as of 10<sup>th</sup> August 2020. The 31<sup>st</sup> July 2020 was the due date for nominations of office-bearers and the 10<sup>th</sup> August was the due date for polling.

Unfortunately, only two nominations were received, one for Chairman and one for Treasurer; which is an abysmal result. Even though we only had two nominations, we still sent the 'Polling Form' out to members, mainly to monitor response and to ensure protocol is adhered. As expected, the amount of polling forms received back could be counted on one hand, with fingers to spare.

Unfortunately, we don't meet the minimum requirement to form an executive committee. Therefore, we have no choice but to wind up operations. To do so, we have to notify the OFT our intentions regarding residual funds in the bank, before closing the account. A letter has been sent to members concerning this matter.

Thanks to MAJGEN Professor John Pearn, our Patron, we have managed to establish a suitable charity to donate our residual funds. We have chosen, the Queensland Children's Hospital School, as part of 'The Ida Kennedy Scholarship', which according to the Executive Principal, Michelle Bond, should be up and running for 2021. Our legacy will be recognised along the following lines:

#### The Ida Kennedy Scholarship

From the bequest of the late Miss Ida Kennedy, and the charitable donations of Mr Ross Dickson and the Boer War Association of Queensland.

For the past three years, we have evolved from the building of a memorial, to an Association committed to maintaining the memory and history of the Boer War; focus being descendants and supporters of the Boer War, to honour our 'Fathers of ANZACs'; thus ensuring their legacy lives on. To achieve this, we have involved the Scouts, Cadets and Schools. It is a long process, requiring intense dedication and belief in our objectives. This also requires commitment by descendants and supporters as well as a wide spectrum of involved organisations.

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The Scouts, LCCC (Logan City Community Cadets) and Corinda State High School, have already become intricately involved, along with organisations such as SAMVOA (South African Military Veterans Organisation of Australasia). Whilst this may seem comprehensive, our focus and objectives need to be spread further afield. I/we have always believed to honour our 'Fathers of ANZACs', Boer War Day, 31<sup>st</sup> May, is as important to Australia as Remembrance Day, 11<sup>th</sup> November.

It is very disappointing, that we are no longer able to continue the success we have had and enjoyed over the last few years. We were slowing meeting our objectives ensuring the legacy of the 'Fathers of ANZACs' lived on. However, sustainability relies on others pulling their weight too. One has to, after all, keep the '*bastards honest*' as mentioned by others on more than one occasion; the bastards being we, Southern Africans.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Patron, Major-General Professor John Pearn AO GCStJ RFD (Retd) for all his support and unconditional loyalty to our cause. I would also like to thank our outgoing executive for their effort and teamwork through last year and the previous years that we have been together. Thanks to Pierre van Blommestein, our honourable Secretary, for ensuring we were always on time with OFT reports and adherence to OFT regulations. Special thanks to Jennie Jones, our Treasurer (and much esteemed Editor and Researcher), for always being there on my right hand. Without Jennie, I/we would never have achieved what we have. Not to forget the newsletter, she so diligently publishes and distributes to members, interested parties, NBWMA website and the State Library. It has been described by our Patron and others, as one of the best, if not the best newsletters, he has the pleasure of receiving. I must admit I totally agree with our Patron.

On behalf of the BWAQ Executive, I would also like to extend our thanks to all who have supported us during our tenure:

- ◆ The Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia,:
  - ◆ His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd); and
  - ◆ His Excellency General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd);
- ◆ The Governor of Queensland, His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC;
- ◆ Australian Defence Force
  - ◆ 2<sup>nd</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment (QMI);
  - ◆ Joint Operations Support Staff (JOSS);
- ◆ Returned and Services League (RSL) Queensland; and
  - ◆ SED (South East District) RSL;
  - ◆ BND (Brisbane North District) RSL;
  - ◆ Sherwood-Indooroopilly RSL Sub-branch – for their loyalty and much appreciated support;
- ◆ Queensland Mounted Infantry Historical Troop (QMIHT);
- ◆ Logan City Community Cadets (LCCC);
- ◆ Queensland Police Service (QPS);
- ◆ Brisbane City Council (BCC);
- ◆ The Scout Association of Australia, Queensland Branch;
- ◆ Corinda State High School for their enthusiasm, loyalty and support in providing the following:
  - ◆ Symphonic Band; and
  - ◆ Vocal Ensemble;
- ◆ Musicians – Piper Joe McGhee and buglers Brad Strong and Ray Koenig;
- ◆ Fr. Geoff Reeder, for always being there to conduct the spiritual side of our annual 'Boer War Day Commemoration Services';

and last but by no mean least

- ◆ All our Life Members, loyal members and all those who have kindly subscribed and donated over the years.

On behalf of the BWAQ Executive, I thank all members for their support. We wish you well and safe keeping, through these trying and worrisome times.

BWAQ (Boer War Association Queensland) Committee:

- ◆ Mr Gordon Bold – Chairman.
- ◆ Rev Pierre van Blommestein – Secretary.
- ◆ Mrs Jennie Jones – Treasurer (Editor and Researcher).
- ◆ Ms Helen Underwood

Gordon Bold  
Chairman



## Road to the Battle of Brakfontein Drift

By Gordon Bold

### Siege of Elands River Post (*Battle of Brakfontein Drift*):

This year (August 2020), is the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Siege of Elands River**, an engagement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War that took place between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> August 1900 in western Transvaal. The Siege of Elands River is also known as the *Battle of Elands River* and sometimes the **Battle of Brakfontein Drift**. To the Boer (Afrikaner) it is known as:

- *Beleg van Brakfontein (Siege of Brakfontein)*, the Post was located on the farm known as 'Brakfontein';
- *Beleg/Slag van Elandsrivier (Siege/Battle of Elands River)*; also
- *Beleg/Slag van Buffelshoek (Siege/Battle of Buffalo's Corner)*.

According to many historians, as quoted by the 'Australian War Memorial'; "*The Siege of Elands River ranks as one of the most significant actions by Australians during the War in South Africa.*" The Siege of Elands River has been described by historian Chris Coulthard-Clark as being, "...perhaps the most notable action involving Australians in South Africa." Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who later published a series of accounts of the conflict, also highlighted the significance of the Siege of Elands River in his book entitled - 'The Great Boer War' – where he mentioned, "...when the ballad makers of Australia seek for a subject, let them turn to Elands River, for there was no finer fighting in the war."

Following the relief of Mafeking in May 1900 and the fall of Pretoria the following month, it was generally regarded, even among many Boers, that the end of the war was imminent. This was reinforced when Major-General Baden-Powell's forces moved through western Transvaal, meeting only slight resistance. Having had extensive experience in Africa and how the Boers operate, Major-General Baden-Powell subsequently placed garrisons in the western Transvaal, along the road between Mafeking and Pretoria, to secure supply lines and as bases for patrolling troops.

The Siege at Elands River Post is considered by many as a rather remarkable engagement of the Boer War in which Rhodesian and Australian Troops, as part of the Rhodesian Field Force (RFF), played a major part. The engagement was quite unfamiliar to what the Australian Troops were used to thus far in South Africa; for the first time they were called upon to experience the miseries of trench warfare. No doubt, the significance of this action was overshadowed by the horrific events of WWI.

However, from a Colonial point of view it is beneficial to take a brisk hike along the timeline, from the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War to Brakfontein Drift, via the Siege and Relief of Mafeking, where the Battle of Brakfontein Drift took place; more commonly known as the Siege of Elands River Post ...

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Not to be confused with the later Battle of Elands River, 17<sup>th</sup> September 1901, near the Elands River Poort (mountain pass), in the Cape Colony, when a Boer raiding force under General Jan Smuts destroyed a British cavalry company led by Captain Sandeman, a cousin of Winston Churchill, on the Modderfontein farm. Hence this battle is therefore also known as the Battle of Modderfontein...

One of Australia's best known writers of military history...

Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle KStJ DL (22 May 1859 – 7 July 1930) was a British

### *In the beginning (Phase-One):*

In 1899, when the British government decided to impose its suzerainty over the South African Republic (Transvaal), it had only around ten thousand British troops, in the Cape and Natal. It was therefore decided to augment the force by another ten thousand before delivering an ultimatum to President Paul Kruger. Colonial volunteer troops from the British Colonies of Natal and the Cape, as well as troops from the British Protectorate of Bechuanaland (today Botswana) and the British South Africa Company Colony (BSAC) of Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe) were mustered and mobilised. The government of India was also approached to provide more than six thousand British Troops.

The military authorities in India, were very prompt. The British Indian troops arrived in Natal between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October 1899 and were subsequently moved to the Transvaal border. This triggered the declaration of war on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1899, with a Boer offensive into the British-held Natal and Cape Colony. The Boers had about 33,000 soldiers, and decisively outnumbered the British, who could move only around 13,000 troops to the front line. The British forces were attacked and the Boers inflicted severe defeats and casualties on the British, for example:

**Battle of Kraaipan** - On 12<sup>th</sup> October 1899, the first engagement of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo Boer War. Combat-General (Veggeneraal) Koos de la Rey, with around 800 men of the Potchefstroom and Lichtenburg commandos attacked and captured the British garrison and railway siding at Kraaipan between Vryburg and Mafeking.

**Guerrilla/Sabotage activity around Kimberley** - On 12<sup>th</sup> October, the Jacobsdal Commando, severed the railway line at the bridge over the Modder River (Modderivier), south of Kimberley. The Jacobsdal Commando then entrenched themselves in the hills at Spytfontein. Around the same time, the Boshof Commando severed the railway line north of Kimberley, at Riverton Road. They then shut off the primary water supply at Riverton on the Vaal River. For the first time, water in the mines became more precious than the diamonds.

**Siege of Mafeking** - On the 13<sup>th</sup> October 1899, Mafeking was besieged and was first shelled on 16<sup>th</sup> October after General Cronje's 9 o'clock deadline to surrender, was ignored. The forces defending Mafeking were under the command of Colonel Robert Baden-Powell. According to his report on the siege, the garrison was composed of 44 officers, 975 men, including:

- Bechuanaland Protectorate Regiment (BPR) total strength 469 under Lieutenant-Colonel Hore, who was second in command to Colonel Baden-Powell;
- British South Africa Police BSAP, strength of 91 under Lieutenant-Colonel Walford;
- Cape Police with a strength of 103 under the command of Inspectors Marsh and Browne;
- Bechuanaland Rifles (Volunteers), with a strength of 81;
- Town Guard, untrained, numbering 296;
- Armed African Natives, affectionately nicknamed the 'Black Watch', around 300 strong, used to guard the perimeter.

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writer and medical doctor. He is known for many things: the creation of Sherlock Holmes, a spectacular moustache, and his belief in spirits and fairies. Whilst his penmanship is held in high esteem and enjoyed by many, his naiveté concerning spirits and fairies seemed almost immeasurable. According to an essay by 'Skeptical Humanities', with extracts from 'Skepticality' (*the official podcast of The Skeptics Society's Skeptic magazine*), Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's credulity, rationalisations and cognitive biases are not particularly unusual, as they are shared by many. However, in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's case it is combined with arrogance, condescension and an unwavering belief in his own appropriateness...

Lieutenant-General Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Baden-Powell, OM, GCMG, GCVO, KCB, KStJ, DL (1857-1941), was a British Army officer, writer, founder and first Chief Scout of the world-wide Scout Movement. He was the garrison commander at the Siege of Mafeking. After the Siege had been lifted he was promoted to major-general and became a national hero. However, British military

This would have bolstered the numbers to around 1,500 men protecting Mafeking. Bolstering this figure, just prior to the siege, Lord Edward Cecil, Colonel Baden-Powell's Chief-of-Staff, formed the Mafeking Cadet Corps of boys aged 12 to 15 (*claimed to be one of the inspirations for the Boy Scouts*) who acted as messengers and orderlies, thus releasing men to fight.

**Siege of Kimberley** – On the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1899, Kimberley was besieged by the Boers; the Boers cut the telephone line to the Cape. Heliograph and dispatch riders consequently had to make hazardous journeys through Boer lines to the Orange River and then to Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. On 15<sup>th</sup> October 1899, martial law was declared in Kimberley. Colonel Robert Kekewich of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire), had secured against a *coup de main*, but not against a sustained siege. Lieutenant-Colonel Kekewich's troops consisted of four companies of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, some Royal Engineers, 120 Cape Police (*recalled from various outposts along the railway line*), plus around 2,000 irregular troops made up of:

- Diamond Fields Horse, strength 178
- Diamond Fields Artillery, strength 97
- Kimberley Regiment, strength 352
- Kimberley Town Guard, strength 1303



These numbers were afterwards increased, with the formation of the Kimberley Light Horse and Kimberley Mounted Corps. Major Scott-Turner was second in command to Colonel Robert Kekewich. On the 16<sup>th</sup> October, Major Scott-Turner took out detachments of Diamond Fields Horse, Kimberley Light Horse, and Police, and drove some of the advancing Boers back towards Alexandersfontein.

On the 4<sup>th</sup> November, the Boer commander, Commandant Cornelius Wessels, presented Colonel Kekewich with an ultimatum, demanding the town's surrender; hence the Boers began shelling Kimberly from the 7<sup>th</sup> November 1899. On the 25<sup>th</sup> November 1899, Major Scott-Turner made a reconnaissance, and succeeded in surprising the enemy at Schmidt's Drift Road, often referred to as the **1<sup>st</sup> Battle of Carter's Ridge (Lazaretskop)**. Then again on the 28<sup>th</sup> November 1899, at the **2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Carter's Ridge (Lazaretskop)**, Major Scott-Turner was killed and was succeeded by Major Peakman, a colonial officer in command of the Kimberley Light Horse.

**Battle of Talana Hill**, also known as the **Battle of Glencoe** and the **Battle of Dundee** - took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 1899, considered by many as the first major battle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo Boer War. On the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> October 1899, two Boer forces, under General Lukas Meyer and General "Maroela" Erasmus closed in on Dundee. General Erasmus took up position on Impati Mountain north of Dundee, while General Meyer took up position on Tolana Hill, with about 3,500 men of the Utrecht, Wakkerstroom, Krugersdorp, Vryheid, Middelburg and Piet Retief commandos, to attack the 4,363 British soldiers and 3 artillery batteries under the command of Major-General Sir William Penn Symons, stationed/garrisoned at Dundee.

commanders were more critical of his performance. Apparently, his alleged failure to understand the situation and abandonment of the soldiers, mostly Australians and Rhodesians, at the Battle of Elands River led to his being removed from action...

In July 1899 Colonel Baden-Powell was sent out to Rhodesia to raise two regiments, in order to protect the borders of that country and of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in the event of war. Recruiting began on 10<sup>th</sup> August, and the two regiments, were raised, trained, and equipped before war broke out, namely:

- The Rhodesian Regiment (RR), under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer; and
- The Bechuanaland Protectorate Regiment (BPR), under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Owen Hore...

Major Henry Scott-Turner of the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders), son of Major Scott-Turner, who from 1894 up until his seconding to Kimberley in June 1899, was the Magistrate/Mayor of the fledgling town of Umtali in Rhodesia. In fact, Henry Scott-

Even though the British managed to defend Dundee against the Boer, the British were pinned down at the foot of Tolana Hill by Boer fire, which turned out to be costly for the Empire. The British commander, Sir William Penn Symons, was killed in action. General Meyer decided to withdraw from Tolana Hill and retreat. British mounted infantry tried to cut off the Boer retreat, but most of the British horsemen strayed onto the slopes of Impati. Here, General Erasmus's men, who had so far played no part in the battle due to Impati being shrouded in fog, surrounded the British mounted detachment and forced them to surrender. The British forces, then under the command of Brigadier-General Yule, second in command to Penn Symons, were unable to contemplate attacking Impati, which held Dundee's water supply. Therefore, they had to withdraw the British forces from Dundee and Glencoe to Ladysmith.

They marched and countermarched beneath the Impati for two days under intermittent shellfire. Other Boer forces had cut the British line of supply and retreat. Finally, the British force retreated across country at night. After an arduous four-day march of 64 miles (103 km), they reached Ladysmith, where they reinforced the garrison.

Even though, considered by many as a tactical victory of the British, Dundee was to be occupied by Boer forces until 15<sup>th</sup> May 1900 - after the relief of Ladysmith. In reality, and the eyes of others, it was more of a tactical victory by the Boers, as the British suffered heavy losses and retreated to Ladysmith which was besieged 13 days later, thus confining an even larger British Force in a single location, within Natal rather than multiple locations.

**Battle of Elandslaagte** - took place on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 1899, just one day after the battle of Talana. A British cavalry, scouting under the command of Major-General John Denton Pinkstone French, led to a battle with the Boer forces of General Johannes Kock, near the town of Elandslaagte. General Kock's force consisted of around 1,150 men made up as follows:

- 700 men of the Johannesburg Commando under Commandant Ben Viljoen;
- 150 Free Staters from the Vrede Commando under Field Cornet de Jager;
- 100 men of the newly formed German Commando of naturalised German citizens living in Johannesburg, under the command of Commandant Adolf Schiel.
- 150 men of the Hollander Corps, made up of Dutch volunteers, under Commandant Jan Lombard.
- Staats Artillerie under the command of Major Erasmus.

Turner was the British South African Company (BSAC) representative in Umtali in 1897 and in April 1898 was the appointed Civil Commissioner...

Major-General Robert George Kekewich, CB (17 June 1854 – 5 November 1914) was a Victorian era British Army officer, of the Loyal Regiment (North Lancashire) and commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion of that regiment in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. He commanded the garrison in Kimberley during the siege and successfully defended Kimberley, during which time he came into conflict with Cecil Rhodes...

Field Marshal John Denton Pinkstone French, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Ypres KP GCB OM GCVO KCMG ADC PC (1852-1925), born in Kent to an Anglo-Irish family, known as Sir John French from 1901 to 1916, and as The Viscount French between 1916 and 1922, was a senior British Army officer. He achieved rapid promotion and distinguished himself on the Gordon Relief Expedition...

General Johannes Hermanus Michiel Kock (1835-1899) was a Boer general and politician...

Commandant Adolf Friedrich Schiel (1858-1903), originally a conscript of the Prussian Army served as a Cavalry trooper. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War broke out he was in South Africa and was given permission to form a German Corps; thus became an officer in the South African Republic's military forces during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer. The German Corps later became part of the Boer Foreign Legion under the command of:

- Combat-General (Veggeneraal) George Henri Anne-Marie Victor count de Villebois-Mareuil (1847-1900) was a former colonel in the French infantry who fought and died (6 April 1900 in Boshof, Orange Free State), on the side of the Boers during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War; his deputy was...
- Combat-General (Veggeneraal) Yevgeny Yakovlevich Maximov (1849-1904), a Russian adventurer, soldier and journalist mostly remembered for his service with the South African Republic during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War...

The Battle of Elandslaagte was also notable for being the first and last battle of the volunteer Hollanderkorps (Hollander Corps). The Hollanderkorps was a group of around 150 Dutch volunteers, established a month prior to the battle. During the

General Kock's force was overrun by General French's 3,500 men, which include the likes of the Imperial Light Horse (ILH). General Kock was wounded and captured by the British. He died a few days later from his wounds in Ladysmith. Commandant Schiel was wounded and taken prisoner during the Battle of Elandslaagte. He returned to Germany after the war, but died in 1903 from wounds received at Elandslaagte.

Among the British dead was Colonel John James Scott-Chisholme, commander of the Imperial Light Horse (ILH). He was killed while leading from the front, encouraging his men, by waving a coloured sash.

**Battle of Ladysmith** was one of the early engagements of the Second Boer War. Around 21,000 Boers advanced into Natal from all sides. General White deployed his forces around the garrison town of Ladysmith, with a detachment even further forward at Dundee. After fighting two battles at Talana Hill and Elandslaagte, the entire British force in Natal, around 12,500 strong, had concentrated at the garrison town of Ladysmith. The Boer commandos began slowly surrounding Ladysmith. On 30<sup>th</sup> October 1899, General White launched a sortie by his entire force to capture the Boer artillery. The result was the disastrous Battle of Ladysmith, a disaster for the British. The main body was driven back into the town having lost 1,200 men, killed, wounded, or captured; an isolated detachment of 800 men was forced to surrender to Commandant de Wet. The Boers then proceeded to surround Ladysmith and cut the railway link to Durban.

**Siege of Ladysmith**, by the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1899 Ladysmith was besieged. At the outbreak of the Second Boer War, General Sir George White was appointed Governor in Chief of Natal, superseding General Sir Penn Symons. Symons had already split his forces chiefly into two garrisons at Ladysmith and Dundee. British Regiments at the Siege of Ladysmith:

- ◇ 5<sup>th</sup> Lancers;
- ◇ 5<sup>th</sup> Dragoon Guards;
- ◇ 19<sup>th</sup> Hussars;
- ◇ 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Division Royal Artillery (21st, 42<sup>nd</sup>, and 53<sup>rd</sup> Batteries);
- ◇ 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Battery;
- ◇ 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion King's Royal Rifles;
- ◇ 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment from Allahabad, India;
- ◇ 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Devonshire Regiment from Jullundur, India;
- ◇ 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Liverpool Regiment from Capetown;
- ◇ 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Manchester Regiment from Gibraltar;
- ◇ 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Gordon Highlanders from Solon, India;
- ◇ 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers from Egypt;
- ◇ 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Rifle Brigade from Crete (*only reached Ladysmith on the 30<sup>th</sup> October*);
- ◇ 1<sup>st</sup> King's Royal Rifles Mounted Infantry (KRR MI) – around 50;
- ◇ Mounted Infantry of Leicestershire Regiment – around 100;
- ◇ Naval Brigade detachment from HMS Powerful, with two 4.7 naval guns and two twelve pounder guns;
- ◇ Irregular Volunteer Militia:
  - *Detachments from the Natal Colony:*
    - *Natal Carbineers - around 390,*
    - *Border Mounted Rifles - around 260,*
    - *Natal Mounted Rifles - around 200,*
    - *Natal Naval Volunteers - around 65,*
    - *Natal Hotchkiss Battery - around 20,*
    - *Natal Police - around 40,*
    - *Volunteer Staff, including Medical and Veterinary – around 11,*
    - *Durban Light Infantry;*
  - *Detachment from the Witwatersrand/Johannesburg (refugees from the Transvaal Republic):*
    - *Imperial Light Horse (ILH) - around 500.*

battle, the Hollanderkorps suffered 9 fatalities. A further 35 of the Hollanders were taken prisoner by the British. Amongst the prisoners, were Willem Frederik Mondriaan (*brother of the Dutch artist Piet Mondrian*) who was wounded and later sent to Saint Helena as a POW and Cornelis Vincent 'Cor' van Gogh (*brother of the artist Vincent*

## Phase-One (Tactical Boer Victory):

By the end of October 1899, the Boers had the large British garrison towns of Kimberley and Mafeking besieged, followed very closely by Ladysmith, early November 1899:

- Kimberley was besieged from the 14<sup>th</sup> October 1899 to the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1900;
- Ladysmith was besieged from the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1899 to the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1900; and
- Mafeking (Mafikeng) was besieged from the 13<sup>th</sup> October 1899 to the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1900.

This was followed by a disastrous week, dubbed '**Black Week**', from the 10<sup>th</sup> December to the 17<sup>th</sup> December 1899, when the British Army suffered three devastating defeats by the Boer, at the battles of



Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso; where a total of 2,776 men were killed, wounded and captured. This would have rekindled some horrendous memories of the disastrous 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War...

### 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War:

The British suffered a defeat in the lesser known 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War of (1880-1881) and to some it became an 'old score' to be settled in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) with devastating effect and further reaching revengeful damage.

The three major battles of the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War when the British regular troops were soundly defeated by the Boer Forces from the Transvaal Republic (South African Republic) are:

- Battle of Bronkhorst spruit, 20<sup>th</sup> December 1880, the destruction of an entire British Column
- Battle of Laing's Nek (Lang's Nek), 28<sup>th</sup> January 1881, a Boer victory.
- Battle of Schuinshoogte, also known as Battle of Ingogo, 8<sup>th</sup> February 1881, a decisive Boer Victory.
- Battle of Majuba Hill, 27<sup>th</sup> February 1881, yet another decisive Boer victory; an extremely humiliating defeat for the British, which led to the signing of the Armistice to end hostility on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1881 and subsequently, the Pretoria Convention.

'Cor' van Gogh (brother of the artist Vincent van Gogh) also wounded, taken prisoner, dying shortly after. The Boer generals were unhappy with the Hollanderkorps' performance; thus it was disbanded. However, several hundred Dutch volunteers continued to fight, by forming a new Hollander Corps as part of Boer Foreign Legion (Boer foreign volunteers) which included; Dutch, Scandinavians, Germans, French, Irish, Americans, Polish, Italians, Russians, Greeks and even some Australians...

The unit was raised in Johannesburg for service in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1899 by Colonel Aubrey Woolls-Sampson, Major Walter Davies, Sir Percy Fitzpatrick and Captain Charles Mullins, it was named the Imperial Light Horse (ILH) with the approval of Queen Victoria. The first muster of the ILH Regiment took place in Pietermaritzburg. The ILH was informally known as the 'Reformers Regiment', due to the fact that many of the ILH officers served on the 'Reform Committee'. It was also known as the 'Uitlander Regiment' by the Transvaal Government and ZAR (*Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek [Transvaal Republic]*) Forces. Interestingly, now fighting on opposing sides, the previously mentioned newly formed German Commando and ILH had their first military encounter at Elandslaagte. Indeed men of the German Commando were acquainted with some of the men of the ILH...

Field Marshal Sir George Stuart White VC GCB OM GCSI GCMG GCIE GCVO (1835-1912) was an officer of the British Army. He became commander of the Natal Field Force in September 1899 at the opening of the Second Boer War and fought at the Battle of Elandslaagte in October 1899. He then withdrew to Ladysmith where he took command of the garrison during the Siege of Ladysmith with his aide-de-camp Major Clive MacDonnell Dixon (1870-1914)...

Petrus Jacobus Joubert (1831-1900), better known as Piet Joubert, was Commandant-General of the Transvaal Republic (South African Republic) from 1880 to 1900; covering both the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War and very much involved in the Siege of Ladysmith. He also served twice as Vice-President to Paul

## 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War: Cont.

On 5<sup>th</sup> March 1881, Sir Evelyn Wood and General Piet Joubert agreed on an armistice in order to start peace negotiations at O'Neill's cottage. The Armistice was signed at O'Neill's cottage the next day, 6<sup>th</sup> March 1881. Subsequently, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1881 in Pretoria, the peace treaty, known as the Pretoria Convention, was signed by Sir Evelyn Wood (British High Commissioner of Southern Africa) and President Paul Kruger (Acting President of the Transvaal Republic), with President Brand of the Orange Free State, acting as intermediary. The signing of the Pretoria Convention was the official document to end the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War, especially the Battle of Majuba is of historic significant for four reasons:

- The **vuur en beweging (fire and movement)** tactics employed by the Boer Commandos, especially Commandant Smit in his final assault on the hill, were years ahead of their time.
- Coupled with the defeats at Laing's (Lang's) Nek and Schuinshoogte, this third crushing defeat at the hands of the Boers, confirmed the strength of the Boers in the minds of the British, arguably with consequences in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, when "**Remember Majuba**" would become a rallying cry.
- General Piet Joubert viewed the aftermath of the battle and noted that the British rifles were sighted at 400-600 yards when the battle raged at about 50-100 yards, as the British officers had not told the troops to alter their weapons and, as a result, they were shooting downhill over the heads of the enemy, who had scant shelter.
- Some notable British historians, although not all agree, claim that this defeat marked the beginning of the decline of the British Empire. Prior to this and since the American Revolution, Great Britain had never signed a treaty on unfavourable terms with anyone and had never lost the final engagements of the war.

However, to further put things into perspective, in South Africa the year before the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War began, the British suffered a few major defeats at the hands of the Zulu during the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. On 11<sup>th</sup> January 1879, the British column, under the command of Lord Chelmsford, crossed the border and invaded Zululand. The British suffered their first major defeat at the hands of the Zulu, at the Battle of Isandhlwana on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1879; the first major encounter in the Anglo-Zulu War between the British Empire and the Zulu Kingdom. Of the 1,800 odd British, colonial and native troops who invaded Zululand, over 1,300 were killed. The Battle of Isandhlwana was the worst defeat suffered by the British Army, especially against an indigenous foe. This resulted in a rapid British retreat, of survivors, back to Natal, ending the **1<sup>st</sup> Invasion** of Zululand. The **2<sup>nd</sup> Invasion** was heavily reinforced and more aggressive. However, even then, the British were defeated yet again at two other significant battles of the Anglo-Zulu War:

- Battle of Intombe on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 1879;
- Battle of Hlobane, on the 28<sup>th</sup> March 1879.

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Kruger from 1881 to 1883 and then again from 1896 until his death 28<sup>th</sup> March 1900...

Alfred Milner, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Milner KG GCB GCMG PC (1854-1925) was a British statesman and colonial administrator who played an influential leadership role in the formulation of foreign and domestic policy between the mid-1890s and early 1920s. He was Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner for Southern Africa from 5<sup>th</sup> May 1897 to 6<sup>th</sup> March 1901. Then post 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, from 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1902 to 1<sup>st</sup> April 1905, he became the 1<sup>st</sup> British Governor of the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies. It has been said that apparently Milner had an unfavourable view of Afrikaners and, as a matter of philosophy, saw the British as 'a superior race'. Therefore, with limited interest in a peaceful resolution, he believed British control of the region could only be achieved through war. General Jan Smuts, after his first meeting with Milner, predicted Alfred Milner would be more dangerous than Cecil Rhodes and would become a second Sir Henry Bartle Frere (*who was recalled to London to face charges of misconduct*)

As mentioned previously, the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War and specifically the Battle of Majuba, was a disastrous British defeat. This was still very much in the minds of both the Boer and British. Graffiti scrawled by both sides on a bedroom wall in a house originally taken by the Boers and later recaptured by British forces, reads:

By the Boers - 'Don't forget Majuba, Boys';  
By the British - 'No fear, Boere, no fear'.

## Empire Involvement (Phase-Two):

President Paul Kruger's October 1899 offensive took the British by surprise, leading to the early Boer victories. With Mafeking, Kimberley and Ladysmith besieged, the bulk of the British regular forces were therefore interned by Boer Forces and quite ineffectual. However, the arrival of large numbers of British reinforcements by early 1900, made an eventual Boer defeat, inevitable. In this second phase, the British, under Lords Kitchener and Roberts, relieved the besieged towns, beat the Boer armies in the field, and rapidly advanced up the lines of rail transportation. Bloemfontein (capital of the Orange Free State) was occupied by the British in February 1900, and Johannesburg and Pretoria (capital of the SAR) in May and June.

Phase-Two, required the relief of the besieged garrisons of Kimberley, Ladysmith and Mafeking, secure Natal and the Cape Colony, then the capture of Bloemfontein (Capital of the Orange Free State) and Pretoria (Capital of the Transvaal Republic):

- On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1900, following the Relief of Kimberley (15<sup>th</sup> February 1900) and Ladysmith (27<sup>th</sup> February 1900) and the Battle of Paardeberg (18<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> February), British forces captured Bloemfontein and built a concentration camp nearby to house Boer women and children.
- On 5<sup>th</sup> June 1900, almost three weeks following the Relief of Mafeking (17<sup>th</sup> May 1900), Pretoria surrendered to British forces, under Lord Frederick Roberts.

In order for Phase-Two to be accomplished, it became obvious the British required substantial reinforcement and needed to change their mode of operation in the field. When traditional battle tactics failed, due to the Sieges of Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking followed by 'Black Week' in December 1899, Lord Roberts ordered all battalions that arrived from Britain to provide a mounted infantry company. Up to this point, the British Yeomanry were not intended to serve overseas, but the British government realised they were going to need more troops than just the regular British Army. Therefore, a Royal Warrant was issued on 24<sup>th</sup> December 1899, for British volunteer forces to serve in the South African War (2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War). The Royal Warrant requested Yeomanry regiments to provide service companies for the Imperial Yeomanry, equipped to operate as Mounted infantry.

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*concerning Afghanistan and Southern Africa)...*

William Philip Schreiner CMG PC KC (30 August 1857 – 28 June 1919) was a barrister, politician, statesman and Prime Minister of the Cape Colony during the Second Boer War. As prime minister he favoured negotiation rather than hostilities, to the annoyance of Alfred Milner (*Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner of Southern Africa*), who was actively encouraging war. Due to Schreiner's opposition to hostilities he was forced to resign from the Premiership and from Parliament in June 1900...

Sir Ian Standish Monteith Hamilton, GCB, GCMG, DSO, TD (1853-1947) was a British Army officer who, following an extensive British Imperial military career in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, commanded the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force in the Gallipoli Campaign of WWI. After the relief of Ladysmith in February Hamilton took command of a brigade of Mounted Infantry, and from April the Mounted Infantry Division. He was promoted to major general, and knighted as a Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB)...

Cont

## 'Fire-and-Movement':

Some of the most successful British troops, from the outbreak of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo Boer War, *throughout Phase-One and active* to the end of the war, were the likes of many non-regular regiments/units, as well as some regular regiments already well versed in *'fire and movement'* tactics from:

- **British Cape Colony** - Units such as the Diamond Field Horse and Kimberley Light Horse (Kimberley Mounted Corps) and Kimberley Regiment were very much involved in Phase-One. However, in 1899, regarding the extent to which the Cape Colonial Forces and militia should be deployed from their recruiting areas to support the wider British campaign, the Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner of Southern Africa, Alfred Milner, was engaged in a power struggle with the Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, William Philip Schreiner. Consequently, many Cape Volunteer and District Volunteer forces were garrisoned within their areas to protect and patrol the surrounding assets, such as the railway network, until the last months of 1899 when Schreiner was forced to concede; Marshall's Horse being a good example. Marshall's Horse in February and March 1900, advanced from Modder River to Bloemfontein, and on the way they saw a great deal of fighting, prior to the capture of Bloemfontein. This march included the Battle of Poplar Grove (7<sup>th</sup> March 1900). A few weeks later, the Unit participated in an action at Thaba Nchu under General Ian Hamilton, an event related in Winston Churchill's - *Ian Hamilton's March*. The battle included Colonel Ridley's Brigade of Mounted Infantry, which embraced the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps of Mounted Infantry, under Colonel Dawson, made up of the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion Regular Mounted Infantry, Roberts' Horse, Marshall's Horse and the Ceylon Mounted Infantry.
- **British Natal Colony** - Quite different to the Cape Colony, their Premier (Prime Minister), Sir Albert Hime K.C.M.G, and Governor of Natal, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson were very much in sync concerning Natal Troops for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. The Natal Field Force and Natal Volunteers were operational from day one of the war and included the likes of, to name a few; Natal Mounted Rifles, Border Mounted Rifles, Umvoti Mounted Rifles, Natal Carbineers, etcetera. Lieutenant-General Sir George White superseded Major-General Sir William Symons as GOC in Natal. General Sir George White became commander of the forces in Natal in September 1899, as Quartermaster General under General Sir Redvers Buller.
- **BSAC (British South Africa Company) Colony of Rhodesia** - The Rhodesian Regiment (RR) and the Southern Rhodesian Volunteers (SRV), under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Plumer, were operational from day one of the war; including the **BSAP** (British South Africa Police) Regiment, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Walford.
- **British Protectorate of Bechuanaland** - The Protectorate Regiment, Bechuanaland Rifles, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Owen Hore, were also operational from day one of the war.

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Charles Parker Ridley CB (1855-1927) the son of Colonel John Henry Ellis Ridley. He gained the rank of Colonel in the Manchester Regiment, in the Miranzai Expedition and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. He was appointed Companion, Order of the Bath (C.B.) in 1900...

Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Albert Henry Hime, KCMG, PC (1842-1919) was a Royal Engineers officer and later a prominent politician in the Colony of Natal. In 1878, Hime designed and built the Natal Mounted Police Headquarters. He was the Prime Minister of Natal from 9<sup>th</sup> June 1899 to the 17<sup>th</sup> August 1903...

Sir Walter Francis Hely-Hutchinson GCMG PC (22 August 1849 – 23 September 1913) was an Anglo-Irish diplomat and colonial administrator. He was the second son of the Richard Hely-Hutchinson, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Donoughmore. Sir Walter was the Governor of Natal from Governor of Natal from 1893 to 1901. He was later appointed Governor of the Cape Colony; in office from 9<sup>th</sup> January 1901 to 1910...

Major-General Sir William Penn Symons KCB (17 July 1843 – 23 October 1899)

- **'Uitlanders'** - Units made up of British supporter refugees/evacuees, the **'Uitlanders'** from the *Transvaal Republic*, mainly from *Witwatersrand / Johannesburg*, such as the Imperial Light Horse, were active from the beginning of the war, then later the Johannesburg Mounted Rifles and others, which became active in Phase-Two. The ILH were very much in the thick of things at the Battle of Elandsplaagte (21<sup>st</sup> October 1899). During this battle, two Victoria Crosses were awarded (Captain Charles Herbert Mullins and Lieutenant Robert Johnston). Sadly, Colonel Scott-Chisholme was killed. The ILH Regiment subsequently saw service at the Siege of Ladysmith (where another Victoria Cross was awarded - to Trooper Herman Albrecht at Wagon Hill) Colenso, the Battle of Spion Kop and the Relief of Ladysmith. At Spioenkop, the ILH was successful in capturing Commandant Hendrik Frederik Prinsloo, the commander of the Carolina Boer Commando. The ILH was then specially selected to join the Mafeking Relief Column, under Colonel Mahon. Eight men under Major Karri Davies of the ILH were the first to enter Mafeking on the night of 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> May 1900 to break the siege, followed by the joint relief columns the following morning.

More troops and units from the British Cape and Natal Colonies were made ready for service and mobilised. British reinforcements were also mobilised. As previously mentioned, many of the units from the Natal Colony, Cape Colony, BSAC Colony of Rhodesia, Bechuanaland Protectorate and those British Supporters from the Boer Republics, were already well versed and quite familiar with the Boer *vuur en beweging (fire and movement)* tactics, as many of them had many decades of previous experience with the Commando System, through many years of conflict in southern Africa.

## Overseas Colonies:

Late 1899, Empire troops from the Australian Colonies, New Zealand, Canada and British Imperial Yeomanry started arriving. Some of the most successful British troops were the non-regular regiments, for example; the Imperial Light Horse, City Imperial Volunteers, the South Africans, Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders, who more easily broke from the habit of earlier British colonial warfare, using their horses for transport rather than the charge, advancing by fire and manoeuvre in loose formations and making use of cover, rather than the formal advance into a storm of Mauser bullets.

The first troops to arrive from the overseas colonies...

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was a British Army officer who was mortally wounded as he commanded his forces at the Battle of Talana Hill during the Second Boer War. While his forces won the battle, they had to abandon their position and fall back to Ladysmith. Symons and the more severely wounded were left to the Boers; he died three days later as a prisoner of war...

Field Marshal Herbert Charles Onslow Plumer, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Plumer GCB GCMG GCVO GBE (13 March 1857 – 16 July 1932) was a senior British Army officer of the First World War. After commanding V Corps at the Second Battle of Ypres in April 1915, he took command of the Second Army in May 1915 and in June 1917 won an overwhelming victory over the German Army at the Battle of Messines. He went to Southern Rhodesia in 1896 to disarm the local police force following the Jameson Raid. Later that year returned to command the Matabele Relief Force during the Second Matabele War. In 1899 Plumer returned to Southern Rhodesia where he raised a force of mounted infantry and then took command of the Rhodesia Field Force, which included Australians...

Colonel Charles Owen Hore CMG, Order of Medjidie 5<sup>th</sup> Class (Turkey), of the South Staffordshire Regiment and the Bechuanaland Protectorate Regiment, died 14/02/1916, Aged 56. He was married to Dulcibella Eden Hore (nee Radcliffe) of Hampton Court Palace...

General Sir Bryan Thomas Mahon KCB KCVO PC (Ire), DSO (1862-1930) was an Irish born general of the British Army and senator of the short-lived Senate of Southern Ireland. During the Second Boer War Colonel Mahon led a flying column, consisting of South African volunteers mainly from Kimberley and Johannesburg, to the Relief of Mafeking...

Cont.

## Queensland:

Queensland is credited as being the first colony in Australia to make an offer of assistance to the mother country, concerning the War in southern Africa. On 11<sup>th</sup> July 1899, three months before the Boer ultimatum, the Queensland Government offered the services of Queensland Defence Force (QDF).

The **1<sup>st</sup> Queensland Contingent of Queensland Mounted Infantry (QMI)** arrived in South Africa on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 1899. They were immediately despatched to De Aar-Modder River line in order to protect the railway line and communications of Lord Methuen. They remained in this environment until Lord Roberts commenced his advance into the Free State on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1900.

On 1<sup>st</sup> January 1900, 200 odd Queenslanders, under Lieutenant-Colonel Ricardo and Captains Chauvel and Pinnock, were part of the 'Flying Column' led by Colonel Pilcher from Belmont towards Douglas, leading to what became known as the Battle of Sunnyside, by many.

## Battle of Sunnyside - 1<sup>st</sup> January 1900:

Colonel Thomas David Pilcher was in command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the Bedfordshire Regiment and was given command of a 'Flying Column' of mounted infantry, made up of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mounted Infantry (British regulars), a large contingent of Australians (1<sup>st</sup> Contingent of QMI) and a Squadron of New Zealanders (initially 1<sup>st</sup> New Zealand Contingent).

Sunnyside was an action, fought on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1900, New Year's Day, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, in which a 'flying column' of less than 500 British, Canadian and Australian troops under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas David Pilcher of the Northumberland Fusiliers attacked a laager camp of some 180 Boers near the town of Douglas on the western border of the Orange Free State.

Colonel Pilcher took extraordinary care to prevent any news of his march leaking out, and owing to this care he was able to surprise the enemy, capturing their laager and took 44 prisoners, including Commandant Schultz, commander of the Boer detachment. The work of the Queenslanders was greatly praised. They had a difficult task to perform, and the most highly-trained troops could not have done it more satisfactorily. When it was known that the column was in the vicinity of the laager, Colonel Pilcher's main endeavour was to throw some of his troops round the enemy's flanks. The Queenslanders got round on one flank unseen, and before they were discovered had gained a position which put the Boers at a disadvantage.

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Field Marshal Paul Sanford Methuen, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Methuen GCB GCMG GCVO DL (1845-1932) was a British Army officer. He served in the expedition of Sir Charles Warren to Bechuanaland in the mid-1880s. He took a prominent role as General Officer Commanding of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division in the Second Boer War. Methuen arrived in South Africa in November 1899 with orders to relieve Kimberley but initially just expelled the Boers from Belmont and Graspan. He was slightly wounded at the Battle of Modder River and soundly defeated by the Boers at the Battle of Magersfontein. After Magersfontein, Methuen remained in the Kimberley-Boshof area trying to capture Boer General Christiaan de Wet...

Lieutenant-Colonel Percy Ralph Ricardo CB, who commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> Queensland Mounted Infantry contingent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. He is also often referred to as 'The Father of QMI'...

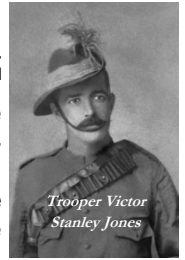
General Sir Henry 'Harry' George Chauvel GCMG KCB (1865-1945) was a Captain in the 1<sup>st</sup> Contingent (QMI)...

Capt Philip William Grant Pinnock was a Captain in the 1<sup>st</sup> Contingent (QMI)...

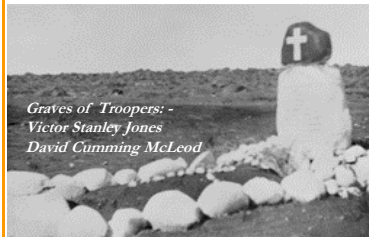
Major-General Thomas David Pilcher CB (8 July 1858 – 14 December 1928) was a British Army officer, who commanded a mounted infantry unit in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas David Pilcher in command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion of the

A few, four man horse mounted reconnaissance patrols, were scouting to the front and flanks of the main body to prevent an enemy ambush. Lieutenant Aide led one of these patrols consisting of Privates Herman, Butler, Rose and Jones. While riding along in open country, the patrol saw four Boers riding on their right. Lieutenant Aide courageously commanded the Boers to surrender. However, twelve other Boers appeared and opened fire.

Private Victor Jones was shot and died instantly; he became the first Queensland soldier killed in action in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. It is also claimed he was the first Australian to be killed in action. Lieutenant Aide was shot twice and his horse killed from under him. As the rest of the patrol came to his rescue, the Boers wounded another soldier and killed his horse. The small patrol struggled back to the main body in time to join the attack that was to become known as the *Battle of Sunnyside*. Amazingly, they had prevented a Boer encirclement.



The major significance of this event is that Private Victor Stanley Jones and Private David Cumming McLeod, killed in Battle of Sunnyside, were the first Australian soldiers to die in battle.



## Rush to Kimberley:

In the rush to Kimberley, and during the fighting on the north side of the town on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1900, the Queenslanders under Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas David Pilcher, along with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mounted Infantry (Regulars) and a squadron of New Zealanders, were part of General French's drive to Relieve Kimberley. They succeeded in capturing a part of the Boer position, and were left out on outpost at Macfarlane's Siding during the night of the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1900, but before morning the enemy had decamped, getting their convoy and guns away. When French got the message announcing that General Cronje had left Magersfontein he pushed on, first, Broadwood's Cavalry and then his other troops to Koedoesrand and Paardeberg Drifts on the Modder River, to endeavour to head-off Cronje and in this, he was successful.

In February, the Queensland Mounted Infantry became part of Major General John French's Cavalry Division. After a strenuous march, the Cavalry Division helped in the Relief of Kimberley on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1900.

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Bedfordshire Regiment, was given command of a column of mounted infantry, which included the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mounted Infantry (regulars) a large contingent of Australians (QMI) and a Squadron of New Zealanders...

Douglas is located on the Vaal River near the confluence of the Orange and Vaal Rivers in the Northern Cape, around 100 KM south-west of Kimberley. It was originally a mission station on the farm known as Backhouse. In 1867 it became a town named after Lieutenant-General Sir Percy Douglas (*General Sir Robert Percy Douglas, 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet*), Lieutenant-Governor of the Cape Colony, whom at the time as Lieutenant-Governor was deputy to Sir Philip Edmond Wodehouse GCSI KCB Governor of the Cape Colony and British High Commissioner for Southern Africa...

Laager, Afrikaans/Dutch camp or encampment, especially within a protective circle of wagons...

George Hodgskin Nethercott, an expatriate Victorian, service number 229, trooper of the Rhodesian Regiment (RR), died 21<sup>st</sup> October 1899 KIA...

Lieutenant-General Robert George Broadwood CB (1862-1917) was Commander of British Troops in South China. Broadwood served as a cavalry officer during the Second Boer War (1899-1902). As a Brigadier General he commanded Common-Cont

In the reorganisation that followed, the Queensland Mounted Infantry became part of Major General Edward Hutton's '1<sup>st</sup> Mounted Infantry Brigade', along with the Canadian and New Zealand mounted units. Chauvel distinguished himself fighting alongside a group of New Zealanders and capturing a Maxim gun. The Queensland Mounted Infantry participated in the capture of Pretoria and the Battle of Diamond Hill.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Queensland Contingent (QMI) commanded by Lieutenant Colonel K Hutch arrived in Cape Town, Cape Colony, South Africa in February 1900. They were rapidly deployed to the front, and a portion was able to take part in the advance after Cronje's surrender. After Paardeberg the Queenslanders (called in the despatch the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Queensland Mounted Infantry) were put into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of Mounted Infantry, the commander of the brigade being Lieutenant-Colonel C G Martyr. The remainder of the brigade were regulars.

The brigade had on several occasions encountered difficult times on the way to Bloemfontein, and bore its share of the fighting with credit. 31<sup>st</sup> March 1900, saw action at Sanna's Post (a.k.a. Korn Spruit). In the despatch of 31<sup>st</sup> March 1900, giving the names of those who had distinguished themselves in the advance, Captains Reid and Browne of the Queensland 1<sup>st</sup> Contingent were mentioned. The strength of the Queenslanders, who marched into Bloemfontein on 13<sup>th</sup> March 1900, was officially stated at 16 officers, 312 men, and 369 horses.

In the advance to Pretoria, the Queenslanders, now about 400 strong were in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mounted Infantry Corps under Pilcher. The other regiments in Pilcher's corps were the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mounted Infantry (Regulars) and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> New Zealand Mounted Rifles. Pilcher's corps was part of the Mounted Infantry Brigade which distinguished itself during the next few months under General Hutton.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Queensland Mounted Infantry (QMI) Contingent, was made up of 320 mounted infantry, commanded by Major W H Tunbridge. They sailed on the *Duke of Portland* on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1900 and arrived in the Cape on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1900. However, they were turned around and sent to Beira. They arrived sometime before mid-April. The contingent was a portion of what became known as the *Australian Bushmen Corps*, which in January 1900 had been destined for southern Africa.

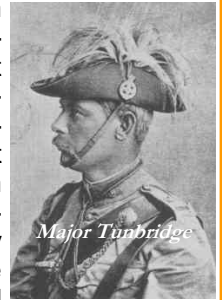
Before the relief of Mafeking was effected in May 1900, Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer mentioned he was joined by a Canadian battery ('C' Battery) and by some Queenslanders (QMI), part of the force which disembarked at Beira. These Queenslanders were 'D' Squadron of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Contingent (QMI), under the command of Captain Kellie and Lieutenants Fowles, Harris and Annat, amongst the officers. Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer spoke very highly of these troops, as of all the Australians and New Zealanders who served under him. He had ample opportunities, throughout two years' campaigning, of putting the qualities of his men, to all manner of severe tests.

After Mafeking was relieved, Captain Kellie's men moved eastward with Generals Baden-Powell and Plumer, via Ottoshoop and Zeerust to the Rustenburg district, where they were employed during July and August. In the fighting at Kosters River, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, the Queensland detachment had Lieutenants Walsh and Leask and 6 men wounded. Lieutenant Leask died of his wounds at Pretoria on 20<sup>th</sup> August.

Captain H.C.W. Hamilton, who had been left sick in hospital at Marandellas, Rhodesia, died there on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1900.

The larger portion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> contingent, under Major Tunbridge, also crossed Rhodesia and entered the Transvaal near Mafeking, as part of the Rhodesian Field Force (RFF) under the command of Major-General Carrington, but they were not to see Kellie's squadron for a long time. The contingent, like other regiments of the Rhodesian Field Force (RFF), was thus much split up.

On 19<sup>th</sup> July Major Tunbridge, with a detachment of his Queenslanders, brought a convoy into Elands River Post camp on the way to Rustenburg. It had been intended that Tunbridge and his men should join Baden-Powell near Megato Pass; but in view of the great strength of the enemy in the neighbourhood, that was found to be impracticable. As things turned out, it was most fortunate that this squadron remained at Elands River, as Tunbridge and his men played a very valuable part in the defence of the garrison when the post was attacked on 5<sup>th</sup> August...



### New South Wales:

The NSW Lancers consisting of around 72 NSW Lancers under the command of Captain Cox arrived in South Africa on the 2<sup>nd</sup>



NSW Lancers (Aldershot Detachment) at Stellenbosch (Remount Camp)

November 1899. They claim to have been the first overseas Colonials to land in South Africa to take part in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. After their arrival at Cape Town, they were deployed to De Aar, but were shortly split up; one body, about 40, under Captain Cox, going to Colesberg, as part of Major-General John French's Force and another, about 30, under Lieutenant Osborne, to Orange River, formed part of Lord Methuen's force.

This detachment was engaged at Belmont, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1899; at Enslin on the 25<sup>th</sup>; at Modder River on the 28<sup>th</sup>; and at Magersfontein on 11<sup>th</sup> December. General French was initially ordered to assemble a Cavalry Division at Maitland, near Cape Town and was then ordered to take command of forces covering the Colesberg area, filling in the gap between Methuen's division, operating at Orange River Station, with a view to relieving Kimberley and Mafeking.

Colonel Walter Howard Tunbridge CB CMG CBE VD (1856-1943) was an Australian architect and soldier. He and his unit were sent to keep order at the 1891 shearers' strike, and in June 1892 Tunbridge was promoted captain. In November 1898 he was promoted major and transferred to the Queensland Artillery Garrison Battery, serving in South Africa from 1900 and commanding the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mounted Infantry Contingent. He saw action at the Siege of Elands River Post and Rhenoster Kop. He served with distinction and was mentioned in despatches, appointed Companion of the Order of the Bath (CB), awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal (QSM) with five clasps and promoted brevet lieutenant-colonel. He returned to Australia in 1902 and served as aide-de-camp to the Governor-General...

Cont.

The New South Wales Lancers, were welcomed, yet unexpected. They were on their way back to NSW after training in England and stopped over in Cape Town. Volunteering at Cape Town was in its very early stages. Overseas men had not yet arrived, and the regiment allegedly holds the proud distinction of its squadron being the first of all overseas volunteers to land at any of the bases of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War.

However, this is not strictly true, as Indian troops arrived in Natal between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October 1899, before the declaration of war (11<sup>th</sup> October 1899), and were immediately deployed to the Transvaal border.

The Battle of Modder River, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1899, was the first major setback suffered by Lord Methuen during the first attempt to relieve the siege of Kimberley. Technically it was a British victory, but achieved at great cost and with no credit to Methuen.

In December 1899, he commanded the British forces at the Battle of Magersfontein, 11<sup>th</sup> December 1899, where the British suffered a humiliating defeat with heavy losses, one of three that week, which became known in England as Black Week (the others were at Stormberg and Colenso). Methuen was effectively side-lined for the remainder of the war. He remained in the Kimberley-Boshof area trying to capture the Boer General, Christiaan de Wet.

**1<sup>st</sup> NSW Mounted Rifles** - One squadron of Mounted Rifles sailed from New South Wales in November 1899, and three squadrons of Mounted Infantry on 17<sup>th</sup> January 1900. Another squadron of Mounted Infantry was formed from the infantry unit, 125 men, which sailed on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1899. The squadron of Mounted Rifles, commanded by Captain J M Antill, arrived on the 6<sup>th</sup> December 1899, and were immediately deployed to the Orange River. During December 1899 and January 1900, they were then sent to garrison Prieska, as there was good reason to believe many of the inhabitants in that district were disloyal...

For the advance to Pretoria, the regiment was put into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mounted Infantry Corps under Lieutenant-Colonel Beauvoir De Lisle, part of General Ian Hamilton's army. Lieutenant-Colonel De Lisle's mounted infantry, along with other troops under General Hamilton, were in pursuit of General de Wet up to the Megaliesberg. They suffered a few casualties on the way. After General de Wet evaded pursuit, they then proceeded to assisted in lifting the Siege of Elands River.

Major-General Charles Frederick Cox CB CMG DSO (1863-1944), soldier, railway auditor and politician, He and his NSW Lancers returned to Sydney at the end of their year of service. As a major, he was appointed to command the newly raised 3<sup>rd</sup> New South Wales Mounted Rifles and was back in South Africa with this regiment in April 1901. In June he was made an honorary lieutenant-colonel...

This is not strictly true, as troops from India arrived a few days before the declaration of war. At the time the British Raj, also called the Indian Empire, was the imperial political structure in the Indian subcontinent from 1858 (when the British took control from the British East India Company) to 1947 (when India was granted independence). The British Raj at the time was a **Crown colony** of presidencies, provinces and Princely States, directly governed by the British Crown through the Viceroy and Governor-General of India...

John MacQuarie Antill was born at Jarvisfield, Picton, New South Wales on 26 January 1866, the second surviving son of John MacQuarie Antill. His grandfather, Major Henry Colden Antill, had served in America and India before coming to New South Wales, where he served as aide de camp to Governor MacQuarie. Antill joined the local militia in 1887. In 1889, he raised a squadron of mounted infantry in Picton, of which he was given command. The Picton squadron became part of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles (as it became known in 1890), in which he was commissioned as a captain on 19<sup>th</sup> January 1889. Major General Edward Hutton, the commander of the NSW Military Forces, arranged for Antill to do a tour of duty with the British army in India in 1893. In November 1899, Antill was promoted to major and given command of 'A' Squadron of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles, a unit specially raised for service in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War... Cont.

One of the few casualties in the relieving force was Lieutenant-Colonel De Lisle, who was wounded in the process.

The **New South Wales Imperial Bushmen** left Sydney, on board the transport ship *Armenian*, on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1900. The regiment originally numbered 40 officers with 722 other ranks, and 800 horses. They were the fourth contingent sent from New South Wales to the war. The corps landed at Beira, crossed Rhodesia, and operated in the north-west of the Transvaal.

From June to August 1900, they served with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, Rhodesian Field Force (RFF) under the command of General Carrington; then Lieutenant General Lord Methuen's No. 2 Column, from September to December, 1900.

Under General Carrington they advanced to the relief of Elands River Post, but took part in what was a very inglorious retreat. Apparently, the Imperial Bushmen expressed themselves very freely regarding the humiliating role they had been forced to play. They had suffered some very trifling losses, but would gladly have endured much to have had the credit of lifting the Siege of Elands River. Apparently, Lord Cecil felt extremely humiliated by General Carrington's inexplicable behaviour. He (Major Lord Cecil), Lieutenant-Colonel Hore and Colonel Baden-Powell, were heroes of the Siege of Mafeking. It would have been rather humiliating, to say the least, to consider oneself on the same side...

**NSW Citizens' Bushmen** - In January 1900, it was announced that the Imperial Government had accepted the offer of a corps, to be known as the *Australian Bushmen*, which would be furnished by the Australian colonies. This regiment, which was the quota of New South Wales, was about 530 strong, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Airey, DSO. Four companies sailed on the *Atlantian* and one on the *Maplemore*, on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1900. On arriving in southern Africa, the regiment was despatched by sea to Beira, and landed there on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1900. This was sometimes referred to as the 'Citizen's Bushmen Contingent', as contrasted with the 'Imperial Bushmen Contingent', a later contribution.

General Sir Henry de Beauvoir de Lisle KCB KCMG DSO (1864-1955) a British Army General who served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War and WWI, where he commanded the Australian Brigade, a mobile column comprising the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion Mounted Infantry, the West Australian Mounted Infantry, the South Australian Imperial Bushmen and the New South Wales Mounted Rifles. He was severely wounded and three times mentioned in despatches. ...

Henry Parke Airey CMG, DSO (1842-1911) was an Australian colonial soldier. He was born on 3 August 1842 at Kingthorpe, Yorkshire, England, son of Henry Cookson Airey, Indian Army officer, and his wife Emily, née Parke. Educated at Marlborough College and the East India Co.'s Military College at Addiscombe, he went to India on graduating in 1859, and was commissioned ensign in the 101<sup>st</sup> Regiment (Royal Bengal Fusiliers) in 1861. He served on the north-west frontier for six years and was promoted lieutenant in 1863. Airey retired from the army in 1866 and arrived in Sydney in August. Airey was of the New South Wales Artillery, formerly in the 101<sup>st</sup> Foot; and having become attached to the New South Wales military forces, of which he became Captain in March 1886, served in the Sudan Campaign with the colonial contingent, receiving a medal, with clasp, for the advance on Tamai. He served with the British army in Burma in 1886 and 1887, and having behaved with great gallantry and been severely wounded, was created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) in 1888 and thus reputedly became the first Australian soldier to be so decorated, mentioned in despatches, and pensioned by the Government of India.

In further recognition of his brilliant services in Burma, he was, in June 1887, appointed a brevet-major in the New South Wales forces by Lord Carrington (Charles Robert Wynn-Carrington, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquis of Lincolnshire KG GCMG PC JP DL), then Governor of NSW. He was appointed honorary aide-de-camp to the governor of NSW in November 1896. In February 1900 Airey left for South Africa in command of the New South Wales Citizens' Bushmen's Contingent which was part of the Rhodesian Field Force (RFF). He served as a Lieutenant-Colonel during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, where he was appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG)...

The 'Bushmen' who landed at Beira included the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> New Zealanders, Lieutenant-Colonel Airey's Regiment from New South Wales, and contingents from the other Australian colonies.

Mr Green, chaplain of the regiment, in his 'Story of the Bushmen' says that it was announced that, apart from the New Zealanders, the other contingents would be divided as follows:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment, New South Wales, Colonel Airey;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, Victorians and West Australians, Major Vials;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, Queenslanders, Major Tunbridge.

The different corps were very much split up and mixed up, before they had gone far into the Transvaal; while a composite regiment was formed of one squadron from each of the 5<sup>th</sup> New Zealand, 3<sup>rd</sup> South Australians, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tasmanians, and 'D' squadron of the 1<sup>st</sup> NSW Bushmen. This composite regiment did excellent work under Lord Erroll and Lord Methuen.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July, at Koster River between the Megato Pass and Elands River, there was very heavy fighting, more about this later...

Lieutenant-Colonel Airey left around 100 of his men of the 1<sup>st</sup> NSW Bushmen, chiefly from 'A' squadron, under Captain James Francis Thomas, Lieutenant D William Cope, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenants Richard Essington Zouch, Charles Cornwall and Bronowski, to help defend the garrison at Brakfontein Drift (Elands River Post). Their effort in defence of the Elands River Post did NSW proud through a splendid display of heroism under the garrison commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Hore...

Charles Gore Hay, 20<sup>th</sup> Earl of Erroll KT CB (1852-1927), Following the outbreak of the Second Boer War in late 1899, he volunteered for active service and was commissioned in the Imperial Yeomanry. He took part in the Battle of Paardeberg (February 1900), following which he was in charge of prisoners from Piet Cronjé's army...

To be continued.

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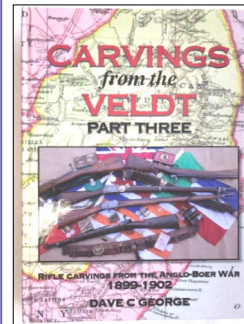
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## A NEW NAME ON AN OLD MEMORIAL

Diane Melloy and David Hunter

21 September 2020



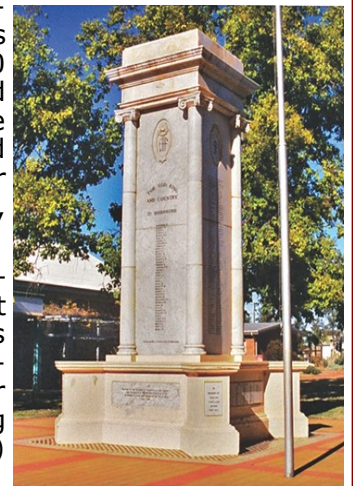
A new name was added recently to the war memorial in Charleville - appropriate recognition, finally, for an Outback man who fought in Australia's "First War" and a fitting reward for the perseverance of a longtime member of the Boer War Association Queensland.

Unveiled by Governor Sir Matthew Nathan on 9 October 1924, the heritage-listed Charleville War Memorial features a seven-metre tall pillar of Italian marble with Ionic pilasters and entablature. Large panels on three of the pillar's four faces bear the leaded names of 310 Charleville-area residents who served in World War I, including 40 who fell. The sandstone base displays the names of those who served in World War II, and incorporates smaller marble panels commemorating other conflicts, including the Boer War.

Until recently, however, there was no recognition for the only Charleville-area resident known to have served in the Boer War. This was a significant omission, since the volunteers who joined the Colours to fight for Queen and Empire in 1899-1900 and for King and Country (the newly formed Australian Commonwealth from 1 January 1901) are now appropriately designated by historians as "Fathers of the Anzacs".

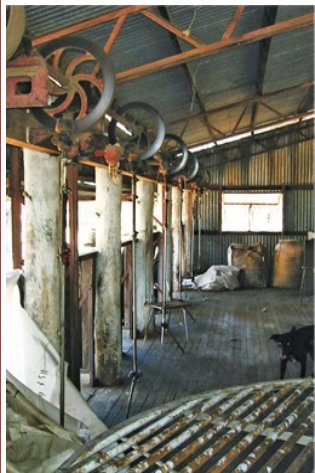
The soldier was Joseph Lock. The absence of his name from the monument has been put right, thanks to the determination and perseverance of his daughter, Valma Hunter, an honorary life member of the Boer War Association Queensland.

Continued over



Born at Roma in 1877 (three months after his father's sudden death), Joseph Lock answered the call to service in early 1901. He left the family home at Charleville, presented himself for attestation in Brisbane and, as a member of the 5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen, sailed for South Africa on 6 March 1901, aboard the *Templemore*.

The 5th QIB joined General Plumer's column and saw action in many far-flung areas. On 4 January 1902, while on patrol at Onverwacht (the Afrikaans word means 'unexpected'), the Bushmen were ambushed by Boer guerrillas. Heavily outnumbered, they fought bravely, but in vain. Eleven were killed in action, 19 were wounded, and 45 officers and men (including the commanding officer, Major Frederick W. Toll, and Joseph Lock) were taken prisoner. The fighting at Onverwacht, in the Ermelo district of Transvaal, was the last major action of the war. A treaty ending the war was signed on 31 May 1902.



Corporal Joseph Lock was discharged at Cape Town on 26 March 1902. For his military service he was awarded the Queen's Medal with three clasps -

Cape Colony, Orange Free State, and Transvaal.

Joseph returned to civilian life in the Outback during the Federation Drought, the worst drought in Australia's recorded history. (By 1903, half the nation's flock of sheep was lost, and more than 40 per cent of its cattle, nearly three million in Queensland alone.)

Following years of lonely hardship and sheer hard work, the Lock/Calcino family became well-established, prosperous graziers, owning several sheep and cattle properties in the Charleville region.

Joseph Lock married Catherine Shepley, an emigrant from England, at Brisbane in 1918. Their son, George, was born in 1919 and daughter, Valma, in 1920. The Locks sold their property, *Alice Downs*, in 1933 and built a new residence on St. Paul's Terrace, Brisbane - *Vailima Flats* - in 1934. The building was heritage-listed in 2004.

Accompanied by daughter Diane and son David, Valma (at age 90) visited Charleville in November 2010 for the Remembrance Day service at the war memorial. She noticed that although the names of those who served in the two world wars were listed, there was no such acknowledgment for the Boer War.



Valma is an accomplished researcher with a "nose for news" and a passion for fostering awareness of local history. She has detailed knowledge of the history of her own pioneering family and of life as it is lived in Western Queensland.



Several years ago, Valma learned that Queensland Government grants were to be made available to local communities for war memorial improvement and restoration. With the deadline looming, she moved swiftly to contact the Charleville RSL, and urged that an application be made without delay. As a result, approval was secured for a marble block bearing the name of Joseph Lock, Boer War veteran, to be added to the Charleville War Memorial. It was fixed in place in July 2020 - a new name on an old memorial.

Valma is one of the very few living first-generation descendants of Boer War veterans. In 2017, she travelled to Canberra with her daughter, Diane Melloy, to attend the dedication of the National Boer War Memorial on 31 May - the 115th anniversary of the signing of the Peace Treaty. In 2019, the Boer War Association Queensland honoured her with life membership, and on 12 September 2020, at a meeting at Maleny RSL, Diane enrolled her mother as a member of the Military Historical Society of Australia (Queensland).

Valma Hunter is now looking forward to her 100th birthday, on 4 November 2020.

\*\*\*\*\*

Diane Melloy and David Hunter - [flanders1918@bigpond.com](mailto:flanders1918@bigpond.com)

1. Cover: Charleville War Memorial, 2020. Photo: Robert Calcino
2. Charleville War Memorial, 2005. Photo: Queensland Heritage Register
3. Old shearing shed at *Alice Downs*, 2001. Photo: David Hunter
4. Valma Hunter with photograph of her father, Corporal Joseph Lock, at the dedication of the National Boer War Memorial, Canberra, 2017. Photo: ABC
5. Valma Hunter with Life Member certificate from Boer War Association Queensland, 2019. Photo: Diane Melloy





# Boer War Association Queensland

Queensland Patron:

Major General Professor John Pearn, AO RFD (Retd)

1899



1902



## Monumentally Speaking - Queensland Edition

Committee Newsletter - Volume 13, No. 4, Part 2 of 4 - September 2020

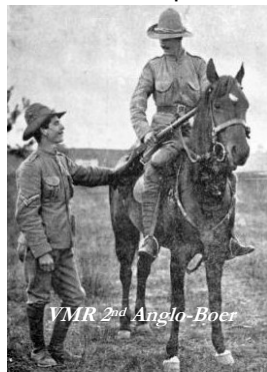
### Road to the Battle of Brakfontein Drift by Gordon Bold Cont. (Part 2)

#### Siege of Elands River Post (*Battle of Brakfontein Drift*): Cont.

##### Victoria

The **1<sup>st</sup> Victorian Contingent** arrived in southern Africa, November 1899, limited to one company of mounted rifles and one company of infantry; the latter was mounted in January 1900. They like most of the Australians were sent to De Aar. About the beginning of January, the mounted squadron was with General Babington, assisting to protect the communications of Lord Methuen. On 8<sup>th</sup> January Babington, with the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Lancers, Victoria Mounted rifles and 'G' Battery, made a reconnaissance to Ramdam in the Orange River Colony. Although they took part in various expeditions of this kind, both to the east and west of the railway, the Victorians did little real fighting in this neighbourhood. The infantry unit, under Captain McInerney, formed part of the Australian Regiment, and during December and January was stationed around Enslin and Belmont, and other points on the line between the Orange and Modder Rivers.

The **2<sup>nd</sup> Victorian Mounted Rifles Contingent**, arrived in Cape Town 6<sup>th</sup> February 1900, and was dispatched on the 12<sup>th</sup> February, with the object of joining General Clements. However, Colonel Price received a message to disembark and hold Hanover Road, between De Aar and Naauwpoort, as the Boers were swarming down into the country behind General Clements' left rear. They immediately adopted a defensive state, holding a long line opposite the Boer position around Colesberg. Major-General Clements took over command on the Colesberg front from Major-General John French in late January, and held it with lesser forces against the attacks of Boer commander Koos de la Rey.



The **3<sup>rd</sup> Victorian Bushmen Contingent** - consisted of two squadrons of Mounted Infantry commanded by Major Dobbin. They were normally known as *Victorian Bushmen*, sometimes *Australian Bushmen*. The contingent arrived at Beira on the *Euryalus* on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1900, and formed part of the Rhodesian Field Force (RFF) which, under General Carrington, crossed Rhodesia and entered the Transvaal near Mafeking. A party of Victorian nursing sisters landed at Beira with the troops and accompanied them on the long journey to Mafeking.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Victorian Bushmen were associated with the 3<sup>rd</sup> West Australian Contingent, the two forming the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Bushmen but sometimes referred to as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Australian Bushmen. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Victorian contingent was split up, but the larger portion moved eastward from Mafeking and Zeerust with Colonel Plumer, under whom they acted, and did fine work during their term in the field.

A detachment of about 50, under Captain Ham, was dropped at Elands River, east of Zeerust, and formed a portion of the garrison which, under Lieutenant-Colonel Hore, made a splendid defence from 4<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> August (Siege of Elands River). About 60 of the contingent were in the force of Colonel Airey, one of those which attempted, but unsuccessfully, to push through to Hore. Ham's detachment was in September brought by rail from Mafeking to Pretoria and joined Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer north of Pretoria.

The **4<sup>th</sup> Victorian Imperial Contingent** corps, consisting of a battalion (five companies of mounted rifles), commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel N W Kelly, formed a portion of the second or 'Imperial' Bushmen force which was contributed to by all the Australian colonies. This Victorian Contingent was often officially referred to as the *Victorian Imperial Regiment*, and sometimes as the *Victorian Imperial Bushmen*. The regiment sailed from Melbourne on the ship *Victorian*, on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1900 and landed at Beira.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Victorians were split up at an early stage of their fighting career: Colonel Kelly, with one portion, had a long association with Lord Methuen. The other portion of the 4<sup>th</sup> Victorians operated with General Plumer, and under him gained great distinction.

##### Tasmania:

The 1<sup>st</sup> Tasmanian Contingent, landed at Cape Town on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1899. They were commanded by Captain Cameron. They were at first dispatched to the De-

Major-General Ralph Arthur Penrhyn Clements CB DSO (1855-1909), was a senior British Army officer. He fought in the 9<sup>th</sup> Xhosa War (1877-1878) and the Anglo-Zulu War (1879) as a junior officer and as a Major-General in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo Boer War... Major General Sir Frederick Carrington KCB KCMG (1844-1913), was a British soldier and friend of Cecil Rhodes. He acquired fame by crushing the 1896 Matabele rebellion. In 1875/6 he raised and commanded the Mounted Infantry in the Griqualand West expedition and the Frontier Light Horse in the Ninth Frontier War in 1877. In 1885, he accompanied Sir Charles Warren's expedition to Bechuanaland in command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mounted Infantry, which soon became known as 'Carrington's Horse'. He commanded the Bechuanaland Police beginning in 1888. He was also appointed military adviser to the High Commissioner in the First Matabele War and commanded the British force in the Matabele Rebellion in 1896. Following the outbreak of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, October 1899, he was appointed on the staff of the South Africa Field Force on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1900, with the local rank of a Lieutenant-General to be in command of the Rhodesian Field Force...

Cont.

Aar-Modder line, where, along with the other units composing the Australian Regiment, they garrisoned Enslin and other posts protecting the railway.

Towards the close of January 1900 they were converted into mounted infantry, and were sent to Naauwpoort, south of Colesberg in the Cape Colony, and joined the force of Major-General Clements.

The **Tasmanian 2<sup>nd</sup> Bushman's Contingent** - sailed from Hobart on the *Atlantian* on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1900. This was half a squadron, commanded by Captain Riggall, and was generally known as the 1<sup>st</sup> Bushmen Contingent. Along with other Bushmen they landed at Beira in April, and having crossed Rhodesia towards Mafeking, took part in many operations in the Western Transvaal under Carrington, Lord Erroll, and Lord Methuen. They had several casualties near Ottoshoop on 6<sup>th</sup> August, when Carrington was endeavouring to assist Hore. This Tasmanian contingent formed a composite Bushmen Regiment along with 'D' Squadron of the 1<sup>st</sup> New South Wales Bushmen, 1 squadron of the 5<sup>th</sup> New Zealanders, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> South Australians.



#### South Australia:

The 1<sup>st</sup> **South Australian Mounted Rifles Contingent** arrived in South Africa, November 1899. On arrival, they were sent to the De Aar-Modder River railway to occupy posts, first at Belmont, and after 10<sup>th</sup> December at Enslin, to protect the railway line. At the end of January the South Australians were, along with the remainder of the Australian Regiment, converted into mounted infantry and taken to Naauwpoort (Noupoort), located around 54 kilometres south of Colesberg, where they received horses and joined the force of Major-General Clements.



The 2<sup>nd</sup> **South Australian Mounted Rifles Contingent** arrived in South Africa, February 1900. They too were dispatched to De Aar on 6<sup>th</sup> March. After arriving at De Aar, a squadron was dispatched to Britstown, as part of Lieutenant-Colonel John Adye's column to put down the Prieska Rebellion.

Apparently, some very hard riding was done, but the squadron managed to return to De Aar tired and with their horses in fair condition. They were then posted to

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Captain David J. Ham was the son of Ballarat Politician David Ham. He was a Captain of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Victorian Bushmen's Contingent during 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War involved at the Siege of Elands River in August 1900...

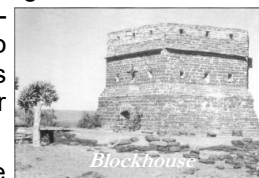
Major-General Sir John Adye KCMG CB (1857-1930), was the son of General Sir John Miller Adye. He fought in the Afghan War (1879), Egyptian War (1882), Nile Expedition between 1884 and 1885. Gained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in 1893 and fought in the Boer War between 1899 and 1902. Became a full Colonel in 1904 and Major-General in 1911 and fought in WWI. Authored the books 'Soldiers and Others I Have Known', published 1925, 'The Golden Scarab', published 1926, 'A Flash of Lightning', published 1927 and 'Napoleon of the Snows', published 1931. He became Colonel Commandant of the Royal Artillery between 1926 and 1927...

Norvalspont (Norvals Pont), located around 40km east-north-east of Colesberg.

From here, the 2<sup>nd</sup> South Australian Mounted Rifles contingent was dispatched to Bloemfontein, where they joined the 1<sup>st</sup> South Australian Mounted Rifles contingent and the main army. At this stage, Bloemfontein had already been captured. On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1900, following the Battle of Paardeberg, British forces captured Bloemfontein and built a concentration camp nearby, to house Boer women and children.

#### Cape Boer Rebellion:

During February and March 1900, de Wet was active in organising revolts in Prieska, Upington, and Kenhardt, and was promoted to Commandant. From the 16<sup>th</sup> February to 19<sup>th</sup> March 1900, Prieska was virtually occupied by hostile Boer forces and Boer Rebels.



Boer commandos occupied the Norvalspont rail transport bridge on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1899, and successfully invaded the Cape Colony soon after. As the British military pushed back, the Boers destroyed three of its central columns on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1900, thus rendering it inoperable.

A few days later, British engineers began constructing a pontoon bridge which would allow several soldiers on foot and horseback to cross the river into the Orange Free State. By the end of March, a temporary railway bridge had been constructed. This bridge and the pump house had to be protected so sangars were constructed in strategic locations, plus a blockhouse was built.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> March 1900, British armed forces dispatched by Lord Roberts to check the advance of Boer Commandos, led by Vechtgeneraal (Combat-General) Liebenberg, were attacked approximately 32 kilometres from Britstown and were forced to retreat back to Britstown, with the loss of 21 men.

#### Prieska Rebellion:

After the relief of Kimberley on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1900, Ladysmith on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1900, and Field Marshal Lord Roberts's entry into Bloemfontein on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 1900, many Cape Rebels had quietly returned to their farms or had crossed the Orange River into the region known as Gordonia, evading the British Posts in Upington, Dragoender and Prieska. One exception however, was the Prieska area where out of about 600 men, capable of bearing arms, no fewer than 400 had

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Andries Gerhardus de Wet (1876-1930) was a South African soldier and founder of the Vrykorps in German South West Africa which tried to overthrow the British-aligned government of the Union of South Africa, at the beginning of WWI, to establish German rule in the Union of South Africa. He was the son of the Veldkornet (lieutenant) Pieter Gerhardus de Wet, and a cousin of General Christiaan de Wet. He was a member of the TVK (*Theron se Verkenningkorps [Theron's Reconnaissance Corps]*) founded by Daniël "Danie" Theron. In December 1899, Theron sent him to the front at Colesberg with 25 men under his command...

Cape Rebels were Cape Boers (Afrikaners), Boer kith and kin of the Boer Republics of the OVS (*Oranje Vrijstaat / Oranje-Vrystaat [Orange Free State]*) and ZAR (*Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek [South African Republic / Transvaal Republic]*)...

Sangar (also sanger) - a temporary fortification usually built of stone or sand bags...

Blockhouse - in military science, is a small fortification, usually consisting of one or more rooms with loopholes (rifle ports), allowing its defenders to fire in various directions, usually providing a 360° defence...

General Petrus Johannes Liebenberg (1857-1950) was a Boer general during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. He participated in the Battle of Kraaipan, Battle of Modder River and Battle of Magersfontein. He was also involved in the Siege of Mafeking. During January 1900 he was promoted from Commandant (Kommandant) to Combat-General (Vechtgeneraal). He then invaded the Cape...

done so, under the leadership of a Jewish storekeeper named Chaim David 'Hermann' Judelewitz. The problem for the British was that they threatened the railway line.

The area they operated in is extremely sparse, Prieska, Britstown and Carnarvon districts of Cape Colony, west of the railway, between De Aar and the Orange River. This had the potential of seriously disrupting communications, supply lines and access necessary for the Relief of Mafeking and the capture of Johannesburg and Pretoria. In fact, Britstown became an important staging point along the *Diamond Way* linking Cape Town with the diamond fields in Kimberley and later the gold fields along the Witwatersrand. The Boer and Boer Rebel activity in the area needed to be checked.

Therefore, around the 15<sup>th</sup> March 1900, Lord Roberts appointed three small columns to be formed to counter the rebellion. They were under the overall command of Brigadier-General Sir Henry Settle of the Orange River Station. The three columns were:

- The left (south-western) Column of around 450 men was under the command of Colonel Sir Charles Parsons. The column was raised in Victoria West and their objective was to march on Carnarvon and Kenhardt.
- The Centre Column of around 500 men under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Adye. The column was raised in Britstown, which included three companies of mounted infantry and the City Imperial Volunteers, with their objective being to concentrate on the area around Britstown and advance onto Houwater and Prieska. This included a forced march to the drift at Kheis / Keimoes...
- The Right (north-eastern) Column personally commanded by Brigadier-General Sir Henry Settle, of around 600 men, which included Orpen's Horse, one company of mounted infantry, a field battery, and half a battalion of infantry, raised in Hopetown/Orange River Station (Oranjerivier). Their objective was to clear the river banks and secure the drifts and cut Vechtgeneraal (Combat-General) Liebenberg off.

### **Jewish Boers:**

Very little is known about the Jewish Boers, the exact number of Jews who served on the Boer side will never be known.

Chaim David Judelewitz, a 24 year-old former Slabodka Yeshiva Bochur, was one of these and fought in the major battles on the western Kimberley front and played a leading role in the little-known Prieska Rebellion. He was an excellent horseman and marksman and was soon promoted to the rank of Veldkornet (Lieutenant). During the siege of Kimberley, he won admiration for single-handedly capturing seven Scottish troops, bringing in a watercart. Later, he was one of the few Boers to escape from Cronje's laager just before its surrender to Lord Roberts. Judelewitz, instead of retiring to the Transvaal as most Boers were doing, moved to the Prieska area where a rebellion against British rule was underway. After the revolt was put down, he took charge of a small band of diehards who continued to raid and plunder. His group was known as the 'Judelewitz Party' and himself as the 'Russian Rebel'. In May 1900, his camp, on what is now Cannon Island in the Orange River near Kheis Drift Keimoes was surprised by a large British force led by Colonel Adye and in the ensuing bombardment, Judelewitz was killed...

### **Kheis Drift / Keimoes:**

Towards the end of May 1900, Colonel Adye in Prieska received intelligence that 400 Rebels had formed a laager at Kheis on the northern bank of the Orange River,

midway between Upington and Prieska. Adye's force, comprised 4 guns, a company of mounted infantry of the Gloucestershire Regiment, the Militia Battalion of the Welsh Regiment, Nesbitt's Horse and 44<sup>th</sup> Battery Royal Field Artillery.

Colonel Adye decided to act immediately and leaving his infantry and 2 of the 6 guns at Prieska, he made a forced march with the remaining 2 sections of 15-pounders, Nesbitt's Horse and the Mounted Infantry to the drift opposite Kheis, which he reached on the 26<sup>th</sup> May 1900. While en route, he was reinforced by the 32<sup>nd</sup> Lancashire Hussars, Imperial Yeomanry at Draghoender and at Kheis by the 5<sup>th</sup> Warwickshire Yeomanry from Kenhardt. Besides being laagered on the northern bank of the Orange River, Judelewitz had occupied a heavily wooded island in the middle of the river, and this commanded the drift. May 27<sup>th</sup> 1900, goes down in history as the day Colonel Adye concluded the Prieska Rebellion at Kheis Drift.

The **3<sup>rd</sup> South Australian Bushmen Contingent** was 100 strong, commanded by Captain S Gran Hubbe, sailed on the *Maplemore* from Adelaide on 7<sup>th</sup> March 1900, and landed at Beira on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1900. They formed part of General Carrington's Rhodesian Field Force (RFF) which crossed Rhodesia and entered the Transvaal from around Mafeking.

It was intended that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of the Rhodesian Field Force should consist of the 3<sup>rd</sup> South Australians, 3<sup>rd</sup> Tasmanians, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Queenslanders; but before Mafeking was reached on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1900, the regiment was split up and was never brought together. Between 4<sup>th</sup> July and 9<sup>th</sup> August 1900, the squadron was patrolling the Marico area and working towards Elands River district. On 6<sup>th</sup> August 1900, Lieutenant Collins was wounded. On the 9<sup>th</sup> August 1900, the squadron retired to Mafeking with Carrington. On the 15<sup>th</sup> August 1900, the squadron was put into a Composite Bushmen Regiment, along with 'D' Squadron of the 1<sup>st</sup> New South Wales Bushmen, Captain Poison's squadron of the 5<sup>th</sup> New Zealand, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tasmanians. For a long time, the regiment did excellent work in the western Transvaal as part of Lord Methuen's force.

### **Western Australia:**

**West Australian 1<sup>st</sup> Mounted Rifles Contingent** arrived in South Africa November 1899. On their arrival in South Africa, they disembarked for De Aar, where they were employed on the lines of communication between De Aar and Modder River. In January 1900, they, like most of the other Australians were converted into mounted infantry. Then, in early February were sent to join the forces under General Clements in the Colesberg district.

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Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Hamilton Settle KCB DSO (1847-1923) was a senior British Army officer who held various commands during the Second Boer War. For a few months in 1899 he commanded the Royal Engineers at Malta, whence he was called in October to take part in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo Boer War. He was initially appointed Inspector General of Lines of Communication, stationed at Cape Town. Early 1900, he was appointed to command the troops stationed in the Orange River Colony, where he arrived on 14<sup>th</sup> February, appointed with the temporary rank of brigadier-general from 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1900...

Colonel Sir Charles Sim Bremridge Parsons KCMG CB FRGS (1855-1923) was an officer in the British Army, who spent most of his career in Africa. Parsons was commissioned into the Royal Artillery in 1876 and posted to South Africa. He fought in the 1877-1879 Gaika War (9<sup>th</sup> Xhosa War), Anglo-Zulu War (1879), 1<sup>st</sup> Boer War (1880-1881)...

Victoria West is a town in the central Karoo region of the Northern Cape...

Jewish Boers - It is likely that around 250 fought in the commandos, including at least a dozen medical personnel. Perhaps another fifty served in a reserve capacity; for example, in the various town guards and in the POW camps. At least two Jews were amongst those guarding Winston Churchill...

Cont.

**West Australian 2<sup>nd</sup> Mounted Infantry Contingent** arrived in South Africa in February 1900. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Contingent, commanded by Captain H L Pilkington, was



*West Australian Bushmen*

portion of a column designed to put down the Prieska Rebellion and continued to operate in the district during part of April. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Contingent arrived at Bloemfontein in time to take part in the advance to Pretoria, in May 1900. On their arrival at Bloemfontein, the 2<sup>nd</sup> contingent was attached to General Pole-Carew's 11<sup>th</sup> Division, with which they served from 1<sup>st</sup> May to the end of October, 1900.

**West Australian 3<sup>rd</sup> Bushmen Contingent**, commanded by Major H G Vials, Captain in the Reserve of Officers, was taken to Beira, where they landed in April 1900. They formed part of the Rhodesian Field Force (RFF), under General Carrington; they crossed Rhodesia and entered the Transvaal near Mafeking. The contingent, small as it was, was split up, but they saw a great deal of fighting throughout July, August, and September 1900, in the district between Mafeking (now Mahikeng) in the west of Pretoria and Warmbad (now Bela-Bela) north of Pretoria.

#### New Zealand:

The 1<sup>st</sup> **New Zealand Contingent** of Mounted Rifles arrived at the Cape on 26<sup>th</sup> November 1899 under the command of Major Robin. They like the Australians were dispatched to De Aar, and from there moved to the Arundel district, where, on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1899, they, along with Australians, joined General French, who was then endeavouring to stem the Boer invasion in the Colesberg district.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> **New Zealand Contingent** of Mounted Rifles landed at Cape Town on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1900, under the command of Major Montagu Cradock. They were dispatched for the north on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1900. They disembarked at Victoria West, and together with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Canadian Mounted Rifles and a Canadian battery of field artillery, formed the advanced guard, under Major Cradock, of the Carnarvon Field Force, under Colonel Sir Charles Parsons.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> **New Zealand Contingent** consisted of two squadrons of Mounted Rifles, frequently referred to as the '*New Zealand Rough-Riders*', under the command of Major Jowsey, sailed on 17<sup>th</sup> February 1900, they disembarked in East London. It had been intended that they should go to Beira, but apparently their services were required in the Orange Free State. They were engaged in the operations for the relief of Wepener and the clearing of the country east of the railway.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, a British and South African colonial garrison of around 2000 men under Colonel E. H. Dalgety was besieged by the Boer commandos under the command of General Christiaan de Wet, at Jammers Drift on the Caledon River. The siege lasted 17 days, until reinforcements arrived on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1900, to end the battle in favour of the British.



*New Zealand 3<sup>rd</sup> Contingent  
'NZ Rough-riders'*

The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> **New Zealand Contingent** - At the beginning of February 1900, it was announced that New Zealand would send a fourth contingent, approximately three squadrons, but so great was the enthusiasm and so plentiful the supply of candidates that the contribution was increased to two full battalions of Mounted Rifles, known as the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> New Zealand Contingents. They sailed at the end of March, and disembarked at Beira at the end of April 1900. These two corps along with the 6<sup>th</sup> *New South Wales Imperial Bushmen* formed the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Brigade of the Rhodesian Field Force* (RFF), which crossed Rhodesia, under the leadership of General Carrington. They entered the Transvaal from the north-west; but before Mafeking was reached, the brigade was split up. The two New Zealand contingents took part in the attempt to relieve Colonel Hore, at the Siege of Elands River.

#### Canada:

The **Royal Canadian Regiment** of Infantry arrived in South Africa, on the 29<sup>th</sup> November 1899. On 1<sup>st</sup> December 1899, the regiment departed for De Aar,



*Royal Canadian Regiment-*

where for a few days they formed part of the garrison along with the 2<sup>nd</sup> *Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry*. The battalion soon moved nearer the enemy, first to Oranjerivier (Orange River Station), and on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> December to Belmont, the locality of Lord Methuen's first battle. The next two months were mainly spent on the lines of communication between Orange River Bridge and Modder River.

On 31<sup>st</sup> December 1899, 'C' Company, under Lieutenant Barker, was chosen to be part of a force under Colonel Pilcher, consisting of about two companies of Queensland Mounted Infantry (QMI), a section of Royal Horse Artillery, about 50 men of the Munster Fusilier Mounted Infantry, two companies of the Cornwall Light Infantry. The object of the expedition was to capture or break up a rebel laager near Douglas. 1<sup>st</sup> January 1900, the enemy were found and thus they too were involved in the *Battle of Sunnyside*. The Canadians were on the right flank of the attack; like all the troops engaged, performed excellently.

Lord Roberts formed the 19<sup>th</sup> Brigade under the command of Major-General Smith-Dorrien, which was made up of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Shropshire Light Infantry, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Gordon Highlanders, and the Royal Canadians. All but the Gordon Highlanders had been on the lines (*railway / communication*). The Gordon Highlanders had already fought at Magersfontein under Lord Methuen. The Brigade formed part of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division under the command of Major-General H E Colville.

General Sir Horace Lockwood Smith-Dorrien GCB GCMG DSO ADC (1858-1930) was a British Army General. He was one of the few British survivors of the Battle of Isandlwana (Zulu War-1879). He arrived in Durban 13<sup>th</sup> December 1899, in the middle of "Black Week". On 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1900, Lord Roberts put him in command of the 19<sup>th</sup> Brigade and, on 11<sup>th</sup> February, was promoted to major-general, making him one of youngest generals in the British Army at the time. He distinguished himself in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. He later commanded a division in South Africa...

Major-General Sir Henry Edward Colville KCMG CB (1852-1907) was an English soldier. He served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. During the early part of the war he commanded the Guards Brigade and was at the Battle of Modder River in November 1899. He took part in the Battle of Magersfontein on 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> December 1899, in which the defending Boer force defeated the advancing British forces who sustained

The 19<sup>th</sup> Brigade provided covering fire for French's Cavalry Division at Klipsdrift, and played an important role at the Battle of Paardeberg, 18<sup>th</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> February 1900, where he was summoned by Lord Roberts who requested Smith-Dorrien's views, apparently in the presence of Lord Kitchener, French and Colville. Smith-Dorrien apparently advised the use of sapping and fire support, rather than attacking the entrenched enemy over open ground. Apparently, Kitchener followed him to his horse to object, stating that he (Smith-Dorrien) would be 'a *made-man*' if he attacked as Lord Kitchener wished, to which he (Smith-Dorrien) apparently replied, '...he had given his views and would only attack if ordered to do so'. A week later, he took the laager, after careful assault.

At Sanna's Post (31<sup>st</sup> March 1900), Smith-Dorrien ignored inept orders from Colville, to leave the largely unprotected wounded, and managed an orderly retreat without further casualties. Smith-Dorrien's reputation as a leader was substantially enhanced during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War...

**Royal Canadian Artillery** - Canada furnished three batteries of artillery, 'C', 'D', and 'E', of six guns each. Battery 'C' arrived at the Cape about the end of March 1900, and, while still encamped at Stellenbosch, on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1900, they received orders to march back to Cape Town. Starting in the evening, the 33 miles were covered in a night, and by 12 noon on the 15<sup>th</sup> April 1900, they had re-embarked on the *Columbian*, en route for Mafeking via Beira and Bulawayo. They joined Colonel Plumer on the 15<sup>th</sup> March 1900. The officers of 'C' Battery were Major Hudson, Captain Panet, and Lieutenants King and Leslie.

On that date, Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer's Column from the north, and Colonel Mahon's Column from the south, joined forces. On the 16<sup>th</sup> March 1900, the combined force fought the stiffly contested action west of Mafeking which opened the gates of the town and raised a siege which had engrossed the attention of the British Empire for seven months...

### Relief of Kimberley and Battle of Paardeberg:

The Battle of Paardeberg was a major battle during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, located near what is known as Paardeberg Drift, on the banks of the Modder River, in the Orange Free State near Kimberley.

Lord Methuen advanced up the railway line in November 1899, with the objective of relieving the besieged city of Kimberley and besieged town of Mafeking. Battles were fought on this front at Graspan, Belmont and Modder River, before the advance was halted for two months, after the severe British defeat at the Battle of Magersfontein.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1899, Field Marshal Roberts returned to South Africa on the *RMS Dunottar Castle* to take overall command of British forces in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, taking over from the previous commander, General Redvers Buller. General Redvers Buller remained in command of the Natal Field Force and second in command overall to Lord Roberts.

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heavy casualties. He was mentioned in despatch from Lord Methuen. On 10<sup>th</sup> February 1900, Lord Roberts placed him in command of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division, with the temporary rank of lieutenant-general. However, in May 1900, while Lord Roberts was closing in on Johannesburg, a Yeomanry battalion under Henry Colville's command was cut off and forced to surrender. Henry Colville was made a scapegoat and sent home...

General Sir Redvers Henry Buller VC GCB GCMG (1839-1908) was a British Army officer and a recipient of the Victoria Cross, the highest award for gallantry in the face of the enemy that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. He served as Commander-in-Chief of British Forces in South Africa during the early months of the

In February 1900, Field Marshal Lord Roberts assumed personal command of a significantly reinforced British offensive. Like Buller, Roberts at first intended to make a direct thrust on the Boer capitals of Bloemfontein and Pretoria, using the central railway line from Cape Town to the two capital cities as his line of communication. Also, like Buller, he found on arrival in South Africa that public opinion both in Britain and South Africa was clamouring for the relief of British forces besieged at Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking and was thus forced to modify his plans.

General Buller remained in command of the Natal Field Force, with the major task to relieve Ladysmith. Field Marshal Roberts on the other hand, collected large numbers of reinforcements which had recently arrived in southern Africa along the railway line between the Orange and Modder Rivers. Lord Roberts' intention was to outflank the Boer left, and pass his cavalry around them to relieve Kimberley, while his infantry secured vital drifts (fords) behind them. Lord Roberts' battle formation included:

- Two infantry divisions, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, each of two infantry brigades; and
- A mounted division of three brigades under Major-General John French.
- Another infantry division, the 9<sup>th</sup>, under Lieutenant-General Henry Edward Colville, formed during the campaign.

### Relief of Kimberley:

General Piet Cronje believed that Lord Roberts would attempt to attack in a flanking manoeuvre from the west, and that the advance would largely continue as before along the railway line. However, on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1900, Lord Roberts ordered General Methuen to advance with the 1<sup>st</sup> Division in a feint manoeuvre on Magersfontein. The Highland Brigade under Major-General Hector MacDonald, located 32 odd kilometres west at Koedoesberg, led General Cronje's forces to believe that the attack would occur there. Roberts' large force began marching east in secret. By the evening of 12<sup>th</sup> February 1900, the leading horsemen had secured drifts (fords) across the Riet River, the first obstacle. The next day, 13<sup>th</sup> February 1900, the British mounted force made a gruelling march of 48 odd kilometres to capture drifts (fords) across the Modder River. Luckily, the move had apparently taken the Boers by surprise, thus did not move in strength to defend the drifts (fords) or nearby hills.

Early on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1900, General French's division began the final march to relieve Kimberley. Only scattered and disorganised Boers opposed them. The diversionary tactics worked well, thus the enormous mass of British horsemen broke through their thin line, concealed in the dust cloud they created. Late that evening they reached Kimberley, where they were greeted with cheering crowds.

By rights, etiquette prevailing, General French should have first communicated with Lieutenant-Colonel Kekewich, the military commander of the besieged garrison. Instead, he called first on Cecil Rhodes, the former Prime Minister of Cape Colony and foremost Imperialist.

The final day's march into Kimberley had severely crippled most of French's division. The British regular cavalry carried far too much equipment; their un-acclimatised horses, including those of the seven batteries of horse artillery, were exhausted.

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the Second Boer War and subsequently commanded the army in Natal until his return to England in November 1900. He was involved in the Zulu War (1879), 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War (1880-1881) and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)...

Hence, his effective force was reduced to two regiments of New Zealand and Australian mounted infantry, and two other battalions of mounted infantry. On the 16<sup>th</sup> February 1900, he further tired his men with futile attempts to intercept one of the Boers' 'Long Tom' guns (Creusot 40-pounder siege guns) which was being withdrawn to the north.

#### **Paardeberg:**

Also on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1900, General Cronjé's men, evacuated their camp at Jacobsdal. Their position at Magersfontein was no longer relevant and they were in danger of being besieged in Jacobsdal by the British 7<sup>th</sup> Division, under Lieutenant-General Charles Tucker.

On the night of the 15<sup>th</sup> February 1900, the large convoy of Boer ox-wagons passed between the rear of French's division and the outposts of Lieutenant General Thomas Kelly-Kenny's 6<sup>th</sup> Division, at the Modder River Drift. Throughout the next day, the Boer mounted rear-guard prevented the British 6<sup>th</sup> Division, overtaking them. On the 17<sup>th</sup> February 1900, the large convoy of Boer wagons reached the crossing of the Modder at Paardeberg Drift. They were starting to cross the river when a force of around 1,500 British mounted troops, almost all of French's fit horses and men who had covered the 64 odd kilometres from Kimberley in another desperately tiring march, opened fire on the Boers.

General Cronjé then decided, for whatever reason, to form a laager and dig in on the banks of the Modder River. The British forces outnumbered his force significantly and had overwhelming superiority in artillery. All the British would have to do was lay siege to the Boer position and bombard them at their leisure. The British on the other hand had insufficient cavalry and it would have been an easy matter for Cronjé to brush them aside and link up with other Boers, east of the Modder River; notably those under General Christiaan de Wet, 48 kilometres away to the south-east and other forces under Chief Commandant Ignatius Ferreira, were a similar distance to the north.

#### **Battle/Siege of Paardeberg:**

Lieutenant-General Kelly-Kenny, commander of the British 6<sup>th</sup> Division, had a sound plan to lay siege to General Cronjé's Laager and bombard his force into surrender. This would almost certainly have proved successful and cost the British very few casualties. Unfortunately, Lord Roberts was ill and his Chief of Staff, Lieutenant-General Herbert Kitchener (Lord Kitchener), now in overall command of the British force, had different plans, and overruled Kelly-Kenny's plan.

Kitchener then proceeded to order his infantry and mounted troops into a series of uncoordinated frontal assaults, against the Boer laager. Kitchener proceeded, despite the fact that the cost of frontal assaults against entrenched Boers had been demonstrated time and again in preceding months, as an extremely costly and futile exercise. Things were no different now; the British were shot down in droves. It is thought that not a single British soldier got within 180 metres (200 yards) of the Boer lines. By nightfall on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1900, some 24 officers and 279 men were killed and 59 officers and 847 men wounded. Concerning British casualties, it was the most severe reverse of the war and became known as 'Bloody Sunday'.

Kitchener, also disregarded Kelly-Kenny's warning; not to leave 'Kitchener's Kopje' undefended. Possession of the kopje was essential to guard the south-east of the British position and prevent Cronjé's escape. Kitchener's over

enthusiasm for an all-out attack, left the kopje defended by only a handful of 'Kitchener's Horse'. General de Wet was therefore able to take the kopje with little resistance. Strategically, for the British, things now changed dramatically. General de Wet could now command a strip of front, stretching from the north-east right through to the south-east, making the British position on the south-east bank of the Modder River indefensible. As darkness fell, Kitchener ordered his troops to dig in where they were. Apparently, it is believed few actually received these orders and fewer obeyed them. Desperately thirsty and exhausted, the surviving British trickled back into camp. Rescue for Cronjé now seemed the likely outcome.

On the morning of Monday, 19<sup>th</sup> February 1900, as the sun rose, General Roberts arrived back on the scene, after his illness. He initially urged a resumption of the frontal assaults. General Cronjé however, requested a cease-fire to bury the dead; Roberts refused. The following day, 20<sup>th</sup> February 1900, Lord Roberts and Kitchener again planned to launch more assaults, which were apparently firmly resisted by the other British senior officers. They obviously did not want a repeat of 'Bloody Sunday'. By 21<sup>st</sup> February 1900, Lord Roberts was intent on withdrawing, but to do so would have allowed General Cronjé to escape. Therefore, Cronjé's encampment was subjected to an increasingly heavy artillery bombardment, as more guns, including a battery of 5-inch medium howitzers and another of 1-pounder 'pom-poms', joined the besieging British forces. Almost every horse, mule and ox was killed, and the stench and flies became unbearable. However, General Cronjé had inexplicably refused to abandon his laager.

In the meantime, Ferreira's Commando, now leaderless, due to friendly fire by one of his own sentries, was no longer in a position to support General de Wet in orchestrating the relief and rescue of General Cronjé's forces. Therefore, General de Wet, faced with an entire British division that may be reinforced at any time, feared for his men's safety, withdrew his commandos from the south-east. General de Wet had no real choice but to abandon General Cronjé.

#### **Boer surrender:**

On the last night of the battle, 26<sup>th</sup> February 1900, the Royal Canadian Regiment of Infantry (now The Royal Canadian Regiment), having lost more than seventy soldiers in an earlier charge against sheltered Boer positions, were again called to take the lead in the routine daily battalion rotation. Instead of another charge the next morning as was expected, the Canadians, with the help of Royal Engineers, advanced at night towards the Boer camp, then set about digging trenches on high ground, 65 yards from the Boer lines. On 27<sup>th</sup> February 1900, the Boers woke up staring down the barrels of Canadian rifles and duly surrendered. General Cronjé surrendered with some 4,019 men and 50 women; equating to around 10% of the Boers' entire army now prisoners of war.

#### **Battle of Sanna's Post:**

Sanna's Post (aka Korn Spruit) was an engagement fought on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1900, during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) between the British and the Boers of the two independent republics of the OVS (*Oranje Vrijstaat in English Orange Free State*) and the ZAR (*Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek in English South African Republic, also known as the Transvaal Republic*).

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Kitchener's Horse and Roberts' Horse, were formed chiefly of men, who supported the British who have found their way to South Africa from various parts of the world...

Cont

On 13<sup>th</sup> March 1900, following the Battle of Paardeberg, the British army, in overwhelming strength, occupied Bloemfontein, capital of the Orange Free State, and were preparing to drive north to Pretoria, capital of the Transvaal. Field Marshal Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief of the British forces, believed that with the capture of the capitals of both Republics, the war would be, all but over. After Lord Roberts took Bloemfontein, Buller correctly predicted that the Boers would take to guerrilla warfare. At this stage, the Siege of Mafeking had not as yet been lifted.

However, while the Burghers (Citizens) of the South African Republic prepared to defend their capital, with little prospect of success, the Boers of the Orange Free State, inspired by President Martinus Steyn, the spiritual heart of the Boer resistance, and Christiaan de Wet, their Commandant-General, regrouped and prepared to continue the conflict, through unconventional means. Their action at Sanna's Post was the first large-scale use of guerrilla tactics in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, thus as many believe launched the start of Phase-3...

#### *Sanna's Post:*

On 30<sup>th</sup> March 1900, a Boer force led by General Christiaan de Wet, advanced in the direction of Bloemfontein. Reconnaissance indicated the presence of a small garrison of British troops at Sanna's Post, 37 odd kilometres east of Bloemfontein, which held Bloemfontein's water works. A British mounted force, under Brigadier-General Robert George Broadwood, had earlier attacked other Boer positions at Thaba 'Nchu, was retreating from there. Broadwood's force consisted of two Batteries of the Royal Horse Artillery, a composite regiment of the Household Cavalry, the 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars, the New Zealand and Burma Mounted Infantry, Roberts' Horse and Rimington's Guides. General de Wet sent 1600 of his men under his brother Piet de Wet to attack Broadwood from the north, while he himself occupied Sanna's Post to intercept their retreat.

During the darkness, Piet de Wet infiltrated a force of riflemen into the ravine created by the Modder River, setting the kill zone of the ambush. At first light on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1900, Piet de Wet's artillery opened fire from a set of small hills to the north, as the British troops were striking camp for the morning. Tactical surprise was complete and all were sent into a state of confusion. The British force began to retreat as expected, in the direction of the ravine where the blocking force awaited with orders from de Wet to hold their fire. This resulted in approximately two hundred British captured, along with the six guns of 'U' Battery.

An alert British officer noticed what was happening and ordered 'Q' Battery to gallop away. De Wet's men then opened fire. The British fell back on a railway station which offered substantial cover, while 'Q' Battery under Major Phipps-Hornby, joined by one gun from 'U' Battery, whose team managed to break away from de Wet, deployed in the open and opened fire.

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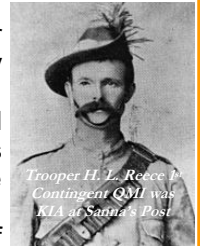
Marthinus Theunis Steyn (1857-1916) was a South African lawyer, politician, and statesman. He was the 6<sup>th</sup> and officially the last President of the independent republic of the OVS (Oranje Vrijstaat / Orange Free State) from 1896 to 1902. He attended Grey College in Bloemfontein and read law at Leiden University, Netherlands...

General Christiaan Rudolf de Wet (1854-1922) was a Boer general, rebel leader and politician. He served in the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War (1880-1881) and took part in the Battle of Majuba Hill, when the Boers of the Transvaal Republic achieved a resounding victory over the British forces which led to the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War and the reinstatement of the independent Republic of the ZAR (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek), South African Republic or more commonly known as the Transvaal Republic. He is mentioned in Rudyard Kipling's poem Ubique and is immortalised by as statue of him located

This fire, combined with accurate rifle fire from the railway station, pinned down Christiaan de Wet's men, but Piet de Wet's forces were increasing their pressure. Broadwood's ammunition was running out, and he decided to retire to the south. First, his guns had to be recovered. Five were hooked up and towed away, but two had to be abandoned. Many British soldiers were killed crossing the 1300 yards of open ground to retrieve the guns, but unit integrity was maintained.

Eventually, Broadwood managed to break contact. Approximately three hours later, the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Sir Henry Colville, arrived to relieve the mounted brigade, but de Wet's men had withdrawn to highly defensible positions across the Modder River and both sides retired from the field. This nevertheless left Bloemfontein's water works in Boer hands.

Casualties included 155 men killed or wounded, 428 men, seven field artillery pieces and 117 wagons were captured. The Boer force suffered three killed and five wounded. But even more serious than the losses in the action, was the loss of Bloemfontein's water supplies.



This greatly aggravated an epidemic of dysentery and cholera among the occupying British army, which eventually caused around 2000 deaths.

Five VCs were awarded:

- Major Edmund Phipps-Hornby VC – 'Q' Battery Royal Artillery,
- Sergeant Charles E. H. Parker VC – 'Q' Battery Royal Artillery,
- Gunner Isaac Lodge VC – 'Q' Battery Royal Artillery,
- Driver Horace Henry Glascock VC – 'Q' Battery Royal Artillery,
- Lieutenant Francis Maxwell VC in the Indian Staff Corps, Indian Army, attached to Roberts' Light Horse during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War.

#### **Relief of Ladysmith:**

Ironically on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 1900, General Buller's Natal Field Forces, eventually broke through the Boer positions, after an intense protracted struggle against the forces of General Louis Botha at the Battle of Tugela Heights, consisting of a series of military actions lasting from 14<sup>th</sup> February 1900, through to 27<sup>th</sup> February 1900, in which General Sir Redvers Buller's Natal Field Force defeated the Boers through a well-orchestrated cooperation between his infantry and artillery.

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Extracted and incorporating modified text from Wikipedia... General Pieter Daniel De Wet (1861-1929), the younger brother of General Christiaan de Wet gained his first experience of war at Majuba in the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War. He was General and Commander-in-Chief of the OFS commandoes south of the Orange River. He participated in the battle of Poplar Grove, Sanna's Post and Lindley. In July 1900 he surrendered and in December 1900 became Chairman of the Burger Peace Committee and commanded the National Scouts (Boers who have chosen to fight for the imperial forces)...

Cont.

Louis Botha's Boer army was thus forced to lift the Siege of Ladysmith and retreat. General Buller finally broke the siege on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1900.

Leading up to the eventual Relief of Ladysmith, three attempts were made by General Sir Redvers Buller's Army to break the siege, resulting in British defeats at the battles of: Colenso, 15<sup>th</sup> December 1899; Spion Kop, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> January 1900; and Vaal Krantz, 5<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1900.

On 6<sup>th</sup> January 1900 the Boer forces of Commandant-General Piet Joubert, attempted to end the siege, by taking Ladysmith, before the British could launch another attempt to break the siege. This led to the battle of Wagon Hill (also known as Platrand) south of Ladysmith. Boer storming parties, under General C.J. de Villiers, began climbing Wagon Hill and Caesar's Camp. Fierce fighting took place lasting the whole day, eventually resulting in the Boers withdrawing.

On the evening of the 28<sup>th</sup> February 1900, apparently, the first party of the relief column, under Major Hubert Gough, accompanied by Winston Churchill, rode into Ladysmith. When Lord Dundonald rode into Ladysmith on the evening of 28<sup>th</sup> February 1900, he was accompanied by some Natal Carbineers, Natal Mounted Rifles, Border Mounted Rifles, and Natal Police, the officers being Major D. McKenzie, Lieutenants Silburn, McKay, Verney, Richards, Ashburnham and Abraham. None of those present will ever forget this ride, probably the most memorable occasion in the lives of any of them.

#### British India and Ceylon:

Following the call for support to India, the military authorities in India were very prompt. British Indian troops arrived in Natal between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October 1899 and were basically immediately moved to the Transvaal border. This triggered the declaration of War, resulting in a Boer Invasion of Natal and the Cape.

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Brigadier-General Edmund John Phipps-Hornby VC CB CMG DL (1857-1947)...

Charles Edward Haydon Parker VC (1870-1918)...

Isaac Lodge VC (1866-1923)...

Horace Henry Glascock VC (1880-1916), later settled in South Africa and served as a Conductor in the South African Service Corps...

Brigadier-General Francis Aylmer Maxwell VC CSI DSO & Bar (1871-1917)...

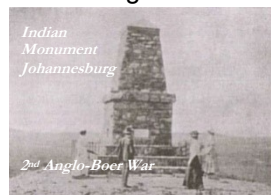
Louis Botha (1862-1919) was a South African politician who was the first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa. A Boer war hero during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, on the death of General P. J. Joubert, he was made commander-in-chief of the Transvaal Boers...

Petrus Jacobus Joubert (1831-1900), better known as Piet Joubert, was Commandant-General of the South African Republic from 1880 to 1900. He also served as Vice-President to Paul Kruger from 1881 to 1883. He served in 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War, 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, and the Malaboch War...

General Sir Hubert de la Poer Gough GCB GCMG KCVO (1870-1963) was a senior officer in the British Army in the First World War. On 1<sup>st</sup> February Gough was appointed, as a local unpaid major, CO of a Composite Regiment, made up of a squadron of Imperial Light Horse, a squadron of Natal Carbineers and a company of 60<sup>th</sup> Rifles Mounted Infantry. He led his regiment to assist general Buller's third attempt, 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February 1900 to cross the Tugela River and then again in the fourth attempt, 14<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> February 1900. He led the first British troops into Ladysmith on the 28<sup>th</sup> February, in defiance of written orders from Lord Dundonald...

Lieutenant General Douglas Mackinnon Baillie Hamilton Cochrane, 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Dundonald KCB KCVO (1852-1935), was a Scottish representative peer and a British Army general. He was commissioned into the Life Guards in July 1870, promoted to lieutenant the following year and captain in 1878. He served in the Nile Expedition, the Desert March and the Relief of Khartoum in 1885. He was appointed Commanding Officer of 2<sup>nd</sup> Life Guards in 1895. He served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War and in November 1899, was appointed Commander of the Mounted Brigade, part of the South Natal Field Force. In April 1902, was appointed General Officer Commanding the Militia of Canada. He served in WWI as Chairman of the Admiralty Committee on Smoke Screens in 1915...

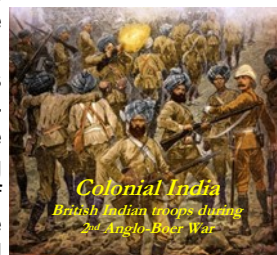
**The Forgotten Indian Troops of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War** - British campaigns under Lord Roberts were forced to rely increasingly on cavalry and especially on mounted infantry. Syces (grooms for horses), nalbands (farriers) and other Indian support staff at the Remount Depots, such as the Remount Depot in Johannesburg known as Observatory Park, helped keep the cavalry going, as would repair and servicing facilities, would do for mechanised divisions today. Overlooking Johannesburg, on Observatory Ridge, is a memorial erected, in Johannesburg, to the 18,000 Indians who served. It stands above the valley in which their 'remount camp' was situated.



The tablet on the monument's east side bears the inscription:

*"To the memory of British Officers, Native NCOs and Men, Veterinary Assistants, Nalbands [farriers], and Followers of the Indian Army, who died in South Africa, 1899-1902."*

Over time, the garrisons in India contributed, 7,950 British NCOs and men, together with 584 officers, totalling 18,534, not counting the large numbers of Native auxiliaries who were also deployed to assist them in southern Africa. Hence, in total, India provided more troops than any of the other overseas British Colonies, which include Australia and its colonies, Canada and New Zealand. Despite reluctance to use Natives of India at the beginning of the campaign, by the end of the War, large numbers of these troops had been deployed in all theatres of the conflict; in Natal, the Orange Free State, and above all, the Transvaal.



Indian auxiliaries were employed as hospital staff, horse trainers, transport drivers, cooks, water carriers and laundrymen, and in other non-combatant roles. Though reluctant to bring in Native troops as combatants, the War Office made repeated requests for veterinary, health and equestrian establishments, leading to several Native contingents being dispatched to southern Africa. The breaking in and training of horses was among the main functions of the Indian auxiliaries, second only to stretcher-bearing.

After the close of the South African War/Anglo-Boer War, at least a few of the Indian Army soldiers remained in South Africa, becoming absorbed into the Indian community and, more broadly, into the continuing stream of South African history.

Other than the regular army as mentioned above, there were the likes of...

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Extracts from:

- The forgotten Indian troops in the Anglo-Boer war, 1899 – 1902 – by Martin Plaut, Journalist specialising in the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa;
- The South African Military History Society - A paper by Eric Itzkin, Deputy Director, Culture and Heritage at the Department of Community Development in the City of Johannesburg, provides useful details of their service...

It is the oldest war memorial in Johannesburg, unveiled 31<sup>st</sup> October 1902, five months after peace was declared. The Memorial is an obelisk of sandstone, cut from the hill on which it stands...

Cont

The **Burma Mounted Infantry**, raised in Rangoon and comprised, three companies of one hundred men from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions of three regiments based in Burma; Essex Regiment, Durham Light Infantry and West Riding Regiment.

As they left Rangoon on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1900, a Burmese lady presented each man with a pink rose, the Burmese emblem of good luck and success.

They served under Brigadier General Robert George Broadwood and were very much involved in skirmishes around Thaba 'Nchu and the Battle of Sanna's Post.

The 1<sup>st</sup> **Ceylon Mounted Infantry** Contingent arrived in southern Africa February 1900, consisting of 6 officers and 119 men (total 125 soldiers) mounted infantry, raised from white men in the Colony. The squadron sailed on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1900. They joined Lord Roberts while he was advancing on Bloemfontein, in time to be present at the engagement of *Poplar Grove*. On 6<sup>th</sup> March 1900, Lord Roberts wired Ceylon:

"I have just ridden out to meet Ceylon Mounted Infantry and welcome them to this force. They look most workmanlike, and are a valuable addition to Her Majesty the Queen's Army in South Africa".

### Battle of Poplar Grove:

The Relief of Kimberley took place on 15<sup>th</sup> February 1900, followed by the Battle of Paardeberg on the Modder River, where General Cronje surrendered on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1900. Christiaan de Wet was subsequently appointed as Commandant-General (Commander-in-Chief) of the Orange Free State forces. He gathered his commandos at Poplar Grove, about ten miles upstream of Paardeberg on the way to Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State. De Wet hastily assembled his burghers in sangars, which straddled the Modder River. On 7<sup>th</sup> March 1900, President Kruger of the ZAR (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek/Transvaal Republic) arrived at Poplar Grove, to visit his remaining burghers. No sooner had he arrived, Boer intelligence reported that Lord Roberts had commenced his advance on Bloemfontein. Kruger was bundled back into his cart and sent on his way back to the Transvaal Republic.

Subsequently, the Battle of Poplar Grove, 7<sup>th</sup> March 1900, was more of an incident than an actual Battle, as British Army moved to take the Boer capital of Bloemfontein. The Boers needed to regroup following the surrender of Piet Cronjé at the Battle of Paardeberg. General Sir John French's cavalry attacked the Boer force from the rear while mounted infantry and horse artillery attacked from the right flank. The Boers abandoned their positions. General Christiaan de Wet, in his book, called the chapter, on the subject – '**Wild Flight from Poplar Grove**'. They could not stop the British advance to Bloemfontein, so other than skirmishes, withdrew to a safer environment. After this, the Boers adopted new battle strategies, resulting in the introduction of guerrilla tactics, as seen at the Battle of Sanna's Post.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> **Ceylon Mounted Infantry** Contingent arrived in southern Africa, May 1900, consisting of 109 men.

**Lumsden's Horse** – was made up of two companies, the Assam Valley Volunteers and the Surma Valley Light Horse. 'A' Company sailed from Calcutta on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1900 and 'B' Company on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. 'A' Company landed at Cape Town and 'B' Company at East London. Both joined the army of Lord Roberts at

Bloemfontein in April 1900. On the 21<sup>st</sup> April 1900, Lumsden's Horse marched out of camp to join General Tucker's Division, which had been holding the hills won at the battle of Karee Siding, 29<sup>th</sup> March 1900. They were attached to a mounted infantry corps commanded by Colonel Ross, which consisted of Lumsden's Horse, Loch's Horse, West Riding and Oxford Light Infantry Mounted Infantry and the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion Regular Mounted Infantry.

### Imperial Yeomanry:

The Imperial Yeomanry was a volunteer mounted force of the British Army that mainly saw action during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. Created on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1900, the force was initially recruited from the middle classes and traditional yeomanry sources, but subsequent contingents were more significantly working class, in their composition. The existing yeomanry regiments contributed only a small proportion of the total Imperial Yeomanry establishment.

The first contingent of recruits to travel to southern Africa was made up of 550 officers and 10,371 other ranks within 20 battalions of four companies each, except the 8<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> Battalions, which had three companies each. The Battalions began to arrive in Cape Town between February and April 1900. However, the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Battalions were sent to Beira, Mozambique (Portuguese East Africa) and integrated into the Rhodesia Field Force (RFF). The Rhodesia Field Forces' (RFF) initial task was to create a second front to the north of the Boer forces, but once in Marandellas (now Marondera) located in Mashonaland, around 72 Kilometres east of Fort Salisbury (Salisbury now Harare), the force would split, some heading south to Mafeking (then Mafikeng and now Mahikeng), which was relieved from its 217 day Boer siege on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1900. Others maintained a presence in Mashonaland to ensure Rhodesian protection against a Boer invasion. Colonials who ended up as part of the Rhodesian Field Force included contingents from Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, West Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand and Canada...

Following the Battle of Paardeberg, the relief of Kimberley and Ladysmith and the fall of Bloemfontein, General Frederick Roberts reorganised his force to pursue the defeated Boers. At the same time, Lieutenant-General Paul Methuen was tasked with clearing the country along the Vaal River on the Boers' flank and to drive towards Mafeking, which was still besieged.

The first contingent of Imperial Yeomanry departed for southern Africa, between January and April 1900. Its first action came in the Battle of Boshof on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1900, when its 3<sup>rd</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Battalions, under the command of Brigadier-General Lord Chesham, surrounded and defeated a small force of the Boer Foreign Legion, of European volunteers and Boers, commanded by the Comte de Villebois-Mareuil. Foreign Legion, of European volunteers and Boers, commanded by the Comte de Villebois-Mareuil. This success was overshadowed by a disaster the next month which tarnished the Imperial Yeomanry's reputation, when its 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion was ambushed and surrounded by 2,500 Boers at Lindley, on 27<sup>th</sup> May 1900. The yeomen were besieged for four days before they finally surrendered. Among the prisoners were the future Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, James Craig, and four members of the House of Lords.



Cont.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Mounted Infantry Brigade:

In early March 1900, Major-General Edward Hutton left Southampton on the SS *Tantallon Castle*, which arrived in southern Africa later the same month. He took up the post as Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Mounted Infantry Brigade, a formation made up of Canadian, Australian and New Zealand troops, on 30<sup>th</sup> March 1900, stationed at Kimberley.

With heavy reinforcements and the assumption of overall command by Lord Roberts with Lord Kitchener as his Chief-of-Staff, the British turned the situation around. Imperial troops eventually relieved the besieged towns of Kimberley (15<sup>th</sup> February 1900) and Ladysmith (28<sup>th</sup> February 1900) as well as captured Bloemfontein, capital city the Orange Free State (13<sup>th</sup> March 1900). However, when the Mounted Infantry Brigade was formed on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1900, Mafeking was yet to be relieved and Pretoria, capital city of the Transvaal Republic, was yet to be captured.

The Brigade was actively engaged in Lord Roberts's advance, following the fall of Bloemfontein and after the fall of Pretoria. However, the brigade also had a short operational life as it was disbanded in November 1900. Major-General Hutton returned to the United Kingdom, where he was knighted as a Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George (KCMG) for his services in South African.

## Mafeking - RR, SRV, BSAP and BPR:

Shortly before the outbreak of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War in 1899, Lord Wolseley, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, failed to persuade the British Government to send troops to the region. Therefore, the unexpectedly large force required for the initial phase of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, depended purely on British Forces garrisoned in the Cape and Natal Colonies, plus the local regular, militia and volunteer units.



Colonel Robert Baden-Powell, accompanied by a handful of officers, raised two regiments of mounted rifles from Rhodesia, of which Major Herbert Plumer (later Lieutenant-Colonel) played a major role. The two regiments formed were:

- The Southern Rhodesian Volunteers (SRV) formed in 1898; commanded by Major P.W. Forbes. The force was divided into the Eastern Division, based in Salisbury, and a Western Division based in Bulawayo. The SRV served in the Boer War and took part in the 'Relief of Mafeking'.
- The Rhodesia Regiment (RR) was created in 1899; recruits were mainly from Matebeleland, with many also coming from the Southern Rhodesian Volunteers (SRV). The first commanding officer was Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Herbert Charles Onslow Plumer; a veteran of the Second Matabele War, where he was in command of a Corps of Mounted Riflemen.

10<sup>th</sup> battalion of the Imperial Yeomanry, included companies from Buckinghamshire, Berkshire and Oxfordshire...

Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Thomas Henry Hutton, KCB, KCMG, DL, FRGS (1848-1923) was a British military commander, who pioneered the use of mounted infantry in the British Army and later commanded the Canadian Militia and the Australian Army...

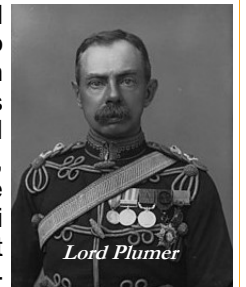
It is interesting to note, that a total of 1,700 Rhodesians volunteered for the Boer War, which equates to 15% of the settler population of the time; made up of RR, SRV and BSAP.



Colonel Baden-Powell sent Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer with the Rhodesian Regiment (RR) to a nearby town, Tuli, to protect the Rhodesian Border, while he and Major Hore (Later Lieutenant-Colonel) established the Bechuanaland Protectorate Regiment in Mafeking, with a handful of British officers. His Chief-of-Staff was Major Lord Edward Cecil, son of the British Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury.

## Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer:

Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer identified six vulnerable points on the Limpopo River, in the form of drifts, which would allow the Boers easy access into Rhodesia. These included Rhodes Drift, Pont Drift, Masibi Drift, Middle Drift, and the junctions of the Limpopo with the Maklutsi and Shashi Rivers. Conditions along the front from Mafeking to the Portuguese border were potentially hostile. During the dry season, crossing of the Limpopo River could be made virtually anywhere. The local vegetation of riverine woods and thickets of thorn scrub made reconnaissance and ambush dangerous. The surrounding kopjes made attacks on an enemy position extremely difficult.



By 16<sup>th</sup> October 1900, 5 days after the declaration of war, around 1300 Zoutpansberg Kommando, based thirty miles south of Rhodes Drift on the Brak River, was operating in the area. With the arrival of five hundred Boers opposite Pont Drift, Lieutenant Plumer redeployed a Rhodesia Regiment (RR) squadron, to bolster forces at Pont Drift. On 21<sup>st</sup> October 1900, a reconnaissance patrol encountered a large force of Boers about a mile south of the drift. In an ensuing skirmish, Sergeant-Major George Yonge and Trooper George 'Geo' Nethercott were killed. Captain L Blackburn of 'D' Squadron and Trooper Henry Levy of 'A' Squadron both died of their wounds en route back to Fort Tuli.

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 1900, Colonel Plumer attempted to fight his way into Mafeking with the Rhodesian Regiment, but was unfortunately repelled, with heavy loss. However, on the 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> May 1900, his relief column plus Colonel Mahon's relief column were successful...

## Siege and Relief of Mafeking:

Colonel Baden-Powell amassed stores and a garrison at Mafeking, with the intent on providing a mobile force on the frontier with the Boer Republics. Unfortunately, soon after war was declared, he and much of his intended mobile force were in Mafeking when it was surrounded by a Boer army, at times in excess of 8,000 men.

Colonel Baden-Powell was the garrison commander during the subsequent 'Siege of Mafeking', which extended over a period of 217 days, from the 13<sup>th</sup> October 1899 to the 17<sup>th</sup> May 1900. Although Baden-Powell could have destroyed his stores and had sufficient forces to break out, throughout much of the siege, he remained in the town to preserve the stash. Unlike Ladysmith and Kimberley, Mafeking was apparently deliberately allowed to be besieged, with the support of Lord Milner (then Governor of the Cape Colony and High Commissioner for Southern Africa).

The plan had varying degrees of success, while Commandant-General Joubert attacked the outnumbered British regular troops in Natal. Commandant-General Cronje marched north-west to Mafeking, thus splitting focus.

The siege of the small town received undue attention from both the Boers and International media because Lord Edward Cecil, the son of the British Prime Minister, was besieged in the town. It was Lord Cecil who set up the 'Mafeking Cadet Corps'; believed to be the inspiration behind Baden-Powell's 'Scouting Movement'.

The garrison held out until relieved, in part thanks to cunning deceptions, many devised by Baden-Powell such as, fake minefields, soldiers pretending to avoid non-existent barbed wire while moving between fake trenches. In one instance, noting that the Boers had not removed the rail line, Baden-Powell loaded an armoured locomotive with marksmen and sent it down the rails into the heart of the Boer encampment and back again in a successful attack. Baden-Powell did much of the reconnaissance work himself.

Whilst most Australian contingents raised in 1899 were involved in the Bloemfontein actions, a number of them, after arriving in Cape Town early April, were redirected north to Beira, Mozambique, to be part of the Rhodesian Field Force (RFF) under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Carrington to take part in the 'Relief of Mafeking'; all part of the diversionary plan.

Major General Carrington landed at Beira to take command of the Rhodesian Field Force which included the brigade of Australian Bushmen which also disembarked at Beira. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Contingent of QMI, under the command of Major Walter Howard Tunbridge, formed a great part of the Australian Bushmen Brigade.

Prior to the Relief of Mafeking, Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer's RR column was joined by a Canadian battery and by some Queenslanders, part of the force which had landed at Beira. These Queenslanders were 'D' Squadron of the 3<sup>rd</sup> QMI Contingent, under the command of Captain Kellie; Lieutenants Fowles, Harris, and Annat being among the officers. The rest remained with General Carrington's RFF Column; this part of the RFF entered the Transvaal from the north-west border.

On 15<sup>th</sup> May 1900, two relief columns of mounted infantry head towards Mafeking and successfully united:

1. One under the command of Colonel Bryan Mahon, consisting mainly of the:
  - ◊ Kimberley Light Horse (KLH), and
  - ◊ Imperial Light Horse (ILH).
2. The other column were members of the Rhodesian Field Force (RFF), under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Herbert Plumer consisting mainly of:
  - Rhodesian Regiment (RR),
  - Southern Rhodesian Volunteers (SRV),
  - British South Africa Police (BSAP),
  - Some members of the Australian Bushmen, which formed part of the RFF (Rhodesian Field Force):
    - ◊ Queensland Mounted Infantry (QMI),
    - ◊ NSW Imperial Bushmen, and a
  - Canadian Battery...

Tuli is a village in Matabeleland South, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and was the first point at which the pioneer column, and many subsequent expeditions entered into Matabeleland and onward north to Salisbury (now Harare). From 1890 to 1893 Tuli was the main entry to Rhodesia. Hence, Fort Tuli was established on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1890, by the Pioneer Column and by 'A' Troop of the BSAP. The fort was first named Fort Selous. The town known as Tuli rapidly grew near Fort Tuli. The notorious Jameson Raid, 29<sup>th</sup> December 1895 to 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1896, was launched from Tuli...

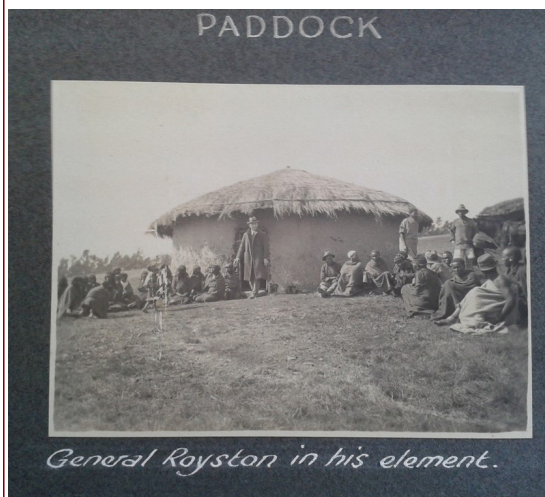
To be Continued.

## General John Robinson Royston

Check the story in Volumes 1 and 2, 2018



*Mr. Palmer, General Royston, Mr. Biggs*



*General Royston in his element.*

**ROYSTON, Brig-Gen.**  
**John Robinson,**  
 C. M. G., D. S. O.;  
 Director, The Natal  
 Tanning & Extract  
 Co., Ltd.; b. 29th  
 April, 1860; son of  
 William Royston.  
 Zulu War, 1878-79  
 (medal and clasp);  
 Boer War, 1899-1902  
 (despatches thrice);  
 Queen's Medal (4  
 clasps). Took a lead-  
 ing part in suppress-  
 ing native rebellion in  
 Natal.



*General Royston, Mrs. Lamb & Mr. Lamb*

I am currently researching our company's records and photos for our company's centenary year book. Our company known as NTE Company (Pty) Ltd was originally known as The Natal Tannin Extract Company. J. R. Royston was involved with and a director of NTE in the early years.

It is understood that after his retirement from military service, he took up the roll of establishing wattle plantations for the expansion of NTE in 1926. I attach a few of his photos.

**Peter Willson**  
**Services Manager**  
 Pietermaritzburg, South Africa



**Capt. Claude William ROBERTSON,  
NSW Citizen Bushmen Contingent  
Robert Smith and Prof. John Pearn**

Capt. Claude William Robertson, Royal Marine Light Infantry, serving with the 1st Regiment Australian Bushmen, was killed in action at Selous River, 22nd July 1900. He was born in September 1868, and educated at Charterhouse. He entered the Royal Marines in September 1889, promoted to Lieutenant in July 1890, and Captain in January 1898.

As a Lieutenant in the Royal Marine battalion, Robertson landed from the squadron on the West Coast of Africa to punish the King of Benin for the massacre of the Political Expedition in 1897, which ended with the capture of Benin City on 18th February. For this service, he was mentioned in despatches and received the Medal with Clasp.

When the war broke out, he was serving on the Australian Station in H.M.S. Tauranga, and he volunteered in Sydney for active service.

Being accepted, he proceeded to South Africa in command of 'B' Company of the Australian Bushmen under Col. Airey, and landed at Beira.

He was then sent to Bulawayo and served with the force for the relief of Mafeking. He later moved towards Rustenburg, and was killed at Magato Pass. Capt. Robertson is buried at Rustenburg.

Capt. Robertson's name is inscribed on the monument in the Cambridge enclosure, St. James's Park, erected by all ranks of the Royal Marine Artillery and Light Infantry, to the memory of their comrades who fell in South Africa and China. His name is also inscribed on the tablet in the War Memorial Cloister at Charterhouse.

The Bushies - A Biographical History of the New South Wales Citizen's Bushmen - Officers who fell in South Africa, page 327.)



Robertson is the serious looking young man in the shooting team (seated centre) at Charterhouse School.

**Obituary**

CAPTAIN CLAUDE WILLIAM ROBERTSON, Royal Marine Light Infantry, was killed in action with the Boers, at Selous River, on 22nd July, while serving with the New South Wales Bushmen, under Colonel Airey (late R.M.L.I.), aged 31. He was born 10th September, 1869, entered the service as 2nd Lieut. 1st September, 1889, became Lieut. 1st July, 1890, and Captain 31st January, 1898. He married in February, 1900, Edith, daughter of the late Mr. Whittingdale-Johnstone, Stipendiary Magistrate. He served with the Royal Marine battalion in the punitive expedition to punish the King of Benin for the massacre of the political expedition, 1897, ending in the capture of Benin City, 18th July, 1897. mentioned in despatches (medal and clasp). Volunteered as instructor to the Bushmen contingent, and embarked on 1st March, 1900, for South Africa, in command of the B squadron of the New South Wales contingent under Colonel Airey, serving with the field force under General Sir F. Carrington.

East & West Africa medal with clasp BENIN 1897 (Lieut C W ROBERTSON RMLI, HMS 'St George') and QSA clasps Transvaal & Rhodesia (Capt C W Robertson NSWCBC) who was killed at Selous River on 22 July 1900.



Example of the East and West Africa Medal with the Benin 1897 Clasp, awarded to members of a punitive column to Benin City consisting of Royal Navy and locally recruited police, for service from 6 February to 7 August 1897.



Example of the QSA with the Rhodesia and Relief of Mafeking clasps:

*The Sidney Morning Herald  
3rd March 1900*

*ROBERTSON, CAPT. CLAUDE WILLIAM.  
Late appointment to Bushmen's Contingent.  
RMLI, Born Kent in 1869. His Grandfather  
Capt. Lansdale was in the Imperial service  
and first resident Magistrate of Melbourne.  
(Biography in Article)*

Memorial

*British War Cemetery - 80k West of Pretoria, Rustenburg,  
South Africa.*

Inscription

*'For King and Country: Claude William Robertson, Captain  
RMLI. O.C. 'B' Squadron, 1st Australian Bushmen,  
21st July, 1900.*

Description of Memorial

*Stone Memorial*

*Carved with a Cross and Royal Marines Badge.*



# Boer War Association Queensland

Queensland Patron:

Major General Professor John Pearn, AO RFD (Retd)

1899



1902



## Monumentally Speaking - Queensland Edition

Committee Newsletter - Volume 13, No. 4, Part 3 of 4 - September 2020

### Road to the Battle of Brakfontein Drift by Gordon Bold Cont. (Part 3)

#### Siege of Elands River Post (*Battle of Brakfontein Drift*): Cont.

On 16<sup>th</sup> May 1900, Colonel Mahon's force broke through the Boers, eight miles north of Mafeking. An advance patrol of horsemen arrived at 7:00pm (19h00 or for some 1900) in the evening. Apparently, greeted by a passer-by, with typical British aplomb, who casually remarked, "Oh yes, I heard you were knocking about." However, as word spread, the men were mobbed and cheered, while the crowd sang 'God Save the Queen' and 'Rule Britannia'.

The ILH (Imperial Light Horse) saw service at the Siege and Relief of Ladysmith and was thus specially selected to join the Mafeking Relief Column under Colonel Bryan Mahon. It was actually eight men under Major Karri Davies of the ILH who were the first to enter Mafeking on the night of 16/17<sup>th</sup> May 1900, to break the siege. At 3.30am (03h30 or 0300) 17<sup>th</sup> May 1900, the joint relief columns of Colonel Bryan Mahon and Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Herbert Plumer rode in to a rapturous welcome from the excited garrison.

During the Siege of Mafeking, three members of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Regiment were recipients of Victoria Cross (VC):

- Brigadier General Charles FitzClarence VC (1865-1914) was an Anglo-Irish recipient of the Victoria Cross, born in County Kildare, the son of Captain George FitzClarence. During the Boer War he was a Captain in The Royal Fusiliers. In 1899 he volunteered to serve as a Special Service Officer at Mafeking, South Africa and was given the duty of training a squadron of the Protectorate Regiment. His ferocity in battle earned him the enduring nickname 'The Demon'. He served in South Africa until February 1901, at which point he transferred to the newly formed Irish Guards.
- Horace Robert Martineau VC (1874-1916) a British recipient of the Victoria Cross. Born and educated in London, Martineau enlisted in the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars in 1891. He served in Natal and in India before buying his discharge and returning to South Africa in 1895.

George Hodgskin Nethercott, Service number 229 trooper of the Rhodesian Regiment (RR) of the South African Colonial Forces died 21<sup>st</sup> October 1899 KIA. George Nethercott was born in Beechworth in 1866, a well-preserved historical town located in the north-east of Victoria, Australia, famous for its major growth during the gold rush days of the mid-1850s. At this stage no Overseas Colonials other than the Indians had even arrived in southern Africa, not even the NSW Lancers...

It is interesting to note that members of earlier contingents of the QMI, NSW Lancers and the NSW Mounted Rifles, made up part of the column involved in the Relief of Kimberley...

In total, four members of the ILH Regiment were recipients of the Victoria Cross (VC), during 2nd Anglo-Boer War...

- ◊ The next year he served in Colonel Sir Robert Baden-Powell's campaign against the Matebele, after which he joined the Cape Police. After the war, he took up employment with the African Boating Company in Durban, specialising in support to military forces. He joined the Durban Militia Reserve in 1903 attaining the rank of Captain before visiting New Zealand in 1914 when WWI broke out.
- Horace Edward Ramsden VC (1878-1948) was a South African recipient of the Victoria Cross. He was awarded the VC for saving his brother's life. The medal was sold by auction in South Africa through Stephan Welz and Co. (incorporating Sotheby's) on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1999 and was purchased by Lord Ashcroft.

The Relief of Mafeking was a decisive victory for the British and a crushing defeat for the Boers. The relief caused ecstatic joy in Britain, out of all proportion to its significance. Apparently, for a time, in colloquial slang, the word 'mafeking' meant 'to celebrate excessively'. Many people thought the Relief of Mafeking would mean the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. Colonel Robert Baden-Powell became a *national hero* and was promoted to major-general.

Many thought the relief of Mafeking (17<sup>th</sup> May 1900) would result in peace, Boers included. Unfortunately, this did not occur. Boer Generals Louis Botha, Koos de la Rey and Christiaan de Wet continued to believe that victory might still be within the grasp of their respective Republics.

#### *Battle of Brakfontein Drift (Siege of Elands River Post):*

The source of the Elands River lies in the Witwatersrand a hundred odd kilometres west of Johannesburg. The stream/river flows north fed by several tributaries prior to circumnavigating the northern extremity of the Magaliesberg Range, eventually feeding the Crocodile River. The river traversed the Zeerust-Rustenburg road, then no more than a wagon track, at Brakfontein Drift. Brakfontein Drift is located around halfway between Zeerust and Rustenburg, at the town today known as Swartruggens.

To the east of Brakfontein Drift, the road climbs over the Magaliesberg mountain range, before entering Rustenburg. The Magaliesberg arises south of the Pilanesberg

Swartruggens is today a small farming town in North West Province, South Africa that was established in 1875 on the farms known as Brakfontein and Scheepersrus, located by the Elands River, 69 kilometres east of Zeerust, 56 kilometres west of Rustenburg and 34 kilometres north-west of Koster. It takes its name 'Swartruggens' from a series of hills there, formerly known as Zwartruggens, a Dutch name for 'black ridges'. Prior to 1900 Swartruggens was a mere settlement/hamlet... Cont.

in the west, gently curves around the southern edge of Rustenburg then intersects the suburbs of Pretoria ending around Bronkorstspruit. The Magaliesberg range played an integral part in military events during 'Phase-Three', the guerrilla phase of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. The northern slope of the range is gentle, whilst the southern slope is steep with cliffs; like a natural fortress. Many have likened the southern side to a breaking wave, overlooking the valley known locally as the 'moot'. The range forms a natural barrier between the Bushveld to the north and the cooler Highveld to the south.

The southern slope of the Magaliesberg range are so steep, they could only be crossed by wheeled vehicles at five passes: Magatos Nek (Magatosnek) and Oliphantsnek near Rustenburg; and to the east at Breed's Nek, Commandonek and Silikatsnek. Several cattle tracks also pass over the crest, suitable for mounted troops. Unfortunately, these passes were only known to local farmers (Boers).

Following the relief of Mafeking (17<sup>th</sup> May 1900), occupation of Johannesburg (31<sup>st</sup> May 1900) and the occupation of Pretoria (5<sup>th</sup> June 1900), the Commander-in-Chief of British Forces in South Africa, Lord Frederick Roberts VC, divided the Western Transvaal operational theatre into districts, with the objective of mopping up pockets of Boer resistance. The Marico District, including the towns of Mafeking, Zeerust, Lichtenburg and Rustenburg, was assigned to Major-General Robert Baden-Powell.

Major-General Sir Frederick Carrington protected the northern frontier on the Limpopo with the RFF comprising Yeomanry Battalions and Bushmen from Australia and New Zealand, with the objective of occupying Rustenburg. However, following the relief of Mafeking, Major-General Sir Frederick Carrington was compelled to split up the RFF (Rhodesian Field Force), and to despatch portions of it across the north-west of the Transvaal to reinforce Major-General Baden-Powell.

Major-General Baden-Powell deployed two mobile columns to effectively search out and neutralise Boer units within this area. The greater portion accompanied Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer to the Rustenburg district; detachments were left at different Posts, establishing small garrisons, along the way. Members of QMI, under the command of Captain Kellie, formed part of Colonel Plumers Column. Three days after the Relief of Mafeking, Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer's column, on their trek east, occupied Ottoshoop, Polfontein and on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 1900, occupied Zeerust. From Zeerust Major-General Baden-Powell and Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer moved farther east via Magatos Nek.

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Moot is the Afrikaans word for Isle. Apparently, when campaigning here General Smuts correctly compared the 'moot' to the 'Shenandoah Valley' in Virginia USA for its fertility and military significance...

Trek (*pronounced trak*) - a long arduous journey, especially on foot...

Lieutenant (*later Major*) Charles Duly DSO was born 1<sup>st</sup> January 1870, son of Charles Duly, of Hastings. He served during the Matabele Rebellion of 1896, and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902); was mentioned in Despatches and created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) 27<sup>th</sup> September 1901. He was a member of the Rhodesian Regiment, Cyclist Section Rhodesian Volunteers. He served in East Africa in the European War, commanding the Mechanical Transport, British South Africa Police, under General Northey (Nyasa-Rhodesia Field Force)...

Silkaatsnek is named after King Mzilikazi of the Matabele (amaNdebele), one of the most impressive leaders southern Africa has ever known, second only to King Shaka of the Zulu (amaZulu)...

On the 1<sup>st</sup> June 1900, a NSW Citizen Bushmen (NSWCB) detachment, under Colonel Airey was sent to probe along the road to Rustenburg. Airey, on his return to Zeerust, left 2 lieutenants and 40 troopers at Elands River Camp. On the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1900, they were joined by 70 BSAP (British South Africa Police). On the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1900, Captain Thomas with a detachment from 'A' Squadron of the NSWCB, came into Elands River Camp.

Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer brought his column to Elands River Post and a camp was set up on the nearby farm of 'Woodstock'. Within a week, there were some 1500 men there. On the 10<sup>th</sup> June 1900, Major-General Baden-Powell's forces occupied Rustenburg and by the 14<sup>th</sup> June 1900.

Many Rhodesians and Australians under General Baden-Powell's command, soon appeared in the 'moot', thus quickly opening communications between Mafeking and Pretoria, after the Boer capital had fallen to Lord Roberts on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1900. These communications were pioneered by a Rhodesian, Lieutenant (later Major) Charles Duly, who cycled from Mafeking to Pretoria through the disintegrating commandos.



Captain Charles Duly DSO

Small garrisons were established throughout the western Transvaal at Ottoshoop, Zeerust, Rustenburg amongst others, with a special staging post set up half way between Zeerust and Rustenburg at Brakfontein Drift, known as Elands River Post...

### Rustenburg Evacuated to occupy Commando Nek and Silkaatsnek:

After the fall of Pretoria on 5<sup>th</sup> June 1900, the British maintained a favourable command of several strategic points in the Transvaal area. At this stage of the Second Anglo Boer War, set-piece battles had become futile, and the Boers, under leaders like Generals de la Rey, Botha, de Wet and Smuts, had realised to avoid defeat, the war would now have to be conducted by unconventional means, guerrilla warfare. Surrounding Pretoria, were two passes (neks) of tactical importance, Commando Nek (Kommandonek) and Silkaatsnek, where wheeled-traffic could cross. Major-General Baden-Powell was ordered to occupy this area by Lord Roberts. To do so, Major-General Baden-Powell would have to substantially weaken Rustenburg, by having to involve the vast majority of troops within the garrison and surrounding area. Hence, during July, August, and September 1900, the bulk of the Rhodesia Regiment was operating to the east of Rustenburg and to the north of Pretoria.

Rustenburg, now the most easterly of the British garrisons appeared to be the most vulnerable and orders went out from Baden-Powell on the 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1900, to the garrison commander, Colonel Hore, to retire to Zeerust. Rustenburg was to be abandoned.

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During the Battle of Onderstepoort the attacking Boer forces were reportedly fired upon from guns at the Wonderboom fort, the only indication that one of the Pretoria fortresses was actually utilised in combat...

Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel George Holdsworth, born 1862, educated at Eton and Cambridge. He joined the army on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1884 and was a Lieutenant in the 7<sup>th</sup> Hussars a year later. He reached the rank of brevet Lt-Colonel. He served in the Boer War, before the 7<sup>th</sup> Hussars went out there, commanding Rhodesian Volunteers and attached to the BSAP (British South Africa Police) Regiment...

Captain Alexander 'Sandy' Butters was an officer of the Southern Rhodesian Volunteers (SRV). He became Commander-in-Chief's Bodyguard. Wounded in action near Reitz, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1901 and died of his wounds on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 1901...

Burgher - a fully enfranchised citizen of the Boer Republic...

Two days later, Field Marshal Lord Roberts countermanded the order and insisted that Rustenburg be re-occupied...

### Silkaatsnek and Commando Nek:

In the meantime, Major-General Baden-Powell had successfully occupied Silkaatsnek and Commando Nek and stressed that both Silkaatsnek and Commando Nek should be held with a reserve on the Rietfontein hills. This fortified communications post, became known as 'Baden-Powell's HQ Camp'. On the 7<sup>th</sup> July 1900, Baden-Powell was relieved by the Royal Scots 'Greys' (cavalry) and two sections of 'O' battery Royal Horse Artillery (RHA), and ordered to return to Rustenburg to re-establish control.

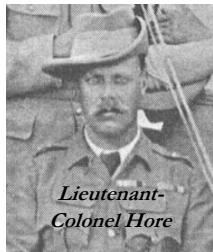
The British occupation of Silkaatsnek, led to the Battle of Silkaatsnek on 11<sup>th</sup> July 1900, when de la Rey attacked the British in the early hours of 11<sup>th</sup> July 1900. The British surrendered the next morning. It is suggested Phase-Three, the 'Guerrilla phase' of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, began with the Battle of Silkaatsnek. There were in fact three other engagements on the same day:

- Dwarsvlei, to the west of Pretoria;
- Witpoort, to the east of Pretoria; and
- Onderstepoort, to the north of Pretoria.

Silkaatsnek was one of four major battles that were fought that day and described by a British eyewitness, quoted by Louis Creswicke as "...a bit of first class generalship. It was made at five different points against five different forces at exactly the same hour, and when the day was over, the Boers had by far the best of it." Only three have been recorded, though. These are the Battles of Dwarsvlei, Onderstepoort and, the most important British defeat of the day, Silkaatsnek. This put a new heart into the Boer cause.

### Lieutenant-Colonel Hore:

Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Owen Hore's column, on its way to Zeerust, met two squadrons of NSWCB under Lieutenant-Colonel Holdsworth on the road past Elands River Camp and the combined forces rode back to Elands River Post. At Elands River Post, Lieutenant-Colonel Hore, who was suffering from the effects of malaria, decided he could go no further. Besides, the horses of 'A' Squadron of the NSWCB were deemed to be so badly knocked up, that they too were ordered to remain. Lieutenant-Colonel Airey (NSWCB) and Holdsworth (attached to the BSAP) continued the march to Rustenburg. The players in the forthcoming drama were beginning to assemble at Elands River Post.



On the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1900, Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer ordered a number of his troops, under the command of Captain 'Sandy' Butters (Southern Rhodesian Volunteers), accompanied by Lieutenants Myburg (Rhodesian Regiment) and Annat ('D' Company 3<sup>rd</sup> Contingent QMI) to Elands River Post, in support of Lieutenant-Colonel Hore, thus hopefully ensuring the supply route and communication between Zeerust and Rustenburg remained intact.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hore was the right man at the right time, as he had extensive siege experience under his belt gained at Mafeking, along with the BSAP and Protectorate Regiment...

In the meantime, the Boers made life difficult. The tele-

graph line from Rustenburg to Zeerust was cut and no contact with Elands River Post was possible.

### Conflict still far from over:

After the Relief of Mafeking and the fall of Pretoria, many burghers (Boers) believed the war was over and were willing to surrender. Many fighting men had gone home after the fall of Pretoria, and it seemed to the British Commanders that the war was virtually over. From these garrisons, patrols were deployed through the 'moot', accepting the surrender of arms by disillusioned burghers, and administering to them the oath of neutrality.

However, the British were unaware that the Boer leaders such as Generals Koos de la Rey, Louis Botha, Jan Smuts and Christiaan de Wet were already rallying the commandos. The series of successful attacks on isolated British units around Pretoria and the Magaliesberg, which they initiated during July 1900, put fresh heart into the burghers. Many renounced their oaths of neutrality; Phase-Three, the guerrilla phase of the war was ushered in, and the small British garrisons scattered through the western Transvaal were shocked to find that they were threatened by superior forces.

The soldiers who had brought their convoys into Elands River, now watched columns of troops marching and countermarching along the road which ran through their camp, engaged in vain attempts to seek out and destroy the resurgent commandos. These columns successfully occupied, fortified and abandoned the five passes over the Magaliesberg following a succession of conflicting orders, as fresh news of the movements of de la Rey and de Wet reached Field Marshal Lord Roberts...

Major-General Sir Frederick Carrington in the meantime, with his remaining portion of the Rhodesian Field Force, was garrisoned in Mafeking to ensure and establish the supply chain between Mafeking and Rustenburg. On the 19<sup>th</sup> July 1900, Major Tunbridge and a squadron of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Queensland Mounted Infantry (QMI) brought in a convoy of supplies from Mafeking, bound for Rustenburg.

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Jacobus Hercules de la Rey (1847-1914), better known as Koos de la Rey, was a South African military officer who served as a Boer general during the Second Boer War. De la Rey also had a political career and was one of the leading advocates of Boer independence...

Louis Botha (1862-1919) was a South African politician who was the first Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa (USA forerunner of the RSA). He was Boer war hero during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War and would eventually fight to have South Africa become a British Dominion. In 1905, as prime minister, he called for the newly discovered Cullinan Diamond to be presented to King Edward VII...

Field Marshal Jan Christian Smuts PC OM CH DTD ED KC FRS (1870-1950) was a South African statesman, military leader, and philosopher.[1] In addition to holding various cabinet posts, he served as prime minister of the Union of South Africa from 1919 until 1924 and from 1939 until 1948...

Christiaan Rudolf de Wet (1854-1922) was a Boer general, rebel leader and politician. He was born on the Leeuwkop farm, in the district of Smithfield in the Boer Republic of the Orange Free State. He later resided at Dewetsdorp, named after his father, Jacobus Ignatius de Wet. Christiaan de Wet is mentioned in Rudyard Kipling's poem 'Ubique'...

The 1891 shearers' strike is one of Australia's earliest and most important industrial disputes and historic events, with political ramifications. Considered by many as second only to the Eureka Stockade; likewise the Southern Cross flag was flown. The dispute was primarily between unionised and non-unionised wool workers. This resulted in the formation of large camps of striking workers. Instances of sabotage and violence were displayed on both unionised and non-unionised sides. . According to many, the shearers' strike flared dangerously close to open warfare; suppressed with the threat of troops with artillery and machine guns. The outcome is credited as being the catalyst for the formation of the *Australian Labor Party* and the rise to power of a *pro-Labor Party* faction in the *Australian Socialist League*... Cont.

However, Lieutenant-Colonel Hore, the Commanding Officer of the garrison at Elands River Post, realised that his unprotected camp was in danger of being overwhelmed. Hence, he deemed it inadvisable for Major Tunbridge to continue to Rustenburg. Boer activity had been on the increase in the surrounding area, as patrols were kept busy often encountering exchange and skirmishes. The most severe engagement took place at Koster River (Kosterrivier), between Elands River and Rustenburg on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1900.

Many historians have stated that considering the fact Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Hore was ill with malaria, Major Walter Tunbridge, the second highest ranked officer in the compound, took charge and control of the situation. Well, aspects of this may be true in the eyes of some, especially where kith are concerned. However, in truth, Major Tunbridge may have been the second highest ranked officer in the compound, but not the most experienced in situations like this; by any means of the imagination. Prior to this, Major Walter Tunbridge's experience extended to the 1891 *Shearers' Strike*. At the time of the Strike, he was a lieutenant and sent to keep order. In June 1892, Lieutenant Tunbridge was promoted captain and then in November 1898, he was promoted to major. His next engagement was southern Africa. The Siege of Elands River would have been his '*baptism of fire*'.

Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Hore, on the other hand, was a veteran campaigner; especially under siege conditions. He had extensive experience at the Siege of Mafeking, as CO of the Protectorate Regiment and second-in-command of the garrison, under Colonel Baden-Powell.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1900, Lieutenant-Colonel Hore learned that there was a concentration of Boers, in his immediate neighbourhood. On the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1900, the enemy commenced the attack by opening heavy fire on parties, who were taking the horses to water...

#### **Koster River:**

The Battle/Skirmish of Koster River was a controversial action fought on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1900, on the road between Rustenburg and Elands River. A Boer commando led by General Lemmer had cut the westward route towards Zeerust and Mafeking, thereby preventing supplies from reaching British forces, stationed at Rustenburg, under Major-General Robert Baden-Powell.

On 21<sup>st</sup> July 1900, a detachment of around 270-300 Australian Bushmen, from Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, were sent to clear the road between Magatos Nek and Elands River. They were under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Airey with orders to 'brush aside' the enemy and return with a convoy from Elands River. They were ambushed by General Lemmer's Lichtenburg Commando. The situation was dire; the detachment was being pounded and pinned down for hours. The men anxiously awaited orders from Lieutenant-Colonel Airey, to no avail, even after an extended period. This resulted in disbelief and anger amongst the men. Apparently, finally they were informed Lieutenant-Colonel Airey planned to surrender.

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General Hermanus Richard (Manie) Lemmer was born on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1849 on the farm Hartbeesfontein in the Potchefstroom district. He was a farmer till age of 32 and two years after the 1<sup>st</sup> Anglo-Boer War (1880-1881) was a veldkornet in the war against Moshette as a volunteer. He was later a member of the House of Assemble till be beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. At the battle of Kraaipan he was still a civilian but was later promoted to Vecht-Generaal (Combat-General) in the Colesberg area and later in Natal, the Orange Free State and Transvaal. He led the Lichtenburg Commando of around 700 men. On 14<sup>th</sup> December 1900 he was killed in a skirmish

Major Vialls, a Western Australian Officer, informed Lieutenant-Colonel Airey that he and his West Australians believed they could hold the hill, but Airey still decided to surrender. Apparently, two English ladies resident in the neighbourhood, Miss Emily Back and Miss Macdonald, boldly entered the firing-line and dressed wounds.

Lieutenant-Colonel Airey apparently, sent a message for reinforcements, but the message was wrongly delivered or misunderstood. It is believed, Miss Emily Back acted as a second messenger. When it became known that Major Lushington was approaching with reinforcements, the surrender order was rescinded.



The reinforcement troops under Major Lushington (3<sup>rd</sup> Dragoon Guards) and Captain FitzClarence, VC (Bechuanaland Protectorate Regiment) were mainly made up of Australian Bushmen and members of the Protectorate Regiment. The enemy were subsequently driven off.

Unfortunately, there were 39 casualties incurred by Airey's men in the six-and-a-half hour ordeal: six killed, three died later of wounds, 23 were wounded and seven men missing. In the fighting, the Queensland detachment, had Lieutenants Walsh and Leask plus 6 men wounded. Lieutenant Leask, 3<sup>rd</sup> Queensland Mounted Infantry (QMI), died of his wounds at Pretoria on 20<sup>th</sup> August 1900.

By 25<sup>th</sup> July 1900, de la Rey was at Selons River, less than a day's march to the east of Elands River Post, with a commando which was rapidly growing as the burghers took up arms again...

#### **Elands River Post:**

Major-General Baden-Powell had himself selected the site at Elands River Post. It was located 1,500 metres on the Rustenburg side of Brakfontein Drift, on a low dome-shaped kopje. It was roughly rectangular and measured approximately 400 metres (north-south) and 350 metres (east-west). The ground to the north and west was broken, and comparatively easy to defend, but to the east and south it fell away gently. An area to the west of the camp was allocated as grazing for the numerous draft animals; at a distance of about 800 metres. The northern and southern faces of the perimeter lay to seasonally dry creeks, which was a defensive weakness as it could provide good cover for an assault group.

A more serious weakness of the position was the water supply, as water had to be drawn from the river 800 metres up-stream from Brakfontein Drift, approachable from the camp by a rough track which ran between two kopjes standing on the east bank of the river. These kopjes, if occupied, protected the water supply point. These two Kopjes were later affectionately named 'Butters Kopje' and 'Zouch Kopje'.

---

near Ottoshoop...

Local girl 18 year old Emily Back (of British descent), was universally admired by soldiers on both sides of the War. Major-General Baden-Powell and Lord Roberts were very keen to track her down to acknowledge her bravery. General Smuts even passed on Baden-Powell's recommendation, which had been intercepted. Back is an unusual and interesting surname of Anglo-Saxon origin ...

Sir Arthur Patrick Douglas Lushington, 5<sup>th</sup> Baronet was born 1861, the son of Sir Henry Lushington, 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet. He fought in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War between 1900 and 1902. He gained the rank of Major in the 3<sup>rd</sup> (Prince of Wales's) Dragoon Guards...

Kopje (koppie) a small hill, mound or rocky outcrop in a generally flat area on the southern African veld (*pronounced fell*)...

Elands Post was set in a huge amphitheatre, varying from 6 to 10 kilometres in diameter and was thus overlooked on all sides, providing a perfect set-up for long range field guns. Another tactical defect lay in the several farm houses which had the potential of providing good cover within rifle range of Elands River Post. The ground where Elands River Post was located consisted of a thin layer of top soil under which laminated slate (slasto), thus making entrenchment difficult; sangars being more suitable.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> July 1900, Major-General Baden-Powell warned Lieutenant-Colonel Hore, to expect a Boer attack. Thus, Lieutenant-Colonel Hore was aware of the build-up of force under the command of General de la Rey, comprised of the Krugersdorp, Lichtenburg and Marico Commandos, commanded by General de la Rey, General Lemmer and Commandant Steenkamp. Towards the end of July 1900 elements of the Staats Artillerie joined General de la Rey.

News of de la Rey's proximity, resulted in Lieutenant-Colonel Hore's garrison setting up stone sangars. Any intentions to entrench their positions resulted in no more than shallow scattered excavations in the hard slasto. He did however secure the vital kopjes that overlooked the water point. He posted Captain 'Sandy' Butters and some Rhodesians on the most southerly of the kopjes. The NSW Australians, under the command of Lieutenant Richard Essington Zouch, occupied the neighbouring kopje. These kopjes later became known as 'Butter's Kopje' and 'Zouch's kopje'. Butters' kopje was in fact composed of two kopjes joined by a narrow saddle.

The Rhodesian position, consisting of a series of sangars, extended over six hundred metres. Each sangar was so placed as to cover its neighbours. The kopjes were the key to the British position and although exposed and uncomfortably isolated, they proved to be firmly held.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hore, who had distinguished himself at Mafeking, was unknown to his rather unruly colonial soldiers, of around 500 strong, made up of:

- Australians, from five Australian Colonies;
- Rhodesians, BSAP, RR and SRV; a few
- Canadians and Britons.

The many historic accounts concerning the breakdown of actual numbers defending Elands River Post, is rather confusing to say the least, and quite inconsistent. After some rather in-depth analysis, based on published information and claimed figures, I have compiled what I believe, to be the closest to the truth, concerning troop numbers under Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Owen Hore's command:

- **201** – Rhodesian Regiment, under the command of Captain Butters and Lieutenant Myburgh, consisted of RR, SRV and BSAP;
- **105** – 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment RFF (Australians) NSW Bushmen, under the command of Captain Thomas, Lieutenants Zouch, Cope, Cornwall and Bronowski;
- **143** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment RFF (Australians), under the command of Major Tunbridge, made up as follows:
  - 141 - 3<sup>rd</sup> Contingent Queensland Mounted Infantry (QMI);
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Contingent Tasmanian Bushmen;
- **51** – 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment RFF (Australians) under the command of Captain Ham, made up as follows:
  - 42 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Victorian Bushmen;
  - 9 – 3<sup>rd</sup> Contingent West Australian Bushmen;
- **2** – Royal Canadian Regiment (Artillery);
- **3** – British, made up as follows:

- 2 – members of the Rifle Brigade (Prince Consort's Own);
- 1 – Army Service Corps;
- **50** – African Drivers.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hore was responsible for supplies valued at £100,000 (*which equates to something like £12,372,210 today*), which lay stranded at Elands River Post. This at least meant that the camp was well provisioned, and there was plenty of small arms ammunition.

### The Siege:

For a few days, peace reigned at Elands River Post. Apparently, the troops kept spirits up by a protracted party and sing song around their fires on the evening of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> August 1900. They were quite oblivious to the fact, that in the darkness, around Elands River Post, the enemy were digging in their guns on the surrounding hills and lining the nearby creeks with snipers.



At first light, 4<sup>th</sup> August 1900, General de la Rey's forces opened fire on a detail going to water horses. The artillery fire caused carnage among thousands of animals. By evening, the stunned garrison estimated that around 1,700 shells had rained down, in what was surely one of the heaviest bombardments of the war. It was on this day, 4<sup>th</sup> August 1900 that the heaviest losses were incurred. It is said, eight soldiers were killed or died of wounds, and over twenty wounded, on the first day.



Casualties under normal circumstances are hard to come by. However, according to some historians, by the end of the thirteen-day ordeal, somewhere around twenty men had been killed, and about eighty wounded. However, according to a report by Captain Albert Duka, a doctor from Queensland who had apparently treated all of the wounded, listed 73 casualties, including 16 killed: Of the 16 killed:

- 8 were Australian,
- 4 were Rhodesian, and
- 4 were Indigenous Africans.

For his service to the wounded, Captain Duka would later be awarded the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

Commandant Pieter Stefanus Steenkamp was of Marico and Rustenburg commando. He fought at Mafeking where the Marico and Rustenburg commandos won the battle against Lieutenant-Colonel Plumber in his first attempt to relieve Mafeking...

Richard Essington Zouch was born 23 August 1848, was christened 26 December 1849 in Bong Bong, NSW, and died 7 November 1917 in Byron Bay, NSW. Richard Essington Zouch was commissioned as Second Lieutenant, 1 January 1898 with the Goulburn Troop which was part of "B" South Eastern Squadron. His commission cancelled on 30 December 1898. Richard Essington Zouch received a commission as part of the New South Wales Citizens' Bushmen's Contingent. He was allotted to "A" Squadron. During service he was promoted to Lieutenant. Richard Essington Zouch ended his service with the award of Mentioned in Despatches on 14 April 1901 and the Queen's South African Medal. He returned to Australia on 11 June 1901. Richard Essington Zouch received a commission as Captain with the 1st Australian Commonwealth Horse (NSW) and was allotted to "A" Squadron. On his return to Australia Richard Essington Zouch was granted the honorary rank of Captain which he retained for the rest of his life...

There are various differing statistics quoted. However, for this manuscript Captain Duka's report is probably as accurate as any...

Extract from the Australian War Memorial article entitled – 'The Siege of Elands River' 27 June 2014 by Cameron Ross...

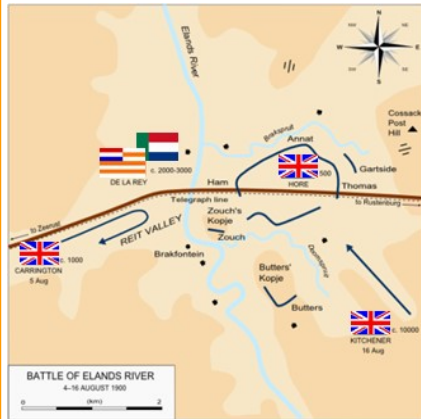
Boer casualties are even harder to ascertain. Some records list Boer casualties as 9, including 2 killed.

The stench of rotting carcasses eventually proved as much a discomfort during the 13-day



siege, as was the persistent Boer shelling and sniping.

That evening, as the firing died away with the light, the men began to dig desperately through the hard slasto (slate). Entrenching tools were in short supply; most of the digging had in fact to be done with bayonets. Bombardment was resumed



on the following day, but only 400 shells fell in the camp, while an attempt by the Boers to bring their guns closer, was repulsed by vigorous rifle fire.

Each night after shelling had ceased, burrowing would be resumed. Some dugouts became quite elaborate and constantly strengthened and covered with wagon wheels, on which was piled slate, crates and bags of flour. Eventually, they were virtually bomb proof. Also, special care was taken to protect a makeshift hospital made from three Australian ambulances near the centre of the camp; it was surrounded by earth-filled wagons together with walls of flour and sugar sacks. It nevertheless suffered from the shelling.

Shelling may have reduced slightly, but constant sniping continued from the creeks and nearby farms throughout the following days and nights, much of it directed at the Rhodesians on 'Butters Kopje'.

#### Carrington's Relief Column:

On the second day, the Australians were enthusiastic by the prospect of an early relief, for a column commanded by General Carrington, known to be approaching from Mafeking. The Rhodesians were far less confident, as many of them had served under Carrington in Matabeleland during 1896-1897, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Matabele War. He was remembered as a rather dubious, cautious and ineffective officer. Carrington was indeed now near at hand, with a thousand fighting men. After departing Mafeking, he reached Zeerust on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1900. He had left Zeerust on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1900, to go to Elands River, and it is said that on the way he received a message from Hore that the enemy were very threatening. But Carrington did not push through, as he was expected to do, at all costs.



Reinforcements led by General Sir Fredrick Carrington, were slow to arrive. Zeerust to the Marico River is only fifteen kilometres. However, it took him two days to get there. On the 5<sup>th</sup> August 1900, he moved again and halted within view of Elands River Post. Here, de la Rey laid down deadly accurate fire which caused Carrington to hasten back to Marico and Zeerust. General de la Rey said afterwards that with a few more men he could have captured Carrington's whole column. Carrington, hastily

retreated back to Mafeking, abandoning mountains of stores at Zeerust and other Posts to the enemy, which sustained them in the field for many months.

When Lord Roberts heard of it, he immediately ordered Carrington back to Elands River, but the *cautious general* moved so slowly that his troops only reached Elands River Post, after it had been relieved.

#### 'Rhodesians never surrender..!':

It is surprising that General de la Rey did not attempt to employ the 'stormjaag' tactics which he later used with devastating effect when dealing with scattered troops and convoys; probably because he could not afford heavy losses. However, by the third day, the British defences had become formidable enough to deter him. Lieutenant-Colonel Hore's siege experience and tactics were paying off. The southern and eastern sides of the perimeter by now were protected by an almost continuous line of short entrenchments, each under the command of an officer or NCO; some were manned only by Rhodesians. The south-west angle of the camp was less strongly entrenched since it was protected from cavalry by the river and by enfilading fire from 'Butters Kopje' and 'Zouch Kopje'. Defence on the west was sustained from two strongpoints, under Australian officers.

Therefore, General de la Rey accordingly decided in an attempt to coerce a British surrender, was to deny access to the water point, by capturing the two adjoining kopjes. After a heavy bombardment, he made a night attack with two thousand burghers on the more exposed location commanded by Captain Butters. Unfortunately for the Boers, the alarm was quickly given by Trooper Joyner, and the 79 Rhodesians entrenched there eventually drove off this far superior attack by rifle fire. A second attack was mounted on Captain Butters' position, the following night. On this occasion, they used a Matabele tactic of driving stock such as sheep and goats ahead, to deaden the noise of their approach. Especially considering that on this occasion they were dragging field guns with intent to install them on the kopje. This attack was also repelled by the Rhodesians. These feats of arms deserve to be better known in Rhodesia, as are Butters' repeated shouted warnings to the enemy that 'Rhodesians never surrender.'

#### Baden-Powell's Relief Column:

Lord Roberts made a second attempt to relieve the garrison, this time from the east, dispatching a force on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1900, of around 1,500 men under the command of Major-General Robert Baden-Powell, from Rustenburg. Baden-Powell had reinforced and re-installed Rustenburg and had to concentrate his troops by drawing in his outlying posts, including the vital one at Oliphantsnek, and set off for Elands River Post.

Major-General Baden-Powell, despite having a superior force, apparently delayed, around 13 kilometres (8 miles) from Rustenburg; only a third of the way to Elands River and according to many historians, failed to scout the situation. Many, me included, wonder why this was so, as it was totally out of character; he was after all considered a scouting guru. In 1884, he published the book entitled, 'Reconnaissance and Scouting'.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Matabele War (1896-1897) also known as Umvukela in Matabele and 1<sup>st</sup> Chimurenga in Shona, which was fought between the BSAC (British South Africa Company) and the Matabele (amaNdebele) in this war the Shona fought as allies with the Matabele. Mlimo, the Matabele spiritual leader, is credited with fomenting much of the anger that led to this confrontation. The Rhodesian Bush War (1965-1979) is also known as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Chimurenga...

Cont

He served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Matabele War (1896-1897), in the expedition to relieve British South Africa Company (BSAC) personnel, under siege in Bulawayo. This too, was a formative experience for him, because he commanded reconnaissance missions into enemy territory in the Matopos Hills. It was during this campaign, that he first met and befriended the famous American Scout, Frederick Russell Burnham.

Apparently, by midday, Baden-Powell mysteriously turned back to Rustenburg without orders and apparently sent messages claiming to have heard gun fire moving westward and suggesting the garrison must have been evacuated to the west, by Carrington. This may have possibly been true, as he may have heard gunfire moving westwards; it may have been, Carrington in retreat. However, something does not gel, as Carrington started his hasty retreat the day before. Something is very much amiss here, because based on reports provided by Carrington upon his return, the British commanders in Pretoria and Mafeking were under the impression the garrison at Elands River Post had surrendered. Therefore, although en route to the besieged Elands River Post garrison at Brakfontein Drift, Lord Roberts ordered Baden-Powell and the rest of General Ian Hamilton's force to return to Rustenburg.

This would have been very disheartening to those at Elands River Post. Many have blamed him for abandoning Lieutenant-Colonel Hore and his garrison, at Elands River Post. Even so, such was Baden-Powell's reputation, especially amongst Rhodesians, that a Rhodesian soldier in the camp was remarkably restrained, when reporting his failure: *'Baden-Powell made a mistake'* he wrote and then added *'enough said!'*

An article in the Portland Guardian, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> August 1900, Page 3 - see extract below:

#### **SIR FREDERICK CARRINGTON'S FORCE**

Telegrams from Pretoria state that there are indications that Sir Frederick Carrington, who is in command of the Imperial Bushmen, has successfully relieved the Eland River Garrison while on his way to join General Baden-Powell at Rustenburg...

Unfortunately, on the surface, things reek of conspiracy, and do not gel. It would seem Lord Robert Baden-Powell was used as a scapegoat, to cover the shortcomings of others. Inevitably, this resulted in the 'national hero' of the Siege of Mafeking, being removed from active service. Echoed succinctly, "enough said!"

#### **To surrender or not to surrender:**

On Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> August 1900, the 5<sup>th</sup> day of besiegement, a Boer police officer rode up to the camp under cover of a white flag, bearing a request for bandages to dress the wounds of the two Australians who had been captured, by General de la Rey. Lieutenant-Colonel Hore, took the opportunity to protest against the shelling of the makeshift 'hospital'. Apparently, General de la Rey made his apologies next day, explaining however, that the hospital was in close proximity to the firing line. He then apparently offered Lieutenant-Colonel Hore, terms for an honourable surrender. Five days later, de la Rey again called for surrender, as he became concerned about being caught by relief forces.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hore delayed his reply, until he could summon Captain Butters to his Headquarters, as he wanted to hear from Major Tunbridge and Captain Butters. Much is written about Major Tunbridge's alleged advice. However, Captain Butters was apparently adamant in his opinion and answer; *"I dare not go back to*

*my camp"*, he said *"and tell them to surrender after the splendid way my troops repelled the Boer attacks"*. His resolution won Lieutenant-Colonel Hore over, and apparently, the Australians too. That night, before Captain Butters could return to his kopje, 'Butters Kopje', the delighted Australians carried him shoulder-high round the camp, cheering him for the spirit he had displayed.

Thereafter, de la Rey appears to have lost heart. His ammunition was running short, and de Wet had broken out of a trap set for him, and was heading northwards from the Vaal, pursued by vastly superior forces. Soon the 'moot' would be alive with British forces and the safety of the de la Rey's force at Elands River would be compromised. Lieutenant Hore, it seemed, could hold out indefinitely.

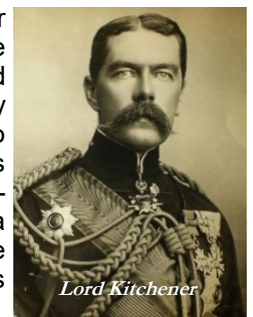
Hence, General de la Rey began removing his guns away to safety. Bombardment of the camp ceased and only small arms fire was maintained. Also, at the time, General de la Rey sent a message to General de Wet suggesting that they joined forces, but the runner was captured by the British on the 13<sup>th</sup> August 1900. Quite unexpectedly, Lord Kitchener, who was conducting the hunt for General de Wet, discovered that Lieutenant-Colonel Hore was still standing firm at Elands River Post.

By this stage, General de Wet had reached safety and led his commandos over the Magaliesberg at Oliphantsnek, which had luckily for General de Wet, been evacuated by Baden-Powell, a few days earlier. General de Wet then disappeared into the wilderness beyond, from which he would emerge to continue the war, for nearly two more years.

Lieutenant-Colonel Hore's stand at Elands River Post unwittingly set events in motion, which led to the abandonment of the vital pass over the Magaliesberg. It can be said, this was a major catalyst for tragically prolonging the war into Phase-Three, the long drawn out Guerrilla War.

#### **Kitchener's Column:**

On 15<sup>th</sup> August 1900, two days after the message from de la Rey to de Wet had been intercepted, Lord Kitchener now denied his prey (General de Wet), wheeled round to converge on Elands River Post. As Lord Kitchener's column approached, General de la Rey, faced by a superior force, decided it was time to withdraw, what remained of his force.



*Lord Kitchener*

Small arms fire around the perimeter ceased that same day, 15<sup>th</sup> August 1900, as the garrison observed rising dust from the withdrawal of General de la Rey's commandos. That evening, a message was sent to Lieutenant-Colonel Hore by four Western Australians (1<sup>st</sup> Contingent of West Australian Mounted Rifles) under the command of Captain Beauvoir De Lisle, part of Lord Kitchener's Column.

#### **Relief of Elands River Post:**

To be continued

The Portland Guardian was a weekly newspaper published between 1842 and 1964 in the seaport town of Portland, Victoria, Australia. It was known as the Portland Guardian and Normanby General Advertiser from 1842 to 1876. It was founded by Thomas Wilkinson and James Swords, and was the second newspaper to be launched in country Victoria. It was eventually absorbed by local rival Portland Observer, with the final issue appearing on 26 March 1964...

## Visiting the Historic Harrismith Cemetery 2020

A discussion paper produced by S J de Klerk for the South African Archaeological Society

Submitted by **Patrick Honeyborne C.A.**



*Harrismith Cemetery, overlooking the Military Garden of Remembrance (S J de Klerk)*

Most Gauteng holiday makers interrupt their journey to the KZN Coast at one of the Ultra City or Star Stop facilities at Harrismith or Van Reenen's Pass. Once fortified with fuel, fast food and soft drinks, they continue their merry way, quite aware they are about half-way to their seaside destination.

This is a pity as they miss the opportunity to visit one of the more interesting and historical cemeteries in South Africa. This is the Harrismith Municipal Cemetery, situated just off the corner of Laksman and Greyling Streets.

Harrismith was established in 1849 and is one of six towns in South Africa named after Sir Harry and Lady Juanita Smith. The other five towns are Ladismith in the Western Cape, Ladysmith in KZN, Fauresmith, Smithfield and Aliwal North, which commemorates Smith's victory over the Sikhs in 1846. By 1903, Harrismith was the second-largest town in the Orange River Colony, a status it lost in subsequent years.

The Harrismith Cemetery contains numerous historical graves which link us to some momentous events in our history:

- The now almost forgotten War of 1865 to 1868 between the Free State and the Basothos, also known as the Seqiti War; The Anglo Zulu War of 1879;
- The South African War of 1899 to 1902;
- The 1914 Rebellion; and
- World War 1.

When entering this cemetery, the British Garden of Remembrance, about half an acre in extent, lies to the right of the cemetery roadway.

It contains the graves of 437 imperial soldiers of

which, 111 were killed in action or died of their wounds. In the Free State Province, only the President Brand Cemetery in Bloemfontein and the Kroonstad Garden of Remembrance contain the remains of a greater number of Imperial soldiers. Imperial soldiers originally buried where they had fallen in battle in the district, were reinterred during 1958/1959 in this Garden of Remembrance. The remains of such soldiers were transferred from farms and sites such as Tweehoek, Tradouw, Culloden, Mill (Molen) River Bridge, Slangfontein, Oliviershoek, Van Reenen and others. Several obelisks commemorate the names of fallen soldiers from regiments active in this area including, the 1st Battalion Imperial Yeomanry and the Riflemen of the 60th Kings Royal Rifle Corps.

There is a rather touching tombstone requesting the passerby to charitably pray for the soul of Lieutenant Robert Charles Lucius Stapleton-Bretherton who was killed in action at Rondedraai. The epitaph is headed by the Latin proverb, '*Fiat Voluntas Tua*' (Thy Will be Done) and ends with the appeal: '*Jesus! Be not to me a Judge. But a Saviour.*'



*Tombstone of Lieutenant Robert Charles Lucius Stapleton-Bretherton (S J de Klerk)*

A British garrison was stationed in Harrismith until May 1913. Hence, there are some graves of British soldiers and their families in this military precinct dating from after the Anglo Boer War. One such tombstone cautions of the hazards when crossing a railway line: '*Cecil Hastings Kirwan, Lieutenant, the Wiltshire Regiment, accidentally killed at the level crossing at Harrismith, 26th May 1910, aged 24 years.*'

A large obelisk stands next to the Town Hall on which are inscribed 123 names of soldiers of the 2nd Grenadier Guards and 78 names of the 2nd Scots Guards who lost their lives in South Africa. Although these regiments were based at Harrismith and many of their men were buried in the town's cemetery, some were not, and their graves may be found as far away as Thaba Nchu and Standerton.

The roadway in the cemetery turns to the right and on the left behind the trees lies the Jewish Precinct. The Jewish Precinct was established in October 1902 and officially opened in 1903 on ground where the

graves of five unknown Jewish soldiers who fought in the Anglo Boer War are located. This Precinct contains the graves of 92 adults and 22 children. At the time of the 1926 census, Harrismith had quite a substantial Jewish population of between fifty and sixty families. Regrettably, by 2007 the Jewish community had completely disappeared.



*Harrismith Concentration Camp Cemetery Memorial  
(www.graves-at-eggsa.org)*

On the opposite side of the cemetery roadway are three monuments detailing the names of the approximately 193 women and children who died in the Harrismith Concentration Camp and buried here. In 1907 the Town Council was tasked with restoring the graves of old men, women and children who had died in the concentration camp. A Dominee Theron\*, then in Bethlehem, wrote that he had been present at most of the burials, but the graves had not been marked, nor any register maintained. Some names, written on paper and enclosed in bottles were placed on the graves, but by 1907 these had disappeared. There are therefore very few individually marked graves of those who perished in the concentration camp.



*Stone commemorating Marthinus Delport, the last surviving son of Johanna van der Merwe (S J de Klerk)*

Close to the concentration camp precinct is a tombstone commemorating the last surviving son of 'Volksmoeder' Johanna van der Merwe, namely

Marthinus Delport, born 1857 and who died in 1944. Johanna van der Merwe (1825-1888) was an acclaimed Voortrekker heroine who survived the Weenen Massacre, an Isizulu impi attack on her trekking party on the night of 17 February 1838, despite sustaining more than twenty assegai stab wounds. She later married Hendrik Frederick Delport, with whom she had seven sons. She died aged 62 and buried in Rouxville. An ox wagon of the 1938 Great Trek Centenary commemoration and a South African Navy submarine were subsequently named in her memory.

Close to the above is a family gravesite of the De Beer and Maree families. The attractive tombstone to the De Beer infant crowned with a small angel leaning disconsolately on an overturned torch flame, signifying death, is worth noting.



*Beautiful tombstone of the infant Morrell Maree de Beer who died in 1890 aged 19 months (S J de Klerk)*

In this area is probably the oldest, still legible tombstone. It appears to be of A. J. Viljoen, born 1803 and died 1855.



*Tombstone of Viljoen, possibly, one of the oldest ones here (S J de Klerk)*

The cemetery roadway turns right and then right again. One is now at the south-eastern end. At this corner there is an obelisk commemorating the 45 fallen members of the Harrismith Boer Commando whose remains were reinterred here in 1938. In 1987 this new obelisk was erected by the National Monuments Council. The original monument dating from 1938 was placed horizontally in front of the new obelisk.

There is also an obelisk in front of the Dutch Reform Cont.

Church listing all the names of the men of the Harrismith Commando who died in the war. Of a total of 73 burghers, 19 are listed as having died at Platrand (6 January 1900), 32 killed or mortally wounded, and 22 who died in prisoner of war camps overseas and buried in India and Sri Lanka.



*Obelisk commemorating members of the Harrismith Commando who died during the Anglo Boer War (S J de Klerk)*

Virtually adjacent to the burgher obelisk are two very historic tombstones of Free State burghers killed in 1866 during the Seqiti War between the Free State and the Basothos.

The inscription on the first grave, covered by a monumental tombstone, is written in Dutch. Translated it reads:

*'To the memory of Hendrik Oostewald Dreyer, the fourth son of J. A. Dreyer of Constantia and grandson of T. F. Dreyer of Wynberg, Cape Colony. Born at Constantia on 4 October 1833 and died in the Basuto War on 29 March 1866. Erected by his sons.'*



*Impressive, historic tombstone of H. O. Dreyer killed in the Seqiti War of 1866 (S J de Klerk)*

The English inscription on the second tombstone reads; *'Sacred to the Memory of Joseph Simbeck who was born at Baireuth in Bavaria December 25th, 1818 and fell in action near Harrismith during the Basuto War March 29th, 1866. Aged 47 years and 3 months. In the midst of life, we are in death.'* It is beautifully engraved but unfortunately there is no indication whom the engraver might have been. It is therefore interesting to speculate on the origin of this tombstone. Harrismith in 1866, would have been a mere village and it unlikely that a competent stone mason would have resided thereabouts. One wonders

whether this tombstone originated in Bloemfontein, Durban or perhaps even Cape Town?



*Beautifully engraved tombstone of Joseph Simbeck also killed in the Seqiti War (S J de Klerk)*

Both Dreyer and Simbeck were killed on the same day at Witsieshoek and their names together with 96 of their comrades who also fell in this war, appear on the Basotho War Memorial in the Queen's Fort in Bloemfontein. The others died in battles and skirmishes in the Smithfield area, Thaba Bosiu, Nauwpoort Nek, Ladybrand area, Hlotse and Moperi's Stadt.

According to Major Tylden, this war consisted of two campaigns from 1865 to 1868. There was a considerable amount of fighting in the first campaign from 1865 to 1866 but very little in the second from 1867 to 1868. The Basotho were completely defeated in the field. However owing to the failure of the Free State to capture Thaba Bosiu, the Basotho managed to keep on skirmishing until Great Britain intervened and forced the Free State, by then financially completely exhausted, to make peace on terms which secured the Basotho possession of their land as it is today, but under the rule of the Cape Colony.

It is not generally recalled today that the Basotho was amongst the first African traditional societies to effectively combine firearms with campaigning on horseback. The Basotho mounted warriors proved very successful and difficult to counter in the mountainous areas adjoining Basutoland.

There is another historic tombstone which links Harrismith with the Anglo Zulu War of 1879. This stone lies about midway between the two Basotho War Graves and the British Garden of Remembrance.



*Isandlwana battlefield with cairns of white washed rocks marking where remains of British soldiers were interred ([www.walkingthebattlefields.com](http://www.walkingthebattlefields.com))*

Unfortunately, it has broken into two and now lies flat on the ground and can therefore easily be overlooked. The epitaph reads: *'Sacred to the memory of Edmund Frederick Tarte, Late Capt. H. M. 24th Regt. Who died at Harrismith, January 6th 1891, Aged 59 Years.'*

The 1st 24th Regiment of Foot was annihilated by the Zulu Main Impi at the Battle of Isandlwana on 22 January 1879. It would be interesting to know more about Captain Tarte's responsibilities on that fateful day and during the subsequent Anglo Zulu campaign. Captain Tarte must have served during this war as the 24th Regiment was thus named until 1881, when its name changed to the South Wales Borderers.

During the 1914 Afrikaner Rebellion, Harrismith was one of several Free State towns occupied for a period by rebels under the command of General Wessel Wessels. Apparently, the rebels confiscated all arms and ammunition as well as large quantities of foodstuff from local shopkeepers. After the suppression of this Rebellion, the rebels were fined R45 010 for damage caused.

General Christiaan de Wet was captured on 1 December 1914 and General Beyers drowned while trying to cross the flooded Vaal River on 8 December 1914, to escape encircling Government forces. By the middle of December 1914, the Rebellion in both the Free State and Transvaal was largely suppressed.

There are two graves relating to this Rebellion in this cemetery. One grave is of Private Harry Wright of the Harrismith Rifles, who drowned while bathing during December 1914. One can safely assume bathing in this instance took place in a fast and deep river, while on active service. The original steel cross indicates his date of death as 5 December, whereas the later erected stone tombstone indicates it as 15 December 1914.

Tombstone of Captain Tarte (S J de Klerk)



Grave of Harry Wright. Note the difference in date of death on the two tombstones (SJ de Klerk)

The other grave is that of Burgher Hermanus Retief of the Bethlehem Commando who died on 20 December 1914, from enteric fever, which we would now diagnose as typhoid. It seems most of the tombstones of the military who died during this Rebellion, do not provide the cause of death, but merely the surname, initials and dates of death.

Although there are no graves of soldiers who died in World War 1 here, there are a few tombstones bearing inscriptions to soldiers who died on active service beyond South Africa.

The inscription on a grave to Edward Arthur Munday, aged 27 years, reads: *'In Memory of my Dear Son. Died in Action August 30th 1916. Interred German East Africa. Forever with the Lord.'*

There is also an inscription on a monumental tombstone to the Mandy family: *'Also Charles Edward Mandy Killed on Active Service. April 5th 1917. Aged 45 years. Interred at Nairobi.'*

There is a rather melancholic tombstone in remembrance of three members of the Terry family: *'In loving memory of my son Henry Walter Seymer Terry Killed in Action France 1918. Also my sister Caroline Walker. Also my daughter Florence Doreen Terry. RIP.'*

Lastly, one tombstone serves as a reminder that the relationship between English and Dutch speakers in the Free State were considered more congenial than in the neighbouring ZAR. It reads: *'In loving memory of Robert Macfarlane born at Paisley, Scotland 3rd May 1833. During a residence of forty seven years in South Africa, he took the deepest interest in, and did much noble work for the welfare of his adopted country especially for the late Free State. Died at The Oaks Harrismith 21st July 1903 Aged 70 years.'*



One hopes and trusts that the Harrismith Municipality and community will make every effort to protect and preserve this historic cemetery.

S J de Klerk

\* If correct, then most likely Dominee C. P. Theron who was minister of the Dutch Reformed Church at Bethlehem from 1872 to 1912, although he was interned at the Ladysmith Concentration Camp from 1901 until the end of the war.

Cont.

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End.

## What a Guy

by Mary E. Metcalfe © - maryrod@bigpond.net.au

“A piece of major luck!” What does the reader imagine on hearing these words? They refer in this instance to the rank and surname of the subject of this story. That phrase cannot, however, describe the fate of the young strapping Queenslander who enlisted in the **4th Queensland Imperial Bushmen contingent** which sailed from Brisbane for South Africa on **18 May 1900**, on the ‘**Manchester Port**’. **His photo by ‘Tosca’ can be found in The Queenslander, 19 May 1900 supplement page 940S.**

When Private **Guy Harold Luck** became member #272, of H Company, 4QIB, he was just eighteen years old, apparently the third son born 6 February 1882, to parents Edward Charles Luck and Julia Atkinson Ross. His father died on 25 September 1891. This family is personally unknown to me. He was one of the men who served with my grandfather, Alexander Beveridge Cunning, #344 of the same contingent.

Research, however, indicates that the Luck family were well known in Central Queensland at Princhester and Torilla Stations, and Cooberie, near Yeppoon. Guy, it would seem, led an adventurous life. To be accepted into the contingent, he had to fulfil the criteria of being a good horseman, a good marksman and generally fit; capabilities which would have been easily gained during station life.

While in South Africa the Queensland Bushmen were regarded for their endurance and suffered their share of heavy fighting and deprivation. Many were invalided home early from battle wounds or debilitated by enteric fever. Guy survived sufficiently to remain there in July 1901 when the majority of the men embarked, time expired, for the homeward voyage on the ‘*Britannic*.’ He transferred to the Cattle Rangers Corps on 6 July 1901, as did several other 4QIB men. This was a corps for the “protection and safe conduct of captured stock”, paying wages of six shillings a day and free rations. On the engagement form they had to declare that they were, “good horsemen and good shots”. *The Northern Miner* (Charters Towers) Saturday 19 April 1902 page 2 gave details of the Cattle Rangers activities.

The ‘*Evening News*’ of 14 February 1902 page 3 reports the arrival back of Ranger Luck on the ‘*Sophocles*’. That same year his older brother, Edward Charles Cecil Luck, had signed on in the 7th Commonwealth Horse. Cecil was an overseer and later managed Portland Downs Station at Isisford. Newspapers of the era continue the “Luck” story.

Next destination for Guy was the Argentine and Chile where he developed business interests. The Great War broke out while Guy was visiting Australia, so he apparently negotiated his way back to Chile to complete affairs and hastened to London to enlist with the British Army in the 8th Battalion, Royal Fusiliers, as No 13261. Sergeant G H. Luck was one of many veterans of the South African War who subsequently volunteered for service in a second war.

The *Capricornian* of 15 December 1917 page 17 indicated Guy was “wounded in the battle of Neuve Chapelle and invalided to England where he received a commission”. Service then followed in German West Africa resulting in his again being wounded, and also suffering from malaria. In March 1917 he was invalided in Cape Town and eventually returned to England.

A second tour of duty to France in July saw Guy pay the ultimate sacrifice at Cambrai on 24 November 1917. Letters in the files of the Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau at the Australian War Memorial indicate that, sadly, his grave could not be located, as that day the battalion had sustained losses of 7,000 men against the German forces. A report of the conflict is offered instead. Guy was unmarried and is honoured on the Cambrai Memorial to the Missing at Louvrevail, Doignies, France.

His name is also among those listed on the honour board of the **Glenmore State School at Rockhampton**.

Adventure was contained in just thirty-five years for **Major Luck** who was another brave Queensland Bushman for whom **luck did not endure!**

## GUY HAROLD LUCK

By Mary E. Metcalfe ©

Of all the “luck”  
With a name the same  
To be killed in action  
The major’s claim to fame.  
A Rockhampton man  
Who survived the 4QIB fray  
Only to fall at France  
in the fields at Cambrai.

(Original composition of Mary Metcalfe © - 7 May 2014 to be included in an, as yet, unpublished, book of my poems on Poetic Moments with the 4QIB)

## SOURCES: –

Queensland State Archives Pay sheet p 45 Microfilm No Z4203 for Guy Harold Luck #272, obtained by personal visit. Thanks to Paul T. Seto whose creative idea it was to obtain stories surrounding the 400 men in the 4QIB, as he and I both had relatives in this contingent. I then began extensive research into the backgrounds of the 4QIB men for my own interest, as my grandfather may have been the oldest survivor of the 4QIB on his death in 1974.

The Murray Index, Official Records of the Australian Military Contingents to the War in South Africa, compiled and edited for the Department of Defence by Lieutenant-Colonel P. L. Murray RAA (Ret) in 1910.

*The Queenslander*, 19 May 1900 supplement page 940S for individual photo prior to departure

Trove digitised newspapers for wide reading on the 4QIB, and Rockhampton men  
Ancestry Public Trees and UK Military Campaign Medal & Award Rolls 1793-1949, to corroborate his movements

Australian War Memorial internet files, <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/R1494084>

Qld BDMs online for the Luck families

*The Capricornian* (Rockhampton) Saturday 15 December 1917, p 17

*The Queenslander*, Saturday 15 December 1917, page 40

*Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton) Saturday 23 December 1918, p 1 Roll of Honour

*The Western Champion* (Barcaldine), 28 March 1925, p 13 for mother Julia’s death

*The Northern Miner* (Charters Towers) Saturday 19 April 1902, page 2 – re Cattle Rangers quote.

*The Brisbane Courier* (QLD) Saturday 27 April 1918, page 14, re Glenmore State School Honour Board



# Boer War Association Queensland

Queensland Patron:

Major General Professor John Pearn, AO RFD (Retd)

1899



1902



## Monumentally Speaking - Queensland Edition

Committee Newsletter - Volume 13, No. 4, Part 4 of 4 - September 2020

### Road to the Battle of Brakfontein Drift by Gordon Bold Cont. (Part 4)

#### Siege of Elands River Post (Battle of Brakfontein Drift): Cont.

#### Relief of Elands River Post:

Lord Kitchener's column arrived the following day, 16<sup>th</sup> August 1900. Lord Kitchener himself led his column into camp hailed by euphoric cheers from the rather ragged, heavily-bearded garrison.

He apparently shouted to one trooper, standing at the bottom of 'Butters Kopje', "Who are you?" "Rhodesians", the trooper replied. "Yes, and dirty enough to be Boers", came back Kitchener's rather impolite remark, as he rode on. However, the rank and file of the relief force regarded the fatigued Rhodesians and Australians, as heroes. For 13 days, they had been penned in and sustained one of the heaviest bombardments of the war. For most of them, in particular the Australians, this was their *baptism of fire*, as it would have been their first action in this African conflict, in fact their first action anywhere. The Rhodesian troops had already seen action in this conflict, from the very beginning; some had even been involved in previous African conflicts. The defence of Elands River Post was described by an officer who had been at the Siege of Paardeberg, the '*brightest page in the history of the war*', when compared to what Cronje's laager sustained...

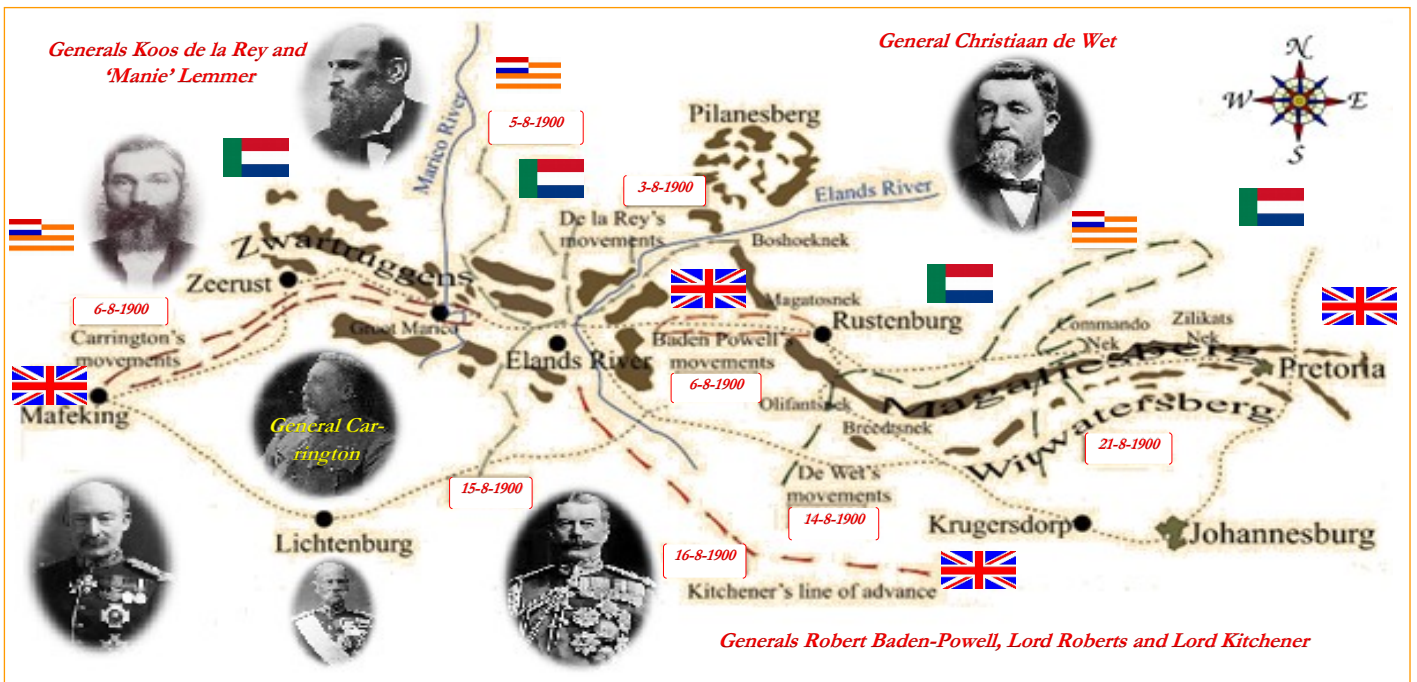
The battered camp of Elands River Post became an object of intense curiosity, even being gingerly inspected by such 'big wigs', as one awestruck Rhodesian noted, such as, Lord Methuen and the Duke of Teck." Also, the columns of: Hart, Smith-Dorrien, Hamilton, Broadbent and Ridley, were bivouacked around the camp.

A high price had been paid with around a hundred casualties, including twenty dead. And of the fifteen hundred and forty animals stranded in the camp, only two hundred and ten remained alive. The Boers also suffered casualties, according to records, around nine which includes two dead. A cemetery for the British war dead is located in the town today known as Swartruggens.



When the relief force arrived, the Elands River garrison gathered round the flag, a rather ragged Union Jack, and sang 'God Save the Queen'. They then gave three cheers for 'the Doctor' as a mark of their appreciation for his efforts, during the 13 day siege.

Conflicts such as the 9<sup>th</sup> Xhosa War (1877-1879), Zulu War (1879), Basuto War (1880), 1<sup>st</sup> Boer War (1880-1881), 1<sup>st</sup> Matabele War (1893-1894), Jameson Raid (1895-1896) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Matabele War (1896-1897)...



## Battle of Buffelshoek:

Ironically, or possibly conveniently, Carrington's relief force from Mafeking, having been ordered to make a second attempt by Lord Roberts, backtracked very slowly and ultimately arrived after the siege had been lifted, by Lord Kitchener. However, in Sir Frederick Carrington's defence, en route from Mafeking to Zeerust, his column encountered Boers at Buffelshoek, under the command of General 'Manie' Hermanus Richard Lemmer.



General 'Manie'  
Lemmer

Lord Roberts' telegram of 18<sup>th</sup> August 1900, spoke of an engagement at Buffelshoek, west of Elands River, near Ottoshoop, in which Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Carrington and Brigadier-General Lord Erroll, drove back the Boers on 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> August 1900. Lieutenant-General Carrington's column included over four squadrons of Imperial Bushmen (from all six Australian colonies) and New Zealanders.

The 16<sup>th</sup> August 1900, was the very day Elands River was relieved by Lord Kitchener from the south. Lord Roberts remarked; *"The New Zealanders in particularly distinguished themselves..."* Around the 28<sup>th</sup> August 1900, General Carrington was replaced by Lord Methuen.

### Aftermath:

Despite the gallant demeanour of the Rhodesians and Australians, the battle was a monument to British bungling; to quote Thomas Pakenham:

"You would think that war is about winning and losing. But it is sometimes unclear, even a century later, which side actually won the war - or won the peace that followed."

The defence of Elands River Post had cost the defenders around 80 casualties and of that number around 20 were either killed in action or died of wounds. In his memoirs, the Boer General Jan Christian Smuts, praised the action of the besieged force at Elands River Post:

"...Never in the course of this war did a besieged force endure worse sufferings, but they stood their

### Note:-

- Adolphus Cambridge, 1<sup>st</sup> Marquis of Cambridge GCB GCVO CMG ADC (Adolphus Charles Alexander Albert Edward George Philip Louis Ladislaus (1868-1927)), was a relative of the British Royal Family, a great-grandson of King George III and younger brother of Queen Mary, the wife of King George V. In 1900, he succeeded his father as Duke of Teck in the Kingdom of Württemberg. He relinquished his German titles in 1917 to become Marquis of Cambridge. He served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War in 1899-1900. His younger brother...
- Prince Francis of Teck GCVO DSO (Francis Joseph Leopold Frederick (1870-1910) also served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. Another younger brother...
- Alexander Cambridge, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Athlone (Alexander Augustus Frederick William Alfred George; born Prince Alexander of Teck (1874 - 16 January 1957)), was a British Army commander and major-general who also served in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War and served as the fourth Governor-General of the Union of South Africa (USA) and as Governor-General of Canada, the 16<sup>th</sup> since the Canadian Confederation. Prince Alexander was born in London to the Duke and Duchess of Teck.

Brigadier-General Arthur Henry Seton Hart-Synnot CMG DSO FRGS (1870-1942) was a British Army general who saw service in South Africa, Japan, Hong Kong, Burma, India, and the European War of 1914 to 1918. He served as brigade major of the Irish brigade with Lord Kitchener's column in pursuit of Boer general Christiaan de Wet...

Major-General Hubert Ion Wetherall Hamilton CB CVO DSO (1861-1914) was a senior British general who served with distinction throughout his career, seeing battle in the Mahdist War in Egypt and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War, before being given command of the British Third Division at the outbreak of the WWI. Major Hamilton with Lord Kitchener's column in pursuit of Boer general Christiaan de Wet...

ground with magnificent courage. All honour to these heroes who in the hour of trial rose nobly to the occasion and amid retreats and flights and capitulations shed a glory their own on the brief entire comic page of Baden-Powell's occupation of the Western Transvaal."

According to records, Captains Albert Theophilus Duka MD from Queensland, medical officer of the 3<sup>rd</sup> contingent of QMI (Queensland Mounted Infantry) and Captain 'Sandy' Butters (Southern Rhodesia Volunteers (SRV), officer in Command of the Rhodesians at Elands River Post) were mentioned in dispatches and recommended for a Distinguished Service Order (DSO), for their services at the Siege of Elands River. Captain Duka's DSO was published in the London Gazette, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1901.



Captain Duka DSO



Captain Alexander 'Sandy' Butters was mentioned in Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Owen Hore's dispatch to Lord Kitchener:

"I would especially mention Captain Butters S.R.V. for his gallantry in holding a detached post through the whole siege in face of the enemy who were entrenched within 250 yards and thereby enable me to retain command of my sole water supply."

Later, Captain Butters took up a commission in the newly formed Commander-in-Chief's Bodyguard. He was wounded in action on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1901 at Kromsprit, west of Reitz; at the little known Battle of Fredericksdale. Sadly, Captain Alexander 'Sandy' Butters died of his wounds, on the 6<sup>th</sup> January 1901.

Lieutenant James Whamond Annat 'D' Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> Queensland Mounted Infantry (QMI), attached to the Rhodesian Regiment, was one of the men left behind at Elands River Post, by Lieutenant-Colonel Plumer, along with Captain 'Sandy' Butters (SRV) and Lieutenant A. Myburgh (BSAP). Sadly Lieutenant Annat was killed on the 6<sup>th</sup> August 1900, at the Battle of Brakfontein (Siege of Elands River Post).

The following Australians received a Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) for their services at the Siege of Elands River:



- Corporal Robert George Davenport New South Wales Citizen Bushmen - Service number 85
- Trooper Thomas Harvey Borlase - New South Wales Citizen Bushmen - Service number 81; and
- Trooper William Francis Hunt - New South Wales Citizen Bushmen - Service number 96

Thomas Francis Dermot Pakenham, 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Longford (born 14 August 1933), known simply as Thomas Pakenham, is the son of The 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Longford. He is an Anglo-Irish historian and arborist who has written several prize-winning books on the diverse subjects of African history, Victorian and post-Victorian British history...

Captain Dr Albert Theophilus Duka DSO, was born 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1866, youngest son of Lieutenant-Colonel Dr Theodore Duka, MD, FRCS, HM Indian Medical Service. He was educated at Cheltenham College and at Cambridge University, and joined the Queensland Military Forces, serving in the southern African conflict. He took part in the operations in Rhodesia (26<sup>th</sup> April to 25<sup>th</sup> May 1900), including actions at Elands River (4<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1900) as well as operations in the Transvaal, west of Pretoria, July to 29<sup>th</sup> November 1900. He was mentioned in despatches (*London Gazette*, 16 April, 1901); received the Queen's Medal with two clasps, and was created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (*London Gazette*, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1901), in recognition of services during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War...

The DSO was instituted in 1886 and used the VRI cypher for issues up to and just after the death of Queen Victoria. It was a military order, until recently for officers only and typically awarded to officers ranked major (or equivalent) or higher, with awards to ranks below this usually for a high degree of gallantry, just short of deserving the Victoria Cross...

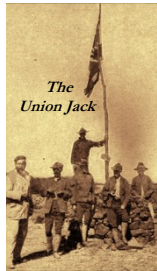
The London Gazette is one of the official journals of record or Government gazettes of the British government, and the most important among such official journals in the United Kingdom, in which certain statutory notices are required to be published...

Rhodesian volunteers for the Boer War, equated to around 15% of the total settler population, at the time. Hence, in September 1900, the year for which the Rhodesians were engaged, expired. They had been involved in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War from day one and were thus demobbed. Many of them went home back to Rhodesia, to protect Rhodesia. Although Rhodesian forces fought alongside British and Imperial units, they remained well aware of the potential threat of an African rebellion. However, some remained and served in units such as the Commander-in-Chief's Bodyguard, such as Captain 'Sandy' Butters and Lieutenant John Anderson, who was wounded at Elands River on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1900. Lieutenant John Anderson was sadly killed in action 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1900 at Clocolan, Orange Free State.

Much of the credit for the success of the defence of Elands River Post must go to the Rhodesian contingent, and it is fitting that the ragged Union Jack which flew throughout the ordeal, now hangs in St Mary and All Saints Cathedral, Salisbury, Rhodesia (now Harare, Zimbabwe).

Lord Kitchener, when riding into Elands River Post, looking around him said:

"Only colonials could have held out and survived in such impossible conditions."



On 12<sup>th</sup> December 1900, Lord Roberts handed over command to Lord Kitchener. Lord Roberts' final Despatches include a number of Rhodesians, some of whom served at Elands River Post, such as Lieutenant Myburgh; below is a list of those named:

- Lieutenant-Colonel J.A. Spreckley – Southern Rhodesian Volunteers (SRV) was KIA 20<sup>th</sup> August 1900 Klip Drift, Hammanskraal, north of Pretoria.
- Major A Weston Jarvis - Rhodesia Regiment (RR), was slightly wounded, near Mafeking, 31<sup>st</sup> March 1900. He was made an honorary lieutenant-colonel and appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG).
- Captain Geoffrey Carr Glyn – Rhodesia Regiment (RR) was created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO - London Gazette, 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1901) and later appointed a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG) in 1916.
- Captain Frank James Smitheman – Rhodesia Regiment (RR), took Despatches through the Boer lines into Mafeking, returned with valuable intelligence for Colonel Plumer; was mentioned in Despatches three times; was created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO - London Gazette, 19<sup>th</sup> April 1901).
- Lieutenant A Myburgh – British South Africa Police/Rhodesia Regiment (BSAP/RR), was at Eland River Post, under Captain 'Sandy' Butters.
- Captain Godfrey Blair Hook – Southern Rhodesia Volunteers (SRV). In October 1899, he became Lieutenant in the SRV and served with Lieutenant-Colonel (later General) Plumer's Force; was promoted Captain, and became DAAG on General Plumer's Staff in March, 1900. He was present at the Relief of Mafeking, and served with General Plumer until the Rhodesian Brigade was disbanded in November 1900. For his services while acting as DAAG on General Plumer's Staff.

Battle of Fredericksdale, near Kromspruit in the Orange Free State (OFS) was an encounter between the Commander-in-Chief's Bodyguard and General Philip Botha (elder brother of Generals Louis and Christiaan Botha)...

- He was created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO - London Gazette 19<sup>th</sup> April, 1901).
- Lieutenant Charles Duly – Rhodesian Regiment (RR) of the Rhodesian Volunteers dispatch riders Cyclist Section, was mentioned in Despatches and created a Companion of the Distinguished Service Order (DSO - London Gazette, 27<sup>th</sup> September 1901).
- Sergeant-Major J Lough – Rhodesian Field Force (RFF) was awarded a DCM.
- Sergeant Major H.R. Webb - Rhodesia Field Force (RFF) was awarded a DCM.
- Trooper C Bentley Rhodesian Regiment, was awarded a DCM,
- Trooper G F Parton – Rhodesia Regiment service number 259, was awarded a DCM,
- Trooper Charles Gustavus Duner – Rhodesia Regiment (RR) service number 82 was awarded a DCM.

### Guerrilla Warfare (Phase-Three):

After the fall of Pretoria, 5<sup>th</sup> June 1900 and President Paul Kruger's exile since 11<sup>th</sup> September 1900, the Siege of Elands River Post (Battle of Brakfontein) is considered by many as the last of the conventional battles and the first in the guerrilla phase of the war. It was also the first of many fought for control of the Pretoria - Rustenburg – Mafeking route.

With practically every Boer town in the hands of the British, President Kruger in exile in the Netherlands, and formal resistance at an end, the British extended an offer of peace to the Boers. Acting in the name of President Kruger, Jan Smuts rejected the terms, and urged the generals to fight on. He described to Louis Botha a manner of guerrilla warfare, which would be suited to the vast expanses of the Veldt.

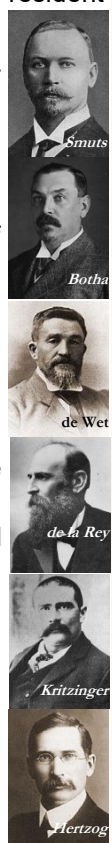
Commandant-Generals Louis Botha (Transvaal Republic) and Christiaan de Wet (Orange Free State) led a concentrated guerrilla campaign, against the British together with:

- General Koos de la Rey,
- General Pieter Kritzinger
- General Barry Hertzog, and
- General Jan Smuts.

The success of Jan Smut's measures concerning a guerrilla campaign was seen in the steady resistance offered by the Boers, extending the war almost two years.

Commandant-Generals Louis Botha and Christiaan de Wet with Generals Koos de la Rey and Barry Hertzog, stretched British resources in the Transvaal and Orange Free State. However, September-October 1901, Commandant-General Louis Botha conducted a second expedition into the British Colony of Natal, thus splitting and further stretching British forces, potentially extending the efforts of Generals Koos de la Rey, Christiaan de Wet and Barry Hertzog.

**Note:** - Like most historic accounts of particular events, records are tainted one way or another, the result of many varying reasons, ranging from; administrative errors, transcription errors and very often unwitting bias and even ignorant exaggeration, based on hearsay. To establish what is closest to the truth, requires extensive research and analysis, which has already been done by many with differing viewpoints. One just needs to analyse the Battle of Hastings for example and one will encounter various points of view. It is also advisable to gather information from the opposite side too; viewed from a different perspective, one's eyes may be opened. Often to get a real perspective, one has to take a walk through the timeline leading to the event without bias, to establish the real truth.



Cont.

Jan Smuts, saw no service in the early stages of the war. His battlefield was Pretoria, where he served as President Paul Kruger's right-hand man. He wrote Despatches to generals, published propaganda, organised logistics and liaised with Transvaal diplomats in Europe. However, necessity soon thrust Jan Smuts into the guerilla campaign. He initially served under General Koos de la Rey and excelled at hit-and-run warfare. In the bitterly cold winter of 1901, General Jan Smuts and his commando invaded the Cape Colony. His task was to invade/infiltrate the British Cape Colony.

DAAG - Deputy Assistant Adjutant General...  
 Pieter Hendrik Kritzinger (1870-1930), was a Boer general and guerrilla commander during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anglo-Boer War. As a part of General Christiaan de Wet's orange Free State forces, Kritzinger's commandos launched successful attacks deep into the Cape Colony on British troops. The British communications and supply lines were severely disrupted...  
 Lord Roberts' Concentration Camps and Scorched Earth policy conducted by Lord Kitchener eventually turned the tide...  
 The escapades of General Jan Smuts and his commando, is covered in some detail in the book entitled 'Commando' by Deneys Reitz. Also described in 'The Times History' as, "The adventures of this handful of resolute men led by General Smuts form one of the most interesting episodes in the whole course of the guerrilla war."

**Horses in the Anglo-Boer War**

Jennie Jones

The number of horses killed in the Anglo-Boer War was unprecedented. Over 300 000 horses died during active service – not counting the horses on the Boer side – it is easy to see how important these animals were. The war lasted for 970 days, which amounts to about 309 British horses dying a day. The Boer horses also died in their thousands, many ridden to exhaustion. Dead horses were not buried, but tended to be left where they fell.

Many soldiers formed strong emotional bonds with their horses, and were held in high regard by the men who worked with them. This is evident from the two horse memorials that have been erected in South Africa.

Only three years after the end of the Anglo-Boer War, the first Horse Memorial was unveiled in Port Elizabeth on 11<sup>th</sup> February 1905, to commemorate the horses that had suffered and died during that war.

The inscription on the base reads:

*THE GREATNESS OF A NATION CONSISTS NOT SO MUCH IN THE NUMBER OF ITS PEOPLE OR THE EXTENT OF ITS TERRITORY AS IN THE EXTENT AND JUSTICE OF ITS COMPASSION*

ERECTED BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION  
 IN RECOGNITION OF THE SERVICES OF THE  
 GALLANT ANIMALS WHICH PERISHED IN THE  
 ANGLO BOER WAR 1899-1902



This South African Horse Memorial is situated in the grounds of Weston Agricultural College in KwaZulu-Natal. It was unveiled on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2009 and is dedicated to horses, mules and other animals that perished serving men in war.

Weston was the site of the British Army's Number 7 Remount Depot, in service from 1899-1913.

An estimated 30 000 horses and mules are believed to have been buried on the farmlands in the area.

The memorial has been designed in a horseshoe shape, mounted by an obelisk-shaped monument created out of old horseshoes found on the farm. The inverted horseshoes of this centrepiece are in keeping with the tradition at a cavalryman's funeral, where his boots are reversed in the stirrups on his horse.

**"I can make a General in five minutes but a good horse is hard to replace."** Abraham Lincoln

Rudyard Kipling writes a poem called "If", based on his absolute admiration for Jameson, who was on trial for his part in the Jameson Raid.

**British Cavalry crossing a river during the Boer War**



IF

by Rudyard Kipling



*If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you.*

*If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too:*

*If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating.  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise.*

*If you can dream - and not make dreams your  
master;  
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim,  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster,  
And treat those two imposters just the same:*

*If you can bear to hear the Truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools.*

*If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss:*

*if you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much:*

*If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run  
Yours is the earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - You'll be a Man, my son!*

The Act of Remembrance

John Meyers, Director, Maryborough Military and Colonial Museum.  
from Diane Melloy

## The "2 Minute" Silence is a South African gift to the Act of Remembrance

**Cape Town's unique remembrance during World War I**

**The two minutes silence and its association to  
Armistice Day or Remembrance Sunday is one of  
South Africa's greatest gifts to humankind.**

When the first casualty lists recording the horrific loss of life in the Battles of the Somme were announced in Cape Town, Mr J A Eagar, a Cape Town businessman, suggested that the congregation of the church he attended observe a special silent pause to remember those in the South African casualty list. It was the church attended by Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, the famous South African author of 'Jock of the Bushveld.'

In May 1918, the Mayor of Cape Town, Councillor H Hands (later Sir Harry Hands) at the suggestion made by Mr R R Brydon, a Cape Town City councillor, in a letter to the *Cape Times* initiated a period of silence to remember the events unfolding on the battlefields of Europe and the sacrifices being made there. Mr Brydon's son, Major Walter Brydon, three times wounded and once gassed, was killed on 12 April, 1918.

The pause would follow the firing of the Noon Gun (a tradition instituted in 1902 and fired every day at 12.00 from Signal Hill).

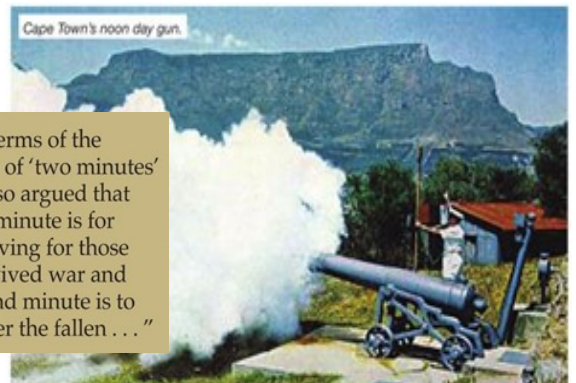
The boom of the gun signalling the midday pause of three minutes was heard for the first time on 14 May, 1918. It became the signal for all activity in the city to cease, and everyone stopped and bowed their heads in silent prayer for those in the trenches in Flanders.

As soon as the city fell silent, a trumpeter on the balcony of the Fletcher & Cartwright's building on the corner of Adderley and Darling Streets, sounded the melancholy strains of the Last Post. Reveille was played at the end of the midday pause.

Articles in the newspapers described how trams, taxis, and private vehicles stopped, pedestrians stopped, hats were taken off, and people sat or stood silently. The result of the Mayor's appeal exceeded all expectations.

One journalist witnessing the midday pause described a young woman dressed in black, who came to a halt and furtively dabbed at her eyes with a handkerchief. "One could not but wonder what personal interest had in the act of remembrance."

A few days later Sir Harry, whose son, Captain Richard Hands, a member of "Brydon's Battery", had been mortally wounded in the same battle Major Byrdon had been killed, decided to shorten the duration of the pause to two minutes, "in order to better retain its hold on the people".





The midday pause of Remembrance in Cape Town during World War II.

It was argued that the first minute of the “two minutes” silence was for thanksgiving for those that survived war and the second minute was to remember the fallen.

An eye-witness account of the midday pause in 1918 eloquently outlines the event. The Observation Post has the story on the link - [www.samilhistory.com](http://www.samilhistory.com) - and search for “The 2 minutes silence.”

The midday pause continued daily in Cape Town until the 17 January 1919, and was revived in Cape Town during World War II as can be seen in the above rare photograph in 1942.

The tradition of the midday gun has continued in Cape Town, as regular as clockwork it goes off at 12.00 and, although the pause is no longer part of the ritual, the idea of the ‘pause’ for two minutes remembrance has survived.

This ritual survives and demonstrates how we remember the war dead and their sacrifice, and became official throughout Britain and the British Commonwealth from 11 November 1919 after Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, a South African from Cape Town, took up the cause.



South African troops in a support trench on the Western Front, Fresenberg Ridge, September 22, 1917.

South African troops in a support trench on the Western Front, Fresenberg Ridge, 22 September 1917



The midday pause in Cape Town 1918

Article written by **Peter Dickens**, edited by Jennie Jones

The greatest gift you ever own are found in the hearts of your family and true friends.

Every day is a new beginning.



Members of the Rhodesian Horse at Fort Tuli 1899



## Sir Percy Fitzpatrick

(from same article)

Sir Percy had been impressed by the period of silence kept in his local church after the horrific loss of life at Delville Wood became known, and the casualty lists had been read out.

He had a personal interest in the daily remembrance as his son, Major Nugent Fitzpatrick, battery commander of 71st Siege Battery, was killed on 14 December 1917, by a chance shell fired at long range.

Sir Percy was understandably deeply affected by the loss of his favourite son and was also so moved by the dignity and effectiveness of the two-minute pause in Cape Town, that the date and time of the Armistice inspired him to suggest an annual commemoration on an Imperial basis.

### The King Decees

Sir Percy wrote to Lord Milner and described the silence that fell on the city during this daily ritual. Taking into consideration that the guns of war finally fell silent at 11.00 am on the 11th day of the 11th month (November), Sir Percy felt that the idea of observing the two-minute silence at that time and on that date, would give the Act of Homage great impact, and proposed that this become an official part of the annual service on Armistice Day.

The meaning behind Sir Percy's proposal was stated as:

*It is due to the women, who have lost and suffered and borne so much, with whom the thought is ever present.*

*It is due to the children that they know to whom they owe their dear-fought freedom.*

*It is due to the men, and from them, as men.*

*But far and away, above all else, it is due to those who gave their all, sought no recompense, and whom we can never repay - our Glorious and Immortal Dead."*

Sir Percy's letter was received by Lord Milner on 4 November 1919, review and accepted by the War Cabinet on 5 November, and was immediately approved by King George V.

Cont

George V, then King of the United Kingdom, shortly afterwards on 7 November 1919, proclaimed by decree:

*"Tuesday next, 11 November, is the first anniversary of the Armistice, which stayed the worldwide carnage of the four preceding years and the victory of Right and Freedom. I believe that my people in every part of the empire fervently wish to perpetuate the meaning of the Great Deliverance, and of those who laid down their lives to achieve it.*

*To afford an opportunity for the universal expression of their feeling, it is my desire and hope that at the hour when the Armistice comes into force, the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month, there may be for a brief space of two minutes, a complete suspension of all our normal activity that at the hour when the Armistice came into force, the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, there may be for a brief space of two minutes a complete suspension of all our normal activities . . . so that in perfect stillness, the thoughts of everyone may be concentrated on reverent remembrance of the glorious dead."*

Sir Percy, when he heard the news that his suggestion had reached the King, stated: *"I was so stunned by the news that I could not leave the hotel. An hour or two afterwards I received a cable from Lord Long of Wexhall: Thank you. Walter Long. Only then did I know that my proposal had reached the King and had been accepted and that the Cabinet knew the source."*

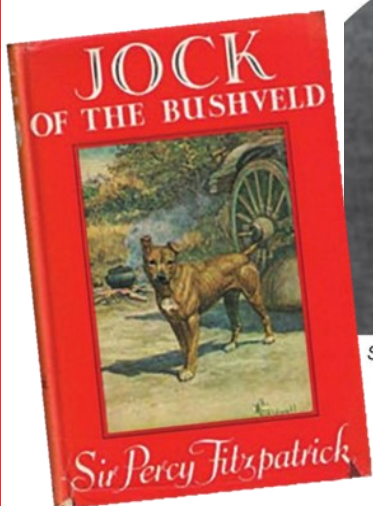
Later, Sir Percy was thanked for his suggestion of the two minute silence by Lord Stamfordham, the King's Private Secretary who wrote:

*"Dear Sir Percy,*

*The King, who learns that you are shortly to leave for South Africa, desires me to assure you that he ever gratefully remembers that the idea of the Two Minute Pause on Armistice Day was due to your initiation, a suggestion readily adopted and carried out with heartfelt sympathy throughout the Empire.*

*Signed - Stamfordham"*

And so the tradition of two minutes of silence during remembrance occasions was born, a unique South African gift to the world, a simple peaceful gesture that in deep solitude remembers the end of all war - not the beginning.



Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, author of Jock of the Bushveldt and instigator of the two minutes silence.

JJ



Final Meeting held in Brisbane to discuss the end of our Boer War Association Queensland (BWAQ)

Clockwise from Left

Professor John Pearn AO GCStJ RFD (Retd) MD PhD  
DSc FRACP

Jennie Jones, Treasurer, Editor

Gordon Bold, Chairman and

Pierre van Blommestein, Secretary



## The Voortrekker

The gull shall whistle in his wake, the blind wave  
break in fire.

He shall fulfil God's utmost will, unknowing His  
desire.

And he shall see old planets change and alien stars  
arise,

And give the gale his seaworn sail in shadow of  
new skies.

Strong lust of gear shall drive him forth and hunger  
arm his hand,

To win his food from the desert rude, his pittance  
from the sand.

His neighbours' smoke shall vex his eyes, their  
voices break his rest.

He shall go forth till south is north, sullen and  
dispossessed.

He shall desire loneliness and his desire shall bring,

Hard on his heels, a thousand wheels, a People  
and a King.

He shall come back on his own track, and by his  
scarce-cooled camp

There shall he meet the roaring street, the derrick  
and the stamp:

There he shall blaze a nation's ways with hatchet  
and with brand,

Till on his last-won wilderness an Empire's out-  
posts stand!

*Rudyard Kipling*

Rudyard Kipling

### A Song of the White Men

Now, this is the cup the White Men drink  
When they go to right a wrong,  
And that is the cup of the old world's hate -  
Cruel and strained and strong.  
We have drunk that cup - and a bitter, bitter cup -  
And tossed the dregs away.  
But well for the world when the White Men drink  
To the dawn of the White Man's day!

Now, this is the road that the White Men tread  
When they go to clean a land -  
Iron underfoot and levin overhead  
And the deep on either hand.  
We have trod that road - and a wet and windy  
road -  
Our chosen star for guide.  
Oh, well for the world when the White Men tread  
Their highway side by side!

Now, this is the faith that the White Men hold -  
When they build their homes afar -  
"Freedom for ourselves and freedom for our sons  
And, failing freedom, War."  
We have proved our faith - bear witness to our  
faith,  
Dear souls of freemen slain!  
Oh, well for the world when the White Men join  
To prove their faith again!

Written in 1899 (concerning the Boer war -  
the so-called white only war)



### I Keep Six Honest Serving Men

By Rudyard Kipling

*I keep six honest serving men;  
(They taught me all I knew)  
Their names are What and Where  
and When  
And How and Why and Who.*

*I send them over land and sea,  
I send them east and west;  
But after they have worked for me,  
I given them all a rest.*

*I let them rest from nine till five,  
For I am busy then,  
As well as breakfast, lunch, and tea,  
For they are hungry men.*

*But different folk have different views;  
I know a person small -  
She keeps ten million serving men,  
Who get no rest at all!*

*She sends 'em abroad on her own affairs,  
From the second she opens her eyes -  
One million Hows, two million Wheres,  
And seven million Whys!*

### Old Fighting-Men

All the world over, nursing their scars,  
Sit the old fighting-men broke in the wars -  
Sit the old fighting-men, surly and grim  
Mocking the lilt of the conquerors' hymn.

Dust of the battle o'erwhelmed them and hid.  
Fame never found them for aught that they  
did.

Wounded and spent to the lazar they drew,  
Lining the road where the Legions roll  
through.

Sons of the Laurel who press to your need,  
(Worthy God's pity most - you who succeed!)  
Ere you go triumphing, crowned, to the stars,  
Pity poor fighting-men, broke in the wars!

Rudyard Kipling