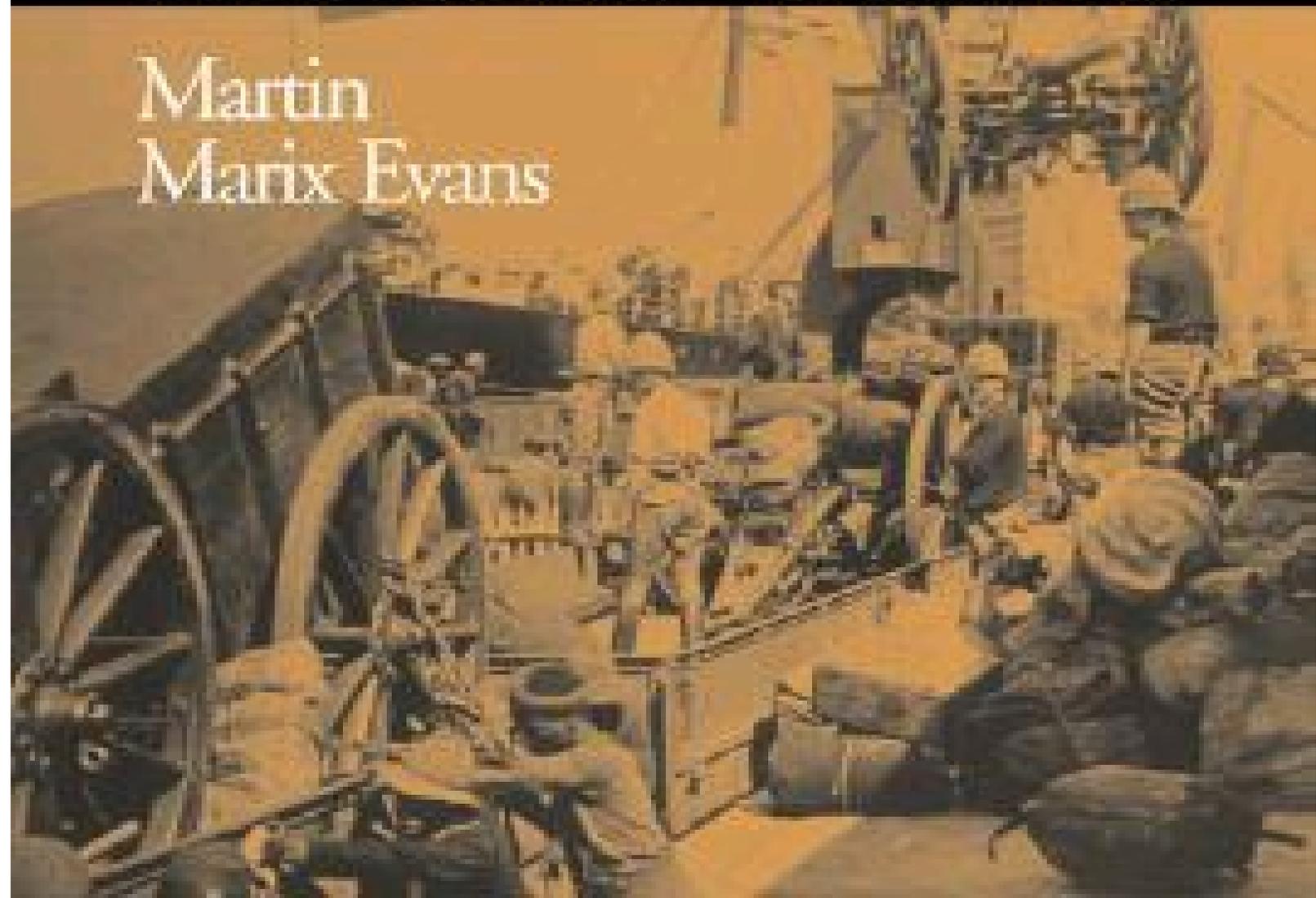




*Encyclopedia of the*

# BOER WAR

Martin  
Marix Evans



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##### In Cape Colony and Natal in September 1899 (N=Natal):

Sent to South Africa before the outbreak of the war, (arrived on the eve of or just after the commencement, of hostilities.):

The Army Corps (despatched Oct.-Nov. 1899):

Ordered out, 31 October 1899:

Ordered out, 11 November 1899 (Fifth Division):

Ordered out, 4 December 1899 (Sixth Division):

Ordered out, 14 December 1899 (Seventh Division):

Ordered out, December 1899 - January 1900:

Technical Troops - Regulars:

Militia (31 battalions, about 20,626 men):

Volunteers and Irregulars, British:

Imperial Yeomanry:

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Canada:

Australia:

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Australasia:

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Battle of Colenso (under Sir Redvers Buller):

Buller reinforced December 1899-January 1900 with:

Spioenkop flanking march (for Brigade strengths see above):

Advance on Kimberley, November-December 1899 (under Methuen):

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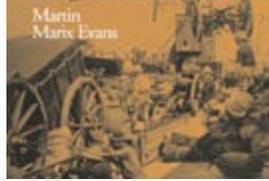
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**BOER WAR**

Martin  
Martin Evans



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## Foreword

This encyclopedia has been arranged so that the reader can access the information in more than one way. If a particular topic is dealt with under a headword, it is possible to go immediately to the relevant page within the A–Z section. Alternatively, the headwords can be found in the chronology, where they are shown in bold type, and thus the entries can be consulted in the sequence of the events they describe. The Introduction attempts to discuss some of the broader issues that are of interest in the study of the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902 and the Index provides access to references to people, places or things which are not necessarily the principal subject of the main entries, but which can be found within the entries.

The appendix material at the end of the book includes first-hand reports of a number of incidents which reflect not only something of the experience described but also something of the attitudes common at the time which are, perhaps, a little strange to the modern reader. There are also some original documents, chosen because they are commonly misquoted or misrepresented, either by accident or design, by writers with a particular view to promote.

I have tried to remain objective in what I have written, but in some instances I have certainly failed. Where contrary views of substance are known to me, I have pointed them out. The critical reader will have no difficulty in guessing that, for example, I think Sir Redvers Buller has been unjustly treated by some historians. The references cited include works providing views which differ from my own as well as books that go more deeply into the issues than is possible here. The main entries are linked to other entries by *see also* suggestions which I hope will lead to unexpected and satisfying new information as well as offering a narrative thread to follow.

The preparation of this book owes much to those to whom I have spoken and to whom I have listened in recent years. They are many, and too many to list here. However, it is impossible to omit words of appreciation to Dr Stephen Badsey, Fiona Barbour, Professor Ian Beckett, David Bryant, Brigit Carlstein, George Durrant, Johan Hattingh, Colonel F. J. Jacobs, Professor John Laband, Pam McFadden, Doug McMaster, Professor William Nason, Colonel Mike Nolan, Colonel J. E. Nowers, Professor Fransjohan Pretorius, Maggie Lindsay Roxburgh, Thomas B. Smyth, Professor André Wessels, Lieutenant-commander Brian Witts and Colonel P. Worthy.

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## Introduction

### *The White Men Arrive*

The vast landscape of South Africa has been the setting for innumerable battles since the Dutch first landed in the Cape in 1652, and no doubt many more before that time of which we have little or no knowledge. The mission of Jan van Riebeeck, the leader of the first Dutch arrivals of around ninety men, was to establish a staging point for ships of the Dutch East India Company to reprovision. Van Riebeeck was to set up a fort and arrange for vegetables to be grown and to purchase cattle from the indigenous Khoikhoi (known to the Europeans as Hottentots). The scheme was not a success and van Riebeeck persuaded the directors of the Company to allow Dutch settlers to come unconditionally. The first of them arrived in 1657. The settlement of Dutch market gardeners was an unhappy experiment, for those willing to leave their homes and sail so far away were not content with hoeing rows of beans. They wanted to farm and trade in good earnest which meant expanding beyond the first little settlement at the Cape of Good Hope. At the south-western tip of the land a peninsula shaped like a hammer-head divides Table Bay in the north from False Bay in the south and it was seriously proposed that a channel should be dug between the two to separate the European settlement from Africa itself. The notion was evidently ridiculous.

Stability was attained for a time under the expansionist reforms of Simon van der Stel in the 1680s. The boundaries of the settlement increased and the village of Stellenbosch was founded. Modern farming methods produced greater yields of wheat and led to the establishment of vineyards. The population was swelled with Dutch and German Protestants and, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, French Huguenots. Now about 800 strong, they overflowed beyond the limitations of the original settlement around Cape Town. The van der Stel family became amazingly wealthy and dominated the economy of the Cape, drawing the disparate nationalities of the farmers together in resistance to them. This, and their Calvinist religious beliefs, nurtured an independence of mind in the settlers, which was coupled with a simple faith that they were a chosen people in the eyes of the Lord, free to go where they pleased and for whom the bounty of the land, including the black people in it, was a gift from Him.

The search for grazing lands and the quest for game to hunt encouraged the settlers to push eastwards, putting pressure on the San (Bushmen) of the interior and bringing them into contact with the Xhosa on the Fish River to the east. It was to meet the challenge of the black African warriors that the commando was developed, a unit in which all white men over 16 years of age were obliged to serve, bringing their own horse and rations, and often their own gun. Expeditions were mounted against the San and continued for more than 100 years. By the end of the 18th century the San had been virtually exterminated. Khoikhoi society had also been destroyed by the expansion of the Afrikaners to whom they became servants, after disease had been added to the decay consequent on the steady

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depletion of their herds of cattle. Slaves were imported, some from East Africa and Mozambique, others Malays from the Dutch colonies in the Far East. They were said to have been well-treated because of their scarcity, but it was not until the end of the 18th century that various punishments of medieval cruelty were abolished – breaking on the wheel and slow strangulation among them. By this time there were more slaves than whites in the colony.

### *The British Presence*

The British entered the picture in 1795, a year after the Dutch East India Company went bankrupt, and at a time when the British were at war with France, from whom the Dutch settlement was “protected”. At the end of hostilities twenty years later the Cape became British permanently. During the 1820s in a series of great battles, the *mfecane*, the Zulu nation was established in the east of what is now South Africa. Then, in the 1830s, the British abolished slavery, which was the last straw for the Dutch farmers, or Boers as they now called themselves. Under leaders including Piet Retief and Piet Uys, they migrated in what became known as the Great Trek. Between 1836 and 1846 some 14,000 people left Cape Colony with their herds of cattle and goats, their furniture loaded into great wagons. They crossed the Orange and Vaal rivers, pushing into the interior and down into Natal to find land. In doing so they encountered more black Africans. Hendrick Potgieter fought the Ndebele in the north and Piet Retief and Andries Pretorius fought the Zulu in the east. Numerous little republics were founded as the *Voortrekkers* squabbled amongst themselves, broke up and moved on. They were by no means a united or harmonious group, coming together to resist external threats before dividing once more in ill-temper and pride.

Meanwhile the British colonised the coast, founding Port Elizabeth and expanding Port Natal to become Durban. The Sand River Convention of 1852 recognised the republic of Transvaal and the Bloemfontein Convention of 1854 did the same for the republic of Orange Free State. Both the British and the Boers lived in a state of intermittent warfare with the Africans around them. A new danger arose in 1867 when a diamond was found on the banks of the Orange River at Hopetown. The subsequent rush of prospectors can be analysed by examining the gravestones in the burial ground there. Two years later the much greater riches of Kimberley were discovered and the Keate Award of 1871 declared the land to be part of Cape Colony – a very dubious finding that later led to the payment of £90,000 to the Orange Free State in compensation. By this time there were 15,000 whites in the area and in the next twenty-five years the black African population grew to half a million, of whom a quarter were labourers, employed by the mine owners in competition with Boer farmers who were hard pressed to afford even the miserable wages paid in the diamond diggings.

### *Boer Independence*

The inability of the Boer Republics to dominate their black African neighbours led the British to enforce a confederation and take up the fight against their former allies, the Zulu. The Zulu, after inflicting heavy and humiliating defeats on the

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British, were eventually defeated in their turn. The relations between British and Boer governments had, through the imposition and maladministration of taxes, decayed to such a point that the latter sued for independence. When it was refused, they fought and, in the First Boer War or First War of Independence, 1880–81, won. The defeats suffered at Langs Nek and Majuba Hill would be remembered with bitterness by British regiments who were prevented from avenging themselves because the Liberal government in Britain was eager to seek peace.

The stability of the Boer independence was overturned by the pressures that followed the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in 1886. Huge numbers of foreigners, *uitlanders*, poured in and, after a time, demanded political recognition. Cecil Rhodes, by now a diamond and gold magnate of immense wealth and influence, put further pressure on the Boers by occupying Mashonaland, now part of Zimbabwe, as an individual imperialist and then, in 1895, attempting to overthrow the government of the South African Republic (formerly Transvaal) with the raid commanded by his crony, Dr Jameson. Although the raid was unsuccessful and Rhodes was subsequently discredited, the British, in the shape of Sir Alfred Milner, maintained their political pressure on the Boer President Kruger, and, in 1899, the Second Boer War began.

### *The Anglo-Boer War 1889–1902*

The Boers had made good use of the revenues generated by gold and were well armed, both with modern high-velocity rifles and with up-to-date artillery. They were able to put some 40,000 men in the field against half the number of British and soon had Mafeking, on the western border with Bechuanaland, Kimberley in the Northern Cape and Ladysmith in Natal under siege. However, this was an error on the part of the Boers. Although British supply lines were long and relief would take immense time and effort, the Boers had abandoned the strategy that made best use of their mobility.

The British government appears to have been rather neglectful of the problems that the army would face in dealing with the farmers of the Boer republics. Only Sir Redvers Buller, the British Commander-in-Chief, appeared to have any doubts about a swift defeat for the Boers as Britain went to war in October 1899. Innumerable colonial wars had been fought and won all over the world, and this was, most thought, just like the rest. By the end of December their error was evident. Three problem areas could be identified at that stage: logistics; the lack of new weapons; and the lack of good maps. Later in the war two further problems had to be solved: the containment and defeat of mobile forces; and the care of refugees and prisoners.

Before the war broke out Buller had written to the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, to point out the deficiency of troops: “We have, say, 13,000 men in South Africa . . . I estimate that . . . we could get 5,000 men from India in five weeks . . . 10,000 men from England in eleven weeks. . .”. The number he estimated necessary for the immediate conduct of war was 50,000, nearly twice the number that were actually in South Africa when the war began. In addition, men, rations, munitions of war, guns, horses and carts all had to be brought up on

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## *The Progress of the War*

The war can be considered as falling into a number of phases and the chronology given in this book has been arranged accordingly. The opening phase was that of the Boer offensive when their commandos invaded Cape Colony and Natal. In the Cape the action was restricted to besieging Kimberley and Mafeking, but in Natal the Boers went south of Ladysmith once the siege there was established and obliged the British to fortify Pietermaritzburg in anticipation of their arrival. Indeed, Durban itself, on the coast, was made ready for defence. The Boer leaders, older men who had fought in the previous war against the British, decided to rely on the strategy that had won them their victory in 1881: to wait for the British to attack, defeat them or hold them off and thus cause them to lose the will to fight on. They therefore adopted static positions in place of the fluid front for which they were so well suited and waited for their enemies.

The British reply began at the end of November 1899. Buller had advised against the attempt to hold a line further north than the Tugela River in Natal, and was furious that he had been ignored and that the siege of Ladysmith was taking place at all. His preference had been to strike at once and hard for the Boer republics' capitals of Bloemfontein and Pretoria from Cape Colony and ignore the rest for the time being. As it was, Cecil Rhodes had contrived to get himself caught inside Kimberley and was squawking for rescue and General White had managed to lock up a considerable number of British troops in Ladysmith. Meanwhile the Boers had taken a number of towns in the north-eastern Cape. Buller decided to adopt a holding stance in the case of the latter and to divide the rest of his force in order to relieve Kimberley and Ladysmith.

On the western front, towards Kimberley, Lord Methuen made progress until, on 11 December, he was stopped by the Boers at Magersfontein. In the centre General Gatacre was not content to adopt a defensive approach and tried to improve his position by taking the railway junction at Stormberg. He failed. Buller, apprehensive about the security of his lines of supply, attempted a frontal attack at Colenso which he had the sense to call off before intolerable losses were sustained. These defeats made up the events of "Black Week" and gave the Minister of War in London, Lord Lansdowne, the chance he was waiting for to replace Buller with his former colleague in India, Lord Roberts.

As Roberts arrived on 10 January 1900 with his Chief of Staff, the man who had won fame in Egypt and the Sudan, Lord Kitchener, the western and central fronts were inactive and the Natal front was being prepared for an effort to outflank the Boers on the Tugela River by going to the west. The attempt failed dramatically at Spioenkop and a second time at Vaalkrans. The Boer artillery dominated the first of these battles, although at the end of the day both sides thought that they had lost the action. The Boers reoccupied Spioenkop more through luck and a taste for early rising than by force of arms. In the second of these two battles, the British artillery was much better handled, but the Boers still had the advantage and Buller withdrew, rather than accept heavy casualties.

The third phase of the war was the offensive undertaken by Roberts. He had brought with him substantial reinforcements, especially cavalry, and the British

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Roberts's armies broke the final Boer entrenched positions at Bergendal (or Dalmanutha), well to the east of Pretoria, on 27 August. Buller pursued some of the Boers to Lydenburg and eastwards over Long Tom Pass while General Pole-Carew spent the next month pushing along the railway to eject Kruger from his country by 24 September.

### *Guerrilla War*

The fifth, the guerrilla, phase of the war now began. It was to last from September 1900 to the end of May 1902. The Boers scattered from the eastern Transvaal and banded together under a number of commanders. The major groups were those of Louis Botha in the south and eastern Transvaal, Koos De le Rey in the western Transvaal, and Christiaan De Wet in the Orange Free State, although they moved as freely outside these territories as within them. In addition to attacking any small group of British they found, they derailed and ransacked trains and kept as many soldiers marching about in futile pursuit of them as they could. In an attempt to add to British problems, the decision was taken to send parties into Cape Colony and raise Afrikaners resident there in opposition to their British colonial masters. Although about 10,000 responded, the vast majority decided they had no argument with the British.

When the war entered the guerrilla phase, the British had to devise ways of catching the roving commandos. The cumbersome British columns of marching infantry, ox-drawn supply wagons and droves of black African servants gave way to more mobile mounted infantry and mounted black Africans, but the vast open spaces of the veldt and the local knowledge of the Boers still gave the latter the advantage. The construction of blockhouses, mainly along the railway lines, reduced the territory open to the commandos, although to begin with the building of massive forts took too long and was too expensive. Lord Kitchener was by now in command, and he turned to Major Spring R. Rice, RE, who devised a circular corrugated iron structure that could be built in a day. These blockhouses, with barbed wire fences between them, eventually spread like a spider's web across the land. More British soldiers arrived to man the blockhouse lines and more black Africans were recruited and armed to patrol the intervals between the fortlets. The other step taken to curtail Boer freedom of movement was to lay waste the farms. The policy created another problem for the British.

The old people, women, children and black people displaced by the scorched earth programme joined the other refugees, those chased off the land by the Boers for co-operating with the British and those fleeing the scenes of war. They were housed in camps. There the administration was incompetent, the food and water inadequate or contaminated and the sanitation unequal to the task. A few camps were well run, but, as Emily Hobhouse found to her surprise and horror, the majority were death traps. The failure of the British to meet the challenge of the refugees (over 27,000 Boers died in the concentration camps, and at least half as many black people) left an enduring bitterness in Boer minds. Although, eventually, the worst of the errors were corrected, it was the abandonment of the internment policy that helped to end the war. Who could be away on

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## Chronology

**Bold** type shows that an entry is given for this topic in the A–Z section. Place is expressed in terms of place-names in common English usage at the outbreak of the 1899–1902 war.

Year	Date/Month	Place	Event
<i>Events before the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902</i>			
1652		Cape	<b>Dutch colonisation</b> begins.
1795		Cape	First arrival of British at Cape Town.
1815		Cape	<b>British colonisation</b> begins.
1834		Cape	Slavery abolished.
1836– 46		OFS	In the <b>Great Trek</b> Boers migrate inland.
1838	16 Dec.	Zululand	Boers under Pretorius win decisive victory over <b>Zulus</b> at <b>Blood River</b> .
1840		Natal	Boer Republic of Natalia (in <b>Natal</b> ) established.
1843		Natal	British annex <b>Natal</b> .
1848		OFS	Republic of Transorangia annexed by British, becoming Orange River Sovereignty.
1852		Transvaal	<b>Sand River Convention</b> gives <b>Transvaal</b> autonomy.
1854		OFS	<b>Bloemfontein Convention</b> gives <b>Orange Free State</b> autonomy.
1867		N. Cape	Diamonds found at <b>Hopetown</b> .
1868		<b>Basutoland</b> becomes British possession.	
1871		N. Cape	British acquire diamond fields in <b>Griqualand</b> .
1879		Transvaal	British annex <b>Transvaal</b> and, after losses, win <b>Zulu War</b> .
1880			<b>First Boer War</b> (First War of Independence) begins.
1881	28 Jan.	Natal	Boer victory at <b>Langs Nek</b> .
1881	27 Feb.	Natal	Boers win at <b>Majuba Hill</b> , British general <b>Colley</b> killed. Peace concluded.
1884			The <b>London Convention</b> defines British/Boer relationship.

1884	Transvaal	Lucas <b>Meyer</b> becomes president of the Boer New Republic, later merged with Transvaal.
1886	Transvaal	<b>Gold</b> discovered in Transvaal; <b>Uitlanders</b> arrive.
1888		<b>British South Africa Company</b> established by Cecil <b>Rhodes</b> , gets charter to exploit <b>Mashonaland</b> and <b>Matabeleland</b> .
1893	Britain	The .303 <b>Maxim-Vickers</b> machine-gun goes into production.
1895	Britain	Joseph <b>Chamberlain</b> becomes British Colonial Secretary.
1895	Transvaal	<b>Delagoa Bay Railway</b> completed, ending British control of <b>railway system</b> .
1896 2 Jan.	Transvaal	<b>Jameson Raid</b> defeated at <b>Doornkop</b> . Reform Committee in Johannesburg, including <b>Karri Davies</b> , arrested.
1897	N. Cape	Railway built through <b>Bechuanaland</b> .
1897	Cape	<b>Milner</b> appointed Governor of Cape, High Commissioner to South Africa.

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### **Abraham's Kraal, Battle of,**

**10 March 1900**

See [Driefontein, Battle of](#).

### **Acton Homes, Action at,**

**18 January 1900**

The approach to the town of Ladysmith (which was held by the British) from the west was poorly defended by the Boers in January 1900, but the British under Lieutenant-general Warren were not flexible enough to seize the advantage. The attempt to break through the Boer line was therefore made at Spioenkop, but, prior to this, Warren also missed an opportunity to outmanoeuvre the Boers at Acton Homes.

Acton Homes, seven-and-a-half miles north-west of Spioenkop in Natal, was a farm which had been garrisoned by the Boers. It commanded the approach to Ladysmith on the western flank of the Boer line on the Tugela River, and when General Sir Redvers Buller was making the moves preliminary to the battle at Spioenkop, Major H. W. G. Graham of the 5th (Royal Irish) Lancers saw Boer reinforcements approaching and ambushed them. The ambush failed, but the weakness of the Boer position was exposed and Lord Dundonald, the brigade commander, was keen to attack in force. Lieutenant-general Sir Charles Warren, the divisional commander, would have none of it and recalled the cavalry. The opportunity to outflank the Boers was missed and the bloodbath of Spioenkop followed.

See also:

[Spioenkop, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

**Africans, Black**

The idea that the South African War of 1899–1902 was a white man's war was a myth nurtured by both the British and the Boers. Black Africans living in the British colonies, the Boer republics and the surrounding colonies and protectorates played an active part in the war both as servants and as members of the armed forces. Those in British service were, relatively speaking, well paid and they expected their service to be recognised when the British were victorious, through the granting of political rights after the war. In fact, they found themselves unemployed

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his army. In the Cape there were 2,496 blacks and 2,939 coloureds (of mixed race) and a further 4,618 blacks in the rest of South Africa, a total of 10,053 men.

The black Africans not in war service were not exempt from the effects of the war. They were displaced from the farms either by Boer raids or by British clearances, ending up in refugee camps of one kind or another, often in concentration camps. At least 14,154 died in the camps.

In the early peace negotiations a British requirement was that the black people should be at least as advantaged politically as those in Cape Colony, but this provision was later dropped, largely with the acquiescence of the British High Commissioner, Lord Milner. The end of the war was not only disappointing in this respect, but also in economic terms. The black African economies had, like the Boers', been shattered by the war, but, unlike the Boers, they were given no support afterwards. Furthermore, the war was the final blow to economic self-sufficiency for many black families and tribes and they had no alternative to seeking work for wages from the white population. Politically deprived and economically dependent, they were destined for the oppression of apartheid.

See also:

[Agterryer](#); [Concentration Camps, black](#); [Esau, Abraham](#); [Leliefontein, Massacre at](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Jackson, Tabitha, *The Boer War* (London, Macmillan, 1999); Nasson, William, "Africans at War", *Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image*, ed. J. Gooch (London, Frank Cass, 2000); Nasson, William, *The South African War 1899–1902* (London, Arnold, 1999); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985); Warwick, Peter, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983).

## Afrikander Uprisings

The term Afrikander was used to describe people of Dutch descent, people termed Boers in the Transvaal and Orange Free State republics, who were resident in, and subjects of, the British colonies of Cape Colony and Natal. Part of the Boer purpose in invading Cape Colony was to recruit Afrikanders to their cause. In the event, the response was very poor and, indeed, many Afrikanders served in the British ranks.

See also:

[Boer](#); [Brabant, Major-general Sir Edward](#); [Joiners](#).

# Agterryer

A servant, literally an 'after-rider'. Boer fighters were frequently accompanied by black African servants who occasionally fought alongside their masters. They were not counted as part of the fighting force and, although present in significant numbers, are rarely mentioned in accounts of the campaigns. British forces also used black African labour and they

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were equally invisible to those recording events, except when something went wrong that could be attributed to them.

Deneys Reitz, who wrote the best personal narrative account of the war, recounts that before the Pretoria commando crossed the Natal border in October 1899, his father sent a family servant, Charley, to him and his brother. They were delighted to turn over their cooking and the care of their horses to him, and later, at Ladysmith, to benefit from his claimed relationship with local tribespeople in order to acquire better rations than their comrades could get.

See also:

[Africans, Black](#); [Provisions](#); [Reitz, Action at](#); [Reitz, Deneys](#).

Reference:

Labuschagne, Pieter, *Ghostriders of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pretoria, Unisa Press, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando: A Boer Journal of the Boer War* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929); Warwick, Peter, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983).

## Albrecht, Major F. W. R.,

**1846–1926**

Albrecht was born in Potsdam, Prussia, in 1848 and joined the artillery in his own country in 1867. He came to the Orange Free State in 1879 and became a captain in the *Vrystaatse Artilleriekorps*, which he made into an effective force. He served against the British in the north-eastern Cape, giving Lord Methuen's troops some difficult fighting up to the Battle of Magersfontein. He was amongst those captured at the Battle of Paardeberg, as were his fellow Orange Free State artillerymen, the six foot, seven inch (2m) tall Baron van Dewitz and Lieutenant van Heister. He returned to Bloemfontein after the war and was in public service until 1910.

See also:

[Belmont, Battle of](#); [Graspan, Battle of](#); [Magersfontein, Battle of](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

**Aliwal North**

A railway terminus and town on the Orange River, the border between Cape Colony and the Orange Free State, eighty miles (130km) east of Norval's Pont on the railway from Cape Town to Bloemfontein. The town was occupied by the Boers at the start of the war but was taken by Brigadier-general Brabant's Colonial Division on 11 March 1900. Assistant Chief-commandant Kritzinger threatened the town briefly during the Boer invasion of the Cape in January 1901. A concentration camp for white people was set up here and had 4,437 inmates in August 1901.

See also:

[Labuschagnes Nek, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

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## Alleman Nek, Action at,

### 11 June 1900

After the relief of the siege of Ladysmith (which was held by the British), the Boers withdrew through northern Natal with the intention of holding the British at Langs Nek. However, General Sir Redvers Buller outflanked them to the west by way of Botha's Pass and Alleman Nek. The Boer position became untenable and they were forced to permit the British to enter the Transvaal.

The Iketeni Ridge, through which the road to Volkrust passes by Alleman Nek, was not heavily defended by the Boers as Commandant-general Louis Botha had expected the British effort to be concentrated further east. He moved his men quickly once Buller's intentions became evident, but they were able to do no more than throw up sangars to protect the 3,000 men, one 12-pounder and three Pom-Poms (37mm Maxim-Nordenfelts) sent to hold the line. Buller's scouts found positions for the British artillery 2,500 yards (2,286m) from the Boers' defences on the ridge either side of the Nek. From there the two 4.7-inch guns and six 12-pounders of the Royal Navy were able to lay down close support for the infantry. In the first rush the 2nd The Dorsetshire Regiment pushed up the southern side of the Nek against the Lydenburg Commando, paused to return fire and then surged forward once more with the Middlesex in support, to take the first of the two summits. The Lydenburgers had fallen back across the saddle in the hill to join the Carolina, Pretoria and Swaziland commandos but the Royal Navy's guns were putting down another daunting blanket of shellfire to enable the Dorsets to complete the advance some forty minutes later. Meanwhile, on the British right flank, an attempt by the Boers to turn the flank was halted with the support of the Maxim Detachment.

The grass had caught fire, either by accident or design, and Captain A. Fitzpatrick, an Australian on Buller's staff, wrote "The Boers burned the grass to cover their retreat. . . During the march we came across many wounded and dead Boers terribly burnt . . . caught in their own grass fires and burnt to death." The Boers completed their retreat both from the area of the Nek and from their positions at Langs Nek during the night.

See also:

[Botha's Pass, Action at; Langs Nek.](#)

Reference:

Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999);  
Droogleever, R.W.F., "Alleman's Nek", *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 58/59, January 1990;  
Wallace, R.L., *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra, Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976).

# Allenby, Colonel E. H. H.,

**1861–1936**

Edmund Allenby joined the 6th (Inniskilling) Dragoons in 1882 and served in Bechuanaland in 1884–85 and in Zululand in 1888. He became one of the leading young commanders of the sweeps conducted in the guerrilla

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phase of the war. The skills he acquired in mobile warfare were to serve him well when, as commander of the British army on the Palestine front in the First World War, he took Damascus in October 1918.

## Anti-Semitism

The motivation for supporting the Boers, or merely opposing the war against them, was not always based on a sympathy for the Afrikaners, but sometimes grew from anti-semitism. A French volunteer declared that he was in South Africa to support the Boers because he opposed the international Jewish conspiracy to take over the sources of mineral wealth. Similarly, pro-Boer Liberal and Socialist anti-capitalist propaganda in Britain had more than a mere colouring of anti-Jewish sentiment. Paradoxically, however, some people who supported the British shared the same antisemitic prejudices. For example, the populist anti-semitic and militarist movement in London, known as the British Brothers League, was vehemently anti-Boer and worked towards a British victory. British officers were known casually to refer to Johannesburg as Jewburg. At the time a distaste for Jewish people was quite common, and lacked any of the genocidal extremism it acquired in the mid-20th century.

### Reference:

Warwick, Peter, ed., *The South African War* (Harlow, Longman, 1980).

## Armoured Train Incident,

### 15 November 1899

The British dependency on the railways for the movement of supplies led them to convert railway wagons into mobile mini-forts. Their extreme limitations of manoeuvre – either forwards, backwards or standstill – made them vulnerable to well-planned attacks unless they had supporting troops. On 15 November 1899 a train was sent by Colonel C. J. Long from Frere northwards to Colenso. It was halted at Chieveley where the Boers had destroyed the line and then started back but it was ambushed by the Boers and partially derailed at the crossing of the Blaauwkrantz River. The young Winston Churchill was a passenger and he helped get part of the train moving once more but was himself captured. He was imprisoned in the prisoner-of-war camp in Pretoria from which he managed to escape to Lourenço Marques in Portuguese East Africa. He made his way back to Durban where he received a hero's welcome which did much for his political career.

This particular train was scarcely armoured, but was armed. There was an open ordinary wagon in front (when going north) with a 7-pounder muzzle-loading gun crewed by men of HMS *Tartar*, an open wagon modified with some armour and with loopholes in front of the engine, and two armoured wagons behind which a regular wagon was attached with line repair equipment. Under Captain J. A. L. Haldane 120 men of the Dublin Fusiliers and Durban Light Infantry manned the train. The photographs of

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the wreck suggest that no explosive shells were used and shells found recently have their fuses set at safety. It appears that in their haste and excitement, the Boer gunners forgot to arm their shells. Later in the war locomotives were protected with elaborate ropework jackets and railway wagons were modified to provide stronger protection for armed men. Trains were also converted to hospital carriages for the transportation of the wounded.

See also:

[Churchill, Winston](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#); [Naboomspruit, Ambush near](#); [Willow Grange, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Churchill, Winston S., *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria* (London, Longmans Green, 1900; London, Leo Cooper, 1989); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Bushmans River Tourism Association, *The Armoured Train Incident*, [www.battlefields.co.za/history/angloboer\\_war](http://www.battlefields.co.za/history/angloboer_war).

## Artillery, Boer

The Boer artillery units in the Orange Free State and the Transvaal republic were composed of professional soldiers with a significant number of experienced German officers who were able to train their men to a high degree of efficiency. The Transvaal was enriched by tax revenues from the healthy mining industry and, under the direction of Lieutenant-colonel Trichardt, made considerable expenditures to acquire the newest and best weapons. When the war broke out they were significantly better equipped than the British.

The modern guns the Boers had were the 155mm Creusot, known by the British as the Long Tom (of which there were four), the 120mm Krupp howitzer (four), 75mm Krupp and Creusot QFs, i.e. quick-firing guns (twenty-eight) and the 37mm Maxim-Nordenfolt, known as the Pom-Pom (twenty-two). The latter was not considered to be an artillery piece by the British. Quick-firing guns had the propellant charge in a cartridge case, rather than a separate bag, which increased the speed of reloading. Still greater rates of fire were achieved with a recoil-absorbing device on the Creusot which enabled the gun-carriage to stay still and thus removed the requirement to re-lay (aim) the gun after every shot. The Transvaal, being the richer state, had the most modern weapons. There were also forty-one other guns of various calibres and vintages, and the Boers naturally made use of any British guns they could capture.

The Long Toms were used in the sieges of Kimberley, Ladysmith and Mafeking to bombard the towns. It was not possible to limit their fire to purely military targets, but neither side appears to have thought it irregular to kill civilians in the process. The howitzers, usually considered short-range weapons for accurate shelling of defensive works, actually out-ranged the older British field and horse artillery. Indeed, it was generally the case that the Boer guns out-ranged British guns of similar

calibre and type, demonstrating that French and German manufacture was superior to that of the British at this time.

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Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Artillery, British, Field and Naval

British artillery of the time was less sophisticated and less powerful than that of the Boers. Comparable Boer guns also had longer ranges as is shown by a comparison of the performance characteristics given above and below. In the case of the modern rifle and machine-gun, the sophistication of weaponry in enemy hands was a new experience for the British from which it took some time to recover.

At the outbreak of the war the British army had some 100 guns available of which only twenty-seven were standard field artillery pieces of a reasonably modern design. The Royal Navy was able to contribute seven 12-pounders carried for use ashore. The rest had to be improvised and, as a result of the resourcefulness of Captain Percy Scott, shipboard 12-pounders, known as Long 12s, and 4.7-inch guns were given emergency carriages or mounts and rushed to the front. The defence of Ladysmith thus became possible. In the course of the war the Royal Field Artillery's 15-pounders were augmented by another 322 guns, fifty Pom-Poms, eighteen 5-inch breech-loaders, thirty-nine 5-inch

6.35kg. Range: time fuse – 4,100 yards/3,750m; percussion – 5,600 yards/5,120m.

*5-inch Howitzer*: Weight of shell – 50lb/22.68kg. Range – 4,900 yards/4,480m. *5-inch gun*: Weight of shell – 50lb/22.68kg. Range: time fuse – 5,400 yards/4,940m; percussion – 10,500 yards/9,600m.

*12-pounder (Long 12) Naval gun*: Weight of shell: common – 12.5lb/5.7kg; shrapnel – 14lb/6.4kg. Range: time fuse – 4,500 yards/4,110m; percussion – 9,000 yards/8,230m.

*4.7-inch Naval gun*: Weight of shell – 45lb/20.4kg. Range: time fuse – 6,500 yards/5,940m; percussion – 9,800 yards/8,960m. Range at 24 degree elevation – 12,000 yards/10,973m.

*6-inch Naval gun (rail truck mounted)*: Weight of shell – 100lb/45.4kg. Range – 15,000 yards/13,750m.

### See also:

[Artillery, Boer](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#); [Magersfontein, Battle of](#); [Scott, Captain Percy](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Artillery Shells

Three types of shell were used in the war: common, case and shrapnel. Common shell was a steel case filled with high explosive for use against defensive positions set off by impact with the target. Case shot was a cylinder or case filled with metal balls. The case broke open on leaving the barrel and sprayed the shot at random at anything or anyone in front of the gun. Shrapnel was a shell filled with shot-like musket balls which was thrown forward by an explosive charge ignited by a time fuse.

Common shell was used by howitzers and the larger guns. The British used Lyddite in them, a new explosive which was not very satisfactory, and which was replaced with TNT after the war, when the shells became known as High Explosive shells. The design of shell cases led to their remaining either largely intact or breaking into a few big pieces. Therefore a few, slow-moving fragments were created which did minimal damage but made a lot of noise. More modern shells break into innumerable fragments that move fast and far. The howitzers hurled their shell high in the air to drop on the enemy while 155mm and 75mm guns fired in a flatter trajectory. The former were, therefore, of greater use against entrenched positions provided the aim was good.

Case shot was recorded as having been used four times by the British and just once by the Boers throughout the war.

Shrapnel was the invention of Lieutenant Henry Shrapnel of the Royal Artillery in 1784 and it was first used by the British against the Dutch in Surinam in 1804. The shell has a time fuse at the nose which is set at what is calculated to be the interval between firing and the arrival of the shell

some twenty feet (6m) short of the target. A charge at the foot of the shell goes off and the balls within are thrown forward in an expanding cone of bullets. Assuming the time fuse has been

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## B

### **Baden-Powell, Major-General Robert,**

**1857–1941**

Robert Baden-Powell attained world-wide fame as the commander of the besieged town of Mafeking and, subsequently, as the founder of the Scout movement. His leadership during the siege has been questioned ever since the siege was lifted, both in the gossip circulating in the army at the time and in scholarly works since, in spite of, or perhaps because of, his being hailed as a hero by the popular press.

Baden-Powell joined the 13th Hussars in 1876 and saw service in India, Afghanistan and also in Matabeleland as Chief Staff Officer in 1896. He was sent out to Rhodesia in mid-1899 and was making preparations for war on the Transvaal/Bechuanaland border when the severing of the railway to the south initiated the siege of Mafeking. The town was already garrisoned by the Protectorate Regiment under Colonel C. B. Vyvyan, to whom many later attributed the successful conduct of the siege.

There is no doubt that Baden-Powell was a curious and complex character, claiming skills as an author, artist, actor and scout as well as expressing enthusiasm for fighting, pig-sticking, playing polo, big-game shooting, hunting, yachting and singing. Two major issues are raised in connection with Mafeking. He armed men of the resident black African population, the Baralong, who became known as the Black Watch. This he subsequently denied in his evidence to the Royal Commission. Second, he stands accused of reducing the rations to black Africans to such an extent that they died of starvation. This charge is based on differing uses of the reports of *Daily Telegraph* journalist J. Emerson Neilly by Thomas

Pakenham and Tim Jeal. It is admitted that refugee black Africans driven into the town by fear of the Boers were underfed and that some starved, but it is also said that the Baralong who had always lived there were properly fed, a strange distinction which hardly absolves Baden-Powell. What is clear is that the man arouses extreme feelings in many historians and commentators and that opinions about him should be regarded with caution.

In later life Baden-Powell founded the international Boy Scout movement and his achievement was recognised with a peerage. He was awarded the Carnegie Peace Prize in 1937 and died in Kenya in 1941.

See also:

[Mafeking, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Comaroff, J. L., ed., *The Boer War Diary of Sol T. Plaatje* (Johannesburg, Macmillan, 1973); Jeal, Tim, *Baden-Powell* (London, Hutchinson, 1989); Neilly, J. Emerson, *Besieged with B-P* (London, C. Arthur Pearson, 1900); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Warwick, Peter, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983); Willan, Brian, in *The South African War*, ed. Peter Warwick (Harlow, Longman, 1980).

## **Bagration-Mukhransky, Prince Nikolai,**

**1868–1932**

Nikolai Bagration was a Georgian, descended from a royal family. He was in Paris when the war began and, in spite of total ignorance of the Boers, at once decided to join them. He joined the French Corps and fought at the Battle of Driefontein, 10 March 1900, and at the Battle of Boshof, 5 April 1900, where he was captured. He was sent to St Helena as a prisoner-of-war.

See also:

[Boshof, Battle of](#); [Driefontein, Battle of](#); [Russian Volunteers](#); [Villebois-Mareuil, Colonel Count Georges de](#).

Reference:

Davidson, Apollon, and Irina Filatova, *The Russians and the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1998).

# Bakenlaagte, Battle of,

**30 October 1901**

Of the columns the British had in the field to harry the Boers, that of Colonel G. E. Benson was among the most efficient. It therefore received the personal attention of the Boer Commandant-general Louis Botha who ambushed it at the Battle of Bakenlaagte with superior numbers and, when the greater part of it had retired, fought the rearguard to a standstill. The victorious Boers not only stripped the dead but also robbed the wounded, actions for which Botha rebuked them forcefully. Benson was wounded, fought on and eventually died of his wounds on the field, known as Bakenlaagte, although the battle was actually fought on Onverwacht and Nooitgedacht farms.

Benson's column, comprised of the 2nd Buffs (East Kents), 3rd and 25th Mounted Infantry, 2nd Scottish Horse

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and 84th Field Battery, Royal Artillery, was making its way north-west from Bethel, Transvaal, across rolling country that gave Botha a perfect opportunity for attack. The rearguard was assaulted by 1,000 Boers under Botha, Vecht-general J. N. H. Grobler and Commandant J. D. Opperman. The Buffs were overwhelmed and the Boers pushed towards the head of the column until they were held by a swiftly-constructed defensive position. Here they were held at great cost until the bulk of the column had escaped. The British had suffered severely with sixty-six British killed and 165 wounded. The account from the Boer viewpoint differs: Gustav Preller reports 238 killed and 120 taken prisoner.

See also:

[Benson, Colonel G. E.](#)

Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles and Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Balloons

Observation balloons, tethered to the ground, were used by the Royal Engineers to make maps and to observe the effects of shellfire. On 18 November 1899, for example, Captain G. M. Heath, R.E., made a map of Boer gun positions around Ladysmith from a balloon and there are Boer reports of seeing a balloon being flown just before the Battle of Magersfontein. However, their contribution to the war appears to have been minimal.

## Baralong, The

The black African inhabitants of Mafikeng. The town of Mafeking, as it is known to the Europeans, had what they regarded as an appendage: the “Stadt”, the black African town, more properly known as Mafikeng, the name used today. This was the home of the Tshidi-Baralong people and a place that they had defended against Boer attack on five previous occasions. They were armed by the British for the defence of Mafeking in 1899 and fought with particular vigour when the Boer Commandant Sarel Eloff and his men broke into the town on 12 May 1900. The Black Watch, as the armed Africans were known, ejected the majority of the Boers, leaving only a small number in the Police Fort to surrender to the British at the end of the day. Colonel Baden-Powell later denied having armed the Baralong and made little of their contribution.

See also:

[Baden-Powell, Major-General Robert](#); [Mafeking, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999);  
Willan, Brian, in *The South African War*, ed. Peter Warwick (Harlow, Longman, 1980).

## **Barton, Major-General G.**

Geoffrey Barton was born in 1844 and entered the British army in 1862 in the

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7th Foot, which had become the Royal Fusiliers. He served in Ashanti in 1874 in the transport service, in the Zulu War of 1879, in Egypt in 1882 and in the Sudan in 1885. He took command of the 6th Brigade, Third Division, in October 1899 and showed little initiative at the Battle of Colenso but rather more in the Battle of Tugela Heights in 1900. He took part in the guerrilla war and successfully defended Frederikstad against Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet in October 1900. He subsequently commanded the Pretoria garrison.

### See also:

[Colenso, Battle of](#); [Frederikstad, Action at](#); [Tugela Heights, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Basutoland

The land-locked territory, now called Lesotho, situated between the Orange Free State, Cape Colony and Natal, remained neutral throughout the war. Neither the British, who feared the outflanking of their colonies on either side of Basutoland, nor the Boers, who feared raids on the Orange Free State by the Basotho, wanted the territory to be involved in the war.

Basutoland became a British colonial possession in 1868. It was a source of grain and wool and it provided a large number of workers to the Kimberley diamond fields and to the gold mines. There were also numerous Basotho working on Boer farms as share-croppers. The Resident Commissioner of Basutoland, Sir Godfrey Lagden, worked closely with the Koena rulers who held day-to-day power. He was stubborn, but not always successful, in preventing the British army from violating the neutrality of Basutoland. The territory was also a haven for refugees; some 12–15,000 black Africans and about 2,000 Boers found safety there. The economy was inflated by the employment of Basotho as labourers for the British and by the sale of horses, of which about 20,000 were supplied by the end of 1901. In Basutoland, as elsewhere in South Africa, the war caused economic distortions that were to prove problematic in the future.

### See also:

[Zulu, The](#).

### Reference:

Warwick, Peter, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983).

# Beaufort West

A town in Cape Colony on the railway line between Cape Town and De Aar. Because of fears of a local uprising by Afrikaners, it was one of fourteen Cape Colony districts placed under martial law in December 1900, when the Boer invasion of the colony caused the British Major-general H. H. Settle to withdraw his headquarters from De Aar to this town.

## Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second*

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*Anglo-Boer War* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## Bechuanaland

The territory west of the Transvaal and north of Cape Colony, now Botswana. The railway running north from Kimberley through Mafeking to Bulawayo in Rhodesia was completed between 1894 and 1897 through Bechuanaland, confirming the strategic importance that had led the British and the Boers to seek control there over the years. In the war of 1899–1902 Boer efforts in the area were limited almost entirely to the siege of Mafeking and British fears of uprisings in Rhodesia were never realised.

The British had annexed the protectorate in the mid-1880s. When war threatened Colonel Robert Baden-Powell and Lieutenant-colonel Herbert Plumer were sent out to raise forces there and a Rhodesian force under Plumer and a Protectorate force commanded by Colonel C. B. Vyvyan were Baden-Powell's to command by the outbreak of hostilities. The Kgatla people were involved with an ill-planned and executed attack by the British on the Boers at Derdepoort on 25 November 1899 and suffered a reprisal raid by a Boer commando 500 strong on 22 December. The Kgatla continued to raid and harass the Boers throughout the war. The Ngwato, on the other hand, under their chief Khama, showed such willingness to defend their land that a Boer force under General F. A. Grobler found discretion the better part of valour and withdrew from the Crocodile River. The Ngwato economy grew vigorously during the war as the railway was vulnerable as a supply facility and food for the British forces was purchased locally from them. Within Mafeking the TshidiBaralong endured a difficult relationship with Baden-Powell and the British, and though they fought valiantly, they gained little recognition for their efforts and sufferings.

See also:

[Baden-Powell, Major-General Robert](#); [Mafeking, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Warwick, Peter, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983).

## Belmont, Battle of,

**23 November 1899**

At the start of the campaign to relieve Kimberley (which was being held by the British), Lord

Methuen's 1st Division attacked a force of Boers under Vecht-general Jacobus Prinsloo at Belmont station, in what was to be the first important battle on the western front. The Orange Free State commandos occupied several kopjes (small hills) in order to block the progress of Methuen's forces, but were forced to retire by the superior numbers and firepower of the British, having suffered some 150 casualties but having inflicted almost twice as much damage on the British. Lacking sufficient cavalry, the British could not pursue the commandos as they retreated northwards.

Kimberley had been under siege by

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## Benson, Colonel G. E.,

**1861–1901**

Benson was responsible for guiding the Highland Brigade at the Battle of Magersfontein and it has, unjustly, been suggested that the disaster that befell it was his fault. He later became one of the most effective commanders of British mobile forces. He was killed in an heroic rearguard action against Boer forces under Commandant-general Louis Botha at the Battle of Bakenlaagte on 30 October 1901, in which he enabled the greater part of the column to get away.

G. E. Benson joined the Royal Artillery in 1880 and it was under the rank of Major that he undertook the planning of the approach at Magersfontein. The conditions were very difficult, with heavy cloud and pouring rain. Benson's task was emulated by Colonel G. R. Duxbury, then the Director of the South African National Museum of Military History, in 1973. Duxbury had no problem with keeping on his compass bearing, but he found himself nearly 200 yards (175m) short of his intended position. Benson was still further away, a little off line and some forty-five minutes behind schedule when he advised Major-general Andrew Wauchope to deploy. When the Boers opened fire nearly half an hour later, the Scots were still in a dense mass, undeployed, and suffered accordingly.

Later in the war Benson became one of the most successful column commanders, moving at night to attack Boer positions at dawn and making great use of intelligence supplied by Sir Aubrey Wools-Sampson, an *uitlander* who had co-founded the Imperial Light Horse. On 20 October Benson led a column south from Middleburg and scored initial success, but the forces of Commandant-general Louis Botha, Vecht-general J. N. H. Grobler and Commandant J. D. Opperman gathered to trap their troublesome adversary north-west of Bethal, at the Battle of Bakenlaagte. Benson organised a tough defence, during which the bulk of his column was able to withdraw, but the cost was high and Benson himself was fatally wounded.

See also:

[Bakenlaagte, Battle of](#); [Magersfontein, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Duxbury, G. R., *The Battle of Magersfontein* (Kimberley, McGregor Museum, 1997); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

**Bergendal, Battle of,**

## 27 August 1900

The battle that took place east of Belfast on the Pretoria-Delagoa Bay railway route was the last set-piece fight of the war. The Boers under Commandant-general Louis Botha established a complex of positions on a line of hills, north of the railway, many protected by marshland. The ridge carrying the railway was held by the ZARP (*Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek Politie*), the police, based on a kopje at Bergendal farm. General Sir Redvers Buller took their position

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of the railway east of Belfast, where hills and rivers through boggy ground favoured the Boers. South of the railway, however, the ground was better and Buller was able to advance in a series of brisk actions along the ridge to the west of the Klein Komatie River in the week beginning 21 August. On 25 August Major-general Sir John French's cavalry and Lieutenant-general R. Pole-Carew's 11th Infantry Division moved against the Boer line north of the railway by which time Buller had reached Vogelstruispoort.

Further progress in the north was prevented by the difficulty of the terrain, but Buller was on firm ground with a shallow valley some one-and-a-quarter miles (2km) from the ZARP positions at the south-eastern elbow of the Boer line. Shelling began at once, continued the next day and then, for three hours on the morning of 27 August, artillery fire fell without cease on the ZARPs. At about 2pm 1st The Rifle Brigade and 6th Inniskillings advanced in short bounds from cover to cover. The surviving ZARPs fired on them but were soon overrun. Deneys Reitz wrote: "By sunset the police were all but annihilated . . . Our line being broken, we had to give way too and after dark General Botha ordered a withdrawal."

Some of the Boers fell back eastwards to Komatipoort while others went north and east in small groups. A last resistance was offered to Buller as he moved forward from Lydenburg, but formal warfare was now at an end. The British thought the war was won and some Boers agreed. Others were determined to continue and guerrilla warfare began.

See also:

[Diamond Hill, Battle of](#); [Guerrilla Warfare](#).

Reference:

Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando: A Boer Journal of the Boer War* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## Bermuda

Early in the war, the British held Boer prisoners-of-war in temporary camps, including ships. They later set up camps in Cape Colony, such as Green Point, and as numbers increased, sent prisoners to colonies overseas. Prisoner-of-war camps were established on St Helena, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India and Bermuda.

More than 5,000 Boers were sent to Bermuda where they were held on Darrell's Island, Morgan's Island, Tucker's Island and Burt's Island. There was also a prisoners' hospital on Port's Island.

Five days short of his twentieth birthday, August Carl Schulenburg of the Lichtenburg Commando had been at the fight at Kraaipan, the first action of the war on 11 October 1899. He fought at Kimberley, Modder River and Magersfontein and on into the guerrilla war, before being captured on 8 May 1901. He was sent to Burt's Island on Bermuda. He

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remained there from 1 July 1901 to 25 July 1902 when, having signed a declaration of loyalty to the British Crown, he was released. His memoirs have been published in Afrikaans.

See also:

[Prisoners-of-war](#).

Reference:

Benbow, C., *Boer Prisoners of War in Bermuda* (Hamilton, Bermuda Historical Society, 1994); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Schulenburg, C. A. R., *August Carl Schulenburg: Krygsgevangene, medikus, boer* (Pretoria, J.L. van Schaik, 1985); van der Walt, N. T., “The Diaries of August Carl Schulenburg”, *Africana Journal*, no. 15, 1999.

## Bethlehem

A town in the north-eastern Orange Free State, Bethlehem stands on the Harrismith–Winburg road, one of the main routes from Ladysmith in Natal to Bloemfontein, the capital of the Orange Free State. The railway ran from Durban to Harrismith and from Bloemfontein to Johannesburg and Pretoria, and this road provided a strategically important link. The British under Major-general R. A. P. Clements took the town from Boer forces under Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet in July 1900.

See also:

[Biddulphsberg, Battle of](#); [Tweefontein, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## Beyers, Assistant Commandant-General C. F.,

### 1869–1914

Christiaan Beyers was born in Stellenbosch, Cape Colony, and moved to the Transvaal in 1888 where he practised as a lawyer. When the war against the British broke out he joined the Boksburg Commando and was promoted after the fall of Pretoria in June 1900. He fought at the Battle of Nooitgedacht in December 1900 and stayed in the field to the end, though his methods were criticised

and cost him the command of the expedition that Jan Smuts led into the Cape. He chaired the Vereeniging Peace Conference in May 1902 and was criticised for his hard-line stance. He was appointed Commander-in-Chief under the Union of South Africa government of Louis Botha which came into existence in 1910. On the outbreak of the First World War he became a leader of the rebellion against the British and was drowned while attempting to escape the forces of General Smuts who put down the uprising.

See also:

[Nooitgedacht, Battle of](#); [Smuts, Assistant Commandant-general Jan Christian](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando*:

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*A Boer Journal of the Boer War* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994); Reitz, Deneys, *Trekking on* (1933; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## Biddulphsberg, Battle of,

**29 May 1900**

The battle at Biddulphsberg was a diversionary action undertaken by the British in order to ease pressure on the 13th Imperial Yeomanry who were surrounded at Lindley. However, the British were caught in the open by the Boers and were forced to retreat. The long grass caught fire at the height of the engagement and wounded men, unable to move, died in the blaze.

To protect the eastern flank of the advance from Bloemfontein, Lord Roberts ordered Lieutenant-general Sir Leslie Rundle to come north-east from Thaba 'Nchu. Rundle's 8th Division advanced to Senekal, between Winburg and Bethlehem, which was taken from the Boers after a skirmish. In response to Colonel B. Spragge's appeal for assistance at Lindley, Rundle decided to mount a diversionary attack on General A. I. de Villiers's force near Biddulphsberg. However, the British approach by the 2nd Grenadier Guards, 2nd Scots Guards and 2nd Royal West Kents, with 2nd and 79th Batteries, Royal Field Artillery, was observed. De Villiers placed the Senekal Commando on the northwestern end of Biddulphsberg kopje with a 75mm Krupp and a Pom-Pom, and the Ladybrand men under Fieldcornet P. Ferreira in ditches along the road running north, supported by another 75mm. With fire cover from the British artillery, which silenced the guns on the kopje, the British came in curving clockwise from the north, but were then caught in the open by the riflemen, forcing them to attempt a retreat. As they did so, the grass caught fire and British wounded burned to death. De Villiers himself was severely wounded, and, beyond the help of his companions, was given into British care. In spite of this he died in Senekal soon after. The rest of the Boers withdrew as reinforcements arrived to support Rundle.

See also:

[Bloemfontein, Advance from](#); [Lindley, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## Biggarsberg Mountains

The mountains of northern Natal, mapped by the British on a scale of one inch to the mile (1:63,360)

in 1896. The terrain was not favourable to the style of fighting to which the British were used and suited better the more mobile Boers. In 1899 the British were forced to retreat from Dundee and were besieged in Ladysmith, south of the Biggarsberg, until the end of February 1900. In May 1900 General Sir Redvers Buller advanced swiftly and efficiently, winning actions at Helpmekaar and Botha's Pass because of his skill in co-ordinating artillery, infantry and mounted troop action and his access to sound mapping.

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## See also:

[Botha's Pass, Action at](#); [Helpmekaar, Action at](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Maps](#); [Talana, Battle of](#).

## Biltong

Dried meat, a staple of Boer field rations. It is a traditional Afrikaner food, made of raw, pickled meat. Pretorius states: “Customary ingredients for the marinade – when obtainable, as during the first phase of the war – were salt, sugar, saltpetre, bicarbonate of soda and vinegar. The strips were hung outside for a week or so to dry, after which they were guzzled with great gusto.”

## See also:

[Provisions](#).

## Reference:

Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Bitter-Ender

A bitter-ender (*bitter einder*) was a Boer who refused to surrender, that is, become a “hands-upper”, or to assist the British, that is, become a “joiner”. Some 20,000 men, a third of the Boers engaged in the war as a whole, were still in the field when peace was agreed in May 1902. The motivation behind this varied. A principal factor was the defiant wish to defend their independence. Other factors were a religious conviction that God was on their side, a revulsion at British tactics in farm burning and sending women and children to camps and, finally, responsiveness to their leaders' exhortations.

## See also:

[Hands-uppers](#); [Joiners](#).

## Reference:

Lee, Emanoel, *To the Bitter End* (London, Viking, 1985); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999); Pretorius, Fransjohan, “The experience of the Bitter-ender”, *Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image*, ed. J. Gooch (London, Frank Cass, 2000).

# Blake, Colonel J. Y. F.,

**1856–1907**

J. Y. F. Blake, born in Missouri in 1856, was a graduate of West Point Military Academy in the United States. He served in the 6th Cavalry in the Indian Wars and left the army in 1890. He went to South Africa and took part in the Matabele Campaign in 1896 as did Russell Burnham, who became the British Head of Scouts. Blake espoused the Boer cause, raising the Irish Brigade which fought with distinction on the Boer side at Nicholson's Nek, Helpmekaar and in the guerrilla war where he remained in the field until the end of the war. He lost the use of one hand at Modderspruit in October 1899. He returned to the United States eventually and died in mysterious circumstances in a gas-filled room at 275 West 22nd Street, New York on 24 January 1907.

## See also:

[Helpmekaar, Action at](#); [Irish](#); [Nicholson's Nek, Action at](#).

## Reference:

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Blake, J. Y. F., *A West Pointer with the Boers* (Boston, Angel Guardian Press, 1903); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); McCracken, Donal, *MacBride's Brigade: Irish Commandos in the Anglo-Boer War* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1999).

## Blockhouses

Fortifications built by the British to defend lines of supply and to create barriers to the free movement of Boer commandos. They were usually about 1,000 yards (910m) apart and, by the end of the war, their lines stretched over some 3,700 miles (6,000km). The 8,000 or so blockhouses were manned by approximately 50,000 British and 16,000 black African troops.

The first blockhouses were built in March 1900 to protect the railways and, in particular, the bridges, as the Boers had initiated a programme of destroying the tracks and blowing up the bridges. This resulted in actions such as Roodewal, when Christiaan De Wet made off with substantial supplies stockpiled because of a blown bridge. At first substantial towers were constructed, some 35 feet (10.6m) high and suited to a garrison of two dozen men. They were expensive and took a long time to build, so a more modest, rectangular, one-storey blockhouse was made with a stone wall topped with a double-skinned corrugated iron upperwork, with rubble in-filling between the two layers of iron. Even these took too long to make and, when Lord Kitchener became Commander-in-Chief and wanted to speed up the programme, he asked Major Spring R. Rice, Officer Commanding 23 Field Company, Royal Engineers to find a solution.

The “Rice” blockhouse was actually one of two designs the engineer produced. It was circular in plan with a corrugated iron double skin on an earth-filled caisson, the whole set on a mound or surrounded with sandbags and topped off with a broad roof. It was quick to build; the record time was three hours and it rarely took more than a day. It was surrounded with a barbed wire enclosure and a barbed wire fence ran between each of the blockhouses. A non-commissioned officer and six men formed the garrison and patrols, often of black Africans, kept nightly watch on the intervals between the blockhouses. Major Rice also designed an octagonal structure and men in the field conjured up their own designs as well.

Railway stations were also fortified by reinforcing the original buildings and adding blockhouses. Attention was paid to planning lines of fire and vision and to clearing scrub that could provide an attacker with cover.

As protection for the lines of supply, these structures were of undoubted use. To catch Boers, however, more was needed and “sweeps” or “drives” were undertaken to trap the commandos between the fixed lines and the British troops. The Boer commander Christiaan De Wet was contemptuous of the system. He pointed out that, on 27 February 1902, the British captured a great

number of Boers and cattle by surrounding them

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and closing in using men alone, but that when driven against a blockhouse line the Boers were able to get through. In this De Wet is not telling the whole story, for the concentration of troops depended on reliable transport which in turn resulted from the security of the blockhouses. Furthermore, in the early days of the guerrilla war, the British rarely achieved the impermeability of line needed to achieve results like those attained in February 1902 at Lang Reit, where a substantial number of Boers and their livestock were taken.

There can be no doubt that the blockhouses made a substantial contribution to the British victory by inhibiting the mobility of the commandos and protecting that of the British. The major consideration at the peace conference in Vereeniging was, however, the prospect of starvation that such land clearance had created.

See also:

[Farm Burning](#); [Lang Reit](#); [Sweeps](#).

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## Bloemfontein

The capital of the Orange Free State. Commandos were raised there under the commands of P. J. Fourie, W. J. Kolbe, J. P. Ackerman and J. J. Boshoff. However, the morale of the Boers was evidently so poor after the series of defeats culminating in the Battle of Driefontein that no attempt was made to defend the city against the British and President M. T. Steyn left by train on the evening of 12 March 1900. Lord Roberts entered the town the next day.

Roberts paused here for six weeks as his troops were exhausted by the hard fighting and marching they had endured coming from Modder River and sickness broke out. Many soldiers had taken water from the polluted streams and from the Modder River itself during the advance. Enteric (typhoid) fever resulted. In order to increase the impact of this disease, Christiaan De Wet intended to attack the town's waterworks at Sannaspos on 31 March, but the unexpected battle with the British that ensued thwarted De Wet's plan. Situated on the railway from Port Elizabeth via Rosmead and Naauwpoort Junctions and East London via Springfontein to Pretoria, Bloemfontein became a centre of military supply for the British. A prisoner-of-war camp for Boers was established here as well as a camp for women and children, a concentration camp, visited by Emily Hobhouse in January 1901. The defence of the town from May 1901 was in the hands of some 3,000 men of the South African Constabulary.

See also:

[Bloemfontein, Advance from; Concentration Camps; Doyle, Arthur Ignatius Conan; Driefontein, Battle of; Sannaspos, Battle of; Documents: Hobhouse, Emily, \*Report to the Committee of the Distress Fund for South African Women and Children\*, June 1901.](#)

## Reference:

Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick

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& Jackson, 1999); Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **Bloemfontein, Advance from,**

### **May 1900**

Three major problems had to be overcome by Lord Roberts before his advance from Bloemfontein to Johannesburg and Pretoria could begin. There were supply shortages, in part resulting from the centralised control of transport unwisely introduced, a lack of horses resulting from the demands made on the cavalry, and the presence of disease amongst the troops. When the advance began on 3 May, Roberts got significant reinforcements which allowed him to envelop, or enfold, with flanking movements every Boer attempt to stop them – at Brandfort, on the Vet River, and on the Zand River. Troops supporting Roberts's advance to the east fought the Boers at Biddulphsberg and Lindley.

Three British columns advanced on 3 May and a considerable section of the army was charged with holding Bloemfontein and guarding railway supply lines against the Boers. Roberts knew he was leaving behind his lines. Lieutenant-general T. Kelly-Kenny's 6th Division was left behind while, in the centre, Roberts rode with Lieutenant-general C. Tucker's 7th Division and Brigadier-general R. Pole-Carew's 11th Division, with four Corps of Mounted Infantry under Major-general E. T. H. Hutton. On his right was the Wimburg Column of Lieutenant-general Ian Hamilton, including Major-general H. L. Smith-Dorrien's 19th Brigade, Major-general Bruce Hamilton's 21st Brigade, Brigadier-general R. G. Broadwood's 2nd Cavalry Brigade and Brigadier-general C. P. Ridley's Mounted Infantry. On the west Lieutenant-general Sir A. Hunter's column included Colonel Bryan Mahon's Flying Column, which went to relieve the siege at Mafeking, and Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen's column, which was to move from Kimberley and Boshof towards Johannesburg. In total some 44,000 men, 120 guns, 2,500 wagons, 11,000 horses, 22,000 mules and 40,000 oxen were involved.

#### **See also:**

[Biddulphsberg, Battle of](#); [Brandfort, Action at](#); [Doornkop, Battle of](#); [Lindley, Battle of](#); [Mafeking, Siege of](#); [Zand River, Battle of](#).

#### **Reference:**

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

# Bloemfontein Convention,

**1854**

The Convention, signed on behalf of Britain by Sir George Clerk, granted the Orange River Sovereignty independence on much the same terms as was agreed with the Transvaal (by now the South African Republic) in the Sand River Convention of 1852.

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That is, it would have the right to buy arms and undertook to prohibit slavery. Britain agreed to have no treaties prejudicial to the Orange Free State with non-white nations or to supply them with arms. Thus the Orange Free State and the republic of Utrecht came into existence.

See also:

[Great Trek, The](#); [Sand River Convention, 1852](#).

Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## **Bloemfontein Conference,**

**1899**

The Bloemfontein Conference of May/June 1899 was almost the last opportunity available to Britain and the South African Republic (formerly Transvaal) to agree a peaceful solution to their differences. It failed.

As tension mounted and the threat of war became ever more real, the leaders of the Cape Afrikaners, Jan Hofmeyr and William Schreiner, persuaded the British to agree to a meeting with President Kruger of the South African Republic and his secretary of state, the former president of the Orange Free State, Francis William Reitz. President Steyn offered his capital, Bloemfontein, as the venue and on 31 May 1899 the parties met there. The Cape Afrikaners had put as much pressure as possible on the ZAR State Attorney, Jan Smuts, to make concessions to the *uitlanders*, the foreigners who had taken up residence in the Republic. After suitable preliminaries had taken up the first day, Kruger made detailed proposals, taking care to ensure that the Afrikaners would retain domination in the Republic. Sir Alfred Milner, High Commissioner for South Africa and Lieutenant-Governor of Cape Colony, was determined not to permit Boer supremacy as it would block his expansionist plans. On the following Monday the conference broke up with Kruger remarking “it is our country you want”.

Reference:

Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## **Blood River, Battle of,**

# 16 December 1838

The total victory of the Voortrekkers over the Zulu in the battle at the Ncome River in 1838 was taken by the Boers as a sure sign of the Lord's favour and a justification of their dominance over the land and its indigenous people. This conviction underlay the Afrikaner attitudes to British imperialism, to the rights of *uitlanders*, or incomers, and to the black African people.

The Voortrekkers, the Boers moving into the African interior to settle, encountered the opposition of the Zulu and various battles ensued. Under Andries Pretorius an expedition was mounted to enforce Voortrekker dominance and on 9 December at Danskraal they made a vow known as the Covenant. This promised the Lord that, if victory was granted to them, they would for ever observe the day as a sabbath.

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Pretorius had made careful preparations for the inevitable battle. Aware of the Zulu practice of attacking from all sides at once, thereby enveloping their foes, he chose a site with the east protected by the Ncome River and the south by a deep donga, or drying watercourse. The wagons were arranged in a laager, a defensive circle, on the other sides and woven wooden hurdles, fence panels, had been brought to block the space below the wagons, the wheels of which were covered with ox skins to complete the wall. There were three muzzle-loading cannon and three smaller guns. The musketeers were given *loopers*, leather containers of buckshot, and the artillery was loaded with grapeshot. Eight men were to man each gap between wagons and a lantern was slung above them to assist reloading in the dawn light. The problem of panicking animals was foreseen; the oxen were to be tethered head to head and for every four horses there was a man allocated to hold them. The 470 Voortrekkers and 120 Natal blacks waited for the light.

The left horn of the Zulu formation crept around to the north-west and attacked at dawn. By 8 am it was cut to ribbons. The right horn and chest (centre) of the Zulu force was obliged by the terrain to attack from much the same direction and suffered a similar fate. About 1,000 warriors attempting to conceal themselves in the river were killed there, causing the waters to run red and giving the battle its name. Altogether some 3,000 Zulus died while the Voortrekkers had only three wounded as their total casualties, including Pretorius himself. The hand of God, they were convinced, had been shown.

## Reference:

Laband, John, *Rope of Sand* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball, 1995), and as *The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Nation* (London, Arms and Armour, 1997).

## **Blood River Poort, Action at,**

### **17 September 1901**

In an attempt to distract the British from their campaign against the guerrillas, the Boers invaded the Cape and Natal in September 1901. Louis Botha gained a military success over Hubert Gough at Blood River Poort, but a lack of horses and transport, as well as poor information on British dispositions, forced him to withdraw with little to show for his pains.

At a conference held at Standerton in the Transvaal in June 1901, the Boer leaders decided to ease the pressure being exerted by the British on the guerrilla commandos by invading the British colonies. Commandant Jan Smuts was to enter Cape Colony while Commandant-general Louis Botha headed towards Natal.

Botha reached Rooikraal near Piet Retief, far to the east, on 11 September and was joined by the Wakkerstroom and Piet Retief commandos. Two days later he had arrived at Frischgewagd on the Pivaan River to meet the Utrecht commando, but now the horses of his original group, Bethal and

Middelburg commandos, were exhausted and had to rest. The spring rains reduced the ground to a mire. On 17 September they reached Blood River Poort, the gorge through

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which Blood River runs, and were in touch with Cherry Emmett and the 300 men of the Vryheid commando seven miles (10km) further south-east at Scheepers Nek. This brought the total force to some 2,000 men.

The British were aware of their approach and Lieutenant-colonel Hubert Gough had arrived at Dundee on 13 September with 24th Mounted Infantry. Together with mounted infantry drawn from the Rifle Brigade, Durham Light Infantry, 3rd King's Royal Rifles, Irish Fusiliers, South Lancashires and Scottish Rifles, they moved with the Johannesburg Mounted Rifles to De Jagers Drift on the Natal/Transvaal border. On 17 September a British patrol saw Boers on Scheepers Nek and Gough decided to attack that night. The force was in fact 150 Vryheidiers who were waiting for Botha and the bulk of the men; the latter had moved off northwards and unsaddled beyond a ridge which hid them from the view of the British patrol. Gough moved forwards with two guns of the Royal Field Artillery and a Colt machine gun to support his mounted infantry, sending the horse forward at a gallop over the final, open ground. Suddenly 500 of Botha's men galloped from the Poort to take the British on the flank, a rare example of a Boer charge. Trying to get the guns into action, Gough found himself in danger of capture and reached for his revolver. The holster was empty. Gough was taken together with six other officers and 235 men. Six officers and thirty-eight men were killed or wounded.

Gough escaped that night. Botha was obliged to release the captives as he had nowhere to hold them, so, having been deprived of their trousers, they made their shameful way back. The guns, 180 rifles and 30,000 rounds of ammunition were taken as well as 200 horses. This was, unfortunately, fairly pointless, for the horses were as exhausted as his own and the rest of the booty came without transport. Botha mounted attacks on Forts Itala and Prospect but was beaten off both. Apart from giving the British another set-back, little had been achieved and the second invasion of Natal was abandoned.

See also:

[Boer Tactics](#); [Cape Colony, Invasions of](#).

Reference:

Droogleever, R. W. F., "Battle at Blood River Poort", *Soldiers of the Queen*, February 1989; Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## Boer

A farmer. The word became the generic name for the people of Dutch descent who left Cape Colony on the Great Trek to establish republics in the interior. During the 20th century, Boer gave way to the term Afrikaner, a speaker of the Afrikaans language.

# Boer Forces

The forces the Boers were able to put in the field in 1899 were largely volunteers, burghers or citizens who were obliged to serve in a commando, their basic military unit. The professionals amongst them were members of the *Staatsartillerie* (State Artillery) or the Politie (police). In addition, supporters came from overseas to become members of existing commandos or to form their own brigades. On the outbreak of war the Boer forces comprised approximately 55,000 burghers, 1,200 artillerymen, 2,000 police and 2,000 foreign volunteers, plus some 400 support service personnel, of whom perhaps 35,000 were in the field.

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one of the Irish Brigades and the Scandinavian Corps. To these were added the French, Americans, Italians (including Lieutenant Count Pecci, nephew of Pope Leo XIII), Russians and Swiss. Mohommed Ben Nasser, a Muslim, came from North Africa and eventually became a Transvaal citizen. Few corps were composed entirely of the nationals of the country after which they were named, as the story of the Russian volunteers illustrates.

### See also:

[Artillery](#); [Commandeer](#); [French volunteers](#); [Irish](#); [Rifles](#); [Russian Volunteers](#); [Appendix: Boer Forces](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Wessels, André, "Afrikaners at War", *Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image*, ed. J. Gooch (London, Frank Cass, 2000).

## Boer Forces, Discipline

Boer formations were held together more by mutual agreement than by any European concept of military discipline imposed from above and sanctioned by law. This made them difficult to control and command, vulnerable in times of hardship and formidable when the spirit of battle was upon them.

European soldiers had great difficulty in understanding the way Boer commandos behaved. The burgher, the citizen soldier, was commanded by an officer he had had a part in electing; the Field Cornet was simply first among equals and could be replaced in another election. Commanders were the social equals of their men and were often their neighbours or members of their own family, quite unlike the hierarchical structure of a European regiment. A burgher might decline to participate in an action he thought unwise or excessively dangerous, or absent himself from his unit entirely, even knowingly breaking the law, in order to attend to the harvest. When they did fight they did so because they chose to do so. It follows that commanding a commando was always something of a gamble.

Nominally discipline was based on the commando acts of the parliaments of the South African Republic (Transvaal) of 1898 and the Orange Free State of 1899. These laws laid down punishments of fines or imprisonment for breaches of military discipline. In fact many offences were allowed to go unpunished or merely admonished, and imprisonment was rarely used given the shortage of manpower. Various field punishments were devised. Saddle-pack involved the miscreant's walking around the camp carrying his saddle, rifle and other equipment for a set length of time or number of circuits while his comrades jeered, a tiring and humiliating experience. The oxhide punishment involved being tossed in the air from an oxhide from a newly slaughtered animal manipulated by ten men. Gun riding was more serious. The convict, sometimes trouserless, had to sit astride a gun barrel,

with hands and feet tied, in the heat of the day. He might eventually collapse because of the awkward posture and excessive heat. Alternatively he might be tied to a wagon wheel to cook in the sun for a while.

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Beatings were administered casually, and a commander might use his sjambok, his whip, in the heat of the moment, but there was also a formal use of corporal punishment. Men might be sentenced to a given number of lashes with a harness or offered the alternative of paying a fine or enduring a given number of lashes with a sjambok.

The American Military Attaché, Captain Carl Reichmann, summed up the situation when he said, “Having complied with the law calling him [the burgher] into the field, he yielded cooperation, not obedience”.

For what were seen as acts of treason the death penalty was exacted. Deneys Reitz reports that a Cape Colonial, one Lemuel Colaine, joined Commandant H. J. Brouwer’s commando on the pretext of having been imprisoned by the British. When Colaine subsequently went missing, Reitz says, “No particular notice was taken of his absence, as the men were constantly riding off to visit farms, or look up friends at distant outposts, and it was thought that he had done the same”. They had a rude awakening when the man led a British raiding party against them. Not long afterwards Colaine was caught in an attack undertaken by Jan Smuts’s men and the General ordered him to be shot. A grave was dug and, after being allowed time with a minister, Colaine was executed.

When peace overtures were being made by the British in January 1901 the Landdrost, or district magistrate, of Griqualand West, J. J. Morgendaal was held captive when undertaking an embassy to Senior Commandant C. C. Froneman. Morgendaal’s action in advocating peace with, or surrender to, the British led Froneman first to beat him and then to shoot him. It was said that Christiaan De Wet looked on, but there is no mention of the incident in his book. Another execution was that of Meyer de Kock who had helped set up the Burgher Peace Committee in Pretoria. He was on a mission to Commandant-general Louis Botha when he was captured. He was shot on 12 February 1901.

See also:

[Boer Forces](#); [Public Hanging](#).

Reference:

Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999); Reichmann, C., *Report on the Operations of the Boer Army* (Washington, 1901); Slocum & Reichmann, *Reports by Cpts. Slocum & Reichmann of Boer War*, U.S. National Archives file number 858–2, 1900.

## Boer Forces, Training

Although most of the Boer fighters were conscripts or volunteers, they were not untrained. The ordinary life of the farming Boer demanded competence as a marksman and skill in horsemanship, not just riding but all aspects of caring for a horse as well. In addition, competitions and field days were used to build on these skills and to bring town dwellers up to standard. However, apart from the

States Artillery and the Police forces, the Boers were an amateur army.

Marksmanship of a high standard was encouraged by holding *Wapenschouws* or rifle meetings, also known as *Bisleys* after the British rifle

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championships, at which cash prizes were awarded. Ammunition was issued free for this purpose, as were 200 rounds when, just before the outbreak of war, the Boer government exchanged new Mauser rifles for the burghers' old Martini-Henrys and wanted to ensure the owners were familiar with their new weapons. These competitions took place two or three times a year as did Field Days on which various martial activities were undertaken. A mock battle might take place or a number of simulated attacks were undertaken on supposed enemy positions. In the period immediately before the outbreak of war the frequency of field days increased and they became common once again during the guerrilla phase when boredom was a problem during the numerous periods of inactivity.

See also:

[Boer Tactics](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Boer Republics

At the outbreak of war in 1899 the British faced the forces of two Boer Republics. The principal combatant was the South African Republic (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek), which the British knew by its former name of the Transvaal, and the secondary adversary, entering the war in support of the ZAR, was the Orange Free State. These republics were the final consolidation of a number of lesser republics that had formed since the Great Trek in 1836 and illustrate the diversity of Boer political opinion.

A first republic was set up at Thaba 'Nchu in 1837 but the original Voortrekkers to the area, Hendrick Potgieter and Piet Uys, were not elected to the government and, in annoyance, took their followers across the Vaal to set up another at Potchefstroom. Meanwhile Piet Retief led the expansion into Natal against Zulu resistance, lost his life and was avenged at Blood River by Andries Pretorius who founded Natalia. Other republics came and went at Utrecht and Lydenburg while Natalia faded away. The Sand River Convention of 1852 recognised the Transvaal which was actually three republics and the Bloemfontein Convention recognised the Orange Free State which was, in fact, the amalgam of two republics. The divisions between the various groups of Boers were not apparent to outsiders, and would resurface under the strains of warfare as bitter-enders stubbornly fought on, hands-uppers withdrew from the conflict and joiners threw in their lot with the British.

See also:

[Bitter-enders](#); [Hands-uppers](#); [Joiners](#).

## Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

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## Boer Tactics

Although the Boers are best known for their mobility and evasiveness, they did change their tactics during the war. At times they carried out lightning attacks, and at others they took up siege warfare. They used trenches in defence and concealment in the field, but also, on occasion, made attacks very like classic cavalry charges. They were versatile and opportunistic which sometimes gave them the advantage, but they were also poorly disciplined and easily discouraged and their lack of staying power let them down.

At the outbreak of the war the Boers moved quickly in a large number of quite small groups, permeating the British defences and eventually surrounding their enemies in Kimberley, Ladysmith and Mafeking. From Ladysmith, in Natal, they might have gone on to the coast at Durban, but the determination of their aged leader, Commandant-general Piet Joubert, failed and they fell back to defend the Tugela River against the force seeking to lift the siege. The events in Natal illustrate the first phase of the war.

In siege situations the Boers depended on tactics such as cutting off supplies to the besieged, shelling the towns indiscriminately with their guns and occasionally attacking on foot. They were aware of the dangers of illness and, at Ladysmith, were in the process of building a dam to cut off the Klip River, the supply of drinking water. At the same time they had agreed a neutral zone for the sick at Intombi camp and adhered to their promise to leave it safe. Neither the British nor the Boers appeared to see any inconsistency in doing this while shelling civilians – men, women and children.

In defence the Boers made excellent use of the ground, exploiting natural cover and making it difficult for the British to locate the source of rifle fire when smokeless powder was used. In Natal they made their traditional good use of high ground which, on the Tugela where they overlooked the lowlands from which the British approached, worked well until General Sir Redvers Buller perfected his tactics of giving his infantry limited objectives and close artillery support. On the approaches to Kimberley, on the other hand, the terrain was flat and open with occasional kopjes, mesa-like hills, and a few rivers. Here the flat trajectory of the high-velocity rifle was exploited by firing from concealed positions in trenches. This tactic worked until the British achieved superior mobility and were able to outflank the Boer positions, at which the defenders abandoned their trenches and moved off.

In the guerrilla phase of the war the main aggressive effort went into disrupting communications by blowing up bridges, breaking up railway tracks and intercepting supply-wagon trains. At Waterval Drift on 15 February 1900 Vecht-general Christiaan De Wet captured a supply train with a third of the British oxen and a full four days' supplies. However, he was so keen to squirrel away his plunder that he was fatally slow in moving to the support of Assistant Commandant-general Cronjé at Paardeberg. As the war continued and Boer sup-



plies by railway from Portuguese East Africa were cut off, the need to acquire clothing, guns, ammunition and even food from the British was added to the incentives to ambush and cut out small contingents of their enemies. By that time, having no permanent territory under their control, the Boers had nowhere to keep prisoners. They therefore took to *uitskud*, literally ‘shaking out’, that is, stripping the British and releasing them naked to find their way back to their comrades.

On one occasion the attempt to promote disease was purposely undertaken. Bloemfontein was supplied with water from waterworks at Sannaspos to the east of the town. It was to destroy these works and to deny clean water to the town and both civilians and military there that De Wet went there on 31 March 1900 and, by chance, encountered Brigadier-general R. G. Broadwood. The fact that he won a famous victory there and that the waterworks survived should not obscure the fact that the increase of typhoid (enteric) fever in Bloemfontein was De Wet’s primary objective.

On their Field Days, their training days, the Boers practised charging towards an objective and opening fire upon it, either from horseback or dismounted. These tactics were rarely used in the field but some examples exist, such as at Blood River Poort in northern Natal where Commandant-general Louis Botha worsted Lieutenant-colonel Hubert Gough, and at Rooiwal where Lieutenant-colonel Robert Kekewich destroyed a force of 1,500 Boers who charged him. Deneys Reitz gives a graphic account of the foot charge made by the Boers against the Northumberland Fusiliers at Nooitgedacht and the attack on Wagon Hill at Ladysmith also involved Boers advancing under fire, though the terrain precluded a charge as such.

### See also:

[Blood River Poort, Action at](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Nooitgedacht, Battle of](#); [Rooiwal, Battle of](#); [Sannaspos, Battle of](#); [Tugela Heights, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## **Boer War, First (First War of Independence),**

**1880–81**

The Transvaal regained its independence to a great extent, if not completely, as a result of a short, sharp war in which the Boers, untrained amateur soldiers, defeated professional British soldiers of approximately equal numbers. The British army felt the disgrace very deeply and, when the chance presented itself, was eager to avenge this defeat. “Remember Majuba” became a war-cry.

In 1876 the Afrikaners fought an unsuccessful war against the Pedi nation in the northern Transvaal and the burghers refused to pay the taxes required to meet the cost. In 1879 the British, in spite of the provisions of the Sand River Convention of 1852 which granted autonomy to the Transvaal,

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sent the governor of Natal, Sir Theophilus Shepstone, to annex the republic. There was no protest, the government having to all purposes fallen apart. British rule failed to improve the situation and Boer missions to present their grievances were largely ignored. After the Zulu War of 1879 the British attitude, if anything, hardened. The unwillingness of the Boers to pay taxes persisted under the British as it had flourished under their own government, but the British responded by demanding the payment of estimated sums, with the burden of proof of a lesser debt falling on the citizen. The matter came to a head in the case of Piet Bezuidenhout who won his case but refused to pay costs. An attempt to enforce the judgement was met by direct action by 100 burghers and followed by a mass meeting at Paardekraal (now Krugersdorp). A Triumvirate of Paul Kruger, Piet Joubert and Marthinus Pretorius was elected to form a government and war followed.

The British took steps to consolidate their forces in the Transvaal but the 94th Regiment, on their way to Pretoria, was intercepted by the Boers at Bronkhorstspuit on 20 December 1880 and over half their number were killed or wounded. Pretoria prepared for a siege. The governor of Natal, Major-general Sir George Pomeroy-Colley was organising the Natal Field Force to put down what the British saw as a uprising and what the Boers saw as a war of independence. Colley did not succeed. In a series of battles in northern Natal – Langs (Laing's) Nek on 28 January 1881, Ingogo (Schuinshooghte) on 8 February and Majuba on 27 February – the British were comprehensively defeated. At Majuba 78 per cent of officers and 58 per cent of other ranks were killed, wounded or taken prisoner. Colley himself was killed. The British government, much to the anger of the army, made peace and the Transvaal became quasi-independent, allowing Britain a voice only in foreign affairs. When the second Boer war broke out in 1899, British regular soldiers were determined to avenge the humiliating defeat at Majuba.

See also:

[Paardeberg, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Castle, Ian, *Majuba 1881* (London, Osprey Publishing, 1996); d'Assonville, V. E., *The First War of Independence*, Marnix, [www.battlefields.co.za/history/1st\\_war\\_of\\_independence/index.htm](http://www.battlefields.co.za/history/1st_war_of_independence/index.htm)

## **Boshof, Battle of,**

**5 April 1900**

Bloemfontein fell to Lord Roberts on 13 March 1900 and he stayed there in order to allow the army to regroup and recover. The Boers undertook a few, limited operations during this period, including a movement by the European Legion, strengthened with Boers, towards the town of Boshof. The

commander of this 150–man force was Frenchman Count G. H. A. V. de Villebois-Mareuil, who had the rank of Vecht-general. He was a strong critic of the Boers' tactics and discipline and, in an attempt to demonstrate correct military conduct, was killed together with two other Frenchmen when the British attacked them at a farm called Tweefontein, south-east of the town.

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Villebois-Mareuil thought that Boshof was occupied by some 200 to 300 British and, with his force of 150 men, persisted in advancing even when the Boers told him that many times that number of British soldiers were in the town. In fact a force under Lord Methuen had moved up from Kimberley and the Count found himself and his men seriously outnumbered. When some 750 men of the Imperial Yeomanry, Kimberley Mounted Corps and 4th Battery, Royal Field Artillery came across the commando, instead of prudently retreating, Villebois-Mareuil took up positions on two kopjes, his Frenchmen on one, the Boers on the other. The battle lasted for three hours, during which the Boers surrendered and the French defiantly fought on. The Count was killed by shellfire as the British were making their final attack with bayonets.

See also:

[Abraham's Kraal, Battle of](#); [French volunteers](#); [Villebois-Mareuil, Colonel Count Georges de](#).

Reference:

d'Etchegoyen, Olivier, *Ten Months in the Field with the Boers* (London, William Heinemann, 1901); Jones, Huw M., and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); McNab, Roy, *The French Colonel* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975).

## Bos-Veldt

Bush-veldt, bush country covered with thin vegetation on the high plains.

## Botha, Assistant Commandant-General Christiaan,

**1864–1902**

Christiaan Botha was the brother of Louis Botha and in 1899 was appointed Commander of the Swaziland Police. He was in command of the Boer forces who intended to resist the British advance at Langs Nek, where the Boers had won a famous victory in 1881 in the First Boer War. On 2 June 1900 Christiaan held discussions with General Sir Redvers Buller to explore the possibilities of peace, but despite a three-day armistice these overtures came to nothing. Buller outflanked the Boer position with an attack on Botha's Pass and Alleman Nek, and no engagement took place at Langs Nek. The Boers vacated Langs Nek on 11 June, after blowing up the railway tunnel. Soon after the war Botha died of peritonitis.

See also:

[Botha's Pass, Action at.](#)

Reference:

Jones, Huw M., and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **Botha, Commandant-General Louis,**

**1862–1919**

Louis Botha entered the war in 1899 as an ordinary burgher but rose swiftly to become one of the greatest Boer commanders. He held the British general Sir Redvers Buller on the Tugela River for nearly three months by making good use of the terrain and

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Versailles peace conference of 1919 and was dismayed by the oppressive terms imposed on Germany. He died later that year.

### See also:

[Bakenlaagte, Battle of](#); [Bergendal, Battle of](#); [Blood River Poort, Action at](#); [Botha's Pass, Action at](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#); [Diamond Hill, Battle of](#); [Spioenkop, Battle of](#); [Vaalkrans, Battle of](#); [Willow Grange, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hill, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## Botha's Pass, Action at,

### 8 June 1900

The main line of communication and the obvious route by road and rail from northern Natal to Johannesburg is by way of a pass called Langs Nek which the Boers assumed would be attacked. After the relief of Ladysmith Sir Redvers Buller advanced north and the Boers fell back, first to the Biggarsberg mountains and then to Langs Nek. On 2 June Buller met Commandant-general Louis Botha's brother, Christiaan to see if terms for peace could be negotiated. A three-day truce allowing time for consultations with governments ended with no agreement. Buller, helped by the excellent maps of the area and encouraged by Lord Roberts, had used the time to prepare artillery positions and on 8 June surprised the Boers by attacking Botha's Pass to the west. Having taken the pass, he then turned north and outflanked the Boers at Langs Nek by taking Alleman Nek. The Boers withdrew, blowing up the railway tunnel, but leaving the road to the Transvaal open.

The Royal Garrison Artillery, 16th Battery Southern Division, had joined Buller south of the Tugela River in January and played a key part in this action. Two of their 5-inch guns with right-half Battery were taken to Inkwelo, the large hill south of Majuba and Langs Nek, while the two guns of left-half Battery were hauled up Van Wyk Hill. At 10 a.m. on 8 June they opened fire, the former on Langs Nek to keep the Boers there and the latter on Botha's Pass to cover the actual attack. Within three hours the pass was taken but the Boers had fallen back and were putting down heavy rifle fire over the plain beyond it. The artillery raised its sights and brought fresh fire down on their enemies. By 4 p.m. resistance had ceased and Buller bivouacked with his troops beyond the pass in the Orange Free State that night.

The next day men and supplies moved up the pass and on 10 June the advance resumed. The

Boers made a last attempt to forestall Buller's progress the next day which saw action at Alleman Nek, five miles (8km) west of Volkrust. Buller was reunited with Lieutenant-general C. F. Clery's 2nd Division in Volkrust three days later, having demonstrated supreme skill as a field commander.

See also:

[Alleman Nek, Action at](#); [Helpmekaar, Action at](#); [Maps](#).

Reference:

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Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Martin, David, *Duelling with Long Toms* (Ilford, David Martin, 1988); Powell, Geoffrey, *Buller: A Scapegoat?* (London, Leo Cooper, 1994); Wallace, R. L., *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra, The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Printing Service, 1976).

## **Bothaville, Action at,**

**6 November 1900**

Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet, President M. T. Steyn and Senior Commandant C. C. Froneman met on 5 November at a farm called Doornkraal, six miles (10km) south of Bothaville in the north-west of the Orange Free State to discuss the plan for De Wet to enter Cape Colony. Although they were aware of a British column nearby, they were surprised by a British force led by Lieutenant-colonel P. W. J. le Gallais the next day. Many men fled, the leaders managing to escape, but in a hard-fought action a small band of Boers held out for four hours during which le Gallais was killed. All De Wet's field artillery was lost.

When the Boer leaders convened on 5 November at the farm on the Vlasch River, a skirmish with British scouts warned them of the presence of their enemies and sentries were posted north of the stream. Nevertheless, the 5th and 8th Mounted Infantry succeeded in launching a surprise attack the next morning. De Wet wrote of the panic which seized his men, some riding away without even saddling their horses first. A small group of Boers were isolated in a farmhouse and the next four hours saw a fierce exchange of fire with the British who were about 200 yards (180m) away in another farm. During this le Gallais was fatally wounded and De Wet later said of him that he was one of the bravest English officers he had ever met. British reinforcements under Major-general Charles Knox were apparently in no hurry to assist. Eventually, surrounded, the Boers had to surrender. De Wet put the loss at nine killed while the British casualties numbered twenty-five. Over 100 Boers were taken prisoner and four 75mm guns, one of the 15-pounders taken at Colenso and a 12-pounder captured at Sannaspos were recaptured. De Wet dismissed the loss of the guns as insignificant because they had almost no ammunition for them anyway. Following this setback, and lacking the apparatus of an army, guerrilla warfare was De Wet's only option.

See also:

[Cape Colony, Invasions of.](#)

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## **Boyes, Major-General J. E.**

John Edward Boyes was born in 1843 and joined the 75th Foot in 1861. He

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became a major in the Gordon Highlanders in 1880 and served with that regiment in Egypt in 1882, in the Sudan in 1884 and in the Nile Expedition of 1884–85. He became commander of the 17th Brigade in Lieutenantgeneral Sir Leslie Rundle's 8th Division in 1900.

## **Brabant, Major-General Sir Edward,**

**1839–1914**

Edward Yewdale Brabant was about sixty years of age when he raised Brabant's Horse in 1900. He had retired as a captain in the Cape Rifles twenty years earlier and entered the Legislative Assembly. The British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, was aware of the problems that locally raised troops experienced when required to serve in regular army units and gave Brabant the job of forming a division of local volunteers. The two regiments he raised were manned mainly by farmers from the Eastern Province of Cape Colony and served in the Colonial Division. Within Cape Colony they distinguished themselves in the defence of the bridge at Aliwal North. They were particularly disliked by the Boers, who felt that many of these men should have been their allies and comrades against the British, and it was their presence that led Commandant-general Christiaan De Wet to be drawn into besieging them at Jammerbergdrif (or Wepener). Brabant was Commandant-general of the Cape Colonial Forces from 1902 to 1904.

See also:

[Jammerbergdrif, Siege of.](#)

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## **Brandfort, Action at,**

**3–4 May 1900**

Brandfort was the first objective in Lord Roberts's advance to the Transvaal. The numerical superiority of the British enabled them to outflank Boer positions, forcing a retreat.

The road and railway running north from Bloemfontein both pass through the town of Brandfort, which was defended by the Boers – by the Heidelberg Commando and Irish Brigade on kopjes to the

west and by Assistant Commandant-general Koos De la Rey with the Ermelo and Wakkerstroom Commandos to the east. The task of defending the town from fixed positions was valiantly undertaken but the threat of envelopment of their flanks by British Mounted Infantry forced the Boers to withdraw.

In March 1901 a white concentration camp was established near the town and by August of that year it held nearly 3,500 people.

**See also:**

[Bloemfontein, Advance from](#); [Concentration Camps, White](#); [Vet River, Battle of](#).

**Reference:**

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

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## Brandwater Basin, Surrender at,

**30 July 1900**

After the British capture of Pretoria and the Battle of Diamond Hill in June 1900, the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, turned his attention to rounding up the Boers in the north-eastern Orange Free State. They were principally located in the Brandwater Basin, the area around Fouriesburg through which the Brandwater and Little Caledon rivers flow. Here they were trapped by the British under Lieutenant-general Sir Archibald Hunter. A third of the Boers, under Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet, with whom President Steyn and government officers were travelling, escaped. The rest, some 4,500 men now commanded by Chief-commandant Marthinus Prinsloo, surrendered, giving the British their second great capitulation of the year, following Paardeberg.

The Brandwater Basin is just within the border of the Orange Free State and Basutoland (Lesotho), with mountains, snow-covered at that time of year, to the south-east. The valley is fairly open to the south-west by Commando Nek, and a number of narrower valleys give access to the north and north-east through the Roodebergen mountains. The British were closing in on three sides, so De Wet divided the Boers into three groups hoping to escape by different routes, leaving a small force under Marthinus Prinsloo to guard the valley, full as it was of Boer cattle.

On 15 July De Wet led his division out through Slabbert's Nek. After he had gone a dispute broke out over the appointment of Paul Roux as Assistant Chief-commandant and an election was held in which Prinsloo was favoured. Meanwhile Major-general Arthur Paget's 20th Brigade closed Slabbert's Nek and Lieutenant-general Sir Leslie Rundle sealed Commando Nek to the south-west. To the north Hunter covered Retief's Nek and Major-general Bruce Hamilton closed the passes to the east. Slabbert's and Retief's Neks were then taken and the British broke into the valley. The author Erskine Childers, who was serving with the Honorable Artillery Company Battery of the City Imperial Volunteers, described the country as “. . .an immense amphitheatre of rich, undulating pasture-land, with a white farm here and there, half-hidden in trees. Beyond rose tier on tier of hills, ending on snow-clad mountain peaks.”

Prinsloo asked Hunter for an armistice which was refused, and after some confusion the Boer commander accepted the British terms, which allowed the Boers to retain their personal possessions, notably their wagons. The guns and ammunition were given up to be burned. De Wet regarded the whole episode as near treacherous conduct on the part of Prinsloo.

See also:

[Paardeberg, Battle of](#); [Prinsloo, Chief Commandant Marthinus](#).

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

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## British Colonisation of South Africa

Cape Colony became British as a result of the defeat of France in the Napoleonic Wars. As British laws and customs grew to dominate life in the colony, the Boers departed to seek their own, independent existence. They settled inland while the British spread along the coast, surrounding the isolated Boers. The discovery of gold and diamonds turned Britain's attention to the interior, precipitating the inevitable clash.

The Dutch settlement at the Cape of Good Hope was given "protection" by the British in 1795 when the English were at war with France, of which the Netherlands was a client state. The settlement was yielded up to the Dutch in 1803 under the Treaty of Amiens, taken again when the war was renewed, and kept by the British in 1814 under agreement reached at the Congress of Vienna when the Napoleonic Wars were finally over. The farms then supplied the British ships on the route to the east just as they had supplied the Dutch before them.

The British presence led to the abolition of slavery in the Colony in 1834 and the imposition of English language and government on the inhabitants. As the Boers undertook the Great Trek to colonise the interior, so the British established themselves along the coast at Port Elizabeth, East London and Port Natal, which was to become Durban. Natal was annexed in 1845. The people of Dutch origin were thus cut off from contact with the outside world and, armed with a faith in a God who had demonstrated his favour to them, preserved a farming culture that became increasingly at odds with the commercial and imperial imperatives that influenced the British. These influences were strengthened by the discovery of mineral wealth, much of it in Boer territory, the exploitation of which could be achieved only with capital investment the British alone were in a position to make.

See also:

[Great Trek, The](#); [Rhodes, Cecil](#).

Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## British Forces

When Sir Alfred Milner was appointed High Commissioner for South Africa and Governor of Cape Colony in 1897, there were at most 10,000 British troops within his jurisdiction. As the likelihood of war against the Boers increased, largely because of Milner's influence, reluctant steps were taken to reinforce the British presence by moving troops from India and the Mediterranean. The British Commander-in-Chief at the outbreak of the war, General Sir Redvers Buller, was of the opinion that

at least 50,000 men would be required to win a war against the Boers. By the end of the war over 250,000 regular soldiers and around 110,000 volunteers from Britain, over 30,000 volunteers from other countries of the British Empire and more than 50,000 men from South Africa had been involved, and it may be that

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Graspan. Some 1,400 men were ashore at any one time.

The men in the field were supported by the Army Service Corps, the Royal Army Medical Corps, the Royal Engineers, the Army Ordnance Department and various other services, some in the front line and some in depots and supply centres.

The troops raised to supplement the regulars came both from within South Africa and from overseas. Many of the *uitlanders*, the non-Boer inhabitants of the Boer republics, left for Natal or the Cape and joined such formations as the Imperial Light Horse. Canada sent troops as did the Australian colonies (Australia as such had not yet come into existence). In proportion to its population, New Zealand sent more men than any country.

Two additional groups within South Africa supplied men to the British – the Boers and the black Africans. Many men of Dutch ancestry within the British colonies, and citizens of those colonies, declined to join the republican Boers and became members of such formations as Brabant's Horse. They were regarded as traitors to the Boer cause, as were the “joiners”, Boers of the republics who joined the British to form such units as the National Scouts and the Orange River Volunteers. Piet De Wet, brother of Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet, was one such and lived out his life after the war an outcast in his own country.

How many black Africans served with the British is impossible to determine. They worked as servants and as ox and mule drivers, but also as scouts and as armed guards on the block-house lines and in the concentration camps that were vulnerable to Boer attack. Their service was ignored when the time came to negotiate the peace.

### See also:

[Artillery, British](#); [Bergendal, Battle of](#); [Elandsplaagte, Battle of](#); [Graspan, Battle of](#); [Horses](#); [Joiners](#); [Karri Davis, Major Walter](#); [Kimberley, Siege of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Rifles](#); [Appendix: British Forces](#).

### Reference:

Barthorp, Michael, “The Mounted Infantry”, *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 99, 1999; Bennett, Will, *Absent-Minded Beggars* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 1999); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Hall, D. O. W., *The New Zealanders in South Africa 1899–1902* (Wellington, Department of Internal Affairs, 1949); Jeans, T. T., ed., *The Naval Brigades in the South African War 1899–1902* (London, Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1901, reprinted by The London Stamp Exchange Ltd.); Reid, Brian A., *Our Little Army in the Field: the Canadians in South Africa* (St Catherines, Ontario, Vanwell Publishing, 1996); Wallace, R. L., *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra, the Australian War Memorial and Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976).

# British Opposition to the War

Although the popular press and the majority of the public were strong in their support for the war, a significant minority, including some Members of

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Parliament, was opposed to the war, seeing it as repressive of the Boer's freedom. The exposure of conditions in the so-called refugee camps gave added impetus to their view, but the course of the war was not much influenced by the Pro-Boers. However, they did make their mark on the conditions of the peace and the subsequent development of British policy towards the Boers.

It should be noted that the ProBoers were in opposition to the war rather than in support of the Boer republics and their policies. Prominent among them were the Members of Parliament Henry Labouchère and Sir Wilfrid Lawson. The policy of farm burning and the use of concentration camps brought politicians of greater standing into sympathy with the Pro-Boers; Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman condemned these acts as being "methods of barbarism". Two future British Prime Ministers were also able to claim anti-war honours, David Lloyd George and Ramsay MacDonald.

Their motivation sprang from a number of convictions. Some opposed an imperialist war against a country governed by a parliamentary system. Others saw the war as a capitalist plot, many going as far as to suggest that it was a Jewish plot. Two committees came to govern the Pro-Boer movement: the Transvaal Committee, later the South African Conciliation Committee; and the Stop the War Committee. Support also came from groups with wider concerns, such as the League of Liberals against Aggression and Militarism which was founded in February 1900. In the General Election of October 1900, the so-called Khaki Election, the limited influence of the Pro-Boers was made manifest when they failed to turn out the government.

See also:

[Anti-semitism](#); [Concentration Camps](#); [Hobhouse, Emily](#).

Reference:

Koss, Stephen, *The Pro-Boers* (Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1973); Porter, Bernard, "The Pro-Boers in Britain", *The South African War*, ed. Peter Warwick (Harlow, Longman, 1980).

## British South Africa Company

The British South Africa Company was established by Cecil Rhodes in 1888 in order to exploit the rights obtained from the chief of the Ndebele people in what became Southern Rhodesia. It was granted a Royal Charter in 1889, thus becoming the official governing body of a new colony, known as the Chartered Company.

See also:

[Rhodes, Cecil](#).

Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

# British Uniforms and Equipment

In the First Boer War in 1881 the British infantry still fought in their traditional scarlet uniforms. In 1896

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the khaki drill service dress introduced in India was adopted for all British troops serving outside Europe. The men arriving in South Africa, however, still wore buff-coloured belts and equipment which they soon learned to stain with tea or tobacco juice for concealment. The Scottish regiments were issued with khaki aprons to cover their kilts, but these only concealed the front. The helmet was later replaced by the slouch hat favoured by the Colonial troops and visible distinctions of rank between officers and men in uniform and equipment virtually disappeared.

Lieutenant C. W. Barton of the 2nd Northamptonshire Regiment noted the arrangements for the carriage of kit, and thus gives in his journal a good idea of what was considered necessary on the march: "The kit of the men was carried as follows: 2 Blankets, carried in Wagons; 1 Waterproof sheet, carried on the man; 1 Great Coat, carried in Wagons with the shirt & socks in pockets; 1 pair canvas shoes, carried in Waterproof sheet on man; 1 pair socks, carried in Great Coat pocket on wagon; 1 Jersey, carried in waterproof sheet on man; 1 Flannel shirt, carried in Great Coat pocket on wagon". His own kit, he says, was down to 35lbs (16kg), thus: Waterproof Valise, 10lbs; Bag blanket, 6lbs; Clothing: 1 shirt, 2pr socks, 1 sweater, 1 pr. pants, 2 cholera belts, 1 Balaclava cap, 2 coloured & 2 silk handkerchiefs, in canvas bag to keep off damp, 4lbs; Toilet bag: 1 Sponge, 1 towel, 1 Razor, 1 shaving brush, 1 Hair brush, 1 Tooth brush, 1 Box tooth powder, 2 cakes soap, 1 looking glass, Nail nippers, Lantern folding, 3lbs; Clothes: 1 Khaki Coat, 1 trousers, 1 felt hat, 4lbs; 1 pr Boots, 1 pr canvas shoes, 3lbs; Writing case, Prayer book, House wife, 3lbs; Canvas water bucket & water bag, 2lbs = 35lbs. In addition he carried on the march his waterproof sheet with a knitted cardigan vest rolled inside weighing 5½ lbs.

See also:

[Rifles.](#)

Reference:

Barthorp, Michael, *The British Army on Campaign 4: 1882–1902* (London, Osprey, 1988); Knight, Ian, *Boer Wars (2): 1898–1902* (London, Osprey, 1996); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## **Broadwood, Brigadier-General R. G.,**

### **1862–1917**

Robert George Broadwood was born in 1862 and joined the 12th Lancers in 1881. He served under Kitchener, who became Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, in the Dongola Expeditionary Force and then in Egypt and the Sudan. He assumed command of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade in February 1900 with the temporary rank of Brigadier-general. He was involved both in the relief of Kimberley and

the Boer defeat at Paardeberg and was captured by Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet at Sannaspos, from where he managed to extract a large proportion of his men, though he lost over 400 men as prisoners and seven guns. On 10 July 1901 he captured most of the government of the Orange Free State, except for President Steyn himself, at Reitz.

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As a lieutenant-general, Broadwood was given command of the 57th (2nd West Lancashire) Division in the First World War. He was killed in June 1917 by a stray shell near ArmentieÁres.

See also:

[Reitz, Action at](#); [Sannaspos, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## **Brodrick, The Right Hon. W. St John F.,**

**1856–1942**

St John Brodrick, eldest son of Viscount Midleton, succeeded Lord Lansdowne as Secretary of State for War in October 1900. He was informed by Sir Alfred Milner, British High Commissioner in South Africa, that, contrary to the view of the army, the war was not over. What Milner neglected to mention, or was ignorant about, was the crisis in the concentration camps about to be revealed by Emily Hobhouse. Brodrick met the uproar in Parliament with a stolid repetition of denials and half-truths which eventually had to be abandoned and he then sent Mrs Millicent Fawcett out to inspect the camps. Her commonsense recommendations did much to improve conditions.

In March 1901 Brodrick introduced his plan for army reform, under which six Army Corps were to be formed, three for home defence and three for foreign service, each to be commanded by the man who would have command in wartime. He appointed General Sir Redvers Buller to command First Army Corps. However, the unjustified blackening of Buller's reputation had been so effective that a public outcry ensued, to which Brodrick gave way, depriving Buller of the post.

See also:

[Concentration Camps](#); [Hobhouse, Emily](#).

Reference:

Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## **Buller, General Sir Redvers, V.C.,**

**1839–1908**

Sir Redvers Buller was lampooned by the British press as “Sir Reverse Buller” as a result of the setbacks inflicted by the Boers in Black Week in December 1899. He was replaced as Commander-in-Chief, Army Corps, South Africa, but was left in command of the army in Natal. His outstanding achievements in the relief of Ladysmith and subsequent engagements were not given the recognition they deserved and his reputation has suffered to this day.

Redvers Buller joined the 60th Rifles in 1858 and served in China, in the Red River Expedition in Canada in 1870 and in southern Africa, winning the Victoria Cross in the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. He rose to high rank and held important positions as one of the “African” ring of officers enjoying the favour of Lord Wolseley,

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control of the next battle, Vaalkrans, and halted that before it became a repeat of Spioenkop. However, the partial success in the latter engagement was the foundation for Buller's new tactics. The infantry were given precise, limited objectives, the artillery was carefully deployed in support of the infantry, and the cavalry was held in reserve for use when the Boer line was broken. In the successive fights that made up the Battle of the Tugela Heights, the losses were painful and resulted largely from limitations in the knowledge available about Boer dispositions; however, the steady accumulation of modest victories smashed the Boer defence and led to the relief of Ladysmith.

Buller's appreciation of the importance of concentrating his artillery in support of an infantry charged with achievable and precise objectives was demonstrated with outstanding success at Botha's Pass in June 1900, the Battle of Bergendal in August and the final dispersal of the Boers east of Lydenburg beyond Long Tom Pass in September 1900. He returned to England at the end of the year, his task completed, only to meet a wall of non-comprehension and general condemnation of his performance, led by the correspondent of *The Times* newspaper, Leo Amery. Amery went on to edit the opinion-forming *Times History of the War in South Africa* which consolidated the view that Buller was unequal to the responsibilities placed upon him.

Many of the faults of which Buller is accused can be seen as strengths: the self-doubt as lack of arrogance, and the willingness to break off an action as prudent husbandry of his men and resources. His greatest strength was his ability, at over sixty years of age, to learn. Perhaps his adversaries should be given the final word. Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet pointed out that "whatever his own people have to say to his discredit, Sir Redvers Buller had to operate against stronger positions than any other English general in South Africa". The American Colonel J. Y. F. Blake, commander of the Boers' Irish Brigade, wrote, "the Boers generally acknowledge General Buller as by far the ablest commander the English had in the field".

### See also:

[Bergendal, Battle of](#); [Botha's Pass, Action at](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#); [Spioenkop, Battle of](#); [Tugela Heights, Battle of](#); [Vaalkrans, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Powell, Geoffrey, *Buller: A Scapegoat?* (London, Leo Cooper, 1994).

## **Burger, Vice-President Schalk,**

**1852–1918**

Schalk Willem Burger, a land surveyor, was born near Lydenburg in the Transvaal, served in the First

Boer War in 1881 and was in command of the Lydenburg Commando on the Swaziland border at the beginning of the Second. He was censured for his neglect in permitting the successful British raid on Gun Hill outside Ladysmith in December 1899. He then served on the Tugela River line and was present at the Battle of Spioen-

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kop. He fell ill and withdrew to his home state where he became Acting President after Kruger had left for Europe. At the Council of War of May 1901 he proposed making peace with the British, but was outvoted by President Steyn of the Orange Free State and his supporters.

See also:

[Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Spioenkop, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Burgher

A male citizen of a Boer republic. A burgher was obliged to serve in the local militia force, the commando, providing his own horse, provisions for eight days and, originally, his own musket or rifle. All men over sixteen years of age and under sixty years were eligible, those between eighteen and thirty-four called up at first, those between thirty-four and fifty next and the final group only in extreme need. Failure to serve was punished with a fine or with imprisonment.

See also:

[Boer Forces](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Burnham, Major Frederick Russell,

**1860–1947**

British weakness in reconnaissance was recognised early in the war and an experienced fieldcraftsman, Burnham, was brought to South Africa to correct the fault. He performed useful service in the taking of Johannesburg and Pretoria, besides experiencing a number of dramatic adventures.

F. R. Burnham was born in Minnesota, United States, and learned much of his skill as a scout

and tracker from the indigenous people of his birth-place. He served in the Matabele War and in early 1900 was at home in Scagway, Alaska, planning to prospect for gold, when a telegram came from the new British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, asking him to become Chief of Scouts. Burnham attempted to discover the conditions inside Commandant-general Cronjé's laager at Paardeberg by floating down the Modder River under a box, but learned little. He was on his way eastwards from Bloemfontein when he came across Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet's force ready to ambush Brigadier-general Broadwood's column at Sannaspos. He attempted to give the alarm but was captured and could only look on as British soldiers were taken prisoner and guns and wagons fell into Boer hands. Burnham escaped from the victor's wagon train and made his way back to headquarters.

As the British approached Johannesburg, the large quantity of railway rolling stock there was seen as an important potential prize, both to

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deny its future use to the Boers and to supplement the British supply capability. Burnham, with a black African companion, went behind the enemy lines to blow up the lines and prevent the removal of the wagons. After the fall of Pretoria in June 1900 it was assumed that Burnham's work was over and he left South Africa.

See also:

[Paardeberg, Battle of](#); [Sannaspos, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Burnham, Frederick Russell, ed. Mary N. Everett, *Scouting on Two Continents* (New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co, 1928); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## **Byng, Lieutenant-Colonel Julian,**

**1862–1935**

When he was detached from Sir Redvers Buller's staff in late 1899, Byng raised the South African Light Horse and led them in the Battle of Tugela Heights. He was one of the leading commanders in the sweeps that characterised the guerrilla phase of the war. Later, in the First World War he took over the command of British forces at Gallipoli and organised the successful withdrawal. He then became commander of the Canadian forces and led them against Vimy Ridge. After the war he became Governor-general of Canada.

See also:

[Tugela Heights, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Pope, Stephen & Elizabeth-Anne Wheal, *The Macmillan Dictionary of the First World War* (London, Macmillan, 1995); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## **Bywoner**

An itinerant farm worker, who pays for food and accommodation with labour; also a share-cropper or tenant, living on another's farm. Men who scraped a livelihood in this fashion were likely to join the

British in the hope of bettering themselves.

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### Cape Colony, Invasions of

At the outbreak of the war there were minor Boer incursions into the British Cape Colony at Stormberg and Aliwal North and, on the north-eastern border, the siege of Kimberley which, while not of major strategic importance, was politically sensitive because of Cecil Rhodes's presence in the besieged town. After the fall of the capital cities of the Boer republics, the Boers had hopes of fomenting uprisings by Afrikaners, people of Dutch descent like themselves, within Cape Colony. However, these efforts enjoyed virtually no success. More serious were the invasions led by Hertzog, Kritzinger and Smuts. The latter was still in progress at the end of the war. All of these made demands on British resources, but none of them constituted a serious threat to the British control of the Cape.

The fighting on the borders of the colony near Kimberley and Stormberg is dealt with elsewhere in this book. The decision to invade the Cape and operate behind British lines was taken by President Steyn and Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet in November 1900 and further such incursions followed. The motivation was partly to undermine British security within the colony by giving sympathisers the chance to join the Boers, and partly to find somewhere to operate where reprisals in the form of farm burning could not take place. In December Assistant Chief-commandant P. H. Kritzinger and J. B. M. Hertzog each led commandos into the Cape, and De Wet attempted to do the same without success. A loyalist militia was raised and martial law was declared in order to deal with the problem. De Wet managed to cross the Orange River in February 1901 but was harried out in a fortnight. Six months later, following a Boer conference held at Standerton in June 1901, Assistant Commandant-general Jan Smuts led his men on a long swing through the colony, first through the Stormberg Mountains and then southwards, before turning north-west to besiege O'Okiep. It was a great adventure for young Deneys Reitz but was of small military significance.

#### See also:

[Elands River Poort, Action at; Hertzog, Assistant Commandant-general James Barry Munnik; O'Okiep, Siege of; Smuts, Assistant Commandant-general Jan.](#)

#### Reference:

Burke, Peter, *The Siege of O'Okiep* (Bloemfontein, War Museum of the Boer Republics, 1995); De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London,

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Archibald Constable, 1902); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## Cape Town

The capital of Cape Colony at the south-western corner of the colony, some 1,000 miles (1,600km) from Pretoria, the capital of the Boer South African Republic (the Transvaal). Cape Town was a major supply port for the British, with men, goods and animals being transported onwards by rail. The prisoner-of-war camps of Green Point and Simon's Town were set up nearby.

## Casualties

Casualties in warfare include those killed in action, those who later die of wounds, those who are wounded and those taken prisoner. As the wounded may suffer small injuries and soon be restored to the fighting force, only to be wounded once more, they may be counted as casualties twice, and the same is true of prisoners who may escape. Prisoners may die in captivity. Even the figure for the dead may be wrong, depending on which side counts them and the method used. All casualty figures must, therefore, be treated with caution. To such casualties it is possible to add those who die from natural causes or accidents and those hurt or rendered unfit for further service for the same reasons.

The British figures give the total of their men killed or having died of wounds as 701 officers and 7,091 non-commissioned officers and men. The wounded numbered 1,668 and 19,143 respectively. The missing and prisoners add 383 and 9,170 respectively to bring the grand total to 2,752 officers and 35,404 other ranks. To these must then be added the 339 officers and 12,911 other ranks who died from disease and the 27 officers and 771 men who perished as a result of accidents. The total number of deaths, taking into account those who died as prisoners, came to 1,072 officers and 20,870 other ranks, 21,942 in all. Thus 35.5 percent were killed as a result of the fighting.

The casualties of the Boers are harder to calculate given the break-down of centralised record-keeping as the war progressed. The Director-general of Military Intelligence, Pretoria, supplied the following figures to the British Royal Commission which reported on the conduct of the war, which are obviously estimates: "Transvaal men killed 3,940, died of disease 700. Orange Free State men killed 2,610, died of disease 450. Rebels killed and died of disease 700 and foreigners 300, giving a total of 6,550 Boers killed, 1,150 died of disease and another 1,000 dead from one or other cause. A mortality of 8,700 men."

The losses sustained by the black Africans are not even estimated, neither on the Boer side nor the British.

To the figures given here must also be added the mortality of the concentration camps: 27,927 whites and at least 14,154 blacks.

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**See also:**

[Concentration Camps.](#)

**Reference:**

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## **Chamberlain, The Rt. Hon. Joseph,**

### **1836–1914**

As Secretary of State for the Colonies, Chamberlain had a major influence on the course of events that led to the Second Boer War. He was consistent in his wish to force the Boer republics to accept the domination of the British Empire.

Joseph Chamberlain held office in William Gladstone's administration as President of the Board of Trade but resigned over the issue of Home Rule for Ireland and founded the Liberal-Unionist party. He became Secretary of State for the Colonies in Lord Salisbury's Conservative government in 1895 and held the post until 1903. He was both a liberal in his view that the black colonies of the British Empire should derive benefit from their membership and an imperialist in aspiring to extend the dominion of the British, an outlook which is difficult, although not impossible, to understand today. Chamberlain encouraged the Jameson Raid and his part in the affair was covered up by his appointment to the Committee of Enquiry and the deals he made with the principal plotters. Sir Alfred Milner was appointed High Commissioner in South Africa under Chamberlain's tenure of office and the two men worked together to precipitate the crisis that led to the war.

**See also:**

[Jameson Raid](#); [Milner, Sir Alfred](#); [Rhodes, Cecil](#).

**Reference:**

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## **Chieveley**

A settlement in Natal, just south of Colenso, Chieveley was a British hospital site. In the early days of the war it was the point to which the armoured train carrying Winston Churchill had travelled northwards before it attempted to withdraw, falling into a Boer ambush. The graveyard is the resting-place of Lieutenant the Hon. Freddy Roberts, V.C., son of the British Commander-in-Chief Lord Roberts, who was mortally wounded at the Battle of Colenso.

See also:

[Armoured Train Incident](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#).

## Chocolate, The Queen's

At the end of 1899 Queen Victoria had a gift sent out to every soldier serving in South Africa. This consisted of a tin box, with the motif "South Africa 1900", her portrait and her monogram in blue, red and gold,

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containing “chocolate in cakes, at once the most sustaining and appetising form of food”. Many soldiers hastened at once to mail the gift back home in order to preserve it as a keepsake.

## Reference:

Dance, Stephen, “As Good as a Medal”, *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 75, 1993; Teulié, Gilles, “A Present from the Queen”, *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 75, 1993; Wilson, H. W., *With the Flag to Pretoria, Volume I* (London, Harmsworth Brothers, 1900).

## **Christian Victor, His Highness Major Prince,**

**1867–1900**

Prince Christian Victor of Schleswig-Holstein, a grandson of Queen Victoria, was born at Windsor Castle, Berkshire, England. He joined the King’s Royal Rifle Corps in 1888, and served in the Ashanti campaign of 1895–96 and in the Sudan in 1898. He became an aide-de-camp to the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, in 1900, largely to ensure that he would never be close enough to the Boers to risk capture or death at their hands. He died of enteric (typhoid) fever on 29 October 1900 and was buried in Pretoria.

## **Churchill, Winston Leonard Spencer,**

**1874–1965**

Winston Churchill was only twenty-five years of age when he achieved public recognition by escaping from a Boer prisoner-of-war camp in Pretoria. His account of the war as he saw it in late 1899 and the first half of 1900 did much to colour the public’s idea of events in South Africa.

Winston Churchill was the son of the prominent politician Lord Randolph Churchill. He joined the army in 1895 and saw service in Cuba with the Spanish and in India with the Malakand Field Force the following year. He was attached to the 21st Lancers with the Nile Expeditionary Force in 1898 and fought at Omdurman. As he lacked the wealth to support an officer’s lifestyle, he combined military service with journalism, and it was his functioning in this dual role that led to such arrangements being forbidden by the army. In March 1899 he resigned his commission in the 4th Hussars. He then stood for election to Parliament as Member for Oldham, but was defeated. He went to South Africa as correspondent for the *Morning Post* newspaper and it was to gain a sight of the front that he travelled in the armoured train that was ambushed between Frere and Chieveley on 15

November 1899. He fought and acted with bravery on that occasion, but compromised his standing as a journalist in doing so. He was imprisoned at Pretoria but, on 14 January 1900, escaped and made his way, with assistance, to Durban.

Churchill was then, despite the rule he had brought into being, given a Lieutenancy in the South African Light Horse. He was at the Battle of Spioenkop and the relief of Ladysmith and then accompanied Lieutenant-general Ian Hamilton's column on the march to Pretoria. He left South Africa on 4 July 1900 and published

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two books that year on his experiences in the war.

Churchill is best known as Prime Minister and leader of Britain in the Second World War.

### See also:

[Armoured Train Incident](#); [Doornkop, Battle of](#); [Spioenkop, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Churchill, Winston, *The Boer War* (London, Leo Cooper, 1989), being a reissue of *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria* (London, Longmans, Green, 1900) and *Ian Hamilton's March* (London, Longmans, Green, 1900).

## Clements, Major-General R. A. P.

Ralph Clements joined the South Wales Borderers in 1874 and served in South Africa in 1877–78, was present at the Battle of Ulundi in 1879 and served in Burma, 1885–86. He was appointed to the command of the 12th Brigade in the 6th Division and in January 1900 took part in operations that forced Assistant Chief-commandant De la Rey to withdraw from the Colesberg district. He positioned his camp unwisely at Nooitgedacht on 8 December 1900 and was attacked by De la Rey and Assistant Commandant-general C. F. Beyers on 13 December. In spite of the surprise of the attack and the losses sustained, Clements extracted his men from the vulnerable position in which he had exposed them.

### See also:

[Colesberg](#); [Nooitgedacht, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Clery, Lieutenant-General Sir Francis

C. F. Clery joined the army in 1858 and was Professor of Tactics at the Royal Military College, Sandhurst from 1872 to 1875. He served in the Zulu War, 1878–79, in Egypt and in the Sudan. He took command of the 2nd Division in Natal in October 1899 and was involved in the Relief of Ladysmith and the advance into the Transvaal before returning to England in October 1900.

### Reference:

## **Colenso, Battle of,**

**15 December 1899**

In order to relieve the siege at Ladysmith, General Sir Redvers Buller at first considered an extensive left flanking movement west of Spioenkop, but decided that it was too risky and would expose his supply lines. Instead, he launched frontal attacks which failed when Major-general A. Fitzroy Hart's Irish Brigade was led into a meander in the Tugela River called the Loop, instead of crossing the

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Of Long's actions, Louis Botha wrote: "I don't know if any of our men were premature and revealed their presence by shooting, but whatever it was, it was Colonel Long who saw them and realized that our force on Nhangwini was already across the river and there was grave danger of a flank attack, and he made it so hot that they had to open fire all along and so gave the whole plan away . . . that man saved the British Army that day".

Buller sent a telegraph to Lord Lansdowne, the Secretary of State for War, in London, saying: ". . . My view is that I ought to let Ladysmith go, and occupy good positions for the defence of South Natal . . . I now feel that I cannot say I can relieve Ladysmith with my available force." In the parlance of the time the words can be interpreted as meaning that he wanted to suspend operations until he had reinforcements, but the interpretation that he was giving up was the one that gained credence then and since.

## See also:

[Artillery, British, Field and Naval](#); [Buller, General Sir Redvers](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#).

## Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles and Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Knight, Ian, *Colenso 1899* (London, Osprey Publishing, 1995); Lilley, F. J., "The Relief of Ladysmith" in *Naval Brigades in the South African War* (London, Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1901; reprint by the London Stamp Exchange Ltd.); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pemberton, W. Baring, *Battles of the Boer War* (London, Batsford, 1964); Powell, Geoffrey, *Buller: A Scapegoat?* (London, Leo Cooper, 1994).

## Colvile, Major-General Sir Henry,

**1852–1907**

Henry Edward Colvile joined the Grenadier Guards in 1870 and saw service in Egypt, the Sudan, Burma and East Africa. He commanded the Guards Brigade under Lord Methuen at the Battles of Belmont, Modder River and Magersfontein and went on to the engagements of Poplar Grove and Sannaspos, where he failed to relieve Broadwood. After the less than sparkling performance at Lindley in May 1900, he was sent back to England.

## See also:

[Belmont, Battle of](#); [Magersfontein, Battle of](#); [Modder River, Battle of](#).

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

# Commandant, Commandant-general

Ranks in the Boer forces were not the same in the Orange Free State and in the South African Republic (Transvaal). In the latter the senior military post was that of Commandant-general, a position held by the president in the Orange Free State. Below that the ranks were, respectively, Assistant

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General and Chief Commandant. The Vecht-general or Combat General, the next most senior rank, was entitled Assistant Chief-commandant in the Orange Free State. The Commandant, who reported to the Vecht-general, was in command of a commando.

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Commandeer

The activity under Commando Law that involved the drafting of men with their equipment and supplies was termed commandeering. The precise provisions varied in time and according to circumstances. Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet set the rules out as follows: “. . . every burgher between the ages of sixteen and sixty must be prepared to fight for his country at any moment . . . if required for active service, he must provide himself with a riding-horse, saddle and bridle, with a rifle and thirty cartridges – or, if he were unable to obtain a rifle, he must bring with him thirty bullets, thirty caps and half a pound of powder – in addition he must be provisioned for eight days. That there should have been an alternative to the rifle was due to the fact that the law was made at a time when only a few burghers possessed breech-loading rifles – *achterlaaiers*, as we called them.”

De Wet goes on to explain that the provisions were understood to be of biltong (dried meat) or of sausages and “Boer biscuits”, small loaves made of flour and fermented raisins instead of yeast, twice baked. The quantity required for eight days was left to the individual.

## See also:

[Biltong](#); [Boer Forces](#).

## Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902).

## Commando

See [Boer Forces](#)

## Communications

As in all conflicts, the passing of clear and unambiguous messages between commanders, their headquarters and their subordinates presented great difficulties and failures were costly. When considering the events of the war the imperfections of communication and the lack of information available to commanders has to be kept in mind.

Both British and Boer communications between the seat of government and headquarters in the field were, at the start of the war, excellent. The telegraph was very efficient. Written messages and reports were carried by railway within South Africa and by sea, taking some three weeks, from South Africa to Britain. The telephone was a recent invention and not much in use as yet except over short distances. However, Colonel Ian Hamilton used the telephone to summon aid

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when the Platrand was attacked on 6 January 1900 during the siege of Ladysmith.

In the field matters were rather different. Morse code, used for the telegraph, could also be employed in the medium of light, using either a lamp or a heliograph, a device that used sunlight reflected from a mirror to flash the message. Fortunately sunshine was not rare in South Africa, but nonetheless it was not a mechanism on which one could rely absolutely. Nor was the lamp; it is said that the men who took the signal lamp up on Spioenkop during the battle ran out of oil to light it. Both these methods risked interception if messages were sent “in clear”, i.e. uncoded, and codes took time to uncode. Searchlights were used to convey messages from the besieged Kimberley to the relieving force by reflecting the light beam off the cloud base and the besieged forces of Ladysmith communicated with a heliograph, using direct line of sight.

Semaphore flag signals were also used, but they exposed the signaller to enemy fire. Written or verbal messages required a galloper or messenger who would also be vulnerable to enemy fire. Black African messengers, risking their lives, carried messages in and out of besieged towns.

## Colesberg

A town in Cape Colony on the railway line between Cape Town and Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State, south of Norval's Pont on the Orange River. Colesberg was annexed by the Orange Free State in November 1899 and the town was occupied by Boer forces under Vecht-general H. J. Schoenman. After the Boer defeat at the Battle of Paardeberg, Schoenman was recalled to help in the defence of Bloemfontein and the town was occupied by the British under Major-general Clements.

### Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## Colley, Major-General Sir George,

**1835–81**

George Pomeroy-Colley joined the 2nd Regiment of Foot in 1852 and, with an interval in which he served as a magistrate in South Africa, served in China and then in Africa. He was selected by Sir Garnet Wolseley to become a member of his staff in the Ashanti wars and served under him again in the Zulu War of 1879. As commander-in-chief in Natal in 1880 he made the error of holding the Boers in contempt and was surprised by the outbreak of the First Boer War. He led the British forces

to their defeat at Langs Nek and Majuba, where Colley himself was killed.

See also:

[Boer War, First.](#)

Reference:

Castle, Ian, *Majuba 1881* (London, Osprey, Campaign Series No. 45, 1996;  
[www.battlefields.co.za/history/1st\\_war\\_of\\_independence](http://www.battlefields.co.za/history/1st_war_of_independence))

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## Concentration Camps, Black

The concentration camps in which Boer women, children and old people were confined eventually received substantial publicity. The black African camps, on the other hand, were scarcely mentioned, although the death rate was at one time higher than the worst of the mortality in the white camps. The numbers of black Africans involved are also uncertain. What records there are show that 115,700 were interned, slightly more than half of those in Orange River Colony, as it was known at the time, and the rest in Transvaal. The records also show that 14,154 died, over 80 per cent of them children, but the true number has been estimated in the region of 20,000.

Conditions prevailing in South Africa at the end of the war compounded the damage to black African self-sufficiency caused by the war itself, and increased the proportion of the black population who were dependent on wage labour.

The black African camps housed refugees who can be classified in two broad groups. One group was either fleeing from war zones or from Boer hostility because of support given to the British, in which case they tended to head for major British-held towns or military establishments. The other group of refugees was the result of British land clearance activity, either because the blacks were servants of displaced Boers or because they were cultivating land in their own right in areas the British wanted to lay waste. These people were usually taken to the same areas as the Boers. The need to establish separate camps was not at first recognised, but in the early months of 1901 the first black camps were set up and by the end of the war there were sixty-six for which records exist and possibly eighty in total.

When a Native Refugee Department was set up by the British in mid-1901, the idea was to make the camps self-supporting. The men were to provide paid labour for the British army and the camps were therefore usually set up beside the main railways; from Bloemfontein to Pretoria, from Johannesburg to Klerksdorp, from Johannesburg to Volkrust, from Pretoria to Komati Poort and from Orange River Station to Dryharts, north of the Vaal on the railway to Mafeking. Shelter was rudimentary and those confined were expected to build their own huts from the insufficient materials available. The food provided by the British was not only too little but was also ill-balanced, lacking vegetables and milk. Disease carried off the enfeebled internees, and it was alleged by British officials that chicken-pox, measles and other such diseases were the cause. However, an incomplete sets of reports from camp administrators in Orange River Colony states that between May 1901 and April 1902 pneumonia accounted for 60 per cent and dysentery 26.5 per cent of deaths. This suggests that the conditions of their confinement, rather than infections to which they had no resistance, were the root cause of mortality.

With popular political pressure having led to the improvement of conditions for the whites, the early



## Concentration Camps, White

A consequence of the British policy of farm burning and land clearance to deny supplies to Boer commandos was that those occupying the land at the time, the women, children and non-combatant white people, as well as black people caught up in the process, were made homeless. It was accepted that responsibility for these refugees fell on the British authorities and camps were set up to shelter them. There were also the refugees created by the war itself, people fleeing from the areas of fighting and “hands-uppers”, those who had surrendered to the British and feared reprisals or being forced to rejoin the Boers. Unfortunately the incompetence and neglect of those in charge led to these refugee camps becoming death traps for many, and left a permanent stain on the reputation of the British.

The build-up of people in the camps started slowly, was accelerated by the British Commander-in-Chief Lord Roberts’s introduction of land clearance in September 1900 and was increased still further when Roberts’s successor, Lord Kitchener, took over at the end of the year. Kitchener gave little, if any, thought to the nature and administration of the camps. Not only were many of the internees country people, unacquainted with the hygiene requirements of large communities living in close proximity, but the administrators were also ignorant and incompetent. Accommodation, under canvas, was primitive, food was poor, sanitation arrangements were insufficient and medical care was ineffective.

## Creusot Guns

See [Artillery, Boer](#).

### **Cronjé, Vecht-General Andries P. J.**

Andries Cronjé was the brother of Assistant Commandant-general Piet Cronjé and, in April 1900, was in command of 1,500 Boers at Fourteen Streams, north of Kimberley where the railway to Mafeking crosses the River Vaal. After his capture by the British at Reitz on 13 July 1901 Cronjé took the part of the peace-makers and worked with the British. From October 1901 he recruited for the National Scouts, a formation of “joiner” Boers.

See also:

[Hands-uppers](#); [Joiners](#).

Reference:

Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985).

### **Cronjé, Assistant Commandant-General Piet,**

#### **1836–1911**

Piet Cronjé was the senior Boer commander in the western theatre in the opening months of the war. Most successes were, however, the work of others, and Cronjé led his army to defeat at Paardeberg in February 1900.

Pieter Arnoldus Cronjé was born in Colesberg and was at the Battle of Boomplaats in 1848, when Sir Harry Smith defeated the Boers who rose in protest at the creation of the Orange River Sovereignty. He was Commandant at the siege of Potchefstroom in the First Boer War and in 1896 forced Dr Jameson and his raiders to surrender at Doornkop. At the outbreak of war in 1899 he was in command of the Western Transvaal and initiated the siege of Mafeking. In November 1899 he went to resist the attempt of Lord Methuen to relieve the besieged town of Kimberley and fought at Modder River and Magersfontein. His leadership was not admired by the then Vecht-general Christiaan De Wet who was at that time under his command. Shortly after the victory at Magersfontein in December, De Wet was keen to take the battle to the British by attacking the railway line to the south, but Cronjé

did not agree. He was content to sit things out behind the augmented trenches while De Wet, as he reports, warned that they would be outflanked: “Cronjé would not listen to me . . . Meanwhile the inevitable results of Cronjé’s policy became more and more apparent to me, and before long we had to suffer for his obstinacy in keeping us to our trenches and *schanzes*.”

In February 1900 the new British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, conducted a great flanking sweep to relieve Kimberley and the Magersfontein position was compromised. Cronjé moved east with a huge wagon train that included the families of his men, until they were surrounded at Paardeberg. He was unable to persuade his men to take advantage of the escape route offered by De Wet and, on the anniversary of the Battle of Majuba, surrendered. He and his wife were imprisoned on St Helena until the end of the war. In 1904 he brought ridicule upon himself by re-enacting

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## D

### Dam

A reservoir or lake created by the construction of a dam.

### Dartnell, Brigadier-General J. G.

John George Dartnell was born in Ontario, Canada, in 1838. At seventeen years of age he was commissioned into the 86th Royal County Down Regiment and served throughout the Indian Mutiny. He was Chief Commissioner of the Natal Police for twenty-six years and was promoted Brigadier-general when he assumed command of the Natal Volunteers at Ladysmith. His local knowledge was invaluable during the retreat to Ladysmith, the siege and in northern Natal when Commandant-general Louis Botha attempted to invade once more in 1901.

### De Aar

An important railway junction on the main Cape Town to Kimberley line which continues north to Mafeking and Rhodesia. The line to the south-east goes to Naauwpoort Junction and thence to Port Elizabeth to the south and Stormberg to the east. De Aar was thus an important supply centre for the British. Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen's troops gathered here in November 1899 and it was the centre of Lord Kitchener's campaign against the Cape rebels west of the railway in March 1900.

### Delagoa Bay Railway

For the Boer republics, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, railway communications, and therefore the substantial import or export of goods, were by way of Cape Colony or Natal. For the British, the Imperial dream of a Cape-to-Cairo railway was limited by the Boer territories which resisted rail development. In the 1880s, as gold and diamonds increased in importance, the railheads were all outside Boer territory and kept there by the Boers until the early 1890s. It was not until they found an alternative that would be under Boer control that the difficulties eased. President Kruger reached agreement with the Portuguese and a line from Lourenço Marques, the port on Delagoa Bay

in Portuguese East Africa, to Pretoria was completed in 1895. This line was to provide the Boers with their only

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supply line from the outside world until the British advance from Pretoria in August and September 1900 took it from them.

See also:

[Transport](#).

Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## **De la Rey, Assistant Commandant-General Jacobus Herculaas “Koos”, 1847–1914**

De la Rey was one of the Boers' finest generals and was much admired by the British. The staunchly anti-Boer writers of *With the Flag to Pretoria* said of him: “[he is] certainly the politest, best mannered, and best educated among the Boer generals . . . ever on the side of liberalism and progress”. He was accorded an equal respect by his countrymen.

Koos De la Rey was born near Winburg, north-east of Bloemfontein, in the Orange Free State in 1847. He saw service against the Basotho in 1865 and against Sekhukhune of the Pedi in 1876. He became a member of the Volksraad in 1893, representing Lichtenburg in the western Transvaal, and was a moderate in his politics. He opposed the move towards war in 1899 but accepted the majority view and became a general. He served with distinction at Graspan and Modder River, but was wounded at the latter engagement and his son was killed there. The defence of Magersfontein from trenches at the foot of the kopjes was his inspiration. In the guerrilla phase of the war he had considerable success. He got the better of the British at Nooitgedacht in December 1901 and at Tweebosch in March 1902 captured Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen. Methuen was wounded and De la Rey escorted him to hospital and telegraphed Lady Methuen to reassure her that his injury was not grave. After the war they became friends. He took part in the peace conference at Vereeniging in May 1902, and became a Senator in Parliament after the war. When the First World War broke out in 1914 he seemed to be against supporting Britain. When the car in which he was travelling through the suburbs of Johannesburg with General Beyers failed to stop at a roadblock, De la Rey was shot and killed.

See also:

[Driefontein, Battle of](#); [Graspan, Battle of](#); [Modder River, Battle of](#); [Nooitgedacht, Battle of](#); [Tweebosch, Battle of](#).

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Scottsville, University of Natal Press, 1999).

# **De Wet, Chief Commandant Christiaan Rudolf,**

**1854–1922**

Christiaan De Wet was one of the greatest of the Boer commanders. He found himself in his element once the rigid constraints of formal warfare gave way to guerrilla activity.

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spread across the country he had a number of narrow escapes from the British, but he described the strategy as “blockhead” and played down the impact it had on the Boers. At the peace conference in Vereeniging in May 1902 he spoke strongly in favour of a continuation of the war but was obliged to recognise the sufferings of the people and accept the majority verdict for peace.

On the outbreak of the First World War De Wet joined the uprising against the British but was captured by his former comrades near Vryberg in the Orange Free State. On his death in 1922 he was buried at the *Vrouemonument*, the Women’s Memorial in the grounds of what is now the War Museum of the Boer Republics in Bloemfontein.

### See also:

[Bothaville, Action at](#); [Brand-water Basin, Surrender at](#); [De Wet, Vecht-general Piet](#); [Driefontein, Battle of](#); [Jammerbergdrif, Siege of](#); [Koedoesberg Drift, Battle of](#); [Nicholson’s Nek, Action at](#); [Olifant’s Nek](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#); [Poplar Grove, Battle of](#); [Reddersburg, Battle of](#); [Sannaspos, Battle of](#); [Waterval Drift, Action at](#).

### Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## De Wet, Vecht-General Piet D.,

**1861–1929**

Piet De Wet was the younger brother of Christiaan. He fought for the Boers at Majuba in the First Boer War and was at Ladysmith early in the second. After fighting with distinction at Sannaspos and Lindley, he met with his brother at Paardekraal on 19 July 1900. He asked him if he saw any chance of being able to continue the struggle, to which Christiaan responded with an angry remark and turned away.

Piet surrendered to the British on 26 July and in December became Chairman of the Burgher Peace Committee. In early 1901 he wrote a letter to his brother explaining his decision, pleading for negotiations before the Orange Free State was utterly laid to waste, telling him more and more British were on their way to South Africa and suggesting that Christiaan had been hoodwinked by the Transvaal generals to do their fighting for them. The bearer was flogged and sent back with a message that Christiaan would shoot Piet like a dog if he got the chance.

Piet visited Cape Colony to urge peace on doubters and on prisoners-of-war and later helped raise the Orange River Colony Volunteers, a formation of Boers who acted as guides and scouts for the British and who were regarded as traitors by their countrymen. Piet commanded the Heilbron section. After the war he returned to farming and died, an out-cast from his people, near Lindley in 1929.

See also:

[Joiners](#); [Lindley, Battle of](#); [Sannaspos, Battle of](#).

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## Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Lee, Emanoel, *To The Bitter End* (London, Viking, 1985); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985).

## **Diamond Hill, Battle of,**

**11–12 June 1900**

The fall of Pretoria on 5 June 1900 had a devastating effect on Boer morale, but Commandant-general Louis Botha made a two-day stand on a front some twenty-five miles (40km) long astride the Delagoa Bay railway, sixteen miles (25km) east of

charge, a rare incident from which the Household Cavalry had to rescue them. In the south at Diamond Hill the day also ended in stalemate. Fighting resumed on 12 June with Major-general Inigo Jones's Guards Brigade pushing towards Donkerhoek, but it was the intervention of Colonel H. B. De Lisle's 2nd Mounted Infantry that made the day. The 6th Regular Mounted Infantry secured a position at the foot of the kopje behind the Rhenosterfontein farm to allow the New South Wales Mounted Rifles and the West Australians to swarm up and secure a position enfilading the Boer line. Seeing that his position had become untenable, Botha withdrew after dark.

See also:

[Bergendal, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## Donga

A river-bed, often dry. In conditions of dry weather followed by torrential rains such dongas are cut deep into the land and afford good cover from view and fire as well as being an obstacle to movement, especially by wheeled vehicles.

## Doornkop, Battle of,

**2 January 1896**

The invasion led by Dr Jameson to accompany the planned uprising against the Boer government in Johannesburg found itself without local support when it approached the town. The small force was surrounded by the Boers at Doornkop and, with sixteen men dead and forty-nine wounded, surrendered.

See also:

[Jameson, Dr Leander Starr](#); [Jameson Raid](#).

# Doornkop, Battle of,

**29 May 1900**

Doornkop, where Jameson was defeated in 1896, was four years later the location of the right of the Boer defences south-west of Johannesburg. The Boers occupied the ridge running east from Doornkop and the British cavalry moved to the west while the British infantry assaulted the ridge. Those regiments who preserved parade-ground formation suffered greatly while those who made use of cover and moved by bounds, that is, in a series of swift dashes, had far fewer casualties. The Boers were driven off and the way to Johannesburg lay open.

The British force advancing on Johannesburg was under the command of Lieutenant-general Ian Hamilton and the advance was vividly recorded by a young officer and journalist, Winston Churchill. The Boer defenders were under Assistant Com-

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mandant-general J. H. De la Rey. As his troops were running low on rations after crossing the Klip River, Hamilton agreed with Major-general J. D. P. French to move quickly. French's cavalry moved west and Hamilton's two brigades made a frontal assault on the ridge defended by the Boers. On the left the 21st Brigade were headed by the City Imperial Volunteers, moving cautiously, making good use of the cover, bearing in mind recent exhortations to preserve an open formation, and well supported with artillery fire. On the right the Gordon Highlanders led the 19th Brigade forward, magnificent in their two, long, straight lines, but showing up prominently against the recently fired and blackened terrain. The ridge was cleared by late afternoon and French had advanced to a position north of Doornkop. The Boer defence was now entirely compromised and they had no alternative but to retreat. The Gordons had, however, suffered over 100 casualties.

See also:

[Burnham, Major Frederick Russell.](#)

Reference:

Churchill, Winston S., *Ian Hamilton's March* (London, Longmans, Green, 1900) and Leo Cooper, 1989 in *The Boer War*;

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## Dorp

A village. Dorp is the equivalent to “thorpe” in English.

## Doyle, Arthur Ignatius Conan,

**1859–1930**

The author of the Sherlock Holmes stories was a medical doctor and after the reverses of “Black Week” wanted to serve his country in the war. Unfit as a soldier, he went out as a doctor and performed outstanding service in the enteric (typhoid) fever epidemic in Bloemfontein, for which he was knighted. He wrote persuasively of his experiences and views after his return to Britain.

Third child and first son of Charles and Mary Doyle, Arthur studied medicine in Edinburgh and benefited from the teaching of Joseph Bell, who was to some extent a prototype for the fictional character Sherlock Holmes. Arthur graduated in 1881 and practised in Southsea from 1882 to 1890. His first work of fiction, *A Study in Scarlet*, appeared in 1887 and his detective stories were well known by the time the South African war of 1899 broke out. Doyle was rejected by the Middlesex

Yeomanry as being too old and too fat, but almost at once was asked by the philanthropist John Langman to become senior physician in a field hospital he was sending to South Africa. Doyle paid his own expenses and received no salary.

The hospital staff reached Bloemfontein on 2 April 1900 and the fifty tons of equipment arrived soon after, allowing the hospital to be set up in the pavilion of the Bloemfontein Ramblers' Cricket Club. The 160 beds were soon filled with victims of enteric (typhoid) fever. The civilian hospital already had 1,700 patients

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and public buildings were converted into hospitals to deal with the epidemic. Doyle and his companions fought the disease for three months. He wrote: “. . . the general condition of the town was very bad. Coffins were out of the question, and the men were lowered in their brown blankets into shallow graves at the average rate of sixty a day . . . You could smell Bloemfontein long before you could see it.”

Doyle himself contracted fever, but fortunately in a mild form, although it did recur in later life. By the time the British had taken Pretoria it appeared the war would soon be over and the hospital was closed down. Doyle took a ship for England on 11 July. His account of the conflict, *The Great Boer War*, was published later that year. While in South Africa Doyle had had some relief from his duties and travelled, observed and questioned with eagerness. As a result he had formed some adverse but well-founded opinions of the British conduct of the war and he did not disguise these views in his book. His comments on tactics, the need for marksmanship and the irrelevance of the attitudes of many of the officer class were not popular with the army. This was followed in 1902 with *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Conduct*, which was translated into a number of European languages. Although critical of the British, it also condemned some Boer practices and was, on the whole, well-balanced. It certainly influenced some of the Europeans in Britain's favour. When informed that the king, Edward VII, intended to confer a knighthood on him, Doyle considered declining it as he felt he had only been doing his duty as a doctor in South Africa. However, he was persuaded that to fail to accept would be an insult to the monarch and the honour was bestowed on 24 October 1902.

[Bloemfontein](#); [Medical Services](#); [Sannaspos](#), [Battle of](#).

## Reference:

Booth, Martin, *The Doctor, the Detective and Arthur Conan Doyle* (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1997).

## Drakensberg Mountains

The borders south and east of the two Boer republics, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (the Transvaal), are defined by the mountains of the Drakensberg Range. They are difficult to cross even today and effectively confined the war largely to two major theatres, Natal and the Boer Republics. The territory held by the republics themselves consists, for the greater part, of wide bush country, veldt, while the colony of Natal is a wedge of hilly country driving into the Drakensbergs.

## See also:

[Botha's Pass](#), [Action at](#); [Brandwater Basin](#), [Surrender at](#).

# Driefontein, Battle of,

**10 March 1900**

The Battle of Driefontein was the final stand by the Boers, under De Wet, against the British before the capture by the British of Bloemfontein. It was bravely fought by the Boers, but their

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lowered morale sapped their endurance and they eventually gave way. Their inability to stand led to the decision not to contest Bloemfontein. The British were unable to mop up the fugitives as a result of the damage done to the cavalry horses during the relief of Kimberley.

After the rout at Poplar Grove in March 1900, Christiaan De Wet fell back some fifteen miles (24km) to Abraham's Kraal where he left his force briefly to assist Judge Hertzog in organising the defences of Bloemfontein. On his return he found that Vecht-generals De la Rey, who had withdrawn from Colesberg, Andries Cronjé, Philip Botha, C. C. Froneman and Piet De Wet, his brother, had placed the men on a line from Abraham's Kraal in the north, on the Modder River, along the Driefontein kopjes to the Boschrand, south of the Petrusberg to Bloemfontein road.

The British advanced in three columns and engaged the whole Boer front. De Wet reports that the shelling was heavy, first on Abraham's Kraal and then in the centre, where De la Rey's Transvaalers were. Brigadier-general T. E. Stephenson's 18th Brigade attacked, along with the 1st Essex and 1st Welsh supported by 13th Brigade's 2nd The Buffs (East Kent) and 2nd Gloucesters. By late in the day they had taken the hills by bayonet attacks against the Johannesburg and Pretoria Police under Philip Botha and the cavalry were coming round the southern flank of the Boer positions. Once more the burghers broke. De Wet wrote: "They had offered a magnificent resistance . . . But with the setting of the sun a change came over them. Once more panic seized them; leaving their positions, they retreated in all haste towards Bloemfontein." The fatigue of the British cavalry once more prevented them from catching the fleeing Boers.

## See also:

[Kimberley, Relief of](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#); [Poplar Grove, Battle of](#).

## Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902).

## Drift

A ford across a river.

## Drives

Drives or sweeps were used to attempt to gather up Boer commandos during the guerrilla phases of the war. They were organised in much the same way as game is driven towards the guns of hunters.

The difficulty was, of course, creating a sufficiently impermeable screen of sweepers.

For example, in January 1901 Major-general French used 22,000 men in eight columns, moving south-east from lines running north from Johannesburg to Pretoria and east from there to the border. They moved off on 28 January from the western side and on 3 February from the northern flank, virtually enveloping Ermelo by 5 February. The quarry was Commandant-general Botha. As they advanced the British swept the

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land clean, burning farms and rounding up the people. Botha left 1,500 men to assist the fleeing populace and, with 2,000 men, slipped away north through the British line. Although the operation continued into April, only 1,332 Boers were taken. The positive result, from the British point of view, was that over a quarter of a million head of sheep and cattle had been taken, hitting the supplies of the commandos hard.

As the war continued lines of block-houses, partly intended to protect supply lines along the railways, served, together with the barbed wire fences that ran between them, as nets to catch the driven Boers.

### See also:

[Blockhouses](#); [Concentration Camps](#); [Lang Reit](#); [Wools-Sampson, Aubrey](#).

### Reference:

Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## Dum-Dum Bullets

Both the British and Boers accused each other of using dum-dum (expanding or deformable) bullets and exploding bullets. That bullets containing an explosive charge were used on purpose is most unlikely, but that manufactured and home-made expanding rounds were employed is not to be doubted, although on what scale these were used, in the face of official disapproval, is not known.

The rounds made at the British arsenal in Dum-dum in India, properly termed Cordite Mark V, had a small cylindrical hole at the tip of the round which caused the bullet to expand on impact. This was considered necessary against “native” adversaries. The British classified the Boer War as a European conflict and therefore the non-expanding Cordite Mark II was prescribed for use. The expanding effect could also be achieved by filing off the nickel casing of the round at its extremity. Mauser ammunition of an expanding character was manufactured in the form of the soft-nose bullet, one in which the casing ceased 5.5mm short of the tip, leaving a deformable nose. Such rounds were intended for shooting heavy game. They were popularly called exploding bullets, though in fact they contained no explosive. It is known that some dum-dum rounds arrived with British troops coming from India and supplies of them were captured by the Boers after the Battle of Talana, 20 October 1899. Deneys Reitz writes of his accidental use of ammunition he had picked up for shooting game. After the Battle of Nooitgedacht, 13 December 1900, where he fought under Assistant Commandant-general C. F. Beyers, he came across the body of a British soldier he had killed: “I was horrified to see that my bullet had blown half his head away, the explanation being that . . . I had found a few

explosive Mauser cartridges . . . [and] kept them in a separate pocket . . . I was distressed at my mistake, but there is not a great deal of difference

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between killing a man with an explosive bullet, and smashing him with a lyddite shell . . . I flung the remainder [of the bullets] into the brook. . .”

Colonel W. F. Stevenson, who served in South Africa and became Professor of Military Surgery at the Royal Army Medical College, discussed the issue, making reference to the experience of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. Massive exit wounds five inches (12cm) square were caused by French Lebel rifle rounds, none of which were explosive. In South Africa Stevenson picked up examples of all the various patterns of “deformable” bullets, but found no explosive ones. He saw only one true explosive bullet there, of greater diameter than the Mauser with a copper tube filled with detonating material at the point, evidently for a “sporting weapon”. He was of the opinion that the wounds said to have been caused by exploding bullets were either the result of expanding or deformable rounds or the effect of a solid round striking bone and breaking up.

See also:

[Rifles.](#)

Reference:

Reitz, Deneys, *Commando* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994); Stevenson, W. F., *Wounds in War* (London, Longmans, Green, 1910, 3rd edition); West, Guy and Leonard, A., “Boer War Magazine Lee-Enfield Mark I”, *Classic Arms and Militaria*, May/June 1999.

## Dundee

At the centre of the coal-mining area of northern Natal, a British colony, Dundee was occupied by Major-general Sir William Penn Symons with 3,280 infantry, 497 cavalry and eighteen guns in October 1899. On 20 October the Boers were driven off in the Battle of Talana, but the position had become untenable and, with Symons mortally wounded, it fell to Brigadier-general James Yule to extricate the troops from Dundee and lead them back to Ladysmith. The Boers sacked the abandoned town, but treated the wounded left in the hospital well. Commandant-general Piet Joubert then made it his headquarters. It was liberated in the British advance of June 1900.

See also:

[Talana, Battle of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

# Dundonald, Major-General The Earl of,

**1852–1935**

D. M. B. H. Cochrane joined the Life Guards in 1870 and served with the Nile Expedition of 1884–85 in command of the 2nd Life Guards detachment of the Camel Corps. He inherited the earldom in 1885. He commanded the Mounted Brigade under General Sir Redvers Buller at the Battle of Colenso and found, but was not permitted to exploit, an opportunity to outflank the Boers at Acton Homes in January 1900. He took part in the relief of Ladysmith and the advance into the Transvaal. In

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order to exploit the fire power of the Maxim machine-gun, he invented the Dundonald Galloping Carriage as an alternative to transporting the guns on pack horses or mules.

**See also:**

[Acton Homes, Action at](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#); [Tugela Heights, Battle of](#).

**Reference:**

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Durban

Formerly called Port Natal, Durban is the main port of Natal. It was placed under martial law with Captain Percy Scott, R.N. as Military Governor and Commandant on 3 November 1899. The Boers never advanced far enough to offer any real threat to the town.

**See also:**

[Scott, Captain Percy](#); [Willow Grange, Battle of](#).

## Dutch Colonisation

The Dutch first landed in the Cape in 1652. The mission of Jan van Riebeeck was to establish a staging point for ships of the Dutch East India Company by setting up a fort and arranging for vegetables to be grown and cattle to be purchased from the indigenous Khoikhoi (known to the Europeans as Hottentots). The settlement of Dutch market gardeners was an unhappy experiment but stability was achieved for a time under the expansionist reforms of Simon van der Stel in the 1680s. The population increased and overflowed the limitations of the original settlement at Cape Town, putting pressure on the San (Bushmen) of the interior and running into the Xhosa on the Fish River to the east. It was to meet the challenge of the black African warriors that the commando, a militia unit, was developed.

The British entered the picture in 1795, a year after the Dutch East India Company went bankrupt, and at a time when the English were at war with France, from whom the Dutch settlement was “protected”. At the end of hostilities twenty years later the Cape became British permanently. Soon after, during the 1820s in a series of great battles, the *mfecane*, the Zulu nation was established in the east of what is now South Africa. Then, in the 1830s, the British abolished slavery, which was the last straw for the Dutch farmers, or Boers. Under leaders including Piet Retief and Piet Uys, they migrated in what became known as the Great Trek. Between 1836 and 1846 some 14,000 people left

Cape Colony with their herds of cattle and goats, their furniture loaded into great wagons. They crossed the Orange and Vaal rivers, pushing into the interior and down into Natal to find land. In doing so they encountered the black Africans. Hendrick Potgieter fought the Ndebele in the north and Piet Retief and Andries Pretorius fought the Zulu in the east.

Meanwhile the British colonised the coast, founding Port Elizabeth and

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### **Elandsfontein, Action at,**

**29 May 1900**

Elandsfontein is now called Germiston, south-east of Johannesburg. The Elandsfontein railway yards were of considerable interest to the advancing British. The enormous length of the supply lines, some 1,000 miles back to Cape Town, meant that every wagon and steam engine was precious. The British Commander-in-Chief Lord Roberts had sent his Chief of Scouts, Major Burnham, behind Boer lines to prevent the rolling stock being removed. This was achieved by blowing up the line and Colonel St G. C. Henry captured seven locomotives and many wagons, together with a hundred prisoners, on 29 May.

See also:

[Burnham, Major Frederick Russell.](#)

Reference:

Burnham, F. R., ed. Mary N. Everett, *Scouting on Two Continents* (New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1928); Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

### **Elandslaagte, Battle of,**

**21 October 1899**

Natal was invaded by the Boers immediately on the outbreak of war on 11 October. While Generals Erasmus and Meyer advanced on Dundee, General Kock's commandos cut the railway line at Elandslaagte, twelve miles (20km) north-east of Ladysmith. Although the British inflicted a comprehensive defeat on the Boers, the village was not defensible and the British withdrew to Ladysmith. The British cavalry charge, which made use of the lance, horrified the Boers, who deemed it uncivilised to fight with spears. General Kock died of his wounds. The action had provided cover for Yule's march to Ladysmith.

The present hamlet of Elandslaagte was, in 1899, a thriving coal-mining town through which the

railway to northern Natal still passes. Vecht-general Johannes Kock was in command of about half the Transvaal force that invaded the colony and, while the other half went to attack the British at Dundee, Kock's task was to take and hold the Mkhupe Pass on the Ladysmith to Newcastle road to prevent a counter-attack from the south. His advance guard exceeded their brief and, on 19 October, descended

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bring his column back to Ladysmith from Dundee unhindered, but the rest of the British also had to return, for General Prinsloo's Orange Free State men were threatening Ladysmith from the west and north.

### See also:

[Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Talana, Battle of](#); [Yule, Brigadier-general James](#); [Documents: The Battle of Elandslaagte, extract from Steevens, G. W., \*From Capetown to Ladysmith\*, Edinburgh, William Blackwood and Sons, 1900.](#)

### Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles and Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Rudgren, Pat, *Battle of Elandslaagte*, [www.battlefields.co.za/history/anglo-boer\\_war](http://www.battlefields.co.za/history/anglo-boer_war)

## Elands Poort, Action at,

### 17 September 1901

The attempts of the Boer commandos to enter Cape Colony as the guerrilla war drew on were countered by British patrols along the Orange River and in the Stormberg mountains. Assistant Commandant-general Jan Smuts's attempt was made in cold, wet weather and culminated in an action against C Squadron 17th Lancers in which twenty-nine British died and forty-one were wounded, against a Boer loss of one dead and six wounded. Smuts's men were able to rearm, remount and reclothe themselves at the Lancers' expense and, dressed in British uniform, they rode on into the Cape.

Smuts crossed the Orange River into the Cape on 3 September and narrowly escaped being shot at Moordenaarspoort, Murderer's Gorge. For ten days his men sought a way through the British patrols and finally got out through what is now known as Smuts Pass, west of Dordrecht, heading in the direction of Tarkastad. On 17 September they were entering a valley leading to the Elands River when they were warned of the presence of an English patrol, the 17th Lancers, whom they engaged and overcame.

The Boers were, by this time, in rags. Few had shirts or shoes, make-shift canvas capes served as coats and rawhide sandals as footwear. Deneys Reitz was invited by one of the wounded British officers, Lord Vivian, to inspect the contents of his tent. Reitz was wearing a grain bag with a hole cut for his head and an old pair of elastic-sided boots given to him a few days before by a farmer's wife. Reitz wrote: "I was not slow to take the hint, with the result that having started that morning with a

grain-bag for my chief garment, a foundered horse, an old rifle, and two cartridges, I now appeared in a handsome cavalry tunic, riding-breeches, &c., with a sporting Lee-Metford, full bandoliers and a superb mount, a little grey Arab, which his groom said had been the property of [the late] Lieutenant Sheridan”. There had already been confusion over clothing on this mission. Some of Smuts’s men had been mistaken for British troops because of their acquired garments, and this kind of incident led the British to threaten to execute Boers masquerading as Brit-

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ish. However, Reitz's obvious requirement for clothing merely to survive shows that disguise was not his primary purpose.

See also:

[Cape Colony, Invasions of](#); [O'Okiep, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Reitz, Deneys, *Commando* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## Elands River Post, Battle of,

### 4–15 August 1900

Following the relief of Mafeking on 17 May and the fall of Pretoria to the British in June, the mobile forces of Assistant Commandant-general De la Rey and Chief Commandant De Wet north and south of the Vaal River threatened communication and supply lines. A British post was set up on the farm of Brakfontein on the Elands River to protect the Rustenburg to Zeerust and Mafeking road, and was manned by Australians and Rhodesians. It became clear that they were too exposed and should be withdrawn, but they were attacked before that could happen and were assumed to have been overrun. In fact they dug in and held on for eleven days until relieved by a column led by Lord Kitchener. It was greeted as a considerable Australian achievement.

The command of Elands River Post was given to Lieutenant-colonel C. O. Hore with his 201 Rhodesian Volunteers to which were added, in the period before the siege began, 299 Australians, mostly New South Wales Bushmen and Queensland Mounted Infantry. When the decision was taken to withdraw them because of the number of Boers observed in the area, Lieutenant-general Sir Frederick Carrington set out from Zeerust on 3 August with 1,000 men, six field guns and four Pom-Poms to cover their retirement. However, the Boers attacked Hore's post the next morning, inflicting thirty-two casualties by shelling the inadequate defences. The men dug in. Carrington's column was also shelled and turned back. Major-general Baden-Powell started from Rustenburg to assist, but assumed, on the slightest evidence, that the declining sound of gunfire indicated Carrington's success and he, too, turned back.

It was not until British men of Lord Kitchener's columns, who were in pursuit of De Wet, intercepted a message from De la Rey at Elands River that they understood that the Australians and Rhodesians were still holding out. The more they had been shelled, the deeper they had dug, for, lacking artillery, they could not retaliate. On 15 August the defenders were surprised by the silence;

Boer fire had ceased. The next day the reason was clear: the approach of Kitchener's column had been too much of a threat to the Boers. Eighty men had become casualties, of whom twenty lost their lives. Neither Carrington nor Baden-Powell emerged with credit, and Hore, to whom many attributed credit for the defence of Mafeking, and his men had showed the British that it was possible to resist successfully against considerable odds.

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**See also:**

[Mafeking, Siege of](#); [Olifant's Nek](#); [Documents: The Hunt for De Wet by F. Everett](#).

**Reference:**

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Wallace, R. L., *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra, The Australian War Memorial and The Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976).

## **Eloff, Commandant Sarel J.,**

### **1870–1944**

Sarel Eloff was a grandson of President Kruger of the Transvaal, and second in command to Vecht-general J. P. Snyman at the siege of Mafeking. On 12 May 1900 Eloff led an attack on Mafeking which broke into the town through Mafikeng, the black African township immediately to the west of the European area. The Boers occupied the British South Africa Police fort and held its occupants, including Lieutenant-colonel C. O. Hore and Angus Hamilton, the *Times* newspaper correspondent, prisoner throughout the day. Thanks to the excellent telephone communication system established by Baden-Powell, the incursion was repulsed elsewhere, largely by the black Africans, the Baralong, with nine Boers killed or wounded and twenty-five taken prisoner. Eloff remained steadfast and courteous, awaiting support from Snyman which never came. As the day faded he was forced to recognise the hopelessness of his position and he surrendered.

**See also:**

[Mafeking, Siege of](#).

**Reference:**

Jeal, Tim, *Baden-Powell* (London, Hutchinson, 1989); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## **Enslin, Battle of,**

### **25 November 1899**

See [Graspan, Battle of](#).

# Erasmus, Assistant Commandant-General D. J. E. “Maroola”

Born in 1845, Maroola Erasmus got his nickname from having directed operations from behind a maroola tree in a campaign against black Africans in northern Transvaal. He and his brother were, according to Deneys Reitz, “. . . tall, swarthy men, clad in black claw-hammer coats, and semitop hats, trimmed with crêpe, a style of dress and headgear affected by so many Boer officers as virtually to amount to insignia of rank”.

Maroola served in the First Boer War at Bronkhorstspuit and was promoted to commandant at the siege of Pretoria. He was involved in the defeat of the Jameson Raid in 1895–96. At the Battle of Talana on 20 October 1899 he sat out the fight on Impate Hill and was present at the siege of Ladysmith. He operated around Pretoria during the guerrilla phase of the war and was captured in January 1902 and sent to St Helena.

See also:

[Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Talana, Battle of](#).

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## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## Erasmus, Major P. E.

Piet Erasmus was one of the brothers of Maroola Erasmus and served with the *Staatsartillerie*. He was trained in the Netherlands in 1893, did not pass the Lieutenant's examination but was commissioned by a board chaired by Captain A. F. Schiel. He dealt with the purchase of the 155mm Creusot Long Toms and served at the siege of Ladysmith where he was in command of the unit whose Long Tom was put out of action in the raid on Gun Hill.

## See also:

[Artillery, Boer](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Trichardt, Lieutenant-colonel S. P. E.](#)

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Ermelo

A town in the South African Republic (the Transvaal) in the centre of the wedge created by the railway running east from Pretoria and the railway going south-east from Johannesburg to Volkrust and northern Natal. Ermelo was at the heart of the country swept by the British in the guerrilla phase of the war. It was occupied by one side and then the other for a year, and as a result was entirely destroyed. The fate of Ermelo illustrates the devastation visited on the land by the British efforts to catch Boers in the guerrilla phase of the war.

Major-general Lord Dundonald occupied the town in August 1900 and a hundred Boer burghers surrendered. When the British left the Boers came back, only to leave again in October when Lieutenant-general French's cavalry division came to town and to move in once more when he left. In the great sweep or drive of January and February 1901 the arrival of Assistant Commandant-general C. F. Beyers and his men increased the Boer force there to 6,000 men before they were forced to move away to the south.

By April the British were gone and Commandant-general Louis Botha's men came in, the town then becoming the temporary capital of the republic with the presence of Acting President Schalk

Burger and his government. In May the British came back again. The final blow fell in September 1901 when Major-general F. W. Kitchener's columns left only one house standing. Thereafter the site was a base for British sweeps in the eastern Transvaal towards the Swaziland border.

See also:

[Blockhouses](#); [Drives](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

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## Esau, Abraham, d.

1901

The Boer occupation of Calvinia in the Northern Cape in January 1901 met with outspoken criticism and opposition from the leader of the local coloured population, Abraham Esau. The Boer governor, Field Cornet C. van der Merwe, had Esau arrested and given twenty-five lashes, causing him to faint. His persecution continued in the following weeks, and as the British advanced upon the town in February, van der Merwe had Esau arrested again. The hapless victim was put in leg-irons, tied between two horses and dragged to the outskirts of the town where he was shot.

See also:

[Africans, Black](#); [Prisoners-of-War](#).

Reference:

Nasson, William, *Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African's War in Cape Colony* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Estcourt

The site of Fort Durnford, Estcourt, seventeen miles (28km) south of Colenso, Natal, was already a British military post before the outbreak of the war. The forces stationed at the Colenso garrison retired on 2 November 1899 and swelled the Estcourt garrison. Colonel C. J. Long was briefly in command, during which time he was responsible for the activity of the armoured train. Major-general H. J. T. Hildyard arrived on 15 November, bringing numbers to about 800 mounted troops and 4,400 infantry and artillery. The Boers tried to circumvent Estcourt and advance towards Durban, but turned back after the Battle of Willow Grange on 23 November. Thereafter the town became a permanent link in the supply chain of the British army in Natal.

See also:

[Armoured Train Incident](#); [Willow Grange, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

# European Views of the War

Although the popular press and large sections of public opinion in Europe were in support of the Boers or against the British, their governments adopted a much more cautious attitude and offered little, if any, practical assistance. A mere three days after the outbreak of the war in October 1899 Britain and Portugal made a secret agreement by which, in return for a guarantee of Portuguese territorial integrity, Portuguese East Africa and thus the Delagoa Bay Railway, the only route not controlled by the British, would be closed for the importation of munitions to the Boer republics. Material assistance thus being out of the question, only diplomatic and political pressure remained and what little was brought to bear had no effect. That did not prevent a considerable volume of adverse opi-

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### Farm Burning

The policy of burning Boer farms was approved by Lord Roberts, but there was strong public feeling against it. Starting as specific reprisals for Boer attacks and building up to a general scorched earth strategy to counter guerrilla warfare, the farm burning, taken together with the concentration camps, was the foundation for a lasting enmity between Boer and British. The Boers themselves sometimes burned the farms of their countrymen when they supported, or failed to oppose, the British.

The reasons for the British burning of Boer farms were numerous and changed over the period of the war. At first private property was protected unless, in the words of the Hague Convention of 1899, its destruction or confiscation was imperatively demanded by the necessities of war. During the advance from Bloemfontein it was said, perhaps correctly, that the white flag, indicating surrender or neutrality, had been shown from farms from which subsequently the

Boers opened fire. Such farms were burned and, in the view of British troops, rightly so. After the success of Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet at Roodewal on 7 June 1900, when the railway line was compromised, the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, proclaimed that farms in the vicinity of such attacks would be burnt and began with De Wet's own farm. In September 1900 the policy was extended to the destruction of all farms and food supplies within ten miles (16km) of the incident, or when troops were fired on from a farm or if it had been used as a commando base. The control of implementation of the policy was loose and many British formations felt that they had a general licence to destroy farms, particularly where a drive or sweep was in progress. In December 1900 the new Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, confirmed and intensified the land clearance policy in order to deny support to Boers in the field. In the course of the war some 30,000 houses, including farms, were destroyed.

See also:

[Concentration Camps](#); [Drives](#); [Guerrilla War](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Lee, Emanoel, *To the Bitter End* (London, Viking, 1985); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985).

## Fawcett, Mrs Millicent Garrett,

**1847–1929**

The political uproar caused by the revelations in Emily Hobhouse's report on conditions in the so-called refugee camps forced the British Secretary of State for War, St John Brodrick, to appoint a Ladies' Committee to visit the concentration camps and report on them. Mrs Millicent Fawcett led the investigation and, although considered anti-Boer and of Conservative stock by some in Britain, the Committee largely confirmed Hobhouse's findings and recommendations.

Millicent Fawcett was the widow of Professor Henry Fawcett, former Postmaster-general, and a member of the Garrett family that also produced Dr Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, who pioneered women's rights to practise medicine in Britain. Her committee included Dr Jane Waterston, Miss Scarlett, Miss Brereton, Lady Knox and Miss Deane. They toured from August to September 1901 and confirmed the facts given in the Hobhouse report, going on to point out fresh dangers, notably the maladministration at Mafeking. They visited in August and made their views known at once. By November, nothing had been done to change conditions, and 400 deaths a week were taking place.

Their final report in December (presented to Parliament as Command Paper 893) laid the foundation for substantial improvement.

Millicent Fawcett was President of the National Union of Women's Suffrage from 1897 to 1919 and a co-

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founder of Newnham College, Cambridge.

### See also:

[Concentration Camps](#); [Hobhouse, Emily](#).

### Reference:

Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Spies, S. B., “Women and the War” in Warwick, Peter, ed., *The South African War* (Harlow, Longman, 1980).

## Fontein

A spring, a water source.

## Fouché, Vecht-General W. D.

Having achieved the rank of Commandant at twenty-five years of age, Fouché was active on behalf of the Boers in Cape Colony, first with Assistant Chief-commandant Kritzinger and then with Assistant Commandant-general Jan Smuts. He was promoted in 1902 and led operations in the Cape Midlands. These actions in Cape Colony were an additional worry for the British, but were not a major factor in the conduct of the war. In the First World War he served under Louis Botha against the Germans in South West Africa.

### See also:

[Cape Colony, Invasions of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Fourteen Streams

The railway station at Fourteen Streams near the Vaal River was the place to which the Boers retreated after the relief of Kimberley in February 1900. Some 3,000 burghers and six guns, under the command of Vecht-general S. P. du Toit, had arrived here by March and a council of war was held

here in April 1900, but the position was abandoned in May without a fight. The railway bridge over the Vaal had been blown up and a temporary bridge took its place for the time being.

See also:

[Kimberley, Siege of.](#)

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M., *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **Frederikstad, Action at,**

**20–25 October 1900**

Major-general G. Barton was cut off at Frederikstad Station, seventeen miles (27km) north of Potchefstroom, by Vecht-general P. J. Liebenberg on 20 October 1900. Liebenberg received support from Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet while Barton called for reinforcements by heliograph. According to De Wet, the men he lent to Liebenberg were misused, permitting the relief of Barton's force and the loss of thirty Boers

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killed or wounded and thirty taken prisoner. De Wet's presence became known to the British, who pursued him and nearly caught him at Bothaville on 6 November.

See also:

[Bothaville, Action at.](#)

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M., *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **French, Lieutenant-General Sir John,**

**1852–1925**

General French commanded the Cavalry Brigade in the dramatic, long, flanking strike that relieved the siege of Kimberley and his troops continued to play a crucial role in operations up to the end of the conventional phase of the war. Thereafter he was involved in operations against the guerrilla commandos with rather less success than he had enjoyed as a cavalry commander in the traditional sense.

John Denton Pinkstone French joined the 8th Hussars in February 1874 and transferred to the 19th Hussars the following month. He served in Egypt and the Sudan and was involved in the attempt to rescue Gordon at Khartoum. He was given command of the Cavalry Division in South Africa in 1899 with the rank of Lieutenant-general. In Natal he was successful against the Boers at Elandslaagte and narrowly avoided being besieged in Ladysmith. The defence of the Cape Colony in the Colesberg area was his next task. He then served under the new British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, and managed to deceive Vecht-general Christiaan De Wet at Waterval Drift at the outset of the flanking march to relieve Kimberley. The effect on his cavalry of making so swift an advance over difficult terrain was severe, but he was nonetheless able to make a second hurried march to prevent Assistant Commandant-general Piet Cronjé escaping from the trap of Paardeberg. He then fought at Poplar Grove, Driefontein, Zand River, Doornkop and Diamond Hill. French later commanded a number of the great drives which were intended to entrap Boer commandos during the guerrilla phase of the war. In 1901 he was given command of British forces in Cape Colony and promoted to Major-general.

Sir John French commanded the British Expeditionary Force in France from the outbreak of war in 1914 to the end of 1915. He became first Earl of Ypres in 1916 and was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland from 1918 to 1921.

## See also:

[Diamond Hill, Battle of](#); [Driefontein, Battle of](#); [Doornkop, Battle of](#); [Drives](#); [Elandslaagte, Battle of](#); [Kimberley, Siege of](#); [Poplar Grove, Battle of](#); [Waterval Drift, Action at](#).

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

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## French Volunteers

The number of French volunteers serving on the Boer side was quite small, in spite of the Huguenot connection shown by such family names as Joubert, du Toit and Villiers amongst the Boers. The French Corps was commanded by Colonel Count Georges de Villebois-Mareuil and fought at Colenso and the Platrand, Ladysmith before going to the Orange Free State and fighting at Poplar Grove and Driefontein. Many of the French were subsumed in the European Legion which Villebois-Mareuil, now with the rank of Vecht-general, led to defeat by Lord Methuen near Boshof. The rest of this unit fought during the retreat from Bloemfontein to Pretoria but broke up because of Boer indifference to, and lack of support for, foreign volunteer units.

Olivier d'Etchegoyen, writing as "An Ex-Lieutenant" of the French commander, produced an account of the war as seen through French eyes which is probably accurate in its details but is wildly unreliable in its overview of events. He was captured in July 1900 by a unit that included French-speaking Canadian troops and was permitted to return to France. At that time no more than forty Frenchman were left in the Boer service.

### See also:

[Anti-semitism](#); [Boer Forces](#); [Boshof, Battle of](#); [Driefontein, Battle of](#); [Villebois-Mareuil, Colonel Count Georges de](#).

### Reference:

d'Etchegoyen, Olivier, *Ten Months in the Field with the Boers* (London, Heinemann, 1901); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Frere

A village in Natal north-west of Estcourt. It was between Frere and Chieveley that the armoured train on which Winston Churchill was travelling was ambushed.

### See also:

[Armoured Train Incident](#).

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## G

### **Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand,**

**1869–1948**

An Indian lawyer, trained in London, Mohandas Gandhi came to Natal in 1893. He was shocked at the treatment he received because of his race. On 16 October 1899 he addressed a meeting of the Natal Indian Congress in Durban and suggested that they could not remain mere spectators in the war. He was authorised to write to the Colonial Secretary pointing out that, while Indians were not competent to fight for the British Empire, there were other duties they could perform on the battlefield. In response to an appeal by the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Redvers Buller, Gandhi was instrumental in raising the Indian Ambulance Corps. The Indians served on the Natal front at the battles of Colenso, Spioenkop, Vaalkrans and elsewhere until after the relief of Ladysmith. Gandhi took part in the fruitless efforts to safeguard the civil rights of Indians in South Africa after the war and led the independence movement in India from 1919 to 1947.

See also:

[Indian Ambulance Corps.](#)

Reference:

Tichmann, Paul, “We are Sons of the Empire after all”, *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 87, 1996.

## Gat

A narrow passage or hole.

### **Gatacre, Lieutenant-General Sir William,**

**1843–1906**

William Forbes Gatacre joined the army in 1862. He was Instructor of Military Surveying at the Royal Military College from 1875 to 1879. He served in Burma in 1889 and in the Sudan in 1898. He

gained a reputation for being formidably fit and, possibly as a result of being capable of impressive physical exploits, over-estimated the capacity of his men to perform likewise. He was given command of the 3rd Division in South Africa in 1899 and led it to defeat at Stormberg that December, one of the three reverses of “Black Week”. His failure to support the British troops trapped by Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet at Mostertshoek led to his being relieved of his command and sent back to England.

See also:

[Mostertshoek, Battle of](#); [Stormberg, Battle of](#).

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## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Gold and the Witwatersrand

Gold was discovered in the Transvaal in 1886. A gold rush followed, with people, *uitlanders*, arriving from all over the world to seek their fortune. The nature of the ore – low-grade but available in vast quantities – called for high investment such as only companies like Wernher-Beit, owned by Julius Wernher and Alfred Beit, and Cecil Rhodes's Consolidated Goldfields could afford. It was their interests that led to the Jameson Raid, the attempted overthrow of the Boer government.

Thereafter the South African Republic (ZAR) enjoyed the massive tax revenues which funded the purchase of weapons and promised to change the balance of power in the area. British imperialist and economic interests alike were threatened. Force having failed, democracy was attempted by those in the pay of the mining companies and a bid was made to have the franchise extended to the *uitlanders*; the failure of this bid led to the Second Boer War.

See also:

[Rhodes, Cecil](#); [Wernher, Beit & Co.](#)

Reference:

Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985).

## **Gordon, Brigadier-General J. R. P.**

Gordon joined the 15th Hussars in 1879 at the age of nineteen and served in the Afghan War of 1880, in the First Boer War, in the Bechuanaland Expedition of 1884–85, in Burma in 1887, in Lagos in 1892 and in the Ashanti War of 1895–96. He was in command of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade in Major-general French's Cavalry Division on the ride to relieve Kimberley. After they had crossed the Riet River near Waterval and the Modder at Klip Drift, the cavalry had to pass a nek (a pass between hills) dominated by Boers and their artillery. French gave Gordon the task of breaking through, which he did with the 9th and 15th Lancers to the fore, at the gallop.

See also:

[French, Lieutenant-general Sir John](#); [Kimberley, Siege of](#); [Waterval Drift, Action at](#).

## **Gough, Lieutenant-Colonel Hubert De La Poer,**

### **1870–1963**

Hubert Gough joined the 16th Lancers in 1889 and saw service in India. He served under Sir Redvers Buller at the battles of Colenso and Spioenkop and was given a mounted infantry command at Vaalkrans. During the guerrilla phase of the war he commanded a column in the defence of northern Natal and was defeated and captured by Commandant-general Louis Botha at Blood River Poort in September 1901. He seems to have been somewhat impulsive in mounting an attack before he was fully appraised of his enemy's dispositions, but to some extent redeemed himself by escaping.

Gough achieved high command in the First World War in France and was unlucky in being the man in command when the offensive of March 1918 pushed the British back some forty miles. He was relieved of his command and recalled to England.

See also:

[Blood River Poort, Action at.](#)

Reference:

Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

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## Graspan (or Enslin), Battle of,

**25 November 1899**

After forcing the Boers to withdraw at the Battle of Belmont, the British under Lord Methuen engaged them two days later near Graspan, ten miles (16km) further along the road towards Kimberley, where the British were besieged. Before withdrawing once more, some of the Boers were forced down from the hills facing the British left and, from the foot of the kopje, fired on the advancing Royal Naval Battalion. The effectiveness of high-velocity rifle fire over flat ground was demonstrated in the number of casualties the British suffered. Nonetheless, the positions were taken and the Boers fell back to the Modder River.

The British reconnaissance of the positions to which the Boers fell back after the Battle of Belmont was mistaken in concluding that only some 400 men held the position. More than five times that number occupied the line of hills or kopjes that lay across the railway line between the little settlements of Graspan and Enslin. De la Rey with his Transvaal commandos had been joined by men of the Winburg, Bloemfontein, Jacobsdal, Hoopstad and Fauriesmith commandos. The plan was to engage the Boers with artillery before rolling up their positions from east to west.

While the shells poured down on the hills, the Naval Brigade and the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry made the long flanking march to the east in the increasing heat of the day. They turned to attack and immediately came under heavy fire when they were about 500 yards (450m) from the base of the kopjes. This came not only from their front, but also from their left where some Boers had been driven off the hilltops by the artillery and were down amongst the rocks at the base of the hill, firing over the flat ground. It was not until the British had got close to the hill to their front that a spur sheltered them from this fire and the steepness of the hill prevented the Boers above from bringing their rifles to bear.

The hills were taken in a series of short rushes, giving the high ground on the Boer left, the east, to the British and thus rendering the rest of the Boer positions to the west untenable. The Boers retreated and the British cavalry and mounted infantry were too few to successfully pursue and take them. Of a total of five officers and 190 men, the Marines lost two officers and nine men, and one officer and seventy-two men were wounded, while the sailors lost two officers and two men, and another six were wounded. The Marines had suffered 44 per cent casualties, partly the result of Boer rifle fire and partly because they failed to stay in open formation; bunching up made them easy targets. The commander of the Naval Brigade, Captain R. C. Prothero, was severely wounded.

Vecht-General Joos de la Rey was not slow to learn and would use the chance positioning of Boer rifleman on a level with their targets as a basic principle of deployment in future battles.

**See also:**

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## Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Jones, W. T. C., "The Action at Graspan" in *Naval Brigades in the South African War* (London, Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1901, reprinted by The London Stamp Exchange Ltd.); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## Great Trek, The

The Great Trek, the movement of the Boers from Cape Colony to lands beyond the Orange and Vaal rivers, was an attempt to preserve a way of life that became, for their heirs, equivalent to the movement of a chosen race to their promised land. It served to reinforce not only the conviction they had of their superiority to black Africans, but also the importance of avoiding contamination by ideas from other white people holding different views.

The willingness of the Boer population in the British colony at the Cape to tolerate the changes made between 1806 and 1836 was finite. Piet Uys said: "We have been deprived of all our domestic authority over the apprenticed coloureds in our homes and on our farms, and this has made these coloureds so insolent that we are no longer secure in our property and even our lives". It was not only the abolition of slavery in 1834, but also acts such as the enforced use of English in schools and in courts of law and the increasing shortage of land that drove them to leave the colony. From 1835, for almost ten years, some 14,000 people of Dutch descent migrated inland. In carving new territory for themselves the Voortrekkers, as they were known, encountered black Africans, some of whom were engaged in building empires of their own. Battles were fought with the Ndebele in the north by Hendrick Potgieter, and Piet Retief and Andries Pretorius struggled with the Zulu in the east. The decisive Battle of Blood River and the associated vow, known as the Covenant, exerted a deep influence on the Boer people.

The action of trekking, moving on when conditions were no longer acceptable, did not cease in the 19th century. In the 1920s Deneys Reitz, then a government minister, encountered Trek Boers in Angola who, dissatisfied with their treatment by the Portuguese, were driving their great ox-wagons towards the Congo.

## See also:

[Blood River, Battle of](#); [Dutch Colonisation](#).

## Reference:

Reitz, Deneys, *No Outspan* (1942, Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994); Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

# Griqualand

In the confusion of settler expansion in Cape Colony, missionaries encouraged various small groups, under leaders such as Adam Kok and Andries Waterboer, to set up self-governing black enclaves along the Orange River and the lands to the north. In 1861 Adam Kok, in response to an

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offer made after diamonds had been discovered along the Orange River, moved his people to an area south of the Drakensbergs between the Cape and Natal that became known as East Griqualand. The original area, now called West Griqualand, was the subject of dispute between the Orange Free State and the British. The West Griqualand chief, Andries Waterboer, was represented by a lawyer called David Arnot who, in 1871, persuaded the Keate Commission, charged with the responsibility of settling the border dispute between the Griqua, Cape Colony and the Orange Free State, that Britain had grounds for annexing West Griqualand – and thus the diamond fields. The finding was later, in 1875, established as being invalid, but as it was impossible to unravel its consequences, compensation was paid to the Orange Free State.

## Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## **Grobler, Assistant Chief-Commandant E. R.,**

### **1861–1937**

Born in the Orange Free State, Esaias Renier Grobler became a member of the Volksraad (Parliament) in 1886. At the start of the war he commanded on the border with Cape Colony and then became commander of the Orange Free State forces in the southern part of the republic. He occupied Stormberg Junction, an important railway junction over the Orange River in Cape Colony, on 23 November 1899 with some 1,500 men. A British force under Lieutenantgeneral Sir William Gatacre stumbled on a Boer unit of this force and was compelled to withdraw; this action resulted in some eighty British casualties and over 600 men being taken prisoner by the Boers. The Battle of Stormberg was one of three defeats inflicted on the British that made up "Black Week" and led to the replacement of Sir Redvers Buller as Commander-in-Chief by Lord Roberts. Grobler subsequently fought at Colesberg and Paardeberg, resisted the British advance from Bloemfontein and was wounded and captured in 1900 near Springfontein in the southern Free State. After the war he was active in the government of the Union of South Africa.

## See also:

[Colesberg, Paardeberg, Battle of](#); [Stormberg, Battle of](#).

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

# Guerrilla War

An irregular war conducted by small bodies of combatants acting independently. The word guerrilla means, literally, little war and emerged in connection with the Napoleonic conflict in Spain in the early 19th century. The style of warfare, however, is much older, the earliest reference being found in the Hittite *Anastas Papyrus* of the 15th century BC. The objective is not to take and hold ground, as in conventional warfare, but to force

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### Haig, Lieutenant-Colonel Douglas,

1861–1928

Douglas Haig served for the greater part of the war on the staff of Major-general Sir John French, under whom he was to serve again in the First World War and whom he replaced as Commander-in-Chief in that war.

Haig had joined the 7th Hussars in 1885 and served in the Sudan where he conducted the final reconnaissances before the battles of Atbara and Omdurman. He assisted the then Colonel French in the preparation of the *Cavalry Drill Book* of 1896. With French, he escaped from Ladysmith on the last train to leave before the siege of that town started in 1899 and was thus available to take part in the cavalry operations in Cape Colony and the Orange Free State. In the guerrilla phase of the war he was involved in planning drives to capture Boer commandos and in the final months was in command of the 17th Lancers.

In his evidence to the inquiry held after the war, Haig criticised the decision to deprive the cavalry of lances and swords and held out for the use of the cavalry in its traditional role. He held that a mounted attack thus armed could produce more rapid and decisive results than could be gained with the rifle. The performance of the cavalry in the relief of Kimberley and at the Battle of Diamond Hill can be cited in support of this view, but neither was undertaken in the face of concentrated rifle and machine-gun fire which had been seen in this war and would be characteristic of the First World War. He became Commander-in-Chief of the British Expeditionary Force in France in December 1915.

See also:

[Drives](#); [Horses](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

### Hamilton, Major-General Bruce M.

Forty-four-year old Bruce Hamilton commanded the British forces that prevented Commandant-

general Louis Botha's planned invasion of Natal in 1901.

Hamilton joined the 15th Foot (the East Yorkshire Regiment) in 1877 and served in the Second Afghan War and the First Boer War as aide-de-camp to

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his brother-in-law, Major-general Sir George Pomeroy-Colley, who was killed at Majuba. He served in West Africa before going to South Africa as Chief of Staff to Lieutenant-general Sir Francis Clery and later served under Major-general Smith-Dorrien. He then commanded the 21st Brigade. His brother, Lieutenant-colonel H. I. W. Hamilton was Military Secretary to the British Commander-in-Chief Lord Kitchener at the end of the war.

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## **Hamilton, Brigadier-General G. H. C.**

G. H. C. Hamilton commanded the British 4th Cavalry Brigade.

## **Hamilton, Lieutenant-General Sir Ian,**

**1853–1947**

Ian Hamilton arrived in South Africa as a staff officer to Lieutenant-general Sir George White and, after conducting a textbook attack on the Boers at the Battle of Elandslaagte, had the frustrating experience of being besieged in Ladysmith. Here he fought off the Boer attack on the Platrand on 6 January 1900. The new British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, gave him command of the Mounted Infantry Division in the advance from Bloemfontein and he fought at Doornkop and Diamond Hill. He returned to England in 1901 but was then appointed Chief of Staff to Lord Kitchener who had taken over the command from Roberts.

Ian Standish Monteith Hamilton was born into an army family in Corfu in 1853. He joined the army in 1873 and served with the 92nd (Gordon) Highlanders in the Afghan War and became a staff officer to Sir Frederick, later Lord, Roberts. He fought at Majuba in the First Boer War and was seriously wounded in the left wrist, losing the function of that hand. He then saw service in the Sudan and other theatres before returning to South Africa to fight the Boers a second time. He was much admired by Winston Churchill who wrote in detail of the advance of the Mounted Infantry to the Transvaal. In the First World War he commanded the assault on Gallipoli and, taking responsibility for the failure of his subordinates, was recalled when it failed.

## See also:

[Diamond Hill, Battle of](#); [Doornkop, Battle of](#); [Elandslaagte, Battle of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#);

[Platrand, Battle of.](#)

## Reference:

Churchill, Winston S., *Ian Hamilton's March* (London, Longmans, Green, 1900) and Leo Cooper, 1989 under the title *The Boer War*; Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

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## Hands-Uppers

In a proclamation of 15 March 1900 the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, offered terms to all Boers willing to lay down their arms. Those who accepted were known to their countrymen as *hensoppers* or hands-uppers. The British offer assured them that if they took an oath not to participate further in the war and returned to their homes having surrendered their weapons, they would not be made prisoners-of-war and their property would be respected. Many complied and were treated with contempt by those who fought on.

The hands-uppers were motivated either by a general aversion to fighting on, or by a positive belief that the war was futile or by the desire to preserve their property and livelihoods. In the Orange Free State about 6,000 burghers had surrendered on those terms by July 1900 and in the Transvaal 8,000 men had done so. They did not necessarily adhere to their undertakings. Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet held that, because it was not made to a legitimate governing body in the Orange Free State, the oath was invalid and he persuaded, possibly somewhat forcefully, a number of men to re-enlist. In addition, many Boers were suspected of yielding up ancient weapons and keeping their Mausers for further use.

Some Boers went as far as working for the British, and were known as joiners. Those of the opposite persua-

sion who refused to contemplate surrender were known as bitter-enders.

### See also:

[Bitter-enders](#); [Joiners](#).

### Reference:

Grundlingh, Albert, "Collaborators in Boer Society", *The South African War*, ed. Peter Warwick (Harlow, Longman, 1980); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985).

## Harrismith

Located in the eastern Orange Free State and commanding the Van Reenen Pass through which the road and railway for Ladysmith runs, Harrismith became a centre from which the British conducted drives to capture Boer commandos.

At the time of the war the railway from Ladysmith terminated at Harrismith and the line provided a supply route for the Boers on the invasion of Natal and for the British after they had taken the town on 4 August 1900. Lieutenant-general Sir Leslie Rundle based his columns here in December 1900 and Major-general E. L. Elliot added his forces in September 1901. Harrismith was the focus for a line of blockhouses on the road west to Bethlehem, north towards Verkykerskop, south to Olivier's Hoek Pass and south-west to Van Reenen's Pass. It was also the site of concentration camps for both blacks and whites.

### See also:

[Colesberg](#); [Drives](#).

### Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## Hart, Major-General Arthur Fitzroy

General Hart was a man of vigour and courage. He commanded the 5th (Irish) Brigade at the battles of Colenso and the Tugela Heights, in both of which his brigade suffered great loss. It was at Colenso that, in person, he led the Irish into the Loop, a meander in the river where the Boers subjected the British to ferocious rifle and shell fire which halted the advance of the British left. On the Tugela Heights, Hart's Hill, named after him, is the place where the Irish regiments showed such valour that

Queen Victoria decided to institute "the wearing of the green", the shamrock, by Irish units on St Patrick's Day.

Arthur Fitzroy Hart joined the 31st Foot (1st East Surrey Regiment) in 1864 at the age of twenty. He saw service in Africa, first in the Gold Coast (Ghana) and then in the Ashanti War. In southern Africa he served in the Zulu War and the First Boer War. His action in leading his brigade into the Loop at Colenso has been much criticised. He apparently neglected advice about the position of the drift (ford) by which he was meant to cross the river to attack the Boer right flank and followed the lead of a black African guide. However, the Intelligence Department, War Office, map no. 1449, published in 1899, clearly shows a drift that leaves the Loop at the north-east. It is possible that Hart

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had seen this map and believed it. In the attack on Hart's Hill the artillery provided close supporting fire until the troops attained the edge of the flat hilltop when shelling had to cease. The Boer trenches were well back from the edge of the hill, providing a clear killing-ground that the Irish Brigade was unable to cross until renewed British shelling on the second day of fighting had subdued resistance. Hart could not have known the details of his enemy's dispositions.

### See also:

[Colenso, Battle of](#); [Maps](#); [Spioenkop, Battle of](#); [Tugela Heights, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## Heilbron

East of the Bloemfontein to Pretoria railway and connected to it by a branch line running south from Wolwehoek in the north of the Orange Free State, Heilbron was the residence of Christiaan De Wet at the outbreak of the war. He served with its commando in Natal. The town changed hands a number of times during the war.

Heilbron was briefly the seat of government of the Orange Free State in May 1900, but the British, under Lieutenant-general Ian Hamilton, entered it on 22 May. It was garrisoned by various units until the surrender of the Boers under Assistant Chief-commandant Marthinus Prinsloo in the Brandwater Basin on 30 July 1900. The Boers returned and De Wet, now Chief-commandant, held a recruiting meeting here. The British soon returned and used the town as a base for the building of blockhouses.

### See also:

[Colesberg](#); [De Wet, Chief-commandant Christiaan](#); [Hamilton, Lieutenant-general Sir Ian](#).

## Helpmekaar, Action at,

### 13 May 1900

When the British army in Natal under the command of Sir Redvers Buller advanced in May 1900, the Boers under Commandant-general Louis Botha decided to defend the line of hills that ended, in the

east, at Helpmekaar. Although deemed by Colonel J. Y. F. Blake of the Boer Irish Brigade the strongest position for defence he had yet seen, the Piet Retief Commando failed to hold it and the Boer defence line was fatally compromised.

The Biggarsberg mountains, with their few passes, bar the way north from Ladysmith to Newcastle and Dundee. This was the line General Kock was supposed to have secured for the Boers instead of getting involved in, and losing, the battle of Elandsplaagte (21 October 1899) at the start of the war. This was also the line to which Commandant-general Louis Botha, with about 4,800 Boers, withdrew after the relief of Ladysmith by the British on 27 February 1900. Helpmekaar stands at the eastern end of the hills and was held in March and April by men of Blake's Irish Brigade,

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fighting on the Boer side. The Irish were withdrawn from Natal in April and in May the place was held by men of the Piet Retief Commando, under Commandant C. L. Englebrecht, and three guns. The hill had been extensively fortified in the previous six months. In the face of a series of approach attacks on their outposts, fire from the Royal Field Artillery and forays by the Natal Carbineers, the Boers withdrew just as a final attack was about to start on 13 May. The Biggarsberg line collapsed and the Boers withdrew to Langs Nek.

See also:

[Botha's Pass, Action at](#); [Elandlaagte, Battle of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Blake, J. Y. F., *A West Pointer with the Boers* (Boston, Angel Guardian Press, 1903); Greenwood, Colin, "Helpmekaar–May 1900", *Classic Arms & Militaria*, March/April 1999; Jones, Huw M., and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **Hely-Hutchinson, The Hon. Sir Walter,**

### **1849–1913**

Hely-Hutchinson was Governor of Natal at the outbreak of the war. He encouraged Major-general Sir W. Penn Symons to take his forces to the north of the colony to guard the coalfields and uphold the supposed honour of the colonists when, in England, the British Commander-in-Chief Sir Redvers Buller was strongly in favour of remaining south of the Tugela River. Hely-Hutchinson had, indeed, pushed the army too far north, as the difficulties of the Natal campaign were to show. Sir Walter became Governor of Cape Colony in January 1901.

See also:

[Colenso, Battle of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Talana, Battle of](#).

## **Helvetia, Action at,**

### **29 December 1900**

Helvetia overlooked the road from the Delagoa Bay Railway, running east from Pretoria, north towards Lydenburg and stood on the road east towards Barberton, a position of importance in the

quest to dominate the guerrilla Boers in the eastern Transvaal. A British post there was attacked and partially overrun in December 1900, but the last redoubt (fortified position) held and the Boers had to abandon their effort.

Helvetia had been taken by the British on 29 August 1900 in the aftermath of the Battle of Bergendal. A post was established with positions on four kopjes and manned by some 344 officers and men of the King's Liverpool Regiment with a 4.7-inch gun. On 29 December they were attacked by 700 Boers under Assistant Commandant-general C. H. Müller. Gun Hill was taken and two more positions, Middle and South Hills, surrendered, but the last position, King's Kopje, was stubbornly defended by the 1st King's under Lieutenant F. A. Wilkinson. Further unsuccessful attacks were made in the following weeks.

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See also:

[Bergendal, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Jones, Huw M., and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **Hertzog, Assistant Commandant-General James Barry Munnik,**

### **1866–1942**

Judge Hertzog was a lawyer who reorganised the Orange Free State artillery, became an outstanding guerrilla leader and was eventually Prime Minister of South Africa.

Barry Hertzog grew up in a Kimberley mining camp, studied law at Stellenbosch and Amsterdam universities and had become a judge of the Supreme Court of the Orange Free State by the time the war began. After the Boer defeat at Paardeberg in February 1900 he took over the Orange Free State artillery and restored it to something of its former effectiveness. In December 1900, Hertzog embarked on a daring raid into Cape Colony where he expected men of Dutch descent to rise in rebellion against the British. The foray was supposed to be conducted in liaison with Chiefcommandant Christiaan De Wet, but the latter's expedition was repulsed by the British. Hertzog, on the other hand, succeeded in thrusting right across to the western coast at Lambert's Bay, 120 miles (200km) north of Cape Town. There they expected to meet a ship bringing arms and ammunition; however, a British warship awaited them instead. Commandant S. G. Maritz claimed that some of his men opened fire on HMS *Sybille*, thus taking part in a naval engagement. Hertzog's return trip was equally perilous, but he managed to reunite his men with Boer forces at Colesberg. A second foray was made in February 1901.

Hertzog took part in the peace negotiations but was never reconciled to the British. He founded the National Party and was opposed to President Botha's policy of supporting the British against the Germans in 1914. In 1924 Hertzog became Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa. On 5 September 1939 he was defeated on a motion that the Union should remain neutral in the Second World War.

See also:

[Cape Colony, Invasions of.](#)

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer*

*War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## **Hildyard, Major-General H. J. T.,**

**1846–1916**

Henry Hildyard served in the Royal Navy from 1859 to 1864. He joined the army in 1867 and served in Egypt in 1882. As Commandant of the Staff College from 1893 to 1898 he made significant changes to balance the study of military theory with the acquisition of practical skills. He commanded the 2nd Brigade at the Battle

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of Colenso and in the relief of Ladysmith and then took command of the 5th Division. He was later put in command in Natal and south-eastern Transvaal.

See also:

[Colenso, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Hobhouse, Emily,

1860–1926

The conditions in the refugee (sic) camps, which become known as concentration camps, were first reported in Europe by Emily Hobhouse. Although her account was dismissed as biased and perverse by supporters of the war, those who questioned British policy took up the cause she championed. The political impact was huge and the government was obliged to appoint an official mission under Millicent Fawcett to investigate. Mrs Fawcett confirmed Miss Hobhouse's findings in almost every particular and supported almost all her recommendations, even adding new ones.

Emily Hobhouse was the daughter of an Anglican parson and was born in Cornwall on 9 April 1860. After her father's death in 1895 she went to Minnesota, United States, where she became a social worker. When her engagement to an American businessman was broken off she returned to England and, at the beginning of the Boer War, joined the South African Conciliation Committee, a pacifist group. When the first news of farm burning and the evacuation of women and children to refugee camps appeared in the British press, she established the South African Women and Children Distress Fund with the object of providing food and clothing to those in the camps.

She went to South Africa with the supplies the Fund had collected in 1900, arriving in Cape Town on 27 December. She was made welcome by Sir Alfred Milner who provided her with a 12-ton railway wagon to carry her goods for distribution to the needy. She was in no way prepared for the suffering, illness and death she found in the camps and on her return to London produced a report notable for its restraint and cool, factual reporting. However, it was not seen that way by government supporters. In *After Pretoria: The Guerilla War*, published by the Harmsworth brothers' Amalgamated Press, it was stated: "She made no allowance for whatever the special difficulties of war . . . She knew nothing of the normal conditions of Boer life, or of the state of dirt and squalour in which a large proportion of the camp inmates usually lived." She was more courteously received by the new Secretary of State for War, St John Brodrick, and at the other extreme, Sir Henry Campbell-

Bannerman, leader of the party in opposition, the Liberals, at a party dinner on 14 June 1901 used the phrase "methods of barbarism" to describe British policy.

Although her visits were confined to the white camps, Miss Hobhouse was aware of the black camps and expressed the view that they badly

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needed examination (page 9 of her report).

Emily Hobhouse tried to visit South Africa again in October 1901 but was arrested and compelled to return to England at once. Her cause was widely publicised as a result and improvements in the camps followed. After the war she visited South Africa again and raised funds for the support of the poverty-stricken and in 1905 opened a school to teach spinning and weaving at Philippolis. She passed her final years in a house in Cornwall purchased by funds raised from the Afrikaner nation and died on 8 June 1926. Her ashes were buried in Bloemfontein on 27 October 1927 at the foot of the Women's Memorial, a statue inspired by her description of a child's death at Springfontein in May 1901, the unveiling of which she was not, through illness, able to attend on 16 December 1913. In the speech read for her she said: "Does not justice bid us remember today how many thousands of the dark race perished also in the Concentration Camps in a quarrel that was not theirs? . . . The plea of Abraham Lincoln for the black comes echoing back to me: 'They will probably help you in some trying time to come to keep the jewel of liberty in the family of freedom'." This passage was omitted from the commemorative issue of *Die Volksblad* on 13 December 1963.

### See also:

[Concentration Camps, Black](#); [Concentration Camps, White](#); [Fawcett, Mrs Millicent Garrett](#); [Documents: Hobhouse, Emily, Report of a Visit to the Camps of Women and Children in the Cape and Orange River Colonies, London, Friars Printing Association, 1901.](#)

### Reference:

Hobhouse, Emily, *The Brunt of the War and Where it Fell* (London, Methuen, 1902); Jacobs, E., *Emily Hobhouse* (Bloemfontein, War Museum of the Boer Republics, no date); Lee, Emanoel, *To The Bitter End* (London and New York, Viking, 1985); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999); van Reenen, Rykie, *Emily Hobhouse: Boer War Letters* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1984).

## Holkrantz, Action at,

### 6 May 1902

At the end of April 1902 the Boers operating in south-eastern Transvaal and north-eastern Natal took action against the Zulu, razing their homes and taking their sheep and cattle. The abaQulusi chief, Sikhobobo, retaliated. Of the seventy Boers attacked to repossess the cattle, fifty-six were killed and a similar number of the 300–strong Zulu force also died. The incident added to the pressures on the

Boers to make peace before, as they saw it, the black Africans became an even greater threat.

Boer activity in the Vryheid district increased in early 1902 and Major-general Bruce Hamilton came to Vryheid with a large force supplemented with a Zulu *impi*. The attempts to round up the Boer commandos were unsuccessful, and the operation ceased. The abaQulusi, who had provided useful information about the

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Boers, were now the victims of a punitive expedition ordered by Commandant-general Louis Botha and carried out by the Vryheid and Utrecht commandos under Field Cornet J. A. Potgeiter. The settlement at Qulusini was destroyed and 1,000 sheep and goats and 3,800 cattle were taken. The chief, Sikhobobo, informed the British magistrate at Vryheid that he was going to get the cattle back and, early on 6 May, his *impi* assaulted the Boers on Zuinguin mountain, near Holkrantz, north of Vryheid. Potgieter died together with fifty-five of his men. It was rumoured that he died of forty-five assegai wounds.

Boer reaction to their defeat at the hands of their old enemies was twofold. First, it was taken as an indication of the probable loss of control over the black Africans that continuing the war would cause, and thus strengthened the hand of those advocating peace. Second, it caused bitter complaint against the British who, the Boers thought, should have prevented unilateral action by the Zulu. An enquiry conducted by Colonel G. A. Mills found that the Zulus in northern Natal, and the abaQulusi in particular, had been raided repeatedly by the Boers, that their stock had been taken without payment or receipts being given and that summary executions of black Africans had been carried out. He reported: "The war has undoubtedly pressed very heavily on the Kaffirs [sic], as they have had to practically feed the Boer commandos . . . many Zulu . . . are practically destitute of stock through no fault of their own."

See also:

[Zulu, The](#).

Reference:

Warwick, Peter, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983).

## Hopetown

The diamond industry started with the discovery of a stone of 21.25 carats at Hopetown in 1867. The town is on the southern bank of the Orange River in what was Cape Colony, north-west of the railway crossing at Orange River Station. A concentration camp for whites was situated halfway between the two at Doornbult.

See also:

[Concentration Camps, White](#); [Rhodes, Cecil](#).

## Horses

The British lack of quick success against the Boers was in part the result of the Boers' superior mobility, founded on their horsemanship and their skills as horse-masters. Attempts to match the Boers were hampered by the breeding of the horses, their care and feeding and the way they were used. The British made use of some 500,000 horses in the course of the war, of which two-thirds died.

Boers, that is farmers, as opposed to city-dwellers who fought against the British, were used to hunting game with horses. Their custom was to ride to the appropriate position, dismount and use their rifles, leaving the horse unattended to forage for food. This was the approach adopted in the war and is typical of mounted infantry,

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the face of such heavy fire power. However, although Kimberley was relieved, the cavalry was reduced from 8,000 to 4,200 horses in that operation alone and suffered further losses in the subsequent action to cut the Boers off at Paardeberg. As a result the British could not take the opportunity to surround the mass of remaining Boers at Poplar Grove because the surviving horses were capable of no more than a trot.

The use of the charge by mounted Boers was successful at Vlakfontein in May 1901 and Blood River Poort in September 1901, but failed at Bakenlaagte in October and at Rooiwal in April 1902.

Although the cavalry in the First World War on the Western Front was to prove useless, the great success of the Palestine campaign of 1917–18 demonstrated that the horse remained a force in war longer than many care to admit.

### See also:

[Bakenlaagte, Battle of](#); [Blood River Poort, Action at](#); [Kimberley, Relief of](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#); [Poplar Grove, Battle of](#); [Rooiwal, Battle of](#); [Vlakfontein, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Badsey, Stephen, "Mounted Combat in the Second Boer War", *Sandhurst Journal of Military Studies*, Issue 2, 1991.

## Howick

A town on the railway north of Pietermaritzburg, Natal, where there was a military hospital and a concentration camp for whites.

## Hunter, Lieutenant-General Sir Archibald,

**1856–1936**

Hunter saw service in Egypt between 1884 and 1886 and was intended to become Chief of Staff to the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Redvers Buller, but instead was besieged at Ladysmith. He led the attack on Gun Hill on 7 December. After the relief of Ladysmith he was given command of the 10th Division with the local rank of Lieutenant-general. As the officer commanding in the eastern Orange Free State, he accepted the surrender of Assistant Chief-commandant Marthinus Prinsloo in the Brandwater Basin in July 1900.

### See also:

[Brandwater Basin, Surrender at; Ladysmith, Siege of.](#)

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## **Hutton, Major-General E. T. H.**

Hutton joined the King's Royal Rifles in 1867 when he was nineteen years old and served in Zululand in 1879 and in the First Boer War. He commanded the Mounted Infantry at Aldershot from 1888–92 and then went to New South Wales in Australia to organise the military forces there. He became General Officer Commanding the Canadian Dominion Militia in 1898. In March 1900 he

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# I

## Indian Ambulance Corps

Within South Africa, and particularly in Natal, there was a sizeable Indian population pressing for political rights. With the encouragement and participation of an Indian lawyer, Mohandas Gandhi, volunteers formed the Indian Ambulance Corps and performed outstanding service on the Tugela River front.

On 16 October 1899 the Natal Indian Congress held a meeting at the Congress Hall, Durban. Here Gandhi proposed that "it would be unbecoming to our dignity as a nation to look on with folded hands at a time when ruin stared the British in the face as well as ourselves, simply because they ill-treated us here". It was decided to offer their services to the British and Gandhi wrote to the Colonial Secretary accordingly, pointing out that, while they were ignorant of the handling of weapons, "there are other duties to be performed on the battlefield". The offer was accepted and, it was stated, would be taken up should it prove necessary. Training

was given by Dr Lancelot Parker Booth, superintendent of St Aidan's Mission Hospital, Durban. The need for the Corps was not long in presenting itself. In December, with much of the Indian Medical Service besieged in Ladysmith, the army asked the Natal government for help in raising a volunteer Indian Ambulance Corps. Many of the men came from the sugar plantations and some were refugees from Boer-held territory in the north. On 14 December 1899 some 600 bearers and twenty-five leaders, Gandhi amongst them, arrived at Estcourt and went on to Chieveley the next day. They had not even been able to set up their camp when, in the failing light, the wounded began to arrive from the battle at Colenso. They set to work at once to carry men the five and a half miles (9km) from the field hospital to the station hospital at Chieveley, working until midnight and starting again at six o'clock the next morning.

The Corps was disbanded temporarily on 19 December, but kept in readiness to serve once more in January. Now called the Indian Stretcher Bearers Corps, the 1,100 bearers and thirty leaders arrived in Estcourt on 7 January and, two weeks later, moved to support the proposed action at Spioenkop. They marched twentyfive miles (40km) from Frere to Spearman's Farm, the British base. After the battle on 24 January the wounded had been brought down from the hill to a field hospital north of the Tugela River and had to be brought south to Spearman's. Major Bapty was in charge and explained that as the field hospital was within Boer shell-shot they were under no obligation to cross the river. To a man they agreed to go. Once the wounded had been brought to Spearman's, those fit to be taken were moved on to Frere and the Indian Stretcher Bearers Corps toiled back and forth across the twenty-five miles.

Red Cross units arrived in South Africa soon after the relief of Ladysmith in February and on 15 April the Corps was disbanded. Buller mentioned the Corps in his despatches and the first Prime Minister of Natal spoke in its praise. This gratitude did not, however, go as far as the repeal of oppressive legislation or the granting of political rights. Like the black Africans, the Indians had no reward from the British.

### See also:

[Colenso, Battle of](#); [Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand](#); [Spioenkop, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Tichmann, Paul, "We are Sons of Empire after all", *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 87, 1996; Treeves, Frederick, *The Tale of a Field Hospital* (London, Cassell, 1900); Warwick, Peter, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983).

## Indian Participation

As a matter of policy the British government decided not to use Indian troops in South Africa in order

to avoid racial problems. They did bring medical units from India and also used men of the Indian Transport Corps. About 1,000 men served as grooms and farriers in the Remount Section. Various menial roles such as

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water-carrying, cooking and driving were also carried out by Indians. There was a population of about 2,500 Indians in Ladysmith during the siege, some of whom ventured beyond the defence lines after dark to cut fodder. Parbhoo Singh kept watch on the Boer Long Tom, the 155mm gun, on Bulwana and gave a warning every time it fired at continuous risk to his own life. A memorial to the Indians who participated in the war is in Observatory, Johannesburg.

See also:

[Indian Ambulance Corps](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Brain, J. B., "Indians and the South African War of 1899–1902", *Africana Journal*, no. 15, Pretoria, 1999; Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Inspan

To harness up animals to a wagon. There was considerable skill involved in handling oxen and to inspan them successfully required matching them for size and strength as well as harnessing them to the transport.

## Intelligence

Boer attention to intelligence was substantial. The Transvaal Intelligence Department had agents throughout South Africa and spent twenty times more than the British on gathering information. British troop movements were therefore known in detail to the Boers. British information, on the other hand, was very poor at the outbreak of the war, partly because intelligence officers already in South Africa became incarcerated in besieged towns. The Field Intelligence Department was set up to make good the loss but did not produce sound information until the guerrilla phase of the war, when railway lines and their attendant telegraph lines were secured by blockhouses.

By 1902 the British Field Intelligence Department had been re-organised by Colonel David Hamilton and comprised 132 officers and 2,321 other ranks, plus an unknown number, certainly some thousands, of black African men. The latter served under such local officers as Colonel Aubrey Wools-Sampson who provided Colonel Sir Henry Rawlinson's column with a number of impressive catches of Boers.

See also:

[Africans, Black](#); [Maps](#).

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## Irish

Irishmen fought on both sides in the Boer War. Service in the army had long been a possible career choice for an Irish boy, just as it was for English, Welsh and Scots youths. Some were driven by poverty and the lack of a

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**J****Jameson, Dr Leander Starr,****1853–1917**

Starr Jameson was the administrator of the chartered British South Africa Company, the organisation owned by Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit that ran the colony of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). He led a successful expedition against the Ndebele in 1893. He was captured on 2 January 1896 when the raid he led to overthrow the government of President Kruger was defeated. He stood trial in London and was convicted, but before the Boer War of 1899–1902 broke out he had returned to Natal. During the siege of Ladysmith he caught enteric (typhoid) fever, but recovered. He became Prime Minister of the Cape in 1904 and served for four years in that post. He played a leading part in the South African National Convention, 1908–09, alongside Louis Botha, and was made a baronet in 1911. During the First World War he served in the Imperial War Cabinet alongside his former enemies.

**See also:**

[Jameson Raid](#); [Ladysmith, Seige of](#); [Rhodes, Cecil](#).

**Reference:**

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

**Jameson Raid,****29 December 1895–2 January 1896**

The failure of the Jameson Raid to overthrow the Boer government in the Transvaal led to the resignation of Cecil Rhodes from his position as Premier of Cape Colony but not to a solution to the grievances of the new settlers that mineral wealth had brought to the republic. Indeed, the tentative consensus of political views that had been forming was decisively shattered. Any confidence in British good faith was destroyed. The raid did reveal the military weakness of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State and initiated the substantial purchases of arms, artillery and ammunition that made the Boers effective opponents three years later.

The exploitation of gold in South Africa brought droves of foreigners, *uitlanders*, to the Transvaal. The gold, and the diamonds before that, made millionaires of Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Beit and bestowed the power to create a new British colony, Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, north of the Transvaal, part of a longer-term dream to create a continuous British colony from the Cape to Cairo. Rhodes added political power to his economic influence by

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becoming Premier of Cape Colony. The *uitlanders* were thought to outnumber the Afrikaner population of the Transvaal, or South African Republic as it had become, but they were denied political rights until they had completed fourteen years' residence lest they took power. Rhodes and Beit plotted the overthrow of the Boer government and planned an invasion to be supported by an uprising in Johannesburg.

Rhodes and Beit owned the Chartered Company which administered and exploited Rhodesia, and it was with some 400 mounted police, employees of that company, and a further 150 at Mafeking in Cape Colony, all under Dr L. S. Jameson, that the invasion was to be carried out. They also had six Maxim machineguns, two 7-pounder mountain guns and a 12-pounder field gun. Meanwhile the Reform Committee in Johannesburg was intending to organise a local uprising to coincide with Jameson's arrival. The committee sent secret signals to Jameson to say they were not ready, but Jameson lost patience and set out on Sunday 29 December. Dawn on 2 January found them at Doornkop, south-west of Johannesburg where they had been herded by bands of Boers they scarcely saw. The uprising in the town had not taken place and the raiders were surrounded. They refused to surrender and fought until at 8 a.m. they had lost sixteen men and forty-nine had been wounded. They surrendered and all the messages that had passed between Jameson and Rhodes's headquarters in Cape Town fell into Boer hands, together with the code-books. Rhodes's part in the affair became public knowledge and he was forced to resign his political position.

See also:

[Jameson, Dr L. S.](#); [Rhodes, Cecil](#).

Reference:

Longford, Elizabeth, *Jameson's Raid* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1982, 2nd edition);  
 Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992);  
 Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## Jammerbergdrif, Siege of,

**9–24 April 1900**

After his success at Mostertshoek, Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet allowed his antipathy to Afrikaners serving with the British to overcome his tactical judgement when he besieged a British force at Jammerbergdrif, a ford across the Caledon River some four miles (6km) west of Wepener. He abandoned the undertaking after two weeks, having achieved nothing of value and having exposed his force to the danger of entrapment, nimbly avoided, near Thaba 'Nchu as he withdrew to the north.

The British forces at Wepener consisted of the Kaffrarian Rifles, 1st and 2nd Brabant's Horse,

the Cape Mounted Riflemen, Driscoll's Scouts and a company of the Royal Scots mounted infantry. Under threat of attack the commander of the garrison, Major C. Maxwell, Royal Engineers, created a defensive position using a ring of hills just west of the drift over

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the Caledon River on the Dewetsdorp road. On 4 April Commandant Banks demanded Maxwell's surrender but was refused. The next day Lieutenant-colonel E. H. Dalgety arrived to take command and moved the 1,800 men to the prepared positions. De Wet and his force of about 6,000 men did not arrive for another three days, allowing time for defences to be improved, and when the first attack was launched, it failed. The Boers' seven 75mm guns and the Pom-Pom did the British real damage, but not enough. Minor attacks and shelling were continuous and another major effort was made on 21 April, but still Dalgety's men held. As relief drew near in the shape of the 8th Division under Lieutenant-general Sir Leslie Rundle, De Wet raised the siege.

That De Wet was influenced by his hate of men he considered traitors seems very likely. He wrote: "To tell the truth, there was not a man amongst us who would have asked better than to make prisoners of the Cape Mounted Rifles and of Brabant's Horse. They were Afrikaners, and as Afrikaners, although neither Orange Free Staters nor Transvaalers, they ought, in our opinion, to have been ashamed to fight against us. The English, we admitted, had a perfect right to hire such sweepings, and to use them against us, but we utterly despised them for allowing themselves to be hired. . . Although I never took it amiss if a colonist of Natal or of Cape Colony was unwilling to fight with us against England, yet I admit it vexed me greatly to think that some of these colonists, for the sake of a paltry five shillings a day, should be ready to shoot down their fellow-countrymen."

See also:

[Hands-uppers](#); [Mostertshoek, Battle of](#); [Thaba 'Nchu](#).

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## Johannesburg

In 1886 gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, the range of hills west of Johannesburg and the town prospered from the resultant wealth. Foreigners, *uitlanders*, flooded in and the fear of their overwhelming the Afrikaner population became strong. President Kruger resisted all pleas to grant the incomers the franchise, increasing the resentment that fuelled Cecil Rhodes's plot to oust Kruger's government. The Jameson Raid of 1895–96 failed, and political divisions were exacerbated.

On the outbreak of war in October 1899 the town provided a commando under Commandant B. J. Viljoen and one was also formed from the South African Republic Police (ZARP). The *uitlanders*, on the other hand, left as quickly as possible for Lourenço Marques and took ship for Durban to join the British. Walter Karri Davies and Aubrey Wools-Sampson, who had been prominent members of the Reform Committee, left in this fashion and raised the Imperial Light Horse

in Pietermaritzburg from 500 selected *uitlanders*.

Early in 1900 a munitions factory, formerly an iron foundry requisitioned

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from its owner, one Mr Begbie, blew up with the loss of some thirty lives, an event witnessed by Deneys Reitz. It was said to be the act of a British saboteur, but Reitz learned a quarter of a century later that the former owner had had a Zulu servant working in the place. From him Begbie heard that the Italian workers were careless, smoking cigarettes and throwing down the stubs, and he attributed the explosion to that practice.

After the Battle of Doornkop on 29 May 1900 the British surrounded the town and Major F. J. Davies, of the Grenadier Guards, went to demand surrender. Special Commandant F. E. T. Krause and Volksraad member J. P. Meyer offered "unconditional surrender" on the condition that the armed Boers were given time to leave. This was agreed and Lord Roberts entered Johannesburg the next day. Later in the war a refugee or concentration camp for white people was set up on the racecourse.

See also:

[Doornkop, Battle of](#); [Pretoria](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1889–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando: A Boer Journal of the Boer War* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994); Reitz, Deneys, *No Outspan* (1942; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994); Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## Joiners

After the capitals of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal had been taken by the British in 1900, Lord Roberts offered terms to Boers for their surrender. They were required to yield up their arms and to take an oath not to renew the fight. Men who did this and stood by their oath were known as hands-uppers, and suffered the contempt of those who fought on. Hate was reserved for those who enlisted with the British as active troops, the joiners.

Christiaan De Wet tells of his last conversation with his brother Piet, also a general, on 19 July 1900. Piet asked if Christiaan still saw any chance of being able to continue the struggle. "The question made me very angry, and I did not try to hide the fact. 'Are you mad?' I shouted, and with that I turned on my heel and entered the house, quite unaware that Piet De Wet had at that very moment mounted his horse, and ridden away to follow his own course." Piet subsequently served in the Orange River Colony Volunteers, a British formation. Christiaan writes of this on page 170 of his book, and in the remaining pages, up to 519, the only mention of Piet is in the index.

See also:

[Cronjé, Vecht-general Andries P. J.](#); [De Wet, Vecht-general Piet D.](#); [Hands-uppers](#).

## Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902).

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## Joubert, Commandant-General Petrus (Piet) Jacobus , 1831–1900

Piet Joubert was an outstanding leader against the British in the First Boer War and led the invasion of Natal in the Second. His health suffered and he was succeeded by Louis Botha.

Born in the Cape in 1831, Piet Joubert took part in the Great Trek at the age of seven. His family were with Piet Retief's party heading for Natal. They subsequently moved to the Transvaal. Joubert became known as "Slim Piet", meaning "cunning Piet". He became Commander-in-Chief of the Transvaal forces in the First Boer War or the War for Freedom of 1880–81, a post he retained after the war, putting him in a position to purchase large numbers of the obsolescent Martini-Henry rifle in the 1890s. When the next war broke out he commanded the expedition into Natal, but his distaste for giving clear orders or expressing a strong opinion led to a slackness of control that reduced the effectiveness of his forces.

As the investment of Ladysmith developed Joubert was felt by his own people to be too leisurely. Deneys Reitz reports seeing Christiaan De Wet on 30 October 1899 looking down on the scene outside the town after the victory at Nicholson's Nek, as the British fell back into the town, and muttering "*Los jou ruiters. . .*" – loose your horsemen. Joubert's retort to his critics was that if the Lord extends a finger, do not take the whole hand. He was content with the victory as it stood. Joubert went further south and was at Willow Grange on 23 November, but after that set-back decided they should go no further. Shortly thereafter he suffered a fall from his horse and, injured and ill, returned to Pretoria, leaving the young Louis Botha in command, a blessing for the Boers. Joubert died in March 1900, soon after the defeat at Paardeberg, further depressing Boer morale. Before he died he advised a change of strategy which led to the start of guerrilla warfare.

### See also:

[Guerrilla War](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Lombards Kop, Battle of](#); [Majuba, Battle of](#); [Nicholson's Nek, Battle of](#); [Willow Grange, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

The presence of numerous, professional war correspondents in South Africa during the war was a source of irritation to the British and, for the Boers, a means of broadcasting their defiance. Problems of how the press should be treated and controlled vexed the British then much as the same problems exercise armies today. The impact the journalists had on public opinion outside South Africa was significant and the resulting political decisions important. The replacement of Sir Redvers Buller as British Commander-in-Chief by Lord Roberts was largely the result of the

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### Kaffir

A name used by the Boers, taken from the early Arab traders' word for an unbeliever, to designate a black African person. It was adopted by other white people, including the British. It is now perceived as being extremely derogatory, but it was not taken in that sense at the time of the Boer War and contemporary documents should be read in this light.

### Karri Davies, Major Walter,

**1867–1926**

Walter Karri Davies was an Australian, educated at Scotch College, Melbourne, resident in Johannesburg at the time of the Jameson Raid, Cecil Rhodes's attempt to overthrow the Boer government in December 1895. He traded in timber imported from Western Australia and took the name of his import as part of his own name. Karri Davies became a member of the Reform Committee which was set up to take over the administration and, together with Aubrey Wools-Sampson, was arrested when the raid failed and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. They were released by President Paul Kruger under an amnesty to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee on 22 June 1897. On the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899 he, with Wools-Sampson, who was South African-born, raised the Imperial Light Horse of 500 picked men in Pietermaritzburg. The regiment's strength, drawn from *uitlanders*, was to rise to 1,500 men during the course of the war. He fought at Elandslaagte in 1899 and at Wagon Hill in 1900. He was among the first to enter Mafeking when the siege was raised and continued to serve, without pay or preferment, until the end of the war.

He became an adviser to Lord Milner after the war before returning to Australia. In 1915 he offered to serve once more and, with the rank of Honorary Colonel in the British Army, headed a liaison office in California, United States. He died in London on 28 November 1926.

#### See also:

[Elandslaagte, Battle of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Mafeking, Siege of](#).

#### Reference:

Wallace, R. L., *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra, The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976).

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## Kekewich, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert George,

**1854–1914**

Robert Kekewich joined the British army in 1874 and served in the East Kent Regiment (the Buffs), taking part in the Perak Expedition of 1874 and the Nile Expedition of 1885; he was also present at Suakin in the Sudan in 1888. He was promoted as a major in the Inniskilling Fusiliers in 1890. He became commander of the 1st Loyal North Lancashire Regiment in 1898. Under the directions of Sir Alfred Milner he investigated the defensive potential of Kimberley in 1899 and, on reporting it as negligible, was sent with half his battalion to set matters to rights. The work was scarcely complete, with the mining waste heaps converted into redoubts and signalling systems established, when war broke out and, on 14 October 1899, the town was besieged. Kekewich had to employ immense tact to deal with the ill-founded criticism thrown at him by Cecil Rhodes in order to maintain good order and military discipline within Kimberley and suffered unwarranted insults afterwards. He subsequently distinguished himself further as a field commander, fighting off a determined attack under Assistant Commandant-general Koos De la Rey and Vecht-generaal J. C. G. Kemp at Moedwil on 30 September 1901 and inflicting a decisive defeat on the Boers at Rooiwal on 11 April 1902. Here the Boers attempted a mounted charge, but the British were not taken by surprise and took cover in a field of mealies (maize) to open a heavy fire which stopped the 1,500 Boer attackers in their tracks. Commandant F. J. Potgieter fell a mere seventy-five yards (70m) from the British line together with fifty of his comrades.

By the end of the war Kekewich had been promoted to major-general. When, in 1914, his failing health forced his retirement, he took his own life.

### See also:

[Kimberley, Siege of](#); [Rooiwal, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Jones, Huw M., and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## Kelly-Kenny, Lieutenant-General Thomas,

1840–1914

Thomas Kelly-Kenny commanded the British 6th Division under Lord Roberts and, when Roberts was ill, was the senior officer present when the Boers were surrounded at Paardeberg. Roberts's second-in-command, Lord Kitchener, technically Kelly-Kenny's junior, over-ruled the siege approach proposed by the more experienced general and considerable losses were sustained before Roberts recovered and resumed command.

Kelly-Kenny joined the 2nd Foot, later the Queen's Royal Regiment, in 1858 and served in China in 1860. He commanded a division of the Transport Train in the Abyssinian campaign of 1867–68. He was appointed Inspector-general of Auxiliary Forces and Recruiting in 1897. In addition to Paardeberg, where Roberts adopted the tactics he had advocated, Kelly-Kenny was at the Battle of Driefontein. When the advance from Bloemfontein began, Kelly-Kenny was left behind as General Officer Commanding Orange River Colony, as it had then become.

See also:

[Driefontein, Battle of](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Khaki

The colour of British active foreign service uniforms, as ordered in 1896. Khaki was also the word used by the Boers to refer to British soldiers. Khaki uniforms were first worn by the British in battle in northern India at Sangao (now in Pakistan) on 11 December 1849, having been introduced into the Indian Corps of Guides the previous year by Lieutenants H. Lumsden and W. S. R. Hodson. Khaki uniforms were first worn generally in the Sudan Campaign of 1898.

Reference:

Barthorp, Michael, *The British Army on Campaign 4, 1882–1902* (London, Osprey, 1988).

# Khoikhoi, The

Known to Europeans as Hottentots, the Khoikhoi were indigenous to south-west Africa, the area that became known as the Cape. White colonisation and settlement led to their destruction and disappearance.

The assertion, often made, that South Africa was an empty land when the white man arrived is evident nonsense. The purpose of the establishment of a staging point for ships of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape of Good Hope was to acquire supplies of vegetables and cattle, the latter to be purchased from local black Africans already residing there. The Khoikhoi were hunters and herdsman of fat-tailed sheep and longhorn cattle. By and large they lived in peace with neighbouring San and Nguni peoples.

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The impact of the arrival of the Dutch in 1652 was not immediately to their disadvantage. A famous Dutch hunter, van Meerhof, married a Christian Khoikhoi woman called Eva in the early days of the new colony, and trade for meat and vegetables was, for a time, to the Africans' advantage. Soon, however, the colony spread and intensive land use exhausted the pastures upon which the Khoikhoi economy depended. The Dutch ploughed up what appeared to them empty land, or land which they did not even consider might belong to someone else, and more pasture disappeared. In the 1660s the matter came to blows and the Khoikhoi lost the ensuing war. Jan van Riebeeck eventually told them that they had lost their land and it now passed to the Dutch by right of conquest. A second war from 1673–77 ended in the same way. An epidemic of fever in 1687 and of smallpox in 1713 completed the process. The survivors, their economic and social structures destroyed, became servants and farm-workers. Their descendants are seen today in the Cape coloured population.

See also:

[Africans, Black](#); [Nguni People](#); [San, The](#); [Zulu, The](#).

Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## **Kimberley, Siege of,**

**14 October 1899–15 February 1900**

The siege of Kimberley lasted for four months. For most of the time the white inhabitants did not suffer greatly as there was adequate food and water and the defences commanded by Lieutenant-colonel Kekewich kept the Boers at a distance, content as they were to sit the British out and indulge in a little shelling. The principal problem was within; Cecil Rhodes, whose commercial interests were a partial cause of the war, attempted to have matters run his own way and even went as far as implying that he would surrender the town to the Boers if the British did not make haste to relieve it. Instead of advancing immediately on Bloemfontein, Lord Roberts sent Lieutenant-general Sir John French to the relief with his cavalry division. The damage done to the cavalry as a result of their wild ride was severe and proved a serious handicap to future operations. Of the white defenders of Kimberley nine civilians and forty-two officers and men of the army had died. Of the black population 483 people died, the majority of them children who succumbed to starvation and disease.

In 1899, as the threat of war grew greater, Sir Alfred Milner, Governor of Cape Colony, became concerned for the safety of the diamond-mining centre of Kimberley and sent Lieutenant-colonel Robert Kekewich to investigate. The verdict was that it was vulnerable in the extreme, so Kekewich and half of his regiment, the 1st Loyal North Lancashires, were posted there to rectify matters. On 14

October, three days after the outbreak of war, the town was besieged by the Boers, with Cecil Rhodes, the mining magnate, caught there as well. The defenders numbered 596 regular soldiers, 352 Cape Police and 5,500

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## Reference:

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## Kimberley, Relief of,

**10–15 February 1900**

The presence of Cecil Rhodes in Kimberley and his threat to yield up the town to the Boers forced Lord Roberts to give the town's relief a greater importance than it deserved in strategic terms. The dramatic and much admired cavalry operation that cut through Boer lines to achieve the relief caused irreparable damage to the strength of the cavalry.

After the failure of Lord Methuen's attempt to relieve Kimberley and the other setbacks of "Black Week", Lord Roberts was appointed Commander-in-Chief. He arrived in South Africa with considerable reinforcements and got to Modder River Station on 10 February. While the Boers under Commandant-general Piet Cronjé were distracted with actions such as that at Koedoesberg Drift, the cavalry, under Lieutenant-general Sir John French, made a wide flanking march to cross the Riet River to the southeast. At Waterval Drift Christiaan De Wet was deceived into thinking he faced a much stronger force and withdrew while French pushed on north towards the Modder River at Rondavel and Klip Drift. A feint to the east kept Commandant J. Lubbe's commando at Klip Kraal Drift. Lieutenant-general Thomas Kelly-Kenny's 6th Division, with a remarkable forced march, came up with French on the night of 14/15 February and French made for Kimberley the next day, brushing aside a feeble attempt by the Boers to stop him. The horses were watered at Abon's Dam and rushed onwards, slowing as they went, and increasing numbers collapsed. The force entered Kimberley at 6 p.m. on 15 February. When called upon to move to Paardeberg two days later, French could muster only 1,500 of the 5,000 horses with which he began this operation.

## See also:

[Horses](#); [Kimberley, Siege of](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#); [Waterval Drift, Action at](#).

## Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

**Kitchener, Major-General Frederick W.**

Lord Kitchener's younger brother Frederick joined the West Yorkshire Regiment in 1876 at the age of eighteen and served under Lord Roberts in the Afghan War of 1878–80. He served in Egypt and the Sudan and became Governor of Khartoum in 1898. He commanded the 7th Brigade of the 4th Division in the relief of Ladysmith, having succeeded Major-general A. S. Wynne. He fought at the Battle of Bergendal and in the Lydenburg district. He was active in the

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Transvaal during the guerrilla phase of the war and returned to England in November 1901.

See also:

[Bergendal, Battle of](#); [Kitchener, General the Rt Hon. Viscount, of Khartoum](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Tugela Heights, Battle of](#).

## **Kitchener, General The Rt Hon. Viscount, of Khartoum,**

### **1850–1916**

A man of enormous energy and little sensitivity, Herbert Horatio Kitchener is most widely remembered as a relentless persecutor of Boer women and children and as the builder of the endless lines of blockhouses intended to entrap Boer commandos. Although there are elements of truth in this, it is too narrow a description to be satisfactory.

Kitchener joined the Royal Engineers in 1871. He worked on the surveys of Palestine (1874–78) and Cyprus (1878–82) before becoming commander of the Egyptian Cavalry. He took part in the attempt to rescue General Gordon from Khartoum. He became Sirdar (commander-in-chief) of the Anglo-Egyptian army in 1892 and fought a number of actions intended to re-establish British supremacy. His tactics in the field were unimaginative, but he made skilful use of modern technology such as the telegraph and the railway.

When confidence in Sir Redvers Buller as Commander-in-Chief in South Africa faded in December 1899 there were those who advocated Kitchener as his successor. However, Lord Roberts was preferred, and any doubts about his suitability on the grounds of his age were overcome by appointing the relatively young Kitchener as his Chief of Staff. Kitchener behaved more as a second-in-command and was often away from headquarters. When Assistant Commandant-general Piet Cronjé's army was surrounded at Paardeberg on the way to Bloemfontein, Roberts was ill and Kitchener assumed command. His field tactics were as unsophisticated as ever, and he ordered repeated attacks against the skilled riflemen which were far more costly in terms of British casualties than Buller's or Methuen's supposed mistakes had been. Fortunately Roberts soon recovered. Kitchener was responsible for a major reorganisation of transport arrangements early in 1900. This

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might have been sensible in theory, but it failed in practice and for reasons he might have foreseen if he had understood people better and been prepared to listen to others.

When Roberts returned to Britain in December 1900, supposing the war to be at an end, Kitchener became Commander-in-Chief. He was energetic in devising drives or sweeps to round up guerrilla bands of Boers but enjoyed small success at the outset. He developed Roberts's policy of farm burning to deny the Boers supplies and, somewhat casually, thought the women and children remaining should be looked after as refugees, though he took little interest in how that was to be done. This lack of attention to a non-military issue led directly to the suffering in the concentration camps but was an error of neglect rather than a calculated policy of cruelty. The responsibility rests, nonetheless, with him. The public outcry against the camps led to an abandonment of the policy of putting newly evicted Boers in camps and the burden of caring for them fell instead on their families, eventually a factor in the Boers' surrender.

In order to create catchment areas to entrap the Boers Kitchener had a system of blockhouses and barbed wire fences erected throughout the land. His methods, carried out with soulless determination, reduced his enemies to poverty, despair and capitulation. In the peace negotiations he was equally practical. Unmoved by thoughts of revenge, imperialism or economic and political domination, he foresaw that reconciliation was needed if the land was to be occupied in peacetime by formerly warring peoples. Unfortunately, like most men of his time, this liberalism did not extend to black Africans and although Kitchener's flexibility promoted the peace agreement, it also helped to lay the foundations of the colour bar which would later develop into apartheid.

Kitchener became Secretary of State for War in 1914 and foresaw that the fight against Germany would be long and hard. He therefore launched a recruiting campaign whose success was vital in the outcome of the war. He was drowned when the cruiser HMS *Hampshire* struck a mine off the Orkneys on 5 June 1916.

### See also:

[Blockhouses](#); [Concentration Camps](#); [Drives](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Pollock, John, *Kitchener: The Road to Omdurman* (London, Constable, 1998).

## **Klerksdorp Conference,**

**9 April 1902**

In an effort to promote the acceptance of defeat amongst the Boers and hasten fruitful peace talks, the British facilitated the holding of a conference in Klerksdorp, a town in the South African Republic (ZAR or Transvaal) south-west of Potchefstroom. Among those attending were Acting President Shalk Burger of the ZAR, President Marthinus Steyn of the Orange Free

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State, and the military leaders Louis Botha, Barry Hertzog, Koos De la Rey and Christiaan De Wet. They were informed by the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, of the correspondence that had passed between the King of England and the Queen of the Netherlands about bringing the warring parties together and, after two days' discussion, wrote to Kitchener to ask for a meeting at which they could bring forward proposals. The meeting took place on 12 April in Pretoria.

See also:

[Peace Negotiations.](#)

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902).

## Kloof

A ravine.

## Kock, Assistant Commandant-General J. H. M.,

1835–99

As a boy Kock was with his father when the Boers fought the British first at Zwartkopjes in April 1843 and then at Boomplats in September 1848. He became Landdrost (district magistrate) of Potchefstroom in 1874 and a member of the Executive Council of the South African Republic (Transvaal) in 1892. He led the Johannesburg Commando and the German Corps into Natal in 1899. He allowed his forces to take the village of Elandslaagte rather than holding the hills and was attacked and defeated there on 21 October. He was mortally wounded while leading a last attack on the British.

See also:

[Elandslaagte, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Knight, Ian, *Warrior Chiefs of Southern Africa* (Poole, Firebird, 1994).

# Koedoesberg Drift, Battle of,

**5–8 February 1900**

The failure of Lord Methuen's attempt to relieve Kimberley, culminating in the British defeat at the Battle of Magersfontein on 11 December 1899, and taken together with the other failures of so-called "Black Week", led to the replacement of Sir Redvers Buller as Commander-in-Chief by General Lord Roberts. Roberts arrived at Modder River Station in the second week of February 1900 with substantial reinforcements. In order to distract the Boers from his true intentions – to move to the east – he sent the Highland Brigade, now under General Hector MacDonald, along the Riet River westwards to Koedoesberg Drift, near the Kimberley/Douglas road. Vecht-generaal Piet Cronjé sent Christiaan De Wet with only 350 men to counter the move. An inconclusive fight to contest occupation of the nearby hill went on for three days before both sides withdrew. On the British side Lieutenant Freddie Tait, a champion golfer, was killed.

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See also:

[Magersfontein, Battle of](#).

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## Komatipoort

A railway station on the Delagoa Bay railway line close to the border with Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique). The retreat of the Boers from the British culminated at Komatipoort on 11 September 1900 when President Paul Kruger left his country. Lieutenant-general R. Pole-Carew led the British into the Komatipoort unopposed on 24 September, capturing some thirty locomotives and 1,500 trucks full of supplies.

See also:

[Bergendal, Battle of](#); [Railway System](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## Koornspruit, Battle of

See [Sannaspos, Battle of](#).

## Kop, Kopje

Literally a 'head', the term kop means a hill, typically but not Literally a 'head', the term kop means a hill, typically but not exclusively the mesa or flat-topped hills found in the Orange Free State and Transvaal veldt terrain. The diminutive, kopje or koppie, is used of a small hill.

## Kraaipan, Action at,

## 12–13 October 1899

The small garrison at the station on the Vryburg to Mafeking railway was withdrawn by Colonel Robert Baden-Powell on 11 October, the day on which the Boer ultimatum ran out. The next day Vecht-general Koos De la Rey arrived from the east with the Lichtenburg Commando, taking the station and putting the railway out of commission. On 13 October the first action of the war took place when De la Rey overcame an armoured train that arrived with twenty-six men of the Mashonaland Police under Lieutenant R. C. Nesbitt taking two 7-pounder guns up to Mafeking.

See also:

[Mafeking, Siege of.](#)

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

### Kraal

Either a cattle enclosure or a black African village.

### Krantz

A valley.

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## Krijgsraad

The 'all-burghers-are-equal' philosophy which underlay the operation of a commando inspired the consultative meeting of the krijgsraad or kriegsraad, meaning 'council of war'. Tactics for a forthcoming engagement were discussed and agreed, and those who did not agree might refrain from taking part in the fight.

See also:

[Boer Forces](#); [Boer Forces, Discipline](#).

## Kripvreter

A stall-fed horse as opposed to one that foraged on the veldt. The term was also applied to men, such as Deneys Reitz, who had a supposedly privileged position on the staff of a Boer commander.

Reference:

Reitz, Deneys, *Commando* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## Kritzinger, Assistant Chief-Commandant P. H.,

**1870–1935**

Kritzinger was one of the most effective Boer leaders during the guerrilla phase of the war, operating in Cape Colony with far more success than the much admired Christiaan De Wet.

Kritzinger joined the Rouxville Commando at the outbreak of the war. With Gideon Scheepers he entered the Cape in December 1900 and caused considerable disturbance. After operating with De Wet in the Orange Free State he was promoted and led another raid into the Cape in April 1901. His third foray ended when he was wounded and in March 1902 the British put him on trial on four charges of murder and one for damaging the railway, but he was found not guilty. In 1929 he became a member of the Cape Provincial Council.

See also:

[Cape Colony, Invasions of](#).

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Kroonstad, Council at

Kroonstad is a town in the northern Orange Free State to which the state government moved on 11 March 1900 after the British occupied Bloemfontein. A krijgsraad, or council of war, was held here on 17 March at which President Marthinus Steyn and President Paul Kruger of the South African Republic (Transvaal) were present. It was decided to continue the war but by new means. Piet Joubert's proposal that wagon laagers were no longer relevant and that mobile warfare on horseback should be adopted found favour. The town was surrendered to the advancing British on 12 May.

## See also:

[Bloemfontein, Advance from;](#) [Guerrilla War.](#)

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## Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **Kruger, S. J. Paulus (Paul),**

### **1825–1904**

Paul Kruger was President of the South African Republic (Transvaal) in the years preceding the war of 1899–1902. He feared that granting the vote to the *uitlanders* would bring about foreign domination of his country and was convinced that the British were bent on annexation, which was not far from the truth. He had hopes that a pre-emptive strike would give the Boers victory in 1899, as it had in 1881. However, he was forced to flee the country in 1900 and went to Europe to seek support, where he found only empty words and no promise of action.

As a boy Kruger took part in the Great Trek and was present at the Battle of Vechtkop when, under Hendrik Potgieter on 16 October 1836, the Boers fought the Ndebele. He attended the Sand River Convention in 1852. In 1862 he helped quell an uprising of his fellow Boers in the Transvaal, became involved in politics once more after the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 and was one of the governing Triumvirate during the First Boer War. In 1883 he was elected President of the South African Republic (ZAR), a post to which he was reelected on a further three occasions.

When the pressure of the incomers flocking to the gold mines led to an attempted coup, which the Jameson Raid was intended to spark, Kruger made good use of the political advantage offered to him and while the tax

revenues from the *uitlanders* funded massive armament imports, diplomatic foot-dragging kept the rights of the *uitlanders* unchanged. He was unable to find accommodation with either British imperial ambition or the business and economic environment which had funded his arms buying. Whereas President Marthinus Steyn of the Orange Free State still thought a *modus vivendi* could be worked out with the British, Kruger saw nothing but a British determination to annex his country for a second time. The inflexibility of his position was demonstrated when he issued an ultimatum to the British which it was actually impossible for them to satisfy, and war ensued.

On 11 September 1900 he was finally forced to leave the country, having retreated before the advancing British to the border with Mozambique. He sailed for Europe on the Dutch warship *Gelderland* and landed at Marseille on 22 November 1900. His reception in Paris was courteous but unhelpful and a plan to go to Berlin was dropped when that received a frosty reception and he went to the Netherlands instead. The countries that had been so vocal in their support for the Boers proved to be of no practical assistance. He remained in the Netherlands until the end of the war, when he moved to Switzerland where he died.

See also:

[Steyn, President Marthinus.](#)

Reference:

Fisher, John, *Paul Kruger: His Life and Times* (London, Secker & Warburg, 1974); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Knight, Ian, *Warrior Chiefs of Southern Africa* (Poole, Firebird, 1994).

## Kuruman, Siege of,

### November 1899–January 1900

The garrison at Kuruman, about eighty-five miles (140km) south-west of Vryburg in the north of Cape Colony, was ordered back to Kimberley on the outbreak of war but was unable to comply. Although a relatively minor affair, their surrender soon after the disasters of "Black Week" – the defeats at Colenso, Magersfontein and Stormberg – added to British woes.

There were thirty-five Cape Police under Captain A. Bates stationed at Kuruman in October 1899, to which Bates was able to add some ninety volunteers. A week-long siege in November by about 200 Boers was fruitless but the siege resumed when more than twice that number of Boers surrounded the town on 5 December. On 30 December the Boers brought a 7-pounder gun into action and the garrison was forced to surrender on New Year's Day. The British retook Kuruman on 24 June

1900.

See also:

[Kimberley, Siege of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Mafeking, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

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### Laager

A camp. On the Great Trek a laager denoted a circle of wagons formed as a means of defence and during the war of 1899–1902 the term laager was applied to a fortified camp with stone walls.

### Laagte

A slope or shallow valley.

### Labram, George Frederick,

**1862–1900**

George Labram, an American citizen, was born in Detroit, Michigan, United States. He became Chief Engineer with the De Beers company in Kimberley in 1896, three years after his arrival in South Africa. When the town was besieged on 14 October 1899 he turned his talents to solving problems associated with war.

The water supply for the town was

secured by pumping out the diamond mines and a position of vantage was made for Lieutenant-colonel Robert Kekewich by making a conningtower (a commander's look-out point) out of the mine-shaft winding gear. Labram then started making shells for the 7-pounder guns in the De Beers workshops. His crowning achievement was the design and construction of "Long Cecil". The Boer 75mm gunfire had been causing a good deal of discomfort and danger, but the little 7-pounders available to the British were too small to strike back. Labram therefore made a 4-inch gun and the ammunition to fire from it. The range it attained was said to be 8,000 yards (7,300m). The Boer reaction was to bring the Long Tom that had been damaged at Ladysmith, now repaired with a shortened barrel and nick-named "The Jew", with which to counter the fire of Long Cecil. On the evening of 9 February 1900 George Labram was changing for dinner in his hotel room when he was killed by a Long Tom shell.

See also:

[Artillery, Boer](#); [Kimberley, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## **Labuschagnes Nek, Battle of,**

**4–5 March 1900**

The road from Dordrecht northwards to Jamestown and thence to Aliwal North runs through a pass called Labuschagnes Nek, through which Brigadier-general E. Y. Brabant attempted to cut off the retreating Boer Commandant J. H. Olivier and his men in March 1900. The pass was held by some 1,200 Boers who had built a laager there and who held out for almost three days, permitting Olivier to recross the Orange River into the Orange Free State.

See also:

[Cape Colony, Invasions of](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Oosthuizen, A. V., *A Guide to the Battlefields, Graves and Monuments of the Anglo-Boer War in the North Eastern Cape* (Bloemfontein, The War Museum of the Boer Republics, 1998).

# Ladybrand

Ladybrand overlooks the valley of the Caledon River on the eastern border of the Orange Free State. It was garrisoned by the 2nd Worcesters on 21 July 1900 and besieged briefly at the end of August by some 3,000 Boers under Commandant P. J. Fourie. A column under Lieutenant-colonel W. L. White forced them to withdraw when it seized the Platberg, a hill dominating the town.

See also:

[Brandwater Basin, Surrender at.](#)

Reference:

Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

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## Lady Grey

A small town in Cape Colony close to the border with the Orange Free State and east of Aliwal North, Lady Grey was invaded by Boers under Commandant J. H. Olivier in November 1899. They were opposed by the postmistress, Mrs Sarah Gluck, an Englishwoman who threw them off her premises. When they hoisted their flag outside, she hauled it down and went on to rip up their posters announcing the terms of their occupation. In spite of this some citizens joined Olivier, and the Boers stayed until early January 1900. On resuming her duties Mrs Gluck received an enhanced salary. The town was garrisoned by the British on 11 September 1901 when Major Lord Lovat brought a gun and a squadron of Lovat's Scouts to protect it from attack by the commando of Assistant Commandant-general Jan Smuts.

See also:

[Cape Colony, Invasions of.](#)

Reference:

Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## Ladysmith

The Boer siege of Ladysmith upset the British strategy for the war. Sir Redvers Buller, the British Commander-in-Chief at that time, had intended to

(Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Chisholm, Ruari, *Ladysmith* (London, Osprey Publishing, 1979); Griffith, Kenneth, *Thank God We Kept the Flag Flying* (London and New York, Viking Press, 1974); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Sheen, C. C., "The Naval Brigade in Ladysmith" in *Naval Brigades in the South African War 1899–1900* (London, 1901; The London Stamp Exchange Ltd., no date).

## Lang Reit

On 28 February 1902, at the end of a sweep in the south-eastern Transvaal, Lieutenant-general Lord Kitchener rode out from the railway station at Albertina, between Harrismith and Ladysmith, to meet Colonel Sir Henry Rawlinson and Lieutenant-colonel C. J. Briggs who had surrounded a laager at Lang Reit the previous day. They had captured 778 burghers, 25,000 cattle, 2,000 horses and 200 wagons in the operation.

See also:

[Blockhouses](#); [Sweeps](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## Langs Nek

Often written as Laing's Nek, Langs Nek, a pass on the borders of Natal and the Transvaal, was the scene of a key engagement in the First Boer War and was expected by the Boers to be of crucial importance in the Second. In the event no engagement took place here as the British, under Sir Redvers Buller, outflanked the Boer position with an attack on Botha's Pass and Alleman Nek in June 1900.

Langs Nek is a pass in the Drakensberg range through which the road between the South African Republic (the Transvaal) and the British colony of Natal runs. The railway line also goes this way, through a tunnel. On 28 January 1881 a British force consisting largely of the 58th Regiment (later the 2nd Northamptonshire) and the 3/60th Rifles carried out an attack on the Boer positions at Langs Nek and were repulsed. It was the last occasion on which regimental colours, those of the 58th, were carried into battle by a British formation.

After the relief of Ladysmith in February 1900, the British advanced northwards and the Boers planned to hold them at Langs Nek, the place where they had enjoyed outstanding success in 1881. The pass was under the command of Assistant Commandant-general C. Botha, brother to Louis Botha. General Buller met Botha on 2 June to discuss possible peace terms, and a three-day armistice was observed. However, the overtures came to nothing. Buller kept the Boers on the defensive there with artillery fire and an infantry division to create the impression of an impending

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assault but, at the same time, bombarded and took first Botha's Pass to the west and then Alleman Nek, threatening to take Langs Nek from the Boer rear. The Boers were thus forced to abandon their position on 11 June 1900, having first blown up the entrance to the railway tunnel. It was reopened on 18 June.

See also:

[Alleman Nek, Action at](#); [Botha's Pass, Action at](#); [Maps](#).

Reference:

Castle, Ian, *Majuba 1881* (London, Osprey, 1996); Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); [www.battlefields.co.za/history/1st\\_war\\_of\\_independence](http://www.battlefields.co.za/history/1st_war_of_independence)

## Lansdowne, Marquis of,

**1845–1927**

Lord Lansdowne was Secretary of State for War from 1895 to October 1900. Formerly Viceroy of India, he was associated with the Indian faction of the British Army and thus favoured Lord Roberts and his associates over the African faction represented by Field Marshal Lord Wolseley. The existence of these rival factions in the army, and the association of the Secretary of State with one of them, prevented objective management of the war in London.

Lansdowne's major contribution to the development of the army was the establishment of the Royal Army Medical Corps in 1898 and he was also involved with the formation of the Central British Red Cross Committee in January 1899. He was constrained to appoint Sir Redvers Buller as Commander-in-Chief in South Africa, but then failed to include him in discussions and planning. The post of Commander-in-Chief was, at that time, not clearly defined in its duties and powers, and Lansdowne continued to act without proper consultation. For example, he appointed Lieutenant-general Sir Charles Warren, a man with whom Buller was known to be at odds, to serve under him and to be marked as Buller's successor should it be necessary. Lansdowne became Foreign Secretary in 1900 and, in January 1902, rejected offers of mediation in the war by the Netherlands. He served in the government in the First World War.

See also:

[Buller, Sir Redvers](#); [Warren, Sir Charles](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer*

*War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Surrridge, Keith, "Lansdowne at the War Office", *Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image*, ed. J. Gooch (London, Frank Cass, 2000).

## **Le Gallais, Lieutenant-Colonel P. W. J.,**

**1861–1900**

Philip Le Gallais was born in Jersey, the Channel Islands, and joined the 8th (King's Royal Irish) Hussars in 1881. When the Mounted Infantry Division was formed at Bloemfontein,

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he was appointed Assistant-Adjutant-general to Lieutenant-general Ian Hamilton and was later given command of a mounted infantry column in the hunt for Christiaan De Wet. He nearly caught De Wet and President Steyn at Bothaville on 6 November 1900, when the Boers were taken entirely by surprise. Le Gallais himself was killed in the engagement. De Wet said his adversary was "without doubt one of the bravest English officers I have ever met".

See also:

[Bothaville, Action at.](#)

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902; Wilson, H. W., *With the Flag to Pretoria* (London, Harmsworth Brothers, 1900).

## Leliefontein, Action at,

### 6–7 November 1900

In an attempt to secure control of the country south of the Delagoa Bay railway line east of Pretoria in November 1900, a British column under Major-general Smith-Dorrien moved towards Carolina and attacked the Boers on the Komati (Nkhomati) River. A Boer counter-attack the next day forced Smith-Dorrien to make a fighting withdrawal, which was successful because of the courage of his Canadian troops.

After the last set-piece battle at Bergendal on 27 August 1900 the Boer forces scattered to form roving bands and the guerrilla phase of the war began in earnest. British tactics at first involved the use of cumbersome columns of infantry, artillery and mounted infantry, in this instance the Gordon Highlanders and the Shropshire Light infantry as well as the Royal Canadian Dragoons, Canadian Mounted Rifles and two guns of the Royal Canadian Artillery. The capture of the Boer positions at Leliefontein was costly and Smith-Dorrien, aware of his vulnerability to counter-attack, decided to withdraw. As he did so the Boers attempted to envelop his flanks. The guns of D Battery, Royal Canadian Artillery, withdrew turn and turn about, each holding the Boers off while the other, together with the column, pulled back. These guns, and a Colt machine-gun, kept the Boers at bay. Lieutenants Cockburn and Turner and Sergeant Holland of the Canadian Dragoons were awarded Victoria Crosses. On the Boer side Assistant Commandant-general J. C. Fourie and Commandant H. F. Prinsloo were killed. The action demonstrated that the traditional British column was woefully vulnerable to mobile Boers.

See also:

[Bergendal, Battle of; Drives.](#)

## Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Reid, Brian A., *Our Little Army in the Field: The Canadians in South Africa 1899–1902* (St Catharines Ontario, Vanwell, 1996).

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## Leliefontein, Massacre at,

**March 1902**

The Methodist mission at Leliefontein, in Namaqualand in the northwestern Cape, was the location of a black African settlement. Between twenty and thirty of the inhabitants were slaughtered when the township was sacked by Senior Commandant S. G. (Manie) Maritz and his men.

Deneys Reitz came upon the scene soon after. He wrote: "We found the place sacked and gutted, and, among the rocks beyond the burned houses, lay twenty or thirty dead Hottentots, still clutching their antiquated muzzleloaders. This was Maritz's handiwork. He had ridden into the station with a few men, to interview the European missionaries, when he was set upon by armed Hottentots, he and his escort narrowly escaping with their lives. To avenge the insult, he returned next morning with a stronger force and wiped out the settlement, which seemed to many of us a ruthless and unjustifiable act. General Smuts said nothing, but I saw him walk past the boulders where the dead lay, and on his return he was moody and curt, as was his custom when displeased."

See also:

[Cape Colony, Invasions of.](#)

Reference:

Jackson, Tabitha, *The Boer War* (London, Macmillan, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994); Warwick, Peter, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983).

## Lindley, Battle of,

**31 May 1900**

The town of Lindley, located between Bethlehem and Kroonstadt in the Orange Free State, provided a commando for the Boer forces while resident Englishmen, such as Charlie Moses, took an oath of neutrality and were allowed to remain. Moses reports that when Christiaan De Wet was collecting men on 19 March 1900, he threatened to shoot any man who refused to be commandeered for service and to deal similarly with any British neutral who spoke against the Boers. The town was taken on 17 May by Major-general R. G. Broadwood's 2nd Cavalry Brigade, but was left undefended when he

moved on three days later. It changed hands several times during the course of the war. On 27 May the 13th (Irish) Imperial Yeomanry entered the town but soon retired to take positions on kopjes to the north-west.

Instead of retreating to Kroonstadt, Lieutenant-colonel Basil Spragge decided to stay at Lindley and sent messages to Lieutenant-general Sir Henry Colvile at Kroonstadt and to Lieutenant-general Sir Leslie Rundle at Senekal for relief. The former continued his advance on Heilbron and the latter undertook a diversionary action at Biddulphsberg. Spragge's unit had been raised by Lord Donoughmore and was officered by titled volunteers from Ireland; Lords Longford, Ennismore and Leitrim were among them, an extreme example of the landed gentry rallying to their country's cause. There Vecht-general Piet De

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Wet caught them, fought them and overcame them. Eighty men from the Yeomanry were killed or wounded before they surrendered. The site of the battle is known as Yeomanry Hill.

The town was garrisoned by Major-general A. H. Paget on 5 June and Piet De Wet layed siege to it. The Boer force was changed and relieved a number of times, but they gave up by the end of the month. During the guerrilla phase of the war the town was a British centre of operations.

See also:

[Biddulphsberg, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Smith, Iain R. and Franzjohan Pretorius, Eds., "The Diary of Charlie Moses", *History Today*, May 1998.

## Lombard's Kop, Action at,

### 30 October 1899

As 14,000 Boers approached Ladysmith, the British realised that, with some 3,000 fewer troops, their best chance lay in breaking the developing encirclement. By 28 October a 155mm Creusot gun, a seriously heavy weapon, had been installed on Pepworth Hill by Assistant Commandant-general Erasmus and therefore Pepworth Hill was the objective of the British attack. The real battle, however, took place to the east of Ladysmith near Lombard's Kop where the British were surprised by Boer forces. Here, and at Nicholson's Nek, the British were defeated and the survivors forced back into the town, facing the certainty of a siege. The day was named Mournful Monday.

Pepworth Hill lies some four miles (6.5km) north-east of Ladysmith to the west of the railway and the road to Dundee. As seen from Ladysmith, Long Hill is to its right on the other side of the tracks, then comes a shallow valley with the river of Modder Spruit running left to right in front of some low kopjes until, due east of the town and also four miles distant, the abrupt hump of Lombard's Kop rises with a lesser one, Gun Hill, in front of it. As the country was well overlooked by Boer positions, Lieutenant-general Sir George White decided that his forces should move into positions for attack during Sunday night. Colonel G. G. Grimwood was to secure Long Hill with the 8th Brigade (1st King's Royal Rifles, Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 1st King's Liverpool and 1st Leicestershires) so that Colonel Ian Hamilton could use the 7th Brigade (1st Devonshire, 1st Manchester, 2nd Gordon Highlanders, 5th Dragoon Guards, 18th Hussars and the Imperial Light Horse) first in reserve and then to take Pepworth Hill. Six field batteries were left in support, and the left flank would be

protected by a force moving towards Nicholson's Nek, while the right was the responsibility of Major-general Sir John French's Cavalry Brigade (5th Lancers, 19th Hussars and Natal Carbineers).

In the deployment in the early hours of Monday 30 October two of Grimwood's battalions, the Liverpools and the Dublins, mistakenly followed

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the artillery, leaving Grimwood with only half his men. At dawn the artillery came under heavy fire from the Boers on Pepworth Hill, and had to be repositioned in order to bring the enemy within range. Grimwood was then surprised by fire from his rear where Lucas Meyer's men were located on the other side of Modder Spruit. In fact, Meyer himself was no longer there. He was taken ill and his command was taken over by Louis Botha who gave here the first indication of his genius as a military leader.

French moved his men onto Lombard's Kop to support the infantry and they, in turn, had to endure heavy fire. Hamilton was forced to act in support and soon it became clear that the original objective of taking Pepworth and Long Hills could not be achieved. To persist here would be to throw men away needlessly, and so the order to withdraw was given. As the retreat began the Navy arrived in the form of men of HMS *Powerful* with both heavy and field guns. Three of the latter, 12-pounders, were on carriages made up from carts under Captain Percy Scott's direction. It was clear to the sailors that something was going on. As Chief Engineer Sheen remarked, ". . .from the continual stream of ambulances wagons and dhoolies full of wounded coming down this road from the fight . . . if a victory was being won, it was at a somewhat heavy price". The naval guns were brought into action and contributed to the silencing, for the time being, of the Boer guns. The withdrawal was orderly, but depressing. The action at Nicholson's Nek had been yet more disastrous. It was, indeed, Mournful Monday for the British and the last chance to forestall a siege at Ladysmith had gone.

### See also:

[Ladysmith](#); [Nicholson's Nek](#), [Action at](#).

### Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Chisholm, Ruari, *Ladysmith* (London, Osprey Publishing, 1979); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Sheen, C. C., "The Naval Brigade in Ladysmith", in *Naval Brigades in South Africa 1899–1902* (London, 1901; The London Stamp Exchange, no date).

## London Convention, The,

**1884**

After the cessation of hostilities at the end of the First Boer War or First War of Independence, Britain's control of the foreign affairs of the Transvaal was secured by treaty in the London Convention of 27 February 1884 while the Transvaal retained full internal independence. President

Kruger made it clear that he was signing the treaty under protest.

See also:

[Boer War, First.](#)

Reference:

Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992);  
Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985).

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## Long, Colonel C. J.,

**1849–1933**

Charles Long became a lieutenant in the Royal Artillery in 1870. He served in the Afghan War of 1878–80 and was commander of the Egyptian Artillery at the Battle of Omdurman in 1898.

Colonel Long was appointed to command the artillery in the Natal Field Force at the outbreak of the war but when he arrived at Estcourt, was switched to Lines of Communication. He was thus the man in command of the armoured train in which Winston Churchill was travelling when the Boers ambushed it and took him prisoner. Long had been satisfied to send the train out unescorted.

At the Battle of Colenso he commanded General Sir Redvers Buller's artillery on the right of the line. Behaving entirely in accord with the conventions of the day and the tactical manual, he took his guns well forward and came under devastating fire. He and his men, unwisely holding their ground, fought gallantly but their casualties were severe and they lost ten 15-pounder guns, for which Buller removed him from command. Commandant-general Louis Botha, however, commented that in placing himself between British forces in Colenso Village and the Boers on their right flank, Long had forestalled a Boer victory. In November 1900 Long commanded a column in the hunt for Christiaan De Wet. In the First World War he became an inspector of remounts.

### See also:

[Armoured Train Incident](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Lötter, Commandant J. C.

A businessman in Naauwpoort, Cape Colony, before the war, J. C. Lötter led a commando and rode with Assistant Chief-commandant P. H. Kritzinger. In May 1901 they entered Cape Colony from the Orange Free State to join Commandant W. D. Fouché. Lötter was wounded at Jackalsfontein, southwest of Cradock, in an encounter with Lieutenant-colonel E. M. S. Crabbe's column. On 4 September 1901 Lötter's commando was surprised and attacked by Lieutenant-colonel Henry J. Schobell's column and taken after a brisk fight. Lötter was considered a rebel by the British, who declined to recognise his claim to recently acquired citizenship of the Orange Free State and produced his

registration as a voter in the Colesberg district to support their view. They tried him on eight charges, including the murder of unarmed black scouts and treason, and he was found guilty on all counts. He was taken to Middelburg where sentence was pronounced on 11 October and he was hanged the next day.

See also:

[Scheepers, Commandant Gideon J.](#)

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal

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Press, 1999); Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M., *A Gazetteer of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## Lynch, Arthur,

**1861–1934**

An Australian of Irish extraction, Arthur Lynch led a colourful life which included fighting for the Boers, being sentenced to death and serving as a Member of Parliament in England.

The Lynch family emigrated from Ireland to Australia during the Gold Rush era and Arthur was born at Smythesdale, near Ballarat, Victoria. He graduated from Melbourne University with a degree in engineering and then went to England where he became a journalist. He covered the Ashanti campaign in West Africa in 1896 and set off for South Africa soon after the outbreak of the Boer War. Having been commissioned to write for journals in Paris, London and New York, he sailed on the German vessel *Hertzog* which was stopped at sea by a British warship outside Durban. Lynch was questioned by the British but then he and the *Hertzog* were permitted to proceed to Lourenco Marques.

Commandant-general Louis Botha, whom Lynch met in Johannesburg, told him that his scheme to report from behind Boer lines was not a practical proposal and Lynch then formed the idea of raising a second Irish Brigade to fight on the Boer side. President Kruger gave his approval and put Lynch in charge of the Brigade with the rank of colonel. In January 1900 Lynch led his brigade, with French and German volunteers as the majority of its officers, to join the Boer forces besieging Ladysmith. The action they saw took place after the town was liberated by the British in February 1900 and as Buller advanced to the north. They fought at Helpmekaar alongside the Piet Retief commando when Buller attacked the Boer left flank on 13 May and at Waschbank in the hills between Elandsplaagte and Glencoe on 16 May 1900 against Lieutenant-general Hildyard's 11th infantry brigade. On both occasions they were compelled to retreat. They then formed part of the force under Assistant Commandant-general Christiaan Botha holding Langs Nek, a position that was turned by Buller with a surprise flanking attack at Botha's Pass on 8 June 1900. By this time Lynch's force was taking part in the defence of Johannesburg, blowing up the bridge at Vereeniging in the face of the advancing Victorian Mounted Rifles on 26 May and afterwards falling back to the Klipriviers Berg, a range of hills south-west of Johannesburg. This position had to be abandoned as it was outflanked by the successful British attack on Doornkop to the west on 29 May. Lynch's depleted force disbanded after the fall of Pretoria on 5 June 1900.

Lynch went to the United States to promote the Boer cause and then settled in Paris. From there, in 1901, he stood as candidate for Parliament for the Irish constituency of Galway. His Boer connections found favour with the electorate and he won, but as there was a warrant issued for his arrest, he was unable to take up his

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seat. As soon as the war was over Lynch decided to return to England and wrote a letter to *The Times* newspaper to say so. On 11 June 1902 he was arrested at Dover and charged with treason. It was said that in January 1903 he achieved the doubtful distinction of being the last man in England to be sentenced to death by hanging, drawing and quartering; in fact, he was merely to be hanged, a sentence that was later commuted to life imprisonment. He served only a year of his sentence and stood for Parliament once more, becoming the member for West Clare. He lost his seat in 1918, having become thoroughly unpopular in his attempts to recruit Irish troops for service in the First World War, and died in London in 1934.

## Reference:

Wallace, R. L., *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra, The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976).

## Lyttleton, Major-General Neville G.,

### 1845–1931

Neville Gerald Lyttleton was one of the few generals to emerge from the Second Boer War with an enhanced reputation. He took over the command of British troops in South Africa from Lord Kitchener in 1902.

Lyttleton joined the Rifle Brigade in 1865 and saw active service in India and Egypt. In September 1898 he commanded one of the two infantry brigades under Kitchener in the Sudan. He was given command of the 4th Brigade, a brigade of rifle regiments, under Sir Redvers Buller in Natal. At the Battle of Spioenkop he pressed forward on his own initiative to take Twin Peaks, the height on the British right from which the Boers were shelling the hilltop. He was ordered to withdraw when the main hill was abandoned. At the Battle of Vaalkrans his brigade took the first objective and held it, but was again ordered to withdraw when it became clear that enfilading Boer shellfire from a Long Tom (Creusot 155mm) jeopardised the position. In the advance to Ladysmith he commanded the 2nd Division and was thereafter active in the guerrilla phase of the war.

After the war, in the reorganisation of the army high command, he became the first Chief of the General Staff and promoted training in fieldcraft and marksmanship for both infantry and cavalry, thereby helping to make the British Regulars a force effective beyond their size in the First World War.

## See also:

[Colenso, Battle of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Spioenkop, Battle of](#); [Vaalkrans, Battle of](#).

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### **MacBride, John,**

**1865–1916**

John MacBride was born in Westport, County Mayo, Ireland and was involved in the anti-British Fenian movement before moving to South Africa in 1896. On the outbreak of the war he suggested to President Kruger that he form an Irish Brigade as there were many men of Irish extraction in the South African Republic (Transvaal). The command of the unit was offered to MacBride, but he declined, judging himself too inexperienced, and the American former army officer J. Y. F. Blake became colonel. The Irish fought in Natal in the first part of the war and were then part of the force that resisted the British advance from Bloemfontein in May 1900. MacBride demonstrated his prowess with explosives by blowing up every railway bridge between Bloemfontein and Johannesburg. The Irish took part in the resistance all the way to the eastern border of the Transvaal, their last major fight being at Bergendal on 27 August 1900, and MacBride left South Africa with many others in September. He then visited America to promote the Boer cause before taking up residence in Paris where, on 21 February 1903, he married the Irish actress and radical nationalist, Maude Gonne. MacBride took part in the Easter Rising against the British in Dublin in 1916, and was captured. He was executed at 3.47 a.m. on 5 May.

See also:

[Blake, Colonel J. Y. F.](#); [Irish](#).

Reference:

McCracken, Donal P., *MacBride's Brigade* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1999).

### **Macdonald, Major-General Hector A.,**

**1853–1903**

Hector MacDonald became known to the British public as Fighting Mac. He was summoned to command the Highland Brigade after its traumatic defeat in December 1899 at the Battle of Magersfontein and led it successfully for the next year. Soon after taking up a new command in

Ceylon (Sri Lanka), he was accused of homosexual activities and he committed suicide.

Of humble parentage, MacDonald joined the 92nd Gordon Highlanders as a private soldier and so distinguished himself in the Afghan War of 1879–80 that he was commissioned. It was as a lieutenant that he fought at Majuba in the First Boer War, eventually resorting to using his fists and thus gaining the respect of the Boers

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who spared his life. He was summoned from India to assume command of the Highland Brigade after the death of Major-general Wauchope at the Battle of Magersfontein. He led his brigade at the Battles of Paardeberg, Sannaspos and in the Brandwater Basin. He left for Ceylon in December 1900.

See also:

[Brandwater Basin, Surrender at](#); [Koedoesberg Drift, Battle of](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#); [Sannaspos, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Machadodorp

A town on the Delagoa Bay Railway east of Pretoria, Machadodorp was the seat of the government of the South African Republic (the Transvaal) from 5 June to 27 August 1900. It then became a British base. It was attacked without success by Boer commandos under Assistant Commandant-generals B. J. Viljoen and Tobias Smuts on 7 January 1901.

See also:

[Bergendal, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## Mafeking, Siege of,

**14 October 1899–17 May 1900**

Mafeking was a British township from which the Bechuanaland Protectorate was administered, located on the railway between Cape Colony and Southern Rhodesia, a few miles from the border with the South African Republic (Transvaal). Its siege was of immense interest in Britain and went down in history as an example of outstanding British heroism. The events here were, in fact, of small military significance and the British success owed far more to the black African participation than the self-promoting and alleged hero of the affair, Colonel R. S. S. Baden-Powell, cared to admit.

However, Baden-Powell was not the ogre that later commentators portray.

In 1899 Mafeking had a population of some 1,500 whites and the adjacent "stadt" or "native" township of Mafikeng was home to about 5,000 black Africans of the Baralong people. Baden-Powell had been organising forces in the northern Cape just before the war and when the railway line was cut at Kraaipan, south of the town, forces there comprised the Protectorate Regiment under Colonel C. B. Vyvyan and some police, about 700 men, to whom were added about 300 civilians as the Town Guard. To supplement them about 750 Baralong, Mfengu and others from the black refugees were recruited. The latter were known as the Black Watch. The only artillery was a pair of 7-pounder guns. Supplies had been guaranteed

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Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Plaatje, Sol T., *Mafeking Diary* (Cambridge, Meridon, 1990); Plaatje, Sol T., *Native Life in South Africa* (London, 1916); Willan, Brian, "The Siege of Mafeking", in *The South African War*, ed. Peter Warwick (Harlow, Longman, 1980).

## Mafikeng

The black African town adjacent to the white settlement of Mafeking. Both towns were besieged in what became known as the siege of Mafeking, 1899–1900. The modern town on the site is called Mafikeng.

## Magaliesberg Mountains

The Magaliesbergs run west from Pretoria in the western South African Republic (Transvaal). At the western end the hills are cut by Olifant's Nek, south of the town of Rustenburg. To the south of the range, between Johannesburg and Mafeking, stands the Witwatersrand range of hills. The topography of the region was expertly exploited by the Boers during the guerrilla phase of the war, especially by Assistant Commandant-general Koos De la Rey and by Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet.

In August 1900 De Wet was north of the range and, having met President Steyn, intended to return to the Orange Free State to continue the guerrilla war in his home territory. Olifant's Nek, the pass by which he had come north, was far to the west and Commando Nek, on the road to Pretoria, was occupied by the British. On 18 August, as his force rode towards Wolhuterskop, nine miles (15km) south-west of Brits, they saw the English at a distance and, when two miles away from the kop, ran into English scouts. They were boxed in against the mountains. De Wet made enquiries of a black African roused out of his hut and learned that the mountains had been crossed nearby in the distant past. They clambered up, leading their horses, slipping on the bare rock, but finally attained the watershed and were down the other side before dark. A Queensland officer with the British afterwards claimed to have used this path on the day the British entered Pretoria when carrying despatches for General French: ". . . I on more than one occasion reported that a regiment could easily cross there in single file, and with very little delay".

See also:

[Nooitgedacht, Battle of](#); [Olifant's Nek](#).

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Wallace, R. L., *The*

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## **Magersfontein, Battle of,**

**11 December 1899**

The defeat of British Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen's forces at Magersfontein prevented the raising of the siege of Kimberley and was one of three defeats, the others being the battles of Colenso and Stormberg, that earned this period the name of "Black Week". The battle was a notable example of the British failure, at this stage of the war, to adapt to modern warfare, but even so was a much less easy victory for the Boers than many suppose. The resulting furore in the British newspapers led to the replacement of Sir Redvers Buller as Commander-in-Chief by Lord Roberts. The battle was also an outstanding demonstration of the effectiveness of high-velocity rifle fire at point-blank range, to the satisfaction of the Boers and the desolation of the British.

After successful, though unexpectedly costly, actions at Belmont (23

Seaforths and the adjustment of the latter's position to meet the threat was interpreted by others as the start of a British withdrawal, though how they thought they could do that under fire is hard to understand. As they started to move back Boer fire intensified, the movement quickened and soon became a flight. The British had endured hours under a roasting sun and under Boer fire and could do no more. The Boers made no attempt to exploit the opportunity and the Scots Guards plugged the gap in the face of the second concentrated Boer artillery fire of the day, the first having been Major Albrecht's bombardment of Moss Drift to prevent a flanking movement by the British. As evening approached some Boers shouted to the Highlanders that the wounded were free to go, which they did, without further harm.

The next day the Boers were still there, as were the British guns and their protecting troops. Cronjé proposed a truce to collect the wounded and bury the dead which lasted until noon, when the last of the British withdrew. Methuen's force had suffered some 239 men killed, of whom 202 were Highlanders, 663 wounded (including 496 Highlanders) and 75 taken prisoner. On the Boer side, the best estimates suggest 87 killed, 149 wounded and 18 taken prisoner. The British settled in on the Modder and the Boers set about enhancing their positions at Magersfontein. They were to stay there until, fearing envelopment by Lord Roberts's army in February 1900, they moved east towards Paardeberg.

### See also:

[Belmont, Battle of](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#); [Graspan, Battle of](#); [Kimberley, Siege of](#); [Modder River, Battle of](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#); [Rifles](#); [Stormberg, Battle of](#); [Trenches](#).

### Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles and Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Duxbury, G. R., *The Battle of Magersfontein* (Kimberley, McGregor Museum, 1997); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War, South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## Majuba Hill, Battle of,

**27 February 1881**

The Boer victory at Majuba, the Hill of Doves, in the First Boer War brought that conflict to a swift and satisfactory end for the citizens of the South African Republic (Transvaal). This success was what they sought to repeat when they invaded Natal, passing that battlefield, in October 1899.

The First War Of Independence, as it became known to Afrikaners, was precipitated by matters

of taxation which brought to a head the question of the legitimacy of the British annexation of 1877 and the undertakings given at that time. The British responded to Boer attacks in the Transvaal by sending forces to Natal and operations in the north of the British colony commenced under Major-general Sir George Pomeroy-Colley. The war concluded with the defeat of a British force of some 400 men which had occupied the mountain to the west of the pass, Langs Nek, between Natal and the Transvaal to the north. They were

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attacked and defeated by an equal or marginally greater number of Boers who exploited their mobility and marksmanship, the memory of which would fade from British minds before the next war. The losses appeared massive to people back in Britain, although they numbered eighty-six dead and 120 wounded which is not, by modern standards, impressive. Public opinion was in favour of revenge, but the British government negotiated a peace granting a substantial measure of independence to the republic.

See also:

[Boer War, First.](#)

Reference:

Castle, Ian, *Majuba 1881* (London, Osprey, 1996);

[www.battlefields.co.za/history/1st\\_war\\_of\\_independence](http://www.battlefields.co.za/history/1st_war_of_independence)

## Maps

A major difficulty faced by the British in fighting the Boers was the lack of adequate mapping of the territory. The Boers were often, quite literally, on home ground and had no need of maps whereas their enemies were frequently deluded by a false crest of a hill, ignorant of an important ford or drift or mistaken about distances. This was not an unfamiliar difficulty for soldiers of the Empire, used to operating by eye and binoculars, but it was nonetheless a problem.

Even in the British colonies, the Cape and Natal, mapping was largely insufficient for military purposes. The principal aim of what maps there were, cadastral maps, was to record land ownership and property boundaries rather than topographical features. The huge investment of time and money needed to do more than this had not been undertaken. The limited amount of military surveying, producing written descriptions and sketch maps, which was carried out resulted in the publication of *Military Notes on the Dutch Republics of South Africa* in June 1898, but the most striking achievement was the work of Major S. C. N. Grant, Royal Engineers, in 1896. Together with that of Captain W. S. Melville, Leicestershire Regiment, and Captain H. R. Gale, R. E., his work led to the publication by the Intelligence Department, War Office, of IDWO Number 1223, *Military Sketch of the Biggarsberg and of the Communications in Natal*, 21 sheets in colour on a scale of one inch to the mile (1:63,360) in April 1897. The quality of the mapping is good and uses precise contours instead of the more usual vague shading. Nonetheless, it was, in retrospect, fatally limited as it covered the area north of Ladysmith as far as Langs Nek on the Transvaal border, and Ladysmith itself, on sheet 16, is shown in the top left corner with the rest of the sheet blank. Sheet 17 appears to have been entirely blank. In general, the detail along the roads and railways is good, but the further away from those one looks, the more vague the information becomes. Moreover, the territory covered was all taken by the invading Boers in a matter of days in October 1899. Even the field where the

Battle of Elandslaagte (21 October 1899) took place was missing, being too far, at two or three miles from the railway, to be other than a blank. Other maps were produced, almost

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Foulkes was to be responsible for the British work on the development of poison gas as a weapon.

After the capture of Pretoria in June 1900 Major H. M. Jackson, Royal Engineers, commanding the mapping section of the Field Intelligence Department, acquired access to the archives of the South African Republic's surveyor-general. He was therefore able to produce a new map, IDWO No. 1495, to accompany Lord Roberts's report of 14 August 1900, after the Battle of Diamond Hill (or Donkerhoek). This was the first of a series of 62 maps covering the Transvaal and the Orange Free State as well as parts of the British colonies, published in monochrome on a scale of 2.35 miles to the inch (1:148,000), actually 1,000 Cape Roods to the inch. They were something of an improvement on the IDWO No. 1367 series, but remained fairly primitive even for strategic planning and were useless for tactical work. Further developments followed, such as the production of a companion series to the *Imperial Map of South Africa* covering Cape Colony undertaken by No. 2 Survey Section in May 1900.

Contemporary British descriptions of events relate closely to the IDWO No. 1367 or IDWO No. 1495 maps, including the spelling of place-names. The maps used in the official British history of the war were the product of Nos. 3 and 4 Survey Sections which arrived in 1902. Since then many changes have taken place, particularly as a result of the standardisation of Afrikaans spelling in the 1950s. In the 1980s and 1990s the rendering of place-names often reverted to the original language, although local signs and modern maps may still retain earlier versions.

### See also:

[Bergendal, Battle of](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#); [Diamond Hill, Battle of](#); [Magaliesberg Mountains](#); [Magersfontein, Battle of](#); [Modder River, Battle of](#); [Talana, Battle of](#); [Vaalcrans, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Jewitt, A. Crispin, *Maps for Empire: the First 2000 Numbered War Office Maps* (London, The British Library, 1992); Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second AngloBoer War* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## Martial Law

Sir Alfred Milner's eagerness to achieve political control of the former Boer republics as head of a civil administration was frustrated by the flowering of the guerrilla war and the necessity of maintaining a military presence, and thus martial law, throughout the land.

As the British occupied the Boer republics the territories came under martial law. In May 1900 Sir Alfred Milner ceased to be governor of Cape Colony and assumed the post of governor of the Transvaal in order to impose British political control and bring back refugees to resume their

occupations in the gold mines. This brought him into conflict, none the less real for being conducted with courtesy, with the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts. On 10 May Milner sought to open discussions of the civil power taking over

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the policing of the Transvaal, but guerrilla warfare was starting, keeping the whole land a war zone. The British need to retain the services of local volunteers could not be squared with allowing others in to do their former jobs, while, at the same time, the refugees not in military service could not see why they should be prevented from returning. The formation of the South African police force, the South African Constabulary, was mooted in July 1900 and began later that year under the command of the hero of Mafeking, Colonel Baden-Powell. In the event it was employed as an arm of the military power, leaving Milner as frustrated as ever.

See also:

[Guerrilla War](#).

Reference:

Surridge, Keith, *Managing the South African War 1899–1902: Politicians v. Generals* (London, The Royal Historical Society/The Boydell Press, 1998).

## Mashonaland

The area in what became Rhodesia occupied by the Shona people. They were obliged to share this area with the migrating Ndebele who established themselves in what became known as Matabeleland. After the failure of Dr Starr Jameson's raid on Johannesburg in 1895, the Shona and the Ndebele rose up and killed many settlers. Whereas Cecil Rhodes negotiated a form of peace with the Ndebele, the Shona proved less amenable and fought on. They were forced into unconditional surrender and their chiefs killed.

Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## Matabeleland

The area in Southern Rhodesia that was settled by the Ndebele under a former subordinate of Shaka, the Zulu leader. Mzilikazi left Shaka in 1822, moving into what became the Eastern Transvaal. He added Mguni and Sotho refugees to his following and moved as pressures from the Griqua and the Voortrekkers bore down on him. The country was the target of expansion and exploitation by Cecil Rhodes and his friend Dr Starr Jameson carried out a raid there in 1893. After Jameson's abortive raid on Johannesburg in 1895 the Ndebele and the Shona rose up and massacred many settlers. Rhodes managed to defuse the situation at a great conference in the Matopo hills and a form of

consultative government was established.

## Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

# Maxim, Sir Hiram,

**1840–1916**

The American-born inventor, Hiram Maxim, was the creator of the weapon that did most to change the nature of warfare in the early 20th century – a reliable machine-gun.

Hiram Stevens Maxim was born on 5 February 1840 in Sangerville, Maine, United States. He was an inventor of

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genius, taking out a patent, for example, on the carbon filament for the electric light in 1880. He was sent to Europe as Chief Engineer for the US Electric Lighting Company in 1881. In Vienna a friend advised the American that, if he wanted to become rich, he should "invent something that will enable these Europeans to cut each other's throat with greater facility". Maxim set up offices and works at 57D Hatton Garden, London, and by July 1883 had registered his second patent on a gun, the first true machine-gun. The next year, he set up the Maxim Gun Company with a steel-maker, Albert Vickers and they supplied the first reliable guns to the British army in March 1887. These were 0.45-inch calibre, water-cooled weapons, weighing some 60lb (27.25kg).

In July 1888 he amalgamated with the firm of Thorsten Nordenfelt, a Swede, who was building a handcranked gun designed by Helge Palmcrantz in works on the Thames at Erith, east of Greenwich. It was not a happy relationship and Nordenfelt resigned from the Maxim Nordenfelt Guns & Ammunition Company in 1890, but the acquisition of manufacturing capacity continued and by 1893 the company had works at Erith, Crayford, Dartford and Birmingham in England as well as in Stockholm in Sweden and Placentia in Spain. The firm changed its name to Vickers, Sons and Maxim Limited on 1 October 1897, but guns were still being stamped *Maxim-Nordenfelt* later that year and possibly into the next. Maxim became a British citizen in 1900 and was knighted in 1901. He became more interested in his heavier-than-air, steam-powered flying machine, which flew earlier than that of the Wright brothers, and eventually retired in 1911, upon which the company name was changed to Vickers Limited. Sir Hiram Maxim died in Streatham, London on 24 November 1916.

### See also:

[Maxim-Nordenfelt Pom-Pom](#); [Maxim-Vickers Machine-gun](#).

### Reference:

Goldsmith, Dolf L., ed. R. Blake Stevens, *The Devil's Paintbrush: Sir Hiram Maxim's Gun* (Toronto, Collector Grade Publications, 1989).

## Maxim-Nordenfelt Pom-Pom

The 1-pounder (1.457-inch/3.7cm) gun that became known, because of the noise of its steady rate of fire, as the Pom-Pom was descended from the hand-cranked guns principally intended for use by the navy. The British soldier was to regret his own army's lack of interest when he encountered the weapon in the hands of the Boers. They recognised its handiness and mobility in difficult country and used it, after the British had discovered the wisdom of taking cover, less to inflict damage than to restrict movement and prevent the return of fire.

The guns manufactured by the French factory of the American designer Hotchkiss and by the British factory of the Swedish inventor Nordenfelt were turned by hand and thus were vulnerable to, at best, jamming or, at worst, exploding should a round fail to go off promptly. The guns were,

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lutely at all times under the control of the officer commanding the battalion."

## See also:

[Maxim, Sir Hiram](#); [MaximVickers Machine-gun](#).

## Reference:

Goldsmith, Dolf L., ed. R. Blake Stevens, *The Devil's Paintbrush: Sir Hiram Maxim's Gun* (Toronto, Collector Grade Publications, 1989); *Machine Guns; Answers Received at the War Office to Additional Questions on Machine Guns and Pom-Poms asked in Army Orders in South Africa* (57/Cape/8122, National Army Museum 7805–26).

## Maxim-Vickers Machinegun

The invention of the fully automatic quick-firing gun by Hiram Maxim followed an appreciation of the limitations of existing hand-cranked weapons. It reached the zenith of its effectiveness in the close conditions of trench warfare during the First World War, but the first opportunity to demonstrate its powers came in South Africa where it was used mainly as a support weapon for attacking infantry. Its potential in defence was recognised but the conditions to use it were rarely available.

The first practical machine-gun was the invention of Dr Richard Jordan Gatling, an American inventor who offered it to his government in 1863. Another American, Hotchkiss, made the next gun of note and went to France to manufacture it. The guns by Nordenfelt and Gardner followed. These were all hand operated, three by a crank and one, the Nordenfelt, by a lever like a pump. However, this method of operation disturbed the aim, and they were all fed from magazines of limited capacity. Furthermore, because cartridges could not be relied upon to go off at precisely the same interval after the firing-pin struck them, it was possible for the operator to be caught in the act of extracting a "hang-fire" cartridge, that is, one that is in the process of exploding. The result is that part of it gets driven into the breech, jamming the gun, and part can set off the rounds while still in the magazine. Maxim's gun harnessed the recoil automatically to eject the spent cartridge, chamber a new one, close the breech block and fire the weapon. A "hang fire" would merely slow the action fractionally. It was an advance of immense practical importance.

The first true machine-gun was the subject of Hiram Maxim's Patent No. 3493 of 16 July 1883 and he was supplying the British army with his guns by March 1887. These were 0.45-inch water-cooled weapons, weighing 60lb (27.25kg). At the same time, smokeless powder was replacing black powder in the wake of the French decision to adopt the new propellant in 1885. Maxim's re-design produced the .45 calibre "world standard" version of which 120 were delivered in 1890. The calibre of the chamber was influenced by that of the guns already in use. The Royal Navy, for example, had been using, and was still using, .45 Gardners and Nordenfelts, and so had .45 ammunition. The Maxims were therefore similarly chambered. In 1891 the British adopted the "small" .303 bullet with

smokeless powder. The Maxim of the same calibre came into production at Enfield in July 1893 and the older guns were converted from February 1899.

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The rate of fire was 500 rounds a minute, but as the belts had 250 rounds and as firing had to be in bursts to avoid overheating, this figure is somewhat academic.

The weapon attracted considerable interest. When the Chinese Ambassador to London, Li Hung Chang, wanted to see a demonstration, Maxim rented the estate of Mrs Beeton, of cookery book fame, in order to have trees to cut down with machine-gun fire. In 1891 John Moses and Matthew Browning patented what was manufactured as the Colt air-cooled gas-hammer machine-gun which Maxim did his best to discredit. At the same time he designed his own air-cooled lightweight model, the "Extra Light" which weighed 27lb (12,25kg) by itself and 44.5lb (20kg) with tripod. It was not a great success.

The evaluation of the Maxim by the army was generally favourable. The *Reports on Equipment from South Africa: Machine Guns (57/Cape/8122)* was a compilation of replies to set questions. There was consistent complaint of jamming, probably the result of dirt and dust or of faulty ammunition, and of maladjustment of the spring, which suggests insufficient training of the men. The Colt and Hotchkiss found favour because, being air-cooled, they were light, and, overall, the tripod and pack-horse configuration was preferred to the Dundonald carriage which was unstable. Almost all commentators pointed out the machinegun's power as a defensive weapon, a message that, by the First World War, was forgotten.

See also:

[Maxim, Sir Hiram](#); [Maxim-Nordenfelt Pom-Pom](#).

Reference:

Goldsmith, Dolf L., ed. R. Blake Stevens, *The Devil's Paintbrush: Sir Hiram Maxim's Gun* (Toronto, Collector Grade Publications, 1989); *Reports on Equipment from South Africa: Machine Guns (57/Cape/8122)*, National Army Museum 7805–26).

## **Maximov, Colonel Yevgeny Yakovlevich,**

**1849–1904**

Maximov was an example of the restless adventurers who divided their time between military service and quixotic expeditions. He served briefly in the war on the side of the Boers, but, like the majority of foreign volunteers, achieved little of significance although he left behind a good story.

Yevgeny Maximov was born in St Petersburg, Russia and joined the Life Guards Mounted Grenadier Regiment in 1869. His varied career included a period of service in the Russian Gendarmerie from 1881 to 1884, which would lead many of his countrymen to treat him with suspicion. In 1896 he was denied entry into Ethiopia with a Russian Red Cross mission but contrived

to get there anyhow. He then threw himself into the conflict between Turks and Greeks on the side of the latter. He went to South Africa to support the Boers and attempted to raise a force of volunteers, but failed. In March 1900 he was offered the post of second-in-command of the European Legion by Colonel Count Georges de Villebois-Mareuil and Maximov had started to perform his duties when Villebois-Mareuil was killed at the Battle of Boshof on 5 April. The European

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Legion broke up and Maximov took command of the Hollander Corps. On 30 April they were engaged at Thaba 'Nchu and Maximov was seriously wounded. Declared unfit for further service, he left the country at the end of May. Maximov was killed in the war between Russia and Japan.

**See also:**

[Boer Forces](#); [Thaba 'Nchu](#); [Villebois-Mareuil, Colonel Count Georges de](#).

**Reference:**

Davidson, Apollon and Irina Filatova, *The Russians and the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1998).

## Medical Services

The medical facilities in support of both British and Boer armies in the formal, set-piece phase of the war were excellent. The wounded were usually removed to field hospitals quite quickly and aseptic surgery and general anaesthetics were employed. However, in the mobile warfare of the guerrilla period treatment was often delayed and the Boers were not able to support their men with medical help, so they left their wounded behind, confident that they would be treated by the British, as they were. The problem the British found far more difficult to deal with was the outbreak of enteric or typhoid fever caused by polluted water. Twice as many British died of disease as fell to Boer action.

The British Royal Army Medical Corps was established in 1898 under the aegis of Lord Lansdowne, Secretary of State for War. There were twenty-eight field ambulances or hospitals, that is, mobile units, five stationary hospitals and sixteen general hospitals in which 22,000 troops were treated for wounds or injuries. The wounded were brought in by stretcher-bearers (among whom were the men of the Indian Ambulance Corps) and subjected to the process of triage. This divided them into three groups: those lightly wounded who could wait for treatment; those severely wounded and unlikely to survive who were given pain relief; and those badly wounded but possible to save who received immediate attention.

X-rays were used to locate bullets in the body and flesh wounds were usually successfully handled, but chest and abdominal wounds were less so. Shock was not understood and blood transfusions could not be performed as the discovery of blood groups came only in 1902.

The Boer forces were supported for the first part of the war by their existing civilian hospitals and by the volunteer ambulance units sent from overseas. Later in the war some formations had a doctor of their own, such as Dr von Rennenkampf who treated the wounded Lord Methuen when Koos De la Rey defeated him at Tweebosch on 7 March 1902. Others relied on the British to look after their wounded.

**See also:**

[Conan Doyle, Arthur](#); [Indian Ambulance Corps](#).

## Reference:

Lee, Emmanoel, *To the Bitter End* (London, Viking, 1985); Treeves, Frederick, *The Tale of a Field Hospital* (London, Cassell, 1900).

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## Methuen, Lieutenant-General Lord,

**1845–1932**

Paul Sanford, third Baron Methuen, joined the Scots Guards in 1864 and served in the Ashanti Expeditionary Force in 1874 and the Bechuanaland Expedition of 1884–85. In November 1899 he arrived to assume command of the 1st Army Corps in the western theatre and fought, in swift succession, the Battles of Belmont, Graspan, Modder River and Magersfontein. The latter was a failure, one of the defeats of "Black" Week, as the British press called it. He was active throughout the guerrilla phase of the war, defeating the European Legion at Boshof on 5 April 1900 and being defeated by Koos De la Rey at Tweebosch on 7 March 1902. He became friends with De la Rey after the war. In 1908 he became General Officer Commanding forces in South Africa.

### See also:

[Belmont, Battle of](#); [Boshof, Battle of](#); [Graspan, Battle of](#); [Magersfontein, Battle of](#); [Modder River, Battle of](#); [Tweebosch, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Meyer, General Lucas,

**1846–1902**

In 1884 Lucas Johannes Meyer became President of the New Republic, a territory of some 3,000 square miles (7,500 sq km) granted to the Boers by the Zulu chief Dinzulu in recognition of Boer help against the Mandhlakazi. Britain recognised the republic two years later, but in 1888 it merged with the Transvaal. Meyer was well disposed to the *uitlanders* and opposed the policies of President Kruger, but when war broke out he fought for the Boers. He fought at the Battle of Talana but fell ill outside Ladysmith within the next two weeks and thereafter played only a modest part in affairs.

### See also:

[Lombard's Kop, Action at](#); [Talana, Battle of](#).

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Middelburg, Conference at,

**28 February 1901**

The peace discussions at Middelburg produced concrete proposals that were approved by the British Government in London. The position of black Africans was to be more to the Boer liking, but their allies in the British colonies were left in jeopardy and the terms were therefore rejected. However, they were used as a benchmark in later talks.

After a series of overtures starting in November 1900, a meeting was finally arranged in the town of Middelburg on the Delagoa Bay railway east of Pretoria, between the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener

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and one of the Boer leaders, Commandant-general Louis Botha. Peace terms were discussed, including an *ex gratia* payment of one million pounds to the Boers and a general amnesty associated with Crown Colony status for the former republics. There was no question of a grant of independence. In his letter of 7 March, summarising the terms as modified by the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, Kitchener also wrote: "As regards the extension of the franchise to Kaffirs in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, it is not the intention . . . to give such franchise before representative government is granted to those Colonies, and if then given will be so limited as to secure the just predominance of the white race. The legal position of coloured persons will, however, be similar to that which they hold in Cape Colony." On 16 March he received a message from Botha rejecting the terms, apparently because the Boers the British regarded as rebels in Cape Colony were not subject to the amnesty.

See also:

[Peace Negotiations](#); [Documents: The Middelburg Proposals](#).

Reference:

Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## Military Attachés

The war attracted considerable attention from the military of other countries. Attachés from America, France, Germany and Japan accompanied both British and Boer forces and Norway and Russia had men with the Boer armies. The Germans went as far as publishing their own account of the war, but only to the end of 1900, thereby neglecting the guerrilla phase.

Reference:

Great General Staff, Berlin, translated by Hubert du Cane and W. H. H. Waters, *The War in South Africa* (London, John Murray, 1902; New York, Negro Universities Press, 1969).

## Milner, Lord,

**1854–1924**

In 1897 the then Sir Alfred Milner was appointed Governor of the Colony of the Cape of Good Hope and High Commissioner for South Africa. He promoted the crisis that led to war in 1899 in order to make a union of South African colonies ruled by Britain possible, and acted to influence peace

proposals accordingly. He was an unashamed, indeed a proud, imperialist.

Alfred Milner was born in Germany and educated there and in England. He was a brilliant scholar at Oxford and became a lawyer. He had experience in government in Egypt, and after the fiasco of the Jameson Raid which ended in triumph for the Boers in 1896, the British required a man of strong vision and political reliability in South Africa. In order to undermine President Kruger's power, he pressed the cause of the *uitlanders*, the foreigners who had flooded into the South African Republic after the discovery of gold and now found themselves without the vote and heavily taxed. At the Bloemfontein Conference in 1899 he stood firm against any pro

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posals that might receive Kruger's approval and when the war came at last, he welcomed it. Milner was fully aware of the fighting ability of the Boers and was prepared to endure the cost of the war. He was created Baron Milner of St James's and of Capetown by the King on 24 May 1901 during a visit to England.

During the final peace negotiations Milner attempted to keep the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener in check as the latter was keen to negotiate an agreement that would promote reconciliation between the white peoples of South Africa. Neither paid any attention to the original contention that the war was, to some extent at least, intended to protect the civil rights of other sections of the population. After the war Milner was instrumental in restoring the broken economy of South Africa, but was undone by another crisis in the gold mines. The need for underground workers was met by the importation of Chinese indentured labourers, who were so much resented by the *uitlanders* that Boer and British found a common political cause in a racial issue and united against the colonial power. The Chinese were flogged "like Africans" which raised a storm in London. Beset from both sides, Milner resigned in 1905. He returned to government in 1914 to serve on various committees concerned with the conduct of the First World War and became a member of the War Council in 1916. He became Minister of War in April 1918 and later Secretary of State for the Colonies. He died from the bite of a tsetse fly.

See also:

[Bloemfontein Conference](#); [Concentration Camps, White](#); [Peace Negotiations](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## **Modderfontein, Action at,**

### **17 September 1901**

When Assistant Commandant-general Jan Smuts was attempting to enter Cape Colony, a British post was established on the Elands River, twelve miles (20km) north of Tarkastad, half-way between Cradock and Queenstown in the eastern Cape, at a farm called Modderfontein, in order to guard against his crossing. C Squadron, the 17th Lancers, had a 9-pounder gun and a Maxim, but Smuts nonetheless overran them, with about thirty Boers killed and wounded but having inflicted more than twice that damage on the British. The arrival of A Squadron drove Smuts off.

See also:

## Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

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## **Modderfontein, Battle of,**

**31 January 1901**

A British post on the farm of Modderfontein, twenty-five miles (40km) north-west of Potchefstroom in the South African Republic (Transvaal), was attacked and overwhelmed after nearly two days' fighting by a large force led by Assistant Commandant-general Jan Smuts. A missionary, Canon Farmer, reported in a private letter: ". . . at Modderfontein . . . the Natives – all of whom I knew – were there in their village: the Boers under Smuts captured this post last month & when afterwards a column visited the place they found the bodies of all the Kaffirs murdered and unburied." Although driven off by a British relieving force in a series of actions between 2 and 5 February, Smuts maintained his control of this part of the Gatsrand hills until he left for Cape Colony in September.

### **See also:**

[Africans, Black](#); [Cape Colony, Invasions of](#); [Leliefontein, Massacre at](#); [Smuts, Assistant Commandant-general Jan C.](#)

### **Reference:**

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## **Modder River (or Twee Riviere), Battle of,**

**28 November 1899**

After Lord Methuen's rather expensive success at Graspan on 25 November, it appeared that the next obstacle on the way to the relief of Kimberley would be the kopjes at Spytfontein and Magersfontein. It must have been a surprise to the British when the station master at Modder River sent the news that the Boers had blown up the bridge and were in occupation. However, Methuen was reassured by the possession of a map of that area drawn from memory by Captain W. A. J. O'Meara, R.E. When the Guards Brigade and the 9th Brigade advanced across the flat ground south of the river, they were suddenly enveloped in rifle fire from trenches dug on the southern bank. They were pinned down in the open and the Guards attempted a right flanking movement, only to find the Riet River running south alongside their position. It was not until a crossing place was found on the left, late in the day, that the

British made progress. The next day dawned to reveal empty Boer positions, but the battle had been very costly.

The map prepared by Captain O'Meara was based on no more than a visit to the site. In the months before the war he had been expressly ordered not to raise tensions by carrying out formal surveys with instruments. The map is entitled *Sketch of Modder River Railway Bridge* and is annotated in some detail. The date reads 19 October 1899 and as Kimberley was invested on 14 October, the document must have been smuggled out of the town. By the time Methuen made use of it, two months' rains had invalidated the comments on how fordable the river was and possibly on the amount of

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## Moedwil, Action at,

**30 September 1901**

Koos De la Rey demonstrated his ability to deliver severe blows to the British at Moedwil, but lost heavily and failed to acquire any supplies, particularly ammunition which was badly needed. Colonel Kekewich showed his abilities as a commander, fighting off a surprise attack and vindicating himself from the attempts made by Cecil Rhodes to blacken his reputation by criticising his conduct at Kimberley.

On 30 September 1901 at 4.40 a.m. a bivouacked column commanded by Colonel R. G. Kekewich was engaged by Vecht-general J. C. G. Kemp at the farm of Moedwil, fifteen miles (25km) west of Rustenburg in the western Transvaal. At the same time Assistant Commandant-general Koos De la Rey sent other units to outflank the British. The advancing Boers were discovered by a patrol and a fierce fight ensued, ending when the British managed to outflank the outflankers. The action ceased at 6 a.m., but the losses were great. Eleven Boers were killed, thirty-five wounded and ten made prisoner, while on the British side sixty-three were killed and 151 wounded, including Kekewich himself. The Boers were buried at Dwarsspruit and the British at Moedwil and at Rustenburg. These burials are said to be among the few that have not been consolidated in later memorial burial grounds.

See also:

[Kekewich, Lieutenant-colonel R. G.](#); [Kimberley, Siege of](#); [Rhodes, Cecil](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Wulfsohn, Lionel, "Moedwil", *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 87, 1996.

**Morant, Harry Harbord,**

*The Breaker*

**1865?-1902**

On 27 February 1902 two Australian officers of the Bushveldt Carbineers were executed by firing squad at Pretoria prison, having been found guilty of murdering Boer prisoners. Lieutenants H. H. Morant and P. J. Handcock died and Lieutenant G. R. Witton was sentenced to life imprisonment. Knowledge of the manner of their trial and punishment reached Australia by an indirect route about a month later; Handcock's widow learnt of her husband's death because a lodger read of it in a newspaper. While the world press generally applauded the verdict and Lord Kitchener's approval of the sentence, the delay fed Australian rumours of a cover-up. Although it is certain that the men were guilty of the actions of which they were accused, some question remains about the status of those actions. The principal defence was obedience to orders and here, as at the Nuremburg trials after the Second World War, it was found wanting. This has not prevented Breaker Morant becoming a symbolic victim of the allegedly arrogant British elite. A practical outcome was that Australia assumed complete responsibility for the enforcement of discipline in Australian units.

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In September Morant led a successful expedition to capture another band of Boers and, with the congratulations of his superiors ringing in his ears, went on leave. On his return late in October he and other officers of the BVC were arrested. It was a fortnight before charges were brought. Major Lenehan was charged with neglect. Morant, Handcock, Witton and a British officer, Lieutenant Harry Picton, were charged with murdering Visser and these four, with the exception of Picton, were also charged with the murder of the eight Boers. Handcock was accused of killing Heese, and there were yet further charges in respect of other deaths. It was December before they were informed they would be court-martialled and it was not until 15 January 1902 that written charges were laid and they were told that Major J. F. Thomas, a lawyer in private life, was to defend them. The trial on the Visser case started the next day in Pietersburg.

The defence offered by Morant consisted of justification on the grounds that the victim was wearing not merely British uniform, but Captain Hunt's clothes. Witnesses threw doubt on this and Trooper Theunis Johannes Botha, Morant's interpreter in the field, directly denied the testimony. On the morning of 24 January 1902 the Boers attacked Pietersburg and Morant and Handcock were given weapons and took part in the successful defence. In the afternoon the Visser case resumed. In February the Eight Boers Case began, the verdict in the Visser case being withheld for the time being. The facts were not disputed, but the standing of the Boers, said to be mere bandits, and the orders not to take prisoners, were the two main planks of the defence. The case of the three Boers was met with the assertion that they were Hunt's killers. It was for the murder of these and other Boers that Handcock, Witton and Morant were found guilty. They were acquitted of the murder of Heese and thus the suggestion that international politics had a part in their punishments is without foundation. Most of the charges against the English officers failed; only Picton was found guilty and he was expelled from the army. This fuelled a belief in Australia that the proceedings had been prejudiced, in spite of the fact that the British who were accused denied the facts in those cases, which contrasted with the admissions of Morant and his co-accused. Breaker Morant and Peter Handcock were shot by a 16-man squad of Cameron Highlanders at 6 a.m. on 27 February. To the end their courage held. They lie in a shared grave in a Pretoria cemetery.

## Reference:

Denton, Kit, *Closed File* (Adelaide, Rigby, 1983); Wallace, R. L., *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra, The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Printing Office, 1976).

## **Mostertshoek, Battle of,**

**3–4 April 1900**

After his victory at Sannaspos on 31 March 1900, Commandant-general Christiaan De Wet scouted

towards his home town of Dewetsdorp to see what forces the British had there. Meanwhile Lord Roberts, becoming

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## N

### Naauwpoort

The Capetown–Kimberley and the Capetown–Bloemfontein railways were joined by a line from De Aar on the former to Naauwpoort Junction on the latter. Naauwpoort is in Cape Colony south of Colesburg and it became one of three key supply centres for the British.

#### Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

### Naboomspruit, Ambush near,

#### 4 July 1901

The ambush of the armoured train which was guarded by the 2nd Gordon Highlanders was, in the context of the war as a whole, a trivial incident but it does illustrate the kind of attack with which the Boers were regularly troubling British transport. It also illustrates how, on both sides, the fighting was becoming increasingly cold-blooded.

Naboomspruit lies on the railway between Nylstroom and Pietersburg, north of Pretoria. The station there had been fortified under the command of Lieutenant C. W. Barton, 2nd Northamptonshire Regiment. A train going north stopped and Barton entertained its commander, Lieutenant A. A. Dunlop Best, to lunch. That afternoon, on the return trip, the train was ambushed, the line blown up and about a dozen soldiers and civilians, including Dunlop Best, killed. Barton wrote that Assistant Commandant-general C. F. Beyers intervened to prevent the plundering of the wounded, but had failed to stop his men shooting the train driver in cold blood. Barton and his men, black and white, brought in the wounded and buried the dead.

Shortly before Barton wrote his journal entry of 17 August another ambush was attempted. This time the train stopped before it was derailed and the Gordons opened fire. Barton writes of the action of the man who set the explosives: "[He] put up his hands & cried 'Gentlemen, I surrender' but the men of Best's regiment remembering the 4th July were not inclined to give quarter & he with 6 others were buried close to the road crossing the rail, with an inscription designed in jam tins 'Here lie 7 Train Wreckers'." As the war went on, humane behaviour became rarer.

See also:

[Blockhouses.](#)

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## Reference:

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## Natal

Natal, on the south-eastern coast of South Africa, was separated from the lands of the Boer republics by the mountains surrounding the northern wedge of the territory and was flanked to the east by Zululand. It had been under British rule since 1843, and was an apparently secure base for operations against the Boers, and thus a prime target for them in war.

The British colony of Natal grew from a coastal settlement, Port Natal, which by 1824 was well established with the permission of Shaka, ruler of the Zulu, who had devastated the hinterland to the north. A decade later the Voortrekkers arrived under Piet Retief who attempted to treat with the new Zulu chief, Dingane, for a grant of land. This was made but immediately invalidated by the slaughter of Retief and most of the whites in Natal; Port Natal itself was abandoned. The penalty visited upon the Zulu was immense. At the Battle of Blood River on 16 December 1837 the Boers, under Andries Pretorius, won an overwhelming victory. By 1840 the republic of Natalia had come into being with its capital at Pietermaritzburg, and a policy of denial of rights to black Africans except for servants.

The British were disturbed by the effects the republic had on black African peoples on the borders and by the numbers of black refugees being ejected from the territory. They were also interested in having an additional port on the route to India. They therefore reoccupied Port Natal in 1843 and annexed the whole territory. In addition to farming, the growing of sugar cane was a potentially important industry in Natal and indentured Indian labourers were brought in to work in the cane fields. These workers, once their indentures had been worked out, acquired land or went into business and by 1904 numbered more than 100,000, a slightly larger population than the Europeans, despite the antagonism of the government. Zululand was incorporated into Natal on 30 December 1897.

Coal was found in the north of the colony at Elandslaagte, Dundee and Newcastle, adding a further dimension to the economy and increasing commercial interest in maintaining control of the north; this was possibly a factor in the tactics adopted – of moving British troops north beyond the Tugela River – when war threatened in 1899.

## Reference:

Laband, John, *Rope of Sand* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball, 1995), and as *The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Nation* (London, Arms and Armour Press, 1995); Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

# Nek

A pass between hills.

## Newcastle

The most northerly town of importance in Natal, Newcastle was occu-

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ried by the Boers under Assistant Commandant-general D. J. E. Erasmus on 15 October 1899. After looting it, they moved on. It was reoccupied by the British in May 1900 and was briefly the headquarters of General Sir Redvers Buller. It was on the railway between the port of Durban and the Transvaal, and therefore became a British supply centre.

See also:

[Botha's Pass, Action at.](#)

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **Nicholson's Nek, Action at,**

### **30 October 1899**

As the British fell back towards Ladysmith before the Boer advance into Natal, the danger of a siege became evident to Lieutenant-general Sir George White, who was in command of British forces in the colony. He decided to attack positions on Pepworth Hill, but the true battle took place on the flanks, at Lombard's Kop and on Tchrengula, the hill south of the pass of Nicholson's Nek. A night advance to the Nek went wrong, forcing Lieutenant-colonel F. R. C. Carleton to seek a defensive position on the hill where he was attacked by a Boer force including Christiaan De Wet. An unauthorised white flag was raised by an isolated and surrounded group of the Glosters, and was seen and accepted by the Boers. Carleton therefore felt obliged to honour this and surrendered on behalf of his thirty-seven officers and 917 men, mostly from 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, to their fury and bewilderment, while sixty-nine men lay dead and a further 249 were wounded. The day was dubbed Mournful Monday.

The purpose of the British force sent to Nicholson's Nek was to cut off the Boer retreat that the attack at Pepworth Hill was expected to precipitate. Carleton had six companies of 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers and five-and-a-half companies, 450 men, of 1st Gloucestershire Regiment, together with 10th Mountain Battery. The Battery was equipped with six dismountable guns, which, with the 600 rounds of ammunition they took, were carried on 133 mules. The muleteers were black Africans, Cape Boys (sic), and numbered 55 men. The whole force consisted of 1,149 men and 250 animals and moved off from the railway junction in Ladysmith alongside Bell Spruit northwards at 11.15 p.m. on Sunday night. They had difficulty both with navigating and with marching over rough ground in the dark. By 1 a.m. they had only just reached a point alongside the southern tip of Tchrengula and Carleton decided that the risk of being caught in the valley with Boers on the hills above as dawn broke was too great. He chose to take to the hills. It was rough, hard climbing. A Boer piquet (a small

group of soldiers acting as sentinels) was disturbed and fled, passing clean through the British. Mules slipped, then panicked, then stampeded. Men and animals tumbled down the slope. The guns went with them, as well as the infantry's ammunition reserve. Most of the men made it to the top and hurried to build stone shelters.

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When daylight came they found themselves under fire from Surprise Hill to the south, from the east across the valley and attacked from the north along the ridge by 400 ZARPS (police) led by Commandant G. M. J. van Dam and 150 Free Staters under Commandant L. P. Steenkamp and Christiaan De Wet. De Wet was of the opinion that the British were well placed with good cover in the rough ground on the southern end of the hill. However, the British line was at right angles to the spine of the hill so that the far ends of each line were not visible to one another. This led to a signalling muddle and one end withdrew, forcing the other to follow suit. The Boers rushed forward to take advantage of the abandoned sangars and redoubled their fire. A white flag was shown by an isolated and surrounded group of the Glosters under Captains Duncan and Fyffe and the Boers, assuming this signalled a general surrender of all the British, rose up to accept it. Carleton felt obliged to order the cease-fire and led his men into captivity.

See also:

[Ladysmith, Siege of; Lombard's Kop, Action at.](#)

Reference:

Chisholm, Ruari, *Ladysmith* (London, Osprey Publishing, 1979); De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable & Co., 1902); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando: A Boer Journal of the Boer War* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## Nguni People

The two main groups of Bantu-speaking people in South Africa are the Sotho-Tswana and the Nguni. The latter is the group to which the Zulu belong, together with the Swazi, Pondo, Thembu and Xhosa of the south and eastern coast and the Ndebele of the Transvaal. That the Nguni were present in south-east Africa in the 15th century seems likely and that they were there in the 16th is certain.

See also:

[Zulu, The.](#)

Reference:

Knight, Ian J., *Warrior Chiefs of Southern Africa* (Poole, Firebird, 1994); Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## Nooitgedacht, Battle of,

## 13 December 1900

The confidence, or perhaps complacency, with which the British viewed the war after the fall of Pretoria and the return of Lord Roberts, the former Commander-in-Chief, to England is illustrated by the victory, incomplete though it was, of the Boers at Nooitgedacht. Major-general R. A. P. Clements camped on the supply route from Johannesburg to Rustenburg in the valley between the Magaliesberg and the Witwatersberg hills, comfortably close to a good supply of water. The Boers attacked both from the Magaliesbergs and along the valley from the west, forcing the British to make a fighting retreat. Only the eagerness of the Boers for booty, their vital means

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of supply, prevented a more comprehensive victory. It became clear to the new Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, that the war was not yet over.

Clements's camp was close under the hills on the northern side of the valley with the Northumberland Fusiliers on the edge of the heights above. Deneys Reitz was with the forces of Assistant Commandant-general C. F. Beyers on the hills while the men of Assistant Commandant-general Koos De la Rey were to attack at dawn along the valley. As dawn broke Beyers's men, approaching on foot, were seen by the Northumberlands, who opened fire. From behind a rock, looking down, Reitz saw: ". . .from behind a jutting shoulder of the mountain came swinging into view a force of mounted men who galloped hard for the English camp". The British fought off the attack and their companions on the hills then, according to Reitz, made a mistake: they cheered. Beyers's burghers rose and, quite uncharacteristically, charged the British. They took the position with heavy losses – twenty-five dead and some seventy wounded. The British casualties were similar, with men taken prisoner in addition. Reitz and his companions then went on to clear the ravine which communicated with the camp below, and this is when Reitz unintentionally made use of an "explosive" bullet.

In the valley the attack was renewed by De la Rey's men and by burghers coming down the ravine. The British fell back to a hill south of the river near Hartebeestfontein, now called Yeomanry Hill in honour of the 20th (Fife and Forfar) Imperial Yeomanry who fought so well here. They retrieved the heavy gun and covered the retreat westwards to Reitfontein. Clements may have chosen a poor position originally, but he acted decisively to get his men out of trouble. On the British side around 250 men were killed or wounded compared to the Boers' 100 and in addition over 300 British were made prisoner. If the Boers had not ransacked the camp, much to their commanders' fury, they might have done even greater damage. Reitz remarks: "We considered that the object of the attack was to capture supplies, and not soldiers, as soldiers would have to be liberated for want of somewhere to keep them . . . we loaded our [horses] with spoil in the shape of tea, coffee, salt, sugar, food, clothing, books and other luxuries of which we had long been deprived . . . We were refitted from head to heel, we carried a Lee-Metford rifle apiece. . .".

See also:

[Boer Tactics](#); [Dum-dum Bullets](#).

Reference:

Gilmour, John, ed. Patrick Mileham, *Clearly My Duty* (East Linton, Tuckwell Press, 1996); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando: A Boer Journal of the Boer War* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

The railway from the Cape to Bloemfontein crosses the Orange River at Norval's Pont. The place was taken by

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## O

### **Olifant's Nek, De Wet's Escape at,**

#### **August 1900**

The road running south from Rustenburg in the western Transvaal passes through the Magaliesberg hills by way of Olifant's Nek. When, in August 1900, the Boer Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet had been harried out of the Orange Free State, he made for the north, pursued by the British, who missed the opportunity to trap him at this pass.

While the British were still conducting conventional warfare against the Boers east of Pretoria, De Wet's guerrilla war had begun in the Orange Free State with actions such as the Battle of Roodewal on 7 June 1900. His success encouraged the British to redouble their efforts to catch him but they failed to do this in the Brandwater Basin in July. The attempt to prevent his crossing the River Vaal also failed and by 6 August, at Schoeman's Drift, he entered the Transvaal. The day before the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, had ordered Colonel R. G. Kekewich to vacate Olifant's Nek which had been captured on 21 July.

Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen's Division gave chase. De Wet fought, ran, and fought again, burning the veldt both to deny the British grazing and to make the khaki of their uniforms more prominent. Roberts's Chief of Staff, Lord Kitchener, was trying to co-ordinate the operation and telegraphed his superior to ask Lieutenant-general Ian Hamilton to move from Commando Nek on the Pretoria to Rustenburg road, north of the Magaliesberg, to block Olifant's Nek. Hamilton elected to move south of the hills, along the valley bounded by the Witwatersberg to the south and he failed to make haste. On the afternoon of 14 August De Wet hurried over the pass; Hamilton arrived that evening.

See also:

[De Wet, Chief-commandant Christiaan.](#)

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

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## Olivier, Commandant J. H.

In 1863, at the age of fifteen, Olivier joined the Orange Free State Border Police and was promoted to field cornet two years later. He fought in the last war against the Basotho. He commanded the Rouxville and Thaba 'Nchu commandos at the outbreak of the war and fought in the Battle of Stormberg. He avoided capture in the Brandwater Basin in July 1900, slipping away with the Harrismith commando through the Golden Gate before Major-general Bruce Hamilton's force could close the gap. He moved west in the direction of Winburg on the Bloemfontein to Kroonstad road and, some ten miles (16km) north-east of the town, happened upon a British patrol at a farm called Helpmakaar on the Vet River. The approach of a relieving force allowed the British to escape, but Olivier's insistence in proceeding, on 26 August, to attack Winburg itself led to his capture and that of his three sons. They were sent as prisoners-of-war to Ceylon (Sri Lanka).

### See also:

[Brandwater Basin, Surrender at; Stormberg, Battle of.](#)

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Wilson, H. W., *After Pretoria: the Guerilla War* (London, Amalgamated Press, 1902).

## O'Okiep, Siege of,

**4 April–4 May 1902**

The long ride of Assistant Commandant-general Jan Smuts through Cape Colony ended in the far north-west where he besieged the copper-mining town of O'Okiep (Okiep). The British were forced to respond with the creation of a relieving force, but already moves towards peace had been made towards Boer leaders in the Transvaal. Although the siege continued after Smuts had left to attend the peace talks and only ceased on the arrival of the Namaqualand Field Force, it had no influence on the outcome of the war.

Lieutenant-colonel W. A. D. Shelton of the Queen's Royal Regiment was appointed Commandant of Namaqualand, the north-western region of Cape Colony, in January 1901. Here there were valuable copper mines worked by people of Cornish origin and located around the three towns of Concordia, Nababeep and O'Okiep. Jan Smuts began his invasion of the colony in September 1901

and, by April, had evaded capture and invested the copper towns. Shelton had made provision for their defence with blockhouses and barbed wire, manned partly by regular troops but mostly by volunteers. The towns were hotly disputed. Concordia fell, but on 26 April Smuts left for the Vereeniging conference taking his brother-in-law, Tottie Krige, and the young Deneys Reitz with him. The continuing siege was left in the hands of Senior Commandant S. G. Maritz. The British relief expedition under Colonel H. Cooper

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was brought by sea to the copper-cargo harbour of Port Nolloth and landed on 12 April. They fought their way along the railway line against Vecht-general J. L. van Deventer's men. On the night of 30 April Maritz sent a train loaded with dynamite towards the town but, fortunately for the British, it came off the rails and the mighty explosion did no harm. At 7.30 a.m. on 4 May the relief column arrived.

See also:

[Cape Colony, Invasions of](#); [Smuts, Assistant Commandant-general Jan C.](#)

Reference:

Burke, Peter, *The Siege of O'Okiep* (Bloemfontein, War Museum of the Boer Republics, 1995);  
Reitz, Deneys, *Commando: A Boer Journal of the Boer War* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929);  
Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## Orange Free State

The area north of the Orange River, south of the Vaal River and north and west of the Drakensberg mountains was progressively settled by Voortrekkers and was taken under British rule as the Orange River Sovereignty in 1848. It was recognised as an independent state, the Orange Free State (Oranje Vrystaat), by the Bloemfontein Convention of 1854. At the time of the outbreak of war in 1899 the president was Marthinus Steyn. The British annexed the territory again in 1900 as the Orange River Colony and it was granted self-government under the peace arrangements of 1902.

See also:

[Bloemfontein Convention](#); [Steyn, Marthinus](#).

## Orange River Station

The railway line from Capetown to Kimberley crossed the river north of Orange River Station, about six miles (10km) east of Hopetown. At the outbreak of the war the bridge was planked between the rails to allow troops to march over instead of having to go north by way of the Old Wagon Bridge on the far side of Hopetown. The area became important as a supply centre. Both white (Doornbult) and black concentration camps were located nearby.

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## Otter, Lieutenant-Colonel W. D.

William Dillon Otter was fifty-six years of age when he accepted the appointment as commander, with acting rank of major, of the Canadian First Contingent on 18 October 1899. He was a professional soldier, and had joined the Queen's Own Rifles in the 1860s. His strict attitude did not suit the relaxed approach of the militia under his command and he earned the nickname of Black Bill. He attempted to contrive a continuation of service by the Canadians beyond the twelve months that expired on 15 October 1900 and had to apologise to the

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Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, when he failed. Otter became Canada's first general.

See also:

[British Forces](#).

Reference:

Reid, Brian A., *Our Little Army in the Field: The Canadians in South Africa 1899–1902* (St Catharines Ontario, Vanwell Publishing, 1996).

## Outspan

To unharness oxen from a wagon. Outspan is also used to suggest dismounting and making ready to camp even where no wagons are present.

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## P

### **Paardeberg, Battle of,**

**18–27 February 1900**

The Boer attempt to withdraw to the east from Magersfontein when Kimberley was relieved was hampered by the families and goods of the burghers. This enabled the British to surround them between Paardeberg and Vendutie Drifts on the Modder River. Lord Kitchener failed to take the Boer laager by storm and Lord Roberts then presided over a siege which ended in the surrender of the entire Boer force, giving the new Commander-in-Chief an encouraging victory and the Boers their first major set-back of the conventional phases of the war. An attempt by De Wet to raise the siege failed.

As Lieutenant-general Sir John French developed his flanking movement to relieve Kimberley, passing to the east of Magersfontein, Assistant Commandant-general Piet Cronjé was forced to recognise that his position entrenched there was untenable. He could either go west, which would cut him off from the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, or head east for Bloemfontein. He chose the latter and the cumbersome convoy of 400 wagons, horses, men, women and children moved off on 15 February, passing to the north of the 6th Division encamped at Klip Drift during the night. At dawn they were seen and actions against their rearguard developed and continued all day. From the south the British summoned Major-general H. A. MacDonald's 3rd (Highland) Brigade and Major-general H. L. Smith-Dorrien's 19th Brigade and the next day, 17 February, they came up to the south of Paardeberg Drift while French's cavalry, or what part of it remained operational after the extreme exertions of relieving Kimberley, cut off Boer movement to the north-east. The 2nd Cavalry Brigade under Colonel R. G. Broadwood occupied the kopjes north of the Modder River, crossing at Vendutie Drift, east of Paardeberg, and the Royal Horse Artillery opened fire. The surprise was complete.

The senior British officer present was Lieutenant-general T. Kelly-Kenny and he made ready to besiege the Boers. Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, was ill but his Chief of Staff, Major-general Lord Kitchener, although with no staff, arrived and assumed command over his senior officer. Kitchener decided to attack across the river from the south-east while, on the flanks, pincer movements would contain the Boers. This complicated operation was made more difficult by Kitchener's

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habit of issuing all orders verbally. In person he could not communicate sufficiently and without staff to carry his orders he could not co-ordinate his forces. By evening the attacks had halted with serious losses, including that of Colonel O. C. Hannay who had led his Mounted Infantry on a futile charge directly ordered by Kitchener. Another blow came with the arrival of Vecht-general Christiaan De Wet from the south. The energetic Boer seized Kitchener's Kopje and the Stinkfontein farm and kopjes, thereby threatening the British rear.

Lord Roberts arrived on the morning of 19 February to take command and the siege began. De Wet heliographed Cronjé and sent Danie Theron secretly with a message to get the fighting men out and surrender the non-combatants, but the old man and his followers refused. The laager was shelled continuously and sniping took its toll on both sides. On 21 February, with his 75mm Krupp and his Pom-Pom running low on ammunition, and with another plea to Cronjé refused, De Wet withdrew, pursued by the British. In the early morning of 27 February the Royal Canadian Regiment attacked and, although they did not break into the laager, it was more than the defenders could stand. White flags appeared. General Smith-Dorrien remarked that so many men popped out of the ground that it was like the resurrection. Cronjé and all his men surrendered, more than 4,000 people altogether, while British losses came to around 303 killed and some 900 wounded. It was the first notable British victory of the war and, what was more, occurred on the anniversary of the Battle of Majuba, the famous Boer victory of 1881.

See also:

[Kimberley, Relief of](#); [Magersfontein, Battle of](#); [Waternat Drift, Action at](#).

Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles and Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Jones, Huw G., and Meurig G. M., *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

**Paterson, A. B. (Banjo),**

**1864–1941**

The poet Andrew Barton Paterson was born in Narambla, near Orange, New South Wales. He became the Sydney *Morning Post*'s correspondent in South Africa and wrote vivid reports of the

Boer War which undoubtedly influenced Australian public opinion. He was critical of British conduct in the war, first the manner of supervising the surrender of weapons by Boers seeking amnesty, and secondly the policy of land clearance.

On the former he wrote: "These old weapons they [the Boers] solemnly

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deposited and went back to the laager again, with brand new Mausers in their hands". On 14 September 1900 his paper published an article in which Paterson wrote: "People who know the facts are of the opinion that no Boers should be left on the farms till the war is over. Even if the farmers did not wish to fight any more, the first commando that came along would make them come out and fight."

See also:

[European Views of the War; Journalists.](#)

Reference:

Wallace, R. L., *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra, The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976).

## Peace Negotiations

To the British, the Boer determination to persist with the war after the irresistible advance of the British armies, which began in May 1900, was difficult to understand; as far as they were concerned, the Boer defeat was inevitable. However, the British underestimated the Boer desire for independence, their belief that God was on their side and their growing stubbornness in the face of British land clearance policies. Thus the first overtures made by Sir Redvers Buller to Assistant Commandant-general C. Botha at Langs Nek in June 1900 came to nothing. Further efforts to contact the Boers with a view to starting talks were hampered by the Boer tendency to regard any of their own people making such an approach as traitors and either to shoot them out of hand or to execute them after trial. In February 1901 the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, met Commandant-general Louis Botha at Middelburg but the proposals emerging from that discussion were rejected by the Boers. In April and May 1902 negotiations were conducted in Pretoria, with the Boer representatives subject to the decisions of their own conference being held in Vereeniging, some fifty miles (80km) to the south on the River Vaal. For their part, the British representatives were subject to the approval of the government in London. In the final terms of the peace treaty, the Boers sacrificed their independence and the British sacrificed the rights of their black African and coloured citizens.

The Middelburg proposals, which eventually formed the basis of the final peace treaty, offered the Boers: an amnesty; the repatriation of their prisoners-of-war; the status of first Crown Colony, but eventually selfgoverning; equal standing for the two languages, Dutch and English; respect for property; payment of certain Boer debts and limited compensation; and no change to the franchise as regards "Kaffirs". These were modified by the Colonial Secretary in London, Joseph Chamberlain, to secure the Kaffirs (sic) the same standing as those in Cape Colony and the details of the amnesty offered were changed to grant less safety to Boer sympathisers within British colonial territories. These proposals were rejected by the Boers.

When, eventually, more substantial discussions were planned for April 1902, following the Klerksdorp conference, safe conduct documents were

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issued to allow representatives of the Boers in the field to convene at Vereeniging because the negotiators required express authority if independence was to be discussed during the negotiations. The lengthy talks are illustrated by extracts from the minutes in the documents section of this book. The initial meeting at Vereeniging opened on Thursday 15 May and closed on Saturday 17 May with instructions to form a commission to meet the British. Then, from 19 to 28 May Louis Botha, Christiaan De Wet, Koos De la Rey, Judge Hertzog and Jan Smuts negotiated with Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener. The time was occupied both by talks and by cabled consultations with the British government in London. On 29 May the peace proposals were taken back to the Vereeniging meeting for a simple 'yes or no' reply. The decision to accept the proposals was taken on Saturday 31 May and the agreement was signed just after 11 p.m. that evening. President Steyn of the Orange Free State was very ill and had handed his powers over to De Wet, who signed the document. On behalf of the South African Republic (Transvaal), Acting President Shalk Burger signed consent.

The final agreement largely followed the Middelburg proposals, with the principal changes of better terms for Cape Colony rebels, more money to reconstruct the economy and meet Boer state debts and, to Boer satisfaction and British shame, an undertaking not to consider a change to the status of black Africans and coloured people prior to the grant of representative government to the former Boer republics. This last provision, as all understood, would deny civil rights to black Africans and coloured people for the foreseeable future.

### See also:

[Klerksdorp Conference](#); [Langs Nek](#); [Middelburg Conference](#); [Documents: Peace Talks](#).

### Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Jackson, Tabitha, *The Boer War* (London, Macmillan, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985).

## Penkoppe

Boer boys and men up to the age of about twenty years were called *penkoppe*. The term covered both those over sixteen years of age who were formally conscripted and younger boys who volunteered to accompany a commando. They were often the under-age relatives of serving burghers, some of them as young as twelve.

### See also:

[Boer Forces](#).

### Reference:

Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Photography

Although the photographic depiction of war was already well established

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with pictures of the Crimean and American Civil wars, the Boer War of 1899–1902 saw not only plate photography as previously carried out, but also stereoscopic pictures, telephoto lens work, amateur roll-film photographs and moving pictures.

On both sides photographers were at work with large-plate cameras mounted on tripods and with black capes under which they crouched to frame their shots. Commercial photographers, such as J. E. Middlebrook of Durban, Frank H. Hancox of Kimberley, and, on the Boer side, M. Bennett and Van Hoepen of Pretoria, recorded life in camp, parades, men standing to arms and, on occasion, soldiers apparently attacking or under attack. The latter were all, or almost all, posed shots. On some pictures the names of both Middlebrook and Van Hoepen appear, and certain pictures of Boers in the field have Middlebrook's Durban mark on them; the pressures of reporting obviously over-ruled loyalties to any one particular faction. The Underwood brothers of the United States published, for door-to-door sale, over 3,000 stereoscopic pictures taken by various photographers whose names are not known. Photography was also used in surveying in order to produce maps, the task of the British Royal Engineers. A 5x4-inch twin lens camera made by Newman and Guardia, with a telephoto lens capability, was used by Lieutenant C. H. Foulkes for this purpose.

The first of two revolutionary changes was the introduction by George Eastman of Rochester, New York of the Kodak roll-film camera in 1888. Two models of camera were widely available at the time of the war. The Folding Pocket Kodak, of which about 60,000 were sold between 1898 and 1902, and the Brownie which, between its launch in 1900 and the end of the war, sold 150,000 (both figures are for sales outside the United States). Not only did this generate a huge number of amateur and unofficial pictures, but it also gave the professional photographer a chance to take pictures in action where the cumbersome plate camera was too difficult and dangerous to use.

The second revolution, moving picture, was not to be fully exploited until later wars, but some moving pictures were taken, for example, of General Sir Redvers Buller. The Biograph machine was patented in the United States in 1896, enabling relatively satisfactory outdoor, on-the-spot movie-making. A movie team was sent to Natal with Buller's army.

See also:

[Journalists](#).

Reference:

Dickson, W. K.-L., *The Biograph in Battle: Its Story in the South African War, Related with Personal Experiences* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1901); Lee, Emanuel, *To the Bitter End* (London, Viking, 1985).

## Pietermaritzburg

The capital of Natal Colony. It was not occupied by the Boers during the war. The nearest they came

to Pietermaritzburg was Nottingham Road, some twenty-five miles (40km) to the north during Commandant-general Piet Joubert's foray south of the

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Tugela River in November 1899. The defensive positions prepared by the Natal Pioneer Corps were therefore not needed.

See also:

[Willow Grange, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **Pieters Hill, Battle of,**

**27 February 1900**

Pieters Hill was the last hill in the line comprising the Tugela Heights, north of the Tugela River. From the top of Pieters Hill, Ladysmith can be seen in one direction and Colenso, the site of the first battle fought by General Sir Redvers Buller against the Boers in December 1899, is visible in the other. The capture of the hill by the British, its southern part by early afternoon and the northern knoll in the late afternoon of 27 February, rendered the Boer positions on these hills and surrounding Ladysmith untenable and forced them into a general retreat from the region.

See also:

[Ladysmith, Siege of; Tugela Heights, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **Platrand, Battle of,**

**6 January 1900**

The Platrand is a long, high hill that covers the southern approaches to Ladysmith. It was in British hands throughout the siege of the town by the Boers, but if it had been taken the continued defence of the town would at least have been compromised, if not rendered impossible. In the early hours of 6 January the Boers attacked Wagon Hill on the west and Caesar's Camp on the east of the Platrand. In

a battle that lasted all day both British and Boers hung on grimly, but the Boers failed to hold any ground on the top of the hill as British counterattacks confined them to the slopes. British reinforcements were summoned by telephone. The cost to both sides was high and no further hand-to-hand attacks were made by the Boers before the end of the siege in February. Had a significant number from the Boer force not elected to absent themselves from an attack considered too dangerous, the outcome might have been different.

The Platrand was not very strongly manned by the British, but Caesar's Camp had been fortified with the construction of walls about seven feet (2m) high and emplacements for artillery on the northern edge with a good field of fire across the hilltop, and there was a low wall along the southern side of Wagon Hill. There was also work in progress on Wagon Hill to make emplacements for a naval 12-pounder and one of the Navy's 4.7-inch guns.

The Boer plan was to attack Cae-

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sar's Camp with about 1,000 Transvaal men under the command of Shalk Burger, while the 400 Orange Free State men under Commandant C. J. de Villiers would take the extreme west, Wagon Point. In the centre 600 men of the Vryheid and Winburg commandos and the German Corps would complete the assault. It was this last group that, in part, decided to stay away. In the first rush the British were pushed back and confused fighting took place in the darkness. The British commander, Colonel Ian Hamilton, was woken by the noise at his headquarters close to the Manchester Regiment's positions at Caesar's Camp and used the telephone to contact Lieutenant-general Sir George White and call for reinforcements. Hamilton himself then set off for Wagon Hill with Major Miller-Walnut and two companies of Gordon Highlanders, cutting himself off from his headquarters and its telephone in the process. He met the expected reinforcements, sent the Gordons back east to the Manchesters and took the Imperial Light Horse west to Wagon Hill. As it grew light the artillery came into action, shelling the southern and eastern edges of the Platrand.

Hamilton was at the new, vacant 4.7-inch gun pit when the Orange Free Staters attacked again. In the confusion two British and two Boers exchanged fire at close quarters around Hamilton; all four were killed, but the colonel survived unscathed. As the afternoon drew on, in a fierce thunderstorm, the men of the Devonshire Regiment clambered up the hill. Hamilton showed their commander, Lieutenant-colonel C. W. Park, the place where, in a little nek at the west of Wagon Hill, the Boers were holding out. The Devons charged forward into almost certain death. Many fell, but the Boers fled. As night fell the remaining Boers could be heard making their way down the hillside. Holding the Platrand had cost the British 424 casualties, 175 of which were fatal. Boer losses are not known exactly, but are said to have been similar.

See also:

[Boer Forces, Discipline](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Tugela Heights, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Chisholm, Ruari, *Ladysmith* (London, Osprey Publishing, 1979); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Park, C. W., *Letters from Ladysmith* (Diary of the Siege no. 3, Ladysmith, Ladysmith Historical Society, 1972).

**Plumer, Brigadier-General H. C. O.,**

**1857–1932**

Herbert Charles Onslow Plumer joined the 65th Foot (York and Lancaster Regiment) in 1876. He served in the Sudan in 1884 and in South Africa in Mashonaland in 1896 when the Shona rising was

put down. He was sent out to South Africa with Lieutenant-colonel Robert Baden-Powell before the outbreak of war in October 1899 to raise troops in Rhodesia, and it was with these men that he took part in the relief of Mafeking in May

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1900. While in command of the Protectorate and Rhodesia regiments he occupied Olifant's Nek on 21 July 1900. He assumed command of Baden-Powell's column later that year and operated in the Delagoa Bay railway line sector until, in February 1901, he was sent to deal with Boer incursions into Cape Colony.

In the First World War Plumer commanded the Second Army of the British Expeditionary Force in France from May 1915 and was responsible for the successful attack on the Messines Ridge in June 1917. He became known as Old Plum.

See also:

[Mafeking, Siege of](#); [Olifant's Nek](#), [De Wet's Escape at](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## **Pole-Carew, Major-General Reginald,**

**1849–1926**

Pole-Carew joined the Coldstream Guards in 1869 and was Private Secretary to the Governor of New South Wales from 1876 to 1877. He served under Sir Frederick (later Lord) Roberts in the Afghan War of 1879–80, then in Egypt and Burma. He became commander of the 9th Brigade after its commander was wounded at the Battle of Belmont, 23 November 1899. His performance at Modder River in breaking the Boer right led to his being given command of the Guards Brigade and he fought with them at Magersfontein and Paardeberg. He was then promoted to command the 11th Division and was at Diamond Hill, Bergendal and the advance to Komatipoort.

See also:

[Modder River, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

**Pont**

A floating bridge or raft-like ferry.

## Poort

Literally a gate, but poort is also used to mean a pass through hills.

### Poplar Grove, Battle of,

**7 March 1900**

After Cronjé's surrender at Paardeberg, Christiaan De Wet was appointed Assistant Commandant-general by President Steyn. He set himself the task of regrouping the remaining Orange Free State forces at Poplar Grove, or Modderrivierpoort, to the east of the site of the recent defeat. On 7 March President Kruger paid them a visit, just as the British resumed their advance towards Bloemfontein. Lord Roberts hoped to enfold them with a cavalry sweep round the south, but his horses and men were too tired to trap the Boers,

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who fled at once, Kruger included. De Wet wrote: “A panic had seized my men. Before the English had even got near enough to shell our positions to any purpose, the wild flight began. Soon every position was evacuated. There was not even an attempt to hold them. . .”. De Wet attributed this reaction to the effect of Cronjé’s surrender on Boer morale.

See also:

[Driefontein, Battle of](#), [Paardeberg, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles and Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902).

## Portuguese East Africa

Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique) was the only outlet to the sea not controlled by the British in September 1899. The railway from Pretoria to the port of Lourenço Marques on Delagoa Bay was completed in 1895 and was the route for the massive importation of armaments undertaken by the Boers prior to the conflict. Within three days of the outbreak of the war the British concluded a secret treaty with the Portuguese to prevent continuing trade in munitions. The British drove the Boers east from Pretoria to Komatipoort on the border with the Transvaal by September 1900 and President Kruger left for Europe that month from Delagoa Bay.

## Pretoria

The capital city of the South African Republic (Transvaal). Pretoria was surrounded with forts which Major Piet Erasmus and Lieutenant-colonel H. P. J. Pretorius had a hand in designing in accordance with the proposals of the former French artillery officer, Leon Grunberg. Far from being at the cutting edge of modern design, they were, according to the American Military Attaché, Captain C. Reichmann, “. . . simply a bluff”. The plan was to arm the forts with 155mm Creusot guns, but these “Long Toms” were, in the event, used in the field. When, on 4 June 1900, the British attacked the south-western defences, Schanz Kop Fort was quickly put out of action and the city was surrendered the following day.

British prisoners-of-war, including Winston Churchill, had been held in camps here and about 3,000 were still held at Waterval, on the northern outskirts, when Pretoria fell to the British. Later in the war the British set up a white concentration camp at Meintjie’s Kop (Arcadia) and a black one at

Reitfontein West.

See also:

[Bergendal, Battle of](#); [Diamond Hill, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

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## Prinsloo, Chief Commandant Marthinus

**1838–1903**

Prinsloo fought in one of the last campaigns against the Basotho in 1866 and became Commandant of the Winburg Commando in 1867. He led Orange Free State men into Natal in October 1899 but did not enjoy the good opinion of the Transvaal men. In the Battle of the Platrand he failed to support the attack with any vigour. After the relief of Ladysmith he withdrew to Van Reenen's Pass and, when Sir Redvers Buller began his advance north against the Biggarsberg hills at Elandslaagte, declined to come to the support of Commandant-general Louis Botha on the grounds that he and his men had to attend a sale of cattle at Harrismith. In the confusion surrounding the entrapment of the Boers in the Brandwater Basin in July 1900, Prinsloo was elected commander of the remaining force just in time to surrender all 3,000 of them to the British.

### See also:

[Brandwater Basin, Surrender at](#); [Platrand, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## Prisoners-of-War

In the majority of cases, both the British and the Boers treated white prisoners-of-war with reasonable respect and care. The ability of the Boers to hold prisoners ceased in the guerrilla phase of the war and the British capacity to intern Boers within South Africa was soon exhausted, so they were sent overseas. Black Africans captured were frequently executed by the Boers, and the British treatment of them was little better.

At the outbreak of the war the Boers were ill-prepared for the reception of British prisoners and they held them in the hastily-converted State Model School in Pretoria. This was the officers' camp in which Winston Churchill was imprisoned and from which he escaped. Other ranks were held at Waterval, north of the city. The British complained of poor rations and inadequate care for the sick, but as only five officers and ninety-seven men died out of 383 officers and 9,170 other ranks captured, the standard of care appears to have been at least adequate. After the fall of Pretoria there

was nowhere to hold prisoners taken by the Boers, so they adopted the practice of subjecting them to *uitskud*, that is to strip them of their clothes and boots, and to release them to walk back to their units. In the baking sun and over hostile terrain, this was often a considerable ordeal. Black Africans caught assisting the British could expect to be shot.

The British were equally unprepared to handle prisoners-of-war. A ship in Durban was demanded for the

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men taken at Elandslaagte but refused, and one in Simon's Town in the Cape, HMS *Penelope*, was used for a while, contrary to the Geneva Convention, but excused on the grounds of being a temporary provision. Camps were set up at Simon's Town and at Green Point, Capetown in the Cape and at Bloemfontein in the Orange River Colony, as it became. These were insufficient to meet the need and prisoners were sent to St Helena, Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India and eventually Bermuda. The Transvaal prisoners numbered 12,954 by the end of the war and the Orange Free State prisoners 12,358. Rebels, that is those British colony citizens who fought for the Boers, who were caught numbered 7,587. In addition, the numbers of those who gave themselves up came to 13,780 from the Transvaal and 8,318 from the Orange Free State.

The worsening conditions in which both sides fought late in the war led to a decay in the standards of behaviour. The ambush of the Gordon Highlanders on a train near Naboomspruit on 4 July 1901 and the subsequent failed ambush a few days later is a case in point. Boers attempting to surrender in the latter incident were shot by men who believed that in the earlier ambush British soldiers had been shot in cold blood. The shooting of prisoners did take place, but did not necessarily go unpunished, as the case of Breaker Morant illustrates. He and another Australian were executed for this crime.

See also:

[Morant, Lieutenant H. H.](#); [Naboomspruit, Ambush near](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985).

## Pro-Boers

In Britain there were a number of influential people, mostly connected with the Liberal Party, who opposed the war. All such were called proBoers even if they were merely against the war. They included William T. Stead, a former editor of the imperialist *Pall Mall Gazette*, L. H. Courtney, a former government minister, Henry Massingham, former editor of the *Daily Chronicle*, and the Members of Parliament Henry Labouchère and David Lloyd George, the latter destined to become Prime Minister during the First World War. They were very much in the minority and failed to make an impact in the general election held in October 1900, known as the Khaki Election. It was not until the publication of Emily Hobhouse's report on the concentration camps nine months later that the conduct of the war, and the war itself, was seriously called in question in Britain.

See also:

[Hobhouse, Emily.](#)

## Reference:

Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Wilson, H. W., *After Pretoria: the Guerilla War* (London, Amalgamated Press, 1902).

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## Provisions

While the British army had a well-developed supply system to provision their troops, the arrangements of the Boer governments proved unequal to the scale of the demand of extensive warfare early in the conflict and, of course, collapsed entirely once the guerrilla war started.

The burgher reporting to join his commando had to bring with him eight days' rations, after which his government was responsible for feeding him. The usual rations a burgher brought were meat, either in the form of sausages or biltong, that is, dried meat, and Boer biscuits, small loaves made of flour and using fermented raisins in the place of yeast. When these were gone flour, coffee, salt and sugar were issued as was meat on the hoof. After butchering, the meat was distributed by a Vleeschkorporal, who handed it out with his back to the line of recipients, to avoid charges of favouritism, and the burghers cooked it themselves.

The faults in the management of the distribution of food led to a flood of complaints, but once the Boer seats of government had been taken by the British, the commandos had to fend for themselves. Bread became a rarity and mealies, or maize porridge, food previously considered suitable only for black Africans, was the norm. Provisions were obtained from the isolated farms until the British destroyed them. Crops were sown and harvested in areas away from British lines and the produce of farmers and black Africans acquired either in exchange for promissory notes to be redeemed in due course or for no payment at all. The lack of salt was seriously felt and coffee was soon replaced with a powder made of burnt barley. One benefit of mobility was that the Boers usually had a satisfactory supply of fruit. Sheep, cattle and goats, as well as other provisions, were much sought-after booty in actions against the British. The increasing grip of the British on food supplies was a significant factor in the eventual surrender of the Boers.

### Reference:

De Wet, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Public Hanging

The British naturally treated Boer citizens of the Cape and Natal colonies as rebels and traitors if they joined the Boer commandos, and the crime of high treason was punishable by death. Some sentences were carried out in public. The ardently pro-British book *After Pretoria* reports one such execution as follows: "As the Dutch . . . did not hesitate to allege that the British did not dare to execute the criminals whom they sentenced to death, but merely spirited them away into banishment . . .

. it became important to show the disloyal that we actually had the courage and the determination to carry out the sentences”. Accordingly, Johannes Petrus Coetzee, who was sentenced to death on 24 June 1901 at Dordrecht and whose

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### Railway System

The immense distances – Cape Town to Kimberley is 650 miles (1,045km) and the Cape to Pretoria is 1,000 miles (1,600km) – and the hostile environment for animal-drawn transport made the railway system a central consideration in British strategic planning and a principal target for Boer commandos in the guerrilla phase of the war. The first part of the system was built in Cape Colony in the 1850s and, under the influence of the discovery of great mineral wealth, lines were built from Cape Town to Kimberley and on from there to Mafeking by 1894 and to Rhodesia in 1897. The Cape line was connected to Johannesburg by 1892. Other lines snaked up from the coast of British territory, from Port Elizabeth to Bloemfontein and on to Johannesburg, Pretoria and north to Pietersburg. This line was joined by others originating at Port Alfred and East London, with crossconnecting lines from De Aar on the Kimberley line, through Naauwpoort on the Port Elizabeth line to Rosmead and Stormberg Junctions on the Port Alfred and the East London lines. These all originated in British-controlled Cape Colony.

In Natal a line ran north from Durban via Pietermaritzburg to Lady-smith and on northwards to the coalfields at Elandslaagte and Glencoe. From there it passed over Langs Nek on its way to Johannesburg. A branch from Ladysmith went over Van Reenen's Pass to Harrismith. This was also controlled by the British.

To have rail access to a seaport free of British influence was one of the Boers' dearest wishes and an agreement with the Portuguese led to the building of the Delagoa Bay line in Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique) which was completed in 1895. It was along this railway that the massive importation of armaments was brought prior to the war and this was the route taken by President Kruger and his peripatetic government after the fall of Pretoria in June 1900. The importation of munitions of war by this route had ceased well before that as a result of British pressure on the Portuguese, and once the British held this railway the Boers had to supply themselves by taking weapons, ammunition and clothing as booty of war.

However, the British control of the railways was incomplete during the guerrilla phase of the war. Bridges were blown up, rails sabotaged and trains ambushed. In retaliation the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, proclaimed on 16 June 1900

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that farmhouses nearby would be burnt down in case of such actions, and backed his words by deeds in firing Christiaan De Wet's farm as a reprisal for De Wet's attack at Roodewal Station. Lord Kitchener built blockhouses along the railway lines partly to protect the iron road and the telegraph wires alongside and partly for ease of supply of these watch-stations.

See also:

[Blockhouses](#); [Roodewal, Battle of](#); [Transport](#).

Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## Rand

A ridge, thus part of a name for a geographical feature such as Witwatersrand.

## Rawlinson, Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Henry,

**1864–1925**

Henry Seymour Rawlinson was born in 1864 and joined the King's Royal Rifles in 1884, transferring to the Coldstream Guards in 1892. He saw service in the East Indies and in Burma before returning to become Brigade-major at Aldershot. He was active in the Sudan campaign of 1898 and joined Lieutenant-general Sir George White in Natal, therefore becoming besieged in Ladysmith. He took command of a column in South Africa in May 1901. In the First World War he commanded the Fourth Army and laid down the detailed plans for the attack on the Somme on 1 July 1916. In 1919 he supervised the evacuation of allied troops from north Russia. He became Commander-in-

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Chief, India in 1920 and died in Delhi after an operation for appendicitis.

## Reddersburg

A town in the Orange Free State, near the railway line running north to Bloemfontein, to which Captain W. J. McWhinnie was marching when caught by Christiaan De Wet at Mostertshoek.

See also:

[Mostertshoek, Battle of.](#)

## Refugees

The people displaced by the war, the refugees, were not all in similar circumstances or moving for the same reasons. In Natal at the start of the war many of the farmers of English stock moved south and were able to stay with friends and relations. As the British forces moved into the Orange Free State and the Transvaal between May and August 1900, the townspeople and particularly those in government fell back before them, ultimately being forced out of the country at Komatipoort on the border with Portuguese East Africa.

In the attempt to curtail the activities of the Boer commandos during the guerrilla phase of the war, Lord Kitchener continued the policy proclaimed by Lord Roberts of burning farms and crops and confiscating livestock. The women, children and old people thus made homeless, both black and white, were described as refugees and, as they clearly could

not humanely be left on the veldt, they were taken to refugee camps. The failure of these camps, better known as concentration camps, is legendary.

Boers who refused to join their countrymen in fighting the British were, in many cases, subject to reprisals. When forced to flee their farms they sought shelter with the British, as did share-croppers (bywoners) who lost their places on farms. The economic impact of the war also contributed to the refugee problem as casual labourers, usually black Africans, lost their job opportunities and clustered around British army posts in makeshift camps. More refugees were created by military operations rendering their homelands uninhabitable. Finally, black Africans were recruited by the British as drivers, servants and scouts, and, rather than leave their families behind to risk the ire of a passing commando, they took their women and children to British posts for protection. The impact of this uprooting of the population was felt most keenly by the black Africans, many of whom lost their economic independence and had only employment by white people to look to for survival after the war.

See also:

[Concentration Camps.](#)

Reference:

Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985); Warwick, Peter, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Cambridge and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1983).

## Reitz, Action at,

### 11 July 1901

The government of the Orange Free State was captured with the exception of President Marthinus Steyn, who escaped with the help of his bodyguard and cook Jan Ruiter, at Reitz on 11 July 1901. Steyn's escape prevented the collapse of Orange Free State resistance and would not have been possible without the intervention of his *agterryer*, a black African man.

The Orange Free State government had come to Reitz, between Bethlehem and Frankfort in the Orange Free State, after meetings with the Transvaal leaders, and was under the impression that Brigadier-general R. G. Broadwood's column had left the district. Many men of the escorting commandos came from the town and were allowed home overnight. President Steyn pitched his tent in front of a Mr Rosseau's house and his eldest brother, Pieter G. Steyn, and Vecht-generals A. P. J. Cronjé and J. H. B. Wessels moved in with him. Before dawn Steyn's cook, Jan Ruiter, had been ordered to make the coffee and, as he did so, he saw Boer scouts returning with the British on their

heels and gave the alarm. Steyn managed to get to his horse and, with a borrowed saddle and his nightcap still on his head, made off. Ruiters distracted the British, telling them the retreating figure was only “some or other scared Boer” and pointing out Pieter Steyn as the President; only Ruiters’ revelation of his position as Marthinus Steyn’s servant prevented the British treating this lie as a capital

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offence. Cronjé and Wessels were made prisoner.

See also:

[Agterryer](#); [Steyn, President Marthinus](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Van der Walt, N. T., “President Steyn’s escape from Reitz”, *Africana Journal*, no. 15, 1999.

## **Reitz, Deneys,**

**1882–1944**

Deneys Reitz served in the Boer forces first, at the age of seventeen, with the Pretoria Commando and then with other formations as the war moved into the guerrilla phase. He journeyed to the peace negotiations as a member of Assistant Commandant-general Jan Smuts’s staff. He came through the war physically

unscathed and wrote, in Cape Dutch, a superb journal of his experience.

Deneys was the third son of Francis William Reitz (1844–1934), President of the Orange Free State, 1887–95, and later Secretary of State in President Kruger's administration in the Transvaal (South African Republic). He and his brothers were brought up in Bloemfontein and he was at school there when, in July 1899, his father summoned the boys to Pretoria in anticipation of the outbreak of war. Although under age, Deneys was supported by Kruger in his wish to enlist.

His service took him to Natal, at the siege of Ladysmith, and the Battles of Spioenkop and the Tugela Heights. He fought against the British at the Battle of Bergendal and then throughout the guerrilla war, finally joining Smuts's Commando on its foray into Cape Colony culminating at the siege of O'Okiep.

At the end of the war, in sympathy with his father, he refused to take the oath to abide by the peace terms and consequently was exiled. He tried to build up a transport business in Madagascar, but it failed and he was persuaded to return to South Africa by Jan Smuts's wife, Isie. It took him three years to recover his health. He served once more under Smuts in the First World War, first against former comrades who rose in rebellion against the British in 1914, then against the Germans in both Southwest Africa and East Africa, and finally in France where he eventually commanded the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers with the rank of Lieutenant-colonel. After that war he held government office in a number of posts before taking up his final appointment as High Commissioner in London, England, in 1942. He died in 1944. His three books are a lasting testament to his quiet courage and humanity.

### See also:

[Bergendal, Battle of](#); [Guerrilla War](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [O'Okiep, Seige of](#); [Smuts, Assistant Commandant-general Jan](#); [Talana, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando: A Boer Journal of the Boer War* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994); Reitz, Deneys, *No Outspan* (1942; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994); Reitz, Deneys, *Trekking On* (1933; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## Rhodes, Cecil,

**1853–1902**

Rhodes's influence in shaping the events that led to war in 1899 was profound. He was a successful,

if unscrupulous, businessman and a determined imperialist. His ambition to see the British Empire govern from the Cape to Cairo led to his disgrace when he fomented the unsuccessful Jameson Raid to overthrow Boer government in the Transvaal. He was present in Kimberley throughout the siege and was able to ease conditions there by offering the resources of the De Beers Company. At the same time he caused the officer commanding, Colonel Kekewich, endless trouble, going as far as deliberately undermining his authority.

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relief and implying that a failure to comply would lead to Rhodes himself surrendering the town to the Boers, Roberts gave Kekewich leave to arrest the troublesome capitalist. Fortunately it never came to that. Rhodes returned to Cape Town after the relief of the Kimberley and died early in 1902, before the war ended.

See also:

[Jameson Raid](#); [Kimberley, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Roberts, Brian, *Cecil Rhodes* (London, Hamish Hamilton, 1987); Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## Rhodesia

The territory north of the Limpopo river, now Zimbabwe, was coveted by both the Boers and the British. Cecil Rhodes won the race, acquiring mineral rights and then virtual governance of Matabeleland and Mashonaland in 1889. The territory became known as Southern Rhodesia, named after Rhodes, and became a self-governing British colony in 1923.

See also:

[Rhodes, Cecil](#).

## Rhodesian Field Force

Before the outbreak of the war Lieutenant-colonel R. S. S. Baden-Powell and Lieutenant-colonel H. Plumer were in the northern Cape and in Rhodesia, raising local volunteer forces. They intended to distract the Boers with the illusion of a second Jameson Raid, an attack on the Transvaal from the north-west, thereby forestalling a serious invasion of the Cape. The ploy worked, but led to Baden-Powell being locked up in the siege of Mafeking and Plumer isolated with his Rhodesian Field Force at Bulawayo in Rhodesia, still a potential threat to the Boers.

On 31 March 1900 Plumer attempted to make the threat into a real one. He had advanced to within four miles of Mafeking with some 270 men, but at Oaklands farm he was comprehensively outmanoeuvred by Vecht-general J. P. Snyman, a rare achievement for one of the least distinguished Boer leaders, and was lucky to escape with only eight men killed, eleven missing and twenty-nine

wounded, of whom Plumer himself was one.

The next attempt was made in May. As Colonel Mahon's force approached Mafeking from the south, Plumer's force of about 800 men received reinforcements in the form of seventeen men of the Queensland Mounted Infantry and C Battery, Royal Canadian Field Artillery. The Rhodesian Field Force met Mahon on the Molopo River, some thirty miles (50km) west of Mafeking, thus adding the Diamonds Fields Horse, the Kimberley Light Horse, the

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Imperial Light Horse, some Cape Police and a Royal Horse Artillery battery to their number, and bringing the total to 2,000. On 16 May they engaged the Boers, now under Assistant Commandant-general Koos De la Rey, blocking their way to the besieged town. The Boers, with an equal number of men, attempted to make the British think they were actually a much greater force and made attacks on the flanks; however, Mahon and Plumer drove straight through the centre. The Canadian artillerymen fired their first shots of the war and their contribution was recognised by the adoption of the countersign "Canada" to the password on 17 May, the day on which the full relieving force entered the town.

### See also:

[Baden-Powell, Lieutenant-colonel R. S. S.](#); [Mafeking, Siege of](#); [Plumer, Lieutenant-colonel Herbert](#).

### Reference:

Jeal, Tim, *Baden-Powell* (London, Hutchinson, 1989); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Reid, Brian A., *Our Little Army in the Field* (St Catherines, Ontario, Vanwell, 1996).

## Rietfontein, Battle of,

**24 October 1899**

The action at Rietfontein was undertaken to prevent Boer forces interfering with Yule's retreat from Dundee to Ladysmith. General White withdrew at the end of the action, satisfied that this had been done, while the Boers congratulated themselves on having forced the British to withdraw, although they were too weak to pursue them.

When the Boers invaded northern Natal at the outbreak of the war, actions took place at Dundee and Elandslaagte from which the British, although victorious, fell back towards Ladysmith. They feared being cut off by Marthinus Prinsloo's Orange Free State commandos descending from Harrismith and it was the first of that force that took up position on the hills north-west of the railway between Ladysmith and Elandslaagte. From west to east they were the Harrismith, Kroonstad, Winburg, Bethlehem, Vrede and Heilbron commandos, the latter under the temporary command of Vice-commandant Christiaan De Wet.

Lieutenant-general Sir George White moved against them at about 8 a.m. on 24 October. His force was substantial, comprising 5th Lancers, 19th Hussars, the Imperial Light Horse, Natal Mounted Rifles, 42nd and 53rd Field Batteries, Royal Artillery, 1st Gloucestershire, 1st Devonshire, 1st King's Liverpool and 2nd King's Royal Rifle Corps. They pushed the Boer outposts back without

difficulty, but then the single 75mm gun the Boers had on Nodashwana Hill went into action and heavy rifle fire was brought to bear on them. The British artillery kept the Boers' heads down and the Boer fire did the same for their enemies. By 3 p.m. White learned that Yule was making good progress towards Ladysmith and so was content to withdraw. The Boers, under the impression that the British had given up their assumed intention of routing their adversaries,

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were pleased with their achievement in this, their first engagement.

## See also:

[Ladysmith](#); [Talana, Battle of](#).

## Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1900* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable and Co., 1902).

## Rifles

The temporary success of the Boers in holding off an entire British army could be explained to a significant extent by their possession of up-to-date high-velocity rifles. Although the British had had weapons of similar performance for some years, they had used them against forces with less sophisticated armament and thus had had no need to devise tactics to overcome an enemy who were their equal in firepower.

The smooth-bore musket was, by 1840, being replaced in general use with the muzzle-loading rifle in which the spiral grooves in the barrel imparted a spin to the bullet. This resulted in greater range and vastly improved accuracy. However, the weapon remained clumsy and time-consuming to load and a steady fire could only be maintained by groups of well-drilled troops firing volleys in succession and reloading as others fired in turn. In such circumstances the individual could not be permitted to take the initiative of firing at will on selected targets of opportunity. The discipline required to maintain successive volley fire was to prove a handicap to the British when improved weaponry offered advantages to less regimented troops.

The perfection of the brass cartridge opened the way to reliable single-shot breech-loaders and further developments led to the quick-firing rifle, drawing rounds from a magazine. At the same time the introduction of smokeless powder of greatly increased efficiency raised the muzzle velocity of the bullet to previously undreamed of levels and thus gave the benefit of a flatter trajectory to attain the same range.

In order to do damage to the enemy, that is, to inflict a wound (killing is less desirable as a rule because one wounded man requires two fit men to carry him away, thereby taking three men out of action), a soldier needs a weapon that creates the maximum 'dangerous zone', the area in which someone is likely to be hit. The dangerous zone extends from the point of 'first catch', the point at which the target can first be hit, to the end of its flight. For cavalry, first catch is defined as eight and a half feet above ground and for infantry six feet, so the faster the bullet is going, the flatter the trajectory, the longer the dangerous zone and the more useful the weapon to its owner. The trajectory of the early German Snider rifle meant that, to attain a range of 2,000 yards (1,830 metres), the bullet

rose to 866 feet (264 metres) above the line of sight, a Martini-Henry bullet to 357 feet (109 metres) and the Lee-Enfield to only 194 feet (59 metres).

A flat trajectory and a high-velocity missile thus have four advantages. First, the dangerous zone is extended. Second, the bullet itself is much more

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damaging to the victim. Third, less elevation is needed in aiming the rifle, and thus there is less room for error and increased accuracy. Finally, the extent of ‘point-blank’ range, the range of the rifle when the lowest or fixed sight is used, is increased. That of the Lee-Enfield was 500 yards (457 metres) within which the bullet never rose above the height of a man, making the whole range ‘dangerous zone’. The Boer Mauser’s performance was much the same, while the Martini-Henry had a point-blank range of four-fifths of that. Moreover, the smokeless powder newly in use kept the position of the marksman concealed from his target.

The new rifles thus had the power to inflict damage much more efficiently than any the British had previously faced. What was more, the Boers had traditionally shot game for food and their marksmanship was therefore of high quality. Finally, both the Mauser and the Lee-Enfield had a magazine from which new rounds were drawn by working the bolt of the rifle, and thus a swift rate of fire could be attained. New tactics, such as open troop formations, movement by bounds and co-ordinated artillery barrages, were required to combat these weapons and the British army was slow to learn.

### *The Martini-Henry*

By the time the Second Anglo-Boer war began, the Martini rifle, the standard weapon of the British infantry in the previous Boer War of 1881, was obsolete, but there were many examples in Boer hands. It was a single-shot rifle firing a heavy round of 0.45 inch calibre, propelled by 85 grains of coarse grain black powder in a 0.577-inch cartridge at a muzzle velocity of 1,350 feet per second. The requirement to own a rifle was made less onerous for the Boer by the government’s arrangements to sell imported weapons at cost or even less. British service pattern Martinis were purchased from Birmingham, England, and Liège, Belgium, in the early 1890s and sold for £4 sterling to citizens of the South African Republic. Even as late as 1896, probably because of the preference Commandant-general Piet Joubert had for the gun, an order for 10,000 “improved” Francotte-Martinis was accepted by Westley Richards of Birmingham, an order that was increased to 10,450 rifles and 2,000 carbines three months later. They were sold to individuals at the price of £7 16s 6d.

### *The Mauser*

At the same time as the order for the obsolete Martinis was being placed, 5,000 Mausers were being imported through Portuguese East Africa. In that same year the interested companies in Germany, Ludwig Loewe & Cie, Berlin, Deutsche Metallpatronfabrik and the powder manufacturing companies Reinische-Westphaelische and Rottweil, combined to form Deutsche Waffen und Munitionsfabriken, DWM, the mark to be found on all the guns made after 1896. By the outbreak of the war the Germans had adopted the 1898 pattern rifle, but the Boers stayed with what is known as the Spanish pattern, the model of 1896. This fired a 7mm (0.276-inch) bullet propelled by nitro-cellulose with a muzzle velocity of 2,296 feet per second. The weapon was sighted for



ranges up to 2,000 metres (2,187 yards) but was probably reasonably accurate up to half that distance in competent hands. Point-blank range was 400 metres (437 yards). It had a fixed vertical box magazine taking five rounds from a charger but it lacked a cut-off to isolate the magazine and allow single-shot loading. The carbine bolt-handle was bent down while that of the rifle stuck out at right-angles to the body of the gun; a feature that was recognised as being a nuisance, catching, as it did, on clothing and other equipment. While a bayonet could be fitted, it was not a weapon of which the Boers approved.

### *The Lee-Enfield*

The first small-bore military rifle used in the British army was the Lee-Metford which used black powder and the Metford rifling system of seven shallow grooves which managed to combat the black powder fouling which occurred. With the introduction of cordite propellant, the rifling degraded after the firing of about 6,000 rounds and the Enfield five-groove system was adopted. The tenround magazine was adopted for the Lee-Metford Mark II in April 1893 and its use was continued with the Lee-Enfield Mark I\* which came into service as an improved version of the Mark I in 1899. The weapon had a cut-off which isolated the magazine and single-round firing was mandatory until the order "Open cut-offs, rapid fire!" was given. Had British marksmanship been anywhere near that of the Boers, the sudden, fearful torrent of rifle fire that would have resulted would have been devastating. Indeed, by 1914 the deficiency had been rectified to such an extent that German troops became convinced that they were being fired on by machine-guns rather than rifles. The 0.303-inch (7.7mm) cartridge was a development of the black powder version first introduced in 1888 and fired a cupro-nickel jacketed lead-cored bullet with a muzzle velocity of 2,060 feet per second. The sword-bayonet was a two-edged weapon which could be fitted to the barrel without impeding the firing of the rifle. British troops were trained to close down on the enemy and use the bayonet, a practice which the Boers found uncivilised.

See also:

[Artillery](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## **Rimington, Colonel Michael Frederick**

British reconnaissance was poor early in the war but, under the command of such men as Michael Rimington, it improved greatly.

Rimington was born in Penrith, Cumbria, England, in 1858. He was with the 6th Inniskilling

Dragoons in Natal in 1881, and served on the Bechuanaland Expedition of 1884–85 and in operations in Zululand in 1888. His experience of South Africa was thus considerable. On the outbreak of war in 1899 he raised his own regiment from farmers in Natal, the

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Orange Free State and Cape Colony, the Imperial Corps of Guides, known as Rimington's Tigers, mainly because they wore a wildcat's tail as a hatband. This unconventional unit was free of preconceptions and had a degree of local knowledge which proved invaluable to the British.

See also:

[Joiners.](#)

## **Roberts, Field Marshal Earl, of Kandahar, V.C.,**

### **1832–1914**

Lord Roberts was given the overall command of the British army in South Africa after the defeats of "Black Week" caused the British government to lose confidence in General Sir Redvers Buller. Roberts recognised the importance of scouting and sound information and was a tough and methodical commander. The conventional phase of the war was won when he occupied the capital cities of both Boer republics and forced President Kruger to flee. His determination to win was shown by his ordering reprisals for Boer attacks on his lines of supply. He handed over command to Lord Kitchener in December 1900, believing the war was over except for the tidying up of remaining Boer forces.

Frederick Sliagh Roberts was born in Cawnpore, India, and was commissioned into the Bengal Artillery in 1851. He was five foot three inches (1.6m) tall and, as a result of a childhood illness, blind in one eye. Nonetheless, he won the Victoria Cross during the Indian Mutiny, at Khodagunge in 1858 and distinguished himself in the campaigns in Abyssinia, Assam and, in 1878–80, the Second Afghan War when he commanded the Kabul Field Force. He became Commander-in-Chief in India from 1885 to 1893 and was Commander-in-Chief in Ireland at the outbreak of the Boer War. His experience had led him to believe in the importance of marksmanship with the rifle and initiative on the part of the private soldier as opposed to the parade-ground tidiness favoured in England. Roberts was keen to have the command in South Africa in spite of his age and applied pressure on the Secretary of State for War, Lord Lansdowne, who had been Viceroy of India when Roberts was Commander-in-Chief there. Field Marshal Wolseley, however, as Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, had appointed Buller, who was also a soldier with African experience.

Roberts's chance came when, in December 1899, the British failed at Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso, the defeats of "Black Week". His appointment was soured by the death of his son Freddie who was fatally wounded attempting to recover Long's guns at Colenso. He arrived in South Africa with his Chief-of-Staff Lord Kitchener and considerable reinforcements, notably three infantry divisions and a cavalry division. He believed in the value of reconnaissance and even sent to Alaska to persuade Frederick Russell Burnham to join him as his chief of scouts.

Roberts left Buller in command in Natal while he took over the western front. He managed to keep Assistant Commandant-general Piet Cronjé

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guessing at his intentions before releasing the cavalry under Lieutenant-general Sir John French in a dramatic movement outflanking Magersfontein by the east to relieve Kimberley. Cronjé attempted to withdraw eastwards but was caught at Paardeberg where, while Roberts was suffering from a mild illness, Kitchener tried to overcome the Boers with a frontal assault. It failed, and Roberts resumed command to impose a more prudent course in besieging and shelling Cronjé into surrender. Bloemfontein fell soon after, and Roberts completed his work by taking the remaining towns of importance, concluding with the Transvaal capital, Pretoria. His weakness was that of the British command system in general, poor staff work. Orders were, though written, often vague or incomplete. In particular, the co-ordination of complex troop movements was too frequently inept. He also agreed with Kitchener to a restructuring of the transport system in mid-campaign, resulting in considerable confusion and numerous breakdowns in communications.

The British lines of supply from seaports to the front were long and vulnerable, offering the Boers opportunities they did not miss. Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet seized ammunition and supplies at Roodewal on 7 June 1900, as a result of which Lord Roberts issued a proclamation saying that buildings harbouring the enemy would be burnt. These reprisals were undertaken with enthusiasm, although also with some misgivings, by the British. As irregulars, for they were still not seen as guerrilla commandos, tormented the British, Roberts instituted measures to deny the Boers sources of supply and, in September 1900, ordered the gathering up of people living on farms in troubled areas into camps. Both these policies would be pursued with increased vigour by Kitchener. As 1900 drew to a close it appeared that the war was almost over, and Roberts returned to England. He died in 1914 as a result of a chill caught when visiting Indian troops in France.

### See also:

[Buller, Sir Redvers](#); [Concentration Camps](#); [Farm Burning](#); [Kimberley, Siege of](#); [Kitchener, Viscount](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#); [Roodewal, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Roodewal, Battle of,

**7 June 1900**

The British vulnerability to Boer attacks on their lines of communication and supply was demonstrated by Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet early in June 1900. The garrison at Roodewal Station, on the Bloemfontein to Vereeniging line, was overcome and the mail and supplies stored

there looted. De Wet had considerable difficulty in diverting his men's attention from the booty in order to carry away the large quantities of .303 ammunition suited for use in captured Lee-Enfield rifles.

Although the British had taken Pre-

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toria two days earlier, the Orange Free State forces remained very active, blowing up bridges and ambushing supply convoys. As a result Roodewal Station, which had been taken by the British on 23 May and garrisoned with men of the 4th Derbyshires, was the temporary railhead and goods were off-loaded there until the railway to the north could be brought back into commission. De Wet captured a wagon train en route to Heilbron from Vredefort Road Station at Zwavelkrans, near the Rhenoster River on 5 June. It surrendered without resistance as the 200 men on board were outnumbered three to one and fifty-six wagons of supplies were taken.

On 6 June, still undetected, De Wet returned to the railway line where he divided his force into three. The first, 300 men and one 75mm Krupp, was sent to deal with Vredefort Road Station at sunrise the next day; the second, with another 300 men, two Krupps and a Pom-Pom, were ordered north to attack the British camp; and De Wet himself, with eighty men and one Krupp, headed for the station at Roodewal itself. The British, who were attacked at dawn, resisted fiercely and De Wet's men were pinned down until the northern party had succeeded at the camp and brought two more 75mm Krupps south to help. The increased artillery fire forced a British surrender. De Wet observed that their fortifications were constructed of bales of clothing and blankets, which kept British fatalities down to twenty-seven men, while 200 or so were captured.

The richness of the prize was beyond Boer powers to exploit, for they lacked the transport to carry it away. The post-bags were opened and looted by Boer and British alike and what the commando could not carry off was to be burnt. De Wet had to work hard to ensure a place for rifle ammunition among the goods his men took, then, according to De Wet: "When the sun set, the burghers were again on the march. But what a curious spectacle they presented! Each man had loaded his horse so heavily with goods that there was no room for himself on the saddle; he had, therefore, to walk, leading his horse by the bridle."

See also:

[Prisoners-of-War](#); [Transport](#).

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985).

## Rooibaatje

A Red-jacket, that is a red-coat or British soldier. The term was used in the First Boer War when the British infantry were still clad in red. However, in the Second Boer War the British were more often called 'Khakis'.

See also:

[Khaki](#).

## **Roo'nek**

A red-neck. The term was used by the Boers for the English who, until sufficiently tanned, suffered from the strong sun.

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## Rooiwal, Battle of,

**11 April 1902**

The defeat suffered by the Boers at Rooiwal, as the result of an ill-considered charge, contributed to the pressures for them to enter peace negotiations, in spite of the resistance of the bitter-enders.

After Assistant Commandant-general Koos De la Rey defeated Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen at Tweebosch on 7 March 1902, Major-general Lord Kitchener poured troops into the western Transvaal to catch the Boer commandos. On 11 April three columns working together under the command of Lieutenant-general Sir Ian Hamilton discovered their enemy at Rooiwal (Roodewal) Farm, south-west of Delareyville. De la Rey himself was not there and Vecht-general J. C. G. Kemp led his men, some 1,500 of them, in a wild charge on the positions the British hastily took up at the orders of Lieutenant-colonel Robert Kekewich. From the field of mealies (maize) in which they had taken cover, the British poured their fire on the galloping Boers. Some, among them Commandant F. J. Potgieter, came within 100 yards (91.5m) before they were shot down. Hamilton ordered a counter-attack and the remaining Boers, about 2,000 men, were forced away to the south. These drives were wearing the Boers down and tentative talks about peace negotiations already taking place amongst the Boers in Klerksdorp were stimulated by this defeat.

See also:

[Bitter-enders](#); [Peace Negotiations](#); [Tweeboch, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## Rundle, Lieutenant-General Sir Leslie,

**1856–1934**

Henry MacLeod Leslie Rundle joined the Royal Artillery in 1876. He served in the Zulu War of 1879 and with the Field Artillery in the First Boer War, when he was besieged in Potchefstroom. He was Chief of Staff to Sir Horatio (later Lord) Kitchener with the Dongola Expeditionary Force and was given the command of the 8th Division in South Africa in 1900.

# Russian Volunteers

The war in South Africa against the English, as the conflict was widely perceived in Europe and the Americas, attracted foreign volunteers who were tolerated, rather than welcomed, by the Boers. It is difficult to establish a figure for the number of Russian volunteers, but it is generally accepted that about 225 volunteers came from Russia.

Some came as combatants while others offered medical assistance. The Russian Red Cross in fact made offers to both sides; the British declined, while the Transvaal government accepted. Six doctors, four medical assistants, nine nurses, twenty hospital attendants and two adminis-

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### San, The

The San, or Bushmen, were encountered by Europeans in South Africa as the latter moved away from their original enclave at the Cape. The San were a hunter-gatherer people organised into tribal groups and driven by more recent arrivals to the marginal lands. They hunted with poisoned arrows which, when hard-pressed, they turned against other men. The expansion of the Afrikaners' territory led to conflict and the settlers devised the commando as a fighting unit to overcome the San. In the 1770s vigorous campaigning against the San took place. In 1774 a commando of 250 white men killed some 500 San and captured 239 more, while the leader of another commando claimed to have killed or captured 3,200 San in the space of six years. By the end of the 18th century a bounty was offered for the taking of the San alive in an attempt to prevent their complete extermination. The San survive in small numbers.

#### See also:

[KhoiKhoi, The](#); [Xhosa, The](#); [Zulu, The](#).

#### Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

### Sand River Convention,

## 1852

After Natal had come under British rule in 1845, Afrikaner groups under the leadership of Hendrick Potgieter and Andries Pretorius established themselves to the north, in the Transvaal. The territory was far from the British Cape Colony and Natal, from the squabbles of the Afrikaners, and from their disputes with the black Africans to the north, east and west. Moreover, the land was of no commercial value. There was, therefore, little difficulty in agreeing to the independence of the Transvaal, with certain conditions. The Boers agreed to ban slavery and the British to forbid all trade in arms with Africans and to refrain from entering into treaties with African peoples north of the Vaal. This led to three republics in the territory, Zoutpansberg, Lydenburg and Potchefstroom, which together became the South African Republic.

See also:

[Bloemfontein Convention, 1864](#); [Great Trek](#).

Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

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## Sangar

A protective stone-built breastwork or gunpit.

## Sannaspos, Battle of,

**31 March 1900**

The Bloemfontein waterworks were at Sannaspos (Sanna's Post), nineteen miles (30km) east of the city. Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet planned the destruction of the works to encourage the spread of enteric (typhoid) fever but unexpectedly encountered Brigadier-general R. G. Broadwood's force there. He ambushed them with considerable success as they tried to cross Koornspruit, killing or capturing a third of their number and taking seven guns.

After the fall of Bloemfontein on 13 March 1900, De Wet sent his men home to rest, ordering them to return on 25 March. He was well aware that some would not, but preferred a smaller number of willing men to a group containing malcontents. When they reconvened they found the British were also consolidating, for, aware that they were overextended at Thaba 'Nchu to the east of Sannaspos, Broadwood had been ordered to withdraw. To assist, Lord Roberts's Chief of Scouts, the American Indian fighter Frederick Russell Burnham, was sent east to seek what information he could about the Boers and report to Broadwood. Burnham found the enemy near the crossing of the Koornspruit and saw the British camp beyond, west of the Modder River, but was taken prisoner as, in the dawn, he attempted to signal the danger.

On the east Vecht-general Piet De Wet drove the British westwards by opening fire on them, and as the departing British descended into the stream-bed to cross, they were taken prisoner by Christiaan De Wet's men. The first of the Royal Horse Artillery batteries, U Battery, lost all but one of its guns in this way, but Q Battery saw what was happening and Major Edward Phipps-Hornby brought them into action at once. The British column scattered back to the railway station, Q Battery's guns being recovered by hand. The Boers were, however, heavily outnumbered and the British Mounted Infantry started to flow around their flanks, forcing De Wet to leave the field, but with 428 prisoners, seven guns, 117 wagons and the Chief of Scouts. Burnham escaped that night.

The valour of Q Battery, Royal Horse Artillery, was such that Lord Roberts decided to award the Victoria Cross. In cases in which a whole unit is involved, the rules state that officers, non-commissioned officers and other ranks should vote for one of their number to be given the award. Gunner Isaac Lodge and Driver Horace H. Glascock were chosen by the men, and Sergeant C. Parker by the NCOs, but the two officers present each nominated the other. On the basis of seniority, Major

Phipps-Hornby received the award.

See also:

[Bloemfontein](#); [Mostertshoek](#), [Action at](#).

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## Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Burnham, Frederick Russell, ed. Mary N. Everett, *Scouting on Two Continents* (New York, Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1928); De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## Schanze

A temporary shelter or hut. When they occupied positions for any length of time, the Boers built stone shelters for protection against the elements.

## Scarves, Queen Victoria's

Queen Victoria was deeply concerned with the heroism and exploits of her troops in South Africa. She crotcheted five scarves to be presented to the “best all-round men” and they were awarded to Colour-sergeant Ferrett of the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, Trooper L. Chadwick of Roberts' Horse, R. Thompson of the Royal Canadian Regiment, Private Duffrayer of the New South Wales Mounted Infantry and H. D. Coutts of the New Zealand Mounted Infantry.

## See also:

[Chocolate, The Queen's.](#)

## Scheepers, Commandant Gideon J.,

**1878–1902**

Gideon Scheepers became a regular Boer soldier and joined the *Staatsartillerie* in 1898. He was seconded to the Artillery of the Orange Free State as a communications expert and then served under Christiaan De Wet as an intelligence officer. In this capacity he is credited with organising some of De Wet's more spectacular escapes. In April 1901 he took his men into Cape Colony, hoping to persuade the Cape Afrikaners to rise against the British. He penetrated as far as Mossel Bay, on the coast between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. Falling ill in October, he had to be abandoned by his men and his *agterryer*, his black servant Hendrik, wept bitterly at the parting. Scheepers was put on

trial by the British at Graaff Retinet on more than thirty charges of murder, arson, train wrecking and ill-treatment of prisoners. He had shot two coloured defenders of a farm near Jansenville in the eastern Cape earlier that year and others whom he regarded as traitors. He was found guilty and, on 18 January 1902, was tied to a chair and shot. His determination to carry on the fight had been great. In July 1901 he wrote to Christiaan De Wet to say that the blood of too many brave burghers had been shed to give up the struggle; he would fight to the death.

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Lee, Emanoel, *To The*

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*Bitter End* (London, Viking, 1985); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## **Schiel, Colonel Adolf Friedrich,**

**1858–1903**

Born in Germany in 1858, Schiel served in the Prussian cavalry before coming to South Africa in 1878. He lived in Natal and then moved to the Transvaal where he became involved in native affairs. He served as Secretary to King Dinuzulu and took part in the Zulu Civil War of 1883–88. He then joined the *Staatsartillerie* and was in action against various tribes in the northern Transvaal. When the Boer War broke out he entered Natal with General Kock and took part in the Battle of Elandslaagte, where he was wounded and taken prisoner. He remarked on the curiosity of fighting against so many of his good friends and sent his compliments to Karri Davies whom he saw there. He was imprisoned on St Helena and returned to Germany after the war.

See also:

[Artillery, Boer](#); [Elandslaagte, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## **Scott, Captain Percy M.,**

**1853–1924**

The lack of both sufficient field artillery and of heavy artillery at the outbreak of the war was a serious disadvantage for the British. The deficiency was repaired as a result of the enterprise and creativity of Captain Percy Scott, RN, and if it were possible to attribute the eventual success of the British to a single man, Scott would be the leading candidate, for without him an early Boer victory would have been likely.

Lieutenant Percy Scott first demonstrated his resourcefulness when, in 1882, he contrived to resite three 7-inch, 7-ton guns near Alexandria in Egypt. It took two locomotives and 1,000 men, but the guns were soon in action against Aribi Pasha's army. Scott had qualified on the long gunnery

course at HMS *Excellent* and in 1890 returned as an instructor. Charged with devising an entertainment for the visiting Lords of the Admiralty, he put on a field gun race in which he led one team and the other was commanded by Lieutenant John Jellicoe, who was to become best known for his part in the Battle of Jutland in 1916. After a brief period at sea on HMS *Edinburgh*, Scott returned as Commander. It was under his command that *Excellent* moved ashore and was established on Whale Island in Portsmouth Harbour.

Scott's first command, in 1898, was HMS *Scylla* which soon became the most efficient gunnery ship in the fleet. In September 1899 he took command of the navy's most powerful

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cruiser, HMS *Terrible*, and was immediately ordered to South Africa. On his own initiative he had designed and built a land-carriage for one of his long 12-pounder guns and when he learned that the lights of Kimberley could be seen by the British, proposed mounting one of *Terrible*'s searchlights on a railway truck to use for signalling. When speaking of this to his commander-in-chief, Admiral Sir Robert Harris, the need for big guns in Ladysmith was casually mentioned. Sir Robert had been told that the Navy's 4.7-inch gun could not be mounted for shore use. Scott said otherwise. He designed a mounting of great baulks of timber which could be bolted together and then unbolted as required, ideal for static defence. At 5 p.m. the following day HMS *Powerful* sailed for Durban with four 12-pounders and two 4.7-inch guns with their mountings. The heavy guns arrived on the last train into Ladysmith before the siege began.

HMS *Terrible* was then ordered to Durban where Scott became Military Commandant. Here he built mobile carriages for 4.7-inch guns and also mounted one on a railway truck. Two of these and sixteen 12-pounders accompanied Sir Redvers Buller on his way to fight the Battle of Colenso in December 1899. After the relief of Ladysmith HMS *Terrible* joined the China Fleet. Scott remained at the forefront of naval thinking, pointing out, after the First World War, that the submarine and the aircraft had made the battleship redundant, a view that was rejected until the next war showed him to be correct.

See also:

[Artillery, British](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Crowe, George, *The Commission of HMS Terrible* (London, George Newnes, 1903); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Senekal

Senekal lies on the Winburg to Bethlehem road in the Orange Free State. It was occupied and reoccupied by both British and Boers through the war. When the British were first advancing from Bloemfontein, Lieutenant-general Sir Leslie Rundle's 8th Division was covering the eastern flank to prevent Boers moving around behind the advance. A company of the 11th Imperial Yeomanry was attacked soon after arriving in Senekal on 25 May 1900, resulting in four men killed, four wounded and thirteen taken as prisoners. Rundle arrived soon after and went on the fight just to the east at Biddulphsberg.

See also:

[Biddulphsberg, Battle of](#).

## Reference:

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

# Shrapnel

A type of artillery projectile invented by Lieutenant Henry Shrapnel, RA, in 1784. The shell is filled with small,

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round shot which is thrown forward at the enemy by a charge in the base of the shell.

See also:

[Artillery, Boer](#); [Artillery, British](#); [Artillery Shells](#).

## Sjambok

A whip. Intended for use in driving livestock, it was also used on people. Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet was liberal in his use of the sjambok to emphasise his orders as well as making use of it to inflict formal punishment. Whipping was not an unusual punishment for *agterryers*, black African servants, or for any other black Africans a Boer might deem to be at fault.

See also:

[Agterryer](#); [Boer Forces, Discipline](#).

Reference:

Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Slingersfontein, Action at,

### 15 January 1900

On 9 January 1900 a British force under Colonel T. C. Porter took position at Slingersfontein, a farm some nine miles (15km) south-east of Colesberg in Cape Colony as part of a move to repossess territory from the Boers. The Boers, under Vecht-general Koos De la Rey, attacked New Zealand Hill on 15 January, taking the positions of the 1st The Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment and pressing hard upon those of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles. The New Zealanders distinguished themselves in throwing back the assault.

See also:

[De la Rey, Assistant Commandant-general Jacobus Herculaas "Koos"](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

# Sluit

A drainage ditch, usually dry.

## **Smith-Dorrien, Major-General H. L.,**

**1858–1930**

Horace Lockwood Smith-Dorrien joined the 95th Regiment (Sherwood Foresters) in 1876. He served in the Zulu War in 1879 and was the only man to escape from Isandlwana on foot. He then served in Egypt and in the Sudan. In February 1900 he assumed command of the 19th Brigade and fought at Paardeberg, Sannaspos, Lindley and Diamond Hill. He was active throughout the guerrilla phase of the war. In the First World War he commanded II Corps of the British Expeditionary Force in France, but was disliked by Field Marshal Sir John French, who disapproved of Smith-Dorrien's gallant fight at Le Cateau and finally got rid of him when a withdrawal to better positions at Ypres was suggested in 1915. Smith-Dorrien resigned and was pre-

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vented by illness from serving further. He died in an automobile accident.

### See also:

[Diamond Hill, Battle of](#); [Lindley, Battle of](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#); [Sannaspos, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Smuts, Assistant Commandant-General Jan Christian,

**1870–1950**

Jan Smuts was born in Riebeeck West in Cape Colony and studied law at the University of Cambridge in England. President Kruger appointed him State Attorney of the South African Republic and in this capacity he attended the meeting with Sir Alfred Milner. He became one of the Boers' most impressive leaders during the guerrilla war.

When the decision was taken to invade Cape Colony in September 1901 the man expected to lead the operation was Assistant Commandant-general C. F. Beyers. However, Vecht-general H. A. Alberts had earlier expressed his misgivings over the plundering of burghers' goods by Beyers' men. Smuts himself wrote of Beyers, ". . .there is much dissatisfaction with the wonderful combination of praying and looting practised by his forces. . .". The important task was therefore given to Smuts. After narrowly escaping at the outset of the invasion, Smuts led his men, including the young Deneys Reitz, south towards Port Elizabeth, then eastwards before turning north-west towards Vanrhysdorp, seventy miles (115km) north of Capetown, in January 1902 and eventually on to besiege O'Okiep (Okiep). He was summoned from there to take part in the peace negotiations.

After the war he was influential in the establishment of the Union of South Africa. He opposed the Boer uprising against the government on the outbreak of the First World War and fought against the Germans in command of the British forces in German East Africa (Tanganyika). He then became a member of the Imperial Defence Cabinet in London. During the Second World War he was Prime Minister of South Africa as well as being made a field marshal in the British army.

### See also:

[O'Okiep, Siege of](#); [Reitz, Deneys](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Hancock, W. K., *Smuts* (Cambridge,

Cambridge University Press, 1962 and 1968, 2 vols.); Ingham, Kenneth, *Jan Christian Smuts* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1986); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## **Snyman, Vecht-General J. P.**

Snyman served under Assistant Commandant-general Piet Cronjé at the

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Siege of Mafeking and took over the command when Cronjé left. He failed to distinguish himself and left Commandant Sarel Eloff without support when the Boers managed to enter the town. He served at the Battle of Diamond Hill but was reduced to the ranks afterwards.

See also:

[Diamond Hill, Battle of](#); [Mafeking, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Spioenkop, Battle of,

**23–24 January 1900**

Look-out Hill, Spioenkop (Spion Kop), is possibly the best-known battle name of the Boer War. Here the British suffered heavy casualties from Boer artillery while the Boers suffered severely from British rifle fire when Sir Redvers Buller was attempting a wide flanking movement to the west in his second attempt to relieve Ladysmith. Both sides thought they had lost the battle and both abandoned the summit of the hill as darkness fell. On the morning of 25 January two Boers looking for slain friends found the hill unoccupied and summoned their comrades to fill the vacancy. Another British thrust was made close by at Vaalkrans on 5 February, but this was also abandoned and the British withdrew to the railway at Chieveley once more.

Buller's decision to revert to the plan made and shelved before the Battle of Colenso was stimulated by the arrival of reinforcements in the shape of Lieutenant-general Sir Charles Warren's 5th Division. The idea was to cross the Tugela River by Potgieter's Drift and head for Lady-smith by the Brakfontein road. Major-general Barton's brigade was to cover the Colenso front. On 10 January the great procession began, comprising 25,000 men, 650 wagons and the Navy's big guns as well as eight field batteries. Colonel Lord Dundonald's cavalry reached Springfield (now called Winterton) the next day and the Tugela at Trichardt's Drift the following morning. The men of the South African Light Horse swam the river and took the pont, or ferry. The infantry plodded on through the rain and took six days to catch up. Warren was to take on the left flank beyond Trichardt's Drift with 15,000 men and thirty-six guns while Major-general N. Lytton with 9,000 men was to hold the Boer's attention at Potgieter's Drift. This would allow Warren to advance without being overlooked by both Spioenkop and Vaalkrans.

The progress was leisurely. On 16 January both drifts were crossed without opposition and Dundonald was at Acton Homes, at the north-western end of the hills, Ntabamnyama, the next day,

fretting to be allowed to gallop away to Ladysmith with his 1,500 men. Warren ordered him back, deeming the move too distant and dangerous. It was not until 20 January that a concerted effort was made to take the hills. Dundonald took Bastion Hill, the western extreme of Ntabamnyama, but Major-general A. F. Hart and Major-general E. R. P.

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wounded and missing came to about 700 and the Boers had lost over half that number, for them a very grievous loss. The next morning the Boers reoccupied the hill without opposition and both sides turned their attention to the care of the wounded. In this the Indian Stretcher Corps, raised by the young Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, performed excellent service. Buller now had to seek an alternative route to Ladysmith.

The men of Lancashire in particular had suffered heavy losses that day, and the terraces rising behind the goal at Liverpool's soccer ground were named Spion Kop in their honour. The word 'Kop' was adopted for other sport viewpoints as well.

### See also:

[Indian Stretcher Corps](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Vaalkrans, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Chisholm, Ruari, *Ladysmith* (London, Osprey Publishing, 1979); Knight, Ian, *Colenso 1899* (London, Osprey Publishing, 1995); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Powell, Geoffrey, *Buller: A Scapegoat?* (London, Leo Cooper, 1994).

## Springfield

A settlement in Natal Colony twenty miles (30km) west of Colenso. Springfield (now called Winterton) was the base for British operations on the Tugela River at Spioenkop and Vaalkrans.

### See also:

[Spioenkop, Battle of](#); [Vaalkrans, Battle of](#).

## Spruit

A small watercourse or stream, often dry.

## Stad

A Boer name for a black African township.

## **Steyn, Marthinus Theunis,**

**1857–1916**

Marthinus Steyn was elected president of the Orange Free State in 1895 and continued in this office until the end of the war when, in May 1902, ill health forced him to appoint Christiaan De Wet as Acting President. Steyn was a strong patriot and a moderate in his political stance. He worked tirelessly to find a peaceful settlement to the differences between the Boer republics and Britain. However, he was not prepared to sacrifice independence and was wholehearted in his support for President Kruger of the South African Republic (Transvaal) when war came. After the fall of Bloemfontein in March 1900 he remained in the field with the Boer forces and was deeply influential in

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ences between Botha and Hertzog in 1912 and in 1914 supported the foundation of the National Party. When the First World War broke out in 1914 he found himself in opposition to Botha's support of Britain, but at the same time he was opposed to those who chose, under De Wet and Beyers, to rise in armed revolt against the British. While addressing a women's organisation, the Oranjevrouereniging, in Bloemfontein in November 1916, he was taken ill and died.

See also:

[Orange Free State](#); [Reitz, Action at](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Stoep

A porch or verandah. The photographs of President Kruger published in Britain at the time of the war made much of the fact that he was portrayed sitting on the *stoep* of his house in Pretoria where any casual passer-by could speak to him. Contrary to British belief, this was no affectation. Kruger gave respectful audience to any citizen. The practice also demonstrated the lack of sophistication of the government of the South African Republic (Transvaal) at the dawn of the 20th century.

## Stormberg, Battle of,

**10 December 1899**

The Battle of Stormberg was one of the British losses which made up, together with the Battles of Magersfontein and Colenso, the defeats of "Black Week". Lieutenant-general Sir William Gatacre not only over-estimated the capacity of his troops but also undertook a difficult march by night in an attempt to surprise his enemy. When such actions end in success, they can be called heroic. However, failure is just failure.

Stormberg Junction in the northern-eastern Cape Colony was of strategic importance because it was on the railway line from the port of East London to Aliwal North, which also branched to join the Bloemfontein line. Furthermore, it was part of the lateral connection to De Aar on the Capetown to Kimberley route. The British garrison there, principally manned by the 2nd Royal Berkshires, had been deemed too vulnerable and had been withdrawn; the Boers occupied the place on 26 November 1899.

Gatacre had been charged with holding firm on this front by the British Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Redvers Buller, but once his force had been reinforced he decided to reoccupy Stormberg. He chose the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles and the 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers for the task, unaccountably leaving the Berkshires, who knew the ground best, behind. A night march was undertaken from Molteno, ten miles (16km) south-east of Stormberg, and Gatacre either changed his plans along the way or got lost. Certainly the

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rearguard of his force took the correct turning to the north as the rest went west. In any case dawn found the worn-out British in a defile at Vegkoppies under the hill of Kissieberg which was occupied by Commandant J. H. Olivier's Rouxville-Zastron commando. The Northumberlands vainly attempted to storm the heights and the Irish Rifles secured a position on the hill but Gatacre decided to withdraw. He left twenty-eight men dead, fifty-one wounded and 634 who were taken as prisoners.

Three months later, on 23 February 1900, the British tried again in the Battle of Schoemanskop and failed for a second time, losing the commander and six men of the Montmorency Scouts. A week later, after the defeat of Cronjé at the Battle of Paardeberg, the Boers pulled out of the Cape and went north, intending to defend Bloemfontein.

See also:

[Paardeberg, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Oosthuizen, A. V., *A Guide to the Battlefields, Graves and Monuments of the Anglo-Boer War in the North Eastern Cape* (Bloemfontein, The War Museum of the Boer Republics, 1998).

## Sunnyside, Battle of,

### 1 January 1900

A column of Canadians and Australians demonstrated that the Boers could be surprised and defeated by swiftly moving troops at Sunnyside in the northern Cape on 1 January 1900.

A number of Cape rebels were in occupation of the town of Douglas, on the Vaal River north-west of Belmont, in December 1899 and, halfway between the two settlements, a laager had been established with about 200 Boers to protect their positions on the Vaal. On 31 December Colonel T. D. Pilcher led out a force of 100 Canadian Infantry, 250 Queensland Mounted Infantry, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry and two guns of the Royal Horse Artillery. They used wagons to transport the men. They left guards at every farm they passed to ensure that no riders could slip past them to warn their quarry and the next morning they attacked, taking the Boers entirely by surprise. The victory was swift, with the loss of only two Queenslanders on the British side and fourteen killed and thirty-eight captured on the Boer side.

The expedition continued to Douglas where Boer supplies were destroyed before the column withdrew, bring a number of loyalist refugees with it. This success did much to cheer the British after the miseries of "Black Week", but it also illustrated the limitations of infantry on foot, for the battle

could not have been won without the ability to move quickly by wagon. Shortly thereafter every battalion in the British army was ordered to send a company for training as mounted infantry.

See also:

[Belmont, Battle of.](#)

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## Reference:

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Reid, Brian A., *Our Little Army in the Field* (St Catherines, Ontario, Vanwell Publishing, 1996).

## Surrender Hill

On the road between Clarens and Fouriesburg in the Brandwater Basin area of the eastern Orange Free State, the capitulation of the Boer forces under Chief Commandant Marthinus Prinsloo took place on 31 July 1900. Surrender Hill was the scene of the great fire that consumed the arms and ammunition taken from the Boers and the ground remains scarred and infertile a century later.

## See also:

[Brandwater Basin, Surrender at](#); [Prinsloo, Chief Commandant Marthinus](#).

## Swaziland

A mountainous country bordering the eastern Transvaal and Portuguese East Africa, north of Zululand. By 1895 there were many white settlers in the territory and the British permitted President Kruger to take control. He, however, boasted to the Germans of his intention, with their assistance, of regaining complete independence from Britain. The British immediately annexed all territory south of the border with Portuguese East Africa, now KwaZulu, thus isolating Swaziland from the sea. The mountainous nature of the terrain helped to keep the war out of Swaziland.

## Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## Sweeps

Attempts to gather up Boer commandos during the guerrilla phase of the war. Also known as drives.

## See also:

[Blockhouses](#); [Drives](#).

# Symons, Major-General Sir William Penn,

1843–99

William Penn Symons joined the 24th Foot (South Wales Borderers) in 1863 and served in the Zulu War. He then served in China and in Waziristan. In 1899 he was in command of the Natal Field Force and when the Boers invaded the colony was in the north at Dundee. Although they were taken by surprise, his men fought stoutly when attacked by General Lucas Meyer's force at Talana Hill, just east of the town. Penn Symons was prominent in the fight and, easily identified as a senior officer from his uniform and the pennant carried alongside, was soon wounded. The Boers were driven off the hill but Penn Symon's wound proved to be mortal and he was left by the retreating British with the rest of their wounded.

See also:

[Talana, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

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### **Tafel Kop, Action at,**

**28 March 1900**

The British entered Bloemfontein on 13 March 1900 and while they were recouping their strength and dealing with the outbreak of enteric (typhoid) fever, they used to time to probe the surrounding country and explore the route northwards towards Pretoria. Vecht-general Tobias Smuts had taken up position across the railway near Karee Siding with his right on Tafel Kop but it was outflanked by Major-general John French's Cavalry Division, allowing Lieutenant-general C. Tucker to break the main defence. The Boers fell back to Brandfort.

See also:

[Bloemfontein, Advance from](#); [Sannaspos, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

### **Talana, Battle of,**

**20 October 1899**

The Boers invaded Natal as soon as war was declared on 11 October 1899 and advanced on Dundee, which was held by the British. Assistant Commandant-general D. J. E. Erasmus approached from the west to occupy Impate Hill and General Lucas Meyer came from the north-west to occupy Talana Hill. The British general, Penn Symons, became personally involved in the action to retake Talana and was fatally wounded in the attempt. The hill was recaptured, but at a heavy cost, with 447 British killed, wounded or missing. The hill was vacated at the end of the day and the British, under Yule, withdrew undetected towards Ladysmith. Although the Boers were left in occupation of the ground they had suffered defeat and they also failed to exploit British weakness immediately thereafter.

Major-general Sir William Penn Symons was superseded as Commander-in-Chief in Natal by Lieutenant-general Sir George White when reinforcements were sent to the colony from India.

Encouraged by the Governor, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, White had allowed Symons to push north to the coal-mining town of Dundee, ostensibly to show the Boers who was in charge, but more likely in response to the worries of the mine-owners there. Meanwhile, in England, the incoming Commander-in-Chief, Sir Redvers Buller, had been imploring the Secretary of State for War, Lord Lansdowne, to order them

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too slow, the general, accompanied by an orderly bearing a bright red pennant, rode forward to hurry them on. Penn Symons was shot and fatally wounded. The command was assumed by Colonel James Yule. By late morning the British, with support from their artillery, had taken the hill at a cost of 447 killed, wounded or missing. Meyer's Boers had gone.

On Impate Erasmus's commandos had done nothing. The fog obscured the view and, although the sounds of battle could be heard, Erasmus kept his men standing. Then, as the late morning sun burnt the mist away, they saw below them Lieutenant-colonel Möller's 18th Hussars galloping round the northern side of Talana hoping to cut off Meyer's retreat. They poured down from Impate, just in time to witness the surrender of the Hussars at Adelaide's Farm.

Brigadier-general Yule, as he now became, was isolated by the advance of General Prinsloo's Orange Free State men towards Ladysmith further south. Dundee was being bombarded by a gun on Impate and there were women and children as well as troops in the town. Furthermore, the wounded and dying, including Penn Symons, were in danger. The obvious route, by way of Glencoe to the east, was dominated by the Boers. Yule contrived to extract some 4,500 troops by night on 22 October and, by noon on 26 October, had brought them safe to Ladysmith by a long, hard route to the east.

See also:

[Elandslaagte, Battle of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles and Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

## Terrain

To people living in temperate zones with maritime climates, the terrain of South Africa is strange. The regions in which the war was fought fall into two principal areas: the hills and valleys of Natal; and the high veldt, the plateau of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. Of lesser importance were the mountainous regions, mainly the Drakensberg, which embrace the southern and eastern borders of the Boer republics.

The hills and valleys of Natal provide a number of natural defensive positions, but the ground is rocky, dry and sparsely covered with scrub (although today, because of reduced grazing, the vegetation cover is much greater than it was at the time of the war). These conditions favour static, defensive warfare and were effectively exploited by the Boers in the early months of the war. However, the Boer style of guerrilla warfare depended on mobility, and the restriction on movement the terrain imposed reduced the number of options open to them and increased the British

opportunities of guarding key locations. Natal was therefore relatively quiet during the guerrilla phase.

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The visual impression of the veldt is of huge, flat plains punctuated by abrupt, flat-topped hills of considerable height. These plains are cut by dongas or spruits, watercourses running only in the wet season (November to February) and dotted with anthills. These ant-hills are like concrete posts up to three feet (1m) high and can overturn a wheeled vehicle moving at any speed, a gun and limber or a wagon. The hills appear, in the clear air, much closer than they really are and the estimation of distance or range is very difficult. These kops or kopjes offer excellent observation posts but are less useful for defence as the flat trajectory of the rifle cannot be exploited and the possibility of being surrounded and besieged is a constant threat. This country was well suited to mobile warfare, particularly that involving mounted infantry or irregulars.

The mountains of the Drakensberg were a barrier to both sides and, for example, in the case of the Brandwater Basin, a trap for the Boers. West of Pretoria and Johannesburg, the ranges of the Magaliesberg and the Witwatersrand were considered largely impassable except by a few neks (passes) and provided the British with opportunities of entrapping the Boers. Both groups of mountains were close to good agricultural land to which the Boers looked as sources of supply, as were the hills of Swaziland.

## Thaba 'Nchu

Located thirty-seven miles (60km) east of Bloemfontein in the Orange Free State. The high kops surrounding Thaba 'Nchu make this a key location for control of traffic north and south to the west of the Drakensberg mountains as well as being the main route to the north-east and northern Natal. It was thus, after the fall of Bloemfontein, an area of great activity.

A flying column commanded by Brigadier-general R. G. Broadwood occupied Thaba 'Nchu in mid-March 1900 but, becoming aware of a Boer laager at Alexandrië (Alexandria) six miles (10km) further east, he decided to withdraw, taking refugee women and children back as well. This was the force that encountered Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet at Sannaspos on 31 March. After De Wet's failure at Jammerbergdrif near Wepener led him to retreat on 24 April, an attempt was made to create a cordon east from Thaba 'Nchu to trap him. Lieutenant-general Ian Hamilton's mounted infantry reoccupied the waterworks at Sannaspos and on 25 April cleared Assistant Chief-commandant E. R. Gobler's 1,500 men out of Israel's Poort, six miles west, to enter Thaba 'Nchu. To the south, preventing Boer movement westwards, Brigadier-general R. Pole-Carew's 11th Division held the road from Bloemfontein to Dewetsdorp and east of Thaba 'Nchu Major-general John French's Cavalry Division was deployed. Despite all this De Wet had already met Assistant Vecht-general Philip Botha at Alexandrië on 25 April and shortly thereafter conferred with Orange Free State President Steyn.

On 30 April Major-general H. L. Smith-Dorrien's 19th infantry brigade was probing north-west from Thaba



'Nchu along the Winburg road when it encountered Boers holding Houtnek, a pass dominated on the west by Toba Mountain. Here Captain E. B. B. Towse led the 1st Gordon Highlanders against men of the Hollander Corps commanded by Colonel Yevgeny Maximov. Both men were seriously wounded, Towse losing his sight and gaining the Victoria Cross, but the Scots took the position.

Thaba 'Nchu later became part of the British blockhouse line from Bloemfontein to Ladybrand.

See also:

[Jammerbergdrif, Siege of](#); [Sannaspos, Battle of](#).

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## **Theron, Commandant D. J. S. (Danie),**

### **1872–1900**

The former teacher and law student Danie Theron served in the Transvaal Cyclist Corps at the Battle of Colenso in December 1899. He then commanded a corps of scouts and, as part of the force attempting to relieve the Boer siege at Paardeberg in February 1900, took a message from Vecht-general Christiaan De Wet to Assistant Commandant-general Piet Cronjé within the laager. The force under his command became known as *Theron se Verkenningskorps* (scouting corps), but on 5 September 1900, he was killed near Fochville in the Gatsrand, south-west of Johannesburg. De Wet said of him: “A more brave and faithful commander I have never seen . . . Not only had he the heart of a lion but he also possessed consummate tact and the greatest energy.” The command of his unit passed to one of his lieutenants, Jan Theron.

See also:

[Intelligence](#).

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

# Thorneycroft, Lieutenant-Colonel A. W.

Alexander Whitelaw Thorneycroft was born in 1859 and joined the Royal Scots Fusiliers in 1879, fighting in the Zulu War and the First Boer War when he was involved in the defence of Pretoria. He raised a regiment, Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, in Pietermaritzburg in September 1899 and led it throughout the war. In the Battle of Spioenkop he found himself in command on the hilltop after the wounding of Major-general Woodgate and held the kop for the rest of the day, at one point steadying men of the Lancashire Fusiliers who were on the point of surrendering and telling the Boers about to take them prisoner to return to their positions.

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He later commanded a column in Orange River Colony with the local rank of Brigadier-general.

See also:

[Spioenkop, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Transport

Whereas the Boers were fighting in their own countries or in lands in which they had sympathisers, the British men and supplies came largely from overseas and had to be carried great distances to where they were required. In this the railways played an essential part, wagons drawn by oxen were used and new inventions such as traction engines powered by steam and trucks and cars fuelled with petroleum were tried. In addition to the mechanical devices that enabled the transport of men and supplies, there were organisational arrangements to be made and here the British experienced severe difficulties.

The Army Service Corps (ASC) had been formed ten years before the war and was an integral part of the system under which each regiment transported its own immediate requirements and drew supplies from an ASC Supply Park. One of the most important items was forage for animals, without which the army could not move. The South African operation was under the command of Colonel Wodehouse Richardson whose advice the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Redvers Buller, heeded so that the ASC companies were sent out first. Colonel Charles Bridge of the ASC reported to Richardson until Buller put the former in charge of

rations and forage for 30,000 animals. The delay of Roberts's army at Bloemfontein was in part caused by the need to regroup the transport and such difficulties persisted until the end of the set-piece period of the war.

Steam traction engines were useful where they were close to supplies of coal and water, and so were used for handling goods at the railheads of Cape Town, Kimberley, Bloemfontein, Johannesburg and Pretoria. In the field they tended to dig in if they were used off hard roads, and even today many South African roads are of packed earth and gravel rather than tarmac. Moreover, they had to take their fuel and water with them, reducing the payload. The limit of their operations was about twenty miles (32km) from a coal depot. Lord Roberts wrote, in his report of 25 March 1901: "This defect would be greatly lessened if an effective oil motor could be substituted for the steam motor, as in that case no water would be wanted, while the coal would be replaced by a more portable and concentrated description of fuel".

The motor car, a Benz, had first been seen in South Africa in January 1897 and some use was made of petroleum-driven vehicles during the war. Kitchener reported: "The motor lorries sent to South Africa did well . . . They will, in the future, be found superior to steam road trains as field transport." Sir Elliott Wood, OC Royal Engineers, South Africa, in his report of 22 October 1902, told of his attempt to obtain automobiles to carry searchlights along the blockhouse lines. The idea of buying from the French was rejected although they were in a position to supply at once and the War Office process failed to deliver before the war had ended.

See also:

[Horses](#); [Railway System](#).

Reference:

Bennett, Ian, "Supply and Transport in the Boer War", *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 87, 1996; Bennett, Ian, *Wait for the Waggon* (London, Leo Cooper, 1997); Crouch, J. D., "The Use of Motor Transport in the Boer War", *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 36, 1984; Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Transvaal

The territory north of the river Vaal into which the Voortrekkers spread in the 1830s.

Hendrik Potgieter left the first republic he founded at Thaba 'Nchu because he was not elected to office, to found the next at Potchefstroom. In 1845 he moved again, this time away from the approaching British, to found the republic of Ohrigstad, north of Lydenburg. From here he attempted to claim supremacy over all Transvaal. This was resented and he was soon on the move again, to establish Schoemansdal, even further north. Andries Pretorius, a less difficult character, remained in

Potchefstroom and tried to bring the scattered white settlers together in some kind of unity. This bore fruit in the signing with the British of the Sand River Convention of 1852. The Transvaal became the South African Republic (ZAR) the following year, but contin-

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ued to be called the Transvaal in ordinary speech. It was annexed by the British on 25 October 1900 and declared to be Transvaal Colony. Under the peace agreement of 1902 it became a Crown Colony and it was given the status of a self-governing colony in 1906.

See also:

[Boer War, First](#); [Gold and the Witwatersrand](#); [Great Trek](#); [Zulu War, The](#).

Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## Trek, Trek-Boer

Long after the first migration in the Great Trek of Afrikaners (the Dutch-speaking people who became known as the Boers), the tradition of solving problems by walking away to seek a place free from them persisted. In the 1920s Deneys Reitz made a journey into Angola. He wrote: “. . . I met with a party of Boers moving through the forest with their wagons and cattle. It was like coming on a continuation of the Great Trek . . . gnarled old men and women sitting under the tented hoods. The other were a younger generation, but still fevered with the eternal unrest that is the heritage of the Afrikaner people. There were about seventy all told. They had come up from Humpata de Janiero down south and said they were on their way to the Congo because they were dissatisfied with Portuguese rule. Yet to my mind the driving impulse was the same ‘sprin-fret’ that had started them from the Transvaal more than forty years ago and had kept them on the move ever since. There appear to be about three thousand Trek Boers in Angola. . .”.

See also:

[Great Trek, The](#).

Reference:

Reitz, Deneys, *No Outspan* (1943; Prescott, Arizona, Wolfe Publishing, 1994).

## Trenches

Trenches or saps had been in use from mediaeval times and earlier, but as a textbook of the time points out, the introduction of rifled arms, both handguns and artillery, made it more necessary than ever to provide cover for troops. The opportunity to do so was often limited by circumstances, time or terrain.

The Boers had a greater opportunity to construct trenches than the advancing army of the British.

A body of men coming under fire cannot stand to dig and thus must make the best of things by lying down, and using natural cover such as rocks and ditches. If there is no enemy fire, time is needed. It was calculated that, using the army issue intrenching pick and shovel, it was possible for a man to move 45 cubic feet of soil in three hours. The suggested trench was three feet (0.9m) deep and the same width (permitting a soldier to sit in it) and thus a trench five feet (1.5m) long could be made by a man in three hours. The soil was used to make a parapet two feet (0.6m) high and two feet thick (to stop a bullet) in front of the trench so that a standing man could see

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forward. This of course assumes that the ground is suitable for digging, what the textbook calls “moderately easy ground”. The rocky soils of South Africa were not always easy to work. On the top of Spioenkop the British could not dig at all and attempted to construct stone schanzes for protection against the Boer shellfire.

The British examined the Boer trenches with interest, having suffered the fire from men entrenched in them at Modder River and Magersfontein. In particular, they noted that the soil thrown to the rear of a trench four feet, six inches (1.4m) deep prevented the heads of the defenders from being seen. A secondary trench in the floor of the main work allowed people to walk out of view, provided a drain when it rained and gave the men a place to put their feet when sitting on the bottom of the main trench. The Boers undercut the sides of the trenches where possible, making storage space.

See also:

[Artillery, British](#); [Magersfontein, Battle of](#); [Modder River, Battle of](#); [Rifles](#); [Spioenkop, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Philips, G., *Text Book of Field Engineering* (London, Pardon & Sons, 1901).

**Trichardt, Lieutenant-Colonel S. P. E.,**

**1847–1907**

Trichardt was the grandson of a Voortrekker leader of the same family name and was born near Ohrigstad. He seems to have fought at every opportunity thereafter, in wars against the

black Africans, the First Boer War and the Jameson Raid. In 1897 he was appointed Commandant of the *Staatsartillerie* and supervised the acquisition of modern guns. He fought in Natal at the start of the war and moved around after the relief of Ladysmith until, after the Battle of Diamond Hill in June 1900, the artillery regiment ceased to operate as such. He then joined the Middelburg commando. After the war he went to German East Africa and then to Kenya, where he died.

See also:

[Artillery, Boer.](#)

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Tugela Heights, Battle of,

**21–27 February 1900**

In a series of actions over the space of a week, Sir Redvers Buller wore down the Boer force blocking his way to Ladysmith and eventually put them to flight, not only here but from the hills overlooking Ladysmith itself. The British troops had learned to make maximum use of natural cover and wise generalship exploited the shelter of the deep banks of the Tugela River. The artillery was used with a new skill, their fire being directed first at the destruction of Boer forward positions and then moving ahead of the advancing British troops to counter the effectiveness of Boer rifle fire. Furthermore, Buller husbanded his forces, fighting successive, limited actions instead of attempting a single, grandiose assault. Finally, the troops were not asked to undertake advances beyond their capabilities and they were properly supported with that most necessary of supplies in the South African summer – fresh drinking water. The water came up from Frere in 200-gallon (900-litre) tanks, each enough to fill the water bottles of a single battalion. Buller's victory was complete and was the first of a series of successes that demonstrated his ability, at over sixty years of age, to learn new ways to fight.

The Boer positions north of Colenso had been prepared at the end of 1899 and steadily improved since. On 5 February Major F. W. von Wichmann was in command of the *Staatsartillerie* at Colenso and he gave details of the Boer forces present on that day, the date of the Battle of Vaalkrans. Under General Lucas Meyer there were the following commandos and men: Swaziland, 180; Krugersdorp, 400; Zoutpansberg, 200; Boksburg, 250; Italian Corps, 40; French Corps, 40; Wakkerstroom, 300; Standerton, 100; Ermelo, 200; Middelburg, 500; artillery, 56; and Bethal, 150.

This amounted to 2,416 men who were certainly well reinforced as the British abandoned their attempt to outflank Boer positions to the west and withdrew to Chieveley. The artillery on 5 February was listed as one Krupp howitzer, two Creusot and one Krupp 75mm guns, and one Maxim-Vickers. Two weeks later, the artillery had, perhaps, been doubled and the men reinforced on the same scale.

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Sunday 25 February in order for them to be carried off the battlefield. Enemies exchanged tobacco and souvenirs and, that evening, started fighting once more. Operations so far had cost the British some 1,200 men killed and wounded.

Now Sandbach located a new opportunity: a new location for the pontoon bridge. After dark on 26 February the Royal Engineers moved it to a position between Hart's Hill Falls and the rapids. At 10 a.m. the next day the British units, various regiments now separated from their brigades as a result of continuous redeployment, crossed to attack Railway Hill, immediate east of Hart's Hill, and Pieters Hill to the east of the tracks. The news of the British success at Paardeberg on this, Majuba Day, came through as they started their assault. The Heidelberg Commando on Pieters Hill was attacked by 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers and 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers and the hill was largely in their hands soon after noon, but not entirely cleared until the 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers had joined the fray. The 2nd West Yorkshires headed for Railway Hill at midday with the 2nd Royal Lancasters on their left. The latter, coming under heavy fire from Hart's Hill, turned their attention in that direction, alongside 1st Rifle Brigade, 2nd East Surrey and 2nd Scottish Rifles. Hart's Hill was taken at last and Railway Hill soon after, with the additional help of 1st Durham Light Infantry. The Boers streamed away northwards and, as evening came on, the first British horsemen reached Ladysmith. Buller's use of the artillery and infantry in concert had, finally, broken the Tugela front, the greatest challenge in the first phase of the war. Christiaan De Wet wrote: ". . . Sir Redvers Buller had to operate against stronger positions than any other English General in South Africa".

### See also:

[Artillery](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Rifles](#); [Spioenkop, Battle of](#); [Vaalkrans, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Chisholm, Ruari, *Ladysmith* (London, Osprey Publishing, 1979); Churchill, Winston, *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria* (London, Longmans Green, 1900; Leo Cooper, 1989); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Reitz, Deneys, *Commando: A Boer Journal of the Boer War* (London, Faber & Faber, 1929).

## Tugela River

The river draining central Natal eastwards, the Tugela, was the barrier the British had to overcome in order to lift the siege of Ladysmith. The modern spelling, Thukela, more correctly represents the Zulu

origin of the name.

See also:

[Colenso, Battle of](#); [Spioenkop, Battle of](#); [Tugela Heights, Battle of](#); [Vaalkrans, Battle of](#).

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## Tweebosch, Battle of,

**7 March 1902**

The continuing depredations of Assistant Commandant-general Koos De la Rey drove British Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen to mount an illmanned sortie to catch him. At De Klipdrift Methuen's men crumbled under De la Rey's attack and the British general was wounded while attempting to rally his men. De la Rey himself supervised Methuen's departure to hospital and arranged for a telegraph message to Lady Methuen to assure her of her husband's safety. At this late stage in the war the defeat was a humiliation for the British, although of little significance in the eventual outcome of the war.

By early 1902 the war was dragging on: the British were mounting increasingly successful drives to round up Boers and there was increasing deprivation for those commandos still on the veldt. De la Rey was short of ammunition and supplies and, on 25 February, he ambushed a convoy on its way from Klerksdorp, west of Johannesburg, at Yser Spruit, a tributary of the Vaal River. The fight was, by the standards of this war, hard and costly. On the British side, 187 men were killed and wounded and on the Boer side, fifty-one. De la Rey had captured the supplies he needed and the surviving British were subjected to *uitskud*— that is, they were stripped of their clothes and left to walk back to Klerksdorp.

Methuen, then in Vryburg, 100 miles (160km) west of Klerksdorp, decided to mount an expedition to put an end to this nuisance. He ordered Lieutenant-colonel Robert Kekewich to take a force north from Klerksdorp towards Lichtenburg while Methuen came from the west past Delareyville and turned north towards Sannieshof. Methuen's force of 1,250 men was made up of elements of no less than twenty formations, many of them inexperienced men, and was further burdened with eighty-five wagons. It was more like a British column of two years before than the mobile, flexible formations that had succeeded in the drives. On the night of 6 March they camped at the farm of Tweebosch and, early the next day, moved off. As the wagons moved on from De Klipdrift on the Great Harts River, De la Rey's men, some 2,000 of them, attacked the rearguard. Repeated Boer charges, with the men firing from the saddle, were more than the colonial volunteer troops could stand. The mounted men fled, leaving Methuen and the old hands of the Northumberland Fusiliers, Loyal North Lancashires and Royal Artillery to resist. Methuen was wounded and, when attempting to mount his horse, became trapped under it when it was shot. The Boers captured one of the British guns and turned it on their enemies. After two hours the 600 or so British surrendered, with sixty-eight dead and 132 wounded besides. The Boers lost nine men and they are buried on the battlefield while their adversaries lie at Ottosdal.

**See also:**

[De la Rey, Assistant Commandant-general Jacobus Heculaas “Koos”](#); [Kekewich, Lieutenant-colonel Robert George](#); [Methuen, Lieutenant-general Lord](#).

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## Reference:

Cakebread, Keith, “The Battle at Klip Drift”, *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 97, 1999; Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## TwEEfontein, Battle of,

### 25 December 1901

In December 1901 the British were building a blockhouse line from Bethlehem to Harrismith in the eastern Orange Free State. The 11th Imperial Yeomanry were camped on Groenkop, a hill with almost a cliff on the west, but sensible defensive trenches to the east. Late on 24 December about 500 of Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet’s men climbed the cliff in their stockinged feet and, in the dark of Christmas morning, attacked. Surprise was complete and the camp was taken. In addition to the victory and the prisoners taken, De Wet gained one Armstrong gun, one Pom-Pom, twenty wagons, guns, tents and ammunition – supplies that would keep him in the field for a while, at least.

The attack in the night was completely unexpected and although the British rushed to arms at 2 a.m. when the Boers, hurled into action by De Wet’s cry of “Burghers, storm!”, fell upon them, they were overcome within forty minutes. As they gathered up the wounded and had time to look about them, the overwhelming impression the British had was of the tattered condition of their adversaries. Private A. D. Bowers wrote: “almost all the Boers were in a state of extreme destitution . . . dressed in rags, and all sorts of makeshifts. Some of the men were wearing women’s bonnets, and sacks and old skirts.” The prisoners were marched out into the veldt and stripped naked, except for one, Private Bourne, who had big feet. Bowers says: “. . . no army boots would fit him . . . He explained to the Boers . . . So while the rest of us were dressed in Nature’s garments, Bourne possessed Nature’s garments plus a pair of twelve in boots.” Thus undressed, they slogged back across the sunbaked veldt.

## See also:

[Blockhouses](#); [Drives](#); [Uitskud](#).

## Reference:

Dance, Stephen, “The Eye of the Storm: TwEEfontein, a Survivor’s Account”, *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 81, 1995; De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

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## U

### Uitlander

The discovery of minerals, diamonds and gold, in South Africa brought miners, businessmen and others from overseas. In the South African Republic (the Transvaal), where gold was mined near Johannesburg, the *uitlanders* (people from lands outside the Transvaal), had no political rights but contributed massively in taxation. Their rights became a key political issue which was exploited by British interests seeking control of the republic.

It should be noted that a significant proportion of the *uitlanders* were not English-speaking but came from Ireland, Germany, the Netherlands and other countries unsympathetic to the idea of British rule. Furthermore, even the English-speaking people were divided and when Cecil Rhodes contrived the Jameson Raid in an attempt to overthrow the Boer government's control of Johannesburg, the *uitlanders* in the town failed to rally to his cause. When war broke out many British, Australian and other citizens of the British Empire left by rail to take ship from Portuguese East Africa for Durban and joined colonial regiments in Natal. Other *uitlanders* fought for the Boers.

#### See also:

[Jameson Raid](#); [Kruger, President Paul](#); [Milner, Sir Alfred](#); [Rhodes, Cecil](#).

### Uitskud

In the guerrilla phase of the war the Boers lacked facilities for holding prisoners-of-war and, at the same time, suffered considerable shortages of clothing, footwear and other supplies. They therefore adopted the procedure of *uitskud*, literally “shaking out”. This involved stripping the captured British of their weapons, clothes and boots and releasing them naked to find their way back to their units.

#### See also:

[Tweefontein, Battle of](#).

#### Reference:

Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

### United States of America, Attitude of

American attitudes to the Boer War were various and conflicting. On one hand, the image of a small nation fighting for independence appealed to them, but on the other the denial

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### Vaal River

Defining the border between the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (the Transvaal), the Vaal flows westwards to join the Orange River near Douglas in Cape Colony.

See also:

[Transvaal](#).

### Vaalkrans, Battle of,

**5 February 1900**

Having withdrawn from Spioenkop, the British were taken back under the direct command of Sir Redvers Buller and another attack was undertaken to clear the Brakfontein ridge and open the way to Ladysmith. The key position of Vaalkrans Hill was taken in the afternoon of 5 February but turned out to be exposed to Boer fire from a 155mm Creusot (a Long Tom) to the south-east beyond the range of British counter-barrage. Calculating the cost of taking the ridge at between 2,000 and 3,000 men, Buller decided to withdraw. The plan to turn the Boer's right flank had failed.

It is rare to have a record of the numbers of Boer forces at a particular action, but a map was made by Major F. W. von Wichmann of the *Staatsartillerie*, the officer commanding the artillery at Colenso on 5 February. He lists the Boer forces on the Upper Tugela, under General Shalk Burger, Assistant General T. Smuts and General Prinsloo, as the following commandos and men: Johannesburg, 400; Standerton, 300; Wakkerstroom, 100; Zoutpansberg, 110; Carolina, 300; Ermelo, 500; Heidelberg, 478; Lydenburg, 350; German Corps, 46; Artillery, 98; Pretoria, 300; Middelburg, 300; ZARP and other police, 600; Vrede, 110; Frankfort, 130; Senekal, 330; Heilbron, 210; and Kroonstad, 300. This amounted to a total of 4,962 men. The artillery consisted of one Creusot 155mm (Long Tom), three Creusot 75mm and three Krupp 75mm guns and three Maxim-Vickers guns. It is not specified whether these Maxims were .303 machine-guns or 37mm Pom-Poms. The map on which these listings appear shows the disposition of forces, Boer and British, on 5 February and the location of the Long Tom on Tala Hill, due east of Schiet Drift (Skietdrif).

The preparations for the British thrust took days, all under the eyes of the Boers beyond the Tugela. The plan was for Major-general A. S. Wynne, who had succeeded Woodgate, slain at Spioenkop, to take the

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Boers ahead of him. Lyttleton' men, 1st Durham Light Infantry and 3rd King's Royal Rifles, had taken Vaalkrans by 4 p.m. and had dug in for the night. There they stayed all the next day, under steady shellfire from the Boer artillery, including the Long Tom which enfiladed the position, making it impossible to move the British guns onto the hill. The hill was also exposed to Boer rifle fire from Brakfontein and from Green Hill to the east. Major-general H. J. T. Hildyard's Brigade relieved them that night, but by then Buller had decided that taking the ridge would be too costly. He telegraphed his Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, to seek approval for this decision but in reply received vague exhortations to relieve Ladysmith, which contributed nothing. On 8 February the British started back to Chieveley with 333 men killed, wounded or missing. Buller's awareness of the probable outcome when his artillery could not give sufficient cover to his infantry had saved many lives and signalled the beginning of a new tactical approach that would find fruition on the Tugela Heights two weeks later.

### See also:

[Buller, Sir Redvers](#); [Spioenkop, Battle of](#); [Tugela Heights, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Wichmann, F. W. von, *Ladysmith, Colenso, Upper Tugela*, map printed in South Africa and logged into War Office Map Room, London, 17 August 1903 (Bodleian Library, Oxford, shelfmark E54:11[40] ).

## Vecht-General

A Vecht-general (Veght-Generaal), or Combat General, commanded two or more Boer commandos in the field. The post was sometimes known in the Orange Free State as Assistant Chief-commandant. The Vecht-general was under the command of an Assistant-general (Transvaal rank), also called Chief Commandant (Orange Free State), an officer responsible directly to the Commander-in-Chief.

### See also:

[Boer Forces](#); [Veldt-Cornet](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

# Veldt

The open countryside. The High Veldt is a term that refers specifically to the high plains of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.

See also:

[Terrain](#).

# Veldt-Cornet

An elected officer within a commando. Criteria for selection might, or might not, take note of military

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competence; however, they could also include family ties, social or commercial obligations or simple popularity as a character. The Veldt-cornet or Field Cornet commanded a section of the commando called a *wykeor* ward, of which there might be as few as three or as many as five in the formation. The officer was elected by free vote of all members of the *wyke* and might have an Assistant Veldt-cornet, also elected, to report to him.

See also:

[Boer Forces](#); [Vecht-General](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Vereeniging Conference

Approaches were made between the warring parties in April 1902 which led to the prospect of peace negotiations, but the Boer delegates pointed out that they lacked the authority to concede the independence of the republics. At the same time the British held that they had annexed the republics and that they no longer existed as independent entities. The problem was resolved by convening representatives of the Boers, organised by republic, to a conference at Vereeniging, south of Johannesburg on the Vaal River. Safe-conduct passes were issued to the Boer commanders for their men's safe passage to it. The first session lasted from 15 to 17 May and authorised a delegation to negotiate. The second session took place from 29 to 31 May and agreed the peace terms.

The discussions at the first session consisted of reports from the delegates of the commandos still in the field. Boers not acting against the British were apparently not represented, as examination of Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet's record of his consultations suggests. The safe-conduct passes were for the Boer war leaders and anyone whom they appointed, and the consultations were with the commandants and their commandos. Other Boer citizens appear to have been omitted from the process.

It is clear from the minutes of the meetings that the views represented were diverse. Some took the view that the objective of the war was independence and that death was preferable to the abandonment of this goal. Others argued that the sufferings of their families and comrades, the dangers of starvation and of attack by black Africans and the impossibility of winning the war were such that the bitter end, to which they had sworn to fight, had now arrived. They voted to authorise their representatives to try to get agreement to a limited independence under the protection of Britain. The discussions with the British offered nothing so generous and the negotiators returned with something very close to what had already been rejected. This was debated until the early afternoon of the deadline of 31 May and acceptance of British terms was agreed by fifty-four votes to six early that

afternoon.

See also:

[Peace Negotiations](#); [Documents: Minutes of meetings](#).

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## Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Verkenner

A Boer scout. The best known of the *verkenners* was Danie Theron who led a corps of scouts.

## See also:

[Theron, Commandant Danie J. S.](#)

## Viljoen, Vecht-General B. J. (Ben),

**1868–1917**

Ben Viljoen was born in Cape Colony. He became a policeman in Krugers-dorp and took part in the defeat of the Jameson Raid. In 1899 he became commandant of the Johannesburg Commando and fought at Elandslaagte and distinguished himself at Vaalkrans. After his promotion to Vecht-general he served under Commandant-general Louis Botha in resisting the eastward advance of the British from Pretoria, seeing action at Diamond Hill and Bergendal. In the guerrilla phase of the war he operated in the eastern and north-eastern Transvaal and was eventually captured near Lydenburg in January 1902. He was imprisoned on St Helena and returned to South Africa after the war. He emigrated to New Mexico, United States, where he died.

## See also:

[Bergendal, Battle of](#); [Diamond Hill, Battle of](#); [Elandslaagte, Battle of](#); [Vaalkrans, Battle of](#).

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

## Villebois-Mareuil, Vecht-General Count Georges De,

## 1847–1900

The Count de Villebois-Mareuil graduated from St Cyr Military Academy in France in 1868 and served in Indo-China. In 1870 he returned to France and served in the Franco-Prussian War. As an officer in the Foreign Legion he was active in Tunisia in 1881 and he retired from the army in 1896. In 1899 he went to South Africa to offer his services to the Boers and in 1900 formed the European Legion with the Russian Colonel Maximov as his second-in-command. Villebois-Mareuil then led part of his force to harass Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen's force near Boshof, north-east of Kimberley, but found that, on 5 April, the British had cornered him at Tweefontein. Though he and his men fought well, the British prevailed and the count was killed.

See also:

[Boer Forces](#); [Boshof, Battle of](#); [Maximov, Colonel Yevgeny Yakovlevich](#).

Reference:

d'Etchegoyen, Olivier (as "an Ex-Lieutenant"), *Ten Months in the Field with the Boers* (London, William

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Heinemann, 1901); Davidson, Apollon and Irina Filatova, *The Russians and the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1998); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); McNab, Roy, *The French Colonel: De Villebois-Mareuil and the Boers 1899–1900* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1975).

## **Vlakfontein, Action at,**

**28 May 1901**

During a sweep south-west of Rustenburg, Brigadier-general H. G. Dixon was attacked by Boers under Vecht-general J. C. G. Kemp under cover of a grass fire they had started. The Boers managed to capture and use against the British two of their own guns and although the British regained them in a counter-attack, the British operation had been entirely disrupted. Both sides suffered serious losses. The British dead numbered fifty-seven and the wounded 121, while the number of Boers killed exceeded forty.

**See also:**

[Drives.](#)

**Reference:**

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **Vlei**

A pond or small lake.

## **Volkrust**

On the northern border of Natal, just inside the Orange Free State, Volkrust was the centre of the gathering of Boer forces prior to the invasion of the British colony in October 1899. It was taken by the British under Sir Redvers Buller on 13 June 1900 and became an important supply centre.

**See also:**

[Botha's Pass, Action at.](#)

## Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War, 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## **Volksraad**

The governing assembly or parliament, in the Orange Free State and in the South African Republic (Transvaal).

## **Voortrekker**

A person of Dutch extraction who took part in the Great Trek of 1836–46. The Voortrekkers left British-ruled Cape Colony to seek new lands in the interior of South Africa.

## See also:

[Great Trek, The; Trek.](#)

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### Warren, Lieutenant-General Sir Charles,

1840–1927

Sir Charles Warren commanded the British troops in the disastrous battle of Spioenkop. His experience and achievements prior to his service in South Africa were both modest and irrelevant, and the manner of his appointment and relationship with his superior in Natal did nothing to improve matters.

Charles Warren was born in 1840 and joined the Royal Engineers in 1857. He was in Palestine from 1867–70 where he did archaeological work in Jerusalem. He commanded the Diamond Fields Horse in the north-western Cape campaign against black Africans in 1877, served in the Middle East in 1882 and in Bechuanaland in 1884–85. He then became Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police in which post he attracted criticism for the failure to apprehend the murderer known as Jack the Ripper and for the vigour with which Socialist meetings in London were dispersed. In 1889 he was posted to Singapore and in 1895 to Thames District in England. In November 1899 he was appointed to command the 5th Division in South Africa.

This appointment was fraught with difficulty. The original intention of the British Secretary for War, Lord Lansdowne, was that Warren should take over from Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen on the western front. However, General Sir Redvers Buller would not agree to that and so Warren came to the Natal front to serve under Buller with both of them aware that, should anything befall Buller, Warren was to take over. Furthermore, the two men had a hearty dislike for each other. When the decision was made to attempt a flanking operation to pass Boer lines on the Tugela River to the west, Warren was given independent command of the British left. He refused to support Lord Dundonald's proposal for a swift foray by way of Acton Homes and plodded on with his assault on Ntabamnyama and then on Spioenkop. To what extent the failure here was Warren's fault is open to question, but his appointment does seem to have been unwise and his experience of command in the field superficial. After serving in north-western Cape Colony, Warren returned to England in July 1900.

See also:

[Spioenkop, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Chisholm, Ruari, *Ladysmith* (London, Osprey Publishing, 1979); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius

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and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Waterval Drift, Action at,

### 15 February 1900

The reorganisation of the transport arrangements of the British army under the new Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, and his Chief of Staff, Lord Kitchener, created a vulnerable concentration of supplies. This was shown when Vecht-general Christiaan De Wet captured the supply train at Waterval Drift, south of Jacobsdal in the western Orange Free State. De Wet's eagerness to enjoy the fruits of his victory delayed his moving in support of the Boers beset at Paardeberg, where they were obliged to surrender on 27 February.

After the Boers repulsed the British drive to relieve Kimberley in the Battle of Magersfontein in December 1899, they strengthened their positions below the hills and, under Assistant Commandant-general Piet Cronjé, awaited events. They assumed that Roberts would head for Bloemfontein to the east and when Major-general John French moved south-east from Modder River on 11 February, they guessed that this was the vanguard of the eastward move. De Wet was sent with 250 men, a Krupp 75mm gun and a Pom-Pom to keep surveillance and he positioned himself at Blauwbank, overlooking Waterval Drift on the Riet River. As French's force was too strong to oppose, De Wet sent Commandant W. J. Lubbe to shadow French and himself waited to see what came next. For the time being nothing did.

In fact French was not heading for Bloemfontein but went north, over Klip Drift on the Modder and on to Kimberley in a dashing move that left the Boers flat-footed and out-flanked at Magersfontein. Meanwhile Robert's supply train trundled into Waterval Drift in the wake of the British support. The escort was without artillery and unable to fight off De Wet, though they tried valiantly. Reinforcements arrived with guns, but Roberts decided to abandon the wagons and the next morning De Wet's men gathered up the spoils of some 200 wagons, harnessed the captured oxen and moved off to the south-east. A message had been sent to Cronjé by Commandant G. J. Scheepers, telling him that the British were moving towards Paardeberg Drift. The old general paid little heed and was destined to be surrounded at Paardeberg three days later. More concerned about seeing his convoy of supplies safely bestowed, De Wet lost a day and arrived at Paardeberg to find the Boers completely surrounded.

See also:

[Kimberley, Relief of](#); [Magersfontein, Battle of](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#).

Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).

## **Wauchope, Major-General A. G.,**

**1846–99**

Andrew Wauchope was killed leading the Highland Brigade against the Boer

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positions at Magersfontein in an attempt at a dawn attack after a night march. He kept the troops in close formation, mass of quarter columns, and delayed deploying them in line as long as he could. This, and the fact that the Boers were in trenches below the kops on which they were assumed to be, magnified the Highlanders' losses.

Andrew Gilbert Wauchope was the son of a wealthy family and joined the Royal Navy in 1860. He left the navy two years later and was commissioned into the 42nd Highlanders (Black Watch) in 1865. He served in the Ashanti War of 1873–74 and took part in the Battle of Tel-el-Kebir in Egypt in 1882, where the Highland Brigade successfully stormed Arabi Bey's positions after a night march. He took part in the Nile Expedition of 1884–85 and was also at Omdurman and Khartoum in 1898.

It is reported that he was uneasy about his orders from Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen before Magersfontein. The night was foul, with heavy rain and thunder, and it was something of a miracle that Major G. E. Benson, RA, brought the Highlanders so close to their intended position. Benson advised deployment, but Wauchope pressed on, perhaps hoping to make up for the delay imposed by the adverse conditions. Wauchope was first buried on the battlefield but was then removed to a graveyard at Matjesfontein, near Beaufort West in Cape Colony.

See also:

[Magersfontein, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Baird, William, *General Wauchope* (Edinburgh, Oliphant Anderson and Ferrier, 1901); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Wepener

A town sixty miles (100km) south-east of Bloemfontein on the Caledon River, near the Basutoland (Lesotho) border. It was occupied by the British, specifically by men of Brabant's Horse, a colonial formation, on 29 March 1900. The dislike of the Boers for colonials, men they thought should be supporting the Boer cause, was such that Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet put aside his own rule to remain mobile and laid siege to the garrison at Jammerbergdrif, north-west of the town. The siege failed.

See also:

[Jammerbergdrif, Siege of;](#) [Thaba 'Nchu.](#)

**Wernher, Beit & Co.**

The largest company in the South African mining business, with assets valued at £15 million in 1895, was Wernher, Beit, run by Julius Wernher and Alfred Beit. Their access to international banking guaranteed the funds required to develop the capital-intensive business of exploiting the poor ore of the Witwatersrand to extract gold. Their disaffection with the Boer government was stimulated by taxation policies and the exploitative charges for transportation levied by the Netherlands South African Rail-

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ways. At the same time the attempts to make Boer farmers profit from land sales under the Gold Law encouraged the large companies both to mine gold and to speculate in land, shutting out smaller companies ones. Boer policy thus created large and powerful enemies and the involvement of Wernher, Beit in backing the Jameson Raid should have been no surprise.

See also:

[Gold and the Witwatersrand](#); [Jameson Raid](#); [Rhodes, Cecil](#).

Reference:

Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Richardson, Peter, and Jean Jacques Van-Helten, “The Gold Mining Industry in the Transvaal 1886–99”, in *The South African War*, ed. Peter Warwick (Harlow, Longman, 1980).

## White, Lieutenant-General Sir George

George Stewart White was born in 1835 and was commissioned into the Gordon Highlanders in 1853. He served in the Indian Mutiny at Charasiah and won the Victoria Cross (1879). He fought in the Afghan War of 1878–80 and commanded a brigade in Burma in 1885–86. He succeeded Lord Roberts as commander in India. He was appointed to command the Natal Field Force in 1899 and, contrary to the pleas of Sir Redvers Buller, moved well north of the Tugela River and became besieged in Ladysmith. Under his leadership the garrison held out, but White was ill and exhausted at the end of it. He was invalided home and, on recovery, became Governor of Gibraltar.

See also:

[Ladysmith, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

## Willow Grange, Battle of,

**23 November 1899**

The most southerly action fought by the Boers in Natal at Willow Grange was, it may be argued, a tactical victory for them. However, an accident befell Piet Joubert, the sixty-eight-year-old

Commandant-general, and they withdrew to the line of the Tugela River. The Boer threat to Pietermaritzburg and Durban was over, but the Boers acquired a new commander of near genius, Louis Botha.

While Willow Grange was the most southerly action of the Boer advance in Natal, their scouts went as far as Mooi River and even beyond. When the siege of Ladysmith started on 2 November 1899 the majority of Boer forces were tied down there but Louis Botha took a force further south to the Tugela River on 3 November and scouted beyond in the days that followed. At the same time Major-general H. J. T. Hildyard's 2nd Infantry Brigade was arriving at Estcourt and Major-general G. Barton had brought the 6th Brigade to Mooi River, from which the railway goes north, crossing the hills at Highland before descend-

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ing to Willow Grange and then Estcourt.

At a council of war on 9 November the Boers, with the exception of the Orange Free Staters, decided to reconnoitre southwards with a view to taking Pietermaritzburg or even Durban. A group led by Commandant David Joubert took the route east from Colenso by way of Weenen while, on 13 November, Botha, accompanied by Commandant-general Piet Joubert, took a westerly route. They all met at Highlands on 21 November, cutting the railway line, setting up a 75mm Creusot gun on Brynbella Hill and threatening the southern approaches to Estcourt.

Hildyard determined to throw them out. Under Colonel F. W. Kitchener, the brother of Lord Kitchener, the 2nd West Yorkshire and the 2nd East Surrey Regiments, together with the Durban Light Infantry, moved south from Estcourt and responded to the Boer threat by helping to heave a naval 12-pounder gun to the top of Klobber's Kop, the north-east shoulder of Beacon Hill. This feat took place in the worst storm of lightning and rain for many years. The Boers, further along the ridge, opened fire with their gun. Meanwhile the infantry clambered up towards the Boer positions in the darkness and rain, at one point observing each other over a stone wall and opening fire, each assuming the others to be the enemy. When day came the Boers had gone, leaving six horses and one man dead, the victims of lightning. The British, lacking support, returned to Estcourt with casualties of eleven killed and sixty-seven wounded.

The Boers conferred about what to do next. Botha, buoyed up by this tactical victory, was in favour of going south. Joubert was against it. An accident tipped the balance, for Joubert was thrown from his horse and seriously injured. His men lost the stomach for raiding the south and the whole force, some 2,000 men, withdrew behind the Tugela. Botha now took command and turned his attention to the fortification of the Tugela line.

See also:

[Armoured Train Incident](#); [Colenso, Battle of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#).

Reference:

Droogleever, R. W. F., "No Smoking, No Talking, No Firing – Nothing but the Bayonet!", *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 45, 1986; Jones, Huw M., and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992); Bushmans River Tourism Association, *The Battle of Willow Grange*, [www.battlefields.co.za/history/anglo-boer\\_war](http://www.battlefields.co.za/history/anglo-boer_war)

**Wolseley, Field Marshal Lord,**

**1833–1913**

Lord Wolseley was Commander-in-Chief of the British Army from 1895 to 1900 and was influential in having one of his “African” men, Sir Redvers Buller, appointed to lead the South African expedition against the Boers rather than one of Lord Roberts’s “Indian” ring or, indeed, Roberts himself. He was deeply disappointed by

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the outcome. Buller failed to deliver the success expected, Roberts replaced him and, on his return to England in 1900, Roberts succeeded to Wolseley's position. Furthermore, when an enquiry was held into the conduct of the war, Wolseley, who had unsuccessfully pressed for preparations to be made for a war against the Boers, was blamed for the lack of those arrangements.

Garnet Joseph Wolseley made his way in the army through his own intelligence and brilliance rather than the purchase of positions. He joined the 12th Foot (Suffolk) in 1852 and transferred to the 80th (2nd South Staffordshires) almost at once to take part in his first campaign in Burma. He served in the Crimea and in the Indian Mutiny with the 90th (2nd Scottish Rifles). In Canada he commanded the successful Red River Expedition of 1870 and on his return to England played a vital part in the reformation of the British Army. He then led, with outstanding efficiency and organisational control, the Ashanti Expedition of 1873. When the Zulu War appeared to be a disaster, he was sent out to take over from Lord Chelmsford, but arrived after the latter's victory at Ulundi and had to content himself with picking up the pieces. His combination of administrative skill and military insight was then demonstrated in 1882 when he led the Egyptian Expedition and won at Tel-el-Kibir on 13 September 1882.

In Britain he was the advocate of professionalism in the army and opposed to the reactionary rule of the then Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Cambridge. However, the tensions between the old attitudes and the new and between the Indian faction and the African, that is, people who had gained their significant experience in one or other of these theatres of the Empire, did nothing to strengthen the strategic ability or operational effectiveness of the army in the 1890s.

### See also:

[Buller, General Sir Redvers](#); [Roberts, Field Marshal Lord](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999); Kochanski, Halik, "Wolseley and the South African War", *Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image*, ed. J. Gooch (London, Frank Cass, 2000).

## **Woodgate, Major-General E. R. P.,**

**1845–1900**

Edward Robert Prevost Woodgate joined the 4th (King's Own Royal Lancaster) regiment in 1865 and served in the Abyssinian Expedition of 1867–68, the Ashanti Expedition of 1873–74 and the Zulu War of 1878–79. After service in the West Indies and in Sierra Leone, he was appointed to the

command of the 9th Brigade and led the attack on Spioenkop. He was mortally wounded in that engagement.

See also:

[Spioenkop, Battle of](#).

Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau,

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1999); Wilson, H. W., *With the Flag to Pretoria* (Harmsworth Brothers, 1900).

## Wools-Sampson, Aubrey,

**1856–1924**

Aubrey Wools-Sampson was born in Cape Town and first saw action with a volunteer unit in the Zulu War. He was again a volunteer in the First Boer War and was wounded in the defence of Pretoria against the Boers. He was, with Walter Karri Davies, an influential *uitlander* (foreigner) in Johannesburg after the failure of the Jameson Raid in 1896 and with Karri Davies left for Natal at the outbreak of the 1899 war to raise the Imperial Light Horse. He fought at Elandslaagte and was wounded again. In 1901 he joined the Intelligence Corps and was instrumental in raising the quality of information available in the drives to capture Boers to a level that caused them real problems. The British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, praised him in despatches in November 1901. Wools-Sampson was knighted and made an honorary Colonel by the British in recognition of his services. His last campaign was the suppression of the Bambata rebellion, a black African uprising in Natal in 1906.

### See also:

[Elandslaagte, Battle of](#); [Intelligence](#); [Karri Davies, Major Walter](#).

### Reference:

Sampson, Victor, and Ian Hamilton, *Anti-Commando* (London, Faber & Faber, 1931); Wallace, R. L., *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra, The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976).

## Wynne, Major-General A. S.

Born in Ireland in 1846, Wynne joined the 51st Yorkshire Light Infantry in 1863. He served in the Afghan War of 1878–79, in South Africa on “special duties” during the First Boer War and in Egypt from 1883 to 1885. After Major-general Woodgate died of wounds received at Spioenkop, Wynne assumed command of the 11th Brigade and led it in the first engagement of the Battle of the Tugela Heights. His name is immortalized on the site of that battle in the name “Wynne’s Hills”.

### See also:

[Spioenkop, Battle of](#); [Tugela Heights, Battle of](#).

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

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## X

### Xhosa

The Xhosa people are of the Nguni group of black African peoples. They had no supreme ruler but distinct groups were governed by chiefs from a particular family. They were largely economically dependent on their herds of cattle. By the time of the war of 1899–1902, their lands and livelihood had been taken over by the white people, both Boer and British.

Boers moving east from Cape Town met Xhosa moving west along the southern coast of South Africa in 1702, on the banks of the Fish River, between the modern sites of Port Elizabeth and Port London. Attempts in the 1770s to limit the eastward advance of the Boers were frustrated by the hunger for land and the determination of the people, Adriaan van Jaarsveld, for example, who acted as they wished in spite of agreements made by their government. Independent action by Boer commandos and raids by both sides in grazing and cattle ownership disputes were supplemented by a series of full-blown wars, a pattern that persisted under British administration in the 19th century. In February 1857 a final tragedy struck the Xhosa. A prophet, Nongqawuse, said that they should destroy their crops and kill their cattle and foretold that, on a given day, the sun would turn red, darkness would fall and their ancient chiefs would arise to lead them once more. The result was destitution and starvation which the British exploited to break the people once and for all. The Xhosa became a servant people, dependent on others for employment, and their land was taken by whites. Those chiefs who resisted were imprisoned on Robben Island, which would still be used to incarcerate black people until the late 20th century. The last rising was put down in 1878.

#### Reference:

Knight, Ian J., *Warrior Chiefs of Southern Africa* (Poole, Firebird Books, 1994); Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

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## Y

### Yule, Major-General J. H.,

**1847–1920**

General Yule's success in bringing the remaining fit fighting men south from Dundee to Ladysmith after the pyrrhic victory of Talana received small praise at the time. However, this not only prevented the loss of the northern British garrison but also reinforced that of Ladysmith. Yule's undramatic steadiness and efficiency suited the requirement of the time.

Colonel James Yule, with the temporary rank of Brigadier-general, was in command of the infantry brigade at Dundee, reporting to Major-general Sir William Penn Symons. When, on Friday 20 October 1899, Penn Symons was wounded, Yule took over the command and completed the clearance of Talana Hill. Deciding that the town was untenable, and receiving Lieutenant-general Sir George White's supporting orders, Yule planned the withdrawal to Ladysmith and carried it out with cool determination. Unfortunately, he left Symons's code-books behind.

Elaborate arrangements were made to disguise the departure and the wounded, including General Symons, had to be left behind. Before midnight on Sunday 22 October, 4,500 men, with civilian refugees, were on the march south. They reached Ladysmith on the evening of Wednesday 25 October.

See also:

[Talana, Battle of.](#)

Reference:

Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

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## Z

### Zand River, Battle of,

10 May 1900

A week after Lord Roberts's advance from Bloemfontein started, the British reached the Zand River (Sandrivier) where some 8,000 Boers opposed them. A vigorous flanking movement got round the Boer right while the British crossed the river in two places facing Boer positions. By the end of the day the Boers had no choice but to retreat.

Commandant-general Louis Botha brought 3,000 men to the Zand River on 6 May to reinforce the 5,000 Orange Free State burghers there and to take over command. The next day Major-general E. T. H. Hutton's Mounted Infantry reconnoitred the position and saw the railway bridge being blown up. On 9 May the 1st Cavalry Brigade took Du Preez Laager Drift, well to the west of the Boer positions, without opposition and thus, on 10 May, Major-general John French's cavalry was able to cross in strength to threaten the Boer right. At the same time Lieutenant-general R. Pole-Carew took the 11th Division across the drift near the bridge and to his right, at Junction Drift, Lieutenant-general C. Tucker with the 7th Division and Major-general Ian Hamilton's brigade went over. These last faced some hard fighting, but the 1st Royal Sussex, 1st Cameron Highlanders, 1st Gordon Highlanders, 1st Derbyshire, the City Imperial Volunteers and the Royal Canadian Regiment pressed steadily onwards and had taken Ventersburg by early afternoon.

The Boers withdrew in good order to, as the British thought, positions in front of Kroonstad, but on the morning of 12 May they found that town abandoned and entered it unopposed. Lord Roberts, ever mindful of the needs of the journalists, had a photograph set up portraying him leading the army into Kroonstad, where his men had in fact already been for some hours.

See also:

[Bloemfontein, Advance from;](#) [Journalists.](#)

Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1889–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

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## Zilikatsnek, Action at,

**11 July 1900**

As the set-piece war dissolved into guerrilla warfare, Koos De la Rey demonstrated his mastery of the new circumstances with a striking victory at a strategically important pass on the route west from Pretoria. However, the British regained the position three weeks later, showing that the Boers were no longer able to hold ground.

After the fall of Pretoria on 5 June, Assistant Commandant-general Koos De la Rey took his men north-west, beyond the Magaliesberg Range which bars easy progress northwards from the pleasant pastures west of Johannesburg. The road from Pretoria to Rustenburg, Zeerust and Mafeking passes through the mountains at Zilikatsnek. Colonel R. S. S. BadenPowell occupied this strategically important position on 2 July 1900 with men of the Rhodesia Regiment and two guns of the Royal Canadian Artillery. They were relieved by the 2nd Dragoons (Royal Scots Greys) and two guns of O Battery, Royal Horse Artillery and, on 10 July, five companies of the 2nd Lincolnshires joined them. The following morning they were surprised by fire from the hills above from De la Rey's men. The Boers charged the British guns and took them before, in the afternoon, taking the pass itself. The British had twenty-four men killed, forty-four wounded and 189 taken prisoner.

On 2 August the pass was held by the West Pretoria Commando which was attacked by a force under Lieutenant-general Ian Hamilton. The British infantry came from the south while Brigadier-general B. T. Mahon's cavalry took them from the north in a comprehensive defeat for the Boers.

See also:

[Oliphant's Nek, Action at.](#)

Reference:

Carver, Michael, *The NAM Book of the Boer War* (London, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1999); Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## Zulu, The

The Zulu nation was forged as a dominant force in the south-east of South Africa by Shaka, who succeeded to the chieftainship in 1818. In ten years his rule had extended to the whole of Natal north of the Tugela and east of the Buffalo rivers and his army numbered some 40,000 men. It was not until

1879, when eventually defeated by modern technology in the Zulu War, that this supremacy came to an end.

On the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899 the British decided to avoid using any other than European troops in a fighting role. This did not preclude engaging black South Africans as scouts, messengers, oxdrivers or servants. After Sir Redvers Buller had been halted at Colenso in December 1899, the Melmouth Field Force, which was charged with the security of the Zululand border, included 300 *Nongqai*, Zulu policemen. Later in the war the Zulu Native Police was expanded to prevent Boer incursions and these men were armed.

Hostilities became open in May

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1902. A Boer force under Field Cornet J. A. Potgieter, based at Holkrantz, near Vryheid, had raided a Zulu tribe, the abaQulusi, burning their huts, driving their women and children out of their settlements and stealing their cattle. The Zulus moved to regain their losses and attacked the Boers at night, killing fifty-six and wounding three of them, an operation of chilling efficiency. Fifty-two Zulus were killed and forty-eight wounded, but they did regain 380 cattle. Fears that the enfeebled Boers elsewhere would be attacked proved to be unfounded.

### See also:

[Holkrans, Action at](#); [Zululand](#); [Zulu War, The](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Knight, Ian J., *Warrior Chiefs of Southern Africa* (Poole, Firebird Books, 1994); Laband, John, *Rope of Sand* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1995), reissued as *The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Nation* (London, Arms and Armour Press, 1997); Laband, John, “Zulus and the War”, *Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image*, ed. J. Gooch (London, Frank Cass, 2000).

## Zululand

At the time of the Boer War of 1899–1902, Zululand consisted of the territory bounded on the south-west by the Buffalo and Tugela rivers, on the north by the Transvaal or South African Republic, and on the north-east by Portuguese East Africa. The sea formed its boundary on the east and south-east. Apart from incursions in the north during the invasion of Natal on the outbreak of the war, and a number of minor trespasses later on, the territory was left largely inviolate.

### See also:

[Zulu, The](#).

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## Zulu War, The, 1879

In January 1877 the British annexed the Transvaal and sent Sir Bartle Frere to become governor of South Africa. The disputes between the Boers and the black African nations now became Frere's problem. In Zululand the ruler, Cetshwayo, was at odds with his former allies, the British, but he was not, as Frere believed, the focus of a planned alliance of all black peoples to throw the whites out. Both in order to prevent such a circumstance and to ingratiate themselves with the Afrikaners, the British sent an army under Lieutenant-general Lord Chelmsford to break the power of the Zulu, having first issued an ultimatum which was known to be unacceptable. The battles of Isandlwana, Rorke's Drift and Ulundi have become legendary and, after their initial losses, the British prevailed. The Zulu nation was broken up into thirteen petty princedoms on a 'divide and rule' philosophy, but was to remain unstable even when it was annexed to Natal in 1887.

### Reference:

Laband, John, *Rope of Sand* (Jeppestown, Jonathan Ball Publishers, 1995), reissued as *The Rise and Fall of the Zulu Nation* (London, Arms and Armour Press, 1997); Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

## British Forces

The structure and composition of the British forces in South Africa changed a great deal between October 1899 and May 1902. The information given here consists of:

1. The list of staff appointments made as issued by the War Office on 7 October 1899 from which the organisation of the British forces can be worked out and on which the names of the principal commanders are given. This is reproduced as printed in Louis Creswicke's *South Africa and the Transvaal War* (1902).
2. The lists of troops engaged in the war from *With the Flag to Pretoria* and the supplementary list from *After Pretoria*, works published in 1900 and 1902 respectively, and which give a good idea of the growth and changing composition of the force. The heading *Australia* covers all the colonies in the antipodes as the Commonwealth of Australia was not formed until 1901. The militia battalions, formed of part-time soldiers, were reformed as territorial battalions after the war. These lists have been retyped and slightly edited for increased clarity.
3. Lists of forces engaged in particular campaigns at various stages of the war, also from *With the Flag to Pretoria*, and also retyped.
4. Lists of columns in mid 1901, when the guerrilla war was at its height and the formal arrangements of earlier days were abandoned. These are taken facsimile from Louis Creswicke's *South Africa and the Transvaal War* (1902).

It is usual in the British Army to list regiments and other formations in order of seniority by arm of the service, that is, the artillery come first, followed by the cavalry and then the infantry. Where this arrangement is used in the source material, it is preserved here.

The names of the units do not portray their size and at the time the manpower involved was as follows. In the Royal Field Artillery a battery had six guns, served by 171 men, with 131 horses. A howitzer battery had 195 men and 136 horses. A cavalry regiment was formed of three squadrons, each of four eight man troops, and a total strength of 531 men. A mounted infantry company had four troops of 32 men and 142 men in all. An infantry battalion was made up of eight companies of between 100 and 120 men.

## Reference

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).



## *Chart of Staff appointments made at the Commencement of the War*

### **LINES OF COMMUNICATION.**

The Lines of Communication will be under the general command and direction of Lieut.-General Sir F. W. E. F. Forestier-Walker, K.C.B., C.M.G.

The following Officers will be employed and will have the Staff position shown opposite their names :—

Names of Officers Selected.	Staff Position.
Colonel H. H. Settle, C.B., D.S.O., p.s.c. . . .	Colonel on Staff.
Captain F. A. Molony, p.s.c., R.E. . . . .	Staff Officer to Colonel on Staff.
Colonel J.W. Murray, p.s.c.	Colonel on Staff.
Colonel W. D. Richardson, C.B. . . . .	Deputy Adjutant-General for Supplies and Transport.
Lieut.-Colonel F. F. Johnson, Army Service Corps . .	Staff Officer to Deputy Adjutant-General for Supplies and Transport.
Brevet-Colonel C. H. Bridge, C.B., Army Service Corps	Deputy Adjutant General for Transport.
Brevet-Major (local Lieut.- Colonel) E. P. C. Girouard, D.S.O., R. E.	Director of Railways.*
Captain H. G. Joly de Lot- binière, R. E.	Staff Officer to Director of Railways.
Captain (local Major) J. H. Twiss, R. E.	Assistant Directors of Railways.**
Captain (local Major) V. Murray, R. E. . . .	

Major J. E. Capper R. E.	Deputy-Assistant Directors of Railways.
Captain H.C. Manton, R. E.	
Capt. W. D. Waghorn, R. E.	
Major (local Lieut.-Colonel) A. E. Wrottesley, R. E.	Director of Telegraphs.*
Colonel R. S. R. Fetherstonhaugh, h.p.	Station Commandants.*
Brevet-Colonel C. P. Ridley, and Bn. Manchester Regt.	
Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel P. T. Rivett -Carnac, 1st Bn. West Riding Regt.	
Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel H. P. Shekleton, p.s.c., 1st Bn. South Lancashire Regt.	
Capt. J. G. Baldwin, Royal Garrison Artillery	Staff Officers to Station Commandants.***
Captain A. E. Lascelles, and Bn. Norfolk Regt.	
Captain C. R. Ballard, 1st Bn. Norfolk Regt.	
Captain C. V. C. Hobart, D.S.O., 2nd Bn. Grenadier Guards	
Brevet-Colonel E. W. D. Ward, C.B., Army Service Corps	Assistant Adjutant- Generals.
Col. J. K. Trotter, C.M.G., p.s.c.	
Lieut.-Col. F. W. Bennet, R.E.	
Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel H. M. Lawson, p.s.c., R.E.	
Lieut.-Colonel S. H. Winter, Army Service Corps	Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals.
Lieut.-Colonel W. R. Winter, Army Service Corps	
Lieut.-Col. R. B. M'Comb, Army Service Corps	

Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel F. W. B. Landon, Army Service Corps

Major J. H. Poett, p.s.c., 2nd Bn. Dorsetshire Regt.

Major C. Rawnsley, Army Service Corps

Major R. B. Gaisford, p.s.c., Royal Scots Fusiliers

Brevet-Major E. G. T. Bainbridge, 2nd Bn. East Kent Regt.

Major R. C. B. Haking, p.s.c., Hampshire Regt.

Major A. W. Thorneycroft, 2nd Bn. Royal Scots Fusiliers

Captain E. H. Hughes, p.s.c., 1st Bn. York and Lancaster Regt. Deputy-Assistant  
Adjutant-Generals.

Captain G. S. St Aubyn, King's Royal Rifle Corps

Brevet - Lieut. - Colonel J. Adye, p.s.c., Royal Garrison Artillery General Duty.

Major H. N. C. Heath, p.s.c., Yorkshire Light Infantry

Brevet-Major C. J. Mackenzie, 1st Bn. Seaforth Highlanders

Major R. L. Walter, 7th Hussars

Major E. F. Gosset, p s.c., 2nd Bn. East Yorkshire Regt.

Brevet-Major A. G. Hunter-Weston, R.E.

Major G. D. Baker p.s.c., Royal Garrison Artillery

Major E. S. C. Kennedy, West India Regt.

Captain A. W. Elles, 2nd Bn. Yorkshire Light Infantry

Captain E. St G. Pratt, 1st Bn. Durham Light Infantry

Capt. C. B. Jervis-Edwards, 1st Bn. Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry

Captain F. B. Maurice, Derbyshire Regt.

Lieutenant W. M. C. Vandeleur, 2nd Bn. Essex Regt.

Lieutenant G. P. Appleby, 1st Bn. Bedfordshire Regt.

Lieutenant F. S. Reeves, 1st Bn. East Kent Regt.

COLERIDGE GROVE,  
M.S.

WAR OFFICE, *4th October* 1899.

*Note.*—The above list only shows the Officers employed on Staff duties on the Lines of Communication. It does not show those employed on medical, ordnance, clerical, supply, pay, &c., services.—C. G.

\* Graded as Assistant Adjutant-Generals.

\* \* Graded as Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals.

\* \* \* Graded as Staff Captains.

## **NATAL FIELD FORCE.**

Staff Position	Names of Officers Selected.
General Officer Commanding (Lieut.-General on Staff)	Lieutenant-General Sir G. S. White, V.C., G.C.B., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.
Assistant Military Secretary	Colonel B. Duff, C.I.E., p.s.c., Indian Staff Corps.
Aides-de-Camp (2) . .	Captain R. G. Brooke, D.S.O., 7th Hussars.  Captain F. Lyon, R.F.A.
Assistant Adjutant-General .	Colonel I. S. M. Hamilton, C.B., D.S.O.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals	(a) Major F. Hammersley, p.s.c., Lancashire Fusiliers.  (b) Major E. R. O. Ludlow, p.s.c., Army Service Corps.
Officer Commanding Royal Artillery	Lieut.-Colonel and Brevet-Col. C. J. Long, R.H.A.
Commanding Royal Engineer (Colonel on Staff)	Lieut.-Colonel W. F. N. Noel, R.E.

Principal Medical Officer .

Lieut.-Colonel R. Exham, R.A.M.C.

Medical Officer . . .

Major J. F. Bateson, M.B., R.A.M.C.

Chaplains (2) . . .

Rev. L. J. Matthews (R.C.) Rev. E. G. Macpherson,  
B.A.

Assistant Provost-Marshal \*

Major A. G. Chichester, 1st Bn. Royal Irish Regt.

Signalling Officer . . .

Captain J. S. Cayser, 7th Dragoon Guards.

\* Graded as a Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-  
General.

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## Troops Engaged in the War

### *Regular Army*

#### **In Cape Colony and Natal in September 1899 (N = Natal):**

Cavalry (2 regiments): 5th Lancers, N. 18th Hussars, N.

Artillery (4 batteries = 24 guns): 13th, 67th and 69th Field Batteries, N. 10th (Mountain) Battery, N.

Infantry (7½ battalions): 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers, N. 1st Leicestershire, N. 1st King's Royal Rifles, N. 2nd Dublin Fusiliers, N. 1st King's Liverpool, N. 2nd King's Royal Rifles, N. 1st Loyal North Lancashire. 2nd Yorks Light Infantry (one-half).

#### **Sent to South Africa before the outbreak of the war, (arrived on the eve of or just after the commencement, of hostilities.):**

Cavalry (3 regiments): 5th Dragoon Guards, N. 19th Hussars, N. 9th Lancers.

Artillery (6 batteries = 36 guns): 18th, 62nd and 75th Field Batteries (from home). 21st, 42nd and 53rd Field Batteries (from India), N.

Infantry (9½ battalions): 1st Devonshire, N. 1st Gloucestershire, N. 1st Manchester, N. 2nd Gordon Highlanders, N. 2nd Rifle Brigade, N. 1st Border Regiment, N. 2nd Berkshires. 1st Northumberland Fusiliers. 1st Royal Munster Fusiliers. 2nd Yorks Light Infantry (one-half).

#### **The Army Corps (despatched Oct.–Nov. 1899):**

Cavalry (8 regiments): 6th Dragoon Guards. 10th Hussars. 12th Lancers. 1st Dragoons. 2nd Dragoons. 6th Dragoons. 13th Hussars. Household Cavalry Regiment.

Mounted Infantry (8 companies).

Artillery (19 batteries = 114 guns): G, P, R, O Horse Artillery Batteries. 7th, 14th, 66th, 63rd, 64th, 73rd, 74th, 77th, 79th, 4th, 38th, 78th Field Batteries. 37th, 61st and 65th Howitzer Batteries.

Infantry (32 battalions): 3rd Grenadier Guards. 1st Coldstream Guards. 1st Scots Guards. 2nd West Surrey. 2nd Devonshire. 2nd West Yorkshire. 2nd East Surrey. 2nd Royal Highlanders. 1st Highland Light Infantry. 2nd Seaforth Highlanders. 1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. 2nd Cameronians. 3rd King's Royal Rifles. 1st Durham Light Infantry. 1st Rifle Brigade. 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. 2nd Royal Irish Rifles. 1st Connaught Rangers. 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers. 2nd Royal

Fusiliers. 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers. 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers. 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers. 1st Royal Scots. 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers. 2nd Somersetshire Light Infantry. 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. 1st Welsh Regiment. 2nd Northamptonshire. 2nd Shropshire Light Infantry. 1st Gordon Highlanders.

*Total under Sir Redvers Buller's command, 30 November 1899, 13 regiments of cavalry, 8 companies of mounted infantry, 49 battalions of infantry and 29 batteries of artillery.*

**Ordered out, 31 October 1899:**

Artillery: 4th Mountain Battery.

Infantry (3 battalions): 1st Suffolk. 1st Essex. 1st Derbyshire (Sherwood Foresters).

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**Ordered out, 11 November 1899 (Fifth Division):**

Cavalry: 14th Hussars.

Artillery (3 batteries): 19th, 20th and 28th Field Batteries.

Infantry (8 battalions): 2nd Royal Warwick. 1st Yorkshire. 2nd Dorsetshire. 2nd Middlesex. 2nd Royal Lancaster. 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers. 1st South Lancashire. 1st York and Lancaster.

**Ordered out, 4 December 1899 (Sixth Division):**

Artillery (3 batteries): 76th, 81st and 82nd Field Batteries.

Infantry (8 battalions): 2nd Bedfordshire. 1st Royal Irish. 2nd Worcestershire. 2nd Wiltshire. 2nd East Kent. 2nd Gloucestershire. 1st West Riding. 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry.

**Ordered out, 14 December 1899 (Seventh Division):**

Artillery (3 batteries): 83rd, 84th and 85th Field Batteries.

Infantry (8 battalions): 2nd Norfolk. 2nd Lincolnshire. 1st King's Own Scottish Borderers. 2nd Hampshire. 2nd Cheshire. 1st East Lancashire. 2nd South Wales Borderers. 2nd North Staffordshire.

**Ordered out, December 1899 – January 1900:**

Cavalry (4 regiments): 17th Lancers. 8th Hussars. 7th Dragoon Guards. 16th Lancers.

Artillery (18 batteries = 108 guns): A, J, M, Q, T, U Horse Artillery Batteries. 5th, 9th, 17th, 2nd, 8th, 44th, 39th, 68th, 88th Field Batteries. 43rd, 86th and 87th Howitzer Batteries.

Infantry (10 battalions): 2nd Grenadier Guards. 2nd Scots Guards. 2nd East Yorkshire. 1st Leinster. 1st Worcestershire. 1st Royal West Kent. 1st South Stafford. 2nd Manchester. 1st Royal Sussex. 1st Cameron Highlanders.

*Total Regular Cavalry, Artillery and Infantry under Lord Roberts's command, April 1900: 18 Regiments cavalry at war strength about 9,558 men; 8 companies of mounted infantry, about 1,048 men; 57 batteries (342 guns), about 10,260 men; 86 battalions of infantry, about 86,860 men; thus 107,726 men and 342 guns.*

**Technical Troops – Regulars:**

Engineers: 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 17th, 20th, 23rd, 26th, 29th, 31st, 37th, 38th, 42nd

and 47th Companies. 1st Telegraph Division. 1st Field Park. A, C Bridging Battalions. Nos. 1, 2 and 3 Balloon Sections. Field Troop.

Artillery, Ammunition Columns: 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th and 11th Division Columns; two detached columns; 1st Brigade Division Column, Natal.

Artillery, Ammunition Park.

Artillery, Garrison Artillery: Eastern Division, Companies 5, 6 and 10. Southern Division, Companies 14, 15, 16 and 36. Western Division, Companies 2, 6, 10, 14, 15, 17 and 23.

Army Service Corps: Companies 3–17, 19–38, 40–45.

Royal Army Medical Corps.

**Militia (31 battalions, about 20,626 men):**

3rd Royal Scots. 3rd West Surrey. 3rd East Kent. 3rd Royal Lancaster. 6th Royal Warwickshire. 3rd Norfolk. 4th Somersetshire. 4th West Yorkshire. 4th Bedfordshire. 3rd Yorkshire. 6th Lancashire Fusiliers. 4th Cheshire. 3rd South Wales Borderers. 3rd King's Own Scottish Borderers. 4th Scottish Rifles. 3rd East Lancashire. 4th East

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Surrey. 3rd West Riding. 4th South Staffordshire. 3rd South Lancashire. 3rd Welsh. 4th Derbyshire. 4th Middlesex. 9th King's Royal Rifles. 4th North Staffordshire. 3rd Durham Light Infantry. 4th Argyll and Sutherland. 3rd Leinster. 3rd Royal Munster Fusiliers. 5th Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

### *Volunteers and Irregulars, British:*

#### **Imperial Yeomanry:**

1st Battalion: 1st and 2nd (Wiltshire), 3rd (Gloucestershire) and 4th (Glamorgan) Companies.

2nd Battalion: 5th (Warwickshire), 21st and 22nd (Cheshire) and 32nd (Lancashire) Companies.

3rd Battalion: 9th and 11th (Yorkshire), 10th (Nottinghamshire) and 12th (South Nottinghamshire) Companies.

4th Battalion: 6th (Staffordshire), 7th (Leicestershire), 8th (Derbyshire) and 28th (Bedfordshire) Companies.

5th Battalion: 14th and 15th (Northumberland), 13th (Shropshire) and 16th (Worcestershire) Companies.

6th Battalion: 17th (Ayrshire), 18th (Lanarkshire), 19th (Lothian) and 20th (Fife and Forfar) Companies.

7th Battalion: 25th (West Somerset), 26th (Dorsetshire), 27th (Devonshire) and 48th (North Somerset) Companies.

8th Battalion: 23rd (Lancashire), 24th (Westmorland and Cumberland), and 77th (Manchester) Companies.

9th Battalion: 29th (Denbighshire), 30th (Pembrokeshire) and 31st and 49th (Montgomery) Companies.

10th Battalion: 37th and 38th (Buckinghamshire), 39th (Berkshire) and 40th (Oxfordshire) Companies.

11th Battalion: 23rd (East Kent), 24th and 25th (Middlesex) and 36th (West Kent) Companies.

12th Battalion: 41st (Hampshire), 42nd (Hertfordshire) and 43rd and 44th (Suffolk) Companies.

13th Battalion: 45th (Dublin), 46th and 54th (Belfast) and 47th (Lord Donoughmore's) Companies.

14th Battalion: 53rd (East Kent), 58th (Northumberland), 62nd (Middlesex) and 69th (Sussex) Companies.

15th Battalion: 56th and 57th (Buckinghamshire), 58th (Berkshire) and 59th (Oxfordshire) Companies.

16th Battalion: 63rd (Wiltshire), 66th (Yorkshire) and 74th (Dublin) Companies.

17th Battalion: 50th (Hampshire), 60th (Northern Irish), 61st (Southern Irish) and 65th (Leicestershire) Companies.

18th Battalion: 67th, 70th, 71st and 75th (Sharpshooter) Companies.

19th Battalion: 51st, 52nd, 68th and 73rd (Paget's Horse) Companies.

20th Battalion: 72nd and 76th (Rough Riders) and 78th and 79th Companies.

*76 companies, each of approximately 116 men.*

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**Volunteers:**

One company attached to each battalion of regulars, 9,187 men.

City of London Imperial Volunteers (one battalion infantry, one 4–gun battery of artillery and mounted infantry), about 1,600 men.

*Volunteers and Irregulars, Colonial:***South Africa:**

Bechuanaland Rifles. Bethune's Mounted Infantry. Border Horse. Border Mounted Rifles. Border Scouts. Brabant's Horse, 1st and 2nd Regiments. British South Africa Police. Cape Garrison Artillery. Cape Medical Staff Corps, A, B and C Companies. Cape Mounted Rifles. Cape Pioneer Railway Regiment. Cape Police. Capetown Highlanders. Grahamstown Volunteers. Commander-in-Chief's Bodyguard. Diamond Fields Artillery. District Mounted Rifles. Duke of Edinburgh's Rifles. Durban Light Infantry. East London Police. Eastern Province Horse. French's Scouts. Frontier Mounted Rifles. Gatacre's Scouts. Griqualand East Mounted Rifles. Herschel's Mounted Rifles. Imperial Light Horse. Imperial Light Infantry. Imperial Yeomanry Scouts. Kaffirian Rifles. Kenny's Scouts. Kimberley Light Horse. Kimberley Regiment. Kitchener's Horse. Komgha Mounted Volunteers. Lock's Horse. Montmorency's Scouts. Natal Volunteer Brigade: Natal Carbineers, Natal Field Artillery, Natal Mounted Rifles, Natal Royal Rifles, Natal Volunteer Medical Corps, Natal Volunteer Veterinary Corps. Nesbitt's Horse. Orpen's Horse. Prince Alfred's Own Artillery. Prince Alfred's Volunteer Guard. Protectorate Regiment. Queenstown Rifle Volunteers. Rhodesian Protectorate Regiment. Rimington's Guides. Roberts's Light Horse. South African Light Horse. Stellenbosch Mounted Infantry. Struben's Scouts. Tembuland Mounted Rifles. Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry. Transkei Mounted Rifles. Tucker's Scouts. Uitenhage Volunteer Rifles. Umvoti Mounted Rifles. Warwick's Scouts.

Mounted Rifle Clubs: Xalanga, Nquamakwe, Engcobo, T'somo.

Town Guards: Dordrecht, East London, Grahamstown, Hoppesia, Kimberley, King William's Town, Kokstad, Mafeking, Naauwpoort, Port Elizabeth, Queenstown and Uitenhage.

**Canada:**

Mounted Infantry (3 battalions): 1st and 2nd Royal Canadian Dragoons. Strathcona's Horse.

Artillery (3 batteries): C, D and E Batteries.

Infantry (2 battalions): 2nd and 3rd Battalions.

## Australia:

New South Wales: Imperial Bushmen (six companies, A-F). Mounted Infantry. Infantry. Lancers.

New Zealand: Mounted Rifles (two contingents). Rough Riders (three contingents).

Tasmania: Infantry and Imperial Bushmen.

Queensland: Mounted Infantry (four contingents).

South Australia: Infantry and Mounted Infantry.

Victoria: Mounted Infantry (two contingents). Mounted Rifles (seven companies). Infantry.

West Australia: Mounted Infantry.

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*Ceylon Contingent.***India:**

Lumsden's Horse.

*Total of colonial troops approximately 40,000 men.*

This completes the listings given in *With the Flag to Pretoria* which covers events to the end of September 1900 and which was published in 1901 in the belief that the war was virtually over. A further two volumes of the history of the war were published under the title *After Pretoria: The Guerilla War* in which a supplementary list of British troops, including those guarding prisoners on St Helena, was given as follows. The heading for troops from the antipodes has changed.

**Cavalry:**

1st, 2nd and 3rd Dragoon Guards. 3rd, 4th, 7th and 20th Hussars.

**Imperial Yeomanry:**

21st Battalion: 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 90th and 93rd Companies.

24th Battalion (Metropolitan Mounted Rifles): 86th, 87th, 94th and 96th Companies.

25th Battalion: 115th, 116th, 117th and 118th Companies.

26th Battalion: 119th, 120th, 121st and 122nd Companies.

27th Battalion: 123rd, 124th, 125th and 126th Companies.

28th Battalion: 127th, 128th, 129th and 130th Companies.

29th Battalion: 131st, 132nd, 133rd, 134th, 175th and 176th Companies.

30th Battalion: 135th, 136th, 137th and 138th Companies.

31st Battalion (Fincastle's Horse): 139th, 140th, 141st, 142nd and 177th Companies.

32nd Battalion: 143rd, 144th, 145th and 146th Companies.

33rd Battalion: 147th, 148th, 149th and 150th Companies.

34th Battalion: 151st, 152th, 153rd and 154th Companies.

35th Battalion: 155th, 156th, 157th and 158th Companies.

36th Battalion: 159th, 160th, 161st and 162nd Companies.

37th Battalion: 163rd, 164th, 165th and 166th Companies.

38th Battalion: 167th, 168th, 169th and 170th Companies.

39th Battalion: 171st, 172nd, 173rd and 174th Companies.

**Imperial Yeomanry, companies attached to earlier battalions:**

88th and 89th to 9th Battalion. 100th to 5th Battalion. 101st and 103rd to 2nd Battalion. 195th to 8th Battalion. 106th to 4th Battalion. 107th and 108th to 6th Battalion. 109th to 3rd Battalion. 110th to 2nd Battalion. 111th to 3rd Battalion. 112th to 11th Battalion. 113th and 114th to Lovat's Scouts.

**Infantry (M = Militia):**

3rd Argyll and Sutherland, M. 3rd Cheshire, M. 4th Dublin Fusiliers, M. 2nd Essex Regiment. 3rd Essex Regiment, M. 3rd Highland Light Infantry, M. 2nd Inniskilling Fusiliers. 2nd West Kent. 4th King's Royal Rifles, M. 5th Lancashire Fusiliers, M. 3rd Loyal North Lancashire, M. 3rd Leicestershire, M. 2nd Leinster. 3rd Lincolnshire, M. 3rd Liverpool, M. 5th Manchester, M. 6th Manchester, M. 3rd Middlesex, M. 5th Middlesex,

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M. 6th Middlesex, M. 2nd Munster Fusiliers. 3rd Northamptonshire, M. 4th Rifle Brigade. 5th Rifle Brigade, M. 5th Royal Fusiliers, M. 1st Royal Highlanders. 3rd Scottish Rifles, M. 3rd North Staffords, M. 3rd South Staffords, M. 3rd East Surrey, M. 5th Warwickshire, M. 3rd West Riding, M. 3rd Wiltshire, M. 6th Worcestershire, M. 3rd York and Lancaster, M. 4th Yorkshire, M.

**Garrison Artillery: 63rd Company.**

*Engineers: 46th Company. Search-light sections, two.*

**Australasia:**

New South Wales: 2nd Mounted Rifles.

New Zealand: 6th and 7th Contingents.

Queensland: 5th Contingent and 6th Imperial Bushmen.

Tasmania: 2nd Imperial Bushmen.

South Australia: 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Contingents.

West Australia: 4th, 5th and 6th Contingents.

**Canada:**

2nd Mounted Rifles and 10th Field Hospital Corps.

**South Africa:**

Ashburner's Light Horse. Bushmanland Borderers. Canadian Scouts. Cape Colony Cyclist Corps. Cape Volunteer Medical Staff Corps. Clanwilliam Convoy Guard. Colonial Light Horse. Cullinan's Horse. Damant's Horse. Dennison's Scouts. Dordrecht District Volunteer Guard. Driscoll's Scouts. Frontier Light Horse. Griqualand West Light Horse. Herbert District Mounted Rifles. Hoskin's Squadron. Imperial Light Horse: 2nd Regiment. Johannesburg Mounted Rifles. Kitchener's Fighting Scouts: 1st Regiment, 2nd Regiment. Knysna Rangers. Maritsani Mounted Rifles. Marshall's Horse. Midland Mounted Rifles. Modder River District Rifles. Namaqualand Border Scouts. New England Mounted Rifles. Pietersburg Light Horse. Railway Pioneer Regiment: 1st Battalion, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Battalion. Scott's Railway Guard. Scott's Sharpshooters. Settle's Scouts. South African Mounted Irregulars. Steinecker's Horse. Transkei Territories' Force. Utrecht Mounted Rifles. Warren's Mounted Infantry. Western Province Mounted Rifles. Western Rifles. Winterburg Mounted Rifles. District Mounted Troops: Aberdeen, Albany, Alexandria, Bathurst, Beaufort West, Bedford, Bredasdorp, Burghersdorp, Caledon, Carnarvon, Cathcart, Clanwilliam, Darling, De Doorns,

Dordrecht, East London, Elsie's River, Forest Hall, Fort Beaufort, George, Graaff Reinet, Groot Drakenstein, Hopefield, Humansdorp, Jansenville, King Williamstown, Klein Drakenstein, Knysna, Komgha, Ladismith, Lady Grey, Malmesbury, Middelburg, Paarl, Peddie, Piquetberg, Plattenberg Bay, Port Alfred, Port Elizabeth, Porterville, Prince Albert, Queenstown, Riversdale, Southwell, Stellenbosch, Steytlerville, Stutterheim, Sutherland, Swellendam, Tarkastad, Toise River, Uitenhage, Uniondale, Victoria East, Victoria West, Wellington, Willowmore, Winterberg.

Town Guards: Aberdeen, Adelaide, Alexandria, Alice, Alicedale, Balfour, Barkly East, Beaufort West, Bedford, Bredasdorp, Britstown, Burghersdorp, Caledon, Cambridge, Cathcart, Ceres, Colesberg, Cookhouse, Cradock, Cyphergat, Darling, De Aar, De

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Doorns, Dordrecht, Douglas, East London and Cambridge Village, Fort Beaufort, Fraserburg, George, Graaff Reinet, Grahamstown, Griqua Town, Hanover, Hermanuspetrusfontein, Hopetown, Humansdorp, Indwe, Jansenville, Katberg, King Williamstown, Klaarstroom, Klipdam, Klipplaats, Knysna, Komgha, Ladysmith, Lady Frere, Lady Grey, Laingsburg, Mafeking, Malmesbury, Matjesfontein, Middelburg, Middleton, Molteno, Montagu, Mossel Bay, Norval's Pont, Oudtshoorn, Paarl, Port Alfred, Port Elizabeth, Prince Albert, Queenstown, Red House, Richmond, Riversdale, Robertson, Rosmead, Sandflats, Seymour, Somerset East, Somerset Strand, Somerset West, Stellenbosch, Storkstroom, Steynsburg, Steytlerville, Stutterheim, Sutherland, Swellendam, Tarkastad, Toise River, Touws River, Uitenhage, Uniondale, Veldrift, Victoria West, Vryburg, Wellington, Willowmore, Worcester. Natal: Charlestown, Dundee, Ladysmith, Newcastle, Utrecht, Volksrust.

## Forces in selected campaigns and sieges

### Siege of Kimberley:

Regulars: 1st North Lancashire (four companies). 23rd Company Royal Garrison Artillery (six muzzle-loading 7-pounder guns). 7th Field Company, Royal Engineers. 588 men.

Volunteers and Irregulars: Cape Police. Diamond Fields Artillery (six 7-pounder guns). Diamond Fields Horse. Kimberley Regiment. Town Guard. 2,072 men.

Technical troops: Army Service Corps. No. 1 Company, Medical Corps. Kimberley Mine Ambulance Company.

### Siege of Ladysmith:

Naval Brigade: H.M.S. *Powerful*, 17 officers (two from H.M.S. *Terrible*) and 267 men, with two 4.7-inch and four long 12-pounder guns.

Regular Army: Royal Artillery, 13th, 21st, 42nd, 53rd, 67th and 69th Field Batteries (each with six 15-pounders) and 10th Mountain Battery (two muzzle-loading 7-pounders and two 12-pounders).

Cavalry, 5th Lancers, 19th Hussars, part 18th Hussars and 5th Dragoon Guards. Infantry, 1st Devonshire, 1st Gloucestershire (half battalion), 1st Manchester, 2nd Gordons, 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers (half battalion), 1st Leicestershire, 1st King's Royal Rifles, 1st Liverpool, 2nd King's Royal Rifles, 2nd Rifle Brigade.

Irregulars and Natal Troops: Natal Artillery (with six 9-pounder muzzle-loaders), Durban Naval Volunteers (with one Nordenfelt QF gun), Imperial Light Horse, Natal Police, Border Mounted Rifles, Natal Mounted Rifles, Town Guard.

## **Siege of Mafeking:**

Protectorate Regiment, Bechuanaland Rifles (part), British South Africa Police (part), Town Guard.

## **Battle of Colenso (under Sir Redvers Buller):**

Naval Brigade: Men of H.M.S. *Forte*, H.M.S. *Philomel* and H.M.S. *Terrible* with two 4.7-inch and twelve 12-pounders.

Royal Artillery: 7th, 14th, 63rd, 64th and 66th Field Batteries.

Dundonald's Mounted Brigade: 1st Royal Dragoons, 13th Hussars, Composite Regiment of Mounted Infantry (Natal Carbineers, Imperial Light Horse and mounted men of King's

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Royal Rifle Corps and Dublin Fusiliers), Bethune's Mounted Infantry, Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, South African Light Horse.

2nd (Hildyard's) Brigade: 2nd Royal West Surrey, 2nd West Yorkshire, 2nd East Surrey, 2nd Devonshire.

4th (Lyttleton's) Brigade: 2nd Scottish Rifles, 1st Durham Light Infantry, 1st Rifle Brigade, 3rd Kings Royal Rifles.

5th (Hart's Irish) Brigade: 1st Connaught Rangers, 1st & 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Border.

6th (Barton's) Brigade: 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers, 2nd Royal Irish Fusiliers, 2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers, 2nd Royal Fusiliers.

**Buller reinforced December 1899–January 1900 with:**

Royal Artillery: 19th, 28th and 78th Field Batteries.

10th (Coke's) Brigade: 2nd Dorsetshire, 2nd Middlesex.

11th (Woodgate's) Brigade: 2nd Royal Lancaster, 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, 1st South Lancashire, 1st York and Lancaster.

**Spioenkop flanking march (for Brigade strengths see above):**

Naval Brigade: Two 4.7-inch and eight 12-pounder guns.

Royal Artillery: 7th, 64th and 73rd Field Batteries (with Second Division), 19th, 28th and 63rd Field Batteries (with Fifth Division), 78th Field Battery, 61st Howitzer Battery and 4th Mountain Battery with Corps Troops.

Second Division (Clery): 2nd Brigade, 5th Brigade.

Fifth Division (Warren): 4th Brigade, 11th Brigade.

Corps Troops: 10th Brigade, Cavalry Division (as Dundonald's Brigade above).

**Advance on Kimberley, November-December 1899 (under Methuen):**

Naval Brigade: Men of H.M.S. *Doris*, H.M.S. *Philomel*, H.M.S. *Monarch* and H.M.S. *Powerful*, Royal Marines, four 12-pounder guns and, by 9 December, one 4.7-inch gun.

Royal Artillery: 17th, 18th, 62nd and 75th Field Batteries, 65th Howitzer Battery, G Battery Royal Horse Artillery.

2nd Cavalry Brigade (part of): 9th & 12th Lancers.

1st Guards Brigade (Colvile): 1st & 2nd Coldstream Guards, 3rd Grenadier Guards, 1st Scots Guards.

9th (Featherstonehaugh's) Brigade: 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, 2nd Northamptonshire, 2nd King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, 1st Royal Munster Fusiliers, 1st Loyal North Lancashire (part).

3rd (Highland) Brigade (Wauchope): 1st Gordon Highlanders, 2nd Royal Highlanders (Black Watch), 1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, 2nd Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Highland Light Infantry.

Volunteers and Irregulars: Rimington's Guides.

**Lord Roberts's Army, February 1900, the Relief of Kimberley and the Advance on Bloemfontein:**

First Division (Methuen):

Royal Artillery: 83rd, 84th and 85th Field Batteries.

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1st (Pole-Carew's) Brigade: 3rd Grenadier Guards, 1st & 2nd Coldstream Guards, 1st Scots Guards.

9th (Douglas's) Brigade: 1st Northumberland Fusiliers, 1st Loyal North Lancashire, 2nd Northamptonshire, 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry.

Sixth Division (Kelly-Kenny):

Royal Artillery: 76th, 81st and 82nd Field Batteries.

18th (Stephenson's) Brigade: 1st Essex, 1st Yorkshire, 1st Welsh, 2nd Royal Warwick.

13th (Knox's) Brigade: 2nd East Kent, 1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry, 1st West Riding, 2nd Gloucester.

Seventh Division (Tucker):

Royal Artillery: 18th, 62nd and 75th Field Batteries.

14th (Chermside's) Brigade: 2nd Norfolk, 2nd Lincoln, 1st King's Own Scottish Borderers, 2nd Hampshire.

15th (Wavell's) Brigade: 2nd Cheshire, 1st East Lancashire, 2nd South Wales Borderers, 2nd North Stafford.

Ninth Division (Colvile):

3rd (Macdonald's) Highland Brigade: 1st Argyll and Sutherland, 1st Highland Light Infantry, 2nd Seaforth Highlanders, 2nd Royal Highlanders (Black Watch).

19th (Smith-Dorrien's) Brigade: 1st Gordon Highlanders, 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, 2nd Shropshire Light Infantry, Canadian Regiment.

Cavalry Division (French):

Royal Artillery: G, O, P, Q, R, T and U Horse Artillery Batteries.

1st (Porter's) Brigade: 6th Dragoon Guards, 2nd & 6th Dragoons.

2nd (Broadwood's) Brigade: 10th Hussars, 12th Lancers, Household Cavalry.

3rd (Gordon's) Brigade: 9th and 16th Lancers, Roberts's Horse.

Mounted Infantry: Hannay's Brigade, Ridley's Brigade.

Corps Troops: Naval Brigade with four 4.7-inch and four 12-pounder guns, Royal Artillery 38th Field and 65th Howitzer Batteries, City Imperial Volunteers (Mounted Infantry), Kitchener's Horse, Rimington's Scouts.

#### **The Advance from Bloemfontein, May 1900:**

Army of the Centre (Roberts):

Seventh Division (Tucker):

Royal Artillery 18th, 62nd and 75th Field Batteries, 14th (Maxwell's) Brigade, 15th (Wavell's)

Brigade.  
Ninth Division (Colvile):  
Royal Artillery 5th Field Battery, 3rd (Macdonald's) Highland Brigade.  
Eleventh Division (Pole-Carew):  
Guards (Inigo Jones's) Brigade, 18th (Stephenson's) Brigade (2nd Royal Warwick, 1st Essex, 1st Yorkshire, 1st Welsh), and three field batteries.  
Cavalry Division (French):  
1st and 3rd Brigades, 4th Brigade (7th Dragoon Guards, 8th Hussars, 17th Lancers) and six horse batteries.  
1st Mounted Infantry (Hutton's) Brigade.

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Also several field batteries, 5-inch guns, four howitzer batteries and the Naval Brigade with their guns.

**Army of the Right (Ian Hamilton):**

Royal Artillery, 74th, 76th, 81st and 82nd Field Batteries and P and Q Horse Batteries, and two 5-inch guns and two Pom-poms.

19th (Dorrien-Smith's) Brigade, 21st (Bruce-Hamilton's) Brigade (1st Derbyshires, 1st Royal Sussex, 1st Cameron Highlanders, City Imperial Volunteers), 2nd (Ridley's) Mounted Infantry Brigade, 2nd (Broadwood's) Cavalry Brigade.

**Army of the South-west:**

**Eighth Division (Rundle):**

Royal Artillery, 2nd, 77th and 79th Field Batteries, 16th (Campbell's) Brigade (2nd Grenadier Guards, 2nd Scots Guards, 2nd East Yorkshire, 1st Leinsters), 17th (Boyes's) Brigade (1st Worcesters, 1st Royal West Kents, 1st South Staffords, 2nd Manchesters), and a Brigade of Yeomanry.

**Colonial Division (Brabant):**

1st and 2nd Brabant's Horse, Cape Mounted Rifles, Cape Police, Kaffrarian Mounted Rifles, Border Horse, Frontier Mounted Rifles, Driscoll's Scouts, Queenstown Volunteers.

## Composition and Strength of Columns, Transvaal War, mid-1901

*composition and strength of columns engaged in major-general bruce-hamilton's operations in southern orange river colony.* [1](#)

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL DU MOULIN'S COLUMN.**

30th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (31–32).  
 31st Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (153–177).  
 39th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
 “N” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
 1st Royal Sussex Regiment (436).

### **COLONEL ROCHFORT'S COLUMN.**

9th Bn., Imperial Yeomanry (302–274).  
 17th Mounted Infantry (331–358).  
 17th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
 “G” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
 28th Co., Army Service Corps (11).

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL BYNG'S COLUMN.**

5th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (129–109).  
 23rd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (123–75).  
 66th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (104–95).  
 32nd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (91–93).  
 South African Light Horse (503–642).  
 17th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
 Pompom Section, 1 pompom.  
 3rd Brigade Field Hospital (5).  
 13th Brigade Field Hospital (11).

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL W. H. WILLIAMS' COLUMN.**

1st Mounted Infantry (203–241), 1 M.G.  
 50th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (120–91).  
 60th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (121–110).  
 43rd Battery, R.F.A., 1 5-inch Howitzer.  
 “D” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
 20th Bearer Company (8).

## **COLONEL MONRO'S COLUMN. (Afterwards in Cape Colony.)**

Bethune's Mounted Infantry (273–500), 2 M.G.

56th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (80), 3 M.G.

57th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (92–95).

58th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (71–56).

59th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (77–80).

39th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

“Z” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

## **LIEUT.-COLONEL A. MURRAY'S COLUMN. (Afterwards in Cape Colony.)**

Lovat's Scouts (152–182).

“M” Battery, R.H.A., 2 guns.

## **LIEUT.-COLONEL WHITE'S COLUMN. 28/6/01. (Since broken up.)**

16th Lancers (469–329).

29th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (132–114)

49th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (141–100).

39th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

“X” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

9th Bearer Company (8).

## **COLONEL HENRY'S COLUMN.**

22nd Mounted Infantry (446–325).

24th Bn., Imperial Yeomanry (373–270).

82nd Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

Pompom Section, R.F.F., 1 pompom.

2nd Gloucestershire Regiment (271), 1 M.G.

23rd Bearer Company (9).

## **KIMBERLEY COLUMN.**

74th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (125–135).

Kimberley Light Horse (94–99).

Dennison's Scouts (81–85).

Mounted Infantry, Royal Welsh Fusiliers (20–24).

Vol. Northumberland Fusiliers (102).

3rd Leinster Regiment (100).

38th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

2nd Royal Scots Fusiliers (38).

Diamond Field Artillery (13–19), 1 M.G.

*columns engaged in major-general charles knox's operations in central orange river colony. colonel pilcher's column.*

7th Corps Mounted Infantry (891–860), 2 M.G.

6th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry (642–582).

### **MAJOR PINE COFFIN'S COLUMN.**

Mounted Infantry, Suffolk Regiment (119– 112).

Mounted Infantry, South Wales Borderers (105–107).

Mounted Infantry, Berkshire Regiment (88– 116).

Mounted Infantry, West Riding Regiment (114–117).

“O” Battery, R.H.A., 2 guns.

14th Battery, R.F.A., 4 guns.

“M” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

36th Co. Army Service Corps (37).

13th Brigade Bearer Company (8).

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL THORNEYCROFT'S COLUMN.**

21st and 22nd Sqds. and 18th Battalion.

Imperial Yeomanry (740–780).

Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry (168–339).

Burmah Mounted Infantry (185–230).

76th Battery, R.F.A., 4 guns.

“X” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

Royal Army Medical Corps (14).

COLONEL HENRY'S COLUMN. KIMBERLEY COLUMN.

1

This table represents the columns as they were disposed at Midsummer 1901.

## The Transvaal War

*columns engaged in major-general elliot's operations in northern orange river colony.*

### **BRIGADIER-GENERAL BROADWOOD'S COLUMN.**

7th Dragoon Guards (581–584), 1 M.G.  
 6th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (123–126).  
 42nd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (29–105).  
 44th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (107–122).  
 46th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (108–102).  
 78th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (59–70).  
 Gun Section, Imperial Yeomanry (17–23), 2 M.G.  
 82nd Battery, R.F.A., 4 guns.  
 20th Brigade Bearer Company (21).  
 86th Co., Army Service Corps (17).  
 17th Co., Army Service Corps (11).  
 Royal Engineers (7).

### **COLONEL BETHUNE'S COLUMN.**

1st Dragoon Guards (384–510), 1 M.G.  
 3rd Dragoon Guards (317–390).  
 7th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (99–98).  
 8th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (99–87).  
 28th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (92–90).  
 “ Q ” Battery, R.H.A., 4 guns.  
 Elswick Battery, 1 gun.  
 “ K ” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
 2nd Somerset Light Infantry (196).  
 4th Field Troop, Royal Engineers (39).  
 19th Co., Army Service Corps (29).  
 Royal Army Medical Corps (19).

## **LIEUT.-COLONEL COLVILLE'S COLUMN.**

2nd Division Mounted Infantry (300–340).  
2nd Johannesburg Mounted Rifles (106–130).  
63rd Battery, R.F.A., 4 guns.  
“O” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
2nd East Surrey Regiment (345), 1 M.G.  
No. 1 Auxiliary Co., Army Service Corps (13).  
2nd Brigade Field Hospital (16).  
2nd Brigade Bearer Company (4).

## **COLONEL RIMINGTON'S COLUMN.**

3rd Regiment, 5th Contingent, New South Wales Mounted Rifles (734–854), 4 M.G.  
41st Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (106–113).  
77th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (91–96).  
106th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (102–115).  
Prince of Wales Light Horse (501–504), 2 M.G.  
“ G ” Battery, R.H.A., 4 guns.  
“ G ” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
“ R ” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
30th Co., Army Service Corps (14).  
20th Brigade Field Hospital (23).

## **LIEUT.-COLONEL DE LISLE'S COLUMN.**

6th Regiment Mounted Infantry (392–457), 2 M.G.  
South Australians (326–398).  
62nd Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
“ A ” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
2nd Co., Army Service Corps (16).

## **COLONEL E. C. KNOX'S COLUMN.**

10th Hussars (566–668), 1 M.G.  
12th Lancers (663–771), 1 M.G.  
21st Bn., Imperial Yeomanry (259–316).  
“ A ” Battery, Royal Australian Artillery, 4 guns.  
2nd East Surrey Regiment (274).  
“ U ” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
17th Co., Royal Engineers (7).  
40th Co., Army Service Corps (15).  
4th Brigade Field Hospital (25).

## **LIEUT.-COLONEL WESTERN'S COLUMN.**

No. 1 Co., Royal Irish Rifles Mounted Infantry (103–130).  
No. 2 Co., Royal Irish Rifles Mounted Infantry (99–137).  
Mounted Infantry, Royal West Kent Regiment (61–76).  
Driscoll's Scouts (422–489).  
62nd Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

“ M ” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
1st Oxfordshire Light Infantry (120).  
1st Royal Irish Fusiliers (120).  
2nd Division Field Hospital (17).  
17th Co., Army Service Corps (15).

*columns engaged in lieut.-colonel western's operations on the vaal river.*

### **BRIGADIER-GENERAL G. HAMILTON'S COLUMN.**

5th Dragoon Guards (373-340), 1 M.G.  
13th Hussars (544-578), 1 M.G.  
“ Q ” Battery, R.H.A., 2 guns.  
64th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
“F” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
1st East Lancashire (363), 1 M.G.  
7th Co., Army Service Corps (7).  
3rd Field Troop, Royal Engineers (29).  
2nd Brigade Bearer Company (27).  
LIEUT.-COLONEL WESTERN'S COLUMN.

### **COLONEL ALLENBY'S COLUMN.**

6th Dragoon Guards (475-488), 3 M.G.  
2nd Dragoons (506-533), 1 M.G.  
“O” Battery, R.H.A., 4 guns.  
83rd Battery, R.F.A., 1 gun.  
87th Battery, R.F.A., 1 5-inch Howitzer.  
“E” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
1st Inniskilling Fusiliers (683), 1 M.G.  
1st Field Troop, Royal Engineers (27).  
6th Field Hospital (10).  
6th Bearer Company (13).  
COLONEL HENRY'S COLUMN.

## Composition and Strength of Columns

*columns engaged in clearing the east of the orange river colony.*

### **MAJOR-GENERAL B. CAMPBELL'S COLUMN.**

1st Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (134)

2nd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (160)

3rd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (114)

4th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (139)

Total horses, 536.

2nd Battery, R.F.A., 4 guns.

“T” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

2nd Scots Guards (688).

1st Leinster Regiment (402).

### **COLONEL HARLEY'S COLUMN.**

36th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (142–153).

53rd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry 138–138).

62nd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (82–35).

Unallotted Imperial Yeomanry (343–121).

Mounted Infantry, Manchester Regiment (96–114).

Tempest's Scouts (38).

36th, Southern Division, R.G.A., 1 5-inch.

77th Battery, R.F.A., 4 guns.

“T” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

1st South Staffordshire Regiment (787).

2nd Manchester Regiment (645).

2nd Grenadier Guards (62).

*columns engaged in operations in the south-west transvaal.*

### **LIEUT.-GENERAL LORD METHUEN'S COLUMN.**

13th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (128).

14th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (130–154).

15th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (140–162).

16th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (130–141).  
100th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (36–35).  
101st Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (142–148).  
102nd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (105–116).  
Gun Section, Imperial Yeomanry (15–24), 2 M.G.  
37th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (99–115).  
38th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (96–105).  
39th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (119–124).

### **MAJOR-GENERAL BABINGTON'S COLUMN.**

14th Hussars (98–105).  
Mounted Infantry, Royal Welsh Fusiliers (29–35).  
Imperial Light Horse (162–229).  
4th New Zealand Rifles (216–280).  
6th Imperial Bushmen (193–260).  
103rd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (135–144).  
107th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (145–153).  
37th Battery, R.F.A., 1 5-inch Howitzer.  
68th Battery, R.F.A., 4 guns.  
Elswick Battery, 1 gun.  
Pompom Section, R.F.F., 2 pompoms.  
Signallers, R.F.F. (7).  
1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers (522).  
11th Co., Royal Engineers (9).  
7th Co., Army Service Corps (21).  
9th Brigade Field Hospital (20).  
12th Bearer Company (11).

### **COLONEL SIR H. RAWLINSON'S COLUMN.**

2nd Mounted Infantry (352–439).  
8th Mounted Infantry (375–428).  
“P” Battery, R.H.A., 2 guns.  
38th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
37th Battery, R.F.A., 1 5-inch Howitzer.  
40th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (95–91), 1 M.G.  
43rd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (113–116).  
73rd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (105–153).  
51st Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (81–106).  
Mounted Infantry, Bedfordshire Regiment (63–72).  
Bechuanaland Rifles (64–90).  
4th Battery, R.F.A., 6 guns.  
37th Battery, R.F.A., 2 5-inch Howitzers.  
R.F.F. Artillery, 2 guns.  
“H” Section Pompoms, 2 pompoms.  
Pompom Section, R.F.F., 2 pompoms.

1st Northumberland Fusiliers (146).

1st Loyal North Lancashire (334).

3rd South Wales Borderers (146).

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL HICKIE'S COLUMN.**

“P” Battery, R.H.A., 2 guns.

78th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

Pompom Section, 2 pompoms.

103rd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (108–113).

107th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (99–109).

Kitchener's Horse (29–51).

Roberts' Horse (114–118).

Imperial Light Horse (369–439).

2nd Cheshire Regiment (182), 1 M.G.

11th Field Troop, Royal Engineers (7).

7th Co., Army Service Corps (24).

29th Co., Army Service Corps (6).

9th Brigade Field Hospital (14).

12th Bearer Company (10).

### **BRIGADIER-GENERAL DIXON'S COLUMN.**

7th Bn., Imperial Yeomanry (151–164).

1st Scottish Horse (451–543).

8th Battery, R.F.A., 4 guns.

28th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

37th Battery, R.F.A., 1 5-inch Howitzer.

“G” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

1st King's Own Scottish Borderers (469), 1 M.G.

1st Derby Regiment (411), 1 M.G.

## The Transvaal War

“B” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

“Z” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

2nd Cheshire Regiment (179.)

2nd Field Troop, Royal Engineers (14).

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL E. C. WILLIAMS’ COLUMN.**

2nd New South Wales Mounted Rifles (526–536).

3rd New South Wales Bushmen (229–244).

21st Bn., Mounted Infantry (432–415).

78th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

Elswick Battery, 1 gun.

“A” Batt., Royal Australian Artillery, 2 guns.

“B” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

“D” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

2nd Cheshire Regiment (192).

Australian Medical Corps (23).

7th Co., Royal Engineers (7).

10th Co., Army Service Corps (24).

12th Field Hospital (32).

10th Bearer Company (12).

7th Co., Royal Engineers (4).

BRIGADIER-GENERAL G. HAMILTON’S COLUMN.

COLONEL ALLENBY’S COLUMN.

### **GENERAL BARTON’S COLUMN.**

108th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (100).

Mounted Infantry (200).

81st Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

1st Cameron Highlanders (700).

### **MAJOR G. WILLIAMS’ COLUMN.**

11th Bn., Mounted Infantry (323–403).

*columns engaged in operations between the delagoa and natal lines.*

## **BRIGADIER-GENERAL PLUMER'S COLUMN.**

5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen (340–361).

6th New Zealand Mounted Rifles (419–406).

18th Battery R.F. A., 4 guns.

“Q” Section Pompoms, 2 pompoms.

1st Royal Munster Fusiliers (264).

2nd and 11th Cos., Royal Engineers (37).

13th Brigade Field Hospital (18).

14th Brigade Field Hospital (16).

Elswick Battery, 1 gun.

2nd Dorset Regiment (500), 1 M.G.

26th Co., Royal Engineers (20).

11th Field Hospital (9).

18th Field Hospital (10).

20th Co., Army Service Corps (20).

45th Co., Army Service Corps (16).

## **LIEUT.-COLONEL GREY'S (afterwards LIEUT.-COLONEL GARRATT'S) COLUMN.**

6th Queenslanders (307–302).

7th New Zealanders (489–504), 1 M.G.

9th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

73rd Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

“C” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

1st East Lancashire (309).

15th Field Hospital (22).

91st Co., Army Service Corps (22).

## **MAJOR-GENERAL W. KITCHENER'S COLUMN.**

5th West Australian Mounted Infantry (160–194).

6th West Australian Mounted Infantry (195–186).

## **BRIGADIER-GENERAL BULLOCK'S COLUMN.**

5th Corps, Mounted Infantry (758–894).

Gough's Mounted Infantry (590–742), 3 M.G.

Johannesburg Mounted Rifles (318–366).

Commander-in-Chief's Bodyguard (182–310), 2 guns and 1 pompom.

74th Battery, R.F.A., 4 guns.

“J” Battery, R.H.A., 6 guns.

“F” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

2nd Imperial Light Horse (138–170), 1 M.G.

53rd Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

16th Southern Division, R.G.A., 1 5-inch.

10th Mountain Battery, R.G.A., 1 gun.

“S” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

1st Devonshire Regiment (833), 2 M.G.  
24th Bearer Company and Field Hospital (9).  
23rd Co., Royal Engineers (10).

**LIEUT.-COLONEL PULTENEY'S COLUMN.**

1st Royal Dragoons (345–349), 1 M.G.  
6th Inniskilling Dragoons (370–400), 2 M.G.  
66th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
“P” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
1st Scots Guards (854), 1 M.G.  
Royal Engineers (48).  
11th Field Hospital (19).  
9th Bearer Company (21).

COLONEL RIMINGTON'S COLUMN.

COLONEL ALLENBY'S COLUMN.

COLONEL E. C. KNOX'S COLUMN.

*columns engaged in brigadier-general plumer's operations in south-eastern transvaal.*

BRIGADIER-GENERAL PLUMER'S COLUMN.

COLONEL E. C. KNOX'S COLUMN.

COLONEL RIMINGTON'S COLUMN.

## Composition and Strength of Columns

### *MAJOR-GENERAL BEATSON'S OPERATIONS.*

#### **MAJOR-GENERAL BEATSON'S COLUMN.**

5th Victorian Mounted Rifles (740–721).  
 9th Battery, R.F.A., 4 guns.  
 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry (366).  
 2nd Seaforth Highlanders (178).  
 26th Co., Royal Engineers (23).  
 20th Field Hospital (26).  
 84th Co., A.S.C. (18).

*columns engaged in lieut.-general sir bindon blood's operations in the eastern transvaal.*

#### **MAJOR-GENERAL BABINGTON'S COLUMN.**

19th Hussars (279–268), 1 M.G.  
 83rd Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
 10th Mountain Battery, R.G.A., 1 gun.  
 "J" Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
 1st King's Royal Rifle Corps (637), 1 M.G.  
 43rd Co., Army Service Corps (16).  
 12th Field Hospital (21).  
 9th Co., Royal Engineers (12).

#### **LIEUT.-COLONEL BENSON'S (R.A.) COLUMN.**

18th Mounted Infantry (466–513).  
 19th Mounted Infantry (362–430).  
 2nd Scottish Horse (503–647).  
 21st Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
 81st Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
 61st Battery, R.F.A., 1 5-inch Howitzer.  
 10th Mountain Battery, R.G.A., 1 gun.  
 "C" Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

“R” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (724)  
23rd Co., Royal Engineers (23).  
8th Bearer Company (22).  
31st Co., Army Service Corps (19).

### **BRIGADIER-GENERAL SPENS’ COLUMN.**

5th Lancers (153–132).  
4th Mounted Infantry (457–534).  
4th Mountain Battery, R.G.A., 2 2.5-inch.  
10th Mountain Battery, R.G.A., 1 12-pr.  
“S” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
2nd Royal Berkshire Regiment (570), 3 M.G.  
19th Co., Royal Engineers (23).,  
19th Bearer Co. (29).

### **COLONEL CAMPBELL’S COLUMN.**

18th Hussars (543–470).  
53rd Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
14th Southern Division, R.G.A., 1 5-inch.  
Pontoon Troop, R.E. (10).  
2nd Rifle Brigade (587), 1 M.G.  
12th Brigade Field Hospital (30).  
Army Service Corps (10).

### **COLONEL PARK’S COLUMN.**

4th Division Mounted Infantry (123–137), 1 Krupp gun.  
53rd Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
“P” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
1st Royal Irish Regiment (613), 1 M.G.  
40th Co., Army Service Corps (8).  
4th Division Field Hospital (4).

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL DOUGLAS’ COLUMN.**

3rd Mounted Infantry (349–446).  
84th Battery, R.F.A., 4 guns.  
“L” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
1st Royal Scots (704), 1 M.G.  
23rd Co., Royal Engineers (17).  
19th Field Hospital (22).  
19th Bearer Company (11).

MAJOR-GENERAL W. KITCHENER’S COLUMN.

LIEUT.-COLONEL PULTENEY’S COLUMN.

MAJOR-GENERAL BEATSON’S COLUMN.

LIEUT.-COLONEL COLVILLE’S COLUMN.

COLONEL GARRATT’S COLUMN.

*columns engaged in operations on the pietersburg line.*

**MAJOR MCMICKING'S COLUMN.**

20th Bn., Mounted Infantry (374–317).

75th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

2nd Lincoln Rifles (179).

**LIEUT.-COLONEL WILSON'S COLUMN.**

Kitchener's Fighting Scouts (417–399).

Bush Veldt Carabineers (21–22).

12th Mounted Infantry (13–13).

2nd Gordon Highlanders (104).

**LIEUT.-COLONEL GRENFELL'S COLUMN.**

Kitchener's Fighting Scouts (364–361).

12th Mounted Infantry (193–194).

2nd Wiltshire Rifles (363).

85th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.

“A” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

*OPERATIONS IN THE STANDERTON-HEIDELBERG DISTRICT.*

LIEUT.-COLONEL COLVILLE'S COLUMN.

LIEUT.-COLONEL GREY'S COLUMN.

## The Transvaal War

*columns engaged in operations in cape colony.*

### **COLONEL DORAN'S COLUMN. (Late LIEUT.-COLONEL HENNIKER'S.)**

Warren's Mounted Infantry (181–191).  
 11th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (134–131).  
 23rd Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (141–148).  
 24th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (125–94).  
 “ M ” Battery, R.H.A., 2 guns.  
 Cape Colony Cyclists (4).

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL CRABBE'S COLUMN.**

P. A. Guards (193–205).  
 Marshall's Horse (120–139).  
 99th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (53–63).  
 104th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (58–60).  
 105th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (53–69).  
 111th Sqdn., Imperial Yeomanry (47–53).  
 85th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
 2nd Royal Fusiliers (78).  
 Cape Medical Staff (13).

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL GORRINGE'S COLUMN.**

Cape Defence Force (263).  
 Cape Police (212).  
 Tasmanian Imperial Bushmen (92).  
 5th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
 “ O ” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.  
 Total horses (1401).

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL CREWE'S COLUMN.**

Kaffrarian Rifles (301–374), 2 machine guns.  
 Queenstown Volunteer Rifles (78–137).  
 44th Battery, R.F.A., 2 guns.  
 “ Y ” Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

### **CAPTAIN LUND'S COLUMN.**

9th Lancers (132).

Brabant's Horse (209)

Imperial Yeomanry (278).

"A" Section Pompoms, 1 pompom.

Total horses (828), and 1 machine gun.

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL SCOBELL'S COLUMN.**

9th Lancers (303–332).

Cape Mounted Rifles (203–356).

Cape Mounted Royal Artillery, 3 guns.

Cape Cyclists (9).

Royal Engineers (2).

### **LIEUT.-COLONEL WYNDHAM'S COLUMN.**

17th Lancers (387–412), 1 machine gun.

LIEUT.-COLONEL HON. A. D. MURRAY'S COLUMN.

COLONEL MONRO'S COLUMN.

NOTE.—Where two figures appear, the first refers to effective men, the second to effective horses.

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## Boer Forces

The number of Boers in the field is difficult to determine as the forces were informal in their administration. At the outbreak of the war the Boer forces were as listed below, and numbered about 60,250 in theory with perhaps two-thirds of that number actually on active service. In addition, about 10,000 Cape Colony subjects fought alongside citizens of the two republics during the war.

### *South African Republic (Transvaal)*

#### *Staatsartillerie*

About 733 men and seventy-one guns.

#### *Police (ZARP, Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek Politie)*

Boksburg Police. Johannesburg Police. Transvaal Police. Swaziland Police. 1,545 men.

#### *Commandos*

The numbers of men are as given by Captain Reichmann, the US Military Attaché, but they must be treated with caution. The actual numbers answering the call at the outbreak of the war may be indicated, but men went on leave, or simply went away, and the locational nature of membership broke down quickly as the war moved towards the guerrilla phase.

Bethal – 737. Bloemhof – 680. Boksburg, Germiston and Johannesburg – 2,013 taken together. Carolina – 427. Ermelo – 963. Heidelberg – 2,375. Krugersdorp – 1,317. Lichtenburg – 993. Lydenburg – 1,125. Marico – 984. Middelburg – 1,550. Piet Retief – 301. Potchefstroom – 1,249. Pretoria – 2,832. Rustenburg – 2,103. Standerton – 890. Swaziland – 271. Utrecht – 492. Vruheid – 731. Wakkerstroom – 1,179. Waterberg – 284. Wolmaransstad – 838. Zoutpansberg – 1,017. Thus 25,351 in total.

### *Orange Free State*

#### *Artillery*

About 475 men and twenty-eight guns.

#### *Police*

One hundred and fifty men.

#### *Commandos*

Bethlehem – 1,142. Bethulie – 337. Bloemfontein – 1,253. Boshof – 780. Fauresmith – 988. Ficksburg – 235. Harrismith – 751. Heilbron – 1,857. Hoopstad – 494. Jacobsdal – 139. Kroonstad – 2,068. Ladybrand – 749. Philippolis – 209. Rouxville – 528. Thaba 'Nchu –

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98. Smithfield – 299. Vrede – 1,038. Wepener – 258. Winburg and Senekal – 1,616 taken together. Thus 14,839 in total.

### *Foreign Corps*

The foreigners who fought on the Boer side volunteered at first from the men who were already in South Africa as gold miners, traders, farmers and in the professions. They were joined by men from overseas inspired by a variety of motives and the formations they served in were not necessarily made up entirely of the nationality its name suggests. The units were:

The German Corps. The Hollander Corps. The Irish Brigades, of which there were two. The Scandinavian Corps. The French Corps (also known as the European Corps). In addition there were volunteers from the United States of America, Italy, Russia and Switzerland. In all some 2,000 men.

### *Other Units*

Active units: Edward's Scouts. Fichardt's Scouts. Hassel's Scouts. Jooste's Scouts. Kirsten's Scouts. Pretoria Mounted Rifles. Ricchiardi's Scouts. Scheeper's Scouts. Theron's Scouts. Theunissen's Scouts. Von Goeben's Scouts. About 100 men in all.

Service units: South African Republic and Orange Free State Medical services, about 250 people. Religious section, about 67 people.

### *Cape Rebels*

Afrikaners in Cape Colony, British subjects in law, were exhorted to join their Boer brothers against the British and some did so. It is estimated that they totalled no more than 10,000 men, less than a quarter of the number hoped for.

### *Guerrilla War Forces*

With the end of set-piece battles in September 1900 and during the part-guerrilla phase of the war that preceded that period, a number of commandos broke up because of losses in battle, surrender of their members to the British or acceptance of the amnesty terms. Adhoc formations came into being, such as Commandant Malan's Afrikaner Cavalry Corps which was formed from elements of a number of commandos after the Battle of Bergendal on 27 August 1900. Further, the decision was taken in the Orange Free State to break the commandos up into small parties to attack targets of opportunity. The territory was divided into six sections, each under an Assistant Chief-commandant with five or six Commandants under him, each one commanding a small group.

### *Boer Forces on 31 May 1902*

At the end of the war something close to half the number of Boers in the field at the start of the conflict were still active. The South African Republic (Transvaal) had about 11,232 men, the Orange Free State about 5,833 and some 3,574 rebels and 140 foreigners were still on commando; 20,779 in all.

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## Concentration and Refugee Camps

The existence of concentration camps in which Boer men, women and children were made to live has been widely known since Emily Hobhouse's reports, but her reference to camps for black people has not received the attention and investigation the camps deserve until quite recent years. The black camps were at first the responsibility of the Department of Refugees, and those known to have been under its control are marked in the list with an asterix, \*. After 1 September 1901, the need for specific management of the black camps having been recognised, they came under the Department of Native Refugees and those camps are marked with a dagger, †. The earliest black camps included those established for the servants of incarcerated whites, and as they were set up alongside the latter, bear the same names.

The names given to the camps appear to have been allocated in an inconsistent way, and it is possible that, in the lists given here, different names may actually refer to the same camp. It is also certain that some camps have yet to be identified, and the lists are therefore incomplete. Locations of camps are taken from Jones & Jones, while additional information, including recorded deaths, may be found in Hall (see references).

### *South African Republic (Transvaal) – White Camps*

Barberton. Barmoral. Belfast. Heidelberg. Irene. Johannesburg. Klerksdorp. Krugersdorp. Lydenburg. Middelburg. Nylstroom. Pietersburg. Platrand (on Volkrust-Heidelberg railway). Potchefstroom. Pretoria (Meintje's Kop). Standerton. Vereeniging. Volkrust. Vryheid. Wareval (on Pretoria-Pietersburg railway).

### *South African Republic (Transvaal) – Black Camps*

Balmoral. Bantjes. Belfast. Bezuidenhout Valley. Boksburg. Brakpan (35km E. of Johannesburg). Bronkhorstspuit. Brugspruit. Elandshoek (on Delagoa Bay railway). Elandsrivier. Florida Kop†. Greylingstad. Groot Oliphants River. Heildeberg. Irene. Klerksdorp. Kliprivier Station. Klipriviersberg. Koekemoer. Krugersdorp. Meyerton. Middelburg. Natal Spruit. Nelspruit. Nigel†. Olifantsfontein (25km S. of Pretoria). Paardekop. Platrand. Pretoria (Reitfontein West). Springs. Standerton. Van Der Merwe Station. Vereeniging. Volkrust. Wilge River. Wit Kop (N.W. of Meyerton).

### *Orange Free State (Orange River Colony) – White Camps*

Bethulie. Bloemfontein. Brandfort. Harrismith. Heilbron. Kroonstad. Norval's Pont. Springfontein Junction. Vredefort Road. Winburg.

### *Orange Free State (Orange River Colony) – Black Camps*

Allemans Siding†. America Siding†. Bloemfontein\*. Boschrand (S. of Kroonstad). Brandfort\*. Brussels. Doorn River†. Edenburg\*. Eensgevonden. Geneva Siding†. Harrismith†. Heilbron\*†. Holfontein†. Honingspruit† (N.E. of Kroonstad). Houtenbeck or Tafel Kop (S.W. of Brandfort). Kopjes†. Kromellenboog†. Kroonstad\*. Orange River\*. Rietspruit\* (on Bloemfontein-Vereeniging railway). Roodewal†. Serfontein†. Smaldeel† (N.W. of Winburg). Taaiboschspruit†. Thaba 'Nchu†. Ventersburg Road†. Vet River†. Virginia Siding†. Vredefort Road\*†. Welgelegen (S.W. of Virginia). Winburg†. Wolvehoek† (S. of Sasolburg).

### *Cape Colony – White Camps*

Aliwal North. East London. Kimberley. Mafeking. Orange River Bridge (Doornbult). Port Elizabeth. Vryburg. Warrenton. Uitenhage (N.W. of Port Elizabeth).

### *Cape Colony – Black Camps*

Dry Harts. Kimberley. Orange River Bridge. Taungs.

### *Natal Colony – White Camps*

Colenso. Eshowe. Howick. Jacobs. Ladysmith. Merebank. Pietermaritzburg. Wentworth.

### *Natal Colony – Black Camp*

Witziesshoek.

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Jones, H. M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

## The Battle of Elandslaagte

*G. W. Steevens was a journalist who had made his reputation reporting Britain's foreign wars. He was based in Ladysmith in 1899 and the following report was published in his book *From Capetown to Ladysmith* the following year. By that time Steevens, at thirty years of age, had died of enteric (typhoid) fever during the siege of Ladysmith.*

FRENCH'S RECONNAISSANCE – AN ARTILLERY DUEL – BEGINNING OF THE ATTACK – RIDGE AFTER RIDGE – A CROWDED HALF-HOUR.

Ladysmith, Oct. 22.

From a billow of the rolling veldt we looked back, and black columns were coming up behind us.

Along the road from Ladysmith moved cavalry and guns. Along the railway line to right of it crept trains – one, two, three of them – packed with khaki, bristling with the rifles of infantry. We knew then that we should fight before nightfall.

Major-General French, who commanded, had been out from before daybreak with the Imperial Light Horse and the battery of the Natal Volunteer Artillery reconnoitring towards Elandslaagte. The armoured train – slate-colour plated engine, a slate-colour plated loop-holed cattle-truck before and behind, an open truck with a Maxim at the tail of all – puffed along on his right. Elandslaagte is a little village and railway station seventeen miles north-east of Ladysmith, where two days before the Boers had blown up a culvert and captured a train. That cut our direct communication with the force at Dundee. Moreover, it was known that the Free State commandoes were massing to the north-west of Ladysmith and the Transvaalers to attack Dundee again. On all grounds it was desirable to smash the Elandslaagte lot while they were still weak and alone.

The reconnaissance stole forward until it came in sight of the little blue-roofed village and the little red tree-girt station. It was occupied. The Natal battery unlimbered and opened fire. A round or two – and then suddenly came a flash from a kopje two thousand yards beyond the station on the right. The Boer guns! And the next thing was the hissing shriek of a shell – and plump it dropped, just under one of the Natal limbers. By luck it did not burst; but if the Boer ammunition contractor was suspect, it was plain that the Boer artillerist could lay a gun. Plump: plump: they came right into the battery; down went a horse, over went an ammunition-waggon. At that range the Volunteers' little old 7-pounders were peashooters; you might as well have spat at the enemy. The guns limbered up and were off. Next came the vicious *phutt!* of a bursting shell not fifty yards from the

## The Battle of Belmont, 23 November 1899

*Lieutenant C. W. Barton served throughout the war with the 2nd Battalion, Northamptonshire Regiment, which had formerly been the 58th Regiment of Foot. In his journal Barton continues using the old name. The 58th fought at the Battle of Belmont during the advance intended to relieve Kimberley. This is his account of the events of 22 and 23 November 1899.*

22 Nov. Wednesday. Left Witteputs Station at 4 pm & advanced over the open plains to Belmont 6 miles distant, 58th Regt formed the Infantry advanced guard. Cavalry & Artillery however went ahead & a few Boer riflemen fired upon them but there was no real opposition to our entry into Belmont. The guns unlimbered & shelled the hills about 3 miles beyond Belmont for about an hour. The whole Division bivouacked for the night in Belmont where a reservoir provided splendid water (as compared with some we have had).

We slept by our arms in peace except for a shot or two exchanged with the outposts.

### *Battle of Belmont Nov. 23rd 1899*

Plan of attack.

9th Brigade to attack Table Mountain.

Guards Brigade to attack Gun Hill.

The two miles of open country to be traversed under cover of darkness & attack delivered at dawn.

Mounted troops to endeavour to get round enemy's left flank.

In the 9th Brigade the 5th Fusiliers were on the left, 58th on the right; advancing each in column of companies which extended to 6 paces outwards when at distance of 500 yds from the position. Yorkshire Light Infantry were in reserve during the advance & latterly were sent to assist the Guards attacking the ridge near the camp. The half battalion of North Lancashire Regt remained to guard our camp at Belmont. The columns started at 2.30, the first shots were fired soon after 4 am. The bullets now began to whistle & scream while the outline of the hills was lit up with brilliant flashes. As we got near the foot of them the hail rendered it advisable to get flat on the stomach & so complete the remaining 100 yds to mountain spur (marked S) affording cover from the fire of Table mountain, a lot

## The Battle of Magersfontein, 11 December 1899

*Private James Williamson of A Company, 2nd Black Watch, fought at Magersfontein and was wounded several times. He was sent back to England and wrote this letter from the Victoria Hospital, Netley, Southampton. The hospital was demolished in 1966 and only a few ancillary buildings remain.*

I got wounded at Magersfontein after waiting so long in Africa for a start, but I am glad it is all up with me now, since I saw what like the Gen. in command was. We were led up in  $\frac{1}{4}$  Column to the trenches and got no command off any one, only had to charge on our own tinpot way, and to my sorry I was in the front company. We pulled up the barb wire and rushed on the Boers but were soon away from them again. We extended out to the left then lay down. Previous to this I got my Helmet knocked off and couldnt go after it. The bullits were coming down on us like hailstones, so we had to stick there, about 30 yards from the trenches, as soon as I lay down I got a Mauser bullet through my left foot which made me wilder so I started firing back but my luck was out that day, for they peppered at me as if I was the only man firing at them. I got one through the left leg severing my mussle then I got another in the back but kept on the fire as long as I was able to hold the Rifle. Then I got one in the right shoulder, it made me drop the Rifle but I managed to pick it up and fire again, but not for long, for I got another in the right leg, so I thought it was the last, but no I got another in the right arm that broke it, so I was done for. I had to lie and witness the fight all day, and then at night until 9 oclock next morning I lay watching the Boers taking away their dead. They would have taken me but they saw I was no use to them so they allowed three of the Highland Light Infantry to come over for me. They gave me water and took me to Modder River Hospital where I got dressed and well done for. So I am here in Netley alright but for a bad hand.

*Yours faithfully  
3843 Pte James Williamson  
A.Coy 2nd Black Watch*

*Reproduced by courtesy of the Trustees of the Black Watch Museum, Perth.*

## The Hunt for De Wet, August 1900

*Private Frank Everett was with the 1st Northampton Rifle Volunteers and left for South Africa on 14 February 1900. His unit was with Lord Methuen's column in the hunt for Christiaan De Wet's commando in the Transvaal in August. He wrote home from Zeerust on 23 August.*

My dear Mother

I have 3 letters which I wrote some time ago to the family but have not had a chance of sending yet, and expect you will be looking out for them. I hope to be able to send them soon with this one as we expect to be at Mafeking in 3 days time. On the 12th of this month I was very pleased to receive letters from Lucy and Ethel, & chocolate from Maria, & cocoa from Lucy. There are three or four mails due to us so I am hoping we shall find them waiting for us at Mafeking.

24th. For some reason or other we are stopping here today but expect we shall be going on tomorrow. I expect you will have seen some account of our doings in the papers lately. We have been having a worse time than ever, but they say we are going to have at least a fortnight's rest when we get to Mafeking. I suppose the news has reached Kettering that J. Bernard Cooper was shot through the heart while in action at Tigerberg on the day after Bank Holiday. He was the only one killed that day on our side with 14 wounded. We left him with several others who were not well at Potchefstroom attached to the Welsh Fusiliers when we left that place on the Monday. We marched about 14 miles to the Vaal River. Stopped De Wet who was supposed to be in the Free State from getting into the Transvaal. We expected to stop by the drift we were at till next day, but got orders that night that De Wet had already crossed by another drift, & we had got to move off early in the morning. Next morning we did a forced march of 10 miles when we began to hear the big guns. We marched more or less all that day, mostly up hill, always in sound of the guns & rifles, & in sight of our own men, but never near enough to do any firing ourselves as De Wet's mob was retiring all the while. That was the day poor Cooper got shot. It seems after we left Potchefstroom the Fusiliers were ordered to get ready to come out for 3 days, & they wanted all those who could march to do so & so no doubt Cooper thought his foot would stand the 3 days & offered to come. He was shot whilst they were crossing an open plain to attack the Boers on a ridge of hills. It seems he was very excited & would not keep down, although he was told to do so time after time. It does not say much for the Boers shooting that they could only kill one considering the positions they were able to pick.

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**TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DISTRESS  
FUND.**

***Report of a Visit to the Camps of Women and Children in the  
Cape and Orange River Colonies.***

***By EMILY HOBHOUSE.***

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*PRICE ONE PENNY.*

## *To the Committee of the Distress Fund for South African Women and Children.*

### **I.- REPORT AND EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.**

As I have been acting as your delegate in South Africa I am anxious to submit to you without delay some account of the Camps in which the women and children are concentrated, and to put before you the need for further effort on their behalf. By the kind permission of Lord Milner and Lord Kitchener I have been enabled to visit a certain number of these Camps, investigate the needs of the people and arrange for the partial administration of the Fund with which you entrusted me.

Considering the changing condition of the Camps, it is hardly possible to draw up an ordinary conventional report. It would seem better to place before you what was written down day by day, as it was seen and as it happened. Here and there foot-notes point out alterations or improvements of later date. By this means some faint picture may be presented to your minds of what is being undergone by the weaker members of two whole countries. Some suggestions are appended which, if adopted, would go far, in my opinion, to alleviate the conditions of life in the Camps during the months or years they may be maintained.—I have, etc.,

### **E. HOBHOUSE.**

January 22nd.

“I had a splendid truck given me at Capetown, through the kind co-operation of Sir Alfred Milner—a large double-covered one, capable of holding 12 tons. I took £200 worth of groceries, besides all the bales of clothing I could muster. The truck left Capetown the day before myself, was hitched on to my train at De Aar, and so arrived when I did. The first thing next day was to go down to the goods station, claim the truck, and arrange for its unloading. This morning I have spent arranging all my stores—unpacking and sorting them. It is very hot. I think the essence of delightful work is when you quite forget you have a body, but, here the heat keeps you in constant recollection that you are still in the flesh, and it’s a great hindrance. I did not have a bad journey from Capetown, though it was rather a lonely one. Going through the Karoo it was very hot, and the second day there were horrible dust-storms, varied by thunderstorms. The sand penetrated through closed windows and doors, filled eyes and cars, turned my hair red and covered everything like a tablecloth. As far as extent and sweep of land and sky go the Karoo is delightful, but it’s a vast solitude, and in many parts the very plants grow two or three yards apart, as if they shunned society. From Colesberg on it was a

desolate outlook. The land seemed dead and silent as far as eye could reach, absolutely without life, only carcasses of horses, mules, and cattle, with a sort of acute anguish in their look, and bleached bones and refuse of many kinds. I saw a few burnt farms, but those unburnt seemed still and lifeless also, and no work is going on in the fields. Really, the line the whole way up is a string of Tommies, yawning at their posts, and these always crowded to the carriage windows to beg for newspapers, or anything, they said, to pass the time. I gave them all I had, and all my novels.

. . . But I must pass on to tell you about the Women's Camp, which, after all, is the central point of interest."

#### **THE BLOEMFONTEIN CAMP.**

January 26th.

The exile camp here is a good two miles from the town, dumped down on the southern slope of a kopje, right, out on to the bare brown veldt, not a vestige of a tree in any direction, nor shade of any description. It was about four o'clock of a scorching afternoon when I set foot in the camp, and I can't tell you what I felt like, so I won't try.

I began by finding a woman whose sister

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in the rations.\*Some people have money, and may add to the above by purchasing certain things at some little retail shops allowed in the Camp, which charge exorbitant prices,†for instance, 6d. for a reel of cotton. But they are, naturally, terribly afraid of parting with their money, feeling it is all they will have to begin life on again, for every one's income is stopped, nothing is coming in. It is, indeed, a dreary prospect. Some few of those who had cash in hand buried it out on their farms for safety, and now, of course, cannot reach it. All say, if released, they would make a living somehow, and shelter beneath the ruined home would be as good as these often rotten tents. It is hard enough that, but countless children's lives would be saved thereby.

We have much typhoid, and are dreading an outbreak, so I am directing my energies to getting the water of the Modder River boiled. As well swallow typhoid germs whole as drink that water — so say doctors. Yet they cannot boil it all, for—first, fuel is very scarce ; that which is supplied weekly would not cook a meal a day, and they have to search the already bare kopjes for a supply. There is hardly a bit to be had. Second, they have no extra utensil to hold the water when boiled. I propose, therefore, to give each tent another pail or crock, and get a proclamation issued that all drinking water must be boiled. It will cost nearly £50 to do this, even if utensils are procurable.

In spite of small water supply, and it is very spare, all the tents I have been in are exquisitely neat and clean, except two, and they were ordinary, and such limitations !

January 31st.

I suggested a big railway boiler\*to boil every drop of water before it is served out. This would economise fuel, and be cheaper in the long run, besides ensuring the end desired, for many could not be trusted to boil their own. Next we want forage for the cows. Fifty have been secured, but they only get four buckets of milk out of the poor starved things.†What is needed is a wash-house with water laid on from the town, but I see no chance of it. Some people in town still assert that the Camp is a haven of bliss. Well, there are eyes and no eyes. I was at the camp to-day, and just in one little corner this is the sort of thing I found. The nurse, underfed and overworked, just sinking on to her bed, hardly able to hold herself up, after coping with some thirty typhoid and other patients, with only the untrained help of two Boer girls—cooking as well as nursing to do herself.

Next, I was called to see a woman panting in the heat, just sickening for her confinement. Fortunately, I had a night-dress in my bundle to give her, and two tiny baby gowns.

Next tent, a six months' baby gasping its life out on its mother's knee. The doctor had given it powders in the morning, but it had taken nothing since. Two or three others drooping and sick in that tent.

Next, child recovering from measles, sent back from hospital before it could walk, stretched on the ground, white and wan ; three or four others lying about.

Next, a girl of twenty-one lay dying on a stretcher. The father, a big, gentle Boer, kneeling beside her ; while, next tent, his wife was watching a child of six, also dying, and one of about five drooping. Already this couple had lost three children in the hospital. and so would not let these go, though I begged hard to take them out of the hot tent. “ We must watch these ourselves,” he said. I sent ——to find brandy, and got some down the girl's throat, but for the most part you must stand and look on,

helpless to do anything, because there is nothing to do anything with.

Then a man came up and said : “ Sister ” (they call be “ Sister,” or “ Di Meisie van England ”), “ come and see my child, sick for nearly three months.” It was a dear little chap of four, and nothing left of him but his great brown eyes and white teeth, from which the lips were drawn back, too thin to close. His body was emaciated. The little fellow had craved for fresh milk ; but, of course, there had been none till these last two days, and now the fifty cows only give four buckets, so you can imagine what feed there is for them. I sent —— for some of this, and made him lay the child outside on a pillow to get the breeze that comes up at sunset. I can’t describe what it is to see these children lying about in a state of collapse. It’s just exactly like faded flowers thrown away. And one has to stand and look on at such misery, and be able to do almost nothing.

\*

These numbers are now nearly doubled.

\*

Three months later—Mrs. P. has been rejoined to all her children, except two.

\*

Of course the numbers are now largely increased. over 20,000 in Orange River Colony alone ; 25,000 in Transvaal camps, besides the Colony and Natal.

\*

With much persuasion, and weeks after requisitioning, soap is now given in occasionally in very minute quantities—certainly not enough for clothes and personal washing.

†

In some camps steps are now taken to prevent exorbitant charges in these shops in certain articles.

\*

None could be had, so the Government built furnaces and tankms. When the camp doubled this would not supply sufficient, so I left money to put up another.

†

Forage was refused, being too precious. After the rains the milk supply was better.

**NORVALS PONT AND ALIWAL NORTH.**

February 10th.

I should like now to begin an account of Norvals Pont Camp. It has been an exciting week, because I had pitched on the same days as De Wet had done for careering up and down this line. At

the best of times travelling is hard enough in this hot, slow, thirsty land ; but add to heat military control of everything, absence, or partial disappearance, of ordinary officials ; permits and passes of endless kinds, the danger of travelling at night, the line occasionally torn up or a train burnt, and the route blocked by countless strings of troop trains and supply trains, all having to pass each other at sidings, as the line is single, and you have some idea of the patience required. One very hot day our eyes were refreshed by continued mirages, pre-

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senting delicious views of cool stretches of water and imaginary cliffs. Sometimes I have slept in the train at sidings, sometimes at ghastly so-called hotels. A German Lutheran missionary has shown me much hospitality, and guards have been most kind in admitting me to their vans. I had great fears as to what I might find in the Camp at Norvals Pont, knowing there was no town to draw upon for supplies or help of any kind. But I am glad to be able to report that it is far superior to the Camp at Bloemfontein. The spot chosen is a slope, surrounded by hills, about a mile from the station. From the Commandant's tent there is a pretty stretch of the Orange River visible, and, far off, the blue, square-topped hill which marks Bethulie. The general character of the hills is like this—square and flat-topped—table mountains constantly recurring all through the land.

The population of this Camp is about 1,500, and it is well laid out in rows and streets with numbers, so that you can find your way about. There are only a few marquees, and those are put in a row on one side to accommodate some of the true refugees. As these people are quite in a minority, it is wholly absurd to call the Camps by their name, “Refugee”; and even they can hardly be said to have come quite of their own free will, only they were told their particular town was to be emptied out, and they would starve if they did not come. The people who were in reality taken as prisoners of war occupy the centre and great bulk of the Camp, and beyond a broad space on the other side are pitched the tents of the single men, people who have surrendered, or such like.

Between the hours of 6 p.m. and 8 a.m. this part of the camp is prohibited from passing to the other side, and the soldiery have no tents in the precincts of the camp.

Instead of drinking the waters of the Orange, they use that river only for bathing, and the Commandant had pipes laid on from a farm, where a spring gives 14,000 gallons per hour, and this pure water is brought into camp.

Much to my delight, I found that there was much less overcrowding in Norval's Pont, and that each tent was supplied with a low wooden bed, a mattress, bench, table, utensils. Consequently, the whole aspect of the people was different. There was no violent outbreak of sickness, though I understand that almost all the cases nursed in the hospital had died. This I attribute (and so did the people) to bad nursing. They have no trained nurse. I hope one may soon be procured.\* There is no minister and they bury their own dead.†

The heat was very great. Even the large, cool, breezy marquee was often 104 deg. Fahrenheit, and the bell tents, with single canvas, rise to 108 to 110 deg. The doctor said he could not use his clinical thermometer in them, as it would not go down at all. I get greatly exhausted after sitting in these tents talking to the people a whole day, especially as there are six or seven in the tent, and others from outside come and throng round the narrow opening, excluding any possible breath of air.

Sir Alfred Milner is sending round the Education Commissioner to arrange about schools in each of these camps. In Norval's Pont‡two large marquees are set apart, and mistresses duly certificated are available from the camp population.

Now the need of clothing for the children is very great. The Commandant had been so unhappy about the clothelessness that he had ordered £150 worth and given it out. I undertook to forward some, and chose some women in the camp to store and distribute it where most needed.

The death rate, though very high, is not so high as in Bloemfontein. Less overcrowding and better water.

\*

One of the Netherlands' nurses is there now, besides an experienced woman from Capetown in charge of the Scarlatina Hospital.

†

Mr. Van der Merwe, from Beaufort West, has, since the second week in April, been allowed to reside.

‡

Under Mr. E. B. Sargant, Education Commissioner, schools for children between certain ages are now being organized, and in some camps are already doing good work. Accommodation cannot be obtained for all as yet.

#### **ALIWAL NORTH.**

February 12.

It was an awful journey from Norval's Pont to Aliwal North, but still I did get there at last. Poor little Aliwal, with only 800 inhabitants, had, within four weeks, to receive and provide for a population of nearly 2,000, nearly three times its own number. And it does them credit, for it is well organized, and, as far as that goes, the misery is alleviated. The Commandant could not speak highly enough of the people—their patience, good conduct, and uncomplainingness under their privations and losses. His camp can barely be called a prison; he has no soldiers or sentries, and most of the people are free to walk into the town, or to receive visits from the people in the town, without passes. The towns of Smithfield, Rouxville, and Zastron are all here, and, so far, only two deaths have taken place. But the camp has only been forming a month. Everything is beautifully arranged and provided for. He gives two tents to large families, and offers sail cloth to any who care to put up wooden framework to make extra rooms. He encourages them to come and state their needs. The rations here are better. Compressed vegetables were given, and 1lb. of potatoes twice a week, (and potatoes are 6d. per lb., or eight times as dear as in London).

I found there a young woman, a complete cripple from hips downwards, and, therefore, quite unfit for tent life, but anxious to earn her own living, as she could do so, by sewing, in a town. The Commandant was perfectly willing she should go if she knew where and

how, and I am trying to get this arranged in Aliwal North. Clothing for children is much needed, especially now the school is likely to open, and I chose some women to receive and distribute the goods. The great lack has been soap. Neither in this camp, nor in Norval's Pont, has any been supplied, and those without money have been unable to wash clothes or person properly. Men don't think of these things unless it is suggested to them ; they simply say, " How dirty these people are! "

I bought some soap in the town, and sent it in for immediate needs ; also material for the women to make up themselves. Many have brought their sewing machines when they saved nothing else.

#### BACK IN BLOEMFONTEIN.

February 17.—I want very much to take the best class of young girls out of camp and place them in boarding schools. The mothers cannot bear to see their girls, month after month, idle in these camps. The life seems to be very demoralizing owing to its purposelessness, and this camp in particular is quite bad for young girls. We all feel that. I can rig them out with clothes from my store.

Now I am beginning to find out the best ways of spending the money.

First, the one I have just proposed, because to get away from the Camp is best.

Next, providing (if procurable) materials for both men and women to work at for their own use, for sale, and also for occupation. A man said if he only had some leather he could keep his family in shoes, and cobble for others for a few pence. To-morrow I shall try and purchase the materials, but you must recollect everything here is scarce, and I may have to go to Capetown. To-day I found a man making jolly little baskets most cleverly, just out of bushes from the kopje. The Dutch are so very full of resource, and so clever. Then, too, they can make their own soap with fat and soda, and, though the Government permit has at last come to supply soap in the rations, yet it might be cheaper to supply the materials and employ a few women to make the necessary supply for the Camp.

At last, too, the tanks have come, and now we shall be able to begin boiling all the water before giving it out, and I hope this may lessen the fever. The throat complaints are, the Doctor says, owing entirely to the bad smells resulting from the bad sanitary arrangements. One side of the Camp the odour is unbearable.

I have been interested in a little baby, born this week in a wee tent so poverty-stricken. The mother asked me to name it with a name suitable to the times. I suggested " Dolores," or, what I thought would be better still, " Hope." But the sad, sick mother can see no hope, and chose " Dolores " for her little child. As she could not do her washing, we got another woman to do it for her, and the father cobbled that woman's shoes by way of payment. In Irene Camp I hear there have been 200 cases of midwifery alone, so the baby outfits come handy everywhere.

I am very worried about the lack of mattresses, but if the military will give me hay or straw I will set the people to work to make them themselves. No other kind of stuffing in any quantity seems obtainable, and so, failing this, the majority must lie upon the hard ground, as they do now.

I feel very chirpy to-day, for I have got leave that one very nice woman, with three little

children, shall be allowed to go south to her friends in the Colony.\*Many could be drafted off that way, and so relieve the pressure.

I just want to send a line to assure you that the clothing is excellent, and much appreciated. I want to send home all the blessing and thanks and hand-kisses I receive, feeling these rightly belong to those who stitch.

Long pinafores are much worn by girls and women of all ages up to about 40, and kappies, which I should describe as a kind of glorified sunbonnet. It makes the women look like magnified children, but is rather picturesque.

February 18.—We want a larger supply of tents, so that there may be less overcrowding. At present it averages six to a small bell-tent, which, of course, means nine and ten in many cases. The capacity is under 500 cubic feet ; so even for six persons, imagine the atmosphere at night !

It is such a curious position, hollow and rotten to the heart's core, to have made all over the State large, uncomfortable communities of people whom you call refugees, and say you are protecting, but who call themselves prisoners of war, compulsorily detained, and detesting your protection.

Those who are suffering most keenly, and who have lost most, either of their children by death or their possessions by fire and sword, such as these reconcentrated women in the camps, have the most conspicuous patience, and never express a wish that their men should be the ones to give way. It must be fought out now, they think, to the bitter end.

Feb. 22 .—In the morning word came that the four girls I selected had been let out of camp, and allowed to come to the Boarding School, and I had to go and see they were clothed and shod.\*Poor girls, they said it had been such a treat to sleep in a bed once more after seven months in the Camp on the ground. One of them,

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who had a slight tendency to deafness, has now become, I fear, permanently deaf in both ears ; she caught such chills from the draughts and damp coming under the tent. Consequences such as this, which don't appear in the death-rate or anywhere else, will be very common results of this whole camp system.

I do wish someone would come out and take up the question of the Native Camps. From odd bits I hear it would seem to be much needed.

An old man was arrested in the Camp yesterday. It appears that a gossiping woman refugee went to the Commandant and stated that she had heard the old man say : “ Perhaps the Boers will be in Bloemfontein again, some day.” So he was arrested and sent in to prison.

Feb. 27.—I am beginning to think a good deal about the future and my best plan of procedure. The demand for clothing is so huge that it is hopeless to think that the private charity of England and Colonial working parties combined can effectually cope with more than a very small portion of it. The Government recognise that they must provide necessary clothes, and I think we all agree that, having brought these people into this position, it is their duty to do so. It is, of course, a question for the English folk to decide how long they like to go on making and sending clothes. There is no doubt they are immensely appreciated, besides, they are mostly made up, which the Government clothing won't be.

So far five camps are, and have been, open to me ; but several more remain in this State, and very large and important ones in the Transvaal. I may, by luck, get to Kroonstadt, etc., but Lord Kitchener has twice distinctly refused me permission to go further north.

Any amount of money could, of course, be spent in making the people more comfortable, especially now that they are getting to the end of such small sums as they had with them, and much might be spent in getting girls and boys away to the good schools ; but the largest sums will be needed as and when they are allowed to leave and go back to begin life again.

If I knew how much money was likely to come altogether I should know how to lay it out to the best advantage.

The four girls selected for the Institute are aged 13-18 years. The day after her arrival one of them developed typhoid, and we must send her to the Volks Hospital, and select another girl in her place. Mrs. ———, mother of two of the above girls, is my great help and stand-by in the Camp. She belongs to an old Cape family ; her husband was a landdrost, and she, of course, lost everything. But she has set a splendid example in the Camp of what you may call common-sense, and, besides, allows us to make her tent a regular depot for bundles of clothing, comforts, etceteras of all kinds, and does hours of untiring interpreting for me personally. I have failed to get as matron the woman I wanted, and so I have definitely asked Mrs. ——— to go round the tents and look after the sick and emaciated babies and the women who are ill, but unable to go to hospital, either because that is full or because of so many small children they cannot leave. So many of the more ignorant prisoners are puzzled by the doctor and superintendents, and all need a link through a kind, sensible woman like Mrs. ———. She is also doing a great deal of voluntary work, such as undertaking 200 families for the Clothing Committee (no sinecure), and cooking for and tending a dear old prisoner, who is in consumption, and

came up from Greenpoint because the sea-air was killing him.

You know we have three tin hospitals, each containing 16 beds, always full—for men, women, and children—also two or three marquees for other cases.

The Sister has done splendid work in her domain, battling against incessant difficulties. She has worked in this Camp since its formation. When I tell you we have already had some 70 cases of typhoid, besides an epidemic of measles, pneumonia, tonsillitis, and other cases, you will realise what the strain on her has been. In addition, she has had the worry of nothing ready to her hand, and the very hospital only building by degrees through it all ; and, to crown the work, she has had the task of training Boer girls to nurse under her.

They have put up five rows of corrugated iron rooms (I can't call them houses), two rows of single rooms back to back—ten in a row, twenty in a building—and each of these rooms contains one family or more. About a hundred families are thus accommodated. The iron partitions don't run to the roof, so noise, draught, and infection can play through the entire structure. Some prefer them, because they have floors. £2,500 has been expended on the erection of these bare miserable rooms, apart from all the other expenses of the Camp. So you see it is a very costly business upon which England has embarked, and even at such a cost hardly the barest necessities can be provided, and no comforts. It is so strange to think that every tent contains a family, and every family is in trouble—loss behind, poverty in front, sickness, privation, and death in the present. But they are very good, and say they have agreed to be cheerful and make the best of it all.

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A disappointment was in store about this. When the written application was sent in six weeks passed, and then the request was refused by the military. Her husband was never on commando, but went with the Red Cross. For 14 months she has neither seen nor heard of him, and does not know if he alive or dead. Her old father in Cape Colony is 80 and she wants so much to see him once more. Besides this, her health is gradually breaking down in the Camp, and one of her children has died.

\*

Have rigged them out with those nice dark blue skirts and the print blouses.

#### SPRINGFONTEIN.

March 4.

I am in this queer little spot, the highest place, they say, in the Free State ; and I am being lodged by a most hospitable German Lutheran missionary. They give me a room and the best of everything that they have, and I enjoy seeing how they live, and they are charming in their simple way, and truly generous. I brought them down a big box of groceries from B———. Everything is so scarce, many necessities unobtainable. I was very sorry to leave Mrs. F———'s house. She has been so very kind and good to me, but I have left a small Committee to work in the

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stand the death-rate in the one at Bloemfontein to be very high, and so also in other places, but I cannot possibly pay any attention to them myself. Why shouldn't the Society of Friends send someone if the war goes on, or the Aborigines Protection Society ?

Though the camps are called refugee, there are in reality a very few of these—perhaps only half-a-dozen in some camps. It is easy to tell them, because they are put in the best marquees, and have had time given them to bring furniture and clothes, and are mostly self-satisfied and vastly superior people. Very few, if any of them, are in want.

#### RAILWAY STAFF OFFICE, NORVALS PONT.

March 10.

I have already sat here seven hours waiting for the train, and it appears likely I may spend the night in this office. I had no difficulty in getting my ticket for Kimberley, but was expressly told it must be at my own risk.

I wish you could impress on the English public that one can't speak generally about these Camps, or the conditions of the women therein. One is very different from another. I mention this because there is likely to be any amount of assertion and contradiction on this subject. All are different, and the amount of discomfort depends upon various matters. (First) The Commandant. (Secondly) Natural conditions, proximity of wood and water. (Thirdly) Distance from a base and stores. (Fourthly) Presense of public opinion. (Fifthly) Date of commencement.

The earlier camps, of course, had opportunities of getting many necessaries, which are no longer attainable.

#### KIMBERLEY.

March 12.

It was a melancholy journey to Kimberley. Our line took us through the battlefields, the now historic scenes of the disasters. Belmont, Modder River, Magersfontein, came in succession, and we could see the ridge towards which the Highlanders advanced, and the long, long trench where the Boers lay and shot down the Blaak Watch. It's all quiet now—the plain and the hills—nothing to mark the spot but the trenches and the groups of graves.

March 13.

All to-day I have been in the camp—fortunately only 20 minutes' walk from my hotel. It is the smallest in area that I have seen. The tents, too close together, and the whole enclosed in an 8-foot high barbed wire fencing, which is supposed to be impregnable, and cost £500. Sentries at the gate and walking inside. No nurse ; an empty, unfurnished marquee, which might be a hospital ; overcrowded tents ; measles and whooping-cough rife ; camp dirty and smelling ; an army doctor, who naturally knows little of children's ailments ; fuel, almost none.

A Commandant's wife is here, with six children. It is so sad about her baby. A general came to her home with his column to sweep her away. She is a delicate-looking, gentle woman, with a white skin and beautiful scarlet lips, so seldom seen out of books. Her baby was only 17 days old when the troops came, and she was very weak. She could not nurse the child, and, like all her children, it was being brought up on donkey's milk. This she explained to the general, who gave special commands that wherever she went that donkey was to go, even to Vryburg and Kimberley. Well, by degrees, she arrived in Kimberley, and the donkey came also to the town. But once she was in the camp that donkey disappeared. They either couldn't or wouldn't produce it. The baby failed and pined. Friends from Kimberley tried everything—cow's milk, condensed milk—all no good. It was a splendid child, and it dwindled to skin and bone. At last the new superintendent arrived; they appealed to him, and showed him the dying baby. At once he produced that donkey; but it was too late. The baby had got so weak it was past recovery. We tried what we could, but to-day it died. It was only 3 months, but such a sweet little thing. The mother is much respected, and there is great sympathy felt for her. It was still alive this morning; when I called in the afternoon they beckoned me in to see the tiny thing laid out, with a white flower in its wee hand. To me it seemed a "murdered innocent." And an hour or two after another child died.

A terrible evil just now is the dew. It is so heavy, and comes right through the single canvas of the tents, wetting everything. The night I slept at Norval's Pont I found this out for myself. Though in a marquee, with double canvas, all my clothes were damp through, and these people have to put their things on saturated day after day. All the morning the gangways are filled with the blankets and odds and ends, regularly turned out to dry in the sun. The doctor told me to-day he highly disapproved of tents for young children, and expected a high mortality before June.

I am going to buy some mourning for this bereaved mother—don't think that foolish or extravagant. You would not if you knew how much these people think of a bit of black, and it seemed to me the best way of showing some sympathy. She is in need of clothes of some sort, and her present from England will be black instead of coloured.

March 15.

To-day I got the mother's black clothes (all hers are burnt), and took them up. Another child had died in the night, and I found all three little corpses being photographed for the absent fathers to see some day. Two little wee white coffins at the gate waiting, and a third wanted. I was glad to see them, for, at Springfontein, a young woman had to be buried in a sack, and it hurt their feelings woefully.

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March 16.

To-day I bought and presented some clothes, and combs, and soap, and towels to the women who tried to run away. They are, of course, in disgrace, and I felt so sorry for them that we had long talks, and I was sure the best thing was to make them a little happier in camp.

In each case they are mothers, separated from, and desperately anxious about, their children. I told them, in their place, I should also have tried to escape, though I am quite sure I should have failed, and I don't think it would be at all wise, and I counselled them not to try again. I fancy they were a bit softened, and soothed, and won't try to escape any more, but wait and try to get news of their children. It struck me the children may be in ——'s last sweepings, now at Warrenton, and I shall have to go up there.

To-day I have met in committee the plucky little body of women who have tried to meet and succour the distress in the camp and out of it ; they work on the same lines as we do, non-sectarian and non-political. Of course they are mainly people of quite small means, for all the wealthy people here are De Beers, in some shape or form. It is wonderful what they have done with their very limited means.

MAFEKING,

April 9.

I arrived here this afternoon, after a long and singularly tedious journey. I felt obliged to come, having learnt there were about 890 women in this camp, besides those at Warrenton, en route. I felt uneasy, for I could learn no details at all about the people here, except that the camp was four miles out of town. At Warrenton there were only about 370 pushed into the church and school, as tents are well high unobtainable, but now, only yesterday, many hundreds more have been brought in there—in fact, the town of Hcopstadt. I mean to visit Warrenton on my way back from if all is well. I do grudge the time spent on the mere journeying—it makes a large hole in my few remaining weeks.

April 10.

To-day I have been out in the camp all day. I had to take a Cape cart and drive out, for it is full six miles—a lonely, lonely spot. Mafeking itself feels like the very end of the world, and the camp seems like driving six miles into space. There are 800 or 900 people, and it is the oldest of all the camps I have visited. In fact, nearly a year old. They were very glad to see me. The hospital nurse said it had put new life and courage into her. She was feeling so downhearted about it all. I found some very nice people whose relations I had made friends with in Bloemfontein camp and also in Kimberley. It is quite interesting sorting out the people and telling them where their relations are. I am at present hunting for the mother of two little boys, aged about six and seven, who were swept away by a different convoy. The Mafeking camp folk were very surprised to hear that English women cared a rap about them or their suffering. It has done them a lot of good to hear that real sympathy is felt for them at home, and so I am glad I fought my way here, if it is only for that reason. The camp was

specially interesting to me as being the first I have seen under Transvaal rule. For rations of food and fuel it is far the best I have seen, but, as usual, no soap. The superintendent is a Scotchman, thoroughly capable and suitable, but, alas ! likely to be removed ere long. The rations are better than in any other camp accidentally, too long a story to dilate upon in this short letter. They are badly off in blankets (many have none), also soap and candles and clothes, and in having no one to visit or care for them from the outside. For miles round no habitation can be seen, and Mafeking folk are too bitter to do anything to help them.

April 11.

To-day I took out large bundles of stuff as suitable as Mafeking could supply—the choice is not large. I formed a clothing committee of seven women, and in the afternoon we met, and I showed them how to organize their work for the camp. They were very pleased, and are going to meet every Thursday, besides dividing the camp into sections, and making a tent to tent visitation. All the seven women are themselves in need of clothes—they have all had their houses burnt, one by Kaffirs, and the rest by English troops.

One old lady I saw was very interesting, a real character. She was very broken-hearted, more so than any I have met. She harangued me on the subject of her feelings and experiences the best part of an hour in really eloquent Dutch and much solemnity. She described with the extraordinary unselfconsciousness which characterises them all the whole history of the General's visit and actions, and how she had thrown herself flat on the stoep and implored him to trample on her and kill her. And she showed me the clothes she had brought, and there was nothing for herself but a white bundle containing her “ dood kleere ”—viz., her dead clothes. I fancy she thought that would be all she would need in camp. It was rather a Job-like scene. She sat in her bare, baking tent, a circle of friends round her, an intensely religious woman, trying to understand God's dealings with her and her people in letting everything be taken, and she ended at last with a solemn thanksgiving to “ onse Heer ” that the English people cared enough even to send someone just to look upon their misery. Altogether the old woman was a striking figure, and very pathetic.

**KIMBERLEY,**

April 13.

I have just returned. At Warrenton I found only about 150 people left, the rest were being sent on. At the station were two trainloads full of them, quite half in open coal-trucks, all

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piled up and wedged in with such goods as they had been able to bring. They were tired and hot. I went and spoke to several of them, and found in a truck the parents of the little boys I mentioned earlier.

There were 240 packed in, and they followed us and our armoured train. On arriving here I saw the Superintendent, who was at hand to meet the arrivals. He told me that after begging, borrowing, and buying he had scraped together 25 tents for the 240 persons. So there will be more overcrowding. I ran up to one of the Committee women to see if anything could be done in the way of getting them a meal after their journey, but nothing had been known of their coming, and late Saturday night we could not tell where to turn to procure either fuel or kettles, etc., to supply such an inrush of people.

April 15.

I am writing just these few lines before leaving this on Friday. I was much distressed to-day in the tent of two women—sisters—whose children are wasting away. We have at last got a new civilian doctor, who speaks Dutch, so I hope we shall move on a bit. Seven children died here the few days I was at Capetown, and two since my return besides.

Mrs. —— has been taken to the hospital in town. She is very ill from a kick in the stomach by a drunken soldier. Something internal. He was punished, I believe, but that does not cure her.

April 15.

All the afternoon I was kept in Mrs. L.'s tent by a downpour of rain. Half the tent floor was a pool of water, which the Kaffir boy was vainly trying to bale out. Two pails caught the pourings from the tent door. All around and above it dripped, making pools on the bedding and on the mats as we sat huddled up—two Kaffirs, five children, Mrs. L., and myself—in the steamy atmosphere, till I began to turn sick, as I generally do in the tents. When it rains at night as often it drips on them all night, and makes little pools on the beds. No wonder children sicken and die. The cloth of the tents seems so very thin and poor.

**BLOEMFONTEIN,**

April 22.

Here I am again in Bloemfontein. I arrived yesterday, taking 2 ½ days from Kimberley. The camp work grows so vast and so rapidly that I feel it is almost impossible to cope with it. Here there are now about 4,000, or double the number I left six weeks ago. At Springfontein I left a manageable little camp of 500 ; now it has swelled to 3,000, and as we passed along yesterday morning there was a trainload in the station of 600 more. It was pitiable to see them—massed in the train, many of them in open trucks. It was bitterly cold, and I was wrapped in a thick grey Welsh shawl. All night there had been a truly torrential downpour of rain, and water stood everywhere in pools. On the saturated ground they were trying to dry themselves and their goods.

Some women were pushing their way to the platform to try and buy food for their children. The soldiers would not permit this. I expostulated. The men said they were sorry for them, but they had to

obey orders. It was Sunday morning, and Springfontein's one small shop closed, and I knew the refreshment-room was the only place where food was available. Just then a little friend of mine ran up from the Mission Station with a can of hot coffee for me. I had waved to them from the train as it passed the house. So she and I went down the platform to the cluster of women and gave them the coffee, and I took them all the food I had in the train with me. Fortunately I had just bought a twopenny loaf (for 1s.), and I had some tinned meat.

A nice-looking woman with a very white face spoke to us. They had been travelling two days, and no food given, and the children were crying with hunger. I gave my friend some money and told her to buy all the food she could in the station and take it down to them, and devote the day to it, leaving alone church. The girl promised, and I had just time to jump into my train. I would have stayed myself and seen to it, but my permit was not stamped to break journey, so I could not do so. I know she will do her best. She is only 15, but very womanly. As there was not additional shelter of any kind at Springfontein, I heard the whole lot were to be sent on to Bethulie, for now a Camp is forming there. It is endless and hopeless. I have just heard from a man who met the same trainload at Edenburg that four children died on the journey.

If only the camps had remained the size they were even six weeks ago, I saw some chance of getting them well in hand, organizing and dealing with the distress. But this sudden influx of hundreds and thousands has upset everything, and reduced us all to a state bordering on despair.

More and more are coming in. A new sweeping movement has begun, resulting in hundreds and thousands of these unfortunate people either crowding into already crowded camps or else being dumped down to form a new one where nothing is at hand to shelter them.

About food, too. The superintendent of a camp is getting in rations for such a number, and suddenly 200 more mouths are thrust in upon him, and things won't go round. Last Saturday 200 or 300 families were without meat in Bloemfontein Camp for that day and Sunday. This would not matter if there were an alternative food, but there is only the ordinary supply of coarse bread to fall back upon, with black coffee and sugar.

No wonder sickness abounds. Since I left here six weeks ago there have been 62 deaths in camp, and the doctor himself is down with enteric. Two of the Boer girls who had been trained as nurses, and who were doing good

work, are dead, too. One of them, Poppy Naude, was a universal favourite. She did not know where her mother was. Her father was in Norvals Pont, and there had been some talk of my taking her to join him ; but in the end she thought she was doing useful work where she was, earning 2s. a day, and she had better stay and nurse the people in Bloemfontein. I come back to find her dead. The doctor, the nurse, and all had said, “ We can’t spare Poppy.”

But, in spite of the death-roll, I think your fund has saved and strengthened many children. It has provided brandy, maizena, Mellin’s, and, where possible, fresh milk. The Government clothing has hitherto come to almost nothing. I formed, as agreed, the committees. The camps were divided into sections, the minimum required was noted down, and the total requisitioned for. Now it has come to a full stop. The superintendent must certify that not one of the applicants has anybody in the camp who could rightly maintain her. Amongst so many, to find that out is well-nigh impossible. The superintendent hesitates, and the whole thing hangs fire.

Thus, had it not been for our clothing, things would have been bad indeed. I hope to get up to Kroonstadt, where no help has been given.”

June 1.

These letters end with an expressed hope of going on to Kronstadt, where I had been earnestly invited by the Superintendent, owing to the need of clothes in Camp and amongst the Boer nurses. But permission to do this or to go further north at all was refused. This fact, combined with other reasons, and the belief that a more detailed knowledge of the circumstances was evidently needed in England to facilitate the collection of funds, etc., determined me to return home at once, a few weeks earlier than I should otherwise have done.

Moreover, it became clear that one person is unable to cope with the work owing to the fresh influx of people.

The months when the foregoing extracts from my letters were written are past and gone, but still the Camps continue and increase. Below are the returns up to the end of April for those under O.R.C. control. By this time those numbers are already left behind. More and more families are to be brought in.

#### REFUGEE CAMPS. O.R.C.

**(Return for week ending April 27, 1901.)**

	<b>Whites.</b>	<b>Natives.</b>	<b>Total.</b>
Brandfort .....	1022	..... 2147	..... 3169
Vredefort Road...	1373	..... 1859	..... 3232
Norval’s Pont .....	1596	.....—	.....1596
Bloemfontein ...	3689	.....1459	.....5148
Winburg .....	1145	..... —	.....1145

Springfontein ...	3011	.....	1219	.....	3011
Heilbron .....	1304	.....	1219	.....	2523
Aliwal North .....	1786	.....	1859	.....	3645
Kroonstadt .....	2502	.....	—	.....	2502
Edenburg .....	—	.....	3048	.....	3048
Harrismith .....	275	.....	252	.....	527
Kimberley.....	1200	.....	200	.....	1400
Bethulie .....	1125	.....	—	.....	1125
Ladybrand .....	361	.....	—	.....	361
Krommelleboog ..	23	.....	—	.....	23
	20412		12043		32455

Increase for week : 2897.

A letter from the Governor of Pretoria tells me of 25,000 in Transvaal Camps.

The Committee should notice the existence also of large Camps of natives, and in some at least of these sickness and death abound.

During the past three months effort has undoubtedly been made to improve the Camps, but difficulties of transport, scarcity of supplies and tents, limited means for outlay, tie the hands of those in authority. Added to this the incompetence of some Superintendents, and an over-centralised system which impedes good work that could and would be done by capable and resourceful local heads of camps. Another bar to advance is the interlacing of civil and military authority, and the unfitness of most military men (however good their intentions) for positions which involve the ordering of the lives of women and children.

Thus the improvements have in many cases been swamped, partly by these things, and partly by the rapid influx of people. For instance, a great blunder was made by bringing an extra 2,000 people into Bloemfontein Camp, already known to be unhealthy and full of fever.

Among the things pressing hardest, and which tend to undermine the health and constitutions of the women, are the following :—

**Lack of Fuel.**—Imagine three small sticks of wood 18 inches long, or small stony coal enough to fill the well of a soup-plate, for daily cooking. The weekly baking becomes almost impossible, and often the meat cannot be cooked, and the bread is sodden because underbaked.

In Kimberley charity has supplied the bulk of the fuel. In Springfontein mist (dried manure) ekes out the scanty ration, and the women root up a small weed to try and heat their clay-built ovens. Oil stoves would help if oil in any quantity could be procured.

**Lack of Beds and Mattresses.**—Only a few have beds or mattresses—the great majority lie on the ground. Even if each tent had a bed, it would not accommodate more than one or two inhabitants of the tent. Meanwhile the damp of the ground, the occasional streams of rain that run through, the draughty night air coming beneath the flap of the tent, combine to lower the health of the children and to kill them off in convalescent and delicate stages.

**Lack of Soap.**—This necessary was not given in any Camp. After much urging and requisitioning, a very occasional and quite insufficient quantity is now doled out.

**Diet.**—The food is monotonous, and does not suit children. Some vegetable diet is greatly

needed. It presses hard when the meat (as often) is maggotty and the coffee coppery and undrinkable.

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Water.—In Bloemfontein the supply is insufficient, and it is also bad. The clothes of thousands have for months been washed in a small dam of stagnant water only occasionally freshened by rain. It is foul. Many other Camps need washhouses.

Overcrowding.—This is very great. Privacy is impossible. In some camps two, and even three, sets of people occupy one tent, and 10, and even 12, persons are frequently herded together in tents of which the cubic capacity is about 500 c.f. In Mafeking and Norvals Pont this trouble is not nearly so bad.

Shoes, Clothes, and Blankets.—At first khaki blankets were plentiful. Now they are getting scarce, and there is much need in various places. The nights are very cold.

Warm clothes are universally wanted. Those people burnt out are, of course, very bare, and have only been relieved by English, Colonial, and Dutch help. Recent importations have been allowed to bring more with them of both bedding and clothes. Quite recently the Government has provided a little flannelette and dress stuff. Shoes are needed everywhere.

Sanitary Accommodations.—This is very inadequate to the number of people. They are separate for men and women, but otherwise wholly without privacy, open to the sun and the rain. Where properly looked after by the authorities all is sweet and clean, but elsewhere, notably Bloemfontein, the effluvia is terrible, making it impossible to approach within fifty yards, unless with nose and mouth tied up. The effluvia reaching one side of the camp makes those tents at times unbearable, and has resulted in tonsillitis and various throat troubles. The people feel these places a terrible degradation.

Each camp has now rough, but useful little hospitals. Many necessaries were lacking in these, which I have supplied. The death rate in most of the camps is high. In Bloemfontein it is terrible ; 172 deaths had occurred up to the date of my leaving. On Sunday, April 28, fifteen persons died in that camp. It figures out to about 25 per cent.

The camp life is felt to be purposeless and demoralising. Mothers are anxious to get young girls out of such an atmosphere if the means were forthcoming to place them in boarding schools.

Education is now provided in a partial way for some of the children in some of the camps. Accommodation cannot be got for all. This is due to the energy of Mr. Sargant, Education Commissioner. There have been a few abortive attempts at recreation here and there, but most lack heart to enter into them. Something should be done in this direction.

To sum up. There is no doubt that the general discomfort could be vastly alleviated by attention to the points mentioned, but it should be clearly understood that they are suggested only by way of amelioration. The main thing is to let them go. The ruin of most is now complete, but let all who have friends or means left go. Above all one would hope that the good sense, if not the mercy, of the English people will cry out against the further development of this cruel system which falls with such crushing effect upon the old, the weak, and the children. May they stay the order to bring in more and yet more. Since Old Testament days was over a whole nation carried captive?

The following recommendations are those which were forwarded by me to the War Office by request of the Rt. Hon. St. John Brodrick.—I have, etc.,

# EMILY HOBHOUSE.

June, 1901.

## RECOMMENDATIONS.

Having, by the kindness of Lord Milner, been enabled to visit various women's camps, and bring succour to the people therein detained, I venture to urge the following improvements :

1. In view of the hardening effect of imprisonment upon the hearts and resolution of the women—of the imperfect supply of tents or other shelter—of the scarcity of food—the difficulty of transport—and the appalling effect of camp life upon the life and health of the people, and in support also of recent statements made in the House of Commons, I urge :  
**That all who still can, should be at once allowed to go :**
    - b. viz., those who, themselves penniless, yet have friends and relatives in Cape Colony ;
    - c. Those who have means and could support themselves in the Cape Colony, or in towns on the line ;
    - d. Those who have houses in towns to which they could go ;
    - e. Those divided from their children who wish to find and rejoin them.
  2. Free passes into towns for all equally wishing to find work there.
  3. Equality of treatment, whether the men of the family are fighting, imprisoned, dead, or surrendered.
  4. In view of the size of the camps, the sickness and mortality, a resident minister in every camp, or free access to anyone living close by.
  5. That, considering the countless difficulties ahead, and the already overcrowded state of the camps, no further women or children be brought in.
  6. That, considering the mass of the people are women, and seeing the success in organization of the Matron at Port Elizabeth, a matron, conversant with both languages, be appointed in every camp. Many would undertake this voluntarily. I do not consider this so necessary in the case of Norval's Pont.
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## APPENDICES.

PERSONAL RECORDS,  
APPLICATIONS FOR RELEASE,  
AND  
NARRATIVES.

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## *APPENDIX A.*

### **PERSONAL RECORDS.**

In the course of her visits to the camps, Miss Emily Hobhouse found herself surrounded with thousands of strange persons, knowing nothing of them, and but little of their language. It was evident that she would be obliged to obtain a clear record, not only of their names, but of their family history, and especially of the circumstances under which they had arrived in the camps. The necessity for such inquiries will be obvious to anyone who has had the smallest experience of administering relief, whether in London or elsewhere. Miss Hobhouse had fortunately enjoyed a good deal of such experience. This was useful to her in drawing up a set of questions in order to establish a basis of knowledge.

But it must be remembered that Miss Hobhouse was dealing with a very novel and extraordinary set of circumstances. These people were not paupers, except by accident and outward compulsion. Many of them were ladies of refinement and wealth, and others were the wives of poor men. But the community of circumstance in one sense simplified Miss Hobhouse's work. She could put to them all one common set of questions, confined to the present crisis of their lives. There was no need to go beyond the present emergency. The following questions, therefore, were drawn up with a strict view to present and future relief :

1. Name of person ?
2. Name of farm and district ?
3. How many children ?
4. Where is husband ?
5. How long in camp ?
6. Why brought here (voluntary or otherwise) ?
7. If any means ?
8. Was farm burnt ?
9. If not, was furniture destroyed ?
10. If allowed to leave camp, have you any friends in the Colony to go to, or means of support elsewhere ?

### **GENERAL REMARKS.**

- a. What illnesses ?
- b. Clothing, etc.

To these questions she obtained an immense number of replies, which were carefully put in writing on the spot. In most cases, the replies were taken down by herself or a close friend, on whose judgment and care she could absolutely rely.

These replies are now in Miss Hobhouse's possession, and after due consideration it has been thought best to make a selection for publication. The Committee has sufficient confidence in the purity and justice of British administration to put aside the fear that by any possibility the publication of these facts could injure anyone in the camps ; and they are quite convinced that in any case complete publicity is desirable. Even if the present circumstances of these women should be rendered necessary by higher considerations of policy, there still remains the possibility, and indeed the duty, of tempering the harshness of fate by the quality of mercy. But mercy cannot act blindfold.

It seems best to publish the statements without comment. They are the stories as told in the camps by the women themselves, and must be judged by every reader according to the face value of evidence.

The numbers of the replies must be compared with the questions given above, to which they form the answers.

1. — Mrs. C. A.
2. —Modderfontein, Bloemfontein.
3. —Four children.
4. —Husband Greenpoint.
5. —Brought in Nov. 6.
6. —Railway was blown up near the farm, and, not having known the Boers were about, the A's had not reported their whereabouts.
7. —Has very little money.
8. —Not burnt when left.
9. —Furniture destroyed. One girl had measles and one low fever. Only the clothes on their bodies.

1. — MRS. DE B.
2. —Middelrand. Vryburg.
3. —One baby.
4. —Husband on commando.
5. —Arrested March 3. Arrived March 9. Brought in open waggons, and it rained hard. Lord Methuen swept her up. House windows and doors and floors torn up and smashed, not burnt. Stock taken. Clothes all burnt. Money stolen. Soldiers gave Kaffirs her sewing machine.

Possesses one ticky (viz., threepenny bit).

Three families are in Mrs. de B's tent, in all 12 persons Heat insufferable. I nearly fainted.

1. — MRS. VAN DEN B.

2. —Klipfontein. Jacobsdal.

Father lived on farm. She lived in town of Jacobsdal. Old father been sick 15 years, and never commandeered or fought. English

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PREV

NEXT

the soldiers talking. Commandant F. was killed, Miss F. shot through the arm, and sister of four years through the shoulder. She was about 10 months in hospital, but her arm is very useless and first finger gone. Bears no ill-will. Does not know where her mother is, but I hope I shall find her in Bloemfontein Camp. The girl would like to support herself if she could find any way to do so, but cannot sew, arm stiff and painful and scarred, inflammation still troubles. Is a prisoner of war, but supported by a friend in the town.

1. — MR. AND MRS. G.
2. —Pondamsfontein.—Boshoff.
3. —No children. A sister.
4. —Husband in camp. Never fought or was on commando. When war broke out he was in Cape Colony (both he and wife British subjects born), and though a Free State burgher, was not allowed to return, but kept nine months in Colony. At 1st Proclamation he got leave to return to his wife and farm, and there lived quietly from June 5 to February 3, 1901. When he had got back to his farm found British troops had destroyed everything in the house except one chest of drawers. Lived on with no goods in the house till a column came along and gave them four hours to turn out. Stock was taken. No receipts. Came away with what they had left, sewing machine, small table, and chest of drawers. Woman delicate, and unable to keep anything down.

Rations.— $\frac{3}{4}$ lb. meat ; 1lb. meal ; 1 cz. coffee ; 2 oz. sugar ;  $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. salt, every other day ; 1 potato or 3 to tent, according to size ; alternate day, onion instead.

Fuel.—Two small thin pieces of wood, one 14 the other 18 inches long ; barely enough to boil one kettle, leave alone bake, etc.

1. — MRS. G.
2. —Hoenderkop.—Dist : Winburg.
3. —Eight children. From 14 to 2 years.
4. —Husband taken prisoner at Paardeburg. St. Helena.
5. —Since November 9 in camp.
6. —Compelled to come. She states that for five months she saw no armed Boers. On August 27 a commando passed through her farm. She gave them food and took the wounded into her horse to nurse. A month after, October 1, she went into Winburg to buy supplies, and was there taken prisoner. Only her eldest girl (14) was with her. Lieut. D. sent this child back to the farm in care of two armed natives, with orders to bring the rest of the family and nothing else in the cart.

No. 4,276. Winburg, Oct. 1, 1900.

Pass Miss G. (little girl) with two Cape carts and drivers (two natives) from Winburg to Hoenderkop to-day, and back to-morrow.—By order, F. P. D., 2nd Lieut.,  
Asst. Provost-Marshal.

Lieut. L. took her cart and horses. Gave no receipt for cart. Horses were worth £40, and he gave a receipt for £14 only. She was kept a month in Winburg (not in her own house there, but her brother's). The children came ; but all that time neither Lieut. L. nor Major O'L. (whom she, like Miss E. C., describes as a brute) would allow her to fetch clothes from home. She had only a little money with her, and with this obliged to buy fresh clothes at Winburg. At home she had plenty of money, but no way of sending for it. After a month at Winburg made to leave suddenly without notice. No time allowed to bring clothes, so a second time lost all. Yet they were kept waiting three hours at the station in boiling sun, and not allowed to go under shelter. Party of 22 was put. in a cattle truck, which had not been cleaned and was filthy. Reached Smaldeel at 4 p.m., and were changed into a meat truck, and 22 persons had to sleep in that. At 5 a.m. reached Bloemfontein, and, at 11 a.m., the camp. Over 24 hours en route, and neither food nor water given to them. They had caught up a little bread at Winburg. Other prisoners got them some drink when they came at last.

1. and 9.—Knows nothing of farm.
2. —Plenty of money at home. None left with her.

Mrs. G. spoke most highly of Captain M., of Imperial Yeomanry, who stayed some time in her house and was very kind. Also, W., F., S., and C. of that Regiment very nice and kind. 16 months since she has seen her husband.

Her girl in hospital for third time with typhoid. Children's stomachs all bad.  
Clothes needed badly.

1. — MRS. G.
2. —Village of Potchefstroom.
3. —Three in Kimberley with her. One, a girl of 20, was ill of inflammation in Potchefstroom, and she was taken from her, the girl left alone ill in the house, no one at all with her. Never heard since of her, and that was 23rd September.
4. —Husband on commando.
5. —Driven from the house by armed Kaffirs, taken to Johannesburg, then by ox waggons, eight days' journey, to Kimberley. Arrived in rags and destitute.

No camp here then, so placed in town, where, by kind friends, enabled to stay. Sister-in-law, Mrs. B., came, too, with six small children, and a seventh born since, to be named, " Smartrijk "—bitterness. Civil-Commissioners give them 30s. weekly, each family—a bare living in Kimberley.

1. — MRS. W. G.
  2. —Bella Vista, Ficksburg.
- 

PREV

NEXT

1. — MR. AND MRS. H. J.
2. —District, Heilbron. Bywoners.
3. —Four children in camp.
4. —Man in camp. 76 years. Surrendered under First Proclamation.
5. —Came February 8.
6. —Compelled. Things left in their house, know nothing of their fate. Stock taken. Three days in coal trucks. Nothing with them. Eight days in waggon. Son of 19 had been on commando. Surrendered July 1.

**COPY.**

No. 153. Treinfontein. 1-7-1900.

Pass.—C. J., of the farm Treinfontein (District Heilbron). He has given up the M.H. Carbine, and has taken the oath of neutrality,

D. B. F.,

Assistant Provost-Marshal.

Heilbron, 3-10-1900.—Renewed till 15th Oct.

B.O. J. A. L., Cap.

Pass.—Mr. C. J., with horse, may go unhindered to his house at Treinfontein, where he is to remain, not returning to town.

H. H. C. B. (?), Lt.,

Provost-Marshal.

In spite of all these, they were brought away. Promised should go only to station with cattle, and be there protected. All a lie. Cattle seen no more. Brought to Springfontein.

1. — MRS. H. M. K.
2. —Nooitgedacht, near Kroonstadt.
3. —No children.
4. —Husband in camp.
5. —Arrived Nov. 11.
6. —Compelled to come. No reason given.
7. —No means.
8. —House, etc., safe when they left.
9. —Nowhere else to go.

No illness.

Clothing needed.

1. — MRS. K.
2. —Town of Boshoff.
3. —Eight children. Ten persons in tent.
4. —Husband on commando.
5. —Brought Jan. 21st.
6. —Was living in the house of a Widow S., who had two sons on commando. English inspected either her or the house. For five months before her arrest, English kept taking away her food to force her to make her husband surrender. During this time she had a baby. Three times they came and searched the house, and the fourth time came when baby was only two days old, on which occasion tore up the floors, broke doors, windows, ceilings, etc. At last broke all the furniture, and when baby was two months old she was brought to camp. Would not ask her husband to surrender.

1. — MR. H. K. AND WIFE.
2. —Moordenaarspoort. . . Bethulie.
3. —Two daughters, son, niece.
4. —Man in Camp. Never went on commando. Took oath of neutrality.
5. —Since early January 10th.
6. —Compelled. No reason given. Patrol of four men sent to farm about 5 p.m., with orders that by sunset they were to be in Bethulie. No time to collect things. Kept in Bethulie that night ; left next day in dirty cattle trucks. Allowed to go into a carriage for the night. Food given them at Springfontein. They are told their furniture is all taken and destroyed, but farm not burnt.

Miss K.'s grandfather is nephew of Oom Paul.

1. — MRS. L. AND MISS L.
2. —Rhenosterfontein. District, Winburg.
3. —All other children married and now in Brandford Camp.
4. —Husband a farmer. He and two sons on commando.
5. —Since December 17th.
6. —By force. Prisoners of war.
7. —Enough to pull through if sent home.
8. —No, but doors and windows all broken.
9. —Goods destroyed. Cattle, carts, etc., all taken.
10. —No.

Since arrival both suffered with violent stomachic pains and dysentery.

Never so at home.

Mrs. Leroux needs a dress complete, daughter a skirt.

Very respectable farmer's wife and daughter. Sleep on the ground ; not sat in a chair since arrival.

Hope the men will fight on now to the end. Nothing more to lose, and death welcome.

1. — MR. AND MRS. VAN L.
2. —Lived in village f Petrusville.
3. —Three children in Camp.
4. —Man in Camp. A blacksmith. Was on commando, but surrendered under Roberts' first proclamation, in which, like others, he had trusted. Lived quietly after that. February 1st he and wife and children taken and given two hours to prepare. Arrived in Camp February 4th. Had tried to get blacksmith work in town, but trade slack, because no iron can be got up to work. It was sad to see the food in Petrusville destroyed. Flour bags cut and the white flour strewn about the streets.

In the tent two families—in all nine persons. Three of the children with measles. No beds.

The dew falls thickly now, and every night beds and clothes are saturated. It takes all day spreading them in the sun to get them dry again. Wearing apparel must be put on damp.

1. — MRS. F. C. L.
2. —Farm, Springfontein, near Fauresmith ; but lived in town.
3. —One child.
4. —Husband prisoner, Greenpoint.
5. —Brought in November 20th.
6. —Compelled to come in. No reason given.
7. —A little money.

8. and 9.—Does not know.
9. —Friends at Tulbach, Cape Colony.

Since arrival has had dysentery. Has heart disease.  
Clothed for the present.

1. — MRS H. L.
2. —Hestersrust, Winburg.
3. —Seven children.
4. —Husband in camp.
5. —Brought in November 27.
6. —Were told to go to Virginia Siding with cattle for protection from troops. Thence the family was sent here ; don't know what has become of the cattle.
7. —No means.
8. —Don't know.
9. —Don't know.
10. —Nowhere to go except home. Children had dysentery. Very little clothing.

1. — MRS. M.
2. —Lived in town of Brandford.
3. —Eight children, youngest four ; all left, she taken.
4. —Left also at home. Husband not ever on commando, because bad eyes. Overseer of waggons.
5. —Since November 28.
6. —Taken prisoner under martial law, no reason assigned. Brought in truck to Bloemfontein. Had to hire for herself trap to the camp, and to pay for bringing her bit of luggage.
7. —Yes ; husband could support her.
8. —Her own house broken up, things partly saved. Children left in a brother's house.

Health has been so far good. Wants a dress. Mrs. M. now lives in the section of a marquee with five other women. All six sleep on the ground.

1. — MRS. J. C. M.

2. —Farm Leeuwvlei, district Bloemfontein.
3. —Six children.
4. —Husband Ceylon.
5. —Brought in November 23.
6. —Compelled to come, no reason given.
7. —Has means.
8. —House not burnt when left.
9. —Furniture destroyed.
10. —Has means to get home or to friends in Colony.

Three children in hospital with typhoid, two sick in tent just starting it. Confinement coming in April.

1. — MRS. J. N.
2. —Vlakkuil, Heilbron.
3. —Six in camp.
4. —In camp. Old man, never fought or on commando. Bad hand.
5. —Three weeks, since Feb. 15.
6. —Compelled, doesn't know why. Believes there was suspicion had fed Boers. It was untrue ; they had barely enough for own use. Everything in the house pulled out and burnt before them. Heard afterwards house also burnt, but did not see it. Brought in ox-waggon to station siding, thence in open trucks. Four nights were spent in these open trucks.

The N.'s were badly for clothes. Very respectable people. The girls borrowed kappies and blouses to come across to the farm where I was dispensing clothes.

#### **OLD MR. N.**

Rabenthal, Boshoff.

Never fought. Paid substitute.

After English entered Boshoff was under their protection. Commandant very friendly, and used to come shooting on his farm.

Old wife left on farm, a large one, ten rooms, £2,000 to build. Since he arrived here in Kimberley word brought that farm was burnt, but Commandant sent to say it was done by mistake !

Armed native scouts frequently about, and very cheeky.

Military have taken his house in Boshoff too. Not even a cushion or blanket he asked for could he have.

#### **MRS. N.**

Mrs. N.'s farm is in Cape Colony.

Zoutpansfontein, near Riverton Station.

She takes snuff. She has been long a widow, and has no sons fighting. She speaks only Dutch, but has been always a loyal British subject. She cannot believe the Queen knew what had been done to her. Her farm is 15 minutes' ride from the station. Feb. 16, 1900, she saw a Boer commando pass in the distance ; after that she never saw a Boer. Dec. 10, in the night, Riverton Station was burnt by Boers. In the morning from the farm smoke could still be seen, and she thought boys had been smoking, perhaps, and set fire to it. That morning the English troops under Captain D. came and said she must go. How could they hold her, a fat old woman, responsible for the station. She did not know of it till all was over. They took her to Kimberley, and put her in the prison. The disgrace she will never forget. She is rich. To have lived to be 57, and then to be put in prison ! The Queen could not know. Now she is kept in Kimberley on parole, and every week must report herself. She did nothing, knew nothing, and mayn't go home, and town presses and chokes her.

1. — MRS. U.
2. —Elim District, Heilbron.
3. —Three children.
4. —Husband surrendered under 1st Proclamation. A month afterwards was arrested, and sent to Greenpoint. Has been there many months.
5. —She was taken Feb. 4, and brought here.
6. —Colonel W. took her ; gave ten minutes. Trekked in same convoy with Mrs.

furniture, saying he could not wait for that. She got out a box with her husband's clothes, and containing a small box packed with trinkets. These were :

1. gold watch.
2. silver watch, with gold chain.
3. diamond ring.
4. plain rings.
5. pair earrings.

Set of silver studs.

Silver bangles.

All of these were stolen, besides her husband's shirts, and other clothes.

In answer to her distress the Captain gave her a paper (unsigned), of which the following is a copy. It is a somewhat poor exchange for a burnt home :

#### **WINBURG.**

P., Corneliusdam.

“ Homestead burnt, by order of General Macdonald.

“ P. claims to be immune on grounds of not having taken up arms.”

He was accused of nothing, and had no arms in his possession owing to bad sight.

When Mr. P. got back he found the house burnt. That day they remained outside. Then they were put into a waggon and taken to Winburg, thence, on the 8th October, to Bloemfontein Camp, where they have been ever since.

At Winburg he again showed his pass, which testified to his oath of neutrality and his being under the “ protection ” of the British. Major L. took this from him, and gave instead a rough piece of paper of which the following is a copy :

Copy.

“ I certify that F. T. P., of Corneliusdam, has taken the oath of neutrality, date unknown.”

#### **W. W. (or O') L., Major, D.C.**

“ Winburg, August 21, 1900.”

The Major was District Commissioner. His name figures also in Miss Ellie Cronje's story, and,

I think, the dates of burning the farms under Macdonald, coincides. September was a black month for farms in the Winburg district.

“ British protection ” has become rather a grim joke to numbers of these people.

At Winburg Mrs. P. at once complained of the theft of her jewellery and her husband's clothes, but, failing to get any redress, or to have the matter looked into, she got angry, for the first time, and told Major L. something of her feelings.

Mrs. P. is a very plain woman, but singularly quiet and gentle in manner and speech. She speaks English perfectly.

The farmers' wives in this country compare very favourably with English ditto. They may have less book learning and less fashion, but mostly speak the two languages freely, and have far more dignity and breeding. You feel at once they hold the position of ladies in their country, and they behave as such.

1. — MRS. J. P.
2. —Uitzicht, Ventersberg Road, Winburg.
3. —Children, three, in camp.
4. —Husband at Greenpoint since December 14.
5. —Came November 11.
6. —Compelled. Captain P. had been often in her house, and very kind, a real gentleman.

He had meals often with her, sad had said her house, etc., should be safe. But some Generals came and camped near the farm. —ere there was a fight, and the Boers passed along the main road near her farm. She could not help it, and the British were pursuing. Next day, 10 a.m., a lot of men came and turned her out. It was raining hard, and she wept and prayed mercy for the children's sake. House was burnt, and she was put into a waggon. She saw seven neighbours' houses burning as she went. She tried to take some furniture, etc., but, it dwindled as she went, and got left behind here and there, Her house had five large rooms. At Kroonstadt she was put into the church with 20 other families and guards all round. Kept there three days. Then they were brought down to Bloemfontein and put into camp. Was well off, has nothing now.

A few weeks after telling me the above, Mrs, Potgieter, who could not stand the life or the diet, grew very weak, sank rapidly, and died.

1. — MRS. W. P.
2. —Weltefreden, Winburg.
3. —Three children.
4. —Husband took fever on commando, and died at home last April.
5. —Brought in Nov. 16.
6. —Compelled to come prisoners. Two sons fighting with J. Theron
7. —A little money.
8. —House not burnt when left.
9. —Furniture all taken.

10. —If could get home to bare walls would manage to get on.

No illness so far.

Clothed at present.

1. — MRS. A. P.
2. —Burghers' Kraal ; Dist., Winburg.
3. —Two children.
4. —Husband also in Camp from Oct. 6.
5. —Mrs. P. brought in Jan. 11, 1901.
6. —Compelled to come. No reason given.
7. —Have no means.
8. —Not burnt when left.
9. —Some furniture taken.
10. —Could go to friends if allowed out.

Child had dysentery.

Very little clothing.

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rain. Then in open truck to Springfontein, and two nights' rain. A pretty, gentle young woman, speaking good English.

#### MR. AND MRS. G. W.

Lived at De Wet's Kraal, Rouxville, but have four or five farms. Evidently very well off, and a very nice woman. Six children, five of whom are in camp ; the eldest, a lad of seventeen, the British said they would take under their protection, but they protected him badly, for the boy, angry that his people were all taken prisoners, escaped and joined the Boers.

Mr. G. W. had fought for ten months. Then he got fever, and was therefore sick in hospital at the time of Prinsloo's surrender. Coming out of hospital, he went home and took the oath of neutrality. He was allowed passes to go from one to the other of his farms, but had not used the same.

In November a commando suddenly appeared on the farm. They had with them two wounded men. Her husband was away from home helping a neighbour about some sheep at another farm. She had not the remotest idea the Boers were coming. They asked her to take in the two wounded men. She gave them all a meal, as they demanded it. Numbers of times she has fed crowds of British soldiers, and has treated both the same. Mrs. W. says she always believed, in common with her countrywomen, that it was actual duty and law to take in wounded men of either army. She would equally that day have taken in British wounded. Had often done so.

She was sending a man to report the presence of Boers on her farm when the Boers stopped her saying if she did they must shoot the messenger. They said they were going to report themselves by attacking the British near by, and went and did so.

Twenty days afterwards, November 27th, Lieut. A. was sent, with fifty men, to seize herself and her husband. Reason given was that a commando had been there and two wounded taken in.

They were taken to Rouxville, where they were kept seven days, he in prison, she in a house. Then the children were brought, and she was sent with them to Bloemfontein Camp. Later Mr. G.W. was also sent to Bloemfontein and lodged in prison pending his sentence. He had been tried at Rouxville (or Aliwal), and, after the lapse of two months, has been sentenced here on the strength of the papers sent from the other town. He has been given two years' imprisonment, with hard labour, and is now working as a convict in Bloemfontein ; while his nice wife and five children inhabit one tiny corrugated iron room in the Camp. All but one sleep on the floor.

Mr. W. was sentenced on native evidence alone, supported by English soldiers. No witnesses were called on his side, neither the white Bywoner (who came into the town) nor any of the family.

Two men and one woman, Kaffir, were the witnesses, and people round all said they had been bribed.

Mrs. W. says her husband never broke his oath of neutrality.

Aged 73. Has epileptic fits.

Never on commando ; but now at Greenpoint.

His old wife begs me daily with tears to get him released. She follows me, wailing, “ He is old, he is sick, he never fought. Bring him back to me.”

It is astonishing how many there are in the prisons who never fought, and who are boys or quite old men !

1. — MRS. W.
2. —Reddersburg town. House of Government School.
3. —Five children ; two down with fever.
4. —Husband was teacher in Government School, in prison Greenpoint. Taken Oct. 11.
5. —In camp since Dec. 20.
6. —Most unwillingly. No reason given. Fled from home first to a cottage, then to father's house, Mr. C., minister of Reddersburg. Brought in an ambulance waggon to Edenburg, thence by cattle truck to Bloemfontein.
7. —Could manage to live with old mother.
8. —No.
9. —Does not know.
10. —With mother in Reddersburg. Children never well since arrival, dysentery and diarrhoea. Never had these complaints before.

Two children now with typhoid.

Mrs. W. herself suffered in her liver since arrival.

A young, nice-looking, neat woman, speaking pretty English.

1. — MISS V.
2. —Townswoman of Brandford.
3. —
4. —Her father left at home. He never fought.
5. —Since Nov. 28.
6. —Forced away from a comfortable home. No reason given her. When arrested, had not even seen a Boer for eight months.
7. —Could live if sent home.
8. —No.
9. —Cows, calves, etc., all taken.
10. —Could go to sister in Newlands, Capetown, who is married to a Cornishman, Mr. R.  
Oats.

Since arrival had dysentery, also continual headache and lassitude. Never had dysentery at home. Was very strong.

Needs a petticoat and underclothes. Miss V., a very respectable young girl, felt keenly the indignity of being driven through the town with six guards, with bayonets, behind her, having to carry her parcels, and continually urged to go faster.

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PREV

NEXT

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## *APPENDIX B.*

### **APPLICATIONS FOR RELEASE, &c.**

In the course of her visits to the camps, and her correspondence, Miss Hobhouse naturally received a large number of applications for release. In the earlier period of her visit, she found that some very few were able to get away from the camp, and she was fortunately able to give them some assistance in doing so. One of these cases was that of a Free State lady and her four children, who were allowed to go to friends in the Colony in February. Another was that of a German widow, who was allowed to return to her friends in Germany. Miss Hobhouse helped this lady to send in her application, and gave her some money towards her journey.

The professed policy of the authorities at Bloemfontein in the month of February, as far as Miss Hobhouse could judge from their utterances, was to release those women and children who had friends in Cape Colony ready to receive them, and had no grown man in the party within the camp. Miss Hobhouse accordingly obtained and forwarded to the authorities certain applications from such cases. The authorities gave no pledges, but promised to consider each on its individual merits. But as no favourable reply was received, the applications fell off. At Kimberley Miss Hobhouse met with some success in getting permission for a few women “ prisoners ” of war to leave the town of Kimberley for the south of Cape Colony.

The following applications, handed to Miss Hobhouse at Bloemfontein, have hitherto met with no success :

(Copy.)

### **MAJOR WRIGHT (Commandant),**

We, the undersigned, respectfully wish to address you with the following request :

1. As we are separated from our husbands, and thus left without help, it is impossible, in the circumstances in which we are placed, to live.
2. On account of carelessness, bad management, and ill-treatment, it is now the second time that we are drenched through and through by rain, which caused our children, already sick with measles, whooping cough, and fever, to become dangerously ill.
3. Being without money, it is impossible for us to provide or obtain soap, candles, or other necessaries. It is now almost three weeks that most of us have been unable to do any washing. It is more than we can stand to be satisfied under all this. These are our griefs. This our humble request is—to look into our case with all reasonableness, and to have compassion on our position, and to give us our liberty by allowing us to return to our respective homes.

We hope and trust that you will take our humble request in favourable consideration, and meet us in this our request as soon as possible.

We are, dear Sir,

Your humble Servants—

A. S. EABLE.	C.E. LOUW
ANNIE EARLE.	J. VAN NIEKERK.
J. M. HORAK.	M. BRITZ.
R DU TOIT.	C. ROODT.
A. J. BRITS.	C. DU TOIT.
S. BOTHA.	HERMINA VAN
E. BOTHA.	BREDA.
M. DE KLERK.	R. HORAK.
A. SERFONTEIN.	M. COMBRINCK.
H. BRITS.	S. COMBRINCK.
M. BRITS.	A. BOTHA.
M. J. ROODT.	C. BOTHA.
E. M. ROODT.	A. DE KLERK.
A. C. COMBRINCK.	W. WESSELS.
A. PIENAAR.	M. SERFONTEIN.
S. DU TOIT.	S. BRITS.
J. HORAK.	M. C. ROODT.
M. BOTHA.	J. J. ROODT.
J. C. MATTHEE.	M. HERBST.

Newton Refugee Camp, Kimberley.

P.S.—Major Commandant and others in authority,—With God there is mercy. Is there, then, no mercy with you for us poor innocent women and children ? Our request is to allow us to leave the 10th March, 1901.

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(Copy.)

Refugee Camp, Bloemfontein, April 25, 1901.)

To the Military Governor of Bloemfontein.

Dear Sir,

—I have been here for the last five months. I wish to ask you if you will please allow me to proceed to the Colony (Piquetberg) to live with my father.

My husband, J. M. Brink, is not a fighting man, but has been in the ambulance for the last 15 months. Whether he is alive or not I cannot tell.

I have three children—having lost the fourth in camp—and I have no means to provide for them. If you could grant me a free pass I shall be very pleased ; if it be against the rules my father is willing to pay my railway expenses. Both my parents and myself are British subjects, born in the Colony.

The camp life has effected my health very much lately, and I shall, therefore, be very grateful to you if you will grant my request.

*Hoping to receive a favourable reply,*

*I am, dear Sir, yours*

*BEATRIX BRINK.*

Mrs. J. M. Brink, Refugee Camp, Bloemfontein.

(Copy.)

Refugee Camp, Bloemfontein, 26th April, 1901.

To the Deputy Administrator, Bloemfontein,

O.R.C.

Honourable Sir,

—I hope you'll kindly excuse me taking the liberty of appealing to you. I hereby humbly beg you to grant me and my two girls the request of proceeding to Worcester, Cape Colony, to my brother-in-law, N. J. van Biljoen, who has offered to pay all my expenses down. I intend leaving for good.

My husband surrendered in July ; was sent to Ceylon, where he is now prisoner of war since September ; in November I, with four children, were sent to camp, of which I lost two, they being too delicate to stand the heat in these tents ; a third is now suffering from typhoid in the hospital for the second time, and I simply dread losing her too, on account of winter drawing near. A change for my two little ones would really be good to pick up their strength again.

Although the authorities here in Camp are very kind, and treat us well, still I and my two children can't enjoy the comfort here that I could with my people in Worcester. Trusting to receive a favourable answer soon, by which you'll oblige.—Your most humble servant,

*S. VAN BILJOEN.*

Add.—Mrs. F. L. Biljoen, Refugee Camp, Bloemfontein.

(Copy.)

Refugee Camp, Bloemfontein,

April 25, 1901.

The Deputy Administrator, Bloemfontein.

Dear Sir,

—Pardon my liberty in writing to you. I have a most humble request—namely, whether you would allow myself and family to proceed to Newlands, Cape Colony. The family consist of two girls and one boy of ten years old. I am at this camp close to five months, and am feeling the need of a change greatly, and am dreading the coming winter months, as our health has not been good of late.

Friends of mine have offered to pay my expenses, if you should allow me to go.

Hoping to receive a favourable reply,

*I have the honour, Sir  
To be your obedient servant,  
Mr. P. J. Botha. E. BOTHA.*

[Note by Miss Hobhouse : Mrs. Botha's help and influence have been invaluable in the camp, and all would feel the loss if she left. Nevertheless, she is really unable to bear the physical and mental strain much longer. The family have had dysentery, inflammation of kidneys, and fever attacks in succession.]

The following are the notes of this case taken at the Bloemfontein Camp by Miss Hobhouse at the time of her visit :

1. — MRS. PHILIP BOTHA.
2. —Landdrost's house, town of Phillipolis.
3. —One at school in Colony, five in camp (ages sixteen to eight), one in Ceylon.
4. —Husband on parole at Durban at his own expense.
5. —The camp since November 14
6. —Sent away by force because the town was cleared ; came with second convoy.
7. —Some slight means left, nothing coming in.
8. —Knows nothing of house.
9. —Goods wantonly destroyed, £60 worth silver stolen.
10. —Sisters in Cape Colony would receive them.

Since arrival two daughters had dysentery, she herself had inflammation of kidney after rain (caught cold). Now child of eight down with fever and dysentery. Never had these illnesses before. Wants bedding, child's nightdress, boots and shoes, underclothes. Mrs.Botha is always cheerful and helpful. She comes of an old Capetown family, and so hates the camp life. She wishes as each one dies it was herself.

#### **RATIONS.**

When Miss Hobhouse first went up to the camp at Bloemfontein the system of half rations to prisoners whose relations were still on commando was in force. It was abolished on February 27th in consequence of a question asked in Parliament on February 26th.

The Rations now stand for O.R.C. Camps.

Meat, ½lb. (including fat and bone).

Floor,  $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.

Sugar, 2oz.

Coffee, 2oz.

Salt,  $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

Occasional tin of condensed milk.

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PREV

NEXT

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## *APPENDIX C.*

### **PERSONAL NARRATIVES AS WRITTEN BY WOMEN IN THE CAMPS.**

In this Appendix it may be useful to set forth certain narratives which Miss Hobhouse received in the course of her stay in South Africa. It will be best to publish them precisely as they were received, without any attempt to make any alterations in the style. There is no need to apologise for the roughness of the composition.

#### **NARRATIVE I.**

“ We were awakened on the 7th of February by the roar of the cannon. We got up and hastily dressed ourselves. We were very frightened. The firing sounded so very near. We could not imagine what it meant, as there was no Boer commando close by. We sat down to our early breakfast, but the food remained almost untouched. I could not do anything, but wandered aimlessly about, thinking of the dear ones of whom we know absolutely nothing. On going out I saw black objects on the hills. Running back hastily, I fetched the telescope, and to my horror saw that they were horsemen coming nearer every minute. Ah ! how my heart throbbed with pain as I went in to break the news to my poor delicate mother. Many of our neighbours’ houses were burned down months ago, while some of the women and children were left upon the open veldt, and others were taken prisoners. We were until then left undisturbed, but I instinctively felt, when I saw horsemen coming nearer, that our turn had come at last. About half an hour later a number of horsemen, accompanied by a small waggon drawn by mules, came up to the house. Their corporal came to the front door, while the troopers stormed in at every door. I went to the corporal. But, oh ! how cruelly his words pierced my heart ! His greeting was : “ I’ve come for you. Be ready to start in about 15 minutes.” I pleaded and begged to be left at home. I told him to take everything and burn the house, but leave us there ; but all in vain. His answer was, “ If you don’t come, I’ll let the men put you in the waggon.” Then all was confusion. I was so excited that I did not know what to do. Mamma stood with her baby, who is two months old. The troopers took three or four boxes, placed it in the waggon ; then they took two beds and pillows, and two blankets, which were also taken to the waggon. Then came the cruel order to get on the waggon. I could have fainted as I looked at my poor mother staggering towards the waggon, weeping loudly and saying that she cannot go with her enemy, leaving her husband and children behind, for papa and four brothers, 21, 18, 16, and 14 years old, are all on commando ; while two little boys, 10 and 12 years old, ran away when the troopers were in the house. Oh ! what a sight met us as we came out of the house. The poultry were killed, flowers and plants pulled out of the pots ; while the whole place was white with feathers, the beds and pillows being cut open. Then we began to move away, leaving our dear old large comfortable house behind, where we had everything we needed—good bread and

meat, vegetables of any kind, fruit in abundance, daily two large buckets of milk, and at least four or five pounds of good butter. We came on the camping-place about 10 o'clock in the morning, and left at three in the afternoon. We could see our house from the camp. It was, indeed, painful to see smoke of the burning farm and furniture, which were carried out of the house. Kopje's Siding is only 3½ hours from our place, and we only came there after having spent five days in the ox-waggon. In our waggon were four families, with their luggage ; while many other waggons contained more people, the families being larger. We could hardly sit during the day, so it can well be imagined how the nights were spent. One night it rained very much. About ten o'clock in the night we were all wet through and through. The last I had was a dry skirt, which I placed round mama to protect the baby. Oh ! can we ever forget that night ? We were all tired to death when we came to Kopje's. There we stopped a few days, and then came the worst part of all. On a Wednesday afternoon we were packed in open coal trucks. In our truck were 70 people ; half the number had to stand. The first evening at Kroonstadt, about half the number were removed. Still there was no chance of sleeping, as our luggage was on the same truck. We remained in the trucks from Wednesday till Friday afternoon. We were nearly burned to death when we arrived at Springfontein. It was most painful to see all the skins come off the arms of the girls and women, who had on thin blouses. I really do not want the English to think well of us or treat us kindly, but I was astonished to see that the civilized English people could allow the Kaffirs to treat us as they did. At every station or siding the Kaffirs came streaming towards the

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train, screaming loudly, and greeting us with “ Good-bye, darling,” and other shameful words ; while the troopers joined heartily in the laughter. Oh! I sometimes felt really inclined to take my own life. The only thought that kept me back was that Christ, our King, the Holy Son of God, suffered more, and why cannot a great sinner suffer a little ?

## PHILLIPINE.

### NARRATIVE II.

Madam,

—I herewith beg to comply with your request in giving you a short detail of my experience and treatment by the enemy during the war. I can only give you the principal facts. On the 3rd October, 1889, my husband, “ Field-Cornet,” left me for the front with £1, the only cash we had then. The 13th February, 1900, the enemy entered Jacobsdal, the village where I am residing, and took possession of the same. A few days afterwards everything I had was taken from me, such as oxen, cows, calves, sheep, goats, and horses. I was left destitute. On the 25th October, 1900, an engagement took place between our people and the enemy, which lasted to four o’clock in the afternoon. The Boers then retreating, the enemy then burnt my house down, with all my furniture, and everything belonging to me in the house. They would not allow me to take out anything. I begged of the enemy to spare me such, but of no avail. The house contained seven rooms, and every one furnished. On the 16th November I with my five children were then arrested and placed in prison, where I had to provide for me and children. On the 28th of the same month we were then released. In February, 1901, the Commandant then offered me his assistance to fetch my husband from the commando, and to persuade him to lay down his arms, with the promise to rebuild my house and furnish the same, and give us money, etc., etc., which I refused, whereupon I was threatened to be sent away, which alternative I accepted. I with my five children were then sent to Kimberley Camp on the 13th February, 1901.

*J. H. E.*

Newton Camp, Kimberley, March 16, 1901.

### NARRATIVE III.

THE BURNING OF A VILLAGE IN O. F. S. Early on Tuesday morning we were awakened by cannon and rifle firing. About seven o’clock they ceased firing. All the men were then ordered to appear at the court-house. There the officer told them to go out to the camp to see the General,

assuring them that they will be back at their homes by 12 o'clock. Amongst them was a lame old man of 70 years, who had been wheeled about and fed like a child, being quite helpless, for the last six years. The men, including the lame old man, never returned to their homes, but were sent away as prisoners of war to Greenpoint, Ceylon, and St. Helena. All these men had taken the oath of neutrality last May, 1900. We poor women sufferers will never forget the next day. Early that morning we were reformed that the General had orders from Lord Roberts to burn down the village. Half of the Boer women received orders at 1 o'clock to be ready on the market square at 2 o'clock, also telling us not to take too many things with us. If we did take too much, will not be allowed to take anything. It was dreadful to see how they destroyed the houses—breaking up floors (even the floor of the Dutch Reformed Church was broken up for firewood), breaking out doors and windows, pulling down verandahs, saying they require these things for fuel. Everywhere one could see them stealing and taking everything they could lay their hands on, even taking the small bundle the poor woman thought of taking with her. Having taken our everything, even this they took from us. Wherever one looks misery is to be seen. It was heart rendering [sic] to see how they ill-treat the animals—driving cows and leaving the young calves behind. When we asked them, for pity's sake, to take the poor calves with them, they said the calves were only a nuisance to them. All the provisions were taken away, and they said the women who remained behind could be supplied with food by the fighting Boers on commando. That same night they started burning the village. Two o'clock we were all present on the market square, and put on open bullock waggons and sent on to the station. We arrived at the station, and had to remain there for the night, sleeping in the open veldt—the wind blowing very strong. Next morning we were all put in dirty cattle trucks ; we were packed in like sardines, and sent to Bloemfontein. When we reached Bloemfontein they had roll call to see whether we were all there. One little baby being sick, the corporal gave permission to the mother to consult a doctor, but that one of the soldiers had to go with her. She went to the doctor, the soldier with a fixed bayonet at her heels. When she asked the doctor for medicine for the sick baby, he answered her in a very impudent manner, saying, “ You must go to another doctor ; I am here only for military purposes.” Then she went to the Staff Officer to ask him to allow her to go to an hotel or boarding house for the night with her baby. Not answering her, he turned to the soldier and asked him who this lady was. The soldier said, “ A prisoner, sir!” The officer said she, being a prisoner, could not go to an hotel or boarding house, but must go to the camp. She went to another officer and asked him whether he could not do anything for her. So he went and got her a permit, but a guard had to be sent with her, and had to report her every hour.

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#### NARRATIVE IV.

I have just heard, from good authority, that my grandfather, who is ninety-seven years, and my grandmother, ninety-one years, were taken as prisoners to Kroonstad camp, and their house (near Senekal) burnt. They had no opportunity of taking anything with them, and had it not been for the kindness of a “ Boer ” lady in Kroonstad, who sent them her bedstead and mattress, they would have had to sleep on the bare ground. Both died, after being prisoners a week in camp. As far as I can find out, they died of misery, sorrow, and ill-treatment.

May 14, 1900.

On the 14th of May I went to my neighbours with Lord Roberts’s Proclamation, and said to each, “ Read this Proclamation. If you live on your farm, no harm will be done to you. So trust to what I say.”

But what was the result ?

The first column that came, with which Captain B. was, took from all those who had remained in their homes all they had of cattle and horses. I had tell little calves and forty-two big cattle in my kraal. I was left without even a drop of milk for my children. I did all I could to get some of these back. Mr. B., of Christiana, lent me £5 to buy flour (meal) and other articles. I was left with three daughters, one sixteen years old, one thirteen, and the other eleven. I had four sons in the service of the Transvaal Government. Through my severe want I gave my consent to my daughter’s immediate marriage with the cousin of President Steyn, trusting to him to come to my help. I got back a cow in milk, also a cart and pair of horses.

Christiana is my nearest village, one hour, that is, about six miles from where we live. Once I went there to get a pass to go to Warrenton to see my son-in-law, who was there on parole. Major T. made me pay £1 sterling for it, because I had gone in to Christiana without a pass. I had no money, and I was without food, my children almost bare. A Mr. G. lent me the £1. I paid the £1, and said the pass should go before the Throne of England. Did anyone ever before pay £1 for a pass? Now, 14 days afterwards, General ——’s column sent a buck-waggon before my door, with a lot of armed Kaffirs, and two families must go on the open buck-waggon. Mrs. P., whose husband was over the line, was ordered to go, but she wished to stay on my place. I pleaded to be allowed to stay in my house. The Major, in an unfriendly way, said : “ In five minutes you must be on the waggon.”

An Australian Bushman said : “ Madame, so many lies have been told in our land about the uncivilized ways of your people, but the shame is the way the women are treated.”

I had no time ; my children’s best shoes and the clothes remained behind, also all my furniture. Only a bedstead and two chairs belonging to Mrs. Combrink were taken. There was a great escort of armed men, and we sat on the open buck-waggon in the sun. Mrs. Combrink was told to be ready in five minutes ; she took her bed, bath, and two chairs. Then a Kaffir put the two chairs on the waggon ; she was thankful, but he said it was for himself. In the evening the Kaffir came and took Mrs. Combrink’s chair from under her, and broke it in pieces to make a fire of. He also took the second

chair, but her sister bought it from him for 2s. Before Mrs. Combrink left they packed all her household goods upon her cart, and put it on fire before her eyes.

In the evening we four mothers of families sat under the waggon, without food, wet through by rain. We had to sit up the whole night. At 4.30 we had to get on the open waggon again. Monday morning we reached the train and the Camp at Fourteen Streams. We had no food that day ; the following morning a few biscuits, coffee, and sugar. When we got to Warrenton it was better. I believe we were taken to Kimberley Camp because the burghers had taken my son-in-law. I brought it before the justice of the General that I had told Captain G. I was not responsible for my son-in-law. . . . I told the Captain over and over again I am not answerable for Mr. S., my son-in-law. He said, “ Yes, you are.” I requested if I might stay by my husband’s grave in my garden, which I and my two daughters had cultivated, and which was doing well, and we could bare lived out of it.

The Captain agreed, but Kitchener’s orders were we women must all be removed, or the Boers would not give in.

Mrs. Combrink, who had been a widow for 19 years, was held responsible for her son, a man of 50 years, who was fighting. She had everything taken from her—she had not ever dress. Everything was also taken from me. I have still two children, who it is very necessary should be at school.

It is dreadful how the armed Kaffirs teased us on the farm when my lands were destroyed by troops and Kaffirs.

In September I had a letter from my son from Derdepoort, where they had Kaffirs fighting against us, with white officers. Isn’t it dreadful for the great British nation—isn’t it terrible?—and old people who were never in a fight seized and put on a waggon—everything taken from them—put on a bare truck and taken to Kimberley.

(The writer of the above is a widow, and born a British subject of the Colony. Her husband was an Englishman born in Chelsea.)

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## The Peace Negotiations

The first substantial attempt to discuss peace, putting aside the tentative overtures between Sir Redvers Buller and Christiaan Botha in June 1900 at Langs Nek, took place at Middelburg at the end of February 1901. This meeting between Lord Kitchener and Louis Botha led to what were known as the Middelburg Proposals which were set out in a letter to Botha dated 7 March 1901. This is the first document in this section.

More than a year later a series of meetings began with a conference at Klerksdorp at which Boer leaders agreed that it was necessary to negotiate. This led to the arrangement of a representatives' conference at Vereeniging in May 1902 at which the Boers reviewed the situation and appointed a negotiating commission. Extracts from the minutes of this conference, De Wet's Appendix A, form the second document. The subsequent meetings with the British led to the formulation and re-formulation of peace terms and extracts from the minutes, Appendix B, are given in the third document. The terms were taken back to the Boer representatives who agonised over them, but finally authorised their acceptance. The fourth document is taken from the minutes, Appendix C, of that final deliberation of the Boer Republics.

The papers are given as a series of appendixes in Christiaan De Wet's *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902) and occupy over 100 pages of the book. The extracts given here have been chosen to give some idea of the spirit of the discussions and to present the precise text of key documents involved in the peace negotiations. Readers may compare the texts of the evolving agreement. The extracts are given with the page numbers from the original book so that the extent of the material omitted can be kept in mind. This leads to some sentences being given only in part at the beginning or end of a page, an inconvenience it is hoped the reader will be willing to accept. The Middelburg Proposal was given out of chronological sequence by De Wet, and is shown here in full but as the first item and without De Wet's page numbers lest there be confusion. They are pages 470 and 471 in the original.

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## *THE MIDDELBERG PROPOSAL:*

LORDKITCHENER TO COMMANDANT-GENERAL BOTHA:

PRETORIA,

*March 7, 1901.*

YOUR HONOUR,—

With reference to our conversation at Middelburg on the 28th February, I have the honour to inform you that, in the event of a general and complete cessation of hostilities, and the surrender of all rifles, ammunition, cannon and other munitions of war in the hands of the burghers, or in Government depots, or elsewhere, His Majesty's Government is prepared to adopt the following measures:

His Majesty's Government will at once grant an amnesty in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony for all bonâ fide acts of war committed during the recent hostilities. British subjects belonging to Natal and Cape Colony, while they will not be compelled to return to those Colonies, will, if they do so, be liable to be dealt with by the laws of those Colonies specially passed to meet the circumstances arising out of the present war. As you are doubtless aware, the special law in the Cape Colony has greatly mitigated the ordinary penalties for high treason in the present case.

All prisoners of war, now in St. Helena, Ceylon, or elsewhere, being burghers or colonists, will, on the completion of the surrender, be brought back to their country as quickly as arrangements can be made for their transport.

At the earliest practicable date military administration will cease, and will be replaced by civil administration in the form of Crown Colony Government. There will, therefore, be, in the first instance, in each of the new Colonies, a Governor and an Executive Council, composed of the principal officials, with a Legislative Council consisting of a certain number of official members to whom a nominated unofficial element will be added. But it is the desire of His Majesty's Government, as soon as circumstances permit, to introduce a representative element, and ultimately to concede to the new Colonies the privilege of self-government. Moreover, on the cessation of hostilities, a High Court will be established in each of the new Colonies to administer the laws of the land, and this Court will be independent of the Executive.

Church property, public trusts, and orphan funds will be respected.

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## *Appendix A*

REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE GENERAL REPRESENTATIVES HELD AT VEREENIGING, IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC, ON THE 15TH OF MAY, 1902, AND THE FOLLOWING DAYS.

The first meeting of the representatives of the two Governments took place at 11.30 a.m. on May 15th.

There were present :—

*For the South African Republic*—His Honour the President, S. W. Burger ; I. W. Reitz ; Commandant-General L. Botha ; Messrs. J. B. Krogh ; L. J. Meijer ; L. J. Jacobs ; and His Honour the Staatsprocureur.

*For the Orange Free State*—States-President, M. J. Steyn ; Judge, J. B. M. Hertzog ; Secretary of State, W. J. B. Brebner ; Commander-in-Chief, C. R. de Wet ; and Mr. C. H. Olivier.

The first matter discussed was the formula for the oath which the delegates were to take, and it was decided that it should run as follows :—

“ We, the undersigned, duly swear that we, as special national representatives, will remain true to our people, country, and Government, and that we will serve them to the best of our ability, and fulfil our duties faithfully and with all necessary secrecy, as is the duty of all faithful burghers and representatives of the nation. So help us God.”

The question now arose as to whether the representatives had the right to decide, if circumstances rendered it necessary, upon any matter touching the independence of the country, irrespective of the powers given to the various delegates, for at some of the meetings the delegates had only received limited powers, whilst at others full authority had been given them to act according to their own judgment.

## THREE YEARS WAR

After considerable discussion it was decided to lay the matter before the delegates themselves. The following representatives were called into the tent, and took the oath :—

*For the South African Republic.*

- a. H. A. Alberts, Vechtgeneraal ; for Heidelberg.
- b. J. J. Alberts, Commandant ; for Standerton and Wakkerstroom.
- c. J. F. de Beer, Commandant ; for Bloemhof.
- d. C. F. Beijers, Assistant-Commandant-General ; for Waterberg.
- e. C. Birkenstock, burgher ; for Vrijheid.
- f. H. J. Bosman, magistrate ; for Wakkerstroom.
- g. Christiaan Botha, Assistant-Commandant - General ; for Swaziland and the States

*Artillery.*

- h. B. H. Breijtenbach, Veldtcornet ; for Utrecht.
- i. C. J. Brits, Vechtgeneraal ; for Standerton.
- j. J. B. Cilluos, Vechtgeneraal ; for Lichtenburg.
- k. J. de Clercq, burgher ; for Middelburg.
- l. T. A. Dönges, Veldtcornet ; for Dorp Middelburg in Regeeringswacht.
- m. H. S. Grobler, Commandant ; for Bethal.
- n. J. L. Grobler, burgher ; for Carolina.
- o. J. N. H. Grobler, Vechtgeneraal ; for Ermelo.
- p. B. J. van Heerden, Veldtcornet ; for Rustenburg.
- q. J. F. Jordaan, Commandant ; for Vrijheid.
- r. J. Kemp, Vechtgeneraal ; for Krugersdorp.
- s. P. J. Liebenberg, Vechtgeneraal ; for Potchefstroom.
- t. C. H. Muller, Vechtgeneraal ; for Boksburg.
- u. J. F. Naude, burgher ; for Pretoria, late Commandant with General Kemp.
- v. D. J. E. Opperman, Veldtcornet ; for Pretoria.
- w. B. J. Roos, Veldtcornet ; for Piet Retief.
- x. P. D. Roux, Veldtcornet ; for Marico.
- y. D. J. Schoeman, Commandant ; for Lijdenburg.
- z. T. C. Stoffberg, Landdrost ; for Zoutpansberg.
- aa. S. P. du Toit, Vechtgeneraal ; for Wolmaransstad.
- ab. P. L. Uijs, Commandant ; for Pretoria.
- ac. P. R. Viljoen, burgher ; for Heidelberg.
- ad. W. J. Viljoen, Commandant ; for Witwatersrand.

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NEXT

## *Appendix B*

THE CONFERENCE AT PRETORIA BETWEEN THE COMMISSION OF THE NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES AND LORDS KITCHENER AND MILNER (MAY 19TH–MAY 28TH, 1902)

Minutes of the Conference held at Pretoria on May 19th, 1902, between Lord Kitchener and Lord Milner, representatives of the British Government, and Commandant-General L. Botha, Commander-in-Chief C. R. de Wet, General J. H. De la Rey, Judge J. B. M. Hertzog, and General J. C. Smuts, delegates of the national representatives, who had met at Vereeniging on May 15th, 1902.

Mr. N. J. de Wet acted as interpreter ; Mr. O. Walrond was secretary for the English Government ; and the Rev. J. D. Kestell and D. van Velden acted in a similar capacity for the Commission.

The Conference met at ten o'clock in the morning at the house of Lord Kitchener. After having greeted each other, the members took their seats at the table in the centre of the room.

Commandant-General L. Botha opened the proceedings in the following words :

“ Allow me to state that, although the negotiations have taken a longer time than we expected, I am able to assure your Excellencies that we are acting in good faith, and that everything has been done with the sole aim of concluding the peace which we all desire.

“ I must also draw attention to the fact that everything we transact here must be submitted to our national representatives, in order to obtain their sanction.”

The suggestion was then made that the proposals which the Commission was prepared to make should be laid before the

## Appendix C

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SPECIAL NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES AT VEREENIGING, SOUTH AFRICAN REPUBLIC, THURSDAY, THE 29TH OF MAY 1902, AND THE FOLLOWING DAYS.

MAY 29TH, 1902.

The Rev. J. D. Kestell having offered prayer, the Chairman requested Vice-President Burger to address the meeting.

Vice-President Burger said that the documents laid before the Governments by the Commission would now be read to the meeting. Thereupon Mr. D. van Velden read the following letter :

REPORT OF THE COMMISSION.

PRETORIA,

*28th May, 1902.*

*To the Governments of the Orange Free State and the South African Republic :*

HONBLE. GENTLEMEN,—

In accordance with instructions received from you, we went to Pretoria in order to negotiate with the British authorities on the question of peace. We have the honour to make the following report :

The meeting lasted from Monday, May 19th, to Wednesday, May 28th, its prolongation having been principally caused by the length of time taken up by the cable correspondence with the British Government.

We first handed in a proposal (annexed under A) [1](#) in which we attempted to negotiate on the basis of a limited independence with surrender of part of our territory. Lords Kitchener and Milner refused emphatically to negotiate on this basis, and ex

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# **Encyclopedia of the Boer War**

**1899–1902**

# Encyclopedia of the Boer War

1899–1902

**Martin Marix Evans**

Santa Barbara, California  
Denver, Colorado  
Oxford, England

A B C  C L I O



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This encyclopedia will, I hope, provide a sound foundation for the reader who wishes to undertake more extensive reading and original research. In Great Britain there are numerous regimental archives to which one can gain access and, given that almost every regiment for which there is a museum was involved in the war, they hold a great deal of material awaiting rediscovery. As much material lies beyond the reach of the English-speaking student and is available only in Afrikaans, I have hopes that this work will stimulate the translation of this material. Finally, it may be that new enthusiasts will be inspired by this work. If so, they may wish to join the international community of interested persons, the Victorian Military Society and the South African Military History Society.

**Martin Marix Evans**

**Silverstone, March 2000**



Vickers .303 water-cooled gun was virtually the same as the weapon that would dominate the killing fields of the First World War. As Philips's text-book said: "These guns are especially suitable for flanking fire, for defending defiles such as bridges, mountain gorges, entrances to villages, barricades, and for commanding ground of limited extent which has to be traversed by assaulting columns" – a fair description of their use fifteen years later. They were also found to be useful for laying down covering fire for troops advancing by bounds (rushes) and making use of cover, a tactic the British had learned after the first six months of the war. The Vickers, Sons and Maxim company in Britain also furnished the Boers with the 1-pounder machine-gun, known as the Pom-Pom or Maxim-Nordenfolt. This was very mobile, being mounted, like many of the .303s, on a light carriage, and could thus be used in open country or, with some manhandling, in hilly terrain.

Boer artillery far outperformed that of the British at the outbreak of the war. Krupp and Creusot 75mm guns had been purchased by the Boers, and were manned by fully trained regular soldiers of the *Staatsartillerie*. They also had heavy guns, 155mm Creusots, "Long Toms", which out-ranged anything the British could put in the field and which were used for the indiscriminate bombardment of civilian centres at Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking early in the war. On the British side only the brilliant improvisation of Royal Navy Captain Percy Scott saved the day. He designed mountings for naval 4.7-inch guns which were rushed into Ladysmith just before the siege began, and designed carriages for the 4.7s and the naval 12-pounders for mobile employment. The proper use of artillery to support infantry against modern small-arms fire was not discovered until Buller's assault of the Tugela Heights in the Battle of Pieters in February 1900.

Even when the guns were properly used, the ammunition might not be. The armoured train ambushed by the Boers between Frere and Chieveley, and on which Winston Churchill was travelling, escaped with less damage than one would expect. In their haste, the gunners had failed to arm the time fuses and the shells passed through the rail trucks without exploding. Equally, British shrapnel was used with minimal effect against Boer positions consisting of stone shelters and trenches.

At the time of the war, only northern Natal had been mapped at 1 inch to the mile (1:63,360) before 1899 (IDWO No. 1223), which may explain how Buller advanced with such élan after the relief of Ladysmith compared with his uncertain advance beforehand. Methuen had to rely on sketch maps prepared from observation without instruments and from memory because full surveys were considered provocative in the months preceding the war. Captain O'Meara did his best to show the Modder River crossing on the map he drew up, but Methuen was justifiably critical of the result in relation to the map's usefulness in planning the attack, although he was perhaps at fault for failing to understand its limitations. Later in the war Major H. M. Jackson, RE, drawing on the facilities of the office of the Surveyor-general of the South African Republic in Pretoria, produced a comprehensive series of maps (IDWO No. 1495) at 2.35 miles to the inch (1:150,000) which were helpful, but not detailed enough for planning an attack on a particular Boer position. The traditional foreign-country campaign skills of observation and scouting had to be developed by the British as the war continued.



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force was now as strong as Buller had originally recommended. Roberts undertook two movements to outflank the Boer positions at Magersfontein, first a cavalry thrust to relieve Kimberley and then a march eastwards towards Bloemfontein. The relief operation succeeded at a terrible cost to the cavalry in broken-down horses and the march turned into a pursuit of the Boers whom Piet Cronjé led away from Magersfontein into what became a trap at Paardeberg. Here, on the anniversary of the British defeat at Majuba Hill, over 4,000 Boers surrendered, giving the British their first substantial victory of the war. Christiaan De Wet was given command of the Orange Free State forces and he attempted to resist the advance to Bloemfontein, but in the end had to accept that it was impossible to defend, and the capital was occupied by the British on 13 March.

At the same time Buller was making progress towards Ladysmith in Natal. In a series of limited battles on the Tugela Heights, in which close artillery support for the infantry was employed with outstanding skill, the Boer positions were chipped away. Ladysmith was relieved on the evening of 27 February, another Majuba Day success.

While the British paused in their pursuit of conventional warfare, Roberts to allow supplies to come up despite the disruptive reorganisation of the transport system and to permit recovery from the epidemic of enteric fever that plagued his army, and Buller to deal with the ravages of the siege on the Ladysmith garrison and to await the all-clear from Roberts, the Boers decided what to do next. A meeting at Kroonstad, at which Piet Joubert spoke only days before he died, decided to adopt a policy of guerrilla warfare, although that was not the terminology used. In essence, they decided to give up the concept of the laager, the defensive wagon circle, and the slow-moving, reactive tactics it implied, in favour of mobile warfare and persistent harassment of the British. Within two weeks De Wet had applied the new thinking with his ambush of General Broadwood at Sannaspos, where he had originally planned to wreck the waterworks and keep the typhoid going in Bloemfontein. During this, the fourth phase of the war, conventional and guerrilla warfare were carried on simultaneously.

Roberts started north from Bloemfontein on 3 May 1900 and Buller began his advance into northern Natal ten days later. In the west British columns from north and south converged on Mafeking and raised the siege on 17 May. The massive force at Roberts's disposal could not be stopped by the Boers, who were repeatedly outflanked and forced to fall back to allow the British to enter Johannesburg on 30 May and Pretoria on 5 June. President Kruger and his government, instead of surrendering, took up residence in a railway carriage and moved eastwards along the Delagoa Bay line. Buller bypassed the Boers defending Langs Nek with a flanking movement to the west and pushed northwards to meet Roberts's force coming east from Pretoria after its victory at Diamond Hill (or Donkerhoek). In the Orange Free State the Boers were herded back east into the Brandwater Basin and while De Wet and President Steyn were among those to escape, General Prinsloo surrendered 4,500 men and a vast number of cattle and sheep to the British. The united force of Buller's and

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commando when his wife and children were cast out of their home without support?

Prisoners suffered less. Boers were sent to camps in Cape Colony and elsewhere and many ended up on St Helena, in Ceylon or in Bermuda. Once Pretoria (where Churchill was imprisoned) had fallen, the Boers had nowhere to put the British, so they usually herded them out onto the veldt, stripped them naked and made them walk back to their comrades.

In an attempt to capture the Boers the British organised huge drives, using the same techniques employed to drive game towards the hunters' guns, to enclose the commandos between the sweeping force and the static blockhouse lines. The bands of British mounted infantry became as adept as their adversaries in travelling across the veldt, and they collected men and their sheep and cattle by this method. However, the gaps in both the static and moving elements of the sweep were often too large and the Boers galloped away. Both in British territory and in the former republics the fruitless chases continued. The men on commando suffered, as they were hungry, tired and their clothes were falling to rags. The men refusing to go on commando suffered, as their homes were sometimes burned and their lives were threatened. Their wives and families suffered, as they were threatened with starvation or incarceration. The men chasing them suffered, and the scope for movement decreased as the blockhouse lines spread across the land. It eventually became clear to all but the most doctrinaire republicans that the bitter end, to which they had sworn to continue, had arrived.

In the subsequent peace negotiations, the first to be forgotten were the black and coloured populations in whom the British had originally professed an interest. The expense of the war had sapped British determination to finish it on their own terms and the stubbornness of the Boers encouraged them to hold out for something as close to independence as possible. As a result the foundation was laid for white supremacy in public, private and economic life that would eventually become codified in the ugly system of apartheid.

The peace was a bitter one and broke down once more on the outbreak of the First World War. The uprising against the British led by De Wet was put down by his former comrades in the last passages of arms to trouble South Africa. Other enmities would challenge in future.

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- 1898 Britain British Secretary of War **Lansdowne** establishes Royal Army Medical Corps to provide **medical services** .
- 1898 USA Amateur **photography** encouraged by launch of Folding Pocket Kodak camera.
- 1899 Transvaal Boers (under **Trichardt, Schiel** and **Erasmus** ) purchase **artillery** and **rifles** .
- 1899 May/June OFS **Bloemfontein Conference** (Boer Presidents **Kruger** and **Steyn**, British Sir Alfred **Milner** ) fails to preserve peace.
- 1899 9 Oct. Transvaal Boer ultimatum issued.

### Year Date/Month Place Event

#### *The First Phase: The Boer Offensive*

- 1899 11 Oct. Transvaal Boer ultimatum expires; Boers invade Cape and Natal.
- 12/13 Oct. N. Cape Boers under **De la Rey** win first action at **Kraaipan** .
- 14 Oct. N. Cape British under **Baden-Powell** besieged at **Mafeking** by Boers under Piet **Cronjé** .
- 15 Oct. N. Cape British under **Kekewich** besieged at **Kimberley** by Boers.
- 16 Oct. Natal Mohandas **Gandhi** advocates Indian support of British against Boers.
- 20 Oct. Natal Boers under **Joubert** beaten at **Talana**, British general **Symons** mortally wounded.
- 21 Oct. Natal Boers under **Kock** defeated at **Elandsplaagte**, **Schiel** captured.
- 23 Oct. Natal British abandon **Dundee** to Boers.
- 24 Oct. Natal Retreat by **Yule** from Dundee covered by British action against Boers at **Rietfontein** .
- 30 Oct. Natal ‘Mournful Monday’: British beaten at **Nicholson’s Nek** . Boer forces include **Irish** under Colonel **Blake** .
- 30 Oct. Natal ‘Mournful Monday’: British beaten at **Lombard’s Kop** by Louis **Botha** .
- 30 Oct. Natal ‘Mournful Monday’: British Naval Brigade reaches **Ladysmith** with Captain **Scott’s** converted **artillery** .

### Year Date/Month Place Event

#### *Second Phase: British Counter-offensive under Buller*

- 1899 31 Oct. Cape Sir Redvers **Buller**, Commander-in-Chief of British forces, arrives.
- 2 Nov. Natal British garrison at Colenso withdraws to **Estcourt** .
- 2 Nov. Natal Last train out of **Ladysmith** carries General **French** and Colonel **Haig** .  
British under General **White** besieged.
- 3 Nov. Natal **Durban** under martial law, Captain **Scott** commandant.
- 14 Nov. N.E. Boers take **Colesberg** .  
Cape
- 15 Nov. Natal Boers ambush **armoured train**, capture **Churchill** .
- 15 Nov. Natal **Hildyard's** 2nd Brigade reinforces British at **Estcourt** .
- 18 Nov. N.E. **Olivier** takes **Lady Grey** for Boers.  
Cape
- 23 Nov. N. **Methuen** forces Boer retreat at **Belmont** .  
Cape
- 23 Nov. Natal Boers fail to exploit tactical victory over F. W. **Kitchener** at **Willow Grange** .
- 25 Nov. N. Boers forced to retire by British at **Graspan** .  
Cape
-

- 1901 16 May Cape **Kritzinger's** second invasion of the Cape.
- 28 May Transvaal Costly clash for both sides at **Vlakfontein** disrupts British **drive** .
- 14 June Britain **British opposition to the war** increased by Campbell-Bannerman.
- July Britain **Brodrick** appoints committee under Millicent **Fawcett** to inspect **concentration camps** .
- 4 July Transvaal Boers ambush train near **Naboomspruit** .
- 13 July OFS President **Steyn** escapes but Andries **Cronjé** and others captured by British at **Reitz** .
- 13 July Cape Coetzee executed by **public hanging** .
- 17 Sept. N.E. **Smuts** overcomes British at **Elands Poort** . Deneys **Reitz**  
Cape reclothed.
- 17 Sept. Natal **Botha** gives Boers victory over **Gough** at **Blood River Poort** .
- 30 Sept. Transvaal **Kekewich** fights off **De la Rey's** Boers at **Moedwil** .
- 12 Oct. N.E. **Lötter** hanged by British.  
Cape
- 30 Oct. Transvaal Boers under **Botha** win at **Bakenlaagte**, Colonel **Benson** killed.
- 11 Dec. Cape **Kritzinger's** third invasion of the Cape begins.
- 16 Dec. Cape **Kritzinger** captured.
- 25 Dec. OFS **De Wet** surprises and beats British at **Tweefontein** .
- 1902 18 Jan. E. Cape Gideon **Scheepers** executed.
- 27 Feb. Transvaal **Breaker Morant** executed for shooting Boer prisoners.
- 28 Feb. OFS A long **sweep** or **drive** ends with British success at **Lang Reit** .
- 7 March Transvaal **De la Rey** defeats British and captures **Methuen** at **Tweebosch** .  
March **Kitchener** enumerates **black Africans** in British army.
- March N.W. Boer massacre of **black Africans** at **Leliefontein** .  
Cape
- 9 April Transvaal Boer conference at **Klerksdorp** to consider **peace negotiations** .
- 11 April Transvaal Faulty **Boer tactics** give **Hamilton** and **Kekewich** victory at **Rooiwal** .
- 4 May N.W. Siege of **O'Okiep**, started by **Smuts**, relieved by British.  
Cape
- 6 May Transvaal Zulu force overcomes Boers at **Holkrantz** .
- 15–17 and 29–31 May Transvaal **Vereeniging** peace conference of Boers, chaired by C. F. **Beyers** .

31 May

Transvaal Peace treaty signed.

June/July

Boer **prisoners-of-war** released from camps in **Bermuda**, Ceylon, India and St Helena.

Reference: Wessels, André, *The Phases of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Bloemfontein, The War Museum of the Boer Republics, 1998).

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and unfranchised, an outcome that, if it troubled some of the British, was not allowed to inhibit the conclusion of an agreement between the warring whites.

The Boer burghers were frequently accompanied by their black *agterryers*, literally their after-riders. The *agterryer* acted as groom, cook, forager, companion and ally. President Steyn of the Orange Free State owed his escape from the British at Reitz to the resourcefulness and loyalty of his *agterryer*, Jan Ruiters, whom Steyn described as his bodyguard and cook. In battle, an *agterryer* would frequently take up arms alongside his *Oubaas*, or master. Some 10,000 black Africans, it is estimated, took part in the war in Boer service.

The British made a considered decision at the outset not to make use of black troops to fight, but they did employ large numbers of them as scouts and drivers as well as taking them on as servants. It is estimated that the drivers alone numbered some 14,000 men, earning up to ninety shillings a month, while less important jobs yielded forty to fifty shillings a month. These were good wages at the time, and, in the absence of work in the mines closed by the war, were most welcome. As the war went on British views changed. Black Africans who owned rifles were allowed to keep them. Then, in July 1901, when the Boer Assistant Chief-commandant P. H. Kritzinger had invaded Cape Colony, he declared that black Africans in British service would be shot even if unarmed. Their subsequent need to defend themselves led to the issue of arms to them.

In March 1902 the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Kitchener, was finally compelled to admit to the number of black Africans serving in

The 75mm guns were used to defend Boer positions and as support weapons in attack. They could fire both shrapnel and common shell (that is, high explosive in a steel case). The Pom-Pom was a large calibre machine-gun that fired one-pound (0.45kg) explosive shells. It used smokeless powder, and thus its position could not be detected from a distance, but the effect of the shells' explosions was fairly trivial. It was useful for the destruction of morale induced by the relentless repetition of its fire – pom, pom, pom, pom – and for range-finding by noting the fall of shot.

The usefulness of artillery to the Boers declined as the war went on. After the action at Bothaville Chief-commandant Christiaan De Wet made little of the loss of his artillery, both because ammunition was running low and because mobility and low visibility had become greater assets than artillery.

*75mm Creusot QF*: Weight of shell: common – 11.5lb/5.2kg; shrapnel – 14lb/6.4kg. Range – 6,800 yards/6,200m.

*75mm Krupp QF*: Weight of shell: common – 13.5lb/6.1kg; shrapnel – 11lb/5kg. Range: time fuse – 3,850 yards/3,520m; percussion – 6,600 yards/6,035m.

*120mm Krupp Howitzer*: Weight of shell – 35lb/15.9kg. Range – 6,300 yards/5,750m.

*155mm Creusot Long Tom*: Weight of shell – 94lb/43kg. Range – 11,000 yards/10,060m.

*37mm Maxim-Nordenfelt Pom-Pom*: Weight of shell – 11lb/0.45kg. Range – 3,000 yards/2,740m.

### See also:

[Albrecht, Major F. W. R.](#); [Armoured Train Incident](#); [Artillery, British, Field and Naval](#); [Bothaville, Action at](#); [Kimberley, Siege of](#); [Ladysmith, Siege of](#); [Mafeking, Siege of](#); [Magersfontein, Battle of](#); [Maxim-Nordenfelt Pom-Pom](#); [Trichardt, Lieutenant-colonel S.P.E.](#)

### Reference:

howitzers and twelve 6-inch guns. The Royal Horse Artillery brought out seventy-eight 12-pounders. Almost all these were out-ranged by Boer weapons of similar type. Furthermore, the British use of field artillery had to undergo a radical revision from the approved tactics that lost the guns at the Battle of Colenso to the fire-from-concealment approach that proved effective at the Battle of Magersfontein. In addition, new methods of coordinating artillery support and infantry movement had to be developed.

The Field Artillery manual, in its 1896 version, laid down that the role of the artillery was to “support other arms by fire establishing such a fire supremacy in the battle area that the enemy can neither interfere with operations nor develop his own effectively”. When coming into action it was laid down that the guns would be some 200 yards (183m) forward of the limbers (ammunition wagons) and wagons with the reserve ammunition, on a line with twenty-yard (18.3m) intervals between them and with an ammunition wagon just to the rear of each gun. The guns were to be placed on firm ground with a clear view of the target. This was all well and good unless the enemy had comparable or superior guns. When the British Horse Artillery, operating according to very similar rules, came into action at the Battle of Magersfontein, firm ground for the guns could not be found and the recoil of their fire pushed them back down the little hill on which they were standing, into cover from Boer fire. They were thus able to operate efficiently with an observer taking sight of the fall of shell and giving orders to improve the aim. The commander was reprimanded for this unconventional behaviour, though it was later adopted as routine.

*12-pounder*: Weight of shell – 12.5lb/5.67kg. Range: time fuse – 3,700 yards/3,380m; percussion – 5,400 yards/4,940m.

*15-pounder*: Weight of shell – 14lb/

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correctly set, it is very effective against troops in the open, but not very useful if they are entrenched or under cover behind rocks.

## Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

the Boers since 14 October 1899 and, with Cecil Rhodes caught in the town and making a great fuss to be rescued, it was deemed a matter of urgency to relieve the town. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Redvers Buller, therefore divided his forces and sent Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen up the railway via De Aar and Orange River Station with 1st Infantry Division.

The 1st Division comprised 1st Guards Brigade (3rd Grenadiers, 1st and 2nd Coldstreams and 1st Scots), 9th Brigade (1st Northumberland Fusiliers, 1st Loyal North Lancashire, 2nd Northamptonshire and 2nd Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry – KOYLI), 18th and 75th Field Batteries, Royal Artillery and the Naval Brigade, and some 400 men from HMS *Powerful*, HMS *Doris* and HMS *Monarch*, with four 12-pounder guns on improvised carriages. The small cavalry presence consisted of 9th Lancers and, attached to them, a squadron of the New South Wales Lancers. In addition, there were about 100 Mounted Infantry and 200 Rimington's Guides, a locally-raised force under Lieutenant-colonel M. F. Rimington.

At 2.30 a.m. on the morning of 23 November the 9th Brigade moved off to march the two miles (3km) over the railway towards Table Mountain on the northern flank while the Guards Brigade made for Gun and Grenadier Hills to the south. The Guards were first into action and, after a fierce struggle, took their objectives from the Boers. The 9th Brigade, with further to go, were still some 1,000 yards (915m) from Table Mountain when the firing started and they were forced to advance into a storm of lead. A company of 1st Scots Guards moved left to assist and Table Mountain was taken. They all moved forward against the next ridge, Mont Blanc, except for the Coldstreams who had to quell interference from a few Boers on hills on their southern flank. The combination of artillery fire and infantry assault had now become too much for the Boers and they took to their horses, retreating in order to fight another day. Lieutenant C. W. Barton of the 2nd Northamptonshires (formerly the 58th Regiment of Foot) wrote: "The Grenadiers seem to have had some very hard fighting & had a terrible loss. A number of the 58th were with them but we had drummed it into the men that they must keep widely extended so that they kept about 6 or 10 paces apart while the Grenadiers were crowded to 1 pace apart & suffered accordingly."

See also:

[Artillery, British](#); [Graspan, Battle of](#); [Documents: The Battle of Belmont, C. W. Barton](#).

Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo- Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Jeans, T. T., *The Naval Brigades in the South African War 1899–1900* (London, Sampson Low, Marston & Co., 1901; reprinted by the London Stamp Exchange Ltd.); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).



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after heavy shelling, and the ZARP were wiped out. With their left flank undefended, the Boers could no longer hold the line and Botha ordered a withdrawal, which was followed by guerrilla warfare. The battle is also known as Dalmanutha, the next village to the east.

After the battle of Diamond Hill (or Donderhoek), east of Pretoria, in June, the British Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, was concerned with the task of trapping Boers in the north-eastern Orange Free State, close to the Drakensberg Mountains and the Basutoland (Lesotho) border. At the same time Assistant Commandant-general Koos De la Rey, together with Jan Smuts, had taken some 7,000 men in a wide arc to the north and then west of Pretoria to operate in the Magaliesberg Mountains. It was not until August that the advance east along the railway towards Portuguese East Africa was resumed and by then Botha had organised defence in depth north

Boer military action was based on the commando system. This had been contrived to meet the needs of a farming people extending their land-holdings in the face of opposition from indigenous peoples. The country was arranged in local districts and each district had to provide a commando, manned by its citizens or burghers. Every man between sixteen and sixty years of age was liable to serve, those between eighteen and thirty-four going first, then those up to fifty years and, in the last resort, those up to sixty years. The system created formations of different sizes. Thaba 'Nchu commando numbered 98 men while Pretoria had 2,832. Commandos were sub-divided into wards, each of which elected its commander, a Field Cornet who might have an Assistant Field Cornet to aid him.

The Transvaal (South African Republic) State Artillery was a well-disciplined force, uniformed, and commanded by Lieutenant-colonel S. P. E. Trichardt. It numbered 733 men and was equipped with four 155mm Creusots (Long Toms), four 120mm Krupp howitzers, fourteen 75mm quick-firing guns and five other 75mm guns. There were twenty-two 37mm Maxim-Nordenfelt Pom-Poms and another twenty-two guns of various kinds. The Orange Free State Artillery was just as professional but smaller, with 474 men, and much less well equipped. It had fourteen breech-loading 75mm Krupps and seven 9-pounder rifled breech-loading Armstrongs, together with seven other old guns. It was commanded by the Prussian-born Major F. W. R. Albrecht.

The ZARP, Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek Politie or South African Republic Police, were 1,545 strong. The Johannesburg Police were particularly unpopular with the *uitlanders* or incomers who left to fight on the British side as a result of the oppressive treatment the latter had endured before the war. These men, like the 150 Orange Free State Police, were well-disciplined and professional.

In the course of the war, particularly in the guerrilla phase, the commandos tended to break up because of casualties and departures. The remaining men formed units of their own such as the Afrikaner Cavalry Corps which Commandant Malan put together to oppose the invasion of the Transvaal. The scout, Danie Theron, of whom Christiaan De Wet thought so highly, headed a formation known as Theron's Scouts and there were a number of similar units.

The foreign volunteers were formed partly from men already in South Africa and partly from people who came expressly to fight in the Boer cause. Amongst the former were the German Corps, the Hollander Corps,

became the commander of the Transvaal's forces in March 1900. In spite of the energetic efforts of the British to capture him, he remained in the field to the end of the war.

Botha was born on the family farm and gained some military experience in the Zulu Civil War of 1883–88. In 1886 he married a lady described by the British press as “of Irish descent whose maiden name was Emmet, and who claims relationship to Thomas Addis Emmet, the United Irish leader of 1798, and to Robert Emmet, executed for high treason in 1803”. The Bothas moved to a farm in the Vryheid district of the New Republic, which became part of the Transvaal in 1888.

When General Lucas Meyer fell ill outside Ladysmith during the Battle of Lombard's Kop or Modderspruit on Mournful Monday, 30 October 1899, he was replaced by the young Botha. After Ladysmith was besieged Botha continued south until, after the Battle of Willow Grange, his commander, Piet Joubert decided to turn back. Botha was then responsible for the preparation of the defences along the Tugela River in anticipation of Buller's attempt to relieve Ladysmith. He assumed, correctly, but only because the Englishman changed his mind, that Buller would attack frontally along the railway line. Botha plotted to let the enemy cross the river, blow up the bridge behind them and destroy them, leaving them no means of retreat. Buller, however, sought to secure his flanks first and in failing to do so had to abort a frontal advance. At Spioenkop Botha failed to garrison the hill sufficiently to prevent British occupation, but he reacted firmly and fast, bringing the British under ferocious shellfire and rallying his men to clamber up the kop. After a terrible day's fighting the Boers were ready to abandon the Tugela line, and it was only Botha's personal intervention that kept them in place.

Botha could not, however, prevent Buller's eventual success in the Battle of the Tugela Heights in February 1900, nor could he halt the British advance northwards. Botha's plans to resist at Langs Nek were put into action by his brother, Assistant Commandant-general Christiaan Botha, but were frustrated by Buller's elegant flanking movement through Botha's Pass. After the fall of Pretoria in June, Botha held Lord Roberts for two days in the Battle of Diamond Hill and at the end of August fought the last set-piece battle of the war at Bergendal when, once again, Buller had the better of him. In the guerrilla phase of the war Botha not only remained at large, but contrived the defeat of Colonel G. E. Benson at Bakenlaagte and the victory over Lieutenant-colonel Hubert Gough at Blood River Poort. However, it became clear to him that the Boer cause could not be won and he advocated peace at the conference in May 1902.

After the war he became the first Prime Minister of the new Union of South Africa in 1910. When the First World War began in 1914 he supported the British and put down the rebellion led by his former comrade, Christiaan De Wet. He then commanded the South African forces against the Germans in South West Africa, a campaign that he completed in July 1915. He was present at the



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black Africans are not included in these figures. It must be understood that not all these men were present at any single time. Volunteers typically served for twelve months. Furthermore, of the 458,000 men in South African service, only about 20 per cent were fighting troops, the rest being in services of supply, lines of communication and other support functions without which an army cannot operate in the field. This must be kept in mind when attempting any comparison with Boer numbers.

The army was made up of cavalry, artillery and infantry to which mounted infantry were added in great numbers later in the war. The

cavalry were quickly shown to be ill-suited to the style of war being fought. They carried out a charge at the Battle of Elandslaagte, using the lance, but that was almost the last classic cavalry charge in history. Their duties as scouts and flanking forces continued, but the knock-out blow to the Boer siege of Kimberley, the long, fast out-flanking ride to relieve the town, killed or injured most of the heavy horses they used. Thus, by the end of February 1900, the cavalry as such was a spent force.

The artillery were present in small numbers at the start of the war, and had to be supplemented with guns provided by the Royal Navy on improvised carriages. The Royal Field Artillery employed 15-pounder breech-loading guns while the Royal Horse Artillery had the lighter 12-pounders. Both fired shrapnel, shells that burst when a time fuse acted, hurling out metal balls. The Field Artillery also had 5-inch howitzers which fired common shells, that is, shells filled with explosive. Lyddite had just been introduced but the high hopes regarding its effectiveness were not realised, and it was replaced after the war with TNT. The PomPom, the 37mm Maxim-Vickers used by the Boers, was soon adopted and fifty of them were sent out from England during the war. Approximately 115 guns, including obsolete ones, were in the British artillery's hands at the start of the war and some 570 were sent out during the conflict.

The infantry were, initially, regular soldiers with experience on garrison duties in outposts of the Empire. Some had fought in the wars in north Africa and in India, mostly against poorly armed and untrained irregulars. They were armed, as were the Boers, with modern high-velocity rifles, but had never fought against men similarly armed. They were, for the most part, used to deploying in close order, that is, in lines of men only a yard (0.9m) apart. The more experienced commanders, such as Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen, gave orders for a much more extended deployment, six or ten times more spacious, and others soon learned that this was vital against modern rifle fire. As the war continued the men acquired greater respect for making use of cover from enemy view and enemy fire and came to recognise the value of good marksmanship.

After the set-piece phase of the war and the last big battle at Bergendal in August 1900, the war became more fluid, developing into guerrilla warfare. This demanded greater mobility on the part of the British and Mounted Infantry became the core of the fighting service. Men were taken from infantry regiments, volunteers came from Britain and the Empire and urgent training was undertaken. In addition to being able to ride a horse, a man had to know how to look after his mount, maintain its health and respect its strengths and weaknesses. Ignorance cost the army dear and two-thirds of the half million horses died.

The Royal Navy also contributed to the land forces. Captain Percy Scott devised gun carriages which were improvised to carry both 12-pounder and 4.7-inch guns that were used in Natal and the north-eastern Cape, and the Naval Brigade fought with distinction as infantry at the Battle of



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Commander-in-Chief of the British Army. Buller was commanding Aldershot District when appointed Commander-in-Chief, Army Corps, South Africa.

He was troubled by the poor relationship between the War Office, headed by Lord Lansdowne, and the army and frustrated by the lack of clarity in policy and in his functional powers. The position of Commander-in-Chief had, at that time, more to do with ‘jollyng-the-chaps-along’ than with actually commanding. The Commander-in-Chief in the field had no staff and no office organisation, deficiencies that were revealed by the experience of the war and rectified after it by the reforms of 1906. Buller warned of the dangers of advancing too far north in Natal, but was ignored and the need to relieve Ladysmith resulted. He pointed out the consequences of under-manning the war effort, but was again ignored and a long war was the consequence.

On arriving in South Africa he was subjected to political pressure to raise the sieges at Kimberley, where Cecil Rhodes was crying out for rescue, Ladysmith and Mafeking, while simultaneously preventing any incursions into Cape Colony. He was forced to divide his forces and attack on three fronts, taking command of one of them himself. On the Tugela River, south of Ladysmith, he was ill-served by maps and intelligence and wary of operating too far away from the railway, his vital supply line. Attempting a frontal attack at Colenso in December 1899, he called off the action and withdrew, losing Colonel Long’s guns in the process. He was severely criticised not only for this, but for the losses at Magersfontein and Stormberg which, taken together, gave the period the name of Black Week. In London the decision was taken to replace Buller as Commander-in-Chief with Lord Roberts. In fact, the influence Buller could have had on battles on other fronts was negligible, and his own actions had been intended to spare his men futile loss and sacrifice. A case can be made for the view that Buller’s disgrace in these circumstances encouraged the hardening of the commanders’ hearts in the First World War.

The British forces at the Battle of Spioenkop were under the control of Lieutenant-general Sir Charles Warren, who was slow and clumsy, but who was also poorly supported by a British artillery unable to neutralise that of the Boers. Buller took personal

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river further west, and when Colonel C. J. Long's guns were unmanned by Boer rifle fire. Buller withdrew rather than lose more men in a futile endeavour. Taken together with the defeats at Magersfontein and Stormberg, this reverse led to this period being named "Black Week". The death of Lord Roberts's son Freddy of wounds received at Colenso did nothing to improve matters. Public dismay and political pressure led to Lord Roberts replacing Buller as Commander-in-Chief.

Under Commandant-general Louis Botha, who assumed that the British would attempt to get to Ladysmith by crossing the Tugela near Colenso, the Boers had established themselves in strong positions on the hills north of the meandering river. They had ten 75mm guns, a 5-inch howitzer and a Pom-Pom. The heights were edged with positions for artillery and riflemen behind stone-built walls and gun-pits. On the east the Boers had crossed the river and occupied the hill, Nhlangwini from which they planned to string out their artillery in a line to direct at the British right. This exposed position was held by the Wakkerstroom commando under Joshua Joubert, while the Krugersdorp, Vryheid and Heidelberg commandos stood north of Colenso village. The western line was held by the Swaziland Police and the Ermelo and Middelburg commandos.

Buller knew nothing of these details. What he could see easily enough was that the gently sloping land descended to the winding river beyond which the hills rose sharply. It is said that he lacked a respectable map, although he may have had or seen the Intelligence Department, War Office, map number 1449 which was published in 1899. This shows a drift in the Loop and gives an impression of the river flowing through a valley much more

symmetrical than it is in fact. The intelligence officers familiar with Natal were besieged in Ladysmith. The Field Intelligence Department in Pietermaritzburg had prepared a blue-print map (one inch to the mile) from available data that showed upward of a dozen drifts across the river, but which also had large blank areas. Daunted by the challenge here, Buller planned to have Major-general G. Barton's 6th Brigade make a show at Colenso while the main force made a night march to Potgieter's Drift, some eighteen miles (29km) to the west to cross and hurry on to Ladysmith. However, the losses at Magersfontein and Stormberg made him cautious about so dramatic a venture and the exposure of his supply lines, so he decided to fight at Colenso.

Early in the morning of 14 December the British began shelling the hills beyond the Tugela. The Royal Navy had, as a result of the efforts of Captain Percy Scott, created 4.7-inch field guns out of their shipboard armament as well as 12-pounders, and a battery under Commander A. H. Limpus bombarded the Boers, with, as far as one can tell, little result given the British ignorance of their positions. In order to cross the Tugela by a drift (ford) and engage the Boer right, the Irish Brigade – 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, 1st Border, 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers and 1st Connaught Rangers – were marched forward in mass of quarter columns, a parade-ground formation, not to the drift to the west but right into the great meander known as the Loop. Here they were subjected to murderous fire from trenches on the surrounding banks and from guns on the hills above. On the right Colonel Long, with 14th and 66th Field Batteries, Royal Artillery, accompanied by the six naval 12-pounders of Lieutenant F. C. A. Ogilvy, pushed ahead, east of the railway to a position some 1,000 yards (914m) from the river. His guns were just coming into action when a storm of fire burst on them, not only from in front but also from above on Nhangwini. In the centre Major-general H. J. T. Hildyard's 2nd Brigade – 2nd Devonshire, 2nd Queen's, 2nd East Surrey and 2nd West Yorkshire – gained Colenso village quite easily as they moved forward in rushes using natural cover. On the extreme right Colonel Lord Dundonald's 2nd Mounted Brigade was attempting to assault Joubert's Wakkerstroomers. It became clear to Buller that the Boers were too well placed to be defeated and that his men were suffering as much from the heat and lack of water as from enemy action. Added to that was the near despair induced by attempting to fight an invisible enemy, one whose positions were well concealed and not even revealed by gunsmoke as a result of using smokeless powder. Buller gave orders for Hart to withdraw and went himself to supervise the extraction of Long's guns from their exposed site. Two of the Royal Artillery's guns were brought out but further attempts were met with heavy losses. Seven Victoria Crosses were won in these attempts, including a posthumous award to Lieutenant Freddy Roberts, before Buller called a halt. British killed, wounded and missing amounted to some 1,140 men while the Boer losses were trivial, at around forty men.

months of 1902 saw some genuine efforts to alleviate the suffering of the blacks as well. More and smaller camps were set up and efforts were made to facilitate the cultivation of land near them, though very few ploughs were provided. The death rate fell, but the camps remained miserable places in which to live.

The marginal increase in productivity made the camps targets for roving Boer forces seeking food, so armed pickets were recruited from the inmates. By the end of the war there were 600 black Africans guarding camps in Orange River Colony and 250 in Transvaal. Nonetheless, there were some successful Boer attacks on the camps. For example, early in 1901 258 cattle and 400 sheep were taken in three raids at Potchefstroom and on 29 December 1901 Piet Lombard's commando raided Taaibosch camp, south of Vereeniging, taking money and clothing.

At the end of the war the British administration faced new problems associated with the camps. There were only four months before the start of the rainy season, by which time the people would have to be back on their land with everything they needed to plant crops, but there was a shortage of transport, of draught animals, and of grain both for seed and for survival until the next harvest. What made matters worse was that men working for the British were being released and so numbers in the camps actually increased, in Orange River Colony to 60,604 and in Transvaal to 55,910. However, the Boers were eager to return to their lands and needed labour, as did the reviving, British-dominated, mining industry. By the end of the year almost all internees had been repatriated, but for many the suffering continued as compensation payment for grain and livestock was slow to come and almost impossible to administer. The British promise to pay for supplies requisitioned by the Boers during the war went unfulfilled because receipts had not been given to the black farmers. Lord Milner himself wrote of the need to "give something quickly to restart them [the black farmers] as they are fearfully destitute". Notwithstanding this, the funds available were not equitably distributed. In the Transvaal the Repatriation Department gave £1,183,594 to supply seed, tools and livestock to white farmers but only £16,194 to black farmers. Moreover, 1902 and 1903 were marked by drought; in many areas black populations faced starvation and, unable to support themselves, were forced to seek employment by others for survival. This created the conditions of dependency that contributed to the establishment of apartheid.

### See also:

[Africans, Black](#); [Agterryer](#); [Concentration Camps, White](#); [Documents: Report to the Committee of the Distress Fund for South African Women and Children](#), E. Hobhouse, 1901.

### Reference:

Anon., *Black Concentration Camps during the Anglo-Boer War* (Bloemfontein, War Museum, 1996); Jackson, Tabitha, *The Boer War* (London, Macmillan, 1999); Warwick, Peter, *Black People and the South African War 1899–1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983).



Some news of the deprivation of the inmates reached London and Miss Emily Hobhouse, funded by the Committee of the Distress Fund for South African Women and Children, sailed from England in December 1900 with supplies of clothes and groceries to alleviate what they perceived to be the problem. The High Commissioner, Sir Alfred Milner, made her welcome in Cape Town and provided a railway wagon to carry her gifts. She had Kitchener's leave to visit the camps. Clearly neither of these men had any idea of what she would find.

The shock and distress experienced by Emily Hobhouse is evident in her report which is reproduced in full in the Documents appended to this book. The conditions she discovered were terrible. Malnutrition and disease were rife, desperate administrators, inept and responsible alike, were swamped by successive shipments of displaced Boers dumped on them by the army and what accommodation there was soon became insufficient. In London the report, balanced, fair and horrifying, caused an uproar. The Minister of War, St John Brodrick, attempted to evade questions, but pressure from the increasing number of pro-Boers forced him to appoint a commission of enquiry which, under the direction of Mrs Millicent Fawcett, went to South Africa. Meanwhile Miss Hobhouse attempted to pay a second visit, but this time was refused entry. This added to the protests and Milner had to take charge of the camps in November 1901. Mrs Fawcett reported in December, confirming all Hobhouse's findings, adopting all the recommendations and adding to them. It should be noted that neither lady visited a black camp, although Emily Hobhouse wrote of their existence.

Conditions slowly improved and mortality rates declined. Eventually, and ironically, the policy was reversed and it was found more destructive to Boer commandos to refuse to shelter their displaced families. The total of those who died in the camps was 27,927, of whom 26,251 were women and children. More than 22,000 of the dead were under sixteen years of age. They had not, as in the concentration camps of Nazi Germany, been put to death deliberately, but the damage to relations between British and Boer had been immense and was to last.

### See also:

[British Opposition to the War](#); [Brodrick, The Right Hon. W. St John F.](#); [Concentration Camps, Black](#); [Hobhouse, Emily](#); [Sweeps](#); [Documents: Hobhouse, Emily, Report of a Visit to the Camps of Women and Children in the Cape and Orange River Colonies \(London, Friars Printing Association, 1901\).](#)

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the Last Stand at Paardeberg at the St Louis World Fair.

### See also:

[Mafeking, Siege of](#); [Magersfontein, Battle of](#); [Modder River, Battle of](#); [Paardeberg, Battle of](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).

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He won notable victories over the British and in spite of their best efforts they were never able to catch him. He resisted any suggestion of surrender to the very end, but bowed to the majority view. His determination to oppose the British was extreme and found expression once more in the uprising of 1914.

Born in the Orange Free State, De Wet served against the Basotho in 1865 in their second war against the Free State. After moving to the Transvaal and becoming a Field Cornet in the Heidelberg Commando, he fought in all the major engagements of the First Boer War in northern Natal. At the outbreak of the Second he was living in Heilbron in the Orange Free State and served in Natal as a member of that commando, swiftly being promoted to Acting Commandant. He played a part in the Boer victory at Nicholson's Nek on 30 October 1889 and was transferred by order of President Steyn to the western frontier on 9 December with the rank of Vechtgeneral, arriving at Magersfontein on 16 December. Here he served under Assistant Commandant-general Piet Cronjé of whom he formed a poor opinion. When Cronjé was surrounded at Paardeberg, De Wet contrived a means of escape for the men which they declined to use, though he omits to consider to what extent his eagerness to plunder a British supply train at Waterval Drift, and his consequent delay in moving in support, contributed to the British investment of Cronjé's force.

At Sannaspos on 31 March 1900 De Wet showed his flexibility in turning a destructive mission directed at a waterworks into an ambush of great subtlety, before going on to conduct successful operations to the south. He made the mistake of letting his personal hatred for the Cape Colony Afrikanders who joined Brabant's Horse overcome his military judgement at Jammerbergdrif but thereafter remained mobile and elusive. His rich haul of plunder at Roodewal in June 1900 triggered the British farm burning reprisals with the destruction of his own farm nearby. The following month he broke for ever with his brother who advocated making peace. De Wet's attempts to enter Cape Colony led to a two-week chase south of the Orange River, but little was achieved. As the blockhouses

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Pretoria. His left was eventually broken at Diamond Hill, but not before his men's spirits had been restored and their confidence that they could beat the British regained.

Instead of giving up when the capital, Pretoria was taken, the Transvaalers shifted the government east to Machadodorp and continued the fight. Botha had 6,000 men and twenty-two guns against the British commander Lord Roberts's 14,000 men and seventy guns. However, the British were feeling the effects of their six-week advance from Bloemfontein. Roberts planned to follow his usual practice of attacking the flanks and Botha prepared for this. As a result General French was held in the north by Assistant Commandant-general De la Rey's forces and the 12th Lancers found themselves facing a Boer-

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expanding Port Natal to become Durban. The Sand River Convention of 1852 recognised the independence of the Transvaal and the Bloemfontein Convention of 1854 did the same for the Orange Free State.

### See also:

[Blood River, Battle of](#); [Boer Forces](#); [Commandeer](#).

### Reference:

Troup, Freda, *South Africa: An Historical Introduction* (London, Eyre Methuen, 1972).

to seize Elandslaagte, surprising a supply train heading for the north, but capturing the next arrival at the station. The train was looted and found to contain, amongst other things, case upon case of whisky. This fuelled a bizarre concert party that evening at which both “God Save the Queen” and the Transvaal Volkslied were sung. Colonel A. F. Schiel, with the German volunteers, followed up and Kock and the rest of his force came down into the town on 20 October in order to select good defensive positions. Schiel argued for better defensive positions to be chosen than those on the ridge to the south-east which he held could too easily be outflanked, but Kock was not persuaded.

The presence of the Boers became known to the British by telegraph and Major-general Sir John French, with five squadrons of Imperial Light Horse, the Natal Field Battery and four companies of the Manchester Regiment, was sent to reconnoitre on 21 October. The Boers opened fire with two 75mm Krupps under the command of Major Erasmus of the *Staatsartillerie* and French telegraphed for reinforcements. The 5th Lancers and 5th Dragoon Guards came up by road with the Natal Mounted Rifles and two batteries of the Royal Field Artillery while the infantry, under Colonel Ian Hamilton, came by train. The infantry comprised seven companies of the 1st Devonshire Regiment and five of the 2nd Gordon Highlanders. The British total was now some 3,500 men and 18 guns. The Boers numbered about 1,000 men, including the Johannesburg Commando under Commandant Ben Viljoen, a contingent of South African Republic Police (ZARPs), the Vrede Commando and the foreign volunteers, German and Dutch.

A brief skirmish against Schiel’s men ended with the Lancers and the Dragoons holding the railway station. The principal action against the hills began in the mid-afternoon, with the Devons on the left, the Manchesters and the Gordons on the right with the rest of the Lancers and the Imperial Light Horse on their right flank. The advance stalled under Boer fire but the British artillery was moved forward to provide covering fire and the British moved on. The sky grew dark and a thunderstorm broke as the infantry struggled with the barbed wire of the farm fields. The Imperial Light Horse under Colonel Scott Chisholme rushed the hill, the Gordons broke through the wire fence and the British swarmed over the hill. The Devons came on with fixed bayonets. General Kock attempted a counter-attack but was wounded; he was later stripped and his valuables looted. He was not found until the next day and died ten days later.

Clearly defeated, the Boers fled. The Dragoons and Lancers at the station followed them, riding them down with their lances, pulling up, turning and riding at them again. Many Boers turned to surrender but were ridden down nonetheless, some needlessly, some because the momentum of a cavalry charge is such that it cannot be stopped on a whim. The Boers regarded the Lancers as barbarians for fighting with spears, and bore them lasting enmity.

The victory at Elandslaagte gave General Yule the opportunity to



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nion being expressed in newspapers and magazines in Europe, nor the spread of disinformation by the Boers, British and other countries not directly involved.

Under Kaiser Wilhelm II, Germany had supported the Boers at the time of the Jameson Raid, when an attempt was made to subvert the authorities in Johannesburg. By the time the Boer War started in 1899, however, British diplomatic moves had improved relations with Germany and, besides, Britain was still the world's greatest maritime power. France, although frustrated by her failure to acquire a colonial toe-hold in East Africa as a result of the British presence, was still more eager to repossess Alsace-Lorraine and British support against Germany would be vital for that. The Netherlands were wholeheartedly in support of their Boer kinsmen in South Africa, as were the Flemish population of Belgium. The French-speaking Walloons of Belgium nurtured an antipathy to Britain in any case and shared their countrymen's views, but neither of these two small nations had sufficient power to influence affairs. Only Russia showed a harmony of government policy and public opinion in supporting the Boers, but it amounted to very little in practice.

In the media things were very different. The French press in particular was loud in its condemnation of the British, and wildly romantic in its portrayal of the Boers, who were presented as champions of freedom (the black African population being forgotten). Intellectuals and poets wrote moving pleas on behalf of the Boers and imaginative accounts of British beastliness with as much attention to veracity as the popular press had shown before and have shown since. The principal outcome was the raising of funds for the relief of distress and much the same thing was taking place in Britain at the same time.

The Boer republics sent missions to the governments of Europe and eventually President Kruger himself undertook such a role, but with no success. As the war continued, a colonial war in China, the Boxer Rebellion, distracted world attention and the Boers were forced to recognise that external help would never come.

### See also:

[British Opposition to the War](#); [United States of America, Attitude of](#).

### Reference:

Lowry, Donal, "When the World Loved the Boers", *History Today*, May 1999; Pretorius, Fransjohan, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Don Nelson, 1985).

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one's opponent to accept that the cost of continuing the war is unacceptably high, either in terms of money, casualties or political disadvantage, or a combination of these.

After the fall of Bloemfontein, the Boer leaders convened a council of war at Kroonstad on 17 March 1900. Here, only ten days before he died, Commandant-general Piet Joubert said: "The time has come for us to look out continually for opportunities to damage the enemy with our attacks; but to do this we need to dispense with our laagers; our commandos must now move out on horseback with raincoats and a bit of food, no more. No longer await the enemy, but send out small sections under responsible commandants which will support each other when possible. We must attack the enemy ceaselessly, swiftly and unexpectedly." The clumsy wagon trains were to be set aside. However, many Boers disliked the policy and repeatedly in the months to come commanders would have to take renewed decisions to dispense with their accumulating baggage trains in the interests of mobility.

With the British in control of all external lines of supply from September 1900, the Boer commandos had to rely on the capture of arms, munitions and, to some extent, food and clothing. These circumstances were very similar to those of Don Juan Martin Diez in Spain in 1808, when "every [French] courier was intercepted; many large convoys of arms, ammunition, clothing, warlike stores, carriages, mules, &c., fell into his hands. . .". Wagon trains, as in the case of the ambush at Waterval Drift, and railway-based storehouses, as at Roodewal, were targets for the Boers, both with the intention of depriving the British and of supplying themselves.

Guerrilla warfare is exceedingly difficult to counter. In South Africa the British could not hope to deprive the Boers of the support of their own people on the veldt by persuasion or by bribery, and so resorted to depriving them of the people themselves and the resources they controlled. Farm burning and land clearance were employed, with the displaced people being housed in camps. These camps became known as concentration camps. Their use was progressively discontinued later in the war in response to public protest in Britain and other countries outside South Africa. The pressure on guerrilla fighters was thus increased when they found they had to look after their people themselves. The other principal technique employed by the British was to drive the Boers up against fortified lines of blockhouses and barbed wire in order to catch them. These methods were largely successful, but the eagerness of the British to end a costly war did give the Boers the opportunity to negotiate peace terms which were surprisingly favourable to themselves.

Not all of the Boers cared for their war being described as a guerrilla war. Christiaan De Wet wrote expressly rejecting the term on the grounds that their war was authorised by a legitimate government, that of the Orange Free State. The same applied to his allies from the Transvaal.

**See also:**

[Blockhouses](#); [Concentration Camps, Black](#); [Concentration Camps, White](#); [Drives](#); [Roodewal, Battle of](#); [Waterval Drift, Action at](#).

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Anon, *The Military Exploits of Don Juan Martin Diez* (London, Carpenter & Son, 1823); De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Pimlott, John, ed., *Guerrilla Warfare* (London, Bison Books, 1985); Pretorius, Fransjohan, *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999).

as opposed to cavalry, tactics. The horses were small, virtually ponies, and were well used to the conditions. Their riders were sensitive to their horses' needs, well aware of their limitations and concerned to avoid demanding more than the horse was capable of giving.

The British mounted forces were of three types. The cavalry was the established arm and it had done much to come to terms with new conditions of battle, as the *Cavalry Drill Book* of 1896, written by Colonel John French with help from Major Douglas Haig, demonstrates. The massed charge had not been of much relevance against the fragmented forces encountered in colonial wars and a range of sophisticated tactics had been developed. However, at the outbreak of the war, the cavalry was present only in modest numbers.

The forces raised locally, such as the Imperial Light Horse, were of mounted infantry who rode to the scene of the action but fought on foot. They, like the Mounted Infantry used in large numbers later in the war, fought dismounted, but unlike the Boers, had one man in four out of the fight, holding his own and his companions' horses.

British problems were caused by a number of factors. First, the standard daily ration for a cavalry horse was ten pounds (4.5kg) of oats, twelve pounds (5.4kg) of hay and eight pounds (3.6kg) of straw. The difficulties of supply forced the British Commander-in-Chief, Sir Redvers Buller, to order, on 6 November 1899, that the ration be reduced to twelve pounds of oats and eight pounds of grass if it could be had – starvation rations. Second, few horses could be acquired in South Africa and so mounts were imported first from Britain and eventually from such distant sources as Australia and Argentina. On board a boat these horses could not be exercised and thus arrived unfit and ill-fed, only to be thrust into immediate service. Finally, the abrupt expansion of mounted infantry by Lord Roberts, when he arrived as Commander-in-Chief in January 1900, brought many men into that arm who were ignorant of any aspect of horsemanship and many had to be taught to ride. They did not know how to care for their horses, to husband their strength or to judge what distance they could carry a certain load. The solution was to supply enough remounts to deal with the fearful mortality that resulted and to accept the operational inefficiencies that could not be changed.

Although the principal tasks of the mounted force were scouting, supporting infantry and, later in the war, attempting to gain positions from which to engage the Boers while dismounted, the tactics still included the charge. This has been ridiculed by many commentators but it was, on occasion, very effective and was even used by the Boers. At the Battle of Elandslaagte fleeing Boers were pursued and killed, to the horror of their countrymen, in a classic charge that, if unpleasant, achieved its objective. In the course of the British flanking approach to Kimberley, Boer opposition at Klip Drift amounted to some 2,000 riflemen. The British cavalry charged, broke through, and suffered between four men wounded (Cavalry Division war diary) and twenty killed (other reports) – very small losses in



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was summoned to South Africa to take command of the 1st Mounted Infantry Brigade and was credited with the fine quality of their training.

### See also:

[British Forces](#); [Horses](#).

### Reference:

Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

viable alternative but many joined because it offered a secure (especially in time of peace) and manly vocation. As in the American Revolution, the Irish in British service found themselves facing their countrymen, both those of republican views and those who were simply opposed to the British. Neither group regarded this situation as unusual or remarkable.

Although the participation of Irish volunteers in the Boers' fight against the British makes interesting reading, this was a very minor factor in the war. During three years of war, probably fewer than 500 men were involved, many of whom did not live in Ireland, in Boer forces that numbered some 80,000 men.

In the British army, the Irish (5th) Brigade under Major-general Arthur Fitzroy Hart, which served under Sir Redvers Buller in Natal, consisted of four distinguished regiments with proud histories. These, the 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the 2nd Royal Irish Rifles, the 1st Connaught Rangers and the 1st Royal Dublin Fusiliers, had been part of the Army Corps sent to South Africa in October and November 1899. At the Battle of Colenso on 15 December 1899 the Irish Brigade suffered severe losses in the Loop, and the slopes of the hills alongside the Tugela River below Hart's Hill are marked with the graves of, and memorials to, the Irishmen who fell in the final drive to relieve Ladysmith in February 1900. Queen Victoria was so moved by their courage that the "wearing of the green" was officially instituted for Irish regiments of the British army on St Patrick's Day and a new regiment was founded in their honour. On 5 April 1900 an Army Order was issued: "Her Majesty the Queen, having deemed it desirable to com-

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noel, *To The Bitter End* (London, Viking, 1985); McCracken, Donal, *MacBride's Brigade: Irish Commandos in the Anglo-Boer War* (Dublin, Four Courts Press, 1999); Wallace, R. L., *The Australians at the Boer War* (Canberra, The Australian War Memorial and the Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976).

reporting of the defeats that, taken together, became known as "Black Week".

The British War Office was taken by surprise at the outbreak of the war and had no arrangements in place for the accreditation or control of journalists. The Secretary of State for War, Lord Lansdowne, attempted to promote a censorship bill for total government control of the press in September 1899, but this could not be enacted and the military depended on exploiting their control of the telegraph lines. By the time the war was a few months old there were some seventy accredited correspondents on the British side, serving some thirty or more newspapers. In addition, there were artists and photographers. The written word reached Europe first, followed some weeks later by visual material which was often used as reference imagery for romanticised engravings of heroic deeds. Perhaps as many as 300 individuals were involved in news-gathering during the course of the war. Buller was intolerant of journalists and suffered accordingly. Roberts was careful to gain their goodwill and prospered in the public eye as a result.

The career war correspondent had come into being a few years earlier and in this war a number of individuals were eager to create, or build upon, their reputations. Among them were Winston Churchill, Leopold Amery and Bennett Burleigh from the British press, Julian Ralph from the United States of America and A. B. "Banjo" Paterson from Australia. Churchill did much to praise Ian Hamilton and Amery achieved the ruin of Sir Redvers Buller's reputation so efficiently that his questionable view remains popular even today. The dispatches read as eye-witness accounts even when they were not. Burleigh was offered Amery's condolences on missing Cronjé's surrender at Paardeberg but replied, according to Amery: "That's all you know about it, my boy". When Burleigh's report appeared in the *Daily Telegraph* it was "as complete, and as full of little touches suggesting an eye-witness story, as any of the others". This process was known as magic-carpeting, a report based on interviews with witnesses but presented as if the author himself had seen it all.

In addition to the professional reporters, the work of other individuals appeared in the press, either because a letter from a relative serving in South Africa was passed on or, in spite of regulations that forbade it, when a soldier acted as a correspondent.

The correspondents themselves were exposed to danger. Churchill was captured when an armoured train was ambushed and he also ventured to the top of Spioenkop during the battle. G. W. Steevens, correspondent for the *Morning Post*, died at Ladysmith of enteric (typhoid) fever, bringing his career to a close at thirty years of age.

See also:

[Churchill, Winston Spencer](#); [European Views of the War](#).

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Badsey, Stephen, "War Correspondents", *Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image*, ed. J. Gooch (London, Frank Cass, 2000); Lowry, Donal, "When the World Loved the Boers", *History Today*, May 1999; Ralph,



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Julian, *An American with Lord Roberts* (New York, Stokes, 1901); Stearn, Roger T., Bennett Burleigh, "Victorian War Correspondent", *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 65, 1991; Stearn, Roger T., "The British Press", *Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image*, op. cit.; Steevens, G. W., *From Capetown to Ladysmith* (Edinburgh, William Blackwood, 1900); Teulié, Gilles, "Tommy and the Press during the Anglo-Boer War", *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 81, 1995.

volunteer Town Guards. During the course of the siege Rhodes put the resources of De Beers, the diamondmining company, at the service of the townspeople and the chief engineer, an American called George Labram, built a look-out tower on mine-lifting gear, arranged pumps to supply fresh water and built a 4-inch gun. Among the supplies the company offered were 422 rifles, six machine-guns and 700,000 rounds of ammunition, the possession of which by a private business went unexplained.

On 25 November 1899, as Lord Methuen's relief column approached, and an attack on the Boer positions on Carter's Ridge was carried out under Lieutenant-colonel Scott Turner. The British casualties totalled seven killed and twenty-five wounded, but they captured over thirty Boers and killed or wounded two dozen more. A second attack on 27 November resulted in Scott Turner's death, together with that of more than twenty of his men and a greater number wounded for little gain. No further sorties were undertaken and, after Methuen's defeat at Magersfontein on 11 December, the British decided to sit out the siege, introducing rationing and attempting to drive unproductive black people out of the town. The Boers increased the pressure by bringing a Long Tom (Creusot 155mm gun) to shell Kimberley, with which they succeeded in killing Labram as he changed for dinner on Friday, 9 February 1900. The town was relieved six days later.

See also:

[Kekewich, Lientenant-colonel R. G.](#); [Kimberley, Relief of](#); [Rhodes, Cecil](#).

strike from Cape Colony towards the capitals of the Boer Republics but instead was forced to divide his forces in order to relieve this siege and the siege at Kimberley. In Natal this led to the battles of Colenso, Spioenkop and the Tugela Heights, costly engagements which were detrimental to Buller's reputation, before Ladysmith was relieved. The Boers, meanwhile, had foregone their greatest strength, that of mobility, and thus committed themselves to a long war, one they could not win.

The importance of Ladysmith to the British was its function as the principal military depot and camp in Natal. The town was located at the junction of the main road and rail routes between Durban and the Boer Republics. Harrismith, the railhead in the north-east of the Orange Free State, lay on the other side of the Drakensberg mountains to the northwest of Ladysmith while the railway to Johannesburg ran north-east and then due north through Dundee and Langs Nek to Volkrust in the Transvaal. Although it was therefore important as a supply centre, and thus not to be abandoned lightly, the town was vulnerable to attack. It lies in a bowl of hills and approach from the south is barred by the Tugela River and the high hills on its northern bank.

In the months before the outbreak of the Boer War in October 1899, the British sent 10,000 men from India as reinforcements to the 13,000 or so already in South Africa in August. These new forces were sent to Natal, the assumed objective of the Boers if war broke out, and a new General Officer Commanding, Natal, was appointed and also set out from India, Lieutenant-general Sir George White, with Colonels Ian Hamilton and Sir Henry Rawlinson on his staff. In Britain General Sir Redvers Buller, V.C., was appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Army Corps it was planned to send out. Buller was familiar with the terrain and the Boers, and was outspoken in his view that no attempt should be made to garrison towns north of the Tugela River. He was ignored, as he only became Commander-in-Chief on mobilisation on 22 September.

White permitted Major-general Sir William Penn Symons to occupy Dundee where he was attacked by the Boers whom he defeated in the Battle of Talana (20 October), but at the cost of his own life. The successor to the command there, Brigadier-general Yule was forced to abandon the town and lead a perilous but very successful withdrawal to Ladysmith, leaving the field to Commandant-general Piet Joubert's force. Further south, at Elandsplaagte, on 21 October Major-general Sir John French defeated Commandant-general Kock's forces, but again had to withdraw to Ladysmith. The peril that forced these retreats was the approach of the Orange Free State commandos under Chief-Commandant Martinus Prinsloo from Harrismith, threatening to cut them off. White checked them at Rietfontein (also known as Modderspruit) on 24 October to ensure Yule's safe arrival in Ladysmith and then fell back to Ladysmith, which the Boers interpreted as due to their prowess. By 28 October Commandant L. P. Steenkamp had occupied hills on either side of Nicholson's Nek, north of Ladysmith, Assistant Commandant-general



D. J. E. Erasmus and the Free State men had taken positions on Pepworth Hill to the north-east and General Lucas Meyer had taken the hills beyond the Modder Spruit to the east. The Boer embrace was closing in on Ladysmith.

White knew he had to take offensive action and, protecting his flanks at Nicholson's Nek and Lombard's Kop, he sent a force against the Boers holding Pepworth Hill. The eastern flank was badly mauled by Meyer and the northern flank by Steenkamp, who took over 950 prisoners, and the operation as a whole failed dismally. The day, 30 October, became known as Mournful Monday. The Boer "Long Tom", the 155mm Creusot, was located on Pepworth Hill and started firing into town to the peril of soldiers and civilians alike. White had been worried about his lack of heavy guns and telegraphed Rear Admiral Sir Robert Harris at the British naval base at Simonstown, near Cape Town, on 25 October. As a result Mournful Monday was cheered by the arrival of men from HMS *Powerful* with three naval 12-pounder guns on hastily constructed carriages and two 4.7-inch guns with static mountings devised by Captain Percy Scott. Civilians were sending wives and children southwards and the last supplies were coming in to Ladysmith as the Boers closed round the town. General French and Colonel Douglas Haig escaped to do more useful work on the last train out on Thursday, 2 November.

Spirits were high for a while within the besieged town. A truce was arranged to allow the British to move the hospital from buildings around the Town Hall out to a camp at Intombi, where No. 12 Field Hospital was installed, uncomfortably, in tents. The British established gun positions on the hills immediately surrounding the town and fortified the Platrand, the long, flat-topped hill about one-and-a-half miles (2.4km) south of the Klip River on the southern edge of town. Sorties were made to attack Gun Hill on the night of 7–8 December and Bell's Kop three days later, when Boer guns were put out of action. A major Boer attack was made on the Platrand on 6 January 1900. It was defeated, but only after bitter fighting and heavy losses on both sides.

Morale within the town declined as the new year wore on. The heliograph provided communication with the relieving force under Buller, but with each reverse he suffered depression grew. Enteric (typhoid) fever killed 393 of the garrison while 170 of them died at the hands of the enemy. Food ran short and the horses were slaughtered in order to feed the people. Luxuries such as whisky commanded huge prices. By late February, however, Buller had engaged the Boers in the succession of actions that comprised the Battle of the Tugela Heights. On the evening of 27 February the first riders reached the town and the British arrived in force the next day to lift the siege.

## See also:

[Elandslaagte, Battle of](#); [Lombard's Kop, Action at](#); [Nicholson's Nek, Action at](#); [Platrand, Battle of](#); [Rietfontein, Action at](#); [Talana, Battle of](#).

## Reference:

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when Baden-Powell's second-in-command, Lord Edward Cecil, had pledged his word they would be paid for.

The British constructed forts and made a show of strength which kept the Boers from attempting to storm the place, but on 24 October Assistant Commandant-general Piet Cronjé brought a Creusot 155mm, which became known to the besieged as Big Ben, and started shelling the town. Attacks and counter-attacks took place over the next few days, but both British and Boers held their lines. Cronjé then decided to leave the matter in the hands of a reduced force of 2,000 men under Vecht-general J. P. Snyman.

Within the town existence settled down into a boring routine, punctuated by sporadic and largely ineffective shelling, although both black and white civilians died. By agreement between the adversaries, Sunday was a day of peace and there were games, music and amateur dramatics as an alternative to drinking.

The application of food rationing, with different criteria for the black and white populations, has been much discussed by historians. That rations differed is beyond doubt, but it is equally doubtful that there was a policy on Baden-Powell's part to starve the black Africans. It also appears that there was some conflict between the various groups of black Africans, with the black residents resenting the intrusion of the black refugees. The earliest writers gave an exclusively European view, some clearly less than truthful but others accurately conveying their honest perceptions. A corrective was published in 1916 in the work of a black African who was present throughout the siege, Sol Plaatje. In the 1970s extreme condemnation of Baden-Powell appeared to be justified, but more recent work throws such views into question.

On 26 December 1899 the British carried out an abortive attack on a Boer fort and suffered more than fifty casualties. A more passive stance was then adopted. The Boers likewise did little until, on 12 May 1900, Commandant Sarel Eloff, Snyman's second-in-command, led an attack which resulted in Eloff and his men becoming besieged themselves in the British South Africa Police Fort on the west of the European township. The Baralong ejected the rest of the Boers. Snyman failed to act in support and the little band of Boers had to surrender. Meanwhile a British column from the south under Colonel Bryan Mahon and another from the north under Colonel Herbert Plumer were coming to relieve the town. They met west of Mafeking at Massibi on 15 May and they fought the Boers on the Molopo River the next day. That evening Major Karri Davies and men of the Imperial Light Horse rode into Mafeking.

See also:

[Africans, Black](#); [Baden-Powell, Major-General Robert](#); [Rhodesian Field Force](#).

Reference:

Jackson, Tabitha, *The Boer War* (London, Macmillan, 1999); Jeal, Tim, *Baden-Powell* (London, Hutchinson, 1989); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London,



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November), Graspan (25 November) and the Modder River (28 November 1899), Methuen had only to overcome the Boer forces under Assistant Commandant-general Piet Cronjé to achieve the relief of Kimberley. Some 25km (15 miles) south of that town a ragged line of hills runs across the route from Modder River Station and these were held by the Boers. On 29 November the Boers held a council of war. Their first inclination was to take up positions on the heights at Spytfontein, closer to Kimberley, but it was argued that there they would be exposed to observation and fire from Magersfontein. It is reported that there was a disagreement between De la Rey and Cronjé on this, and that President Steyn tipped the balance in favour of the former at a further council of war on 4 December. In any case the Boers moved to the Magersfontein line later that day. The hills known as the Magersfontein kopjes lie to the east of the railway and to the north-west on the other side of the track they extend and curve west. The railway itself is thus overlooked by substantial hills. To the east of Magersfontein, running almost due south, a ridge slopes gently to the Modder River at Moss Drift (marked as Voetpads Drift on the map later

artillery, with Wauchope, was to the east. For two hours they shelled the heights while the Boers remained safely, if apprehensively, in their trenches below. All secrecy of intention was now lost – the British were clearly planning to attack.

The Highland Brigade moved out at half-an-hour after midnight on 11 December. It was pouring with rain. They were guided by Major G. E. Benson, R.A., who had taken a compass bearing on the desired deployment point. In order to avoid getting lost, the men advanced in mass of quarter-columns. This meant that the 3,400 men, 30 companies, moved in a long column about 38 metres (40 yards) wide. The terrain was dotted with anthills which stood up like concrete posts, half as high as a man, and patches of scrub to trip and catch at weapons and kilts. There was no barbed wire but a single wire farm fence crossed their path. By 3 a.m. they were still short of their objective by half a mile or so (about 750m) and a little too far west, but the bulk of the hill could be seen as the rain ceased. Benson advised Wauchope to deploy his men at once, but the general preferred to press on and Benson left him to do so. Some 45 minutes later, and by now within 400 yards (370m) of the undetected trenches, Wauchope gave the order to deploy, but changed the original plan, telling the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders to take up a position right of the Black Watch in order to compensate for the navigational error. With A Company of the Black Watch in position and B Company in the act of deploying, at about 4 a.m., the Boers detected them and opened fire. Their bullets tore into the dense body of men. The Black Watch fixed bayonets and charged, but were stopped by the weight of fire. Wauchope immediately realised the fire on his right was lighter and ordered an extension of the line in that direction, towards the gap in the Boer line. As he did so he was killed. The man who received the order, Lieutenant-colonel Coode, was also killed. At least two parties of Highlanders attempted to attack the eastern face of the kopje, wiping out the Scandinavians in the process. The first was forced back by Boer fire and the second faced not only their enemies but also friendly fire from British artillery as they scaled the hill. These efforts, had they succeeded, would certainly have led to a Boer defeat. By 8 a.m. the Highlanders were pinned down, sheltered only by fire from the British artillery which, at last, had seen the Boer trenches. Outstanding work was done by G Battery, Royal Horse Artillery which came into action from Horse Artillery Hill and, finding the recoil pushed them back down the slope, had the good sense to stay there and shell the Boers while sheltered from their rifle fire.

The Guards Brigade were engaging the Boers on the ridge to the east and, as the day wore on, played a key part in protecting the guns at Horse Artillery Hill and in resisting added pressure from Andries Cronjé's Potchefstroom burghers, who had been moved to plug the gap east of the kopje. At about 7 a.m. the Gordon Highlanders were ordered up against Magersfontein kopje and by 11 a.m. they too were pinned down, short of the objective. At noon the Boers started to outflank the right of the



all of them showing a road or railway route as did IDWO 1229, 11230 and 1231 (bridges on the borders of Cape Colony and the Orange Free State) and as did a number of maps made in 1898 of roads into the Free State and beyond Bloemfontein. The surroundings of Ladysmith and Colenso were shown in IDWO 1448 in four maps of apparently limited coverage, but the author has seen no examples of them.

When Sir Redvers Buller arrived in December 1899 to face the Boers defending the line of the Tugela River he found himself with a school map of the entire colony published in 1893 on a scale of five miles to one inch, approximately 1:300,000. Under Buller a Field Intelligence Department was set up which attempted to compile a map of the area along the Tugela River for his use, but it could only work from secondary sources as the Boers occupied the ground that needed to be surveyed. The relief of Ladysmith in February 1900 was costly in men and time compared with the speed and tactical elegance of his advance from Ladysmith to the Transvaal border. It appears possible that the quality of mapping available to Buller was influential in this.

Other maps were made. On 15 March 1898 the Intelligence Department, War Office, Map Room in London received and date-stamped a map entitled *Approaches to Ladysmith*, a hand-drawn work by Major J. Mackenzie-Grove, RA, which provides a sound appreciation of the town's vulnerability. One wonders if anyone subsequently involved ever saw it. Clandestine surveys were also undertaken. Captain W. A. J. O'Meara, Royal Engineers, was making a survey "by eye only" south of Kimberley. This resulted in a sketch, dated 19 October 1899, of the crossing point of the railway over the Modder River. It actually showed the Reit River, of which the Modder is a tributary, and as it was based on information gathered during the winter, which tends to be dry, and was then used by Lord Methuen to plan his attack in December, the wetter summertime, the detail was misleading.

The situation in respect of the Boer republics seems to have been rather better, but for military purposes it was, in fact, much the same. An official map of the Orange Free State by J. J. Herfst had appeared in 1891, but on a scale of 22 miles to the inch, 1:1,400,000, which was acceptable for major routes and rivers, but useless tactically. The South African Republic (Transvaal) was served with well-made maps on a scale of 7.5 miles to the inch, about 1:500,000, printed in colour in Switzerland. The six sheets that covered the Transvaal and surrounding territories (a large part of the northern Orange Free State, eastern Bechuanaland and Griqualand West) were the product of F. H. Jeppe and his son, C. F. W. Jeppe. The father died in July 1898, before publication, and the son at Spioenkop on 24 January 1900. The publisher was Edward Stanford of London and stocks bound for Pretoria were seized and the map was used by the British, notably in the sweep of the eastern Transvaal in January and February 1901.

The Intelligence Division, War Office, began mapping of the Boer Republics in November 1898, using



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Gras Pan (sic) and Modder River Station, the line of Lord Methuen's advance in November 1899, but shows no hills at all at the first two places and depicts the Riet River as being almost without bends to the east until the Orange Free State, which was very misleading. These maps are indexed on IDWO No. 1445, *Diagram of the Transvaal and Orange Free State*, dated 1900, together with the Natal maps, IDWO No. 1223 mentioned above. The 1367 series was the principal reference for Lord Roberts's advance to Pretoria. The general map, IDWO No. 1445, showed the main lines of communication, the railways, and the principal towns and appears to have been intended for the information of the general public and as a catalogue of available IDWO mapping.

In March 1899 Colonel G. F. R. Henderson, who became Roberts's Director of Intelligence, contracted map-making to John T. Wood of Wood & Ortlep in Cape Town. The resulting thirty-one sheets covered the Transvaal and Orange Free State and the first of them was published in April 1900, entitled *Imperial Map of South Africa*. Thus they might well have been available for use in the advance into the Transvaal. They were in colour, on a scale of 1 inch to 3.94 miles (1:250,000) and with rather more sophisticated detail.

Given the lack of detail available on IDWO No. 1367, more precise information was required for use in the field. The role of gathering information, conducting what surveys were possible in the presence of the enemy and preparing maps was usually that of the Royal Engineers. For example, on 18 November 1899 Captain G. M. Heath produced a sketch map of the Boer gun positions around Ladysmith, working from an observation balloon. Surveying involved not only the naked eye and the telescope, but also photography. A Newman and Guardia 5x4-inch twin-lens camera with a telephoto option was used by Lieutenant C. H. Foulkes in December 1899 to prepare his sketch map of the Boer positions at Taaiboschlaagte, a farm 15km (9.3 miles) south of Colesberg. The plan for Roberts's advance from Bloemfontein was also made by Foulkes. As a Major-general in command of the Special Brigade in the First World War,

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however, much favoured for the protection of capital ships against fast-moving torpedo-boats. Maxim introduced his automatic 1-pounder in 1885. The rate of fire of the belt-fed Maxim was 250–300 rounds per minute, which permitted accuracy and still laid down a heavy weight of shell on the target. There were twenty-five shells to a belt and twelve were carried in the limber, so the rate of fire in practice was a good deal lower than in theory. The hardened steel projectiles used by the Navy were capable of penetrating one inch of iron plate at 100 yards and those used in South Africa were charged with black powder which marked the shell-fall clearly when they exploded and thus facilitated adjustment of the aim. This range-finding function was found to be very useful. The range was said to be 3,000 yards (2,740m).

By the end of the war the British infantry and mounted infantry had started to use the Pom-Pom, of which fifty were sent out from England. The War Office circulated a questionnaire to commanders after the war, seeking opinions which it seems were subsequently ignored. Of the Pom-Pom Major-general F. W. Kitchener said: "Not to have a Vickers-Maxim 1-pounder with infantry is most foolish, as it at once adds 50 per cent to the value of the men's rifle fire by ranging. Apart from this it is a tactical necessity." Lieutenant-colonel A. W. Thorneycroft expressed the view: "It is most desirable to have a [Pom-Pom] with each battalion of mounted infantry, so that it is abso-

cover available. In this case it was not the lack of a map that undermined the British plan, it was having a map that, because its limitations were not understood, misled the commander when the crisis struck.

The crisis itself was caused by a change to Boer tactics instigated by Vecht-general Joos De la Rey. Having observed the effectiveness of the flat trajectory of high velocity rifle fire at Graspan, he persuaded his comrades to dig trenches on the south bank of the Riet River and to stay quiet in them until the British were well in range. As a result the rifle fire from Mausers with a point-blank range of 437 yards (400m), and thus a long dangerous zone at 800 yards, was devastating. It is also said, perhaps unkindly, that having the river behind them encouraged the Boers to stay put rather than to try to retreat on their own initiative.

At about 4.30 a.m. that Tuesday morning the British advanced on either side of the railway with Major-general R. Pole-Carew's 9th Brigade (1st Loyal North Lancashires, 2nd King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry and 1st Northumberland Fusiliers) on the left and Major-general Sir Henry Colville's Guards Brigade (2nd Cold-stream, 3rd Grenadiers and 1st Scots) on the right. The 9th had the 1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in reserve and the Guards 1st Coldstream. As they went forward Methuen remarked to Colville that the Boers appeared to have gone. When they were within 1,000 yards (910m) the Boers opened fire. The British were pinned down in the open for most of the day. Most of them could not even see the Boers. The kilted Highlanders had the backs of their legs badly burned by the sun. On the left, where they were located in a farm south of the river, the Orange Free Staters were attacked by the Argylls and their line started to crumble, allowing the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry to take the farm and cross the river to Rosmead (now Ritchie). On this flank General Marthinus Prinsloo was unsupported by artillery and as darkness fell the vulnerability of their position, with the British coming over on the west, led to the withdrawal of the entire force during the night. Methuen had been wounded earlier in the day and Colville assumed command, ordering the positions at nightfall to be held and the battle to continue the following day. When day dawned the Boer positions were empty. The victory had cost the British dear – with seventy dead and 413 wounded – while the Boers had also suffered seriously with about fifty killed and many wounded.

## See also:

[Graspan](#), [Battle of](#), [Magersfontein](#), [Battle of](#), [Maps](#), [Rifles](#).

## Reference:

Baker, Anthony, *Battles & Battlefields of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999); Pakenham, Thomas, *The Boer War* (London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Abacus, 1992).



Where Harry Morant was born is not clear. Neither is it clear whether his name was Harry Morant rather than Edwin Henry Murrant, son of a workhouse-keeper. He claimed to have been born in Devonshire, England, and to be the son of Admiral Sir George Digby Morant. In a public announcement in the London press on 4 April 1902 the Admiral denied this but Charles Ansell Morant of Renmark, South Australia, and a true relation of the Admiral, certainly regarded The Breaker as a relative. The truth is not known. It is, however, well documented that he was an outstanding horseman, virtually fearless and also a writer of verse. He was published in the *Bulletin* of Sydney, under the name of The Breaker and was thus a literary contemporary of Henry Lawson and Banjo Paterson.

Morant enlisted as a Lance-corporal in the Second Contingent, the South Australian Mounted Rifles. He landed in Cape Town on 25 February 1900, having been promoted to Sergeant on the voyage. Within hours of arriving at De Aar on 6 March he found himself part of the expedition to deal with the insurgents at Prieska and his unit was subsequently sent to Bloemfontein to join in the advance to Pretoria. Morant's abilities as a horseman led to his appointment as a "galloper", that is, a despatch rider, a task he also performed for the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, Bennett Burleigh, for some six months from June 1900. He then applied for, and was granted, leave and went to England where he met Captain Percy Hunt of the 10th Hussars. Hunt returned to South Africa and wrote to Morant of a new unit he had joined, the Bushveldt Carbineers (BVC), commanded by an Australian, Major Robert Lenehan, and raised to combat the Boer bands in the country north of Pretoria and east of Pietersburg known as the Spelonken. Morant joined the unit on 1 April 1901.

From their base at Pietersburg, the BVC patrolled to the east and south. The troopers were an uneven bunch – some were farmers from the area, others were Boers who had surrendered and joined the British ("joiners"), but the majority were Australians seeking adventure. Discipline was poor and eventually Morant's friend Hunt was sent to take over that part of the unit based at Fort Edward, 90 miles (150km) north of Pietersburg. Captain Hunt, supported by Morant, soon had things running soundly and was sufficiently confident to mount a raid on the base of Field-Cornet Viljoen at Duivel's Kloof, some 80 miles (130km) south-east on 5 August 1901. Hunt was killed in the attack and when the BVC medical officer, Johnson and the clergyman, the Rev. F. L. Reuter, to whose mission Hunt's body had been taken, saw him, they observed a naked corpse with boot-marks on its face, a broken neck and long knife wounds to the legs. Morant arrived to hear the news an hour after Hunt and the other casualty, Sergeant F. Eland, had been buried.

In a frenzy of activity Morant gave chase to the Boers. He captured a young man called Visser and had him shot and later caught another eight who suffered likewise. A German missionary, C. H. D. Heese saw their bodies and was warned to take care; a week later his corpse was discovered.



aware that his forces were too scattered, ordered Major-general Sir William Gatacre to pull his forces back closer to the railway south of Bloemfontein. A force of some 600 men of the Royal Irish Rifles and Mounted Infantry were caught by De Wet at Mostertshoek and, as the Boers had gathered about 2,000 men and three 75mm Krupp guns, the British surrendered after a full day's fight. Gatacre, who had made little effort to come to their aid, was relieved of his command. De Wet had further demonstrated that he knew how best to use his commandos.

In the rear of the army's advance to Bloemfontein British forces had spread out across the country in small formations to hold the towns, thereby making themselves vulnerable to Boer commandos. The experience of Sannaspos made Roberts realise his error and he turned his attention to securing his lines of supply – the long and vulnerable railways. The order to retire from Dewetsdorp to Reddersburg reached Captain W. J. McWhinnie at midnight on 1/2 April and he had his force on the move at 5 a.m. With only a small force, De Wet shadowed them while sending frantic messages to General C. C. Froneman to hurry from Sannaspos with men and guns. Progress on both sides was hampered by the heavy rain and muddy conditions. That night the two forces camped only a few miles apart from each other and at dawn Froneman and General J. H. De Villiers came up. As the British moved on, De Wet had to accept that the guns would have to follow slowly over the difficult ground and the pursuit was continued by the mounted men only. McWhinnie's men were fired on as they passed Mostershoek, only about four miles (6km) east of Reddersburg, and they took position on a line of hills. De Wet invited McWhinnie to surrender, but the latter declined. By the end of the day Krupp shellfire was added to the rifle fire the British endured, and the next day, after a cold night, it all started again. At 9 a.m. the Boers surprised the Mounted Infantry on the west of the line by charging and taking the ridge. Enfilading fire was now brought to bear on the Irish Rifles. At 11 a.m. the British surrendered. On the British side, ten were killed, thirty-four wounded and 460 taken prisoner.

De Wet wrote: "I have never been able to understand why the great force, stationed at Reddersburg, made no attempt to come. . .". He went on to point out that swift movement and a readiness to flee if necessary were attributes required of the Boers, as well as a willingness to fight. However, at Jammerbergdrif he was to break his own rules.

### See also:

[Boer Tactics](#); [Jammerbergdrif](#), [Siege of](#), [Sannaspos](#), [Battle of](#).

### Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Drooglever, R. W. F., "I'll Be Damned if I'll Surrender!", *Soldiers of the Queen*, no. 38, October 1984; Jones, Huw G. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999); Marix Evans, Martin, *The Boer War: South Africa 1899–1902* (Oxford, Osprey Publishing, 1999).



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the Boers on 1 November 1899 and retaken by the British under Major-general R. A. P. Clements in March 1900. A pontoon was constructed to replace the bridge blown up by the Boers. A white concentration camp was established here. When Emily Hobhouse visited it she found it worthy of praise.

### See also:

[Concentration Camps, White](#); [Hobhouse, Emily](#).

### Reference:

Jones, Huw M. and Meurig G. M. Jones, *A Gazetteer of the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899–1902* (Milton Keynes, The Military Press, 1999).

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sentence was confirmed by Kitchener on 2 July, was hanged in front of the whole populace of Cradock on 13 July. Another man found to be a rebel, Petrus Willem Kloppert, was executed in public in Bergersdorp on 20 July 1901 (on the memorial in the town his name is spelt Kropper). *After Pretoria* concludes its report with the breezy sentence: “Four or five such public executions, at which witnesses were compelled to be present, took place and then the practice was discontinued”.

### See also:

[Boer Forces, Discipline.](#)

### Reference:

Oosthuizen, A. V., *A Guide to the Battlefields, Graves and Monuments of the Anglo-Boer War in the North Eastern Cape* (Bloemfontein, The War Museum of the Boer Republics, 1998);  
Wilson, H. W., *After Pretoria: The Guerilla War* (London, Amalgamated Press, 1902).

Cecil John Rhodes was born the fourth son of a clergyman in Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, England. He went to South Africa in 1870 in the belief that the climate would be better suited to his health. At first he concentrated on business, creating the dominant De Beers Company by arranging the amalgamation of various diamond-mining firms. When gold was discovered on the Witwatersrand, the ore was of such low quality that only a sophisticated industrial process could extract it and setting up the necessary processing plant called for capital finance on a grand scale. Rhodes and his associates were in a position to provide this and thus also became dominant in the gold-mining industry. He became member of the Cape Parliament for Barkly West in 1881, which gave him the opportunity to act politically, giving added scope to his imperial ambitions. In 1888, believing there was much gold to be had in the area, he secured mineral rights north of the Limpopo from Lobengula, chief of the Ndebele people, and went on to set up the British South Africa Company (BSA) which bought out the few remaining rivals and in effect became the government of a new colony. The British government brushed aside protests by those wishing to protect black African rights and granted the BSA a Royal Charter in 1889. Rhodes became Prime Minister of Cape Colony in 1890. That same year saw an influx of settlers and the acquisition of black lands in the territory north of the Limpopo, supported by force of arms in 1893 under the command of Dr Jameson, and the creation of "native reserves" on land unsuited to cultivation. This was imperialism in its most unpleasant form.

Gold had attracted numerous miners, businessmen and opportunists to Johannesburg, none of whom had the right to vote but all of whom were taxed vigorously by a Boer government elected by only half the population of the Transvaal. The residence qualification for voting was actually increased from five to fourteen years in 1894. Rhodes thought that this and other injustices had created a strong foundation for rebellion and plotted to spark it off by a raiding party from Rhodesia. Dr Jameson and his men rode in on Sunday, 29 December 1895. They were surrounded and eventually forced to surrender at Doornkop outside Johannesburg on 2 January and the planned uprising never took place. Rhodes's part in the plot was revealed and he was forced to resign his office as Prime Minister when censured by the British House of Commons. He was exonerated of criminal responsibility by the British, to the disgust of the Boers. This error of judgement destroyed the growing trust and co-operation between the British and Boers at official levels.

At Kimberley Rhodes appeared to regard the siege as a personal affront and the British army as part of his household staff. This did not endear him to Colonel Kekewich who was actually in command of the garrison. When Kekewich did not attack the Boers he was berated by Rhodes and when he did he was accused of throwing away the lives of his men. When, late in the siege, Rhodes signalled Lord Roberts, the British Commander-in-Chief, demanding immediate



trators made up the party, arriving in Pretoria in January 1900. Nikolai Ivanovich Kuskov wrote home: "There seem to be more nurses in Pretoria than the sick and wounded". The Russians went to Natal in February and set up hospitals in Newcastle and Volkrust, adding one at Glencoe in March. To the end of April, when the withdrawal from Natal was taking place, they treated some 5,000 outpatients (including local civilians) and 600 in-patients, and performed 120 operations. Most of them retired to Pretoria and worked there until the end of May when they moved with the Boers towards Portuguese East Africa. Others worked with splinter groups of Boers, one with Ben Viljoen's commando in July and August, at which time they were recalled to Russia.

Another detachment, with four doctors, was the Russo-Dutch Ambulance, sent by subscriptions raised by Dutch people in St Petersburg. They served in the Orange Free State until the end of May 1900. A small group of them, under Dr Vladimir Alexandrovich Kukharenko, were captured when the British took Kroonstad and they served for some weeks alongside the British medics.

The fighting Russians came to South Africa as individuals and in March 1900 a significant number of them had drifted to Glencoe, where they were serving in various Boer units. Alexei Nikolaievich Ganetsky attempted to form a Russian Corps but many of his countrymen declined to join and Russians were, in fact, in a minority in the unit. Of its achievements little is known; there are conflicting reports of heroism and hooliganism.

Individual Russians distinguished themselves. Captain Leo Pokrovsky was held in high esteem by his Boer comrades and died on Christmas Day 1900 after leading an unsuccessful attack on a British garrison at Utrecht in the south-eastern Transvaal the evening before. Lieutenant-colonel Yevgeny Yakovlevich Maximov was appointed second-in-command of the European Legion by the Count de Villebois-Mareuil as the latter departed on his fatal expedition to Boshof in March 1900, but the unit fragmented after the Frenchman's death and Maximov retained only the Hollander Corps. He was wounded at Thaba 'Nchu, where Captain E. B. B. Towse won a Victoria Cross. The wound was serious and although he recovered and was promoted general, he was pronounced unfit for service and returned home. Perhaps the most flamboyant of them all was Prince Nikolai Georgiievich Bagration-Mukhransky, known afterwards in Russia as Niko the Boer. He served under Villebois-Mareuil, was captured at Boshof and was sent as a prisoner-of-war to St Helena.

See also:

[French Volunteers](#); [Irish](#).

Reference:

Davidson, Apollon, and Irina Filatova, *The Russians and the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Human and Rousseau, 1998).



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Woodgate in the centre and on the right found themselves conquerors of a false crest that left them looking into the barrels of the defending Boers' guns on the summit. The attack had broken down and Buller, on 23 January, pressured Warren to find a way through. The plan was then adopted to take Spioenkop and position artillery on it to cover the British breakthrough.

At 11 p.m. that night Woodgate, who in spite of his incomplete recovery from a broken leg had been given the task, took 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, 2nd King's Own Royal Lancasters, two companies of South Lancashires and Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry onto the hill. Lieutenant-colonel Alec Thorneycroft had managed to make a sketch of the area while it was still light and led the way. They slipped and scrambled up, keeping as quiet as possible, and as they clambered onto the boulder-strewn top of the hill, they were challenged by a Boer. A swift exchange of shots and a bayonet charge put the Boer lookouts to flight, leaving one dead man behind. In the mist and the darkness, Woodgate ordered the British soldiers to dig in, or rather combine what little digging was possible on such stony ground with raising a low stone wall across the summit, facing north. It was about 4 a.m. and the British had taken the hill.

Commandant-general Louis Botha received the news calmly and declared that the Kop must be retaken. The gunners on Ntabamnyama were ordered to prepare to fire to the south on Spioenkop at dawn with three 75mm guns and a Pom-Pom. Two guns, a 75mm and a Pom-Pom, were sent to Twin Peaks to fire to the north-west. Riflemen were also sent onto Green Hill, Conical Hill and Aloe Knoll and a force was assembled below the north-eastern face of Spioenkop, ready to climb up. With daylight it became clear to the British that, while they held the summit, the broad slope before them gave perfect cover to anyone coming up the hill beyond the abrupt edge, so they started to move forward towards the edge of the plateau. Boer artillery fire immediately burst amongst them and rifle fire, largely too distant to be anything other than random, was brought down on them. By sheer force of personality, Botha was able to inspire his men to climb the hill and engage the British at close quarters. The young Deneys Reitz, who wrote a fine account of his experiences, said "The English troops lay so near that one could have tossed a biscuit among them. . .".

As the hot day drew on General Woodgate was killed. The succession to the command was confused but then Thorneycroft took over and sent a runner for reinforcements. The British artillery only had Twin Peaks within range and at the time there was confusion about which side held the two hills. Boer artillery was thus virtually unopposed. Lyttleton moved in support and 3rd King's Royal Rifle Corps took Twin Peaks, but the day was now almost over and the top of Spioenkop was littered with dead and wounded. As evening came the British staggered back down the mountain, believing that the Boers had won. On the opposite side the Boers did the same, thinking the British had won. The British dead,

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maintaining their morale and resistance.

Steyn's early life was spent on his father's farm and when he was twelve years of age he went to Grey College in Bloemfontein. Subsequently, he studied law, and spent two years in Holland before going to London to become a barrister at the Inner Temple. When the First Boer War broke out in 1881 he wrote an article defending the Boer cause for the *Manchester Guardian* newspaper. On his return to South Africa in 1883, he practised law in Cape Town and then Bloemfontein, where he became Attorney-general and, in 1889, a judge. He married Rachel Isabella (Tibbie) Fraser and they had a son and four daughters.

As President, Steyn paid much attention to the improvement of educational facilities and his work eventually led to the establishment of a university. However, at the close of 1895 the Jameson Raid took place. This incursion, led by Dr L. Starr Jameson at the instigation of Cecil Rhodes, was intended to precipitate an uprising amongst *uitlanders*, people from overseas, in Johannesburg. It ended in ignominious defeat by the Boers in January 1896, and Steyn, fearful of future British interference, turned his attention to the alliance with the South African Republic. A mutual support pact was signed that year.

As relations between Britain and the South African Republic deteriorated, Marthinus Steyn proposed a conference in Bloemfontein to attempt to find an accord. President Kruger came from Pretoria and Sir Alfred Milner from Cape Town and the meeting opened on 31 May 1899. The conference lasted four days, but Milner refused to accept President Kruger's slender proposals for reform and Steyn stood by the undertakings given to his Boer brothers. With the fall of Bloemfontein to the forces of Lord Roberts on 13 March 1900, the Orange Free State government moved first to Kroonstadt and then to Heilbron. It then became homeless, Steyn travelling with General De Wet and narrowly escaping capture in the Brandwater Basin in July 1900, at Doornkraal in November, at Springhaan Nek in December 1900, and at Reitz in July 1901. When President Kruger departed for France in October 1900, Steyn became the leader and symbolic figurehead of Boer defiance, a role he continued to fulfil until illness rendered him too weak to continue. He strongly maintained his opposition to the attempted peace talks between Commandant-general Botha and Lord Kitchener and continued to argue for his republic's independence, even at the peace conference in Pretoria in April 1902 where illness forced him to hand over power to Christiaan De Wet.

After the war was over, Steyn and his family went to Holland where the ex-President was successfully treated for his medical condition. He returned to his farm near Bloemfontein three years later and took his place in public life once more. He was the moving force behind the monument to the memory of the Boer women and children which was unveiled on 16 December 1913 and which stands in the grounds of the War Museum of the Boer Republics in Bloemfontein. He attempted to reconcile the differ-



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to stay much further south, preferably on the Tugela River, south of Ladysmith. Buller feared the vulnerability of over-long supply lines and scattered, small garrisons that the mobile Boers could raid and pick off at will. His fears were subsequently justified by events.

The Boers advanced with a night march on 19 October and Erasmus occupied Impate, the hill north-west of the town, while General Lucas Meyer came from the east to take position on Talana Hill and Lennox Hill overlooking the town from the east. Here he placed two 75mm Krupp guns and a Pom-Pom. They had a minor brush with a piquet of Royal Dublin Fusiliers in doing so, but the alarm was not raised until, through the fog at daybreak, men of the 1st King's Royal Rifles saw the Boers on the skyline. Symons sent the Dublins and the Rifles forward with 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers in support, across the gentle slope of Smith's Farm, through a wood and over a stone wall to scale the steep, boulder-strewn side of Talana Hill into the teeth of the Boer fire. Thinking their progress

transport and the latter in charge of supplies; this could have been an uneasy relationship but, through their own good sense, the two colonels made it successful.

The railway system provided the bones of the supply complex and wagon transport the muscles. As oxen were best driven by local people, mostly black Africans, the ASC drivers were either lent to the Royal Artillery or to the Remount Depots to assist with the supply of replacement horses. When Lord Roberts and his Chief of Staff, Lord Kitchener, assumed command the plan was to move away from the railways and to outflank Boer positions. Lacking understanding of the existing system, and viewing the stationary wagons as being wasted, they put all transport under the aegis of the ASC. It was to be lent out to a regiment that needed to move, the only exceptions being Royal Artillery ammunition wagons, Royal Engineers equipment wagons and medical units. Even if it had been a good, efficient plan, the middle of a war was the wrong time to make such reforms. There were too few ASC officers to manage the new system and in any case the administrative problems included inventing the system itself.

In Natal Buller retained the old arrangements and his speedy advance north bore witness to his wisdom. In the Orange Free State the clumsy wagon train moved in pursuit of the army as it marched towards Paardeberg, following by way of Waterval Drift. Here, on 15 February 1900, Vecht-general Christiaan De Wet ambushed the wagons and Roberts lost at a stroke a third of his wagons and four days' supplies, 150,000

The British had some 25,000 men in the field and about seventy guns.

The British preparations were deliberate and unhurried. South of the Tugela and east of Colenso stands a ring of hills, beginning with Nhlangwini, and, moving anti-clockwise, Green Hill, Cingolo, Monte Christo and, east to west along the river, Clump Hill and, on the western side of a shallow valley, Fuzzy Hill. These were occupied in a series of actions undertaken between 16 and 19 February to secure the southern bank. North of the river the Tugela Heights run east with the railway between them and the river. Acting on information provided by the intelligence officer, Lieutenant-colonel A. E. Sandbach, Buller rejected the idea of crossing the section of river where there are waterfalls as the banks were high and the approach was exposed to the heavy Boer defences to the north. A pontoon bridge was built north-east of Fort Wylie at Studam.

On 21 February, under the cover of artillery carefully sited on the northern end of Nhlangwini, Major-general J. T. Coke's 10th Brigade crossed the Tugela and advanced north to the Onderbroekspruit. The 2nd Dorsets and 2nd Somerset Light Infantry came under Boer fire from east and west and the following morning were relieved by Major-general A. S. Wynne's 11th Brigade. The 1st South Lancashires took the hill now called Wynne's Hill, immediately above the railway, though Wynne himself was wounded and command passed to Lieutenant-colonel F. W. Kitchener, the brother of Lord Kitchener. The 2nd Royal Lancasters reinforced Wynne's Hill and the 2nd and 4th Brigades were sent in support. In response to a Boer counter-attack, 3rd King's Royal Rifle Corps fought up on the left in the dark and the morning of 23 February saw all the hills in British hands, though with their heads well down behind hastily-built sangars. Here they stubbornly held on while Major-general A. F. Hart brought his 5th (Irish) Brigade up to attack the next hill to the east. It would become known as Hart's Hill or Inniskilling Hill.

Although they made what use they could of the high river banks, the Irish Brigade were forced into the open where the old railway line crossed Langverwagspruit on what became known, as a result of immediately subsequent events, as Pom-Pom Bridge. Here they had to run across the bridge under Boer fire. Fortunately, the climb up the hill was out of sight from the Boers above, and was covered by heavy British artillery fire from south of the Tugela. On the left were the 1st Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, in the centre 1st Connaught Rangers and on the right the Imperial Light Infantry. As they reached the top, the British artillery ceased fire lest their own men were hit and the Irish faced the Boer trenches some 150 yards (140m) ahead across open ground – perfect terrain for exploiting the high-velocity rifle's flat trajectory. The hilltop became a charnel-house as neither side would give up. In the dark of the night the Irish sought what rest they could on the rocky hillside and the next day the 1st Durham Light Infantry and the 1st Rifle Brigade joined them in battle. So distressing was the plight of the wounded that a truce was arranged for the morning of



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of political rights to the *uitlanders* and the attempt to perpetuate the social dinosaur that was evinced in the Boer lifestyle struck them as undemocratic and reactionary. These conflicts were resolved by complete inaction at government level.

The Irish-American community was anti-British as a matter of course and even contemplated raiding into Canada in sympathy with the Boers. A small number went to South Africa to fight, some of them in the guise of a Red Cross unit of fifty men led by Dr John R. MacNamara. The Dutch- and German-derived populations were equally ready to talk but reluctant to act. The courage of the Boers was admired and resulted in offers of land to be settled by them in Arkansas, Colorado and Wyoming, but these were not taken up.

The view of the government of the United States, as presented by Secretary of State John Hay, was that the extension of commerce would benefit British and American and everyone else as well. Theodore Roosevelt equated British action with that taken by the Americans against Spanish possessions in the Americas and said that those who supported the Boers were the same people who had sympathised with Spain at that time. Given American embarrassment over events in the Philippines, where they were suppressing Filipino independence fighters, it would have been difficult for the United States to criticise British treatment of Boers. The Boer delegation that landed in New York on 15 May 1900 thus enjoyed a warm welcome from many people, but an official cold shoulder.

Mark Twain wrote: "England must not fail, it would mean an inundation of Russian and German political degradations . . . a sort of Middle Age night and slavery . . . Even when wrong – and she is wrong – England must be upheld."

### See also:

[Blake, Colonel J. Y. F.](#); [Burnham, Frederick Russell](#); [European Views](#); [Irish](#).

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Lancashire Brigade over Potgieter's Drift towards Brakfontein Ridge. Meanwhile Major-general N. Lyttleton's Brigade would cross over a pontoon bridge to be built at Munger's Drift and take Vaalkrans itself. Then reinforcements would pass between Vaalkrans and the river to take the Boers on Brakfontein in the flank. Covering fire was to be provided by 12-pounder naval guns and two army 5-inch guns would be below Swartskop (Zwaarts Kop), while six 12-pounders would be carried up to the top of the hill. On Mount Alice, to the west, was the 4.7-inch naval gun. At 7 a.m. on 5 February Wynne crossed the river and engaged the



## 4TH DIVISION.

Staff Position.	Names of Officers Selected.
General Officer Commanding (Lieut.-General on Staff) .	Colonel (local Lieut.-General) Sir W. P. Symons, K.C.B.
Aides-de-Camp (2) . .	
Assistant Adjutant-General	Colonel C. E. Beckett, C.B., p.s.c.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals	(a) Major and Brevet-Lieut. Colonel Sir H. S. Rawlinson, Bart., p.s.c., 2nd Bn. Coldstream Guards.  (b) Captain T. D. Foster, Army Service Corps.

## 7TH BRIGADE.

Major-General . . .	Colonel (local Major-General) F. Howard, C.B., C.M.G., A.D.C.
Aide-de-Camp . . .	Captain H. E. Vernon, D.S.O., 4th Bn. Rifle Brigade.
Brigade-Major . . .	Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel Hon. C.G. Fortescue, C.M.G., p.s.c., Rifle Brigade.

## 8TH BRIGADE.

Major-General . . .	To be nominated locally.
Aide-de-Camp . . .	
Brigade-Major . . .	

## 3RD CAVALRYBRIGADE.

Major-General . . .	Colonel (local Major-General) J. F. Brocklehurst, M.V.O.
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Aide-de-Camp . . . Lieutenant H. W. Viscount Crichton, Royal Horse Guards.

Brigade-Major . . . Captain G. P. Wyndham, p.s.c., 16th Lancers.

COLERIDGE GROVE, M.S.

WAR OFFICE, *3rd October* 1899.

### **STAFF OF 1ST ARMY CORPS.**

Staff Position.	Names of Officers Selected.
General Officer Commanding Army Corps (General Commanding-in-Chief)	General Rt. Hon. Sir R. H. Buller, V.C., G.C.B., K.C.M.G.
Military Secretary . . .	Colonel Hon. F. W. Stopford, C.B., p.s.c.
Aides-de-Camp(4) . .	Captain H. N. Schofield, R.A.  Captain C. J. Sackville-West, King's Royal Rifle Corps.  Lieutenant A. R. Trotter, and Life Guards.  2nd Lieut. C. A. Howard, Shropshire Light Infantry.
Chief of the General Staff (Major-General on Staff)	Major-General Sir A. Hunter, K.C.B., D.S.O.
Aide-de-Camp . . .	Brevet-Major A. J. Kings, Royal Lancaster Regt.
Deputy Adjutant-General	Colonel A. S. Wynne, C.B.
Assistant Adjutant-Generals (2)	Colonel H. S. G. Miles, M.V.O., p.s.c.  Colonel C. W. H. Douglas, A.D.C.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals (4)	(a) Lieut.-Colonel C. 1/2 Court, p.s.c.  (a) Major L. E. Kiggell, p.s.c, Royal Warwickshire Regt.

	(b) Major P.J. Lewis, Army Service Corps.
	(b) Major A. H. Thomas, Army Service Corps.
Commandant, Head-Quarters*	Colonel R. Pole - Carew, C.B., h.p.
Principal Medical Officer .	Surgeon - General W. D. Wilson, M.B.
Medical Officers . . .	Major W. G. A. Bedford, M.B., R.A.M.C.
	Captain M. L. Hughes, R.A.M.C.
Provost-Marshal* . . .	Major Hon. J. H. G. Byng, p.s.c., 10th Hussars.
Intelligence Duties—	
Assistant Adjutant-General (1)	Major E. A. Altham, p.s.c., Royal Scots.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals (2)	Major H. J. Evans, p.s.c., Liverpool Regiment.
	Captain Hon. F. Gordon, p.s.c., Gor. Highlanders.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General for Topography	Lieut.-Colonel W. W. C. Verner, p.s.c.
Commanding Royal Artillery (Major-General on Staff)	Colonel (local Major-Gen.) G. H. Marshall.
Staff Officer, Royal Artillery	Major H. C. Sclater, R.A.
Aide-de-Camp, R.A. . .	Captain A. D. Kirby, R.F.A.
Chief Engineer (Major-General on Staff)	Colonel (local Major-Gen.) E. Wood, C.B.
Staff Officer, Royal Engineers	Major E. H. Bethell, p.s.c., Royal Engineers.
Aide-de-Camp, Royal Engineers . . . .	Brevet-Major R. S. Curtis, Royal Engineers.
Military Mounted Police**	Brevet-Major R. M. Poore, 7th Hussars.
Press Censor** . . .	Major W. D. Jones, p.s.c. Wiltshire Regt.
Principal Chaplain . .	Rev. E. H. Goodwin, B.A.

Director of Signalling	Major (local Lieut.-Colonel) E. Rhodes, D.S.O., Royal Berks Regt.
Chief Ordnance Officer	Colonel R. F. N. Clarke, Army Ord. Department.
Principal Veterinary Officer	Veterinary Lieut. -Colonel I. Matthews, Army Veterinary Department.
Orderly Veterinary Officer	
CORPS TROOPS.	
Officer Commanding Corps Artillery (Colonel on Staff)	Colonel C. M. H. Downing
Adjutant . . . .	Captain E. S. E. W. Russell, Royal Field Artillery
Officer Commanding Royal Horse Artillery	Lieut.-Colonel W. L. Davidson, Royal Horse Artillery.
Adjutant, R.H.A.	Captain G. W. Biddulph, Royal Horse Artillery
Officer Commanding F.A. (I.)	Lieut.-Colonel J. S. S. Barker, p.s.c., R.F.A.
Adjutant . . . .	Captain E. J. Duffus, R.F.A.
Officer Commanding Field Artillery (II.)	Lieut.-Colonel P. C. E. Newbigging, R.F.A.
Adjutant . . . .	Captain E. C. Cameron, Royal Field Artillery
Officer Commanding Corps Troops, Royal Engineers	Lieut.-Colonel C. A. Rochfort-Boyd, R.E.
Adjutant . . . .	Lieut. S. D. Barrow, R.E.
* Graded as Assistant Adjutant-General.	
** Graded as Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals.	

**1ST ARMY CORPS—1ST DIVISION.**

Staff Position.

Names of Officers Selected.

General Officer Commanding (Lieut.-General on Staff)	Lieut.-General P. S. Lord Methuen, K.C.V.O., C.B., C.M.G.
Aides-de-Camp (2)	Major H. Streatfield, Grenadier Guards.  Captain J. A. Bell-Smyth, 1st Dragoon Guards
Assistant Adjutant-General	Colonel R. B. Mainwaring, C.M.G.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals	(a) Brevet Lieut.-Colonel H. P. Northcott, C.B., p.s.c., Leinster Regt. (b) Major R. H. L. Warner, p.s.c., Army Service Corps.
Assistant Provost-Marshal**	Captain R. J. Ross, 1st Bn. Middlesex Regt.
Chaplains (2)	Rev. T. F. Falkner, M.A.  Rev. E. M. Morgan (R.C.)
Principal Medical Officer	Colonel E. Townsend, C.B., M.D., R.A.M.C.
Medical Officer	Major C. H. Burtchaell, M.B., R.A.M.C.

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Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General	(a) Captain H. E. Gogarty p.s.c, Royal Scots Fusiliers. (b) Captain W. G. B. Boyce, Army Service Corps
Assistant Provost-Marshal**	Major G. F. Ellison, p.s.c., Royal Warwickshire Regt.
Chaplains (2)	Rev. A. A. L. Gedge, B.A. Rev. J. Robertson (P.).
Principal Medical Officer	Colonel T. J. Gallwey, M.D., C.B., R.A.M.C.
Medical Officer	Major W. Babbie, M.B., C.M.G., R.A.M.C.
Divisional Signalling Officer	Lieut. J. S. Cavendish, 1st Life Guards.
3RD BRIGADE.	
Major-General	Maj.-Gen. A. G. Wauchope, C.B., C.M.G.
Aide-de-Camp	Captain J. G. Rennie, R.H.
Brigade-Major	Major and Bt.-Lieut.-Col. J. S. Ewart, p.s.c., Cameron Highlanders.
4TH BRIGADE.	
Major-General	Major-General Hon. N. G. Lyttelton, C.B.
Aide-de-Camp	Captain Hon. H. Yarde-Buller, Rifle Brigade.
Brigade-Major	Captain H. H. Wilson, p.s.c., Rifle Brigade.

\*\*Graded as a Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General.

### **1ST ARMY CORPS—3RD DIVISION.**

Staff Position.	Names of Officers Selected.
General Officer Commanding (Lieut.-General on Staff)	Major-General (local Lieut.-Gen.) Sir W. F. Gatacre, K.C.B., D.S.O., p.s.c.

Aides-de-Camp(2)	Lieutenant A. J. M 'Neill' 1st Bn. Seaforth Highlanders.
Assistant Adjutant-General	Colonel R. E. Allen, p.s.c.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals	(a) Lieut.-Colonel W.H.H. Waters, M.V.O., p.s.c. (b) Major P.E.F. Hobbs, Army Service Corps.
Assistant Provost-Marshal*	Captain J. R. F. Sladen, p.s.c., East Yorkshire Rgt.
Staff Position.	Names of Officers Selected.
Chaplains (2)	Rev. E. Ryan (R.C.)  Rev. R. Armitage, M.A.
Principal Medical Officer	Lieut.-Colonel J. D. Edge, M.D., R.A.M.C.
Medical Officer	Maj. G. E. Twiss, R.A.M.C.
Divisional Signalling Officer	Captain S. Fitz G. Cox, and Bn. Lincolnshire Regt.
5TH BRIGADE.	
Major-General	Major-General A. Fitzroy Hart, C.B., p.s.c.
Aide-de-Camp	Captain Hon. St L. H. Jervis, King's Royal Rifle Corps.
Brigade-Major	Major C. R. R. MacGrigor, p.s.c., King's Royal Rifle Corps.
6TH BRIGADE.	
Major-General	Major-General G. Barton, C.B., p.s.c.
Aide-de-Camp	
Brigade-Major	Captain J. A. E. MacBean, D.S.O., p.s.c., Royal Dublin Fusiliers.

\*\* Graded as a Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General.

## STAFF OF CAVALRY DIVISION.

Staff Position.	Names of Officers Selected.
General Officer Commanding (Lieut.-General on Staff)	Col. (Lieut.-General) J. D. P. French.
Aides-de-Camp (2)	Lieutenant J. P. Milbanke, 10th Hussars.
Assistant Adjutant-General	Colonel Hon. G. H. Gough, C.B., p.s.c.
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-Generals	(a) Major D. Haig, p.s.c., 7 <sup>th</sup> Hussars. (b) Major G.O. Welch, Army Service Corps.
Officer Commanding, Royal Horse Artillery	Lieut.-Colonel F. J. W. Eustace, R.H.A.
Adjutant, R.H.A.	Capt. A. D'A. King, R.H.A.
Chaplain (1)†	Rev. W. C. Haines.
Principal Medical Officer	Lieut.-Colonel W. Donovan, Royal Army Medical Corps.
Medical Officer	Major H. G. Hathaway, Royal Army Med. Corps.
Assistant Provost- Marshal **	Captain P. A. Kenna, V.C., 21st Lancers.
Intelligence Department—	
Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General	Captain Hon. H. A. Lawrence, p.s.c., 17th Lancers.
1STBRIGADE.	
Major-General	Col. (local Major - General) J. M. Babington.
Aide-de-Camp	Lieutenant F. W. Wormald, 7 <sup>th</sup> Hussars.
Brigade-Major	Captain C. J. Briggs, 1st Dragoon Guards.
Officer Commanding Mounted Infantry*	Major and Brevet - Lieut.-Colonel E. A. H. Alderson, p.s.c., Royal West Kent Regt.
Adjutant, Mounted Infantry**	Captain H. M'icking, Royal Scots.

## 2NDBRIGADE.

Major-General	Colonel (local Major - Gen.) J. P. Brabazon, C.B., A.D.C.
Aide-de-Camp	Major Hon. C. E. Bingham, 1st Life Guards.
Brigade - Major	Captain Hon. T. W. Brand, 10th Hussars.
Officer Commanding Mounted Infantry*	Captain and Brevet-Lieut.-Colonel R. J. Tudway, and Bn. Essex Regt.
Adjutant Mounted Infantry*	Captain H. L. Ruck-Keene, Oxford. Light Infantry.

\* Graded as Assistant Adjutant-General.

† Will act for both Brigades.

\*\* Graded as Deputy-Assistant Adjutant-General.

COLERIDGE GROVE, M.S.

*2nd October*1899.

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PREV

NEXT

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## Reference:

De Wet, Christiaan, *Three Years War* (London, Archibald Constable, 1902); Hall, Darrell, ed. Fransjohan Pretorius and Gilbert Torlage, *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War* (Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press, 1999).

armoured train – and the armoured train was puffing back for its life. Everybody went back half-a-dozen miles on the Ladysmith road to Modder Spruit Station.

The men on reconnaissance duty retired, as is their business. They had discovered that the enemy had guns and meant fighting. Lest he should follow, they sent out from Ladysmith, about nine in the morning, half a battalion apiece of the Devonshire and Manchester Regiments by train, and the 42nd Field Battery, with a squadron of the 5th Dragoon Guards, by road. They arrived, and there fell on us the common lot of reconnaissances. We dismounted, loosened girths, ate tinned meat, and wondered what we should do next. We were on a billow of veldt that heaved across the valley: up it ran, road and rail; on the left rose tiers of hills, in front a huge green hill blocked our view, with a tangle of other hills crowding behind to peep over its shoulders. On the right, across the line, were meadows; up from them rose a wall of red-brown kopje; up over that a wall of grass-green veldt; over that was the enemy. We ate and sat and wondered what we should do next. Presently we saw the troopers mounting and the trains getting up steam; we mounted; and scouts, advance-guards, flanking patrols – everybody crept slowly, slowly, cautiously forward. Then, about half-past two, we turned and beheld the columns coming up behind us. The 21st Field Battery, the 5th Lancers, the Natal Mounted Volunteers on the road; the other half of the Devons and half the Gordon Highlanders on the trains – total, with what we had, say something short of 3000 men and eighteen guns. It was battle!

The trains drew up and vomited khaki into the meadow. The mass separated and ordered itself. A line of little dots began to draw across it; a thicker line of dots followed; a continuous line followed them, then other lines, then a mass of khaki topping a dark foundation – the kilts of the Highlanders. From our billow we could not see them move; but the green on the side of the line grew broader, and the green between them and the kopje grew narrower. Now the first dots were at the base – now hardly discernible on the brown hill flanks. Presently the second line of dots was at the base. Then the third line and the second were lost on the brown, and the third – whereff There, bold on the skyline. Away on their right, round the hill, stole the black column of the Imperial Light Horse. The hill was crowned, was turned – but where were the Bo——

A hop, a splutter, a rattle, and then a snarling roll of musketry broke on the question, – not from the hill, but far on our left front, where the Dragoon Guards were scouting. On that the thunder of galloping orderlies and hoarse yells of command – advance! – in line! – waggon supply! – and with rattle and thunder the batteries tore past, wheeled, unlimbered as if they broke in halves. Then rattled and thundered the waggons, men gathered round the guns like the groups round a patient in an operation. And the first gun barked death. And then after all it was a false alarm. At the first shell you could see through glasses mounted men scurrying up the slopes of the big opposite hill; by the third they were gone. And then, as our guns still thudded – thud came the answer. Only whereff Away, away on the right, from the green kopje over the brown one where still struggled the reserves of our infantry.

Limbers! From halves the guns were whole again, and wheeled away over ploughland to the railway. Down went a length of wire-fencing, and gun after gun leaped ringing over the metals, scoring the soft pasture beyond. We passed round the leftward edge of the brown hill and joined our

infantry in a broad green valley. The head of it was the second skyline we had seen; beyond was a dip, a swell of kopje, a deep valley, and behind that a

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PREV

NEXT

other storm – the storm of lead, of blood, of death. In a twinkling the first line was down behind rocks firing fast, and the bullets came flicking round them. Men stopped and started, staggered and dropped limply as if the string were cut that held them upright. The line pushed on; the supports and reserves followed up. A colonel fell, shot in the arm; the regiment pushed on.

They came to a rocky ridge about twenty feet high. They clung to cover, firing, then rose, and were among the shrill bullets again. A major was left at the bottom of that ridge, with his pipe in his mouth and a Mauser bullet through his leg; his company pushed on. Down again, fire again, up again, and on! Another ridge won and passed – and only a more hellish hail of bullets beyond it. more men down, more men pushed into the firing line – more death-piping bullets than ever. The air was a sieve of them; they beat on the boulders like a million hammers; they tore the turf like a harrow.

Another ridge crowned, another welcoming, whistling gust of perdition, more men down, more pushed into the firing line. Half the officers were down; the men puffed and stumbled on. Another ridge – God! Would this cursed hill never endff It was sown with bleeding and dead behind it; it was edged with stinging fire before. God! Would it never endff On, and get to the end of it! And now it was surely the end. The merry bugles rang out like cock-crow on a fine morning. The pipes shrieked of blood and lust of glorious death. Fix bayonets! Staff officers rushed shouting from the rear, imploring, cajoling, cursing, slamming every man who could move into the line. Line – but it was a line no longer. it was a surging wave of men – Devons and Gordons, Manchester and Light Horse all mixed, inextricably; subalterns commanding regiments, soldiers yelling advice, officers firing carbines, stumbling, leaping, killing, falling, all drunk with battle, shoving through hell to the throat of the enemy. And there beneath our feet was the Boer camp and the last Boers galloping out of it. There also – thank Heaven, thank Heaven! – were squadrons of Lancers and Dragoon Guards storming in among them, shouting, spearing, stamping them into the ground. Cease fire!

It was over – twelve hours of march, of reconnaissance, of waiting, of preparation, and half an hour of attack. But half an hour crammed with the life of half a lifetime.

**G. W. Steevens**

**From Capetown to Ladysmith, Edinburgh, William  
Blackwood, 1900.**



of us made for it & found the Scots Guards lying in a huge mass there waiting for the other Guards to secure their points of attack further to the right. Their pipers played The Cock of the North & other airs but as they were lying flat on their backs the music was also rather flat. Finding the Guards blocking our advance here our Colonel (Denny) began to extricate his men from the Scots Guards telling the officers of the 58th (of whom there were a number present) to take them on. Skinner the senior subaltern collected about a dozen men, left the spur & dashed for hill top marked A from which the Boers were chasing off as quickly as possible. I went on with this party & he led us up to the col. The whole place seemed deserted except for one or two Boer ponies. Continuing in the same direction we came in sight of one or two men concealed among the boulders. We thought there were only one or two of them & we exchanged shots but as they did not clear out we took up a position & waited for reinforcements. As it afterwards turned out we were on the flank of about 40 of the enemy who were opposing the 5th Fusiliers & some of the 58th while crossing the plane & clambering up the mountainside. The place got pretty hot after a time & a man of the 58th near me said "I've been hit" and he at once gripped hold of the artery of his upper arm to stop the bleeding while I got a tourniquet (composed of a bandage & a bayonet) on & then bound up the wound with the field dressing each man carries in his pocket. He had a bullet through the upper part of his arm, but luckily it missed the bone. More men now came up by dribblets from all sorts of regiments, Guards, Fusiliers & 58th & Skinner took command directing their fire but still we could not \*\*\*\* see the men among the boulders so as to get a fair shot at them. To advance directly on them we had to climb over the boulders & they picked off any man who showed himself. Skinner then got about a dozen men & tried to work round this flank keeping the slope of the mountain out of sight, but to our astonishment we found fully 200 men of the 5th Fusiliers lying under cover flanking the very fellows we wanted to get out but who were much stronger than we had originally supposed. As the 5th had their commanding officer with them Skinner could do nothing so he collected the 58th men & drew off & as I attended to some wounded men I missed him, & went back over the col to the point marked O where were Capts Copland & Godley with a number of 58th men firing across the open upland so I told them of the boer position on their flank. All this time the bullets were flying all over the place coming from every direction.

The Guards were now seen crossing the open upland having come from Gun Hill & Copland & Godley changing front to the left advanced to where the party of Boers were making the stand. Worming my way among the boulders here I felt a sharp smack on the head which made a singing in my ears, but absolutely no pain. It did not take long to whip out the field dressing & a pad of antiseptic wool soon began to staunch the blood. The boers were now being surrounded & hoisted a shirt but it was some little time before the firing stopped on both sides. Knight the war correspondent of the Morning Post was hit after they had the flag of truce up. A large martini bullet passed through the bone of his upper arm, so I got a bandage from a man & bound it up, then got two bayonets & formed splints binding them on & his arm to his side with a man's puttee. He was very plucky indeed over it. The fight was now practically over in every direction. It was about 7.45. The battle lasted about 3½ hours.

What I have related is merely what I happened to see myself, which was nothing much. The

whole affair consisted of isolated fights over an area of about 5 square miles. Long

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PREV

NEXT

before you will get this the newspapers will be full of it. The Grenadiers seem to have had some very hard fighting & had terrible loss. A number of the 58th were with them but we had drummed it into the men that they must keep widely extended so that they kept about 6 or 10 paces apart while the Grenadiers were crowded to 1 pace apart & suffered accordingly. Their fearless advance must have astonished the Boers very much.

The Boers themselves must be divided into two classes, those who bolted directly they saw our determined advance & those who fought with a courage & valour which won great admiration on our part. They don't quite understand civilized warfare & some hold up a flag of truce while they keep up their fire.

But I will entirely leave the account of the battle as a whole to those who have been able to form a better idea of it than it was possible for an eye witness.

Copland sent me back to camp & on the way down the mountain I came on several Boers who had been bandaged up by our men & they did not know what to make of the meat lozenges I gave them. One of them said "danker" the others kept stolid silence. At the foot of the hills I found Ripley who put me on the General's horse, for unfortunately our Brigadier Fetherstonhaugh had been wounded so I rode on to the railway line where the Sappers with an armoured train were busily repairing the line. The engine driver with a bucket of water & a lump of cotton waste gave me a clean down & a doctor with them dressed my scalp and then I went on to camp, to find we had only 14 men wounded & 3 officers which is a good proportion considering we were all dressed just like the men.  
*Reproduced by courtesy of the Museum of the Northamptonshire Regiment, Northampton.*

The Fusiliers charged with the bayonet when they reached the hills, but the Boers did not wait for them, I think their losses were much greater than ours, as our artillery managed to drop some lyddite amongst them once or twice. Next day we buried Cooper. He looked very nice, so did his grave. There was a cross of stones made right across it, & a wooden cross with his name etc. on it put at his head. You must excuse the smudges etc. as the wind is blowing a regular hurricane all the while. That day I went into the butchering line for the first time in my life. We do a little bit of everything out here. As we had not been able to buy any pork for some time I thought I would buy a pig myself. So as my section was on outpost by itself, I went away with another fellow with the section's water bottles to fill them, & passed two farm houses, & as I saw some pigs & fowls at one of them I went in it. It is great fun trying to bargain with the Boer women, when they don't understand any English, and you don't understand any Dutch or whatever they speak. I bought a fowl for 1/- and a pig for 10/-. Well the next thing was to kill the pig so as to get it to our outpost. The other fellow had no knife & the Boer woman had none, so I had to kill it with a little one I bought at Kruyersdorp. The blade was not above two & a half inches long. Well I felt for the two little bones in her throat, which I believe is the correct thing to do, and stuck the knife blade & handle & all into her. She stopped squealing almost directly. It made us sweat a bit carrying her & the water bottles back. When I told them what I had stuck her with they said she would be full of blood, but when we opened her we found she was beautiful & clean & lovely & fat. Well the other fellow had enough to last him & his pal for about a week & I had enough to last Lygo & me the same, & we divided the liver & kidneys & leaf [fat] between us. We rendered the leaf & some more fat down so it did to put on the biscuits. The remainder of the pig we sold to the other fellows in the section cheap, & made 17/- of it, so we were 3/6 each in pocket besides the pork we had.

30th 8. 1900 Mafeking.

I will continue my letter where I left off. The day after we buried Cooper, we were on the march again early. We had just stopped by a farm to have breakfast when 2 Boer waggons came in and the Yeomanry started off immediately so we knew there was some fresh news. We soon heard firing & when we had had breakfast started off after the Yeomanry. We found them hanging on to De Wet's lot again & prepared to help them, but the Boers would not wait. We kept attacking kopje after kopje but they kept firing a few shots at us, & then retreating long before we got anywhere near them. We kept on going till the sun was nearly down. While advancing to attack one position a deer got in amongst us, scared no doubt by the firing, & the veldt being on fire. (You see the shells set the grass on fire & so sometimes we have to walk 3 or 4 times in an afternoon through the flames.) It ran about for a little while & then evidently made up its mind to make a dash for liberty. You should just have seen it go. It went like greased lightning, but just as it was passing 2 of our company they struck at it with their clubbed rifles & one of them hit it across the nose & rolled it over. It took 2 to carry it. There were several waggons & an ammunition cart captured that day. Next day we kept on going & finished up with De Wet on a very high kopje just in front of us, & it was said that there were some men of our own troops on the other side, so that he



It is very good of you all to be so kind to me. The chocolate from Maria reached me just when I was done up most, & I found it helped me wonderfully. Of course these other lots I hope I shall have eaten before they think of starting us off again, but they will be a great luxury. It rained both last night and the night before. They gave us tents yesterday afternoon. We had only just got them up when it started a regular tropical thunderstorm. I never heard such thunder in my life, & the wind was terrific. We all had to hang on to the tent to keep it from being blown away. There were half the tents blown over, & this morning fellows were walking miles away in search of their belongings. The rain filled our trench & came inside a bit, so we did not get much sleep till about mid-night, but we were more fortunate than some of the others.

Well I really must dry up or you will get tired of reading & besides I have some more letters to write & the mail goes out this afternoon. I am glad you both enjoyed yourselves at the I. O. M. I hope it came up to your expectations. Two of the Kettering fellows here just came to me & asked me if as a favour I would let them give me a sovereign each, & then Father give their wives a sovereign each, as they don't know how to get the money home safely. I thought under the circumstances Father would not mind doing this, so when they are paid this afternoon they are both going to give me a sovereign, & have written to their wives & told them to call & see Father at the George Hotel when he will give them each a sovereign. The names of the 2 men are George Crouch (lives in Avondale Rd.) & David Jackson (lives in Ford St.) The latter is cook & has done me good turns on several occasions.

*Love etc. Frank*

*Reproduced by courtesy of the Museum of the Northamptonshire Regiment,  
Northampton.*

had met in Capetown. It is such a puzzle to find your way in a village of bell tents, no streets or names or numbers. There are nearly 2,000\*people in this one camp, of which some few are men—they call them “hands up” men—and over 900\*children.

Imagine the heat outside the tents, and the suffocation inside! We sat on their khaki blankets, rolled up, inside Mrs. B.’s tent ; and the sun blazed through the single canvas, and the flies lay thick and black on everything ; no chair, no table, nor any room for such ; only a deal box, standing on its end, served as a wee pantry. In this tiny tent live Mrs. B.’s five children (three quite grown up) and a little Kaffir servant girl. Many tents have more occupants. Mrs. P. came in, and Mrs. R. and others, and they told me their stories, and we cried together, and even laughed together, and chatted bad Dutch and bad English all the afternoon. On wet nights the water streams down through the canvas and comes flowing in, as it knows how to do in this country, under the flap of the tent, and wets their blanket as they lie on the ground. While we sat there a snake came in. They said it was a puff adder, very poisonous, so they all ran out, and I attacked the creature with my parasol. I could not bear to think the thing should be at large in a community mostly sleeping on the ground. After a struggle I wounded it, and then a man came with a mallet and finished it off.

Mrs. P. is very brave and calm. She has six children, ranging from fifteen down to two years, and she does not know where any one of them is.\*She was taken right away from them; her husband is in detention of some kind at Bloemfontein, but not allowed to see her. She expects her confinement in about three weeks, and yet has to lie on the bare ground till she is stiff and sore, and she has had nothing to sit on for over two months, but must squat on a rolled-up blanket. I felt quite sure you would like her to have a mattress, and I asked her if she would accept one. She did so very gratefully, and I did not rest yesterday till I got one out to her. All her baby linen was in readiness at home, but all is lost. This is but one case, quite ordinary, among hundreds and hundreds. The women are wonderful. They cry very little and never complain. The very magnitude of their sufferings, indignities, loss and anxiety seems to lift them beyond tears. These people, who have had comfortable, even luxurious homes, just set themselves to quiet endurance and to make the best of their bare and terrible lot ; only when it cuts afresh at them through their children do their feelings flash out. Mrs. M., for instance. She has six children in camp, all ill, two in the tin hospital with typhoid, and four sick in the tent. She also expects her confinement soon. Her husband is in Ceylon. She has means, and would gladly provide for herself either in town or in the Colony, where she has relations, or by going back to her farm. It was not burnt, only the furniture was destroyed ; yet here she has to stay, watching her children droop and sicken. For their sakes she did plead with tears that she might go and fend for herself.

I call this camp system a wholesale cruelty. It can never be wiped out of the memories of the people. It presses hardest on the children. They droop in the terrible heat, and with the insufficient, unsuitable food ; whatever you do, whatever the authorities do, and they are, I believe, doing their best with very limited means, it is all only a miserable patch upon a great ill. Thousands, physically unfit, are placed in conditions of life which they have not strength to endure. In front of them is blank ruin. There are cases, too, in which whole families are severed and scattered, they don’t know where.

Will you try, somehow, to make the British public understand the position, and force it to ask itself what is going to be done with these people ? There must be full 15,000\*of them ; I should not wonder if there are not more. Some few have means, but more are ruined, and have not a present penny. In one of two ways must the British public support them, either by taxation through the authorities, or else by voluntary charity.

If the people at home want to save their purses (you see, I appeal to low motives), why not allow those who can maintain themselves to go to friends and relatives in the Colony ? Many wish ardently to do so. That would be some relief. If only the English people would try to exercise a little imagination—picture the whole miserable scene. Entire villages and districts rooted up and dumped in a strange, bare place.

To keep these Camps going is murder to the children. Still, of course, by more judicious management they could be improved ; but, do what you will, you can't undo the thing itself.

To-day is Sunday, and all the day I have been toiling and moiling over the bales of clothes—unpacking, sorting, and putting up in bundles. We were so glad of such odd things, such as stays and little boys' braces! I found some baby linen for Mrs. P. I do not think that there is a single superfluous article. But what a family to clothe !

Now I must tell you their rations :—

Daily—

Meat,  $\frac{1}{2}$ lb (with bone and fat).

Coffee, 2oz.

Wholemeal,  $\frac{3}{4}$ lb.

Condensed milk, one-twelfth of tin.

Sugar, 2oz.

Salt,  $\frac{1}{2}$ oz.

That is all, nothing else to fill in. Once they sometimes had potatoes, seven potatoes for seven people, but that has long been impossible. Soap also has been unattainable, and none given

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Camp and watch the interest of the people there, and I am anxious to visit Kimberley and others. My difficulty is that, in spite of my permit, I am not allowed to travel below Norval's Pont, and one has to go down to De Aar and up again to reach Kimberley.

I have several days' work here. It is a comparatively small and recent Camp, but the people are poorer and more utterly destitute than any I have yet seen.

The Commandant is a kind man, and willing to help both the people and me as far as possible, but his limitations (and mine), through lack of material, are woeful. Fortunately, I brought three cases of clothing with me ; but it is a drop in the ocean of their needs. All day I have sat in a farmhouse stoep, and had each family in succession brought to me from the tents, fitting each in turn with clothes as far as possible, just to cover their nakedness. Each woman tells me her story, a story which, from its similarity to all which have gone before, grows monotonous. But it is always interesting to note the various ways in which the great common trouble is met by divers characters. Some are scared, some paralyzed and unable to realise their loss, some are dissolved in tears ; some, mute and dry-eyed, seem only able to think of the blank, penniless future ; and some are glowing with pride at being prisoners for their country's sake.

A few bare women had made petticoats out of the brown rough blankets—one had on a man's trousers. Nearly all the children have nothing left but a worn print frock, with nothing beneath it, and shoes and socks long since worn away. Shoes we must leave—it is hopeless—until we can procure rolls of sole leather and uppers, lasts and sprigs, and then the men can make veld schoone, a simple kind of rough shoe.

I clothed about fifteen families to-day, or about sixty persons, and hope to do the same to-morrow, and I may collect some old clothes from the residents here to help us along.

In despair I went to the one village shop, but it is long since cleared out, and I came away empty, save for some packets of needles. I had been giving some material for women to make their own boys, clothing, but we are stopped by the utter famine of cotton or thread. Scissors are handed round from tent to tent ; thimbles are very few. Everything here is so scarce that the sight of my rough deal packing cases cre quite a sensation—not for what was inside, but for the actual wood. They are destined to make low bedsteads, tables, and a few bits for firing.

Mattresses, I fear, are out of the question here on account of the lack of material, but we thought low beds might be made if a little wood could be found mid strips of sacking nailed across. This would lift them off the ground for the winter. Perhaps we shall manage a few. The crying need in this Camp is fuel. Wood there is none ; a little coal is served out, but so little that many days the people cannot cook at all, and their rations are raw meat, meal, and coffee, so each of these needs fire. if you could peep at Springfontein you would at once realize the hopelessness of getting any fuel—a bare veldt, covered with short sparse vegetation, ringed by barest kopjes, stony, and without even grass. Except at the farm where I sat there are no trees, and these have been grown with greatest pains. So there is nothing to burn.

Women to whom I have given nothing nor offered to, and who neither ask nor wish for charity, express deepest gratitude for the bare tidings that any English people feel for them. They are very

sore at heart, and are really helped by the knowledge that we understand at all the aspect of affairs as it appears to them. They are tired of being told by officers that they are refugees under the “ kind and beneficent protection of the British.” In most cases there is no pretence that there was treachery, or ammunition concealed, or food given, or anything. It was just that an order was given to empty the country.

One woman told me to-day that a waggon load of her goods was brought away by soldiers, and followed their convoy. She begged hard for a favourite chair of hers, but was refused.

One afternoon a poor young Tommy came to the door of this house to buy eggs. He was from Somersetshire, near Taunton, and “ zo Zummerzset ” in his talk that I had to go out and interpret. Poor boy, he was very sorry for himself and longing for home. Never, never, never would he go to war again ; he had had a “ sickener.” He was just out from hospital and an attack of slow fever, and was jealous of the C.I.V.’s going home so soon. I gave him my pot of cocoa, which he said would be a great treat. He had had to sleep in six inches of water, and all his rations were swamped and those of his companions.

I just want to say, while it’s in my mind, that the blouses sent from England, and supposed to be full grown, are only useful here for girls of 12 to 14 or so—much too small for the well-developed Boer maiden, who is really a fine creature. Could an out, out woman’s size be procured ? and for camp-life dark colours are best. It’s hard to keep clean, and soap is a luxury, water not superabundant. You would have realized the scarcity and poverty a little had you seen me doling out pins and needles by twos and threes, and dividing reels of cotton and bits of rag for patching. A few combs I brought up from Capetown were caught at with joy.

There is very little time here for letter writing, as I am busy in Camp all day, and then we all have to be in bed and lights out by 8.30 p.m. It’s rather nice living with the sun in this sort of way.

With regard to the vexed question of differing nationalities, is it generally known and realized at home that there are many large native (coloured) Camps dotted about ? In my opinion these need looking into badly. I under-

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7. That, considering the congested state of the line, and the great lack of fuel, any new camp formed should be in a healthy spot in Cape Colony, nearer supplies and charitable aid.
8. That, because all the above, and much more, including the economical distribution of clothing, demands much careful organization, detailed work and devoted attention, free access should be given to a band of at least six accredited representatives of English philanthropic societies, who should be provided with permanent passes—have the authority of the High Commissioner for their work— be absolutely above suspicion, and be responsible to the Government, as well as to those they represent, for their work. Their mother-wit and womanly resource would set right many of the existing ills.
9. That the doctor's report on the state of health of the children in Bloemfontein Camp be called for and acted upon.
10. That the women whose applications are appended be at once allowed to leave. Their health is failing under the long strain. All three are good, respectable women.  
By request of the Right Hon. St. John Brodrick these recommendations were forwarded to the War Office.  
I would like to add one more recommendation, which I consider of great importance, and which was unfortunately omitted from those sent to Mr. Brodrick.
11. That, considering the growing impertinence of the Kaffirs, seeing the white women thus humiliated, every care shall be taken not to put them in places of authority.

arrested him on farm, and sent to Greenpoint. Smashed the house of farm.

3. —Mrs. Van den B, a widow for five years, lived with her children in Jacobsdal. October 25 English came, and there was a fight. A Maxim was put on her house, and they shot in and out of it. She and children sent to shelter in hospital the while. Clothes and furniture spoilt. Soldiers stole £3 6s. After fight, Boers came back the 29th, and put everybody right ; then in a few days English came again, and she with ten other families locked up in the schoolhouse and given no food. Then sent to her own house, where for 3 weeks she was kept locked up, not even allowed on the stoep. Her child had scarlet fever the while. A neighbour had to get her food. This was by order of a Lieutenant, Colonial Volunteer. Her only relative fighting was a brother, and Lieutenant L. said she must suffer for him. Brought to camp Feb. 13.

1. — MRS. B. AND JOHANNES ADRIAN B.
2. —Came now from Kopje Aleen, Winburg.
3. —Four grandchildren (orphans), one deaf and dumb. Their fathers on Commando.
4. —Her old husband, aged 75, in St. Helena.
5. —Since November 26.
6. —Poor old Mrs. B. and her husband do not know why they were brought away. They were people from Cape Colony, and had only been four years in Free State. He was, therefore, not a burgher, and had never been on Commando or taken arms. Had intended returning to the Colony, but rinderpest had killed their cattle, and could not afford it. So they were staying with friends on their farm (D.'s). The Commandos passed occasionally, but so also did the "troop Commandos," as she calls the soldiers. They and their friends were all turned out together and brought away in trucks. At Bloemfontein they were separated, her husband being detained and sent down to Greenpoint, while she was brought to camp. She has just heard in a roundabout way that he has been sent to St. Helena, but still he does not yet know where she is. The old woman is very poor, very forlorn, and in need of clothing for herself and children, but, most of all, appeals to get her old husband back lest he die. He has done nothing to merit exile.

I spoke of this case to the Commandant, who said she could make application through him. He acknowledged that a column passing through the country was meant to fight and not judge individual cases, and had made, of course, a dreadful muddle of such work. Consequently, the people are puzzled. There is no meaning in any of it.

1. — MRS. B.

2. —Farm of Deput, Brandford.
3. —Seven in camp. One son at Greenpoint prison.
4. —Husband on Commando. Not heard of him 9 months.
5. —Since January 10.
6. —Forced from home. Soldiers roused them at 2 in the night and sent them in to Brandford to their town house. Next day made them come on. Train to Bloemfontein. Open waggons out to camp.
7. —Yes. Better anywhere than here.
8. —Knows nothing. All confiscated. Soldiers said her house was theirs now, and if she remained she must pay them rent for it. They cut 200 loads of wood and gave no money for it.
9. —No.

Since arrival never felt well. Good health at home. Daughter lying down ill ; swelled throat, broken-out face, etc. Shoes needed.

Mrs. B., a really handsome woman, with a fine family, was one of those who, early in the year, went out from Brandford to ask the Boers to give up. They refused. Now, she says, we are a ruined people. We will fight through. Roberts's first proclamation, if kept, would have ended war, but it has been lies, lies, lies.

1. — MR. AND MRS. J. B.
2. —Groenvlei. Heilbron.
3. —Six in camp ; two still on commando.
4. —In camp since Feb. 16.
5. —Father 68 years old ; never on commando.
6. —Come as prisoners. Farm was near the road, and English were constantly planted there, swarming over the farm. Fed British troops constantly. Had not seen Boers for very long time. One day, Feb. 11, an officer (unknown) came and said must take them to Kopje Siding for " protection." Did not need protection. Gave them five minutes, and as they were bundled into the waggons, the house, with everything in it, was fired ; also three other houses on the farm and the Government school.

Their house had three bedrooms, dining-room, parlour and kitchen. Everything lost. They were kept one night at station, then three days in open trucks. All stock gone ; no receipts given—900 sheep, 36 cattle, 8 horses, 8 mules.

A nice young woman, eldest daughter, told me this, who had learnt English in a Government school.

## E. H., Springfontein.

1. — MRS. B.
  2. —Kept a shop in village of P.
  3. —Four children, who were away with their father at her mother's farm when she was arrested.
  4. —Husband never fought—a shopkeeper.
  5. —Troops came and turned all foodstuffs out of her shop. She resisted soldiery, so was forced and is destitute. Fine woman, with big gentle eyes, but desperate to get to her children. She and Miss Du T. planned escape. A scout (English) was friendly and expressed sympathy.
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PREV

NEXT

Wept in speaking of her son who was shot. Very motherly woman.

1. — MRS. F. C.
2. —Lived in town Philippolis.
3. —One child.
4. —Widow.
5. —Arrived Dec. 13.
6. —Compelled. No reason given.
7. —Very little money.
8. —Not burnt or destroyed when left.
9. —Could get taken in at Zonderhondt, near Philippolis.

No illness so far.

Clothing needed.

1. — MR. AND MRS. P. J. H. D.
2. —House in Edenburg, one room in Bloemfontein.
3. —Seven children.
4. —Husband a mason (in camp). Can also make shoes and turn his hand to anything. Never fought ; was working quietly at Edenburg, when taken from his work and brought to Bloemfontein Camp. No reason ; believes someone gave false information for spite. Came November 26. Furniture all destroyed. Longs for work. Wife was confined in the bell tent without nurse. I gave him leather, and he made shoes for all his family. I offered to pay him to make for others, but he said he would gladly make them for nothing, as I had given him for his children.

1. — MRS. J. E.
2. —Village of Jacobsdal.
3. —Ten children, five in camp, one son St. Helena.
4. —Husband on commando. Field cornet, an Englishman by blood, son of English parents ; an English officer, Major E., fought against him at Magersfontein ; it was his cousin. After the fight October 25 the English, under Colonel J., burnt her house. They would not believe her that no Boers were in the house, so burnt, and found none. Drove her from her house, and would not listen to her pleadings. The 29th the Boers came back. She saw her husband, and he his blackened home. He was silent first, then lifted his hand and said, “ The Lord will provide, but now I will never, never, never give in.” She has not seen him since. November 7

English returned. She was locked in the school for several days, and no food or drink given. Early in February Mrs. E. was asked if she would take Kitchener's proclamation to her husband. She replied, " Though you give me 2,000 troops and £100 (and I have nothing), I will not do it." A second time she was urged, or if not she would be sent to Kimberley Camp. Very well, then, she said, it must be the camp. Four other prominent women were urged to ask their husbands to surrender—in vain.

1. — MRS. E.
2. —Lived in a town.
3. —Two children.
4. —When heard last husband with Hertzog.
5. —Arrived December 13.
6. —Compelled ; no reason given.
7. —A little money.
8. and 9.—She believes not.
9. —Could, if allowed, go to friends at Spion Kop. No illness, so far. Has enough clothing.

1. — MRS. T. F.
2. —Uysberg, Ladybrand.
3. —Ten children in camp, one in Simonstown.
4. —Husband Greenpoint. Was an invalid, and never fought. Took oath neutrality.
5. —Since November.
6. —Compelled. One Sunday, about twelve o'clock, Boers came. Between one and two o'clock same day she reported this to Mr. M., J.P. Next day, about three p.m., they sent to look for the Boers. Why, she said, didn't you come yesterday when reported? Of course, they are gone now. Major W. and Captain D. sent and took her. She was kept eight days in town of Ladybrand, was allowed to send for a little bedding and clothes. Eight days in the waggon coming to Bloemfontein. One of her nice daughters is setting up a private school in camp. One is chosen to go into Miss Murray's Institute.

1. — MRS. C. F.
2. —Lovedale, Thaba 'Nchu.
3. —Two children.
4. —Husband Ceylon.
5. —Brought in November 27.
6. —Compelled as prisoners.
7. —No means ; washes for others.
8. and 9.—Not destroyed when she left.
9. —Nowhere to go but home. Needs clothing.

1. — MRS. J. J. F.
2. —Deelfontein, district Winburg.
3. —Three children.
4. —Husband Greenpoint.
5. —Arrived in camp November 27.
6. —Compelled ; no reason given.
7. —Very little money.
8. —House burnt.
9. —House burnt, cattle taken.
10. —Could, if allowed, go to her father at Rookraal. Since arrival baby had measles. wants clothing.

1. — MISS F.
  2. —Lubbesfontein, Winburg.—Daughter of Commandant F., who was killed the day before the relief of Kimberley. She and her little sisters and other women and children were all in a waggon going to join the Boer laager at Alexandersfontein. When near, found it occupied by town guard, who shot on ten waggons from 20 yards distance, so near could hear-
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3. —1 child in camp, 1 orphan, 1 Kaffir.
4. —Husband in Ceylon, taken July 30.
5. —Some months.
6. —Compelled to come. First Major W. took her to Ladybrand, where she remained 15 days. She was so ill there they sent her back. After a week at home 26 men came for her. She was bad and had had poultices on all night. Got as far as Mrs. M.'s, the J.P., when she fainted. Sick there for 12 days, was driven in her own trap to Bloemfontein, which took four days. Very well off, so also the orphan, but everything gone, and only one tiny tin trunk with them. Child had not a chemise, and, when wet, had to be put to bed for clothes to dry. Lieutenant D., of Black Watch (she believes), said it was all a mistake, but he has since been shot. Soldiers smashed everything. Neighbours brought into town keynotes of her piano and harmonium chopped up. Farm 1,000 morgens, house had seven large rooms. Another farm in Senekal. 600 bags of wheat burnt and endless other things. Always been well-to-do and had servants. Most of all felt the loss of a pet horse given by her husband before her marriage. It could do tricks. This horse drove her to Bloemfontein, and then she lost sight of it. Fancies some one has made a back horse of it. One day it came out to the camp, and turned round at the sound of her voice. The Sergeant-Major noticed, and said, "That horse surely knows your voice."

Nice young woman, asthmatical. If farm is confiscated, have nothing.

1. — MR. AND MRS. A. H. H.
2. —Swartlapberg. Dist. Thaba 'Nchu.
3. —Three children in camp ; 3 sons in Ceylon ; in Ladysmith Camp.
4. —Husband now with her in camp, aged 63.
5. —In camp since Oct. 21.
6. —Compelled to come. Husband was on commando, and had to surrender with Prinsloo. Understood they were to go home and live quietly. Went home. Soon after was sent or and brought to Thaba 'Nchu, where he was thrown into gaol. Kept there a month. First 8 days no food given, and must have starved if friends in the town had not helped. This was under Dist. Comr. L. Then his brother came, who was better, not so hard. They were sorted and sifted by him, and finally he, Mr. H., was sent here to Bloemfontein and his boy of 15 to Ceylon. Lived on a Free State Government farm.

This was burnt.

Has nothing now. His wife very nice, also English, and sister of Mrs. C. G. H. Brothers married sisters.

Mr. A. H. H. a very straightforward, pleasant man, with a merry twinkle. Thinks Prinsloo's men not come off very well, or so well as to induce others to surrender. Fighting would have been pleasanter.

Says none can understand Prinsloo's surrender except on score of bribery. Men did not wish it. Plenty of ammunition and food, and good position. An awful blow to their fellow-burghers.

Mrs. H. recently turned out and brought to this camp, where the two met.

1. — MR. AND MRS. C. G. H.
2. —Hex River. Dist., Ladybrand.
3. —Has 6 children ; 2 in camp, 4 left behind.
4. —Husband in camp.
5. —Came Jan. 18.
6. —Prisoners. Mrs. H. is English, of Grahamstown, and a quiet, superior woman. Married a Boer. He was sickly, and so never on commando. When English took Ladybrand, about April, he took oath of neutrality. Mrs. H. had a pass, and went freely about everywhere in and out of town, and did other folk's errands. Known to be thoroughly English in sentiment, and had always hoped and thought English would win. Now she is English no longer. Her husband had this permit also :

“ Leave is granted to Mr. C. G. H., of Hex River, dist. Ladybrand, to herd about 35 head of cattle, being the property of his children, who are all at home, and one old male with foal six months old, untrained, the latter on foal account to be kept in his possession.

” H. did not farm his own Land and was not well off, but they always got on and made two ends meet. Now are absolutely penniless. One day a patrol came and said she had communicated with Boers. Parents and children to come at once to Swartlaagte. Was told she would be allowed home again, so took nothing, neither food nor blanket. Major B. said then “ No, must go on to Bloemfontein, where she would hear all about it.” Long journey across country. Sent from pillar to post. Had to buy food, lodging, etc., everywhere at their own charges In Bloemfontein came before Captain H., Provost-Marshal. Told him all. He said, on hearing story “ You may not be the H., but we shall take all till the right H. is found. Everyone in Bloemfontein sent them to someone else. No use at all. Were conveyed to the camp.

Everything at the farm taken. Live now in the quarter of a marquee, and wonder how they will ever begin life again ; no longer young or strong. Husband about 60.

1. — MRS. H. H.
2. —Lived in town Philippolis.
3. —One child.
4. —Husband with Judge Hertzog.
5. —Arrived in camp Dec. 13.
6. —Compelled. No reason given.
7. —A little money with her.

8. —Not hurt when she left.
9. —Could, if allowed, go to Spion Kop, Philippolis.

No illness.

Has enough clothes.

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PREV

NEXT

Wessels. 1,300 sheep, 300 horses, 140 cattle—all gone. Doors and windows smashed in.

Fate of house unknown.

1. — MRS. J. J. P.
2. —Farm, Burghers Kraal, Winburg.
3. —One child.
4. —Prisoner in Bloemfontein.
5. —Arrived January 11, 1901.
6. —Compelled to come as prisoners.
7. —Has no means.
8. —Not burnt when left.
9. —Furniture destroyed and cattle taken.
10. —Could go to Velterreden, Winburg.

No illness so far.

Very scant clothing.

1. — MRS. P.
2. —Farm Gruysfontein, near Bethulie.
3. —Has six children, ages 15 to 2 years. Taken from them, does not know where they are.
4. —Husband a farmer, detained in Bloemfontein. May not see her.
5. —About two months.
6. —Brought by force. Lost everything. Expects confinement in three weeks. Shares a single bell tent with eight others, and all lie on the ground. Rise stiff and miserable.
7. —Would get on somehow if let loose.
8. —Knows nothing.
9. —No.

Mrs. P. is wonderful in the brave way she faces her troubles, present and future. She did not complain or ask for anything. None of them do. I have to find out what each longs for most. In her case a mattress and baby clothes as what she prepared was all lost.

1. — MRS. B.
2. —Lives in Village of Zastron.
3. —Has six from four years to 17. Knows nothing of them.
4. —A farmer. He and one son in Ceylon.
5. —Since January 4.
6. —Is a prisoner—forced here. Besides house in Zastron has cattle near Bethulie. She went off alone to fetch them, but was taken prisoners before could reach home, because, on getting near Zastron, found the town taken by English.
7. —Yes ; feels sure she could get on.
8. —Knows nothing. No tidings. Wrote but no reply.
9. —No.

Since arrived never feels well, but she looks hardier and healthier than others.  
Needs a dress, and has a great longing for a pillow.  
Terribly anxious for children.

1. — MRS. P.
2. —Lived on father's farm, near Petersburg.
3. —Had five children in Camp, also three little boys, who the troops had taken out in the fields with the sheep, whom she befriended away from their parents. One day the Sergeant frightened these lads with threats of Ceylon, and her two eldest lads, of 13 and 9, with these three others, all ran away together. Nothing has been heard of them, and they were not followed.  
Mrs. P. is mad with anxiety, and that is why she herself tried to escape, with Mrs. V. B. and Miss T., as elsewhere related.
4. —Husband on commando.  
No soap or clothes.
5. —Been in Camp since Feb. 13.

1. — MR. AND MRS. F. P.
2. —Corneliusdam—Winburg.
3. .—Five children in Camp.
4. —Husband also in Camp. Deaf, and with weak eyes. Never on commando.
5. —Since Oct. 8, in Bloemfontein.
6. —Compelled. Mr. P. had always lived quietly at home, on account of health and bad sight. In June, on the approach of troops, thought it best to take oath of neutrality, and did so, receiving a pass stating he was under British protection, etc., etc. In September the Boers occupied Thornburg, about one hour from his farm. No burghers had been near them. The British troops came along, and on the evening of September 17 Mrs. P. and family stood at the door of her house listening to the band playing in the distance. Then they sat down to supper. When it was dark a knock was heard, and on opening there stood a man with a gun. It was an

English officer, and he said to Mr. P., “ I am come to take you prisoner.” “ How can that be,” said he, “ when I am living here at peace, under the oath of neutrality.” “ Have you a pass ? ” said the officer. “ Yes,” said the farmer, and produced it. “Very well,” said the officer, “ then that is all right.” They gave him some coffee, and when he went out Mrs. P. followed him, chatting. She said she always liked to chat with people. He whistled, and behold a number of men appeared. “ Why,” she said, “ my house is surrounded, and I never knew it.” “ Yes,” said the officer, “we are looking for burghers.” “We have not,” she assured him, “ had any or seen any on our farm.” She further asked him if they were safe, and he replied they were, with the husband’s pass.

Next morning, September 18th, before 9 a. m., a captain and eight men appeared. “ You have five minutes,” he said. “ I am come to burn the house.” They pleaded. But he said, “ These are my orders. I shall be shot if I don’t obey.” He then sent Mr. P. to find the General, Hector Macdonald, under whom he served, saying he would be found passing in such a place with the column. In less than half an hour, before the farmer could get back, the Captain set fire to the house. Mrs. P. said she cried and prayed and pleaded, all in vain. He told her to get out her things, and she hastily began pulling out chairs, chests of drawers, etc., with the children’s clothes. Then he began to smash the

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PREV

NEXT

1. — MR. AND MRS. W. J. P.
2. —Farm, Het Kruis, Smaldeel.
3. —Wife and 4 children in Camp.
4. —
5. —Since January 7.
6. —Forced here against will. Took oath of neutrality last May. Never broken it. British nothing against him. Only took arms 28 days at beginning of war. Was against it always. Got a certificate from Free State Government to go home, and hired a substitute to fight. Lived quietly on farm ever since. Had no fear of Boers. Yet suddenly soldiers swooped down. Said he must come in for their protection (which he did not want) and all brought to Camp.
7. —Yes ; could get on.
8. —No.
9. —All packed in cellar. No illness yet ; only here 17 days.

No clothes wanted yet.

Only to go home and see to farm work.

1. — MRS. R.
2. —Klipladrift, Heilbron.
3. —Four children in Camp.
4. —Husband in Camp, too. Never fought. Had sick certificate from Free State and protection paper from British.
5. —Since February 4.
6. —Compelled. No reason given. Officer (Col. W.) from Vredefort came early one day and asked if she would like to go. She refused, and then he said he must protect them. In vain she said she needed no protection, and offered stock, goods, anything to be left alone ; but she was carried off to Kopje siding, and after being kept there nine days was brought here. Food stuffs were all burnt, and her furniture taken. Promised to return stock some day. House left empty, but she had seen many empty houses burnt, and feared for hers.

Clothing sparse.

1. — MRS. J. C. V. R.
2. —Farm, Bornonansdrift, Ladybrand.
3. —Four children and an orphan in camp. Two sons on commando. Two in Ceylon. One

Son in Simonstown prison.

4. —Husband a Field Cornet. Still on commando.

5. —She was taken December 21st. Captain Davies told her that some neighbours had laid information against her. It was false, and she believes it was done in spite, because her husband, being Field Cornet, had been obliged to commandeer some of their goods.

Mrs. V. R. had been very kind to British soldiery, and fed many, and they had commandeered much of her stock, etc. In May, 1900, some officers left the following paper with her :

(Copy.)

“ 18th May, 1900.

“ To all it may concern.—Sufficient in the eyes of the Colonial Division has been commandeered from Mrs. V. R., and she has been left in charge of her husband’s farm, with her children, who have been very civil to us, who slept here last night.

## “ J. H. LYON, Border Horse.

## “ H. E. SPRING, Border Horse.”

Mrs. V. R. had quarter-hour’s notice to leave her house. Three hundred men came along with two cannon. She was allowed neither clothes nor food, saying that could be sent for afterwards. Arrived in Ladybrand ; refused to let her send back to the farm for either. She managed to buy a few loaves and some jam. Twenty-four persons were put into one waggon, and they started for Thaba N’chu: At night they slept under the waggon. The 29th December they reached Thaba N’chu ; no food had been given on the way. After Thaba N’chu food was given. Reached Bloemfontein Camp Jan. 1st. Not until the 8th was a tent given to her. Slept with her children where and as she could till that day.

Was a wealthy woman, Has now only a trifle of money left, and no clothes or means of any kind.

Captain W. had given her a note of protection, but Captain D. took no notice of it. She has a receipt for six loads of goods taken by Brabant.

Her farm cost £2,560 to build. The house was 70 ft. long and 40 wide, and had thirteen rooms. The roof was taken off, doors, windows, and all woodwork destroyed. Flooring torn up. Piano and organ cut to pieces, best furniture carted into Ladybrand to furnish an officer’s house. Seven hundred bags of wheat burnt, large quantities of mealies, 3,000 sheep (17 were German sheep imported, and worth alone £ 450), 100 horses, with a valuable imported stallion, a new buggy, waggons, cattle, etc., etc. The farm was only 1,800 morgens, but they had another in Winburg district, where the cattle mostly were.

Her husband (as Field Cornet) had got off free from fighting 11 English-born burghers, who did not want to fight their own race, and he pleaded for them and sent them home safe.

Mrs. V. R. is very quiet and calm. One of her girls, Engela, is chosen to be put to school with Miss Murray in the Institute for six months. The mother is more than grateful. They were rich, now they have nothing but what they stand up in.

A married daughter, Mrs. J. J., of Concordia, Senekal, nursed two wounded British soldiers. One died, and she buried him ; one recovered. An officer came and thanked her warmly, and said nothing should happen to her. Next day her house was burnt down, and she and her little ones fled.

1. — MRS. M. M. R.
  2. —Village of Bethulie.
  3. —Six children, three in camp, one (only sixteen) in Bloemfontein Prison, though never on commando, two married.
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out to a distant farm of his to bring in his lad of 14. While absent the English came, Feb. 1st. They made a fire in Mrs. Du T.'s yard, and, having smashed up things, burnt all the food and soap. Then two hours were given to put all they wanted on waggons. They packed clothes and money and placed in waggon. £600 was in a case securely placed in a bundle of clothes. As the waggons got full in the trek, which lasted four days, the clothes and boxes were thrown off by Colonel C.'s order—all of theirs was thus lost, including the £600. They went to the Colonel and complained, and he said he thought they were Kaffirs' things. All is lost. Their farms swept of stock, even six cows they had in town. The four days' trek had only hard biscuits, except the Sunday, then bully beef was given.

Know nothing of the father and his lad. I gave Miss D. T. a new pair of boots and a skirt.

1. — Two sisters—MISSES U.
2. —Town of Brandford.
3. —No little sisters or children with them.
4. —Father never fought ; is 66. Now prisoner at Greenpoint.
5. —Since Nov. 28.
6. —Forced to come here. No reason given. Had to hire to come out and pay themselves.
7. —No money to get home, but once there could live.
8. —Know nothing.
9. —Married sisters left at home.

Their health poor ; constant acute neuralgia and dysentery. At home slight neuralgia, but never dysentery. Their father had a butcher's business. Can find no reason for their arrest unless it were some man had a spite against them.

Since arrival in Camp have earned a trifle by sewing for others, and so kept themselves in clothes.

Evidently very delicate girls—with sweet faces and gentle manners. Like very superior dressmakers.

1. — MRS. H. J. V.
2. —Vraainitzich. Ventersburg.
3. —Three children and one adopted boy.
4. —Husband died in hospital, Bloemfontein, Jan., 1901.
5. —Arrived in Camp Oct. 3, 1900.
6. —Was told to be ready to come south with food and cattle ; latter left at Zand River, and not heard of since.
7. —No means.
8. —House burnt.

9. —Ditto.
10. —If released, could go to father-in-law (also in camp).

Husband died of fever.

Clothing for the present.

1. — MRS. A. S. V.
2. —Klipplaatsdrift. Bloemfontein.
3. —Five children ; eldest nine, baby 15 days when came.
4. —Husband now at Greenpoint.
5. —Since Nov. 26.
6. —Compelled—50 men went out to take her just after confinement. False information given by a neighbour, a half-breed called S. Her husband, being sickly, was on the farm, and had complied with rules by sending in report that Boers were on the farm. But no use ; he was arrested.  
She not fit to travel—put in a van on line and kept there all night. Journey 24 hours, instead of 5½. No food given. Took a little bread with her.
7. —No money.
8. —Does not know.
9. —Furniture destroyed. Fowls led— everything—30 cattle, 936 sheep, 50 horses— all gone. Captain H. promised receipt ; gave none.
10. —No friends in Colony.

One child diarrhoea, one had chest. Herself sick more than a month after arrival. All look ill. No soap. Very poor and worn and ill.

1. — MRS. W.
2. —Farm Serano, Thaba Nehu.
3. —One small child.
4. —Husband in Camp also. Always been sickly, and so never fought. Brought here five months ago. No reason.
5. —She arrived January 17th.
6. —After husband had been here five months she asked to come to this Camp to join him.
7. —No means, nothing. Has friends, but could not live on them.
8. —Burnt, and eight houses on the farm besides.
9. —All destroyed, trees uprooted. But for this could have gone home and lived somehow.
10. —No.

Paid her own fare all the way to camp. Very young, and poor, and sad. Very respectable and tidy.

Needs a gown and shoes for child.

1. — MRS. W.
  2. —Siberia. District, Kroonstadt.
  3. —Two small children.
  4. —Husband on commando. For many months she has heard nothing of him ; may be dead, wounded, prisoner, or still fighting.
  5. —In Camp since February 5th.
  6. —Prisoners. Officer came in the morning and asked if she would like to come under British protection. She said, No ; would rather remain at home, where she had plenty. He said he would not press her, and went away. In the afternoon came again with soldiers, and gave her ten minutes to be ready. She expostulated after what had passed in the morning. He got cross, and smacked his whip, and in a minute the house was full of troops, who took many things. All her corn and meal were burnt. Has no tidings of her house. Stock all taken. She was taken to the soldiers' Camp in ox waggon. It is three hours' journey to Kopje Siding, and it took them five days with
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Unfortunately the weight often falls short, and at times the supply does not go round. The meat is sometimes maggoty, and the coffee much adulterated.

With this diet, added to the fact of the intense heat of the tents, and the use, which then prevailed, of unboiled Modder River water, it can scarcely be wondered that Miss Hobhouse found the children drooping and lying languid and sick in every tent. Nor is it astonishing that many of these children have since died.

**NOTE.**

Though few names are printed in these pages, the individual name is in each case known to the Committee. Miss Hobhouse cannot, of course, hold herself absolutely responsible for the truth of any given statement, but believes all here written to be the simple facts of a very terrible time, told simply and without exaggeration by each in turn. It appeared to the Committee that such records, slender though they be, would prove of interest to the subscribers and to a large number of the public.

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*Contributions will be thankfully received by*

**The Hon. Treasurer,**

**LADY FARRER,**

**3, Whitehall Court, S.W.**

*Or by*

**The Hon. Secretary,**

**FRED. W. LAWRENCE, Esq.,**

**17, Essex Street,**

**Strand, W.C.**

*Parcels of Clothing may be sent to*

**MISS E. D. BRADBY,**

**19, Linden Gardens,**

**Bayswater, W**

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Both the English and Dutch languages will be used and taught in public schools when the parents of the children desire it, and allowed in Courts of Law.

As regards the debts of the late Republican Governments, His Majesty's Government cannot undertake any liability. It is, however, prepared, as an act of grace, to set aside a sum not exceeding one million pounds sterling to repay inhabitants of the Transvaal and Orange River Colony for goods requisitioned from them by the late Republican Governments, or subsequent to annexation, by Commandants in the field being in a position to enforce such requisitions. But such claims will have to be established to the satisfaction of a Judge or Judicial Commission, appointed by the Government, to investigate and assess them, and, if exceeding in the aggregate one million pounds, they will be liable to reduction *pro rata*.

I also beg to inform Your Honour that the new Government will take into immediate consideration the possibility of assisting by loan the occupants of farms, who will take the oath of allegiance, to repair any injuries sustained by destruction of buildings or loss of stock during the war, and that no special war tax will be imposed upon farms to defray the expense of the war.

When burghers require the protection of firearms, such will be allowed to them by licence, and on due registration, provided they take the oath of allegiance. Licences will also be issued for sporting rifles, guns, etc., but military firearms will only be allowed for purposes of protection.

As regards the extension of the franchise to Kaffirs in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, it is not the intention of His Majesty's Government to give such franchise before representative Government is granted to those Colonies, and if then given it will be so limited as to secure the just predominance of the white race. The legal position of coloured persons will, however, be similar to that which they hold in the Cape Colony.

In conclusion I must inform Your Honour that, if the terms now offered are not accepted after a reasonable delay for consideration they must be regarded as cancelled.

I have, etc.,

*KITCHENER, GENERAL,  
Commander-in-Chief British Forces, South Africa.*

To His Honour, Commandant-General Louis Botha.

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*For the Orange Free State.*

- a. C. C. F. Badenhorst, Vice - Commandant-in-Chief ; for Boshof, Hoopstad, West Bloemfontein, Winburg, and Kroonstad.
- b. A. J. Bester, Commandant ; for Bethlehem.
- c. A. J. Bester, Commandant ; for Bloemfontein.
- d. L. P. H. Botha, Commandant ; for Harrismith.
- e. G. A. Brand, Vice - Commandant-in-Chief ; for Bethulie, Rouxville, Caledon River, and Wepener in the eastern part of Bloemfontein.
- f. H. J. Brouwer, Commandant ; for Bethlehem.
- g. D. H. van Coller, Commandant ; for Heilbron.
- h. F. R. Cronje, Commandant ; for Winburg.
- i. D. F. H. Flemming, Commandant ; for Hoopstad.
- j. C. C. Froneman, Vice-Commandant-in-Chief ; for Winburg and Ladybrand.
- k. F. J. W. J. Hattingh, Vice-Commandant-in-Chief ; for the eastern part of Kroonstad, in the district of Heilbron.
- l. J. A. M. Hertzog, Commandant ; for Philippolis.
- m. J. N. Jacobs, Commandant ; for Boshof.
- n. F. P. Jacobsz, Commandant ; for Harrismith.
- o. A. J. de Kock, Commandant ; for Vrede.
- p. J. J. Koen, Commandant ; for Ladybrand.
- q. H. J. Kritzinger, Veldtcoronet ; for Kroonstad.
- r. F. E. Mentz, Commandant ; for Heilbron.
- s. J. A. P. van der Merwe, Commandant ; for Heilbron.
- t. C. A. van Niekerk, Commandant ; for Kroonstad.
- u. H. van Niekerk, Commandant.
- v. J. J. van Niekerk, Commandant ; for Fricksburg.
- w. I. K. Nieuwoudt, Vice-Commandant-in-Chief ; for Fauresmith, Philippolis, and Jacobsdal.
- x. H. P. J. Pretorius, Commandant ; for Jacobsdal.
- y. A. M. Prinsloo, Vice-Commandant-in-Chief ; for Bethlehem in Ficksburg.
- z. L. J. Rautenbach, Commandant ; for Bethlehem.
- aa. F. J. Rheeder, Commandant ; for Rouxville.
- ab. A Ross, Commandant ; for Vrede.
- ac. P. W. de Vos, Commandant ; for Kroonstad.
- ad. W. J. Wessels, Vice-Commandant-in-Chief ; for Harrismith and Vrede.

PREV

NEXT

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Republics hereby charge the Governments to nominate a Commission for the purpose of entering upon negotiations with His Excellency Lord Kitchener, acting on behalf of His Britannic Majesty's Government. The Commission is to endeavour to make peace on satisfactory terms, and is then to lay the result of its negotiations before this meeting, for the sanction of the two Governments."

The meeting was then closed with prayer.

1

Infantry.

Conference, whereupon the following letter was read to the meeting :

PRETORIA,

*19th May, 1902.*

*To their Excellencies, Lord Kitchener and Lord Milner, Pretoria.*

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,—

With a view to finally concluding the existing hostilities, and being fully empowered by the Government of the two Republics, we have the honour to propose the following points—in addition to the conditions already offered in the negotiations of April last—as a basis for negotiations :

- a. We are prepared to cede our independence as regards our foreign relations.
- b. We wish to retain self-government in our country, under British supervision.
- c. We are prepared to cede a part of our territory.

Should your Excellencies be prepared to negotiate on this basis, then the above-mentioned points can be elaborated.

We have the honour to be,

Your Excellencies' most obedient servants,

*LOUIS BOTHA.*

*C. R. DE WET.*

*J. H. DE LA REY.*

*J. B. M. HERTZOG.*

*J. C. SMUTS.*

When this letter had been read, a discussion followed.

Lord Milner : “ Considering the wide difference between this proposal and that made by His Majesty's Government, when we last met, I fear that I can hold out very little hope of any good results following negotiations on the basis you have suggested.”

Lord Kitchener : “ We can take those proposals into consideration, but I cannot see how it is possible to bring them into harmony with those of His Majesty's Government.”

Commandant-General Botha : “ If this is the position you take, we should like to receive from you a final answer to our proposals.”

Lord Milner : “ Do you wish us to refer your proposals to His Majesty's Government ? ”

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engaged in fighting and who now surrender shall, on their return, be dealt with by the Colonial Governments in accordance with the laws of the Colonies, and that all British subjects who have joined the enemy shall be liable to be tried under the law of that part of the British Empire to which they belong.

“ His Majesty’s Government has received from the Government of Cape Colony a statement of their opinion as regards the terms to be offered to British subjects of the Cape Colony who are still in the Veldt or who have surrendered since April 12th, 1901. The terms are as follows :—In regard to the burghers, they all, on their surrender, after having laid down their arms, shall sign a document before a resident magistrate of the district in which their surrender has taken place, in which document they shall declare themselves guilty of high treason ; and their punishment, in the event of their not having been guilty of murder, or of other deeds in contradiction to the customs of civilized warfare, shall be that for the rest of their lives they shall not be registered as voters, nor shall they be able to vote in Parliamentary, district, or municipal elections. As regards justices and veldtcornets of the Cape Colony, and all other persons who had occupied official positions under the Government of Cape Colony, and all who held the rank of commandant in the rebel or burgher forces, they shall be brought on the charge of high treason before the ordinary Courts of the country, or before such special Courts as later on may legally be constituted. The punishment for their misdeeds shall be left to the discretion of the Court, with this reservation, that in no case shall capital punishment be inflicted.

“ The Government of Natal is of opinion that the rebels should be judged by the laws of the Colony.”

The meeting now adjourned.

The secretaries and Messrs. De Wet and J. Ferreira, with the help of lawyers, set themselves the task of making copies of the proposal of the British Government for the use of the national representatives at Vereeniging. This work kept them engaged until the evening.

At seven o’clock the Commission left Pretoria and returned to Vereeniging.

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pressed the opinion that to cable this proposal to the British Government would be detrimental to the objects of these negotiations. They told us they had already informed the two Governments that the British Government would only negotiate on the basis of an amended form of the Middelburg proposal. In order finally to formulate this proposal, Lord Milner asked the assistance of some members of the Commission ; and this was granted, on the understanding that the assistance of these members of the Commission should be given without prejudice to themselves.

As the result of the deliberations of this sub-committee, Lord Milner produced a draft proposal, in which we insisted that a fresh clause (No. 11) should be inserted ; and this was done. This draft proposal (annexed under B) [1](#) was then cabled to the British Government, revised by them, and then communicated to us in its final shape (annexed under B). [2](#) We were informed by the British Government that no further revision of this proposal would be allowed, but that it must now be either accepted or rejected in its entirety by the delegates of the two Republics ; and that this acceptance or rejection must take place within a stipulated time. We then told Lord Kitchener that he should know our final decision by the evening of the next Saturday at latest.

During our formal negotiations certain informal conversations took place in reference to the British subjects (in Cape Colony and Natal) who have been fighting on our side. As a result of these informal conversations a communication from the British Government was imparted to us (annexed under B). [3](#)

We have the honour to remain, etc.,

*LOUIS BOTHA.*

*J. H. DE LA REY.*

*C. R. DE WET.*

*J. B. M. HERTZOG.*

*J. D. SMUTS.*

Vice-President Burger said that the delegates must proceed to discuss this document, and that they would then be asked to decide—firstly, whether the struggle should be continued ; secondly, whether the proposal of the British Government should be accepted ; and, thirdly, whether they were prepared to surrender unconditionally.



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the railways to the scene of operations. The distance from Cape Town to Kimberley is some 650 miles (1,045km) and that from Cape Town to Pretoria is over 1,000 miles (1,600km). Durban to Ladysmith is about 190 miles (305km) up through the hills of southern Natal and Pretoria lies a further 320 miles (500km) to the north beyond the Drakensberg mountains. Lieutenant-general Lord Methuen would find himself tied to the railway and was unable to contemplate outflanking Magersfontein in December 1899. A few days later, Buller would undertake a head-on attack at Colenso, fearing to endanger his supply lines by leaving the railway for Potgieter's Drift to the west to turn the Boer flank before Ladysmith. Another consequence of the long and overloaded supply lines was Buller's decision on 6 November 1899 to cut the horses' rations from the standard 30lb (13.6kg) to a starvation level of 8lb (3.6kg) of grain, to be supplemented by anything else they could find. During the course of the war two-thirds of the half-million horses used by the British died.

Although the British had been using the Lee-Metford rifle, which used black powder, for a decade and the Lee-Enfield, the Mark I\*, which was introduced in 1899, and which used smokeless cordite as a propellant, they had never fought against men using modern high-velocity rifles. Whereas the Martini-Henry rifle, which had been the standard British infantry weapon and was still carried by a considerable number of Boers, had a muzzle velocity of 1,350 feet per second, the British Lee-Enfield boasted a muzzle velocity of 2,060 feet per second and the Mausers, which had been imported in great quantities to arm the Boers, had a muzzle velocity of 2,296 feet per second. The advantages of the new weapons were that they had flatter trajectories and thus had a longer dangerous zone than ever before, that is, they put a standing man at risk within a greater distance, and that their point-blank range, the distance the bullet would travel without raising the sights, was longer. Additional benefits were that their bullets had greater energy and thus the ability to cause more damage; the elevation need to fire at longer ranges was lessened and thus there was less opportunity for error; they had magazine feed and thus could fire more quickly; and they used smokeless powder, making the position of the rifleman difficult or impossible to detect. This is a formidable list of new characteristics which the Boers were swift to exploit and the British slow to appreciate and counter.

In a manual published in 1901 for the instruction of British soldiers, Philips's *Text Book of Field Engineering*, it was still possible for the author to state that beyond 1,200 yards (1,097m) infantry fire was a negligible danger and to discuss the effect of infantry fire in terms of troops in close order and firing volleys section by section, behaviour suited to troops using muzzle-loading weapons. Individual marksmanship was still not valued in the British army.

The manual reports details of Boer entrenchments, but fails to point out that fire from such positions takes full advantage of the extended point-blank range of a high-velocity rifle. A standing man would be in danger practically anywhere up to 600 yards in front of the trench. The Boer fire with Mausers from trenches at Modder River and Magersfontein would demonstrate this convincingly.

New to both sides were the American inventions, machine-guns. The Maxim-



- 1899 28 N. British pinned down by **rifle** fire at **Modder River**, but Boers cannot hold on  
Nov. Cape and retire again.
- 5 Dec. Cape British besieged at **Kuruman** .
- 10 N.E. ‘Black Week’: Boers under **Grobler** defeat **Gatacre** at **Stormberg** .  
Dec. Cape
- 11 N. ‘Black Week’: **Methuen** fails to dislodge Boers from **trenches** at  
Dec. Cape **Magersfontein** . British general **Wauchope** killed.
- 14 Natal **Indian Ambulance Corps** arrives at Estcourt with **Gandhi** .  
Dec.
- 15 Natal ‘Black Week’: Boers prevent **Buller’s** first attempt to cross **Tugela River** at  
Dec. **Colenso** .
- 18 Britain Lord **Roberts** appointed Commander-in-Chief in Buller’s place.  
Dec.
- 1900 1 Jan. Cape British garrison at **Kuruman** surrenders.
- 1 Jan. N. Canadians and Australians defeat Boers at **Sunnyside** .  
Cape
- 6 Jan. Natal Strong Boer attack on **Platrand** at **Ladysmith** defeated by British.
- 10 Cape **Roberts** and his Chief-of-Staff Lord **Kitchener** land in Cape Town.  
Jan.
- 15 N.E. **De la Rey** fails to overcome British and New Zealanders at **Slingersfontein** .  
Jan. Cape
- 18 Natal British reconnaissance at **Acton Homes**, west of **Spioenkop** not exploited by  
Jan. **Warren** .
- 23–24 Natal Battle of **Spioenkop** ends in British withdrawal by **Thornycroft** and Boer  
Jan. withdrawal at same time, but Boers re-occupy the hill.
- 5 Feb. Natal **Lyttleton** takes **Vaalkrans**, but attempt to break through to **Ladysmith** is  
abandoned.
- 5–8 N. British Highlanders under **MacDonald** engage **De Wet** at **Koedoesberg Drift** .  
Feb. Cape
- 9 Feb. N. George **Labram**, American engineer, killed in **Kimberley** .  
Cape

## Year Date/Month Place Event

*Third Phase: British Offensive under Roberts*

- 1900 15 Feb. N. **Relief of Kimberley** by British under General **French**; many **horses** die.  
Cape Boers retreat to **Fourteen Streams** .
- 15 Feb. OFS New British **transport** arrangements provide **De Wet** with victory at  
**Waternat Drift** .
- 21 Feb. Natal Battle of **Tugela Heights** begins.
- 23 Feb. Natal **Hart's Irish** Brigade attack Boers on **Tugela Heights** with heavy losses.
- 27 Feb. OFS Massive Boer surrender at **Paardeberg** . Piet **Cronjé** and Major **Albrecht**  
captured.
- 27 Feb. Natal British win final battle on **Tugela Heights** at **Pieters Hill** . First horsemen  
reach **Ladysmith** that evening and siege ends.
- 4–5 Mar. N.E. **Brabant** overcomes Boers at **Labuschagnes Nek** .  
Cape
- 7 Mar. OFS Boers flee before British at **Poplar Grove** .
-

- 1900 12 June Transvaal British defeat Boers under **Botha** at **Diamond Hill** (Donkerhoek).  
 16 June Transvaal First proclamation by Lord **Roberts** threatening **farm burning** .  
 July OFS 7,000 Boers under **De Wet** ousted from **Bethlehem** by British under **Clements** .  
 11 July Transvaal **De la Rey** ejects British from **Zilikatsnek** .  
 26 July OFS Piet **De Wet** surrenders to British and becomes a **joiner** .  
 31 July OFS **Prinsloo** surrenders Boers to **Hunter** in **Brandwater Basin** .  
 4–15 Transvaal Australians hold out at **Elands River Post** .  
 Aug.  
 11 Aug. Transvaal **Dundonald** occupies **Ermelo** for British.  
 14 Aug. Transvaal Pursuit of **De Wet** fails as he attains **Olifant's Nek** .  
 18 Aug. Transvaal **De Wet** escapes back over **Magaliesbergs** .  
 26 Aug. OFS **Olivier** captured by British in Winburg.  
 27 Aug. Transvaal British win final set-piece battle at **Bergendal** (Dalmanutha).

### Year Date/Month Place Event

#### *Fifth Phase: Guerrilla Warfare.*

- 1900 5 Sept. Transvaal Boer scout Danie **Theron** killed.  
 5 Sept. OFS Brief siege of **Ladybrand** by Boers relieved.  
 14 Sept. Australia Banjo **Paterson**, Australian **journalist**, supports British land clearance policy.  
 24 Sept. Transvaal **Pole-Carew** leads British into **Komatipoort**, last Transvaal town on **Delagoa Bay Railway** .  
 October Britain In the British General Election the **Pro-Boers** fail to attract votes.  
 19 Oct. President **Kruger** sails for Europe and Schalk **Burger** becomes acting President.  
 20 Oct. Transvaal **Barton** holds out against Boers at **Frederikstad** .  
 24 Oct. **Buller** returns to England.  
 25 Oct. Transvaal South African Republic annexed by British.  
 6 Nov. OFS British Lt-Col **Le Gallais** almost catches **De Wet** and **Steyn** at **Bothaville** .  
 6–7 Nov. Transvaal Canadians prevent Boer success over **Smith-Dorrien** at **Leliefontein** .  
 10 Dec. Cape Lord Roberts leaves for England.

- 13 Dec. Transvaal Boer forces of **Beyers** and **De la Rey** force General **Clements** to withdraw.
- 16 Dec. Cape **Kritzinger** invades **Cape Colony**, as does **Hertzog** .
- 27 Dec. Cape Emily **Hobhouse** arrives to bring gifts to **refugees** in camps – **concentration camps** .
- 29 Dec. Transvaal British repel Boer attack on **Helvetia** .
- 1901 28 Jan. Transvaal General **French** launches major **drive** to capture Boers.
- 31 Jan. Transvaal **Smuts** beats British at **Modderfontein**. **Black Africans** slaughtered.
- 10 Feb. Cape **De Wet's** two week invasion of the Cape begins.
- 28 Feb. Transvaal **Kitchener** and **Botha** meet at **Middelburg** to start **peace negotiations** .
-

memorate the bravery shown by the Irish regiments in the recent operations in South Africa, has been graciously pleased to command that an Irish regiment of Foot Guards be formed. This regiment will be designated the Irish Guards."

In South Africa the Boer Irish Brigade was recruited from Irishmen who were living and working in the Transvaal. They were not citizens of the South African Republic and indeed it was partly in order to attain such status that they volunteered. The formation of the Brigade was the idea of John MacBride who had been involved in Fenian activity in Dublin before coming to Africa in 1896. President Kruger gave his approval to the creation of the unit but forbade the solicitation of recruits in Ireland and America. The membership of the Brigade was not exclusively Irish; there were also some French and American volunteers among them. MacBride declined to take up the office of commander of the brigade, believing that he lacked the experience required. The post was filled by an Irish-American resident of Johannesburg, Colonel J. Y. F. Blake, who had graduated from the United States Military Academy, West Point, and had served in the Apache wars. This, the First Irish Brigade, served at the siege of Ladysmith, and the battles of Colenso and Spioenkop. Reinforced with new recruits from Massachusetts and Chicago, they then took part in the resistance to Lord Roberts's advance from Bloemfontein in May 1900. At this time their chief activity, under Major MacBride, was the blowing up of bridges and they succeeded in wrecking all the rail crossings of the rivers between Bloemfontein and Johannesburg. Their last action in the Boer War was at Bergendal in August 1900.

A second Irish Brigade was raised by an Australian, Arthur Lynch, in January 1900. Lynch had graduated in engineering at Melbourne University and then worked as a journalist in England. It was in this capacity that he went to Johannesburg in 1899. When he failed to get clearance to cover the Boer campaigns he instantly quit journalism and offered instead to form another Irish Brigade. Kruger approved and the newly designated Colonel Lynch led his men, many of them, especially the officers, German and French, into Natal early in 1900. Their principal service was in the resistance to Buller's advance after the relief of Ladysmith (28 February 1900), under Louis Botha at Waschbank and under Christiaan Botha at Helpmakaar. After Buller outflanked the Boer position at Langs Nek by way of Botha's Pass, Lynch's unit took part in the defence of Johannesburg, facing the 2nd Victorian Mounted Rifles at Vereeniging and the Australian scouts on the Klip River. The Brigade disbanded after the fall of Pretoria (June 1900) and Lynch departed to promote the Boer cause in the United States and in France.

## See also:

[Blake, J. Y. F.](#); [Lynch, Arthur](#); [MacBride, John](#).

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made by the British). The Boer defences depended on these features, and the trenches below them. The road to Kimberley passed, at that time, round the eastern end of the Magersfontein kopje. The British approach was over ground that was almost level. Indeed, the post-battle British map does not even show what are now known as Horse Artillery Hill and Headquarters Hill and a visitor to the site has to have them pointed out. They are the merest hummocks but are, nonetheless, sufficient to conceal troops from observation from the trenches, though less satisfactory if the observer is on the hilltop.

To get within attacking distance unscathed over ground more open than it is today meant a night approach over country that had not been mapped in detail nor reconnoitred thoroughly, although this task could have been carried out before 4 December when Cronjé moved south from the Spytfontein position. Indeed, British patrols actually rode over the Magersfontein kopjes before then; until that day they were there for the taking.

The British were reluctant to take action as they had fought three battles in the space of a week and the medical officers said they needed rest. In addition, Methuen was recovering from the wound he had received at the Modder River, a replacement for the blown railway bridge over the Modder was being built, reinforcements were awaited and various other reasons for a respite could be found. It is, however, clear that the failure to maintain the advance was responsible for what followed.

By 10 December Methuen had some 12,000 men, a 4.7-inch naval gun, six 5-inch howitzers and eighteen 15-pounder and six 12-pounder field guns. There were also four naval 12-pounders to guard his camp. To his left was a desert and to his right the Boers held sufficient territory to prevent a successful flanking movement, reducing the choices to the road or the railway. Methuen chose the hills between them in order to be able to use the road, the most direct route and one on which he could concentrate his forces. With the information available to Methuen, this must have seemed a sound decision, but it was made without knowledge of the Boer defensive positions. The attacking force was in three columns. On the right, ready to undertake the principal attack, was the Highland Brigade under Major-general Andrew Wauchope. The Brigade consisted of, in the order of march, 2nd Black Watch, 2nd Seaforth Highlanders, 1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the 1st Highland Light Infantry. All the field artillery and the howitzers were with Wauchope, as were the 9th Lancers and, to guard the south-eastern flank, were the 2nd King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry. On the left was Major-general R. Pole-Carew's force consisting of 9th Brigade and the Naval Brigade (1st Northumberland Fusiliers, 2nd Northamptonshires, Rimington's Guides and the 4.7-inch naval gun) to make a demonstration against the Boer right. In reserve was Major-general Sir Henry Colville with the Guards Brigade (1st and 2nd Coldstream Guards, 3rd Grenadier Guards and 1st Scots Guards), 12th Lancers and No. 7 Field Company Royal Engineers. The rest of the force was guarding the Modder River camp, except for the Gordon Highlanders who were to bring up supplies in the wake of the Highland Brigade.

Awaiting their approach were some 8,500 Boers with, probably, five 75mm Krupp guns, of which three faced south-west from the Magersfontein feature, and five Pom-Poms. The trenches at the foot of the Magersfontein kopje were held by men of the Kroonstad and Hoopstad Commandos of Cronjé's Orange Free State force and more of his men, of Kroonstad, Heilbron, Bethlehem, Ladybrand and Ficksburg, held the northern end of the ridge to the east with De le Rey's Bloemhof, Lichtenburg and Wolmaranstad Commandos holding the line down to Moss Drift. Forward of the ridge in the north was the Scandinavian Corps, a small group of volunteers. The positions beyond the railway to the north-west were held by men under Commandant Andries Cronjé, brother of Piet.

On 10 December Methuen's artillery bombarded what they took to be the Boer positions. The 4.7-inch gun, nicknamed Joe Chamberlain, was west of the railway and the rest of the



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available South African maps. The result was some twenty-seven sheets of IDWO No. 1367, monochrome, on a scale of 3.94 miles to the inch (1:250,000). The sheets are marked as being "Heliozincographed at the Ordnance Survey Office, Southampton, 1899" and distributed by agents in London (Edward Stanford), Edinburgh and Glasgow (John Menzies & Co), Dublin (Hodges, Figgis & Co), Liverpool (Philip, Son & Nephew), Manchester (J. E. Cornish) and Aldershot (Gale & Polden). They are based on the property definition maps and show topographical features in a fairly primitive way. The Hopetown sheet, for example, marks Belmont,

small sugar-loaf kopje to the left and a long hog-backed one on the right – a saw of small ridges above, a harsh face below, freckled with innumerable boulders. Below the small kopje were tents and waggons; from the leftward shoulder of the big one flashed once more the Boer guns.

This time the shell came. Faint whirr waxed presently to furious scream, and the white cloud flung itself on to the very line of our batteries unlimbering on the brow. Whirr and scream – another dashed itself into the field between the guns and limbers. Another and another, only now they fell harmlessly behind the guns, seeking vainly for the waggons and teams which were drawn snugly away under a hillside on the right. Another and another – bursting now on the clear space in rear of the guns between our right and left infantry column. All the infantry were lying down, so well folded in the ground that I could only see the Devons on the left. The Manchesters and Gordons on the right seemed to be swallowed by the veldt.

Then between the bangs of their artillery struck the hoarser bay of our own. Ball after ball of white smoke alighted on the kopje – the first at the base, the second over, the third jump on the Boer gun. By the fourth the Boer gun flashed no more. Then our guns sent forth little white balloons of shrapnel, to right, to left, higher, lower, peppering the whole face. Now came rifle-fire – a few reports, and then a roll like the ungreased wheels of a farm cart. The Imperial Light Horse was at work on the extreme right. And now as the guns pealed faster and faster we saw mounted men riding up the nearer swell of kopje and diving over the edge. Shrapnel followed; some dived and came up no more.

The guns limbered up and moved across to a nearer position towards the right. As they moved the Boer gun opened again – Lord, but the German gunners knew their business! – punctuating the intervals and distances of the pieces with scattering destruction. The third or fourth shell pitched clean into a labouring waggon with its double team of eight horses. It was full of shells. We held our breath for an explosion. But, when the smoke cleared, only the near wheeler was on his side, and the waggon had a wheel in the air. The batteries unlimbered and bayed again, and again the Boer guns were silent. Now for the attack.

The attack was to be made on their front and their left flank – along the hog-back of the big kopje. The Devons on our left formed for the front attack; the Manchesters went on the right, the Gordons edged out to the extreme rightward base, with the long, long boulderfreckled face above them. The guns flung shrapnel across the valley; the watchful cavalry were in leash, straining towards the enemy's flanks. It was about a quarter to five, and it seemed curiously dark for the time of day.

No wonder – for as the men moved forward before the enemy the heavens were opened. From the eastern sky swept a sheer sheet of rain. With the first stabbing drops horses turned their heads away, trembling, and no whip or spur could bring them up to it. It drove through mackintoshes as if they were blotting-paper. The air was filled with hissing; underfoot you could see solid earth melting into mud, and mud flowing away in water. It blotted out hill and dale and enemy in one grey curtain of swooping water. You would have said that the heavens had opened to drown the wrath of man. And through it the guns still thundered and the khaki column pushed doggedly on.

The infantry came among the boulders and began to open out. The supports and reserves

followed up. And then, in a twinkling, on the stone-pitted hill-face burst loose that

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could not get away, so we expected to have a jolly good smack in to finish De Wet off. Next morning we advanced in extended order to take the kopje expecting some very stiff work, but as usual the bird had flown. That was by Los Berg. That night we reached the line. Well I need not keep on telling you what we did day by day, they were all much about the same. Fearful lot of marches, & very little food. We marched 42 miles in 33 hours. 166 miles in 5 days & 236 miles in 13 days. These figures are official, & so they give you some idea of what it was like. Included in the 13 days were 4 engagements. I got very done up, & my ankles would keep swelling like a horse's do. But we have a very nice doctor & so I went & asked him if he would let me have my equipment carried for me for a few days & so I used to put it on the blanket waggon. That made a lot of difference to me. I am alright again now. Aug. 16 was the last day we had anything to do with De Wet. That was somewhere in the Witwater Rand Mts. not far from Oliphants Nek, I think it was called Rundles Nek. He held a formidable position. 2 of our companies advanced to take a kopje while the rest of us were escort to the guns. He only seemed to have one gun, but he put two or three shells from it at us which came too close to be pleasant, one dropping just behind me, but luckily not exploding. Our artillery soon silenced their gun, & when some of our men got round the back of the kopje the Boers soon retreated, managing to get away as usual. People may say what they like about Methuen, but I think facts speak for themselves. When you find that for 10 days he hangs on to De Wet & captures over half a dozen waggons & a gun (which De Wet captured from the English at Colesberg) although he only has Yeomanry & a few Colonials & Infantry, while Kitchen, Ian Hamilton, Ridley, Baden Powell & Smith-Dorrien who have cavalry brigades & are also supposed to be helping catch De Wet are not able to touch him.

We then started off to come here & relieved Colonel Hore, by the way. We kept on doing 20 miles a day on still further reduced rations. You can tell how much we had when I tell you that instead of full rations of tea & full ration of coffee we had  $\frac{1}{4}$  ration of either tea or coffee. That is if we had  $\frac{1}{4}$  ration of tea we had no coffee & vice versa. Colonel Hore was relieved 2 days before we got to him. Just fancy while we had had nothing much to eat, his men had been making walls to protect them of tins of jam, sacks of flour, barrels of rum, & lime-juice etc. We have had plenty to eat since we came to Elands River where Col. Hore was as we put as much of his stores on our waggons as we could & they let the men take as much away as they liked to carry as well, & then burnt what was left. My company happened to be advance guard so we did not stop at the place but we were able to buy stuff from the others. I forgot to mention that after we crossed the line in the pursuit of De Wet we passed through Ventersdorp. I mention this as perhaps you look on the map to trace our course. After we left Rundles Nek we were on the main road from Pretoria to Mafeking, & after we passed Elands River have come by easier stages through Wonderfontein, (large orange groves with the most magnificent oranges I have ever seen) Vaal Kop, Zeerust & 6 Mile Spruit. We stopped at Zeerust a couple of days. The day I was on guard there I went down the town with a file of men as escort, & a Boer prisoner, to hand him over to the M.M.P. & while down the town saw Carrington's lot come in, and with them Pagets Horse. Carrington's lot, to use their own expression, had come with a big convoy from Mafeking for Methuen's starring column. Next day I went up to Pagets Horse & found Jim

McEmery. He is quartermaster sergeant. . . .

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His duty was to take him in P. direction, and he offered to take them with him. They gave him 30s. (Miss Du T. has a little money), and he drove them one night to a friend's house in Beaconsfield, meaning to take them on next day. House belonged to a Mr. P. on parole. Next day he went as usual to report himself, and there heard that two women were missing. Not understanding they were runaways, said they were at his house, so caught and brought back. The scout got 42 days' hard labour, or so it is said.

(By far the bitterest women I have met are in Kimberley ; but no wonder. Their conditions are bad.—E. H.)

1. — MRS. J. M. B.
2. —Lived at Jagersfontein.
3. —Had four children ; one died in camp.
4. —Husband not heard of for eleven months. He was Government schoolmaster at Jagersfontein for ten years, and, though born a British subject, was therefore a burgher of Free State. But went on with his school, and did not go on commando at all, till March, 1900, they begged him to help the Netherlands Ambulance ; since which she has heard nothing.
5. —Brought in with convoy. First, when English came to Jagersfontein, they turned her out of her schoolhouse, and she took refuge with a friend, taking her husband's expensive Greek and Latin books and some of her furniture. Then, at the evacuation, when stores were blown up, these were all destroyed. She applied to Major K. for permit to go to her people in the Colony, and was told she should have it if went to Bloemfontein. Was taken there in open trucks with convoy. She and the four children were only just recovering from recent measles, and were not fit to travel. She asked for leave to sell remaining bits of furniture to pay the doctor, but was not allowed. Income had entirely stopped since March, 1900. In the trucks coming to Bloemfontein very cold in the open at night. Reaching B., was told she must go out to the camp. Went straight to the hospital, and was there with children a month. Coming out of hospital, was allowed a residential pass to live in the town at her own expense. Quite useless, as she had no money left but a Christmas gift sent the children by grandparents, and with that she has had to buy soap, candles, and a little extra food for them. Was put into a leaky bell-tent. Her baby of 16 months got wet through one wet night. She had no dry clothes for it or means of drying it ; it took a chill and died 15 days ago. Begs leave to go to parents to see once more old father of 80. Asks me to ask for her. Pretty, quiet young woman and three lovely children, exquisitely kept.

1. — MRS. B.

2. —Village of P.
3. —Four daughters.
4. —Husband, a builder of houses, been 16 months in Greenpoint.
5. —Came into Camp in February.
6. —Compelled to come, taken by the shoulders and turned out of her house. English thought the Boers were in the town, and fired twelve cannon balls into it. Not a Boer there. Then they marched into it and cleared out all the Boer families in the place.

One Afrikaner, who had married an Englishman, ran out to meet them with the British flag, and is allowed to remain, and one or two sick.

Came in ox-waggon for four days.

Very poor now ; for 16 months no money coming in.

1. — MRS. T. DE B.
2. —Venterspaalmyn, Ventersburg.
3. —Six children with her, and two daughters, who have been in Kroonstadt Camp since September.
4. —Husband at Greenpoint.
5. —Arrived November 10.
6. —Daughters and husband were sent away because Boer spies had passed over the farm, though had not stopped. She and children were forced to come here for “ protection ! ”
7. —Has no means.
8. —Not when she left.
9. —Could return home.

All the children have had dysentery. Clothing in tatters. No boots.

1. — MRS. A. C.
2. —Burgherskraal, Dist. Winburg.
3. —No children.
4. —Husband in Camp.
5. —Arrived January 11.
6. —Brought in prisoners for having given food to fighting Boers.
7. —No means
8. —House not burnt.
9. —Furniture destroyed.
10. —Nowhere else to go, except home.

No illness yet. Hardly any clothing.

1. — MRS. C.
2. —Village of Ficksburg.
3. —One son on commando ; one on parole at Pretoria ; one son shot at Greenpoint by sentry (when holding a prayer meeting—he was preparing for the ministry). All will recollect his case.
4. —Husband on commando.
5. —Just arrived preceding night, Feb. 22, after 13 days' journey in waggon. Mr. C., a builder in Ficksburg, where they own two erven. Did not know why she was taken. Major S., of Manchester Regiment, said it was because her husband still on commando. Before that General K. had passed that way and spoilt everything. Her clothes, etc., taken.

No tent for her on arrival. Simply said : “ I am on the veldt.”  
Quite willing to be a prisoner in her country's cause.

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4. —Husband surrendered with Prinsloo ; instead of going home as promised, sent to Ceylon.
  5. —Came in November.
  6. —Compelled. Taken prisoner by General G. Went to Smithfield for three months, and on return found everything destroyed. He (the General) said he must, have half of everything. Took the best half. Doors kicked open. Woodwork spoilt.
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1. —MRS. R.
  2. —Lives in town of Phillipolis.
  3. —Daughter of fifteen in camp, four sons on commando.
  4. —Husband at Greenpoint prison.
  5. —Arrived October 27.
  6. — Forced to come while ill. Open waggon to Springfontein, then open cattle truck.
  7. —Enough to live somehow.
  8. —Knows nothing.
  9. —No.

Not much illness, only she and girl unwell off and on. Mrs. R. has slept three months on the ground, and longs for a mattress, also shoes. An elderly woman, quiet and composed.

1. — MRS. S.
2. —House in Jacobsdal and farm at Koffifontein.
3. —Three daughters in camp, one son on commando.
4. —A widow for fourteen years, so put caretaker on farm and lived in town to educate girls. English occupied Jacobsdal. Her house between barracks and cannon, soldiers all round, no one could pass in or out unseen. October 25 a fight, and English badly shot. Accused her house. Said Dutch were in it. So turned and fired through all the windows and doors till riddled with shot. Then searched and found not a Boer within. So burnt down the house and eighteen others in village that day. First all was smashed. Girls pleaded for dead father's likeness enlarged, but refused. Threatened to shoot Mrs. S. if she pleaded. She was taken and shut up in parsonage, where watched all night. Then, with ten other families, put into the schoolhouse, and only allowed out from four to six daily. No food given, and the other families would have starved if she had not supplied them and herself with her sheep. Colonel J. was head of the troops. Her farm at Koffifontein also burnt. A good, motherly woman of substance, with pleasant, well-mannered girls. " I cannot offer you a chair," she said, " for they are burnt." To illustrate Kaffir impertinence, she said one night while she was in the

parsonage a Kaffir came and said General S. had sent to say he was going to burn the house early next morning. They all sat up ready dressed, with things collected, waiting the dawn, and then found the Kaffir was making game of them. Mrs. S. told an officer outside, who, instead of whipping the Kaffir, only laughed.

1. — MRS. P. S.
2. —Ramhoogte.—Bethulie.
3. —Four children in camp, and two orphans. Three sons in Ceylon.
4. —Husband at Greenpoint, over 60. Never fought, being invalid with bad legs.
5. —In camp since Oct. 19.
6. —Prisoner (but hopes I will not take it amiss if she calls herself so.) She has two farms. Was told Boers had been on the farm one day, and she had not reported it. Said she could not. Her husband was in bed, and she had no man to send. Some time after she drove in with him to the doctor. He was captured, sent off, and she has never seen him since. Family brought in, said for only three days, so only brought one small trunk. Not allowed back, however, and all brought to Bloemfontein. They had food, and were put into a first-class carriage ! This was October, when there was not such a rush. Knows nothing of fate of farms.

1. — MRS. S., a German.
2. —Lived at Veutersburg Station.
3. —No children.
4. —Husband drank, so they separated four years ago, and he went back to Germany, while she has supported herself in this country.
5. —Since November 15.
6. —Compelled. Was happily and successfully getting a living (having a cow) by selling coffee at Ventersburg-road Station. Captain P. commandant there in the station, and very kind to her. She supplied the officers' table with milk. Then Captain B. came too, and was cross that she had barely enough milk to supply another customer. One morning her Kaffir missing, and she had no one to milk her cow, so could supply none. The Captain was angry, and came and threatened to send her away. That was the first time. She trembled inwardly and walked warily. Her little house was almost in the camp, so they could know all her movements. One night she was in bed, and, being poorly, had the lamp still burning, though the window was well covered. Captain B. came, roused her, said she was signalling to the Boers, and threatened to send her away. That was the second time.

One day, soon after, a man called Hewins, who had been some days hanging about the station, was put into her coffee-stall, and took possession of her house and goods ; her stove cost £15 alone, and she was brought away to Bloemfontein. It was a bitter blow. She had written to Hewins to pay her for her goods, but no reply. All gone. Wants to go to relations in Germany. Getting old, cannot begin here again. During her home. Her husband's father is kind. Could pay most of her journey.

Lonely and grieving.

Mrs. S. was permitted to leave, and is now in Germany.

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use this to buy food now for the children. Will soon be gone.

8. —Knows nothing. Only 10 minutes given to come away. Put with four other families into a railway van.
9. —No friends to go to, but could manage with bare walls only at home. Begged me to go to England to-morrow, and telegraph next day they might go.

One child in hospital with typhoid.

All are ailing.

Children's clothes badly needed.

1. — MRS. W. S.
2. —Fonteinspruit, District Thaba'nchu.
3. —Two children.
4. —Husband Ceylon.
5. —Arrived November 27.
6. —Compelled to come.
7. —A little money with her.
8. and 9.—Does not know.
9. —

Boy had the measles in camp.

Only a little clothing.

1. —MR. AND MRS. S.
2. —Poedamoor, Transvaal.
3. —All grown up and gone.

The S.'s are an old crippled couple, aged 75 and 65. He has a twisted leg from rheumatic fever, and she has not walked for 10 years. Cannot even dress herself. They had already been taken from their own farm to that of a neighbour, Mrs. G. When there Lord Methuen's column came along one Sunday and ordered off this helpless couple. They came at sunset one Sunday evening, put these people into a waggon, where they sat all night, and were driven off at dawn next morning. 120 people were swept up from that part, and of these only two were men—her husband (75) and a lad of 15.

At Vryburg they were kept three weeks, and then brought to Kimberley Camp in spite of

entreaties that they might stay in a Vryburg house. She was sore and bruised with the rough travelling. Arrived in Kimberley cold, tired, and hungry. No tent for them ; no food. A poor woman, with 6 small children in a bell tent, took in the helpless pair, and there they still are. A lady of the Dutch Committee came and wrapped the old woman in a blanket, and gave her food. So they are 9 in the hot little tent, with one bed, and the rest on the ground. They are miserable.

1. —MRS. T. AND HUSBAND, AND FATHER-IN-LAW, MR. PIETER T.
2. —Verona, Bechuanaland.
3. —Three children, with whooping cough.
4. —Husband in Vryburg prison. Surrendered under first proclamation. Lived quietly. Two months since arrested.

Mr. Pieter T. never fought. He is 72, and always a loyal resident of Bechuanaland. One day he saw afar the flying column of the General who relieved Mafeking. Fearing for his daughter's house a mile distant, he went there to lock it up. Returning, he found troops in possession of his own house and looting everything. They refused to let him in, and he saw they had found his cash-box, and begged for it ; but they laughed, and divided it amongst themselves. His wife, aged 67, and daughter, with two children, were in the garden. The soldiers put one child in the arms of each and drove them in front of them to the next farm. They burnt the house. They inspanned the waggon, and putting the old man at the head of the team to urge the oxen, set out for Vryburg. Then they took him on to Bulawayo, and then back to Vryburg, where they put him in prison last May, and there he is to-day.

He has had no kind of trial, and no reason was ever given for this treatment.

One of his sons—long since married and a burgher of the Transvaal—is with Kruger in Holland, and they wonder if that is why the father is punished.

1. — H.G.T. AND WIFE.
2. —Lived at Ventersburg, Winburg.
3. —Wife and four children.
4. —In Camp since September. Wife came in October.
5. —Compelled. Is a Colonial, of English parentage, but had lived 10 years in Free State, so a burgher, and bound to fight. Married a Dutch woman. Colonial brothers fighting the other side. Went home from commando sick.

Very good-looking, clever man. Had just built a house of seven rooms, and had ploughed and sowed, and had built up a little contract business. House burnt. Everything destroyed. Not a cent in the world.

Baby of 16 months died in Camp.

Only boy of 4 emaciated.

1. — MRS. F. DU T.

2. —Ventershoek, Winburg.
3. —Two children.
4. —Husband in Camp, too.
5. —Arrived Nov. 27.
6. —Compelled to come ; no reason given.
7. —No means.
8. —House not burnt when left.
9. —Furniture broken.
10. —Could, if allowed, go to J. de Beer, Riebspruit.

One child ; bad eyes.

Very few clothes.

1. —MRS. D. T. AND DAUGHTERS.
2. —Village of Petrusburg.
3. —Three children, unmarried.
4. —Father retired farmer, aged 58 ; never on commando, always in the municipality helping poor, etc. Not in camp—whereabouts unknown.

The Tuesday before Feb. 1st Mr. D. T. went

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The meeting now proceeded to choose a chairman, and the following were proposed :—J. de Clercq, C. F. Beijers, C. C. Froneman, W. J. Wessels, and G. A. Brand.

The choice of the meeting fell on General C. F. Beijers, who called upon the Rev. Mr. Kestell to offer prayer.

His Honour, S. W. Burger, now declared that the meeting was formally opened, and after the Chairman had spoken a few words, the representatives adjourned until three o'clock.

When they reassembled, the Chairman requested President Burger to explain the objects for which the meeting had been called.

Then the President spoke a few words of welcome to all ; he expressed his sorrow for the absence of some who would certainly have been present had they not given their lives for their country. But still there were many left to represent the two Republics.

“ The difficulties which confront us,” continued the President, “ are like a great mountain, at the foot of which we have just arrived. Everything now depends on us who are assembled together here. It is impossible to deny that the state of affairs is very serious, and that the future looms dark before us. Our position requires the most careful consideration, and as there are sure to be differences of opinion, it will be necessary for us to bear with one another, and yet, at the same time, to speak our minds freely.”

The President proceeded to refer to the correspondence which had taken place between Holland and England. A copy of this correspondence had been sent, through Lord Kitchener, to the Governments of the two Republics. The opinion of the Transvaal Government (which was the first to receive the correspondence) was that advantage should be taken of this opportunity. It was proposed to ask Lord Kitchener to allow the Transvaal Government to meet that of the Orange Free State, so that they might discuss the desirability of making a peace proposal to England. The two Governments had accordingly met, and had corresponded with Lord Kitchener and Lord Milner. As a result of this, a letter, with the above correspondence annexed, had been sent to the various commandos.

“ We felt,” continued President Burger, “ that we had no power to surrender our independence, and that we were only justified in making such terms of peace as would not endanger our national existence. Whether it is or is not our duty to

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so much material and personal sacrifice has been made, and decides in the name of the people of both Republics to empower both Governments as follows :—To conclude a peace on the following basis, to wit : the retention of a limited independence offering an addition to what has already been offered by the two Governments in their negotiations, dated the 15th of April, 1902.

- a. To give up all foreign relations and embassies.
- b. To accept the Protectorate of Great Britain.
- c. To surrender parts of the territory of the South African Republic.
- d. To conclude a defensive alliance with Great Britain in regard to South Africa.

During the discussion it was clearly explained that the territory which it was suggested should be ceded was the already mentioned goldfields and Swaziland. The question was put whether the South African Republics would have to pay for the damage done during the war. “ By all means let us pay,” said Mr. de Clerq. “ If I could only buy back the independence of the Orange Free State, I would gladly give all I possess.”

Several other Transvaal delegates expressed themselves in the same sense, and said that they fully appreciated the sacrifices which the Orange Free State had made. General Froneman thanked them in the name of the Free State.

He felt that the two Republics no longer thought of themselves as having conflicting interests. In the fire of this war they had been firmly welded together.

Commandant Ross (Vrede) thought it wrong even to discuss the possibility of giving up independence. The delegates had received a definite mandate. They had been commissioned to see that the national independence had remained untouched, whatever else might have to be given up. This being the case, they might come to decisions on all other points, so long as they remembered that independence was not an open question.

Commandant J. van Niekerk (Ficksburg) spoke to the same purpose. He could not even think of sacrificing independence.

After some other delegates had made a few short remarks, General Brand, seconded by Commandant A. J. de Kock, proposed the following resolution, which was accepted by the meeting :  
“ This meeting of the national representatives of the two

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Commandant-General Botha : “ Yes, unless you have full powers to give us a final reply.”

Lord Milner : “ I am quite convinced that your proposal will be rejected ; and I feel bound to say that to refer it, as it stands, to His Majesty’s Government will only do you harm.”

Commandant-General Botha : “ If you have no power to decide upon this proposal here, we should like you to refer it to His Majesty’s Government.”

Lord Milner : “ I have no objection to taking the responsibility of refusing your proposal on myself. The instructions received by myself and Lord Kitchener are quite clear on this point.”

Commandant-General Botha : “ I must then understand that when Lord Salisbury said that this war was not carried on with a view to annex territory, he did not mean it.”

Lord Kitchener : “ It is no longer a question of territory, for annexation is an accomplished fact.”

Commandant-General Botha : “ I am unable to see how our proposal is inconsistent with annexation.”

Lord Milner : “ I cannot now recall the exact words used by Lord Salisbury, but it is true that Lord Salisbury declared that his Government did not begin the war with the intention of obtaining territory. But in the course of the war circumstances developed in such a way that the decision to annex the Republics became a necessity, and the British Government have pronounced their firm intention not to withdraw from this decision.”

Judge Hertzog : “ I should like to be informed as to what the great difference is between the basis now proposed by us and that laid down by His Majesty’s Government during the negotiations of last year—I do not mean the difference in details, but in principle.”

Lord Kitchener : “ Do you mean by your proposal that the Boers will become British citizens ? ”

General Smuts : “ I cannot see that our proposal is necessarily in contradiction to that of last year. Our proposal only makes provision concerning the administration.”

Lord Milner then quoted from the terms offered at Middelburg by the British Government the previous year :

“ At the earliest possible date military administration shall cease, and be replaced by civil administration in the form of a Crown Colony Government. At first there will be in each of the

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said Commission as proof of war losses, suffered by the persons to whom they had originally been given. In addition to the above-named free gift of £3,000,000, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to grant advances, in the shape of loans, for the same ends, free of interest for two years, and afterwards repayable over a period of years with three per cent. interest. No foreigner or rebel shall be entitled to benefit by this clause.'

Lord Milner : " In making this communication to the Commission we are instructed to add that if this opportunity of concluding an honourable peace is not taken advantage of within a time to be fixed by us, then this conference shall be regarded as closed, and His Majesty's Government shall not be bound in any way by the present terms. I have, in order that there may be no mistake about these terms, made a copy of the documents and of Lord Kitchener's telegram, also of the amendments and additions determined on by His Majesty's Government, and of the memorandum to which I have just drawn your attention."

A debate now followed on the time that should be allowed for the discussion of the proposals at Vereeniging, and it was agreed that Commandant-General Botha should propose a term that very day before the Commission left Pretoria.

It was subsequently settled that the delegates must arrive at a decision before Saturday evening, May 31st.

General Botha asked if there were any objection to the delegates erasing any paragraph of the proposal sent by the British Government.

Lord Milner : " There must be no alteration. Only ' Yes ' or ' No ' is to be answered."

Commandant-General Botha : " I think that the burghers have the right to erase any article they may wish, for they have the right to surrender unconditionally."

Lord Milner replied that the burghers certainly had the power to do so, but the document of the British Government could not be changed.

There now followed an informal discussion about the colonists who had been fighting on the side of the Republics.

Lord Milner communicated what the British Government's intentions were with regard to these colonists ; and read the following document :—

" His Majesty's Government has to formally place on record that the colonists of Natal and the Cape Colony who have been

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power the Governments to accept the proposal, and to add that they did so with such and such provisos.

Commandant A. J. Bester (Bloemfontein) thought that there had been enough said, and recommended that the discussion be closed.

Commandant J. E. Mentz (Heilbron) also thought that it was not necessary to argue any more. He believed that the war could not be continued. In Heilbron, Bloemfontein, and part of Bethlehem there were not five head of cattle left. The helpless condition of the women and children also demanded consideration. The state of the country was becoming so desperate that they were now obliged to break away from the kraals. He himself had been compelled to do this not long ago, and had lost forty men in one day. He would have to leave his district, but could not bring it to his heart to leave the women behind. It was quite clear to him that the war must be stopped, for some parts of the Transvaal were absolutely unable to go on fighting. Moreover, were the war to continue, commando after commando would go over to the enemy.

General Kemp (Krugersdorp) took a more encouraging view of affairs. He would stand or fall with the independence. His mandate was to that effect. His conscience also would not justify him in taking any other course. He thought that the proposal of the English Government was vague, that there was not sufficient provision for the Boer losses in it, and that it treated the Dutch language as a foreign tongue. Circumstances had often been dark, and the darkness would pass away this time as it had done before. Remembering the commission which had been given to him by the burghers, he could not do otherwise than vote for a continuation of the war.

Vice-President Burger : “ I have already given my opinion. I am sorry that the meeting seems to be divided. It is necessary for the welfare of our nation that we should be of one mind. Are we to continue the war ? From what I have seen and heard, it is clear to me that we cannot do so. I repeat that there is no possibility of it, neither does any real hope exist that by doing so we should benefit the nation. It is idle to compare our condition in the struggle in 1877–1881 with that in which we now find ourselves ; I speak from experience.

“ It is true that the victory was then ours ; that it was so is due to the help which we received from outside. The Orange Free State remained neutral, but assistance came from President

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suitable to the occasion as follows :— “ We are standing here at the grave of the two Republics. Much yet remains to be done, although we shall not be able to do it in the official capacities which we have formerly occupied. Let us not draw our hands back from the work which it is our duty to accomplish. Let us ask God to guide us, and to show to how we shall be enabled to keep our nation together. We must be ready to forgive and forget, whenever we meet our brethren. That part of our nation which has proved unfaithful we must not reject.”

Later, Vice-President Burger spoke a few words of farewell to the Commandant-General, to the Members of the Executive Councils, and to the delegates.

In the afternoon, as it turned out for the last time, Commandant Jacobsz, seconded by General Muller, made the following proposal, which was unanimously accepted by the meeting :—

“ This meeting of Delegates, having in view the necessity of collecting means to provide for the wants of the suffering women and children, widows and orphans, and other destitute persons, who have through this war come to a condition of want, and also having in view the desirability of nominating a Committee, whose duty it shall be to arrange the necessary steps in this matter, and to finally decide on the management and distribution of the donations received, decides :—

“ To nominate the Hon. Messrs. M. J. Steyn, S. W. Burger, L. Botha, C. R. de Wet, J. H. De la Rey, A. P. Kriel, and J. D. Kestell, as the Committee, to carry out all arrangements for the above-mentioned purposes, that may seem desirable and expedient to them, and also to appoint new Members, Sub-Committees and working Committees ; and the said Committee is empowered to draw up regulations, and to amend them from time to time as shall seem to them expedient.

“ This meeting further decides to send abroad from the above-mentioned Committee, Messrs. C. R. de Wet, L. Botha, and J. H. De la Rey, in order that they may help in collecting the above-mentioned donations.”

Then this—the last meeting of the two Republics—was closed with prayer.

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See page 433 *et seq.*

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See page 451 *et seq.*

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See page 465 *et seq.*

3

See page 468 *et seq.*



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1900 10 Mar.	OFS	Boers under <b>De Wet</b> defeated at <b>Driefontein</b> , last stand before Bloemfontein.
11 Mar.	N.E. Cape	British under <b>Brabant</b> re-take <b>Aliwal North</b> .
13 Mar.	OFS	British enter <b>Bloemfontein</b> unopposed.
15 Mar.	OFS	Lord <b>Roberts</b> offers terms to Boers who lay down arms – <b>hands-uppers</b> .

### **Year Date/Month Place Event**

*Fourth Phase: Both Guerrilla and Conventional War taking place.*

1900 17 Mar.	OFS	Boer conference at <b>Kroonstad</b> decides on <b>guerrilla warfare</b> .
28 Mar.	OFS	Boers driven off <b>Tafel Kop</b> .
31 Mar.	OFS	Boers under <b>De Wet</b> ambush <b>Broadwood</b> at <b>Sannaspos</b> .
March		First <b>blockhouses</b> built by British.
2 April	OFS	Arthur Conan <b>Doyle</b> arrives with field hospital at Bloemfontein.
3–4 April	OFS	<b>De Wet</b> overcomes British at <b>Mostertshoek</b> .
5 April	OFS	British win at <b>Boshof</b> ; <b>French volunteer</b> Count <b>Villebois-Mareuil</b> killed, <b>Russian, BagrationMukhransky</b> , captured.
9–24 April	OFS	<b>De Wet</b> fails to capture Afrikanders at <b>Jammerbergdrif</b> .
30 April	OFS	British try to catch <b>De Wet</b> at <b>Thaba 'Nchu</b> , but fail. <b>Russian</b> volunteer <b>Maximov</b> wounded.
3 May	OFS	British advance from <b>Bloemfontein</b> forces Boer flight at <b>Brandfort</b> .
10 May	OFS	Boers fail to prevent British crossing the <b>Zand River</b> .
12 May	N. Cape	Boer break-in under <b>Eloff</b> fails at <b>Mafeking</b> ; <b>Snyman</b> fails to support it.
13 May	Natal	British advance in the <b>Biggarsberg</b> mountains forces Boer retreat at <b>Helpmakaar</b> and <b>Irish</b> withdrawal under <b>Lynch</b> at Waschbank.
17 May	N. Cape	<b>Mafeking</b> relieved by columns under Mahon and <b>Plumer</b> .
28 May	OFS	Orange Free State annexed as Orange River Colony.
29 May	OFS	<b>Rundle</b> defeated by Boers at <b>Biddulphsberg</b> .
29 May	Transvaal	Boers defeated by British under <b>Hamilton</b> at <b>Doornkop</b> .
29 May	Transvaal	<b>Burnham</b> blows up rails at <b>Elandsfontein</b> to prevent Boer acquisition

of rolling stock.

- 30 May Transvaal British enter **Johannesburg** .
- 31 May OFS Piet **De Wet** defeats British Yeomanry at **Lindley** .
- 2 June Natal Boer Christiaan **Botha** and British general **Buller** meet to discuss peace at **Langs Nek** .
- 5 June Transvaal **Roberts** enters **Pretoria** and Boer government moves to **Machadodorp** .
- 7 June OFS **De Wet** hits British supply lines at **Roodewal** .
- 8 June Natal Buller outflanks Boers at **Botha's Pass** .
- 11 June Transvaal **Buller** completes outflanking of Boers at **Langs Nek** with victory at **Alleman Nek** .
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PREV

NEXT

1. — MRS. C. S.
2. —Altona.—Ladybrand, and also a house in the town.
3. —Three children in camp. Boy in Ceylon.
4. —Husband at Greenpoint. Never fought, arrested for sympathies only.
5. —She was living in town for education of the children and her brother on their farm. They said Boers were on the farm, and they went out and burnt it down. The house cost £1,262, and was only completed two years ago. Farm of 5,000 morgens (2 acres), all the wheat burnt.

All of English parentage. Speaks and looks English. She received half-day's notice to leave about 10 days ago, February 15. Commissioner came to her house and told her the reason.

She had written a letter to a friend, in which she had complained of two neighbours who had sided with the enemy, and given spiteful information about old friends. The sentence was read out to her by officer : “ Mr. Van D. and J. Van S. are too big for their boots, and if it had not been for these mean Afrikanders the war would have been over long ago.”

For this she was arrested, and after eight days' journey brought to Bloemfontein Camp. Nice woman, but perfectly furious in a quiet way. Well off.

1. — MR. AND MRS. M. S.
2. Ongegunde, Vryheid, dist. Ventersburg.
3. Ten children, five have died in camp.
4. Mr. Stander never fought. Had certificate from Government not fit for commando service.
5. Arrived Nov. 1st.
6. Compelled. After month of May, when troops came north, Mr. S. never went from home for fear he should be suspected. British soldiers often passed, and as often he fed them for nothing. In October there was a fight, and the Boers passed along main road, never stopping, closely pursued by English. Next day General H. came with 300 men to burn the house. Their farm had 1,976 morgens, and the house seven large rooms. They had no time to get clothes or food. Some were put into a cart, five or six of them were driven in front of 300 troops to the station, two hours distant. Thirty horses were taken out of a horse-truck, and they were put in. It was not cleaned, and three dead horses lay there. (These were afterwards removed.) Army biscuits were given to them.

Arrived at Bloemfontein, they slept at the station in an open coal-truck, and it rained heavily. They asked for a sail-cloth, but it was refused. Next day entered camp.

1,800 bags of mealies were burned, and neighbours coming later said it took 14 days to consume them. They were still burning.

The S. family is intensely affectionate. 30 Nearly broken-hearted over the five sons and daughters who died within two months. Now the mother is very ill in hospital, and father and daughter got poisoned hands, from which several are suffering.

1. — MRS. E. S.
2. Lived in town of Philippolis.
3. Five children.
4. Widow.
5. Brought in Dec. 14.
6. Compelled ; no reason given.
7. No means.
8. Not so far as she knows.
9. Nowhere to go if allowed, except home. No boots. Three of the children got left in Philippolis with strangers.

1. — MRS. T.
2. —Kaffirfontein, District Winburg.
3. —Four children living, 10—5 years.
4. —Husband on commando so far as she knows.
5. —Came in October 9.
6. —Compelled to come. Five days, first in Winburg, not allowed to stay, though had her own house there, and means to live there. None now.
7. —Farm burnt in September.
8. —Furniture also. Stock confiscated.
9. —In April, Brabant's Horse and Border Horse passed through, 1,500 strong, and cleared off every bit of forage, and food, and mealies, etc., so had nothing to give Boers if they came. She had money, several hundred pounds, and, instead of burying it, as some do, gave all with papers to Dr. S., of Ventersburg, to keep in his safe, as did many others. Since then he has been arrested. Everything in his house looted. Safe broken, and thousands of pounds taken from it.

Government school on their farm destroyed. Benches, tables burnt.

Since arrival never felt well. One child died of measles, another almost of pneumonia, another inflammation of brain, the rest had measles. All look ill now.

1. — MRS. S.
2. —Damplaants, Ventersburg, District Winburg.
3. —Seven children, from 11 years to eight months.

4. —Husband in camp. Said he surrendered under Roberts's first Proclamation, because his wife was sick, to be confined, etc., and something wrong with her. After that never gave Boers anything nor signalled.
  5. —Since November.
  6. —Compelled to come. Stock taken, 282 sheep, 19 cows, 8 horses. Receipt given him for two horses only. Another promised, but never given.
  7. —A few sovereigns with him. Obligated to
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PREV

NEXT

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surrender our independence is a question that must be left to the decision of our people. And it is to represent the people that you are here. It is from your lips, then, that our Governments must learn the opinions of the two nations. It is clear enough that the English Government has no idea of allowing us to remain independent—it expresses surprise that we even dare to speak of such a thing.

“ You have now to report upon the condition of the country, and upon the circumstances in which your wives and children are placed. You have also to decide whether you are willing to make any further sacrifices. We have lost so much already that it would be hard, indeed, to lose our independence as well. But, although this matter is so near to our hearts, we must still listen to the voice of reason. The practical question, then, which we have to ask ourselves is, whether we are prepared to watch our people being gradually exterminated before our eyes, or whether we should not rather seek a remedy.

“ The Government can do nothing without the support of the nation. You, therefore, must determine our best course. For instance, if you come to the conclusion that we have exhausted every expedient, will you still continue the struggle ? Are we not to desist until every man of us is in captivity, in exile, or in his grave ? Again let me urge you to speak freely, and yet with consideration for the feelings of others. For myself, I can truly say that my spirit is not yet broken ; but I would hear from you what the feeling of the people is.

“ At this point, however, a difficulty arises. Some of you, having only received limited powers from your constituencies, appear to think that you would not be justified in exceeding your mandates, while others have been authorized to act as circumstances may seem to require. But I do not think that this difficulty should be insurmountable. At least I beg of you not to allow it to cause any dissension among you. Let us all be of one mind. If we are united, then will the nation be united also ; but if we are divided, in what a plight will the nation find itself ! ”

A letter was then read from the deputation in Europe, which had been written five months previously, and which had been brought through the English lines in safety. It contained little more than an assurance that our cause occupied a better position in Europe than it had ever done before.

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“ The Kaffirs are another great source of trouble ; in this problem they are a factor which cannot be neglected.

“ There is no hope of intervention, nor can we expect anything from the English nation. Facts that have come to my knowledge prove to me that England has become more and more determined to fight to the bitter end.

“ I do not see what we can possibly gain by continuing the war. Our own people are helping the English, and every day the enemy are improving their position. What advantage can there then be in persisting in the struggle ? We have now a chance of negotiating, and we should seize that chance. For we have the opportunity given us of obtaining some help for our ruined compatriots, who would be entirely unable to make a fresh start without assistance.

“ As to the religious side of this matter, I am not ashamed to say that I believe I am serving God in the course which I am taking. We must not attempt to obtain the impossible against all reason. If we make any such attempt, the results will probably be exactly opposite to what we wish. I have the greatest doubt whether it really is in order to give glory to God that the nation wishes to retain its independence. On the contrary I believe that the motive is obstinacy, a vice to which human nature is always prone.

“ It has been said that it would be shameful to disregard the blood already spilt ; but surely one ought also to consider the blood that might yet be shed in a useless struggle.”

The proposal of the Commission was now read, and after some discussion accepted. It ran as follows :

The meeting of national representatives from both Republics—after having considered the correspondence exchanged, and the negotiations conducted, between the Governments of the two Republics and His Excellency Lord Kitchener, on behalf of the British Government ; and after having heard the reports of the deputies from the different parts of both Republics ; and after having received the latest reports from the representatives of the two Republics in Europe ; and having taken into consideration the fact that the British Government has refused to accept the proposal of our Governments made on the same basis ; and notwithstanding the above-mentioned refusal of the British Government—still wishes to give expression to the ardent desire of the two Republics to retain their independence, for which already

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Lord Milner : “ The whole difference between you and myself is that I take the letter of 7th March to be the utmost concession that the British Government is able to grant ; not that that letter binds us down to every clause of the proposal, but that it is an indication of how far our Government is prepared to go on the general question. Your answer, however, is no answer at all.”

Lord Kitchener then read his telegram, dated 14th April. [“ A difficulty has arisen in getting on with the proceedings ; the representatives state that constitutionally they have no power to discuss terms based on the surrender of independence, inasmuch as only the burghers can agree to such a basis. Therefore, if they were to propose terms, it would put them in a false position with regard to the people. If, however, His Majesty’s Government could state the terms which, subsequently to a relinquishment of independence, they would be prepared to grants, the representatives, after asking for the necessary explanations, and without any expression of approval or disapproval, would submit such conditions to their people.”] “ Clearly you have not kept to what you undertook in this telegram.”

Commander-in-Chief de Wet : “ If it had only been a question of our feelings being hurt by having to give an answer on the basis proposed to us by the British then it would not have been necessary for the people to come together at Vereeniging. But in matter of fact we have come here with a proposal, which, rightly understood, is nearly equivocal to the Middelburg proposal, and which meets the wishes of the English Government as far as possible.”

Commandant-General Botha : “ I do not see why we should insist so much on our proposal. If it is not to the mind of your Excellencies, if it is an unacceptable proposal, then let us have a definite answer to it.”

Lord Milner : “ We wish to have an answer to the proposal made by us.”

General Smuts : “ I do not see that any proposal has been made by the British Government. A certain basis only has been laid down, and therefore no formal answer is required.”

Lord Milner : “ Our proposal is six times as definite as yours, and I believe that the British Government is justified in wanting to know if your people are inclined to come to terms on the general lines which have been placed before them.”

Lord Kitchener : “ Here is quite an original suggestion : How

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by the Commander-in-Chief to the Boer Generals, and which shall be heard before a court martial immediately after the cessation of hostilities.

‘Fifthly, the Dutch language shall be taught in the public schools of the Transvaal and of the Orange River Colony when the parents of children demand it ; and shall be admitted in the Courts of Justice, whenever this is required for the better and more effective administration of justice.

‘ Sixthly, the possession of rifles shall, on taking out a licence in accordance with the law, be permitted in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony to persons who require them for their protection.

‘ Seventhly, military administration in the Transvaal and in the Orange River Colony shall, as soon as it is possible, be followed by civil government ; and, as soon as circumstances permit it, a representative system tending towards autonomy shall be introduced.

‘ Eighthly, the question of granting a franchise to the native shall not be decided until a representative constitution has been granted.

‘ Ninthly, no special tax shall be laid on landed property in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, to meet the expenses of the war.

‘Tenthly, as soon as circumstances permit there shall be appointed in each district in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony a Commission, in which the inhabitants of that district shall be represented, under the chairmanship of a magistrate or other official, with the view to assist in the bringing back of the people to their farms, and in procuring for those who, on account of losses in the war are unable to provide for themselves, food, shelter, and such quantities of seed, cattle, implements, etc., as are necessary for the resuming of their previous callings.

‘ His Majesty’s Government shall place at the disposal of these Commissions the sum of £3,000,000 for the above-mentioned purposes, and shall allow that all notes issued in conformity with Law No. 1, 1900, of the Government of the South African Republic, and all receipts given by the officers in the Veldt of the late Republics, or by their order, may be presented to a judicial Commission by the Government, and in case such notes and receipts are found by this Commission to have been duly issued for consideration in value, then they shall be accepted by the

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Brand in South Africa and from Gladstone in England : thus it was not by our own sword that we were enabled to win.

“ It will be asked why, if we have kept up the struggle for two years and a half, can we not still continue to do so ?

“ Because, in the meantime, we have become weaker and weaker, and if we persist the end must be fatal. What grounds have we for expecting that we may yet be victorious ? Each man we lose renders us weaker ; every hundred men we lose means a similar gain to the enemy. England’s numerical strength does not diminish ; on the contrary, there are even more troops in the country at this moment than when Lord Roberts had the command. England also has used our own men against us, and has not been ashamed of arming the Kaffirs ; the enemy are learning from our own men in what way they should fight—he must be blind indeed who cannot see these facts.

“ I do not think we can appropriately call this altogether a ‘ war of faith.’ Undoubtedly we began this war strong in the faith of God, but there were also two or three other things to rely upon. We had considerable confidence in our own weapons ; we under-estimated the enemy ; the fighting spirit had seized upon our people ; and the thought of victory had banished that of the possibility of defeat.

“ The question still remains, What are we to do ? I have no great opinion of the document which lies before us : to me it holds out no inducement to stop the war. If I feel compelled to treat for peace it is not on account of any advantages that this proposal offers me : it is the weight of my own responsibility which drives me to it.

“ If I think that by holding out I should dig the nation’s grave, nothing must induce me to continue the struggle.

“ Therefore I consider it my duty, as leader of our nation, to do my utmost that not one man more shall be killed, that not one woman more shall die.

“ The sacrifice must be made ; is not this also a trial of our faith ? What shall we gain by going on ? Nothing ! It is obvious that further surrenders will take place—here of a few, there of many—and our weakness will increase.

“ We shall also be obliged to abandon large areas of the country. Will this make us stronger ? Rather, will it not enable the enemy to concentrate still more ? And the abandoned tracts—to whom will they belong ? To the enemy !

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three years, there only remains an insignificant part of the fighting forces with which we began.

“ Sixthly, that this fighting remainder, which is only a small minority of our whole nation, has to fight against an overpowering force of the enemy, and besides is reduced to a condition of starvation, and is destitute of all necessaries, and that notwithstanding our utmost efforts, and the sacrifice of everything that is dear and precious to us, we cannot foresee an eventual victory.

“ We are therefore of opinion that there is no justifiable ground for expecting that by continuing the war the nation will retain its independence, and that, under these circumstances, the nation is not justified in continuing the war, because this can only lead to social and material ruin, not for us alone, but also for our posterity. Compelled by the above-named circumstances and motives, we commission both Governments to accept the proposal of His Majesty’s Government, and to sign it in the name of the people of both Republics.

“ We, the representative delegates, express our confidence that the present circumstances will, by accepting the proposal of His Majesty’s Government, be speedily ameliorated in such a way that our nation will be placed in a position to enjoy the privileges to which they think they have a just claim, on the ground not only of their past sacrifices, but also of those made in this war.

“ We have with great satisfaction taken note of the decision of His Majesty’s Government to grant a large measure of amnesty to the British subjects who have taken up arms on our behalf, and to whom we are united by bonds of love and honour ; and express our wish that it may please His Majesty to still further extend this amnesty.”

Mr. P. R. Viljoen then withdrew his proposal.

Commandant H. P. J. Pretorius, seconded by General C. Botha, presented the proposal, as read by the Commission.

General Nieuwoudt also withdrew his proposal, but it was at once taken over by General C. C. J. Badenhorst, seconded by Commandant A. Bester, of Bloemfontein.

The meeting then adjourned till the afternoon.

In the afternoon at 2.5. it again met.

Proceeding to the voting, the proposal of H. P. J. Pretorius, seconded by General C. Botha, was accepted, by fifty-four votes against six. Then Vice-President Burger spoke a few words

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The Chairman then asked Commandant L. Botha to address the meeting.

Complying with this request, the Commandant said that he wished to be assured, before anything further was done, that the fact that some of the representatives had been entrusted with limited powers, whereas others had been given a free hand, was not going to prove to be an insurmountable obstacle to united action on their part.

To this Judge Hertzog replied that it was a principle in law that a delegate is not to be regarded as a mere agent or mouthpiece of his constituents, but, on the contrary (when dealing with public affairs), as a plenipotentiary—with the right, whatever his brief might be, of acting to the best of his judgment.

States-Procureur Smuts concurred in this opinion, which appeared to satisfy both the Commandant-General and also all the other representatives, for no further allusion was made to the subject by anybody.

Commandant-General Botha now made his report.

In the districts of Vrijheid and Utrecht, he stated, the store of maize was so small that it could not last for more than a short time ; but there was still a great number of slaughter-cattle. In the districts of Wakkerstroom there was hardly sufficient grain for one month's consumption. Two other districts had still a large enough number of slaughter-cattle—enough, in fact, to last for two or three months. In Ermelo, to the west and north-west of the blockhouses, and in Bethal, Standerton, and Middelburg, there was grain for one month. But the Heidelberg and Pretoria commandos had now, for the first time, no corn remaining for food. In the neighbourhood of Boksburg the only grain left was the old maize of the previous year, whilst there were no cattle at all in the district. When he had visited Boksburg he had found that the commandos had had no meat for three days. In the country between Vereeniging and Ermelo there were only thirty-six goats, and no cattle whatsoever. In the Wakkerstroom district, however, there were still a few slaughter-cattle. The horses were everywhere worn out and exhausted. They had been so constantly kept on the move, owing to the enemy's increasing attacks, they could now only cover the shortest distances.

The Kaffir question was becoming from day to day more serious. At Vajheid, for instance, there was a Kaffir commando

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what difference is there between this and digging our own graves ? ”

Mr. Birkenstock said that the question about the goldfields must be carefully considered. This source of income must not be given up.

The meeting was then closed with prayer.

SATURDAY, MAY17TH, 1902.

The Chairman first called upon Chief-Commandant de Wet to offer up prayer.

A private report from Mr. J. Schmorderer, who had brought the missive from the deputation in Europe, was then read.

The first delegate to speak was Landdrost Bosman (Wakkerstroom), who said :

“ My opinion is that the best way of ascertaining the probable future course of events is to see what has already happened in the past. A year ago there were six hundred burghers in my district, and each man had a horse ; now there are not more than half that number, and many of them have to go on foot. Last year we had from three to four thousand bags of maize ready to hand ; this year there are not more than as many hundred, and how to get at them is more than I can tell. If such has been the history of the past year, in what sort of condition shall we be at the end of the present one ?

“ The great difficulty with regard to our families is not how to clothe them, but how to feed them. I know of a woman who has lived for weeks on nothing but fruit. I myself have had to satisfy my hunger with mealies for days together, although I have no wish to complain about it. Even the scanty food we can get has to be obtained from the Kaffirs by persuasion. Moreover, the Kaffirs side with the English, who in their counter-marches are clearing all the food out of the country. “

The men in my district told me that if I came back and reported that the war was to be continued, they would be obliged—for the sake of their wives and children—to go straight to the nearest English camp and lay down their arms. As to the women, it is true that they are at present full of hope and courage, but if they knew how matters stood in the veldt, they would think very differently. Even now there are many of them who say that the war ought to be put a stop to, if only for their sakes.

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would it be if you were to go back to your people and ask them if they would not make a proposal ?

” General Smuts : “ You must understand that the Middelburg proposal, with all that took place in April, has been read to the eople. Their answer was neither ‘ Yes ’ nor ‘ No.’ They simply elected the delegates. The delegates as yet have not given any answer. They are still considering the matter, and, in order to gain time, they have commissioned us to see whether we could not come to some arrangement.”

Lord Milner : “ We are getting away from the subject. Tell us what alterations you want, and then place our proposal before your people.”

Lord Kitchener : “ Should you agree that your proposal is not in opposition to the annexation, we shall have accomplished something.”

General Smuts : “ Is it your opinion that our proposal must be set aside ? ”

Lord Kitchener : “ Yes, surely. It is impossible for us to act on it.”

Lord Milner : “ It is impossible for us to take your proposal into consideration. We can send it to England, but this would certainly tend to hinder the negotiations. This is my personal opinion, which naturally you are not bound to accept. All that we can say is, that this is the only answer that we can give you.”

Lord Kitchener : “ It would be better to draw up a new document, in which everything of importance would be noted down, and all unimportant matters left out.”

General Smuts : “ But paragraph 3 of our proposal has not even been mentioned. We are prepared to cede a part of our territory.”

Lord Milner : “ This would be in contradiction to the annexation of the whole. If the *whole* becomes annexed by us, how then can a *part* be ceded by you ? ”

General Smuts : “ The ceded part would then become a Crown Colony, the remaining part being governed as is here proposed.”

Lord Milner : “ You mean that one part would become a British Colony of the ordinary type, and another part a protected Republic ? ”

Lord Kitchener : “ Two forms of government in the same country would lead to great friction. Our proposals are too divergent. From a military point of view, the two forms of

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have received a copy, the following message has been received from His Majesty's Government

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‘His Majesty's Government sanctions the laying before the meeting for a “ Yes ” or “ No ” vote the document drawn up by the Commission and sent by Lord Kitchener on the 21st May to the Secretary of War, with the following amendments :

‘ The final proposal made by the British Government, on which the national representatives at Vereeniging have to answer “ Yes ” or “ No.” ’

‘ General Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, Commander-in-Chief, and His Excellency Lord Milner, High Commissioner, on behalf of the British Government ;

‘ Messrs. S. W. Burger, F. W. Reitz, Louis Botha, J. H. De la Rey, L. J. Meyer, and J. C. Krogh on behalf of the Government of the South African Republic and its burghers ; ‘ Messrs. M. T. Steyn, W. J. C. Brebner, C. R. de Wet, J. B. M. Hertzog, and C. H. Olivier on behalf of the Government of the Orange Free State and its burghers, being anxious to put an end to the existing hostilities, agree on the following points :

‘ Firstly, the burgher forces now in the Veldt shall at once lay down their arms, and surrender all the guns, small arms, and war stores in their actual possession, or of which they have cognizance, and shall abstain from any further opposition to the authority of His Majesty King Edward VII., whom they acknowledge as their lawful sovereign.

‘The manner and details of this surrender shall be arranged by Lord Kitchener, Commandant-General Botha, Assistant Commandant-General J. H. De la Rey, and Commander-in-Chief de Wet.

‘ Secondly, burghers in the Veldt beyond the frontiers of the Transvaal and of the Orange River Colony, and all prisoners of war who are out of South Africa, who are burghers, shall, on their declaration that they accept the status of subjects of His Majesty King Edward VII., be brought back to their homes, as soon as transport and means of existence can be assured.

Thirdly, the burghers who thus surrender, or who thus return, shall lose neither their personal freedom nor their property.

‘ Fourthly, no judicial proceedings, civil or criminal, shall be taken against any of the burghers who thus return for any action in connexion with the carrying on of the war. The benefit of this clause shall, however, not extend to certain deeds antagonistic to the usages of warfare, which have been communicated

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“ In all probability this is our last meeting. I do not believe that we shall be given another chance to negotiate : we shall be deemed too insignificant. If we reject this proposal, what prospects have we in the future ? If we accept it, we can, like a child, increase in size and strength, but with its rejection goes our last opportunity.

“ Fell a tree and it will sprout again ; uproot it and there is an end of it. What has the nation done to deserve extinction ?

“ Those who wish to continue the war are influenced chiefly by hope ; but on what is this hope founded ? On our arms ? No. On intervention ? By no means. On what then ? No one can say.

“ I am sorry that the Transvaal and the Orange Free State are at variance on this point, and I regret that it is the Transvaal which has to declare itself unable to proceed further ; but the enemy have concentrated all their forces in this State, and we can hold out no longer.”

Mr. L. Jacobsz : “ I have hitherto not spoken, because I am a non-combatant. I have also suffered much, although less than others. I have listened to what has been said, but my opinion is not changed by the views I have heard expressed.

“ I repeat now what I said at Klerksdorp, namely that the struggle cannot continue. I have noted the condition of the country, which is such that the commandos can no longer be supported. I would point out the condition of the women and children, of whom many are dying, and all are exposed to great dangers. If there was a chance of succeeding in the end, then we might hold out, but there is no such chance ; there is no possibility of intervention, and the silence of the deputation is ominous.

“ I sympathize with the heroes present at this meeting ; we must have a foundation for our faith, and we cannot altogether compare our people with the people of Israel. Israel had promises made to them ; we have none. I would further point out that, in the interests of the nation, it will not do to surrender unconditionally : the terms before us may be deceptive, but they are the best obtainable.

“ With regard to the difficulty of those delegates who consider that they are bound to act as they have been commissioned, I am of the same opinion as Judge Hertzog and General Smuts.”

Commandant J. J. Alberts (Standerton) spoke more or less

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Government has absolutely declined to negotiate with the Government of the Republics on the basis of their independence, or to allow our Government to enter into communication with our deputation. Our people, however, have always been under the impression that not only on the grounds of justice, but also taking into consideration the great material and personal sacrifices made for their independence, that it had a well-founded claim for that independence.

“ We have seriously considered the future of our country, and have specially observed the following facts :—

“ Firstly, that the military policy pursued by the British military authorities has led to the general devastation of the territory of both Republics by the burning down of farms and towns, by the destruction of all means of existence, and by the exhausting of all resources required for the maintenance of our families, the existence of our armies, and the continuation of the war.

“ Secondly, that the placing of our families in the concentration camps has brought on an unheard-of condition of suffering and sickness, so that in a comparatively short time about twenty thousand of our beloved ones have died there, and that the horrid probability has arisen that, by continuing the war, our whole nation may die out in this way.

“ Thirdly, that the Kaffir tribe, within and without the frontiers of the territory of the two Republics, are mostly armed and are taking part in the war against us, and through the committing of murders and all sorts of cruelties have caused an unbearable condition of affairs in many districts of both Republics. An instance of this happened not long ago in the district of Vrijheid, where fifty-six burghers on one occasion were murdered and mutilated in a fearful manner.

“ Fourthly, that by the proclamations of the enemy the burghers still fighting are threatened with the loss of all their movable and landed property—and thus with utter ruin—which proclamations have already been enforced.

“ Fifthly, that it has already, through the circumstances of the war, become quite impossible for us to keep the many thousand prisoners of war taken by our forces, and that we have thus been unable to inflict much damage on the British forces (whereas the burghers who are taken prisoners by the British armies are sent out of the country), and that, after war has raged for nearly

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which had already made several attacks upon the burghers. This attitude of the Kaffir population was producing a very dispiriting effect upon the burghers.

The women were in a most pitiable state, now that the lines of blockhouses had been extended in all directions over the country. Sometimes the commandos had to break through the lines and leave the women behind alone ; and when the burghers later on returned they would perhaps find that the women had been driven from their houses, and, in some instances, treated with atrocious cruelty.

Referring to the numbers in the field, he said that there were, in the whole of the Transvaal, ten thousand eight hundred and sixteen men, and that three thousand two hundred and ninety-six of them had no horses. The enemy during the summer had taken many of the burghers prisoner ; and since June, 1901, the commandos had diminished to the extent of six thousand and eighty-four men. The burghers thus lost to them had either been killed, or taken prisoner, or had surrendered their arms.

The number of households was two thousand six hundred and forty.

The Commandant-General concluded by saying that the three greatest difficulties with which they were confronted were their horses, their food supply, and the miserable condition of their women and children.

Commander-in-Chief de Wet then spoke. He said he would leave it to the delegates who were officers to make reports. They had come from far and near, and knew exactly what the condition of things was. He, however, could state that the number of burghers in the Orange Free State was six thousand one hundred and twenty, of whom about four hundred were not available for service. The Basutos, he found, were more favourably inclined to the Boer cause than ever before.

“ General De la Rey,” continued General de Wet, “ like myself, does not quite know what task he has to perform here, but he thinks with me that the duty of making reports belongs to the delegates. However, he feels bound to state that in his divisions there is a great scarcity of everything. But precisely the same state of affairs existed there a year ago. And when his burghers were at that time without food—well, he went and got it for them.” (Cheers.)

General Beijers (Waterberg) then addressed the delegates,

He was of opinion that the small commandos which had already been in Cape Colony had done the best they could. The question that now arose was whether the whole of their forces ought to be sent from the Republics into Cape Colony. He himself thought that there was all opening for them, but the difficulty was to find a method of getting them there. The existence of this difficulty, and the facts which he had brought before the delegates, had forced him to the conclusion that a general rising in Cape Colony was an impossibility.

As to the continuation of the war and matters of that nature, they must naturally be settled by the Republics, and not by Cape Colony.

The meeting was then adjourned until eight o'clock in the evening.

Upon its reassembling, Commandant Uijs (Pretoria, North) said that in that part of the district of Pretoria which lay to the north of the Delagoa Bay Railway there were still cattle enough to last for a considerable time, but that the store of grain would be exhausted within a fortnight. The number of horses also was insufficient. The district could muster one hundred and fifty-three mounted men and one hundred and twenty-eight *voetgangers*. In the division of Onderwijk, Middelburg, there were twenty-six mounted men and thirty-eight *voetgangers*.

Commandant Grobler (Bethal) stated that in his district they had not been left undisturbed during the summer. Only a short time previously he had lost sixty-three men in an engagement, where he had been besieged in a kraal, out of which he, with one hundred and fifty-three burghers, had managed to escape. Bethal had been laid waste from one end to the other, and he had no provisions for his commandos. He had on his hands three hundred women and children ; these were in a serious position, owing to the lack of food ; some of the women had also been assaulted by Kaffirs.

General Christiaan Botha (Swaziland) then reported on the condition of the Swaziland commando. They had no provisions in hand, and were simply living by favour of the Kaffirs. They had no women there. His commando of one hundred and thirteen men was still at Piet Retief. As there was no grain to be had, they were compelled to go from kraal to kraal and buy food from the Kaffirs, and this required money. Yet somehow

Government of which Lords Kitchener and Milner are the heads being accepted. An arrangement of this nature would, it seems to me, be an insurmountable difficulty. When I feel so strongly in this matter, it would not be fair to their Excellencies for me to remain silent.”

Lord Kitchener : “ I think it would be better if General de Wet were to wait until he has seen the whole document before he gives his opinion.”

It was then agreed that Judge Hertzog and General Smuts should act as a sub-committee, in order to draw up a complete draft with Lord Kitchener, who was to be assisted by Sir Richard Solomon.

The meeting then adjourned.

On Wednesday, 21st May, 1902, the Conference reassembled.

Lord Milner laid before the meeting the document which he had drawn up with the help of the sub-committee. It was in the form of a contract, and the names of the members of both Governments were now filled in. The document was the same as that telegraphed, with the exception of Article II, dealing with the notes and receipts and the sum of three million pounds.

It was read in Dutch and English, and ran as follows :—

“ General Lord Kitchener of Khartoum, Commander-in-Chief, and His Excellency Lord Milner, High Commissioner, on behalf of the British Government ;

“ Messrs. S. D. Burger, F. W. Reitz, Louis Botha, J. H. De la Rey, L. J. Meyer, and J. C. Krogh, on behalf of the Government of the South African Republic and its burghers ;

“ Messrs. M. T. Steyn, W. J. C. Brebner, C. R. de Wet, J. B. M. Hertzog, and C. H. Olivier, on behalf of the Government of the Orange Free State and its burghers, being anxious to put an end to the existing hostilities, agree on the following points :—

“ Firstly, the burgher forces now in the Veldt shall at once lay down their arms, and surrender all the guns, small arms and war stores in their actual possession, or of which they have cognizance ; and shall refrain from any further opposition to the authority of His Majesty King Edward VII., whom they acknowledge as their lawful sovereign.

“ The manner and details of this surrender shall be arranged by Lord Kitchener, Commandant-General Botha, Assistant Commandant-General J. H. De la Rey, and Commander-in-Chief de Wet.

Republics, or by their orders, may also be presented to the said Commission within six months ; and if they have been given *bona fide* in exchange for goods used by the burghers in the Veldt, they shall be paid in full to the persons to whom they were originally issued.

“ The amount payable on account of the said Government’s notes and receipts shall not exceed £3,000,000 ; and in case the whole amount of such notes and receipts accepted by the Commission should exceed that amount, a *pro rata* reduction shall be made.

“ The prisoners of war shall be given facilities to present their notes and receipts within the above-mentioned six months.

“ Twelfthly, as soon as circumstances shall permit, there shall be appointed in each district of the Transvaal and of the Orange River Colony a Commission, in which the inhabitants of that district shall be represented, under the chairmanship of a magistrate or other official, with a view to assist in the bringing back of the people to their farms, and in procuring for those who, on account of losses through the war, are unable to provide for themselves, food, shelter, and such quantities of seed, cattle, implements, etc., as are necessary for the resuming of their previous callings. Funds for this purpose, repayable by instalments extending over a number of years, shall be advanced—free of interest—by the Government.”

Lord Milner : “ If we come to an agreement, it will be the *English* document which will be wired to England, on which His Majesty’s Government will decide, and which will be signed.”

Commandant-General Botha : “ Will not a Dutch translation be annexed ? ”

Lord Milner : “ I have no objection to the addition of a Dutch translation. This, then, is the document which we are prepared to lay before the English Government.”

Commandant-General Botha : “ There are a few points on which I wish to speak. The first is in reference to the receipts given by our officers. It seems to me quite right that they should be mentioned in the paragraph about government notes. These receipts were issued, in accordance with instructions given by our Government, for the purchase of cattle, grain, and other necessaries for the support of our commandos ; and the chief officers now present, as well as all other officers, have acted according to these instructions and issued receipts. Therefore I

in the same strain. He was of opinion that the war should be finished by ceding territory, but, failing this, that it should be ended on any terms obtainable.

Vice-President de Wet expressed his opinion that, considering the short time at their disposal, they should proceed, if possible, to make some proposal.

General D. A. Brand said that he would have spoken if he had not thought that enough had been said ; he considered it desirable to close the discussion, and was willing to make a proposal.

Veldtcoronet D. J. E. Opperman (Pretoria South) considered that the difficulties of continuing the war, and of accepting the proposal, were equal. Some of his burghers would fight no longer. What troubled him most was the condition of the women ; it went to his heart to see these families perish. He was of opinion that, for the sake of the women and children who were suffering so intensely, the proposal should be accepted under protest.

Veldtcoronet J. van Steedden, seconded by Veldtcoronet B. J. Roos, moved that the discussion be now closed.

The meeting was adjourned after prayer.

SATURDAY, MAY 31ST, 1902.

The meeting was opened with prayer.

General Nieuwoudt, seconded by General Brand, made the following proposal :—

“ This meeting of special deputies from the two Republics, after considering the proposal of His Majesty’s Government for the re-establishment of peace, and taking into consideration (*a*) the demands of the burghers in the veldt and the commissions which they had given to their representatives ; (*b*) that they do not consider themselves justified in concluding peace on the basis laid down by His Majesty’s Government before having been placed in communication with the delegates of the Republic now in Europe, decides that it cannot accept the proposal of His Majesty’s Government, and orders the Government of the two Republics to communicate this decision to His Majesty’s Government through its representatives.”

Mr. P. R. Viljoen, seconded by General H. A. Alberts, made a proposal, amended afterwards by General Smuts and Judge

Hertzog, which appears later on under the proposal of H. P. J. Pretorius and C. Botha.

A third proposal by General E. Botha and General J. C. Celliers was laid upon the table, but subsequently withdrawn.

Mr. J. W. Reitz considered it to be his duty not only to the nation but also to himself as a citizen, to say that, in case the proposal of the British Government should be accepted, it would be necessary for the meeting to make provisions as to whose signatures should be attached to the necessary documents. He himself would not sign any document by which the independence would be given up.

Remarks were made by several members on the first proposal, and Mr. P. R. Viljoen asked that no division should arise.

Vice-President de Wet then said that, as the time was limited, and all could not speak, he would propose that a Commission should be nominated in order to draw up a third proposal in which various opinions of the members should be set down ; and that, whilst the Commission was occupied in this way, the Orange Free State delegates on their part and those of the South African Republic on their part, should meet in order that an understanding might be come to between them. They must endeavour to come to a decision, for it would be of the greatest possible advantage to them.

Commandant-General Botha thought that this hint should be taken. They had suffered and fought together : let them not part in anger.

The above-mentioned Commission was then decided upon, and Judge Hertzog and General Smuts were elected.

Then the Orange Free State delegates went to the tent of Vice-President de Wet, whilst those of the South African Republic remained in the tent in which the meeting was held.

After a time of heated dispute—for every man was preparing himself for the bitter end—they came to an agreement, and Judge Hertzog read the following proposal :—

“ We, the national representatives of both the South African Republic and the Orange Free State, at the meeting held at Vereeniging, from the 15th of May till the 31st of May, 1902, have with grief considered the proposal made by His Majesty’s Government in connexion with the conclusion of the existing hostilities, and their communication that this proposal had to be accepted, or rejected, unaltered. We are sorry that His Majesty’s

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