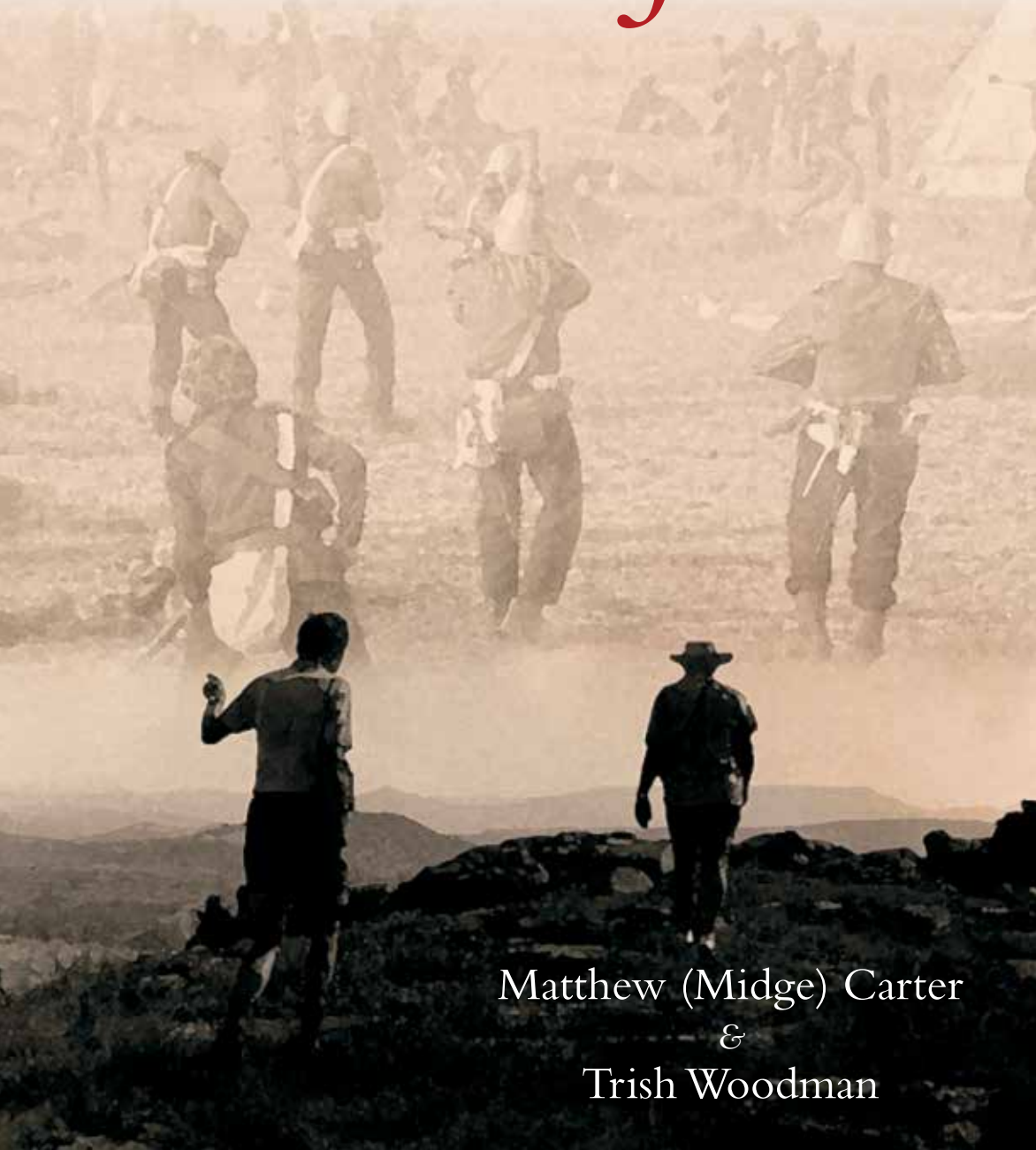


We Wander the Battlefields



Matthew (Midge) Carter
&
Trish Woodman



We Wander the Battlefields is the fruit of Midge Carter's life-long passion for the history of the Anglo-Boer and Zulu wars at the turn of the 19th century. The stories of heroism and tragedy are retold from the graveyards and memorials, many of them left forgotten and overgrown.

It is both a detailed and personal account with many photographs and, unusual for a book, complemented with an extensive list of videos available on the internet, videos made by Midge as he wandered the battle sites.

It has been his partner, Trish Woodman who has patiently listened to these stories, researched the background, collated the available photographs and written this book.



We Wander the Battlefields



Matthew (Midge) Carter
and
Trish Woodman

PRODUCT LABEL INGREDIENTS

A very personal (and very non-academic) collection of anecdotes and reminiscences of military history meanderings in South Africa for more than 60 years.

- Memories of well-known personalities from the past.
- Many old and modern photos of graves, monuments and people. Inscriptions have been provided, with Afrikaans texts translated. The background stories behind '*just a name on a stone*' have been written.
- Odds and ends.
- Warnings:

Does not contain ponderous, learned chapters.

Written by two wrinklies past their 'Best-by-Date'.

Authors:

- **Matthew (Midge) Carter.** Made from New Zealand ingredients, grown in South Africa, product of Australia.
- **Trish Woodman.** Entirely a West Australian product (with a taint of Irish convicts).

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Cartoon on page 9 courtesy of Rose Digden.

Cover image: Midge walking the summit of Isandlwana with Brian Scott and in the background a scene from the film, *Zulu Dawn*.

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In loving memory of Midge Carter (30th November 1930 – 23rd July 2016) the co-author of this book. He is much missed by his partner, Trish, his family and his friends all over the world.



We Wander the Battlefields has enjoyed steady success and this is the third printing.

A website, www.battlefieldwanderers.com.au is also currently underway. This will make available all the videos of historical battlefields which Midge made not just in South Africa but world-wide. As these fields become slowly overgrown and forgotten, Trish would like the website to be both a forum for discussion and a valuable resource of research material, free to all.

Dedication

Dedicated to the memory of the innumerable, long-forgotten men and women, victims of war, whose graves we have visited in so many battlefields and cemeteries around the world. May they rest in peace and honour.



The 'Cross of Sacrifice' found in many military cemeteries.

NOTE

To complement many of the entries in the book and give a better picture, especially for those who have not been to South Africa, we have placed clips of battlefields and cemeteries, from our videos, on YouTube.

A list of these video clips appears in the back of the book or visit www.battlefieldwanderers.com.au

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SECTION ONE

Part A

Anecdotes

Reproduced by kind permission of Rose Rigden.



"Oh will you be quiet!... I'm trying to focus"

Before you begin reading

In these days of overdone ‘political correctness’, it is wise to remember the following generalisations.

The Zulu and Anglo-Boer Wars took place more than a century ago, so we should not judge events from our own perspective. Attitudes and social conditions were very different from today’s. This picture, which I found in a very old and tattered book so can’t reference, illustrates the distorted picture many people may have had of South Africa. By the way, there are no tigers there!



DESPERATE ENCOUNTER WITH FEROCIOUS BEASTS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Domination

Not only did the British impose themselves on other nations at that time, but also the Dutch, French, Portuguese, Belgians, Germans and finally the Italians. They were greedy for the spices, diamonds, gold and other riches of the new territories, and often exploited the ignorance and vulnerability of the locals.

War

Throughout history countries have fought their neighbours for what they believed was right, or to gain territory. No matter the colour, religion or nationality, men fight each other. Even today sects battle sects, dictators oppress and massacre, and people fight bravely and fiercely for their freedom. It has been going on forever. Countless numbers of men have fought, and died, being given no choice by their leaders. It is horrifying to think that in many countries today, the inhabitants have known only bloodshed, persecution, fear and deprivation for decades, generations and even centuries.

Punishment

Soldiers were executed for desertion (for “cowardice”) when they were really suffering from overwhelming anxiety, exhaustion and fear. When our generation were children, parents “corrected” us with a heavy hand, a handy rubber thong (flip-flop) or Dad’s belt, and as children we accepted this. At school, the boys “got the cuts” (with the cane) for tardiness, poor schoolwork, minor infringements of rules etc. What we now label “child abuse” was almost part of growing up for many kids. That doesn’t make it right, but shows that attitudes change over generations.

Hygiene and sanitation

It seems ludicrous to us now that soldiers had to be warned not to drink from streams where animals drank or had even died. They had to be ordered to dispose of refuse and provide sanitation away from the camp.

Women had few rights

Even today voting rights are being fought for – in some countries for both men and women. Married women were widely the property of the husband, who took over her wealth on marriage and made every decision for her. Her purpose was to provide comfort for her husband and produce children. Many women endured numerous pregnancies with insufficient food and no medical care, often losing several babies or toddlers to diseases that we now vaccinate against and are rare in Western countries.

In many cultures she was the food-gatherer. Her husband was entitled to beat her into submission if necessary. Sadly, this is still a woman’s lot in some cultures. Poverty and hopelessness, with too much drink added, too often led to a wife and children being beaten on a regular basis. Women were hobbled not only by their skirts, but by the perception that they were inferior.

As they were given little education, females had few resources if unmarried or left widowed or deserted, and had to eke out an existence for themselves and their many children, by taking in washing or performing other menial tasks. Pregnancy outside of marriage led to loss of reputation and being shunned by righteous women, even if the girl had been raped or forced by someone in authority such as her father or employer. Being born illegitimate was a life-long stigma.

The upper English classes

It was usual for boys to be sent to boarding school when very young. These schools could be very spartan and harsh. The major schools were training grounds for officers. Many well-to-do or influential families lost their officer son in battle (e.g. Lord Roberts). Most had little understanding, before World War I, of the hard lives of the “lower classes”. It was even later before they began to see indigenous people as humans with feelings, intelligence and abilities.

The poor

Lower ranks in the British Army often came from pitiful poverty and from homes where many families shared one outside toilet and there was no running water laid on, so that bathing was infrequent. Lice and bed-bugs were common. Many children shared a bed and parents had little privacy. Clothing and shoes were minimal. Children were working at a very early age to contribute a few pennies to the family finances. Education was a privilege, not an expectation, and then for only a few years. At least in the Army one would be fed and earn a small wage.

It's no wonder to me that many a young man was eager to sail away in 1899 “to do his bit” for the mother-land, because books then were so inspirational and the illustrations poignant! Songs and poetry also stirred the blood and heart, with titles such as *Who will care for Mother now?*.

Here is an excerpt from Cassell's *Illustrated History of the Boer War*, p388. Our copy was awarded to W Hadley, class XV, in 1907 for “regular attendance”. (Trish).

One Bozeley, the sergeant of a gun in No.2 Section, was sitting on the tail of his piece when two fragments of shell hit him. One took off an arm, the other a leg; and his mangled body fell across the gun-trail. His comrades

thought him dead, and ran to the bleeding carcase. But he was very much alive, and in the midst of his agony thought only of duty. "Roll me off, boys" he said, "and go on firing!" He was picked up and carried to the rear; and as the ambulance men bore him away from the field he turned round, waved his remaining hand and shouted, "Buck up No. 2 Section!" How could any foe hope to conquer men like these? They might be beaten once, twice, thrice; but they must win in the end.

However Henry Lawson, Australian poet of the times (1867-1922), was probably nearer to the mark in the chorus of his poem, *Ballad of the Cornstalk*:

I'm going to the war, and I don't know what it's for,
 But the other chaps are going with the Bush Contingent men,
 But if I should stay behind, there'll be trouble on my mind,
 For my girl would throw me over when they come back again.

Introduction



I chose this photo as “typically Midge”, always taking photos, sometimes to the irritation of those (‘patiently!’) waiting. However, he is the one who can provide a photo of a long-ago event or long-dead family member for those once impatient friends.

West Australia Hill, 1997.

After years of urging from friends, in many countries, who share his passion for South Africa’s military history, ‘Midge’ has put together this collection of memories and photos. It is not meant to be an academic work, but rather a sharing of his experiences with those who have not been able to explore Southern Africa for themselves.

Born on 30th November 1930, he lived in Southern Africa at a time when most Zulu and Boer War battlefields had been undisturbed for decades, where many graves still dotted the countryside, when people were still alive to share their memories of the times.

For years he rode his motor-bike to places off the beaten tracks exploring alone, often with a book – such as *Commando* by Deney’s Reitz – to refer to. Later he persuaded a wife, then one, two, three, four children to scramble along with him up the *kopjes*. Sometimes a group from the Durban branch of

the South African Military History Society would go on a field trip to these often remote sites. And there were special trips with historian friends such as “SB” Bourquin and Ken Gillings.

Then in 1987 Midge came back to Australia, where he had been born of New Zealand parents, and which they had left when he was 1½. He and I met in 1995 and the passionate search began again, but this time with more of an Australian flavour, the guerilla war. Altogether we have since spent more than 10 months climbing hills, picking blackjacks from our clothes, meeting wonderful people and showing other Aussie fanatics around an amazing country.

In 1997 we spent five months in Southern Africa and drove 23,000 km from Johannesburg to the Cape, up through Botswana to Harare (formerly Salisbury, Rhodesia) and back to Johannesburg, and every little dorp and city in between. Three years later in 2000, accompanied by three other ABW fanatics and two wives, we guided them from Cape Town to Johannesburg for a month. They returned to Australia and we then spent three months exploring and visiting old friends. In 2001 we were invited to be special guests as part of the ceremonies in Zululand at Itala, Fort Propect, Fort Nongqayi and others... a wonderful month. In 2006, with two other Aussie historians, we wandered over South Africa for a month, then Midge and I spent two months in the UK, Spain and USA. There are few Zulu War and Boer War battlefields that we have not been to.

There have been a couple of less than pleasant experiences. A spider bite laid me low for a few days at Bothaville, but my kind non-English-speaking Afrikaner hostess took me to her doctor (at first both thought I had Tick Bite Fever). She was willing to care for me as long as needed... I had only met her that day at her farm where the Battle of Bothaville took place in 1901, and she had invited us to stay the night.

Then there was the (for me) terrifying encounter with two gun-toting Africans on the deserted old Ladysmith to Colenso road while we were exploring Hart’s Hill. Later we discovered that they were patrolling the area for cattle rustlers, but when they first appeared beside our car and I realized that no-one knew where we were and all we possessed was in that car, I was SCARED. Midge gave the two Africans a friendly wave and, to my great relief, they let us continue unchallenged. He said that they were holding a South African standard military issue rifle – an R3 used by guards etc,- but had they been carrying an AK 47 he would have”sh★★ himself”.

I was also petrified at Victoria Falls, when creeping through the bush late one night near the border crossing into Zambia. We had met a couple of Aussies as we were strolling down the road on a lovely moonlit evening, who told us that the backpackers had a hole in the fence where they entered to see the Falls, as the entrance in 1997 was US \$11 for foreigners but only \$2 Zim for locals (which Midge had been for several years in the 60s). Of course we were only checking it out of interest. However I was very alarmed to hear and then see a vehicle with its lights off going very slowly past our hiding spot! It quite cured my sense of adventure and I was very relieved when the vehicle disappeared, and so did we.

The climb up and down the mountain Amajuba in 2006 was not a pleasure either! Interesting, scenic and worthwhile being at the top, but the up and down bits were taxing for two ‘*wrinklies*’. Amajuba is by no means a very high mountain in South Africa, but if it was transferred to Australia it would rank amongst Australia’s highest, being less than 40 metres lower than Mt. Kosciusko.

This then is a collection of personal anecdotes, the human side of South African military history. If it seems weighted towards the British experience this is because, in the early years, it seemed more common for diaries, books, reports etc to be written and published by the British, and their monuments were more numerous and the inscriptions more eloquent. Also, fewer Boer historians were researching and exploring old battlefields then. This has changed in recent times, but this book is about Midge’s experiences, often decades ago, hence the many times “I”, “he” or “we” appear in the text .

The photos are mostly our own, a record of many years of meanderings and fortunate meetings with marvellous people. Mainly, we have chosen those with a special appeal to us. Those taken before 1997 are, of course, by Midge.

We have made no reference to the modern conflicts the South African Defence Force have been involved in, as we are recording Midge’s experiences and the places we have visited.

We believe that there is a wide enough range of photos and anecdotes to interest Boer War fanatics from the UK, Canada and New Zealand, as well as Australia and South Africa.

Trish Woodman

South Africa

A land of contrasts and breathtaking scenery



A Nek

To help you to understand and appreciate the difficulties faced by both Boer and Brit alike, consider the following: there are endless miles of veldt with little cover, and ranges of steep *kopjes* covered with boulders; Blackjacks and other prickles stick to your socks and pants; ticks can cause tickbite fever, and malaria is still a serious threat in many areas; lightning or a fall from their horse or troop train killed a surprising number of the troops; severe cold or heat caused misery at least, and even death, from exposure; diseases – especially gastric complaints and measles – killed many hundreds, including the doctors and nurses and the occupants of the concentration camps; food supplies were inadequate; water, if available, was often tainted.

The horses also suffered from the rough terrain and were subject to a wide range of diseases which I have dealt with in the Regimental Orders in Section 1.



A Poort

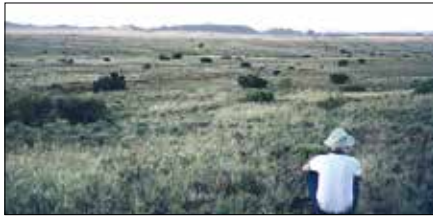
For those of you who have not been to South Africa, we have included the following photos to give you an idea of the diversity of and beauty of the scenery.



Table Mountain, 1997



Donga:: a usually dry, eroded watercourse running only in times of rain.



Midge looking sadly over the veldt for perhaps the last time.



A kranz is a cliff.



A drift is a crossing place over a river.



Yes, it does snow in South Africa!



Trout Rally riders going through Wyllie's Poort.



Kraal: group of huts

Also, as the names of many towns in South Africa are made up of a descriptive word such as *wit* (white) or *modder* (muddy), plus a physical feature such as *nek*, *laagte*, *poort*, we have included a photo or sketch to illustrate some of these.

Note that a *berg* is a mountain, a *burg* is a large town. A *stad* is a city (e.g. Kaapstad = Cape Town), a *dorp* is a village.

Anecdotes



Midge on the second motorbike he owned, a 1944 350cc Ariel.

My Dad served with the New Zealanders in the Great War, before he went to Australia and then South Africa to live. He spent time in the trenches in France and the horrors he experienced there led him to say to my brother, Gavin, and me “I’ll never let you boys go to war” as he sat with his arms around us listening to the Declaration of War speech by Mr Neville Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister, in 1939. Because our parents were in their late thirties when we were born, we were too young for WW2, and though I spent 21 years in the Umkomaas and South Coast Commandos in Natal, I was too old for call-up for the Border Wars.

In 1941, as a 10-year-old, I was awoken by Dad one night (the 24th May 1941) to be told the tragic news that the battlecruiser HMS *Hood* had been

sunk by the German battleship *Bismarck*. This devastated me and brought me to tears. The “Mighty Hood” had been the most important item of British supremacy to win the war, or so I had believed.

My passion for South African military history was ignited when I was a school boy at St John’s College in Johannesburg. We boarders were required to have a period of “silent reading” every midday before afternoon sport and one book I chose from the library was *Commando* by Deneys Reitz. It absorbed me completely and after I had left school I took my copy to many battlefields, where I sat and read his account of what took place there when he was a teenager, and gained a much clearer picture of what happened.

The second influence was the acquisition of my first motor-bike. I had had the opportunity to ride an autocycle (a combination of pedal bike and small two-stroke motor.) To a 15 year old boy it was a revelation and I wanted one.

My mother was dead set against it. “Over my dead body will my boys ride a motor-bike,” she used to say. Dad however had a far more realistic attitude and he said, “Leave her to me. You can both have a motor-bike on two conditions. 1) You have to earn every penny to pay for them and 2) I will select what I consider to be the most appropriate bike.” So both Gavin and I found school holiday jobs and we ended up with Royal Enfield 125cc two-stroke motorbikes.

All of a sudden, my range from home expanded a hundred fold, and one of my first trips, in 1947 or ’48, was to Pretoria, 50 kilometres or so north of Johannesburg, to explore Fort Klapperkop. This proved to be a great disappointment to me as I expected to find a fort like Fort Zindaneuf as I remembered from the film *Beau Geste* with movie star Gary Cooper. Klapperkop was nothing like that!

I was lucky that these sites and battlefields were still relatively untouched. At that time too – the late 40s and early 50s – there was not a lot of interest in the Boer War, so I had to ask local farmers if they had any idea where to look. Little had been disturbed in decades. As another of my passions has always been photography, I took countless photos, which Trish believes I should now make available. (Sadly, when I came to Australia in 1987 one tea-chest of items I wanted to bring went to the tip by accident, and one tea-chest of rubbish arrived here! So I dread to think what I may have lost.)

As time went by I became friendly with other enthusiasts and we would go on field trips to places like Amajuba and Isandlwana. Some of these people are profiled in the section on the South African Military History Society, as

they have played a crucial role in finding and preserving sites, in documentation and in educating people about the very interesting Zulu and Boer Wars. None of us wants to glorify war, but these events happened and can't be ignored.



South African Military History Society members climbing Belmont Kopje, Northern Cape. Darrell Hall, Dick Peddle and Alma & Bruce Benadie are among the climbers. This is an excellent indication of how rocky and difficult many of the battlefields were.

Battle of Belmont, 23 Nov 1899. Belmont Kopje, N/Cape. Photo 1969

Zulu Dawn

Note. If it appears that this section has been given a lot of space, it is because DVD copies of Zulu Dawn are still widely available, and a new remastered edition with ‘special features’ has recently been re-released (2013). This article may answer some of the questions about military and production aspects of the film.

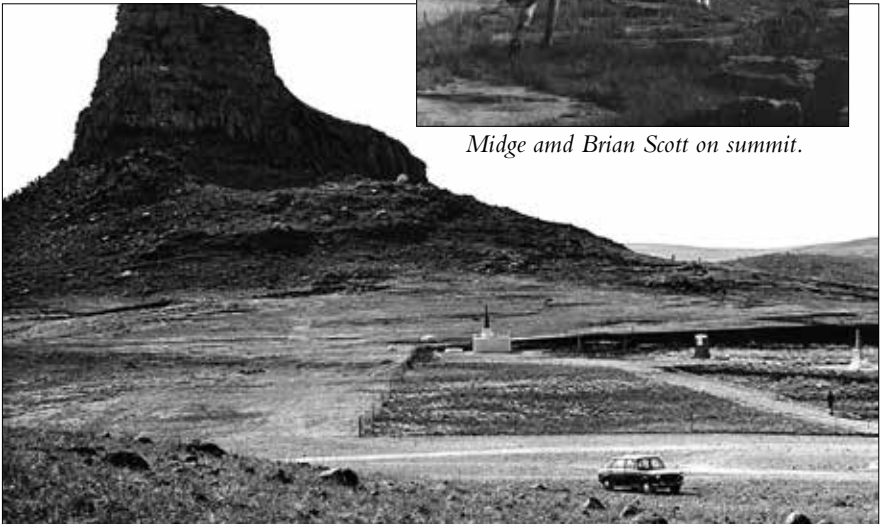
Perth, WA 2012

In 1978 an English/American film company named Samarkand came to South Africa to make the film *Zulu Dawn*, about the worst military defeat ever suffered by a white British army at the hands of a black army in South African history. This happened at a place called Isandlwana in Zululand in 1879.

Unfortunately nobody on their production staff had any knowledge of the Zulu War or of this battle. I had contacted them because I was concerned that they would fly the incorrect flag in the battle sequence, which was not the Regimental flag of the 24th Regiment. This was incorrectly painted by the



Midge and Brian Scott on summit.



Isandlwana battlefield. Photos taken 1966.

Victorian painter Alphonse De Neuville in his painting *The Last Sleep of the Brave*. It was the Queen's Colour, the Union Jack which had been taken to Isandlwana, the Regimental Colours remained with HQ staff at base camp.

Concerned about this, I phoned the production office in Pietermaritzburg to see if the saving of the Colours was going to be featured in the film. When this was confirmed I asked them to describe the flag being saved. It was the wrong one, and I had pictorial evidence to prove it. That afternoon the Art Director came to our home and I showed him what I had, which resulted in me being offered a job on the production.

Fortuitously, as the firm I worked for had just folded, Samarkand then contracted me as the historical advisor and later as the military advisor as well. I had served in the South African Commandos for over 15 years at that time and I also had an extensive collection of military weapons and a long and passionate interest in the military history of South Africa.

I was put in charge of the principal actors and all 400 extras, to teach them the correct drill procedures of the period – very different from what they are today. My work quickly snowballed into location-finding, set-dressing, voice-overs,



still photographer and even assistant director and finally to play the part of Lieutenant Cavaye, one of the British officers who was killed.

Some perks were the use of a company car, a motor-cycle to enable me to move quickly between sets, and flights in a helicopter to choose locations (keeping in mind the Director's needs regarding access, lighting etc.)



Well-known actors in *Zulu Dawn* included John Mills (a true gentleman), Peter O'Toole, Burt Lancaster, Dai Bradley, Bob Hoskins, Christopher Cassenove, Denholm Elliott, Simon Ward, Paul Copley and many others.

We also required in excess of 1,000 Zulus at times. These were drawn from the local workforce,



which was not very popular with the sugarcane growers. It was rather amusing that the scenes demanded that the Zulu actors run bare-footed over the rocky ground – something they were not used to now and which caused chaos in one huge massed charge when it was noticed that one or two were wearing green ‘tackies’ (sneakers).

I was constrained, to a certain extent, by the underlying purpose and need of the company to “put bums on seats”. This meant including a romantic interest between Colonel Durnford and Fanny Colenso, the daughter of Bishop Colenso of Pietermaritzburg. However I was permitted to rewrite one scene.

Trish recently found a magazine article, *Film and the Zulu War* by Ian Knight, in which he writes, referring to *Zulu Dawn*:

And yet the historical accuracy is far better than average, the battle scene breath-takingly spectacular, and the sense of location superb. Many of the scenes were filmed on the spot, including the river-crossing at Rorkes Drift – though this was filmed in reverse, the column crossing from the Zulu side to the real Natal side!”

South Africa, 1978

In going through the large amount of paper I kept from the making of the film, I found these “observations” I made at the time. It may answer many questions.

Some Historical Observations by Matthew Charles Carter, Historical and Military Advisor.

The cloud of grey smoke cleared away with the echo of the gun shot. The crowd of senior film personnel stood back watching the test firing of a British field gun made expressly for the film *Zulu Dawn*. To me, as military advisor, it was incredulous. The gun did the most remarkable gyrations along the ground, defying realistic imagination. By the looks of delight on most

of the faces about me, the antics of the gun were lost to most but me. What happened in sequence went something like this:

- 1) the gunner chopped down on the lanyard (dummy) in the customary manner;
- 2) instantly the gun was fired electrically – remotely triggered by a special effects man;
- 3) half a second later the gun ran back in a delayed recoil and,
- 4) instantly and entirely unassisted by the now unemployed gunners was thrust forward to position (1) by its own concealed mechanism.

I protested to the director that this sequence was impossible and explained why. A hurried meeting was held with the special effects team who admitted that the device they had made and brought from Germany was made to suit a modern gun with a recuperator – not an unsophisticated muzzle loading British field gun designed well over 100 years ago. The system could not be adapted to work any other way due to the time factor, the only choice left was Hobson's! Perhaps some deft cutting by the editor may be able to mollify these sequences, otherwise you gunners please don't laugh.

But by and large *Zulu Dawn* has been made as historically and militaristically accurate as the strictures of time, money and the dramatic content of the story will allow and Douglas Hickox, the director, and all the other hard-working production crew, kept this constantly in mind.

To this extent original locations were used wherever possible.

I came to *Zulu Dawn* well after the production stage had commenced, with the result that to some extent the die had been cast on some issues, but shooting was still two months away and many inaccuracies were corrected.

The film script *Zulu Dawn* had been written by Cy Enfield and Anthony Story many years ago, soon after the very successful release of *Zulu* in 1964. The actor Stanley Baker had bought it with the intention of making this a vehicle for his own acting talents – but by the time he died this had never been done. With his death the script became available once again and Samarkand Motion Picture Productions obtained the production rights.

Naturally, being an out-of-doors film, good weather was vital so a winter schedule was opted for. This presented several problems for the sake of consistent sunshine. As we all know, the period we were filming was of a Natal in mid-summer with all its greenness, full rivers, thunderstorms and mists, but we would have brown veld, clear skies and rivers with little water in them. Added to this, extras dressed for summer found the chill winter winds

bit through their thin garments, and the near-naked Zulu extras suffered even more.

The consensus of opinion however was that the majority of people overseas, who have any preconceived opinion of South Africa, picture it as a 'Khaki' country, so that piece of licence was accepted.

I would like to make one important point here which an historian must accept when he starts to get on his high horse over some point or other. The Director's word is final. A film must sell to be a success. The average film-goer is there to be entertained. If he or she is, they pass the word along, and so the turnstiles roll and the producers – those who put up the money – are happy. In an enormous production like this, both in size and expenditure, those turnstiles must turn a'plenty to keep the backers happy.

So, bearing this in mind, all things are subservient to the dramatic impact of the story. With *Zulu Dawn* this too must apply, but wherever possible all due respect has been given to historical accuracy.

Zulu Dawn will start with the ultimatum being drawn up by Sir Bartle Frere, played by Sir John Mills. This is then conveyed to Cetshwayo, who does not comply with the terms and thus the British Army sets out from Pietermaritzburg for the Zululand border. These scenes are historically simplified so as not to confuse the unknowledgeable and perhaps uninterested cinema goer, whether they be in America, Japan, Germany or Spitzbergen.

For convenience the first scenes shot were those of Lord Chelmsford's sorties out from Isandlwana looking for Cetshwayo's army whilst the British camp was attacked and destroyed. These scenes were shot at Baynesfield near Pietermaritzburg.

The soldiers had to look dirty, sweaty and tired after a long march. Helmets and webbing browned down with mud as was required by regulations to make them less conspicuous. Certain animal-drawn vehicles were insisted upon to make the column look big, although Chelmsford took little or none in reality. Also appearing here, and historically incorrect, is a section of 17th Lancers, as his guard. These had been ordered and cast before I came on the scene, and certainly they added an air of military pomp. In real life this unit only reached Natal in April, 1879. As to Lord Chelmsford's escort, this was composed of mounted infantry, drafts from the 24th Regiment.

After several days at Baynesfield, where every morning we waited for the sun to melt the frost before we could make the scene look like summer, we moved the whole operation, including our vast mobile kitchen and canteen to Pietermaritzburg.

Here the army would be assembled before going to war, here the NNC (Natal Native Contingent) would get a smattering of training, here the volunteers would be introduced to the story and here the Commander-in-Chief would review some of his troops. Needless to add all browned-down helmets and equipment had to look like virgin snow!

For this purpose, a squad of near company size was drilled solidly until they could present arms like a machine. The moment had come and Peter O'Toole, as Lord Chelmsford, regally mounted an off-white horse, approached with his Staff. Sergeant R. Gill bellowed the appropriate command—there was a crashing and stamping of feet—and Chelmsford's horse took off. Peter O'Toole battled to control the beast, but to no avail and he fell off – fairly gently, fortunately.

All credit to him, a hurried discussion took place; he would do it again and the men would go through the motions in silence.

Next take—the same result, but Peter O'Toole kept his seat this time. He then drove the horse back to the redcoat ranks, but it remained very skittish, and finally threw him heavily and very nearly trampled him as well. This put Mr O'Toole in bed for a few days.

Another gaffe, which I had to concede to, was Lt Melvill inspecting the men's rifles from right to left, which is the wrong direction. This was done for the sake of camera angles and the direction of the sunlight.

It was during this period that I read an amusing report in a local paper. Several of our extras proved to be enterprising young journalists hoping for inside stories, and one who had been in a day or two wrote about the sloppy marching and rifle drill he had been taught, nothing like the smart foot-stamping drill of the British Army. Furthermore he said we had concocted it all ourselves. He obviously hadn't been present, or hadn't listened, when I explained to all the new recruits that they would have to learn the authentic turns etc of the time and forget about all they had been taught during their military training.

The scenes utilising the oval in Pietermaritzburg and which had been very skilfully redecorated to resemble a military assembly area, were concluded with a night sequence of the army on the move. This took three full nights of shooting. Now there can be few more pleasant places than Pietermaritzburg on a warm summer evening, but in June we were working in temperatures down to -5°C and all night through. It was hard going.

Following this section I left for Dundee and Rorkes Drift with the 2nd Film Unit.



Midge Carter, film star! When one of the cast dropped out I was given the role of Lieutenant Cavaye, complete with moustache. Seated with other officers in the Mess, I was to propose the toast "The Regiment..." my only speaking part! If you blink you will miss my few seconds of film fame, but at least I have a photo of myself as Cavaye (sans moustache) with Peter O'Toole, to prove it.



Burt Lancaster is in the middle of the photo.

Now a movie of this size needed two complete film crews in order to accomplish the shooting in the allotted time and the second unit, directed by David Tomblin, who was assistant to Sir Richard Attenborough on *A Bridge Too Far* and co-ordinated by Peter MacDonald, considered one of the best cameramen in Britain today, had all the vast outdoor scenes to shoot, including the massive sequences at the Zulu Royal Kraal.

But to start with they had to shoot the invasion of Zululand at Rorke's Drift, with all the paraphernalia of an army crossing a river into enemy territory, and a more dedicated and professional crew one couldn't hope to meet with.

Once again dramatic licence was used. Looking at Zululand across the Buffalo River, the countryside looks soft and peaceful, but looking at Natal from the Zulu bank, with the rugged Oskarberg or Shiyane looming straight up from the river bank, a far more forboding scene meets the eye, so for effect the filmed invasion is reversed – we invaded Natal from Zululand!

At this point we were troubled by the low water and also a modern building close to the river where the army had originally crossed, but downstream 600 metres we found a spot wide enough to make the ponts feasible and realistic. These had been accurately built by a skilled crew, and reduced slightly from the originals to make the river seem much wider.

A vast tented camp was set up across the river and an old drift crossing, opened up by an excavator, became our roadway for the 4-wheel-drive vehicles to cross. This track gave constant problems and needed frequent work to keep it negotiable.

We seemed to spend weeks on this sequence, during which our first helicopter crashed when the engine failed. The occupants were very lucky as only the skill of the pilot saved them from certain death.

Whilst there, the rocky and bush-covered slopes of the Oskarberg were used to shoot a number of small scenes of importance to the story. It was here that we had the helpful company of Mr George Buntting, the well-known historian from Fugitives' Drift.

One particular incident stands out in my memory.

Towards the end of these sequences a high angle view of the crossing was called for, showing Zulu scouts observing the British invasion. This had to be shot from the summit of the Oskarburg.

By now both film units and the whole crew were at Rorke's Drift.

I was asked by Peter MacDonald, the 2nd Unit Co-Ordinator, if I could guide a small camera crew to the summit early next morning. We would take four Zulu actors with us as well.

By 7.30 we were ready. We drove to a point around the back of the hill, completely surrounded in mist. Each person had a load to carry. We had two 35mm Panavision movie cameras and all their equipment. To my surprise, Peter MacDonald, who is not a big man, heaved a massive tripod on his shoulder and set out behind me up through the rocks and heavy bush into the mist. We made the summit, heaving and sweating, in three quarters of an hour and had to huddle in the lee of the rocks for nearly two hours until the mist cleared and we could shoot. It was the willingness of these two directors to muck in and do everything they expected of their team, that created a wonderful *esprit de corps* amongst the second unit. I don't recall them ever taking one Sunday off once the filming got under way.

What a farewell party they gave their unit crew in the final week! I will never forget it.

From here we moved to the battle area to be shot on the northern slopes of Isepezi Hill, about 18 kilometres to the east of Isandlwana. Whether or not permission was given or even asked for us to use the original battle site I do not know. Technically it could certainly have been used. The monuments, graves and buildings could easily have been concealed, but one major problem could not be avoided. From soon after mid-day Isandlwana throws an ever-lengthening shadow across the battlefield. This would have created major problems from two points of view; 1) with big scenes it would take all morning and sometimes more, to set up a sequence, so shooting would take place late in the day, and 2) that massive shadow would cause serious continuity problems.

So, with some regret, we had to use a very different locale, a hill double the size of Isandlwana, and a plain heavily interlaced with deep dongas. On this field I now had to set up the battle sequences as near as possible to what took place in reality, and at the same time use the natural terrain as a local commander would use it.

I spent much time walking the area, if I couldn't get to it by light motorcycle, and finally drew a set of maps laying out the whole sequence of events to represent the fateful 2nd of January, 1879.

In the end Douglas Hickox chose to bring the perimeter in somewhat closer than I had suggested, for practical cinema purposes.

Next problem was to expect modern Zulus to emulate highly trained and hardened warriors of a century before. Many lacked any incentive to run, let alone charge on command. Their feet, in many instances softened by constant wearing of shoes, couldn't take the rough ground. We eventually let

them wear dark shoes or tackies in long shots. Much time was lost in trying to get these sequences to work, and it wasn't until David Tomblin and his unit had a brainwave on the penultimate day of shooting, that we got something that really looked like a ferocious charge from our thousands of warriors. He found them an area of soft going with little or no rock or thorns, faced them downhill, pointed them towards home – the opposite direction of the British camp – placed all the prop trucks in a *donga* (a dry water course) in front of them, and then told them to do it right and they could go straight on home, but if any one of them didn't run like hell, he would send them back to do it all again! There were also several crates of beer in the trucks for them – a powerful and successful incentive!

His “Go!” signal was two rifle shots fired over his head. What a headlong rush – it was incredible. Three cameras at different angles got it all and the Zulus went home.

Veld fire was a constant hazard and our efficient fire-fighting unit had a number of calls to deal with before the film was finally in the can. Many fires were required for the film... we lost count of the number of times one waggon was set alight for the cameras and as quickly doused once shooting was over. A trick of ‘special effects’ used for this was to use liberal amounts of contact adhesive poured all over it and lit. This burned most realistically for quite a while before the timber was seriously affected.

Authentic equipment proved to be a very serious problem however, one which was never completely solved. Martini-Henry rifles in any quantity were just unobtainable. Carbines and cut-down rifles, ex-school cadet drill weapons yes, but long rifles very few.

The set design department made a very authentic looking Martini-Henry reproduction in moulded foam polyurethane for drill purposes, which worked very well, but these obviously couldn't fire, so in the battle sequences these were replaced with the shorter carbines which would fire blanks. Even these were in no way adequate quantity for all our soldiers, so men in long shots had all sorts of .303 rifles (all our blanks were black powder in this calibre), and I had to keep a constant watch to see that these were never seen close on camera. For specific close-ups the long Martini-Henry rifles were used.

The seven-pounder field guns do not resemble the authentic guns either. Firstly they were made to the size of the nine pounder, as the seven pounder looked too puny, and secondly the quoin elevating mechanism is utterly wrong, as they copied this from an illustration of a seven-pounder mountain gun.

Due to the size of Isepezi, the Zulu right horn, who came round behind Isandlwana to cut off the British retreat, had to be ferried in by bus. They were then assembled to make their dramatic entry to cut off the flight of Durnford and the survivors from the battlefield.

Burt Lancaster as Colonel Durnford, uses an authentic break frame Mk.vi Webley revolver. He had to do all this acting and action with a crippled left arm and he devised a way he could handle and reload this type of weapon, which he could not convincingly do with the solid frame Adams or Tranter of the period. He proved a fit and skilful rider and comes over well as the doomed Colonel.

Throughout the battle the guns caused problems and certainly some excitement too. The sequence where they are lost was all action and despite mishaps, no serious injuries were sustained. Unlike another sequence where a gun and limber fell into a ditch on top of a gunner who had to be rushed to hospital.

At this point, it is important to understand the role of the Honourable Standish Vereker in this film. This character did exist and was an officer with the NNC and perished in the flight from the battlefield.

As the reader can appreciate in an action like Isandlwana, many men have small but important parts in the action. In a film, to create all these characters for a fleeting moment only serves to confuse the audience. To simplify it all and make things work, Vereker plays the part of a number of men on that fateful day and becomes a major character in the story. This part is played by Simon Ward. In the film Vereker's role incorporates the actions of Vereker himself, Captain Bradstreet, George Shepstone and, finally, at Fugitive's Drift, Lieutenant Higginson. This sequence is not historically accurate either, as the Queen's Colour is not washed out of Lieutenant Melvill's hand, but is dropped in the river by a fleeing Zulu after Vereker shoots him. This ending is more theatrical and the Director rewrote it this way. He doesn't let Melvill and Coghill get far from the river bank either. I did not see this sequence being shot, which was done at the real Fugitive's Drift. I had earlier taken a film crew, complete with two horses and riders, to prove the feasibility of using this drift again. To my surprise the water, even in mid-winter, was too deep for horses to cross without swimming.

With a production of this size there are many little facets that cannot be recorded here, but for me it was an unforgettable experience. I for one can't wait for the finished article to reach our cinema screens.

It needs to be noted that the weather in Natal is usually dry in winter, wet in summer, whereas in the Cape and parts of Australia, winter brings rain.

Lieutenant-Colonel Crealock's book

While filming *Zulu Dawn* I bought a copy of Colonel Crealock's book of paintings *Road to Ulundi*, a limited edition, and most of the cast and crew signed it for me or wrote a message. There are many famous signatures in it, including John Mills and Burt Lancaster. It's a real treasure!

Some messages were:

Douglas Hickox

Very, very many thanks for a long and sustained effort.

Christopher Cassanove

Dear Midge. So many thanks for all your advice and help and care.

Angela Allen

To Midge, for all your pains and especially your suffering when we did it all wrong.

John Yule (Sgt SAS)

To Midge (Staff Sgt). It gives me a thrill to know that you have seniority in the Sergeants' Mess.

Ralph Hock

Great experience working with you.

Rob Gill

To the Umkomaas Staff Sergeant from Samarkand's Sergeant Major. Best wishes, Midge.

Dai Bradley

For Midge, a fella and a half.

Geoff Freeman

I travelled 6,000 miles to meet a good friend.

Jacko

To Midge, historian and raconteur supreme. It's been lovely knowing you.

John Hodil

A gentleman and a scholar. A true man who speaks the truth.

Boon (?)

Midge, you've done a tremendous job!

Mike Sti – – –

Midgelet. It's been a pleasure. All the best.

Memorabilia

Among the mementos of the film, I still have the following:

- My copy of the script
- All my background notes, including sketches of uniforms and arms, drills, etc
- Photos I took during filming, of the stars, the hundreds of Zulus, the locations etc
- A Tshirt featuring the logo *Zulu Dawn*
- Crealock's book, of course, with its collection of signatures

Not always wise

After *Zulu Dawn* I got jobs on several other films, including *King and Country*. Coming home from one of the shootings I found the road blocked by a cane fire (Natal is a huge sugar cane producing area). I could see flames dancing across the sugar cane and already across the main road. In spite of the flames and smoke, I drove desperately on because I was to be the guest speaker at a meeting in Durban that evening over 120 km away. I just made it!

2011 Interview

I recently received an email from Los Angeles, asking me to be interviewed about my memories of the making of *Zulu Dawn*. It amazes me that there is still such interest in the film, 33 years down the track. I'm told that the movie is being revamped, with extras such as this interview. I'm sure that this person wasn't aware that I have a copy of the script, many photos of the Cast, Crealock's book and all the sketches of uniforms, weapons etc that I made at the time. We shall see what eventuates!

Update March, 2013

We have just received copies of the new DVD *Zulu Dawn*, made by Severin Films. It features a visit to the battlefield by Zulu War 'fundis' Ian Knight, who explains the history of the Isandlwana battle and shows us important sites on the battlefield. It also has a section titled 'Recreating the War' which is the interview they did with me. The general opinion is that they have done an excellent job.

The Prince Imperial's Watch.

An interesting find.



The words on this simple cross, in an isolated cemetery south of Vryheid, say:

This cross is erected by Queen Victoria in affectionate remembrance of Napoléon Eugène Louis Jean Joseph, Prince Imperial, to mark the spot where, while assisting in a reconnaissance with the British troops on the 1st June 1879, he was attacked by a party of Zulus and fell with his face to the foe.

Some brief notes. The Prince Imperial – Napoléon Eugène Louis Jean Joseph – was the son of Napoleon III, Emperor of France, and Eugénie, the daughter of a Spanish Count. He was born on the 16th March 1856. When he was 14, he was with his father at the “skirmish at Saarbrachen where he saw shells explode and men with bandaged limbs”.

When his father was taken prisoner-of-war in September 1870, the Prince joined his mother in England in Chislehurst, Kent, and when he was freed his father joined them.

In 1872 he became a cadet at the Royal Military Academy, Woolwich and was attached to the Royal Artillery at Aldershot. When news of the dreadful happenings at Isandlwana came, he was eventually allowed to go to South Africa as an 'observer', appointed to Lord Chelmsford's personal staff, but was never to be allowed to leave camp without permission.

However, the Prince was a talented reconnaissance scout and he went to choose a campsite for the march to Ulundi. There seems to have been no definite understanding of who was in charge. The small party halted near a *kraal* which appeared to be deserted. They were somewhat careless, posting no sentries, etc. When a group of about 40 Zulu warriors were spotted approaching through the long grass, the troops scrambled to mount, but the Prince's temperamental horse reared, the holster strap was broken and the Prince faced the foe bravely. He received 17 assegai stab wounds. Troopers Abel and Rogers were also killed. All were disembowelled, which was the Zulu custom.

Lieutenant Carey, who had left the Prince and galloped away, was court-martialled, found guilty of "misbehaviour in the face of the enemy" and ordered back to England. Empress Eugénie, however, intervened with the Queen on his behalf, and she wrote to the Review Board. The disgraced Carey rejoined the regiment which 'sent him to Coventry' permanently.¹

A Mrs Solveig Tonnesen phoned me one day to say that she had what she believed to be the Prince Imperial's watch. I was sceptical as I knew this item was not recovered when all his other effects were located at the end of the Zulu War, however I did not say this to Mrs. Tonnesen.

The Prince had written a Will before he went to South Africa, a copy of which I found in the Killy Campbell Library in Durban, where he mentioned his "enamel-faced watch" so I knew there was a watch.

I asked Solveig how she had acquired it and that story was also most interesting. Solveig's maiden name was Oftebro and her father was one of the group of Norwegian Missionary doctors who were based at their Eshowe

1 *South African Military History Journal*, Alf Wade, December 1974.

The Unfortunate Prince, Donald Featherstone, author of Captain Carey's Blunder, in *Military Modelling*, May 1976.

The Zulu War, David Clammer, Pan, 1975. *Story of The Prince Imperial's Watch*



The Prince Imperial's watch

Mission in Zululand. Some years after the war had finished an elderly Zulu came to see the doctor. It was a wet and stormy night and the old man asked if the doctor would come and tend his wife who was gravely ill. Without question Oftebro set off with the old Zulu to his *kraal* many miles away. He found the woman was delirious with a high fever. He immediately treated her and then stayed with her all through the night until the fever broke. Not till he was satisfied that she was saved did he set off back to the mission station. A short while later Oftebro was visited by the old Zulu, who brought him the second most precious thing he had, as a gift. It was the Prince Imperial's watch. He told the doctor that he had saved the life of his most precious possession, so he gave him the watch in gratitude.

When I saw it, the front cover was missing, one hand was also missing and the mechanism didn't work. It had a distinctive enamel face.

I asked if I could take it to a well known Durban Antique Clock dealer for his identification. She agreed. He was very busy so I put it on the counter while I waited. He told me gruffly that he was not interested in buying “Mickey Mouse watches”. I, equally gruffly, told him I was not interested in selling one.

So he examined it and then went to his extensive library without saying a word. After a while he then informed me that it had been made in Belgium in the late 1700s and had a ‘Verge escapement mechanism’. He said that the enamel face was a special type, no longer used, and was probably made in a batch for a ceremonial purpose. I then showed it to Daphne Strutt, the then curator of the Durban History Museum at the old Courthouse building. She, of course, wanted it for the Museum and the family kindly subsequently donated it.

I also took it on a Military History Society trip to Zululand to the place where the Prince had been killed.

When the prince was killed, all his possessions had been divided up between the Zulu attackers. I was told that the watch had been taken from the Prince’s body by one of the Zulus as his share of the spoils. At some time later it had been given to a local white doctor by a Zulu chief, grateful to the doctor for going out on a stormy night and saving his favourite wife. This corroborated Solveig Tonnesen’s story.

This memorial to the Prince, situated in an isolated valley near the Ityotyozu River, is difficult to find and few people visit it. It was in a stone enclosure with a few trees and two other graves (Abel & Rogers). The first time I went to find the place where he died, my car got stuck in the drift. I had to come down the steep bank, accelerate through the water, then keep up momentum across a stretch of sand...unsuccessfully!

It was fairly late in the afternoon. I went looking for some of the local men to give me a hand, but as I didn’t speak Zulu and most of the men were away from home, I couldn’t explain my problem. I jacked up the car on one side, put river boulders under the wheels and in front of it, let the car down then repeated the exercise on the other side till I had a reasonable track ahead to gain enough speed to get out of that sand trap.

Trish’s note. Recently I was reading the following account in the *Military History Journal* (South African), Vol 6, No. 4 (December 1984). It is entitled *Memorandum Regarding the Discovery of the late Prince Imperial’s Uniform and Other Effects* by Lt. Colonel George Villiers, Grenadier Guards. It mentions the watch:

Clas brought back with him a Zulu who had been present when the watch was broken up – he said they thought that it contained snuff and, as they could not open it, they smashed it up between two big stones. Their story at this point was so succinct that I had with regret to abandon further search for the watch. Tho' I offered a considerable reward, if only any debris of it were brought to me – but I knew it was almost hopeless, for Colonel Bengough had bivouacked for two nights with his Kaffir Regt. on the very spot where the watch was broken up.

Cetshwayo's Grave.

'Abide with me' 1972

Some members of the South African Military History Society (Ken Gillings, SB Bourquin, Terry Willson, Justin Hulme and I) went to visit Cetshwayo's grave near Mome Gorge in the Nkandla Forest.

Several other groups had tried to visit from the other side which is almost impossible, but we were advised to go from the Eshowe side. What a trek!

We went in SB's station wagon, until the road ended at a country trading store, then walked from there. A young local girl acted as guide to Jotham 'Dunlop' Shezi's home, near the gravesite. As we approached we could hear the glorious sound of



*Mome Gorge area with a kraal
at the bottom.*



Dunlop Shezi



Chief Shezi and SB



a trumpet playing *Abide With Me*. We discovered that it was Dunlop, so named because he had worked at the Dunlop Tyre Factory in Durban for many years. He also played in a Salvation Army Band when he lived in Durban. The nickname “Dunlop” distinguished him from the many other “Shezis”.

Dunlop accompanied us to the ‘hut’ of the custodian of the grave, where a ceremony took place before we were permitted to go to the site. We also sat with the Zulu elders in the hut and an ‘uKhamba’, a wide rimmed clay bowl, of Zulu beer was passed around which all drank from, one or two of us reluctantly

While here we took the opportunity to visit the area of the Battle of Mome Gorge on 10th June 1906, where the renegade Bambatha and his force was finally cornered and slaughtered by Natal Government troops. This was the last major military battle fought on



South African soil, although there have been riots where military force was involved.

SB, the Director of Bantu Administration, was well-respected by the Bantu people who had named him "Borkini". The old chief said that though King Goodwill and other Zulu leaders had not been to the site, it was sufficient that "Borkini" (SB) had been there.

The grave was now overgrown, but we could still see the remains of the metal parts of the ox-wagon on which Cetshwayo's body had been carried after his death on 8th February 1884 and there burnt (*see facing page*).

Ken Gillings tells me, "There is now no ceremony prior to a visit and there is no one there to prevent a visitor from simply entering the fenced off enclosure, which is now surrounded by lantana and chromalena ('Triffid' weed from South America)". This new polished black granite monument now covers Cetshwayo's gravesite

Note. Trish recently reread the excellent report of this trip by Ken Gillings in Vol 2 No 4 (December 1972) of the South African Military History Society's Journal. He is a very experienced and knowledgeable guide and still leads groups to many battlefields, so is up-to-date with the current state of these sites. This is his photo of the grave today. (*facing page at bottom*). Photo by kind permission of Ken Gillings.

The 1st Anglo-Boer War Amajuba 'The Hill of Doves'. *A night climb and a mystery.*

After climbing Majuba (2167m) on the Saturday night of 26th February 1881, General Colley, with stupid disregard for the supposed vulnerability of his position, with 365 troops on the summit, made no plans to fortify the position they had gained without even firing a shot.

His 2ic was Commander Romilly of the Naval Detachment from HMS *Boadicea*, then in Durban.

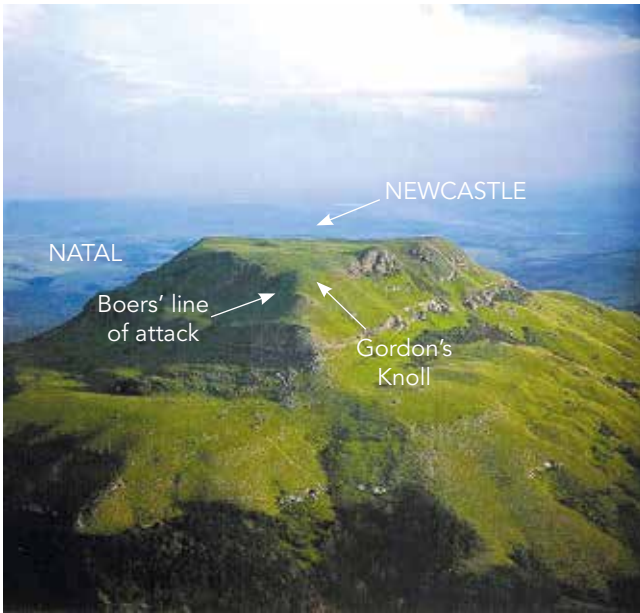


Photo courtesy of Ken Gillings *Battles of KwaZulu*



View of Laings Nek from Amajuba summit

During the morning, when desultory Boer rifle firing was taking place, Colley was standing on the skyline discussing defences with Romilly, when an amazing shot, from a Boer sniper 900 yards away, hit Romilly in the stomach and severed his spine. He died some hours later.

The defence by the British became a fiasco and soon all was lost and Colley killed. Colley had never commanded men in action and was totally incompetent when things started going wrong. Romilly had a sound reputation as a military leader and his death could have been the death knell for the British troops that day. How then may the whole history of South Africa been changed on that day.

Legend has it that Romilly's ghost still haunts the mountain, dressed in a long black coat and cap then worn by British Naval officers.

100 years to the hour after the event, 41 people set out from the remote Mt Prospect military cemetery in Natal to re-enact Colley's Forces' night climb. My three younger children and I were in that party. There were Ann 15, Peter 13 and Stephen 9, together with Peter's pal Leonard. In the pre-dawn hours, as we got to the nearly sheer edge below the top ascent, the whole column had become somewhat scattered as people of varying states of fitness, and by now of exhaustion, could not maintain cohesion.

Two fellows carried loaded backpacks of the same weight that the soldiers had carried. I also had a pack in which I carried a petrol stove, a two-litre water bottle, warm jumpers for the kids, coffee and milk powder, a bottle of Sweet Muscatel wine, as well as a Martini Henry rifle and a handful of 577/450 ammunition – a fair load but not as much as the two-pack carriers.

I had Stephen with me, but as the column disintegrated the other three got well ahead and in the darkness with no lights permitted, I did not see where they were going, until a call by me revealed that they had taken a very steep and dangerous route which we were told to avoid. They would not come back and so I resigned myself that they would be okay, as they had been in some mighty awkward places in the *kloofs* where we lived and had survived. (I was only to find out about some of those exploits much later. In those days kids had much more freedom to explore).

It became increasingly cold and windy so, as a fog descended, I got Stephen and myself into a crevice in the rock face and got the stove out and soon had hot sweet coffee brewing. Suddenly, out of the mist a figure emerged. It was our team leader, Colonel George Duxbury, who had become lost on the climb. In no time we had extra coffee on the go, when another forlorn figure rolled up. Hot coffee soon revived his spirits as well. Soon the first signs of

dawn made its appearance and we pressed on to find we were less than 50 feet from the summit.

Soon the stragglers of our party were got together and, to my delight, my three adventurers were there. They had reached the top ahead of most, had found a sheltered ledge and were fast asleep when found. A roll call soon determined that all 41 who had set out had reached the summit.

I chided the kids about haring off the way they went and said how dangerous the route over ‘Sailor’s Knoll’ was, where Romilly had been hit 100 years earlier. They said they were with a member of our party who led the way. I asked them to point him out so that I could thank him. They could not identify him, but when I asked what he looked like they said he wore a long black coat and a cap. I’m a bit of a sceptic and maybe one of them had heard of the old legend and decided to pull a fast one on their old man, but Peter still insists that they were protected by this person.

As the sun started to peep out, Colonel Duxbury gathered us all together and went over the momentous events of 100 years earlier. I opened the Muscatel and we all had a swig until it was finished. I think Ken also had a bottle of fortification. Then we all set out on the descent by the “easy” route to the carpark 2000 feet below.

Some of the well known members of this group were: Fiona Barbour, George Duxbury, Ken Gillings, Ian Uys, Steve Watt.

O’Neill’s Cottage. This cottage was used as a make-shift hospital for the British soldiers wounded on Amajuba and some of their graves are in the grounds. The peace treaty was also signed here. (*See Section 2 for photo*).

Trish’s Note: So you are sniggering at his talk of ghosts? Rob Milne, (*Anecdotes of the Anglo-Boer War*, 2000, Covos Day Books), includes two stories of unexplained and spooky occurrences:

Depression [page 33] where a little dog “froze, growled menacingly and the hackles on his neck rose” near the last grave in the cemetery at Airlie Station, between Waterval Onder and Nelspruit, then “suddenly he turned and, with tail between his legs, ran away”. This was the grave of Major RL McGregor, of the 1st Batt, the Royal Scots, who – in a fit of depression – killed himself on 2nd April, 1901. It has been long rumoured that Waterval Onder cemetery is haunted. Midge stayed at the Inn there, with his family, when he was a youngster.

Ghosts [page 56] describes a “man dressed in an old-fashioned officer’s uniform and a bandage around his head” who exchanged greetings with a local man at the Helvetia battlefield. This was believed to be Major Cotton of the King’s Liverpool Regiment.

MAJUBA CENTENARY NIGHT MARCH

On the night 26/27 February 1981 forty-one persons retraced the route taken by Major-General Sir George Pomeroy-Colley, KCSI, CB, CMG and his force one hundred years earlier to the hour from his camp at Mount Prospect to the summit of Majuba Mountain. In order to maintain contact on the march, which took place in pitch darkness, each member was given a number. The faces of the members appear below against the numbers they bore in this historic night march.

1. Henry W.E. Briscoe	2. George B. Duxbury
3. Andrew Walker	4. Malcolm Meyerowitz
5. Peter B. Leggatt	6. Alan Bruce Dalgleish
7. Bert Simpkins	8. Sheila Eleanor Terry
9. Glen T.A. Terry	10. Jack B. Bester
11. Barbara Pretorius	12. Philip Pretorius
13. Steven A. Watt	14. Barrie Thomson
15. Richard Tomlinson	16. Ari Amoils
17. Hymie Amoils	18. Michael J.C. Marsh
19. Rob Jordan	20. Ian S. Uys
21. Paul W. Barker	22. Bill Carr
23. Ivor C. Little	24. Fiona M. Barbour
25. Peter M. Carter	26. Leonard C. Dann
27. Ann C. Carter	28. Stephen D.A. Carter
29. Matthew C. (Nidge) Carter	30. Kenneth G. Gillings
31. Richard H.D. Dey	32. James B.R. Findlay
33. Achilles Kallos	34. André F. Mulan
35. Hercules A.B. Jansen van Vuuren	36. Allan J. Kretzmar
37. Valentine J.D. Stephenson	38. Barry J. Stephenson
39. Barbara M. Neall	40. Victor John (Jack) Hickman
41. Martin A. Donaldson	

Bronkhorstspuit.

The legend of the soldiers' peaches.

20th December, 1880

The First Anglo-Boer War was more of a revolt than a war. On 20th December, 1880 a British column on its way to Pretoria under Colonel Anstruther, was ambushed by Frans Joubert and ordered to advance no farther or it would be regarded as an act of war against the Boer Republics. Anstruther refused, so the Boers opened fire. The Column suffered horrendous casualties. Out of 263 officers and men, 157 were struck down, of which 76 were to perish, including Anstruther.

In 1958 I was working in Nelspruit, but commuted to Johannesburg most weekends. One Sunday I decided to have a quick look for the old Bronkhorstspuit battlefield in the old Transvaal,

You may have read a moving story by Stuart Cloete called *The Soldiers' Peaches*, which describes how these men, who were marching from Lydenburg to Pretoria, had camped the previous night in a peach orchard and had filled their pockets with peaches to eat on the march.

When the soldiers' bodies were thrown into the mass graves, all their clothing went with them and peach trees soon began to emerge from their graves.

In 1958 I had done enough research to know where the old road had gone, several kilometres south of the present town and roughly where the ambush had been sprung. It did not take me long to find either three or four (I can't remember now) rectangular stone wall enclosures, which were the last resting place of these men, and to my amazement, the gnarled remains of peach trees were still growing out of two of these.

In 2000, with a group of friends who had gone with us to South Africa, I tried to find these again but although we found a small Garden of Remembrance on the eastern side of the main Delmas-Bronkhorstspuit road and a memorial on the other side of the road, there were no signs of the enclosures I remembered.

The 2nd Anglo-Boer War

Bakenlaagte / Brakenlaagte

The soldiers' boots

Lieutenant-Colonel George Benson's Column was one of the more effective British columns operating against the Boers during the guerilla phase of the Boer War. Benson was the Highland Brigade guide at Magersfontein and had taken part in the Relief of Kimberley. On 30th October 1901 at Bakenlaagte [barken/larkh/tuh], in the (then) Eastern Transvaal, a large force of Boers led by General Louis Botha dealt them a savage blow.

As a result, Benson's Column lost 15 officers and 74 men killed, plus 11 officers and 138 men wounded. The Scottish Horse lost 5 officers and 28 men killed (about 1/3 of whom were Australians). The Boers are believed to have lost 44 killed and 100 wounded. (Details from *Southern Cross Scots*, by JE Price)

In 1966 or 1967 on my first visit to Bakenlaagte (which was a difficult place to find), a woman from an adjoining farm came out to talk to me. She was a visitor from Holland and usually came to South Africa every second

year to visit her daughter who had married the farm's owner. She told me that she had been there the previous year when the graves were opened so that the dead could be re-interred in a central Garden of Remembrance.

She said that the thing that amazed her was that as the bodies were removed from the communal grave, all the men's boots were still intact and were placed on the top edge of the trench, but within a short period of time they gradually disintegrated into heaps of dust, caused by exposure to the atmosphere.

Site of original British graves



She told me that, when Benson's body was exhumed, there was a large bandage on the knee and no other apparent bandages and she expressed surprise that he had died from a knee wound. I was able to tell her that this was not so, but that he had been later fatally wounded by a bullet deflected from another man.

We know now that this was Trooper Grierson of the Scottish Horse, who was later mentioned in despatches for gallantry. Benson had given Grierson, a volunteer, a message to take to Colonel Wools-Sampson, telling him not to send ambulances, as the Boers might use the mules to drag the guns away. Grierson, taking cover behind an ant-hill, was hit in the foot and the bullet deflected into Benson's hip and passed right through his body.

Colonel Benson was badly wounded in the knee, but refused to be carried away and was now crawling around from point to point in the firing line, encouraging all around him with a splendid example of coolness and courage. (*The Times History*).

Wounded twice more, he later died of his wounds.



Benson, Colonel George

Primrose Cemetery (1997)

In memory of Colonel George Elliott Benson RA, of Allerwash, Northumberland, who died of wounds received in action while commanding at Brakenlaagte on 30th October 1901.

Benson's Assistant Staff Officer, young Eyre Lloyd of the Coldstream Guards, had been occupied in laying out the camp, but divining the predicament of the rear-guard, had determined to join his Colonel. Technically it was a departure from duty, but one that it was hard to censure. At a moment when it was death to appear on the skyline, he galloped to the rear of the guns, dismounted, and threw his reins to a trooper. Trooper and horse fell dead as he did so. Scarcely appearing to notice what had happened, he sauntered quietly towards Benson, upright, unarmed, the target of a score of Boer rifles, and fell, mortally wounded, within a few paces of his chief. Witnesses said, "He was the bravest young officer that they had ever seen". (*The Times History*)



Lloyd, Captain Eyre

Primrose Cemetery, Johannesburg. (Photo 1997)

*In loving memory of their only child Eyre Lloyd,
Captain 2nd Coldstream Guards,
who died of wounds 31st October 1901, aged 30.
This cross is erected by Major General Lloyd of
Beechmount, Co. Limerick, and Mary his wife.*

*Captain Lloyd was assistant Staff Officer to Colonel Benson.
He left a safe but relatively unimportant duty in camp and lost his life in
a voluntary attempt to reach his wounded chief at the point of danger,
persevering though wounded on the way.*

“Be faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life”

In a letter published in *The Argus*, 20th January, 1901, Corporal AJ Ogilvy, formerly of the 2nd Contingent VMR, and then of the 2nd Regiment, Scottish Horse, reported:

... nearly 500 dead and wounded British and Boer lay out that night... I am sorry to say that the Boers stripped the wounded as well as the dead, leaving some of them with nothing but shirts and socks on. Many died from exposure, many more lived in agony til the morning and died as soon as they were found. The Boers stripped the bodies stark naked, and the most horrible sight of all was the dead bodies glistening in the morning sun.

Bothaville

The Kings Park Gun (Western Australia)



I first explored Doornkraal or Klipkraal, as it was then known, in 1982, after I saw the gun in Kings Park, Perth, when on a visit there before I left South Africa. The farm was owned by Hercules Odendaal who invited me to stay the night and we spent much time wandering around the property, with him relating tales he had heard from his mother, as the family had owned it since 1900. In this photo Hercules is picking up a Mauser cartridge case in the walled garden so hotly defended by the Boers at Bothaville [borta/vill] and against which the British and West Australians made their victorious bayonet charge. 6.11 1900. Sadly Hercules died fairly young from heart problems.

Note from Trish: It was here at the farmhouse (in 1997) that I had suspected Tick Bite Fever, but which was more likely a spider bite, and our kind Afrikaner hostess (whom we had only just met) took me to her doctor and offered to care for me as long as was needed. However we decide to return to Johannesburg, where I recovered after a few days.



What happened at Bothaville

As this is not a well-known action, I have included this description I wrote in the 80s.

During the morning of the 6th of November 1900, in an all but forgotten battle, the gallantry of an under-strength company of West Australian Mounted Infantry, led by a spirited lieutenant from Geraldton, nearly pulled off a crushing victory in the Boer War in South Africa, had they had the full support and vision of their British commanding officer.

A rapid follow-up of their successful bayonet charge could have brought about the collapse of the Boer forces in the Orange Free State and ended the year-old war, which would now drag bitterly and bloodily on for more than another year and a half.

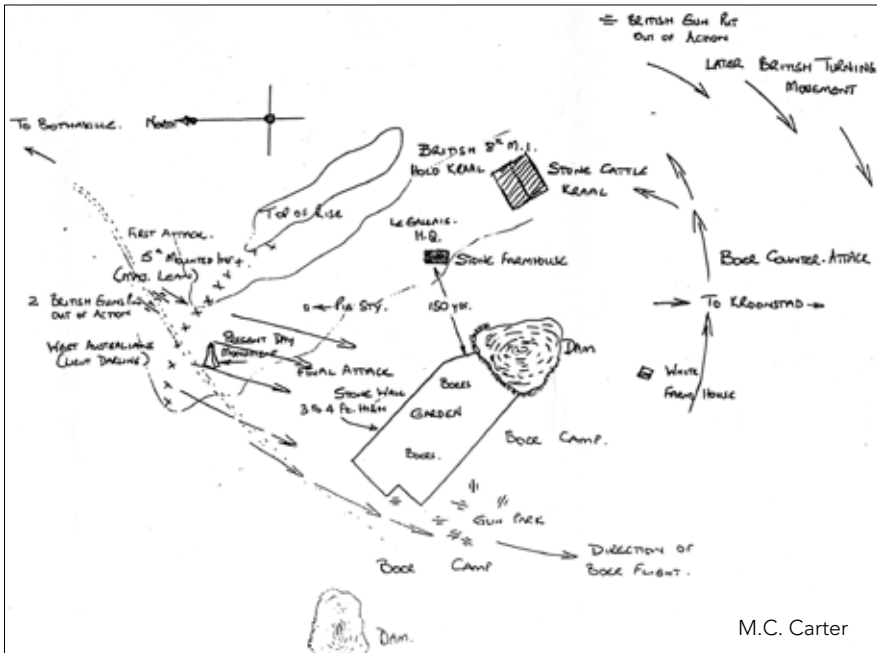
While on a visit to Perth in 1982, I spotted the Krupp 75mm gun in Kings Park in front of the impressive Boer War monument, and read on the plate that it was captured at Bothaville in South Africa. At the first opportunity when I returned home to South Africa, I visited the site where this engagement took place, and to my amazement found that little had changed since that sharp sanguine encounter all those years ago.

The events leading up to the action at Bothsville started a good two weeks earlier. A large Boer commando, under the wily General Christiaan de Wet had besieged a British column under Major General Barton at a small station called Frederickstad in the South Western Transvaal. After 4 days de Wet broke off the action, but not before causing a lot of consternation for Lord Roberts, the British Commander-in Chief in South Africa,

Roberts ordered Major General Sir Charles Knox to Barton's aid, with his augmented colonial division containing many Australians.

Knox chased the elusive de Wet to and fro for the next 10 days, making brief contact only once, at Rensburg's Drift, until on the 5th November a column led by the brilliant Colonel Philip Le Gallais, picked up the trail of de Wet's guns approaching the ruined town of Bothaville.

At the time Le Gallais was the brightest and best mounted infantry officer in the British Army. His tactics in dealing with the fleet and mobile enemy commandos, were rapidly being perfected by adapting the outdated British systems to those of the Boers. Using stealth and speed he kept up the pursuit in darkness instead of camping for the night. His column stopped only for short rests to refresh men and horses. The result was that the leading units under Major Kenneth Lean, with only 67 men, caught the outlying Boer sentry picket fast asleep and took them without a shot. Soon after, first light



found de Wet's camp asleep and still, as they topped some high ground only 300 yards away.

Leaping from their horses they pumped a storm of .303 rifle fire into the startled camp. Panic gripped the Boers, who scattered from their slumber, grabbing horses at random in their headlong dash to escape.

At first the small size of Lean's detachment was not realized. In minutes, two 15 pounder field guns of "U" battery were on the scene and supported Lean, firing into the camp over open sights, but before many more British troops got up, a lot of Boers started recovering from their first shock and turned back to the battle.

In addition many whose horses had bolted grabbed their rifles and about 130, taking cover behind a long stone wall of a vegetable garden, fought back.

Halfway between Lean and this stone-walled garden stood a stone pig-stye in which three Boers had been sleeping, started a spirited resistance causing a lot of damage for a long time, before finally a shell ended their charmed lives and destroyed their position.

Colonel Le Gallais was early on the scene and went straight to the stone farm house which stood between Lean on the right and a large stone cattle kraal behind and to its left, already occupied by a handful of men under Le Gallais, quickly perceived that many Boers, now recovered from their

initial shock, were walking around to his left to get behind him, ordered Major Hickie, his staff officer, to race back to the heliograph and send a message to all men, including non-combatants with the baggage wagon, to rush up to reinforce his precarious position. He then went into the small solid stone house with other officers to set up his command post. A fatal decision!

By now the massive volume of fire with bullets and shells flying in all directions, had terrified two small children and their African maid trapped in the small farm-house. Le Gallais quickly pushed them under a stone wash tub in the kitchen, the only shelter he could see.

The house however had a fatal design feature. The front and back doors lined up through a short corridor and from the corner of the stone walled garden 150 yards away a view right through the house was clearly visible.

To Boer sharp shooters this was a welcome gift. Any movement inside the house was silhouetted clearly. Very soon Le Gallais received a horrendous chest wound, and seven others were killed and wounded, including Major Ross, with half his jaw shot away, and Captain Williams killed.

What made it worse, several men were hit by exploding bullets. Le Gallais died a few hours later and with him perished much British initiative in handling the rapidly expanding Boer guerilla activity.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Herbert Darling and his 80 West Australian men were on another leg of the search for de Wet when news of the conflict reached them and with all haste made for the battle, hoping they would get there in time.

By now Major Hickie's message was bearing fruit, and rapidly the British position was being reinforced.

The sight of the Boer guns parked so close, made them press the attack with increasing vigour. The Boers on the left were forced back. A direct hit destroyed the cursed pig-stye and its snipers, and the defenders behind the stone wall were getting a pasting and their comrades were now starting to desert them.

Colonel de Lisle, now on the spot and taking over from the dying Le Gallais, realised the time for a decisive move was imminent.

Newly arrived was Lieutenant Darling and his West Australians, having galloped nearly 10 miles to get to the battle. They had flung themselves down on the right of Major Lean's remnants.

They fixed bayonets and with Lean's remaining men charged, with a yell, down on the Boers behind the wall and on into the laager and gun park. The

sight of cold steel was enough for the stunned Boers who had fought so well, and they put their hands and white flag up and surrendered.

It was a great victory for the British side. De Wet lost all his artillery and wagons, plus many men, casualties and prisoners. Others would probably have bagged both him and old President Steyn as well, but it was too much for General Knox.

Le Gallais was dead, and so Knox, content with what had been achieved, let de Wet get away – a tragic blunder of long-reaching proportions.

Today one of these guns now stands as a prize in Kings Park as a reminder of the gallant charge by those West Australian volunteers that summer day so far away.

Le Gallais, Colonel Philip Walter Jules.

Bothaville cemetery, Free State. (1984)

“Without doubt, one of the bravest English officers I have ever met.”

General de Wet

*In loving memory of Colonel Philip
Walter Jules Le Gallais,
commanding mounted troops of
General Sir Archibald Hunter's force,
who was killed in action on
the 6th November 1900
at Bothaville, ORC.
Born 17th August 1861.*

[ORC is Orange River Colony]

Le Gallais was born in Jersey. He had served with distinction in the Soudan as a cavalry officer.



Elands River Siege

The flag

In April 1997 when Trish and I were in Zimbabwe visiting relatives in Harare, (was Salisbury), we went to Salisbury Cathedral to look for the flag that had been flying during the Siege at Elands River and we believed had been ‘pinched’ by a Rhodesian soldier from an Australian, who had souvenired it after the Siege ended. It was no longer in the Cathedral, but we were told that it had been given to the National Archives. The following reference to this flag was printed in an article, on page 341 in *Life* dated 15.10.1907 headed *The Fight at Elands River* by Major DJ Ham. We found it in the *The Kopje* No 18.

This flag which we kept flying, though it was repeatedly struck down by shells, will be seen in the photo sent (not included), to be riddled with bullets, and one of its corners taken off. It is generally supposed that I have possession of this flag. I did have it, but it was stolen from me when on trek.

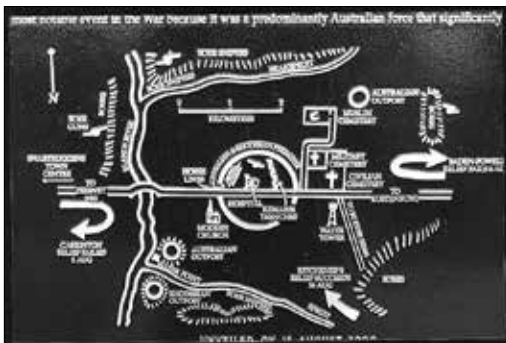
At the Archives the African Staff had no knowledge of it, could not find it. We asked to see the Director but were told to return later. When we met the young deputy Director and explained our quest he decided to search for it himself and 10 minutes later came back with a blue paper package, clearly labelled. This we spread out on the board-room table. The flag was in a netting bag and was obviously very fragile and falling to pieces. We could not photograph it, so it was folded away again, we thanked him profusely and left.

When we returned to Australia we sought the assistance of the Department of Veterans Affairs to try to have the flag given to Australia, because we thought it would be restored or at least preserved better here. Unfortunately

the answer was “NO!”.

The pity is that the Authorities there did not even know that they possessed it and had no inkling of its significance, but weren’t prepared to part with it.

Ross Bastiaan’s plaque of the siege position.



Frere, near Colenso KZN.

A closer look.

*Here lieth the remains of those who were
killed in the armoured train
on Nov 15th 1899.*

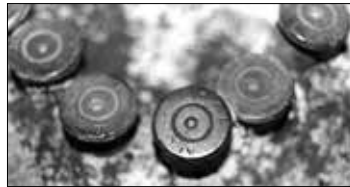
*Erected by the Border Reg.
in memory of our comrades who fell
on Nov 15th.*

This grave is near the site of the ambush of the armoured train from which a young Winston Churchill, then a war correspondent, was captured. He later escaped from prison in Pretoria.

I have visited this site several times over the years, as far back as 1965, and taken weapon collectors with me and all agree that among the cartridges used to spell out the memorial inscription are several .303 Mark IV or dum-dums. This is irrefutable evidence that the Boers were correct in their claims that the British used dum-dum bullets, which the British denied.

A “dum-dum” bullet (*pictured above*) has a hollow point, so that it explodes on impact causing an horrific wound. These were developed and supplied by the Dum-Dum Arsenal in India. They were outlawed for use in ‘civilised’ warfare.

The exploding Mauser cartridges used by the Boers were different. The bullet’s outer casing was cut through lengthwise from the point, so that on impact the case collapsed and the lead core mushroomed. There were four of these cuts. These bullets were used for hunting and caused a horrendous wound. Many Boers were known to mix these with ordinary bullets in their bandoliers.



Holkrans Massacre.

A lucky escape.



While the Peace negotiations were going on at Vereeniging in May 1902, the opposing forces in the field observed a truce and a Boer commando in the Vryheid area had laagered at Holkrans to the north of Vryheid. The Zulu, who had been seething at the treatment the many Boer units had inflicted on them throughout the war, now saw their chance for revenge. Under cover of darkness a large impi approached the laager and attacked with complete surprise. Few Boers survived.

In 1970 I heard that there was still a survivor of the Holkrans Massacre living near Vryheid (Frayhate), so I went to see him. His name was Francis Pratt and he had been in the field since the war started. When I interviewed him he was then in his 80s. He described to me how he got away that night.

The Boers had formed a laager with their wagons and, as it was a cold winter night, most had gone to sleep close to the big fire they had made in the centre of the wagon ring. He had preferred to settle under a wagon. He was awakened by the swishing of many legs passing through the grass beside his wagon. He was not seen because the light from the fire lit up the sleeping men around it. They had no chance.

Meanwhile, Francis slipped away. He got to another laager a mile or so down the valley guarding women and children. The Zulus did not attack them.

I did not have my tape recorder with me as it was too bulky to keep with me when I had no plan to use it. I had intended to return and record Mr Pratt's story, but Francis died before it could be done.

Itala.

Monument to valour.

25 September 1901



My interest in Itala was sparked when, as a 15-year-old, I saw a copy of R. Caton Woodville's painting of *The Gallant Bugler of Fort Itala*. Nearly 18 years later I started searching for this battlefield whenever my work took me to Zululand. One Friday afternoon, on my way home from Vryheid, I noticed a hill with a monument on the top. I saw a Zulu girl,



wearing nurse's uniform, on the back of a motor-bike, so I stopped them and asked them if this was Itala and she said, "Come and speak to my grandfather". I followed their motor bike up a rutted track to where they stopped close to a weed-filled wire enclosure which I found contained a handful of rusted crosses of British Soldiers. The nurse then took me to meet her grandfather, a charming old Zulu who lived in a corrugated iron house. And so I met Isaiah Nsiband. Isaiah spoke quaint 19th century English because he had been taken to England when young and educated there. As a boy he had been a goat herd when the British soldiers came to Itala, when Isaiah was 10 or 11. As news about the impending battle reached him, his father took his children to hide in a cave for safety. His father's house was the first built in Zululand in corrugated iron and when I met him there were still bullet holes in the roof which had been covered over with corrugated iron sheets to keep the rain out.

Isaiah took me to see this Bluegum tree which had grown around a .303 rifle buried when the Boer attack seemed likely to succeed, and over the years had pulled it out of the ground. It no longer had a bolt or magazine and the wood work had long gone. I also went to look at the graves on the lower level, that were kept in a reasonable condition.

Over the years I have been back to Itala many times. Once, my younger brother Gavin and I climbed to the top. The panel on the memorial there was missing, but this was later copied and replaced. Another time I went with "SB" Bourquin, a noted Bantu Administrator who spoke Zulu very well.

In 1997 we were very happy to find that the graves were being kept spotless by the local Zulu people. We took photos of the group of curious children who were fascinated by seeing themselves on our video camera (so many times



bigger than the one we use today). We sent enough copies of the photo for each child to have one.

Imagine our delight when Trish and I received an invitation to be guests of honour at the Centenary Commemoration of these two significant Boer War actions. As we now lived in Perth, Western Australia some planning was needed, but once organised we were on our way.

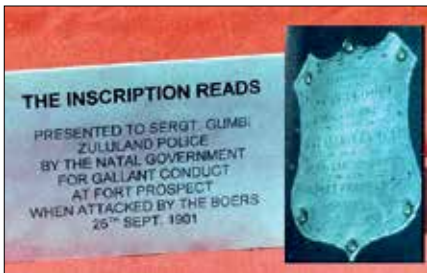
What we received far exceeded anything we could have hoped for. We enjoyed a very special welcome at Gelykwater where the initial ceremonies were held, wonderful accommodation at the spectacular mountain top Ntonjoni Lodge, exuberant Zulu dancing and entertainment at Dingaanstad, saw old friends and met so many well-

known people we would never otherwise know, some who had also come from overseas.

This time we met Isaiah's son, Wilberforce. We had sent copies of the photos to Wilberforce, and later received a beautifully hand-written thank you letter.

Ceremonies were held at Itala, Fort Prospect and Gelykwater. We also attended one at Fort Nongqayi in Eshowe, where we met descendants of Sergeant Gumbi of the Zululand Native Police, who had been presented with an inscribed rifle for his role in the action at Fort Prospect.

On the small shield attached to a .303 rifle is the following:



Presented to Sergt Gumbi, Zululand Police, by the Natal Government for his gallant conduct at Fort Prospect when attacked by the Boers, 26th Sept. 1901.

Itala – Monument to Valour

As what happened at Itala is not well known, here is my account as I wrote it in 1967. It is rather long but gives a background to events and the decisions made.

Twice in less than 23 years Natal was saved from invasion by the gallant stands made by two small, vastly outnumbered detachments of British soldiers. The first was at Rorke's Drift in 1879, the second at Itala in 1901.

Early in September that year, Louis Botha, Commandant General of the Boer Republican Forces, started gathering together the biggest raiding commando of the guerilla war. With the arrival of the spring rains he made ready to move south.

His commando of picked, tough fighting men had come from Bethal and South Middelburg, from Ermelo, Carolina and Standerton, numbering almost a thousand. Across a cold, rain-swept veldt they silently set out from Blaaukop, near Ermelo in the Eastern Transvaal, to begin the 2nd Boer invasion of the Colony of Natal.

The cold rivulets of water ran off their hats and over hunched shoulders. It soaked into ragged and patched jackets and dripped off their noses and sodden beards. Their laps formed cold pools in their saddles, and backsides, frozen and wet, chaffed to the constant roll of the horses.

Despite the weather there was an air of excitement among this motley throng, for the long winter months of planning and preparation were past. At last they were on the move. The essential pasture for their horses was now assured and they became a powerful, far-ranging fighting force.

Louis Botha, with his brother Chris at his side, headed the biggest raiding commando in this Spring revival of Boer activity. They rode South-East through Piet Retief, avoiding the few British outposts and columns along their route, all the time gathering more men. Commandos from Wakkerstroom, Piet Retief, Utrecht and Vryheid, eventually swelled their ranks to over 2,000 mounted men.

Botha's plan was to invade Northern Natal, disrupting British control to the limit, then cut south to enter the Cape Colony and ultimately to join forces with Smuts, who had already succeeded in getting into the Cape with his small force. An ambitious, but not impossible plan.

British columns sent to catch him, bogged down in the quagmires that passed for roads. Botha, with no wheeled transport, was much better off. Using pack animals for supplies, he averaged ten miles a day with ease, the British barely three.

By September 17th he had reached the Blood River Poort, also known as Spieshoek, about 15 miles (25km) west of Vryheid, there to await the Vryheid Commando under his brother-in-law, Cherry Emmett.

British Intelligence reports on Botha's movements were sketchy. At Dundee Captain Hubert Gough, with orders for a routine patrol to intercept and escort a convoy of empty British wagons from Vryheid, only had information several days old. To his knowledge Botha was at least 20 miles away (about 35km).

Gough's Mounted Infantry, totalling 585 men with the Johannesburg Mounted Rifles under Lieutenant-Colonel HK (Bimbash) Stewart, a pretty rough crowd of irregulars, reached De Jager's Drift on the Buffalo River, on the 16th. Next day, grey, wet and miserable, his advance patrol reported a group of about 300 Boers about five miles beyond the Blood River at Scheepersnek.

By 2pm Gough was in a position to attack. The Boers meantime, moving north to the Blood River Poort, could with skill, be approached on a converging path by the British while they, in turn, remained concealed behind the long, low north ridge of the Rooikoppies.

Leaving Stewart and the JMI to guard his transport, Gough impetuously rode forward, certain of his surprise. The Boers, oblivious of their peril, had off-saddled at the foot of the hills. Gough had cornered them.

To complete his attack he now had to cover a mile of open ground. This the British did at the gallop, fanning out with the two field guns bringing up the rear.

The first volley seemed to panic the unsuspecting Boers, when to Gough's horror, the main bulk of Botha's force burst out of the Poort. A poort is a defile or narrow, deep passage through the hills

Crossing his front at full gallop, they wheeled to their right, enveloping and rolling up Gough's flanks against the mountain. Others, climbing over the ledges of the western hill, poured a deadly plunging fire on the hapless mounted infantry. In 10 minutes it was all over. 44 killed and wounded, and 241 prisoners paid the price of Gough's impetuosity.

Stewart, following some miles behind, was lucky to save the transport and get back to de Jagers Drift intact.

Botha's men were jubilant. The way south was now clear. They re-equipped themselves with British rifles, ammunition, horses, boots and trousers, and they released their prisoners next day to find their way to Vryheid, bare and sore-footed and bare-bottomed.



Grave sites on Itala



Itala old kraal ruins and Jean Carter, 1966

Meanwhile the foul weather continued to hamper British Columns; and swollen rivers, Botha. His horses were in poor condition and the sodden ground made heavy going. Unable to force the pace, British garrisons were able to thwart his attempts to cross the Buffalo River into Natal at both Vant's Drift and Rorke's Drift.

Moving further and further south in what was then still the Transvaal, Botha reached Babanango Kop on the 4th. From here his path was guarded by two small fortified posts at Itala and Fort Prospect. Beyond these lay Melmoth, Eshowe and the Indian Ocean. The necessity to take these two posts is highly debatable, as they could easily have been by-passed. For Botha to protect his communications was a fallacy as he had none. Stores he needed and fresh horses too, but other than this they probably seemed easy prey for another prestige victory.

By now the weather had cleared. From his lookout on the top of Babanango, the rolling green hills of Zululand stretched far to the horizon. To his left Dingaan's kraal could be seen in the distance, where Piet Retief and his party had been slain 60 odd years before. To his right he could clearly see Isandlwana, "the little hand", where nearly 1500 British troops, 900 of them white, had been massacred by Cetshwayo's impi 22 years earlier. In front lay Itala, a commanding height, 8 miles to the south.

Through his binoculars he could see the British camp at the base. Further to the left, atop a smooth green dome of a hill, he could make out Fort Prospect. The distance between these two, 14 miles. He could easily slip through.

But Botha needed time to revive his horses, and another victory like Blood River Poort would slow the British columns bearing in on him. His spies reported the two outposts weak and undermanned and that they could fall to him without difficulty, so he made ready to attack.

Since the Battle at Allemansnek 15 months earlier, Natal had been out of the conflict zone. For the people of this British Colony, the war was far away. They were now more concerned with their local elections than activity against stubborn, unconquerable commandos. They could hardly have been less interested in Louis Botha's Commando and the peril facing them.

Six months earlier a detachment from the 5th Mounted Infantry Division had been posted to Nkandla as a frontier guard. They also provided the garrison at Fort Prospect, a strong point half way to Melmoth, right on the border road. Their sum total was about 400 men.

It was a backwater from the war. Life was pleasant and easy for the troops who made their mark with the local farmers and their families. Their

Commanding Officer was an Irishman, Major AJ Chapman of the Dublin Fusiliers. Chapman was a cleancut professional soldier. At 38 he was Botha's junior by 3 months. Campaign hardened like his men, with nearly 2 years of arduous toughening in the mould of veldt warfare behind them. Chapman was astute, awake and extremely capable, as he had already proven in his successful defence of Utrecht, during December 1900.

Early in September he decided to move his Nkandla position to a new post at the foot of Itala, almost at the apex of the Transvaal's southern enclave.

The treeless summit of Itala, over 4,800 feet high, slopes down to its base in the east almost 1,400 feet below, along a ridge over a mile in length. This ridge terminates in a narrow, steep spur at the bottom, concealing the outpost site below from the summit. Possession of this spur was the key to the British position. From a cursory examination it appeared a weak position, but in fact not so.

On the 23rd September news first reached Chapman indicating that he was in the path of Botha's southern thrust, and from then on his able corp of scouts, under Mr Gordon Collins, kept him acquainted with the ever increasing danger he was in. He must fight if attacked, but only great skill and courage could save his small garrison of 220 strong, if they were not to go the way of Gough. Fort Prospect, under Captain Rowley of the Dorset Regiment, had 148 men, manning a strong barbed wire enclosed position. Rowley had already distinguished himself when he led the victorious charge at Allemansnek.

On the morning of 25th, Chapman drew 80 men from Prospect to bolster the defences at Itala, for his scouts informed him to expect an attack that night.

The men worked feverishly with spades and picks digging trenches about 4½ feet deep, skilfully laid in the trees at the wooded outpost site. Each trench to cover those adjacent with flank fire. On the north side a natural rock wall put the defenders on a platform overlooking all approaching ground. The Achilles heel of the position, the rock spur above the camp was sangered (stone wall) right across, and a machine gun set up to fire up towards Itala. Two 15-pounder field guns firing shrapnel were also positioned below the spur.

At dusk Chapman despatched Lieutenants Lefroy and Kane to the summit with 80 men. Chapman, however, was not going to fall into the trap of defending a mountain top, as the British had done so tragically before. Lefroy's party was to be merely a warming reception. Furthermore, in the dusk their move had gone unnoticed from Babanango Kop.

At the same time, Botha despatched 1800 of his men, keeping back only about 200. These divided into 3 groups. 600 under Chris Botha made for the summit of Itala; 800 under Opperman, Potgieter and Scholtz, by a different route to encircle the base camp and 400 under Emmett and Grobbelaar to attack Fort Prospect.

Full moon was two nights away and the clear night was lit from dusk until nearly dawn.

Crouching cold and stiff among the rocks at the summit, the small British detachment watched and silently waited. Towards midnight the approaching sounds of the Boers could be heard. Soon a large body of men, about 600 in all, could be clearly seen approaching in the moonlight.

At 100 yards the first British volley crashed out. Though caught, stunned and shattered they recovered quickly. Scurrying forward from rock to rock, Chris Botha's men soon worked their way in and around their adversaries. Fighting was hard and bloody and soon weight of numbers began to tell. The small British force was far too small to contain the attack. Kane died shouting "No surrender" and with him fell others including Lefroy, shot through the stomach, arm, leg and chin.

In half an hour the summit was in Boer hands. Those British who still survived uncaptured retreated down the way they had ascended, fighting back all the way until they were safe behind the sangared spur. They numbered a pathetic 14.

In the meantime, the outpost had been surrounded and very heavy rifle fire was poured in from all sides. The Boers charged right up to the trenches, firing as they ran, only to be driven back at bayonet point. These veteran British troops had not experienced such ferocious attacking on such a scale at any time throughout the war. The Boers seemed possessed of a heroic madness, which but for the remarkably stubborn defence would have carried all before it, but the rifle fire from the trenches was like a curtain of lead beating down on everything in its path.

The full fury of the first attack lasted five hours, the defences of the outpost being strained to its limit. Casualties on both sides were high. But Chapman could least afford them, for he had already lost 66 of the 80 men in his summit reception party – over 20% of the garrison.

By first light, around 6am, all firing had ceased and the attack seemed to have spent itself. Dr Fielding, the British Medical Officer, decided he must go to the summit to attend the wounded there. He, an orderly and two bearers left the sangar on the spur with a truce flag, but to his surprise, as

he reached a wide hollow 600 yards up the ridge, he found a large body of Boers about to resume the attack. Fielding was immediately taken prisoner, but released and allowed to go as soon as Commandant Opperman appeared. Fielding's work that day saved many lives on both sides.

Almost immediately the attack was resumed more violently than before. The gunners, who had gallantly manned the two 15-pounders during the night, were too exposed now and were shot down. The guns ceased firing. The machine gun on the spur became hopelessly jammed and the battle now resolved to Lee-Metford against Lee-Metford, for the Boers were by now nearly all equipped with captured rifles. The burghers, with the edge on marksmanship, were technically at an advantage.

A tornado of lead enveloped the post. Bullets screamed and howled, the ground rapidly became covered with a shower of broken branches and chopped leaves; the screams and groans of stricken men and the pathetic horses filled the air; dust and earth flew in all directions and the constant ear-shattering crash of hundreds of rifles made a sound to match all the thunder-bolts of Hell, as the Boers tried to batter the defences to pieces with rifle fire. No cover could withstand this inferno and men fell thick and fast, yet each attack still melted away under the galling return cross-fire of the defenders.

The position was reaching a stalemate and a battle of attrition developed. By now, Louis Botha, realising the importance of the sangared spur, ordered it taken at all costs. This was an almost impossible task, for 600 yards of absolutely coverless ground had to be covered. The troops behind the sangars were no mean shots themselves and blew each attack to pieces before it got far.

Meanwhile ammunition was getting very scarce on the spur and every effort to get boxes of cartridges up by man or mule failed, all being shot down from behind on that exposed suicidal face.

In desperation Chapman called for volunteers. Several surviving artillery men came forward. The first two away were both shot down on the fire-swept slope. Dashing out, heedless of danger, went Driver FG Bradley and returned with both wounded men, then gathering an ammunition box he forced his way up the ridge to the spur. This he repeated, bearing a charmed life. For this act he was later awarded the Victoria Cross. (Bradley settled in South Africa after the war and served as a major in the Witwatersrand Rifles in the 1914-1918 War).

By late afternoon, after 17 hours of heavy, unrelenting attack, both sides were exhausted. Chapman's force had taken a fearful toll of the attacking commando, but they had suffered 81 killed and wounded and lost a further



View of Itala from opposite hill.

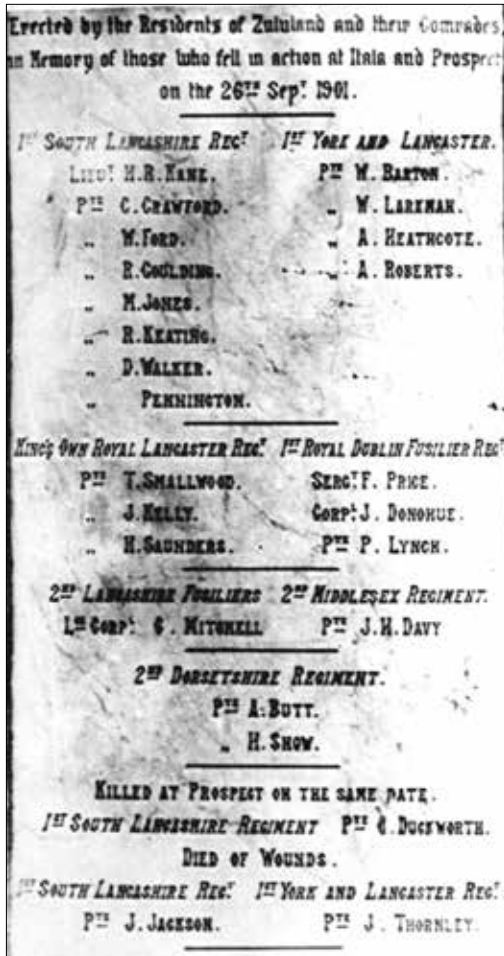


My young daughter Ann stands next to the obelisk.

40 as prisoners. This was nearly half his total strength. The troops, bleary-eyed, with hands burned, shoulders raw and scorched faces, their ammunition nearly exhausted, could hardly be expected to withstand another concerted attack. They were ready, but hardly able.

Chapman himself, shot through the right leg, waited and listened as the Boer fire slackened and died away. After an hour he sent out scouts who returned with the heartening news that Botha's men were drawing off.

Gathering his stores onto wagons, Chapman decided to fall back onto Nkandla. Leaving a small, unarmed party to assist with the wounded, he pulled out at 9pm and, completely exhausted, they limped into Nkandla at 4am on the 27th. Soon after this Dr. Fielding returned to the camp and took charge.



For Emmett and Grobelaar their attack on Fort Prospect had been even less successful

Shrouded in mist, Prospect was forewarned by the firing coming from Itala. At 4.30am a blast of rifle fire shattered the night air as an outpost discovered a large party of Boers attempting to cut the barbed wire into the perimeter. Shooting was fast and furious for a while and soon the Boers drew off. Although Captain Rowley had only 80 men, Fort Prospect was basically very strong, with stone redoubts, cleverly laid out trenches, a machine gun

Original engraved memorial stone panel on obelisk on summit of Itala Mountain (facing page), missing for many years.

and the lot stoutly surrounded with barbed wire.

A second Boer attack before dawn was no more successful than the first, and thereafter they contented themselves with long range rifle fire until they decided to withdraw at about 4pm. The Boers lost about 60 men here, the British one killed and 9 wounded. Rowley himself had a lucky escape when a bullet pierced his helmet, grazing his forehead but inflicting no other damage.

At Itala the British losses were 22 killed and 59 wounded. In addition six native servants died and four were wounded.

The Boer losses, as to be expected, were much heavier. Early tallies stated that 332 bodies had been buried, but this was later corrected to 128. In addition 21 others were buried at the laager site at Gelykwater, making a total of 149 dead. These included two of Botha's best Commandants, Scholtz and Potgieter. Opperman, too, was wounded. At Prospect 40 burghers were buried. There were estimated to be about 280 wounded.

The tragedy of the horses at Itala cannot go unmentioned, for there, devoid of protection except for a small stone building into which a few were crammed, out of 300 horses 153 died, 40 were wounded and 30 disappeared. In addition, 82 draft mules were killed and four wounded.

At Itala the British artillery fired 53 shells and the troops 70,000 rounds of rifle ammunition. The true fury of this defence can be gauged by comparison with the Battle of Kambula in the Zulu War. This was the most expensive and key battle of that war and the 2,000 troops fired 66,400 rounds.

By nightfall on the 27th, Botha's advance had been checked. His frontal attack against fortified positions was a failure. His casualties severe and his ammunition stocks almost bare. His position could have been desperate, but he was not the type of man to lose heart. He not only had to preserve the freedom of his commando, but he had to get them back to the Transvaal. But as so often happens, Fortune favours the bold, for by a stroke of gross British negligence, the supply wagon convoy en route to Nkandla from Melmoth was allowed to fall into Botha's hands – 30 wagons with one white policeman and eight Zulus, six of whom were shot in the encounter. These supplies were manna to Botha, and setting off first eastwards and then to the north, he cleverly outwitted every single column and blockhouse line to get his men back to the Transvaal.

Such was the mettle of this man, that a month later he was able to launch his commandos into a brilliant victory against Benson's Column at Bakenlaagte, near Kinross.

As for Chapman, the Boer War offered him no more action. His gallant stand was rewarded by promotion. He retired from the Army in 1919 a Brigadier General and he died in 1950 aged 87.

Neither Itala nor Prospect have changed much in 66 years. The old iron-roofed house at Itala still has a few sheets with bullet holes in them and at Prospect several of the trenches are over 6 feet deep. The British graves are still marked, but are now dilapidated, but the Boer graves, long unmarked, have now disappeared, except for the few beautifully tended at Gelykwater farm. See the lonely grave of Private Duckworth in 'Graves' in later sections of this book.

On the summit of Itala stands an impressive stone monument, erected by the people of Eshowe and the local district as a token of gratitude to those heroic defenders who gave their lives in the defence of Natal at Itala and Fort Prospect.

Postscript: When Major Chapman called for volunteers to carry ammunition up the hill, under heavy cross-fire, Driver Lancashire and Gunner Bull volunteered, but Lancashire soon fell wounded. Bull and Driver Bradley ran forward and caught him up, then Gunner Rabb carried him to cover, while Bradley with the help of Gunner Boddy succeeded in getting the ammunition up the hill. Bradley was awarded the VC and the other four men the DCM.

Bradley, now a Captain, served in the Somme and was wounded at Delville Wood in 1916.

Reference: *Uys Victoria Crosses of the Anglo-Boer War*

Dr TE Fielding's Letters

Some notes from the letters home of Dr T.E. Fielding who tended the wounded at Itala.

These were kept in the Killie Campbell Library in Durban and in 1968 I was permitted to have them typed by my wife. I then had them bound in two volumes.

Nkandla
Zululand
7th October 1901

The first fight took place on the top of Itala. The first shot was fired at midnight. As the Boers streamed over the rise, our men opened a withering fire from the shelter of the rocks. Nothing daunted, the Boers charged and the men used their bayonets with deadly effect. They could not stand, though, and after we had lost 6 killed and 30 wounded, the remainder chucked it. A good few, some slightly wounded, managed to escape into the camp to help swell the defence there. This fight only lasted about three quarters of an hour. Poor Kane was shot through the stomach and spine. Lefroy, the other officer, was shot in the stomach, arm, leg and chin. Lefroy is now out of danger and doing well, but Kane died at about 7 o'clock in the morning.

Nkandla
21st Oct 1901

This man did very well. He was in command of a trench, and his last orders were, "Whatever happens you've got to stick it!" He did.

The Boers got to within five yards of his trench shouting, "Surrender!" The Sergeant replied, as he and his men shot them down like rabbits, "Come on! Chance it another yard!" Every time he shouted he fired, and all the front Boers were killed, and the remaining retired. Among the dead Boers left behind was a Commandant, a personal friend of Chris Botha's. The latter told me that he (the dead Commandant Sholtz) did not know what fear was. Another Sergeant on top of the hill where our men were overrun and captured, behaved very pluckily. When his officer was shot down he took command and continued to shout, "No surrender!" He was shot through the shoulder on the right side, so he took his bayonet in his left hand and

continued to cheer on his men. He was surrounded by Boers, and one, unwilling to kill such a brave man, hit him on the head with his clubbed rifle and knocked him senseless.

There were two officers on top of the hill and one was killed; the other fought to the last, and though wounded in three places his last act, before he fell with a fourth wound, was to blow out the brains of a commandant with his revolver. He would no doubt have been killed long before, but he had his servant and his groom, one on each side. These men were both devoted to him, and the three fought to the very end;- all three did not cease till they were badly wounded. The officer (Lefroy, Dublin Fusilliers) has received a DSO for his conduct on this occasion.

Poor Kane, who was killed, shouted, "No surrender!" till he fell unconscious. He was a brave lad indeed.

Nkandla

6th Nov 1901

It is all bunkum about the wounded being left without care, for all day I had half the wounded and nearly all the dangerously wounded close by me on Itala. There was no trench of any kind on top of the hill, and the fight there was hand to hand, so you can easily guess the worst wounds occurred there. As a matter of fact a few badly wounded were unfit to travel into Nkandla, where I sent the less seriously hurt, and it is a significant fact that none had to be left behind except men who were hit on Itala.

The Vet Surgeon and one of my trained orderlies bandaged those hit in camp, and I brought down the wounded from Itala to camp as soon as Chris Botha gave me permission. I at once turned my attention to these others as soon as I arrived, and I worked for some hours before Kennedy, the District Surgeon, turned up the day after the fight. He was very good and gave chloroform while I operated and put on splints etc, etc, but to say that he succoured the wounded is a bit too much.

The papers here published long reports about that I was seized and carried off to Babanango, and how all our wounded lay out in the scorching sun all day without water and skilled attendance. It riled me I can tell you.

Koster River

aka Rooipooierspruit [Roy/pweer/sprate]

The heroism of Emily Back

22nd July, 1900



We had read snippets in several books about a heroine named Emily Back, (also mis-spelt Rock, Backe and Beck) and were keen to find out more about her, as we had been to Koster River with Lionel Wulfsohn in 1997 and had photos of the graves of the Australians who died there and are buried in Rustenburg Cemetery.

With the help of a librarian friend, Petria de Vaal, we had located copies of the death certificates of Emily and her husband Thomas in Pretoria, which helped us to find her grandson, Tony Houston and his wife Rylvés. What wonderful, hospitable and generous friends they turned out to be! They not only allowed us to copy photos of Emily and her family and documents referring to her bravery, but also welcomed us into their home.

Emily's behaviour would be considered extraordinary even today, but Emily lived in the Victorian era, with all the restrictions it placed on women, especially a beautiful and unmarried one. In a letter home, and published in the local WA newspaper, Pvt W Cowley of the 1st WAMI commended Emily:

“If ever a mortal person deserved the VC, it was this brave, undaunted girl!”

Her links with JF Thomas (formerly Major), who defended “Breaker” Morant and Peter Handcock, and the bravery of Dr Ingoldby and Bugler Forbes enhanced the story, from an Australian point of view.

The accounts of Emily's acts at Koster River vary a little from one account to another, so we will include them all. Some copies are quite indistinct in parts, so I have transcribed them as best I could. (T Woodman).

Official Letters

Regimental Orders, by Major Vials, commanding 3rd Regiment Australian Bushmen, Maghatos Pass. 25.7.1900

The following extract from General Orders is published for information.

A detachment of 300 Bushmen was despatched under Lieutenant Colonel Airey, DSO on the night of the 21st instant, to clear the road between the Pass and Elands River. The enemy was found in superior numbers, strongly posted in position near Koster River, 8 miles west of Magato Pass. Our men endeavoured to drive them out, but were subjected to a very severe fire in unfavourable ground and were unable to effect anything for several hours. Reinforcements under Lt/Colonel Sir A Lushington, Bart, and Captain FitzClarence then arrived and succeeded in forcing the enemy to evacuate their position. Our casualties, though heavy, were not such as they would have been had the Bushmen tried to retreat instead of holding their ground, as they did until reinforcements or darkness came on.

It is with the greatest regret that the General Officer Commanding has to record the death in action of the gallant leader of B Squadron, 1st NSW Regiment, Captain Robertson. In him the Force loses a most valuable and reliable officer. [See grave in Section 2]

Trooper Cameron, NSW, and Sergeants Pruden and Goodman, and Troopers Walford and Oliver, Victorians, also fell in the discharge of their duty. The General Officer Commanding has, in the name of the Force, telegraphed a message of sympathy to the widowed bride of Captain Robertson and the relatives of those killed. [Note: The graves of these men are in the Rustenburg cemetery]

The following officers, NCOs and men were wounded:

Captain Ingoldby severely (the doctor had his wrist badly damaged), Capt. C Hill (slightly), Lieut. F Davis (slightly), No. 20 Trooper J Scott (dangerously), No. 432 L/Corp J McClure (dangerously), No. 440 Trooper JS McCartney (dangerously), No. 76 GA Glenn, No. 52 Trooper J Leeson, No. 6 Trooper WO Jones, No. 15 Trooper E Cox (slightly), No. 383 SB Booker, No. 540 J Peters (severely), No. 381 LT Butler, No. 431 J Kennedy (slightly), No. 455 WW Anderson, No. 500 Trooper W Bastian (slightly).

RJP Anderson, Lt and Adj.

3rd Australian Regt.

Note: This report is from Major Vials, who we believe was the “Lieutenant Vidal” mentioned in the *Cape Argus* newspaper clipping about Emily Back.

With the sincere compliments and good wishes for the future, JC Smuts.
State Attorney, SAR [Written across the top of the following notice]

Rustenburg, Thursday, 26th July, 1900.

The General Officer Commanding desires to record his warm appreciation of the courage and kindness of Miss Back who, during the fight at Koster River on 22nd inst, tended one of the wounded Victorians and got him into the house where she was staying. [Emily’s note: nearby, not where I was staying]

She then rode, under fire, to fetch the Medical Officer, but on finding that he too was wounded, volunteered to ride to the Camp for assistance.

On the following day Miss Back again rode away with dressings to where the wounded were collected in order to render help.

The bravery and resourcefulness which this lady showed on the occasion are deserving of the highest praise.

By order

ALJ Godley, Lt/Colonel

AAG Frontier Force

From Major-General RSS Baden-Powell, Commanding Frontier Force
To Chief of Staff, Army Headquarters, Pretoria.

Rustenburg

26th July 1900.

Sir,

I have the honour to request that you will bring to the notice of the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, the gallant conduct of Miss BACK during the engagement at KOSTER RIVER on July 22nd 1900. She is the step-daughter of a Mr Abingdon, who was a corporal in Methuen's Horse in 1885. A good deal of fighting took place near a house that she was in and, seeing a Victorian trooper lying wounded, she bandaged his wounds and took him in. She then borrowed a horse and saddle from another trooper and rode, under heavy fire, to Colonel Airey, DSO, Commanding the 1st (New South Wales) Regiment to ask for a doctor for him. On being told that the only doctor [Ingoldby, see end note] was wounded, she volunteered to ride on a man's saddle to Magato Pass to fetch another. A messenger had however already been sent, so she then occupied herself, under fire, with dressing and tending the wounded. She returned the following day with lint and bandages in case they should be required. Colonel Airey and other officers who saw her, speak most enthusiastically of her bravery and the help that she rendered.

I have the honour to be, sir, your obedient servant

RSS Baden Powell,

Major-General, Commanding Frontier Force

Then followed a series of notes as they tried to track Emily down.

I believe she came in yesterday with the refugees from Rustenburg. – (*Intd*)
WNC (Private Secretary)

Ascertain where she is staying. I should like to thank her personally. – (*Intd*)
R (Lord Roberts) 13.8.00

Provost Marshal,
Can you please let me know, for the information of the Commander-in-Chief, where Miss Back, one of the Rustenburg Refugees, is stopping in Pretoria? (*Sd*) *A Waterfield, Capt. AMS 13.8.00*

Com. Of Police
Can you give the Provost Marshal the required information? – (*Sd*) *AR Hoskins, Major 13.8.00*

No person bearing this name has reported herself here, nor is she known to other refugees. – (*Sd*) *WP Anderson, Capt. Asst. Comr. "D" Ward. 13.8.00*

Provost Marshal,
This lady cannot be traced. Please see above minute. She is not on our rolls.
– (*Sd*) *NJ Canker, Lieut, for C.of P 13.8.00*

Asst. Mily Secretary
Please see attached memorandum. The Police appear to be unable to trace the lady. – (*Sd*) *W Bonham, Capt. APM, AHQ 13.8.00*

From the Commandant, Rustenburg
To, The Adjutant General, Army Headquarters, Rustenburg,
27th May 1901

Sir,

I beg to enclose a letter from Major General RSS Baden-Powell, dated 28th July 1900, which came into my hands under the following circumstances.

As far as I can learn the letter was despatched from here either by post or by runner in July last, and fell into the hands of the Boers.

The letter was returned to Miss Back (the lady mentioned in the letter) by General Smuts, late Attorney General. Miss Back brought the letter to me, on her arrival in Rustenburg recently from Elands River.

Miss Back is proceeding to Pretoria by the first opportunity to rejoin her parents.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your obedient servant,

(sd) CE Borton, Lt/Colonel,
2 Norfolk Regt. (Commandant).

Clippings from the Cape Argus, 5th March 1902

MARCH 5, 1902.

OUR ILLUSTRATIONS.

A TRANSVAAL HEROINE.

Among our illustrations this week will be found the portrait of Miss Back, whose name will one day be a household word in the Northern Transvaal. On a day in July, 1900, a desperate fight was raging in the Western Magaliesberg. In the early hours of the morning Colonel Airey left camp with three hundred of the Queensland Bushmen, his object being to dislodge the Boers from a position commanding the road between Eland's River and Magato Nek. Favoured by the darkness, Colonel Airey made a detour, which he calculated would turn the enemy's flank. Unfortunately, the circle proved too short, and Lieutenant Vidal, with fifteen men of the advance guard, actually passed unchallenged through the enemy's centre, and took up a position on an eminence behind them. Meanwhile, our main body became hotly engaged at close range, and were so hard pressed that at about 4.30 in the afternoon Colonel Airey decided to surrender, and hoisted the white flag, which the Boers ignored, as Lieutenant Vidal, now entrenched, refused to surrender. Much of the fighting took place near the farm Woodstock, and here an incident occurred which Baden-Powell describes in the following highly favourable recommendation to the Commander-in-Chief:

Rustenburg, July 26, 1900.

To the Chief of Staff, Pretoria.

Sir,—I have the honour to request that you will bring to the notice of the Field-Marshal, Commanding-in-Chief, the gallant conduct of Miss Back during the engagement at Koster River on July 22, 1900. She is the stepdaughter of a Mr. Abbingdon, farmer, who was a corporal in Methuen's Horse in 1885. A good deal of fighting took place near a house that she was in, and seeing a Victorian trooper lying wounded, she bandaged his wounds and took him in. She then borrowed a horse and saddle from another trooper, and rode under heavy fire to Colonel Airey, D.S.O., commanding 1st N.S.W. Regiment, to ask for a doctor for him. On being told that the only doctor was wounded, she volunteered to ride on a man's saddle to Magato Nek to fetch another. A messenger had, however, already been sent, so she then occupied herself under fire with dressing and tending the wounded. She returned again the following day with lint and bandages, in case they should be required.

Colonel Airey and other officers who saw her speak most enthusiastically of her bravery and the help she rendered.

On her way to Colonel Airey Miss Back was repeatedly shot at, and she had to walk part of the way under heavy fire, but her attention to the wounded was still more heroic, being carried out between the contending parties and in the direct line of fire. General Baden-Powell's letter shows that he considers such gallant conduct worthy of further recognition, but no such notice has been taken, although it would be hard to find a more suitable recipient for the Red Cross medal. It must be said of the Boers that later on, when they visited the farm where Miss Back was staying, although suspicious that she had carried despatches, they recognised her courage, and treated her with every consideration. The enclosed photo. is one taken recently of the brave girl by Mr. R. C. E. Nissen, of Pretoria.

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Among our illustrations this week will be found the portrait of Miss Back, whose name will one day be a household word in the Northern Transvaal. On a day in July, 1900, a desperate fight was raging in the Western Magaliesberg. In the early hours of the morning Colonel Airey left camp with 300 of the Queensland Bushmen, his object being to dislodge the Boers from a position commanding the road between Eland's River and Magato Nek. Favoured by

the darkness, Colonel Airey made a detour which he calculated would turn the enemy's flank. Unfortunately the circle proved too short and Lieutenant Vidal, with fifteen men of the advance guard, actually passed unchallenged through the enemy's centre, and took up a position on an eminence behind them. Meanwhile, our main body became hotly engaged at close range, and were so hard pressed that at about 4.30 in the afternoon Colonel Airey decided to surrender, and hoisted the white flag, which the Boers ignored, as Lieutenant Vidal, (Major Vialls) now entrenched, refused to surrender. Much of the fighting took place near the farm Woodstock, and here an incident occurred which Baden-Powell describes in the following highly favourable recommendation to the Commander-in-Chief:

This text is the same as that printed on page 79 from Baden-Powell, but adds the following:

On her way to Colonel Airey Miss Back was repeatedly shot at, and she had to walk part of the way under heavy fire, but her attention to the wounded was still more heroic, being carried out between the contending parties and in the direct line of fire. General Baden-Powell's letter shows that he considers such gallant conduct worthy of further recognition, but no such notice has been taken, although it would be hard to find a more suitable recipient for the Red Cross medal. It must be said of the Boers that later on, when they visited the farm where Miss Back was staying, although suspicious that she had carried despatches, they recognised her courage, and treated her with every consideration. The enclosed photo is one taken recently of the brave girl by Mr RCE Nissen of Pretoria.



Miss Back, a Transvaal Heroine, whose plucky ride is told on page 4.

Letters from Australian Troops

Letter to Mr Abingdon, Emily Back's stepfather, from **JF Thomas** qv. Army Post Office, Pretoria, 30.5.1902.

Dear Mr Abingdon,

Yours (re Miss Back) of 28th inst received. I think it is the best way to give her the money and then she can buy a memento herself or otherwise dispose of it. I think it would be a good idea to get a few Australians together and have just a small meeting (say) at the Zoological Gardens some afternoon and give her the purse then.

A short paragraph could be put in the local paper and quoted in Australian papers so that people there can see it. I will try to arrange for an early(?) date if you see no objection to my (?). I would like King and Leigh (?) of Canadian Scouts to be present and a few Bushmen.

I have part of the money at Cape Town and sent Lieutenant Hannan a Power of Attorney to get it, but he was ordered off to Australia suddenly on the 4th inst and wrote saying he had not been able to do anything. I am a sort of "prisoner of war" here, and can't get a permit to go to Cape Town where all my belongings are. I may go to Johannesburg early next week for two days, or possibly on Saturday, and on my return I will try to fix the matter up. I can't think of any better way of doing the matter under present circumstances and I think it better to have just a little ceremony.

Yours truly, J Francis Thomas.

Letter to Emily from **JF Thomas**.

Pretoria, 23rd June, 1902

Dear Emily Back,

On behalf of those members of "C" Squadron, New South Wales Citizens Bushmen, who were present at Koster River fight in July 1900, I have the pleasure of handing you a purse of sixteen sovereigns as a small – and only a very small – token of their recognition of your attention and bravery on behalf of the wounded men.

This money was handed to me, for the most part, by Captain Mullins of 'C' Squadron when I was leaving for South Africa last year, and he asked me to give it to Major Vials of Western Australia, who it was understood had some other donations in hand. It was only recently that I heard from Major Vials, who has written to say that he has received none.

Unfortunately the detachments that were at Koster River seem to have been scattered soon afterwards, and what with the constant trekking we do, I am afraid that nothing systematic was ever done in the matter.

The other squadron of Regiment –“B” Squadron–was also present at Koster River, and I am in communication with their Officer, and before long I hope to ask your acceptance of a token from that squadron also.

I feel sure that you will recognise the great difficulties these two squadrons have had in doing this in the way they would have liked. The Regiment was split into several detachments, or mixed up with troops from other Australian States, and so nothing systematic could be done.

I was not myself at Koster River, though I heard, at Eland's River, all about the former and the services you rendered our men there.

With kindest regards and best wishes for your future from the men of 'C' Squadron, NSWCB,

I am, dear Miss Back

Yours very truly

J Francis Thomas, late C Bushmen.

Letter to Emily from JF Thomas

PO Box 1088
Pretoria, 31.8.02

Dear Miss Back,

When I met you the other day I quite forgot to ask you something – in fact two things. First, for your photo (now please don't say “that's like his

impudence”), and second, for your own version and description of the Koster River episode. May I explain?

Last year when I went back to Australia, I was asked for a description of the work of the NSW Bushmen (the Regiment was raised by public subscription), but I said the Regt had been so split up that I could not possibly give anything like a detailed account then, but that some time I might. I may be returning to Australia ere long and I would like to take with me any data I can and perhaps if I have time a little pamphlet or an illustrated magazine article may result.

Now I know how modest you are about the Koster River affair, but really it is one of the few romantic incidents of the Bushmen’s career – that and Eland’s River. So I hope you won’t let modesty stand in the way. Of course we would write up the description, and it would appear as an account written by yourself. Perhaps Mr Abingdon would, if you preferred, write the incidents.

One of our men, some time ago, rather distinguished himself and I asked him for a description of the incident he was concerned in, but he said, “No, I would rather some one else told you”. I said, “But no-one else except yourself, and another man who can’t be found, can describe what happened, so if your modesty can’t be overcome, I can only give a half and half account”.

If I go in for anything of this sort, I like to do it fully and interestingly – and here’s a little exciting and romantic affair of which you were the centre and heroine! I believe you are the only woman who distinguished herself in this way during the war.

I enclose headings which may act as a guide if you accede to this request. I have a photo of the graves of our men at Eland’s River and some of the Pretoria Cemetery, another hoisting the British flag at Rustenburg and a few others.

Yours very truly, JF Thomas.

Letter from JF Thomas to Emily

PO Box 1088
Pretoria, 19.9.02

Thank you very much for your notes re Kusters. Of course there is a lot to fill in yet which, with your permission, I will do personally. You know (unless Mr Abingdon forgot to tell you) I have been trying to arrange for a suitable horse and photographer for your benefit and to [take you – *indecipherable*.]

The first photographer I went to was Mr Nissen who said that he already taken one of you dismounted and would let me have a copy, with your permission. I shall be glad to get one or two of these from him, but this can wait until I see you. What I want is one of you mounted as nearly like you were “toggled out” the day you rode to the rescue. I expect you were not as spic and span on that occasion as you may think essential, but the more realistic the better.

You see, we want to look on you as a sort of “Grace Darling” of the veldt. It’s true I’ve seen some presentations of the original Grace Darling in the middle of the storm as dry as a bone and dressed up as if for a Ball! Which isn’t quite as she was, I imagine.

The trouble has been to get a horse – but Mr Heath (one of the Bushmen who came to the relief) has one which he thinks will do and I will arrange with him and a photographer to come together at your own house (if you don’t object) and take you by storm (or camera, rather). But I will see you first. I know a photographer who is going through Koster River and I will ask him to take a few scenes there.

I expect your horse got killed at Eland’s River. I shall ask Captain K. to “ante up” that side saddle. [*This then becomes difficult to read in parts*] Mr Balty(?) you say was in “his hiding place” You ought to say “was taking cover”! General de la Rey acted in a very gallant way in sending that intercepted order and the message to you.

Please don’t think me very presumptuous for writing in this way. I don’t believe in lionizing (or lionessing either) or sensations, but I think that little

romantic incident of the war should be preserved. I only hope I shall succeed in getting a little memorial printed some day.

With kind regards

Yours very truly

JF Thomas

I expect to leave on Tuesday for a day or two, then return.

Note: I have included all of JF Thomas's letters because they also illustrate his character, which becomes pertinent to his story elsewhere in this book. All photos and letters are in the possession of Emily's grandson, Mr Tony Houston who kindly allowed us to copy them.

Letter to Mrs Thomas Houston (née Emily Back) from **EJ Tannock**,
3rd Queensland Contingent

Prieska

Cape Colony

January 7th 1904

Mrs Thomas Houston

Box 141

Middelburg, Transvaal

My Dear Madam

On behalf of the 3rd Queensland Contingent (Bushmen Regiment) I take the extreme pleasure of forwarding to you under separate cover a souvenir in the shape of a "gold watch" on a chain, in recognition of the heroism and kindness manifested by you to our men at Koster River on July 22nd 1900 during a fight between the Boers and Australians.

Words cannot express the feelings, in which we reflect with a pang of deep grief at the comrades we lost and ones wounded on that memorable day of which we owe you a debt of gratitude for the gallant ride you made into our lines to report some of our men being cut off, as well as tending to our wounded. This courageous and sympathetic behaviour won the greatest esteem and love of all the Contingent who were there, also those who heard

of it, towards you, feeling they could not let this pass without some small token of that esteem.

On the Contingent returning to Australia in May, 1901, it was decided to make this presentation, commissioning me to act on their behalf.

Being a member of the contingent and present at that fight, I was in a position to witness all you done, and it gave me the greatest pleasure in having this honour. Subsequently after my return to Queensland I came back to South Africa in order to take up in the Mining Surveying Department Johannesburg, but owing to the stringent restriction of civilians being allowed into the Transvaal, as well as martial law prevailing in Cape Colony, I was compelled to remain in Cape Town for some considerable time, thence came here where I have remained ever since.

I regret that you have not received this parcel before now. Owing to only receiving it from Australia a few months since, and being unable to ascertain your whereabouts before, I was unable to do so, but trust any shortcoming incurred through these delays will be overlooked by you.

Immediately after Peace being proclaimed I made various enquiries as to your address without avail, consequently concluding you had left the country, awaiting a more settled state of affairs. In view of these fruitless enquiries I let the matter remain in abeyance until the arrival of the souvenir, when I communicated with various people, eventually wrote to the Resident Magistrate, Rustenburg who informed me of your step-father's (Mr Abingdon) address. On receipt of this I at once wrote him who has now given me this long sort for communication. Further I regret that this issue was not made prior to your marriage of which I am pleased to hear of and shall acquaint my friends in Australia.

Trusting you will receive present in order, and wishing you on behalf of the Contingent and myself long life and happiness with your husband.

I remain
Yours sincerely
EJ Tannock

PS The inscription inside the watch has the name of Beck, which I note is incorrect, being Back. There being no jeweller here I am unable to have it altered. Any tradesman could make the alteration in a few minutes. EJT.



The War with Johnny Boer (page 287) includes an official account by Captain RB Echlin, Queensland Mounted Infantry, in which he refers to this watch:

Our Queensland boys were so impressed with this act of unselfish bravery, that they have agreed to subscribe a sufficient sum to purchase a gold watch and chain, and an illuminated address for the fair heroine.

References to Emily in other Documents

An excerpt from *Selections from the Smuts Papers*. (Vol 1, June 1886-1902. Edited by WK Hancock and Jean van der Poel, 1966. page 586)

One memorable incident in this fight deserves mention. During the fight and when the bushmen were falling right and left, and Airey's ambulance could not venture into the bullet-swept field of action, a brave young Colonial girl, Miss Emily Backe, who was a governess on one of the neighbouring farms, volunteered to go forward and attend to the wounded. This she did with the greatest sang-froid

To many of the Boers she was well-known and in any case they would not fire on a woman; she therefore came scatheless through the ordeal and continued her work of mercy all day long among the poor wounded Australians who were dying of thirst in the boiling sun.

One of Baden-Powell's despatches to Lord Roberts recounted in glowing terms the heroism of this girl and recommended her for appropriate distinctions. This recommendation I felt happy in saving from the wreck of his intercepted correspondence and in subsequently presenting to the girl who was an honour to South African womanhood. Although Lord Roberts probably never saw the despatch and the girl, like so many other South

African heroines, received no distinction, the despatch might pass down in her family as an heirloom and a record of one of the bravest deeds of the war.

In a letter home (Perth, WA) published in the local paper, Private W Crowley of 1st WAMI writes:

Riding across the very line of fire was a woman, who appeared to be making a bee-line for the house in which our fellows were. I afterwards learnt that this woman was a Miss Rock [sic], who was riding to bring the doctor to our wounded men. If ever a mortal person deserved the VC it was this brave, undaunted girl.

EMILY HOUSTON (née BACK)

Emily Charlotte Back was born in Kurumon, Cape Province, on 3rd October 1881 and was 18 when the Koster River incident took place. She died in Durban on 26th October 1960. She was a descendant of Alexander Biggar who, “with five of the Voortrekkers and 70 of his own Native followers, was killed at a fight with the Zulus at the White Umfulosi, exact spot unknown” as quoted from a newspaper clipping, origin not recorded.



She married Thomas James Houston, born in Northern Ireland, on 26th October 1903 . Thomas later became a Chartered Accountant and a partner in a firm in Vryheid. He died 12.1.1948.

Emily and Thomas arrived in Vryheid in 1915. They had four children – Don who died aged about 16 of diabetes, Errol, Sheila, and baby Doreen who died as an infant.

Emily became totally deaf due to Meningitis, before WW1. She often competed (side-saddle) in the Show arena.

[These notes from their daughter Sheila, living in Canada].

Note re-Dr Ingoldby

The following is part of a report from Mr Bert F. Toy *The Morning Herald* (Perth) war correspondent with the West Australian Bushmen to the Acting Commander Major Campbell.

Trooper Scott had received a brutal wound in the groin from an explosive bullet. Seeing the damage done, another trooper yelled to Ingoldby. In a while he made himself heard above the deafening din and rattle, and the doctor turned around. It was useless to attempt to explain anything, so the trooper merely pointed to the prostrate figure of Scott. Ingoldby looked across for a minute, and during that brief space he must have seen, by the way the horses were falling around us in all directions and heard by the continuous rattle of the explosives, that it was practically certain death for him to come across to us. But he stood straight up, hugged his medicine chest close to his side and ran directly over the open flat to where we were. Reaching Scott he knelt down, wholly exposed to the fire, tore open the poor fellow's trousers to examine the wound, shifted his position to get out of the way of a falling horse, then opened the medicine chest. He had just raised a bandage from it when, to us nearby, a bullet seemed to explode in his face. He jumped to his feet, grasping his wrist with his left hand, and we saw the bloody bits of flesh and sinews dangling from between his fingers, "I'm no more use here" he gasped, turned and ran to a little farmhouse a hundred yards away.

That was all. He saw a wounded man, and he ran to assist him. It doesn't sound much, but it was the pluckiest thing I saw done during my 12 months out there.

NOTES: A photo of the grave of Capt Robertson, buried in the Rustenburg Cemetery, is in Section 2, Part A, and a photo of the Boer memorial is in Part B.

For further excellent accounts of the events at Koster River, see *The War with Johnny Boer. Australians in the Boer War 1899-1902* by Max Chamberlain & Robin Droogleever, 2003, Australian Military History Publications.

Bugler Forbes

297, Bugler Arthur Edward FORBES, DCM 3rd Queensland Contingent.

This is a rare photo of Bugler Forbes, done on glass. Bugler Forbes was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal at 16 years of age for his bravery at Koster River, Transvaal, for leaving a farmhouse which was under attack by the Boers, to recover ammunition from the pouches of dead horses which were in an exposed position.

During World War 1 he served as a Chaplain with the AIF (Australian Imperial Forces). His medals are now on display at the Australian War Memorial.



Craig Machin

Colonel Bertram Laing

Interview with a veteran

(1970)

In 1970, in Durban South Africa, I interviewed 91-year-old Colonel Bertram Laing DSO CB CMG of the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders. “Uncle Bertie” remembered celebrations for Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897, where as a young Highlander he had lined the route. He then served in the Boer War. In World War One, he fought in France, Belgium and Italy. He was also in the British assault on the Somme on 1st July 1916. He lost 2 brothers during that war. I seem to recall that he was also an air raid warden in the 2nd World War.

He added Italian and French awards, including the French Croix de Guerre, to his South African medal with clasps for Modder River, Paardeberg and Bloemfontein. As he laughingly explained there was no clasp for Magersfontein as “We don’t give a clasp for a defeat.”

When my wife Jean and I were in London in 1970, ‘Uncle Bertie’ invited us to have lunch with him at his club, the Army and Navy Club, in Pall Mall. What a dear old chap!

Here are some of the excerpts of the interview I have on audiotape, with the ‘ums’ and ‘ahs’ removed.

First Command

In October 1899, fresh from Sandhurst, young Bertram landed in South Africa and went by train to a very big transit camp in De Aar.

And that’s where I got my first command. There was a *kopje* (a small hill) only just overlooking the camp, literally overlooking it, I mean, you could have almost thrown a stone at it. It was such a thing that if a sniper was up there it would make the camp uninhabitable of course. And so that had to be occupied and I was told to take half my company – I was only a subaltern (2nd Lieutenant) then and not a commander of a company – up the thing for the night and hold it for the night, you see, and so we crawled up this

beastly *kopje*, nothing but stones of course and rocks and no place to sit down anywhere and no room between them, as you know most of these *kopjes* are.

And when we got to the top I posted all my sentries around the top, you see, and then I tried to get some sleep. Well of course that was out of the question. To start with, this was my first command, and I had a very restless night going round the sentries, and just before dawn I got up to one sentry and he said, “Sh, Sir, hush up.”

“What’s that?” I said, “What’s the trouble?”

“Hush I hear them creeping up.”

So I at once warned the others they were not to fire, but be on the alert. I said we thought we heard something creeping up... and just as dawn broke and we thought we were really ready to shoot at anything, we saw it was only goats, creeping up in steps.”

Modder River, (28th November 1899)

The Argylls and the KOYLI were on the left flank.

I can’t remember what time in the afternoon, but we got very bored with lying there and being burnt. The backs of our legs were being burnt to a cinder by the hot summer sun. And myself and quite a lot of other fellows, moved off to the left, you see, and we eventually got down to the weir, which is still there incidentally, and that’s where we crossed...

... there must have been somebody pretty handy, because as I walked across the wall – I thought I’d go across it and keep dry, you see, – the shot went whizzing past me and I ducked like this and fell into the deep side. Well that soaked my kilt of course and I got soaked. I didn’t mind being wet precisely, but the kilt was already covered in dust and filth like that and simply cut the backs of my knees to ribbons, absolutely to ribbons...and I was in hospital for, ooh, I think ten days, with this terribly painful, agonising pain and you couldn’t move, you know, they were just cut to ribbons, literally raw. It was awful because that kilt was all filth and muck on it.”

Bertie managed to purloin a pair of ladies’ stockings from a little abandoned shop in Modder River and he cut the feet out of them and wore these stock-

ings during the horrific battle of Magersfontein three weeks later. “*Quite prepared to pay for them now, if they wanted*”.

Drinking water, Enteric and Inoculations

After Modder River they were force marched by Jacobsdal and on to Paardeberg.

We lost a whole convoy, you know. To de Wet or somebody... and we were on half-rations, which was bad enough I can assure you. Half-rations until we got to Bloemfontein, we only had biscuits and bully beef, you know in those days. It was pretty tough work, oh very.

The worst of the whole thing was thirst, of course. We drank the most awful muck. We, very fortunately my regiment was inoculated against Enteric. But lots of regiments weren't and they lost very, very heavily from Enteric.

MC: “I didn't know there was an inoculation against Enteric.”

“Oh yes, going out on board ship they had to. It isn't a nice inoculation there, where they give you a little jab like that. They shoved a thing in your behind and it was going in to your butt like the side of your finger don't you know, like a syringe sort of business. Hurt like Hell, you couldn't sit down for about two or three days; we used to walk about with a cushion...

After the surrender, my company was sent down as a sort of guard of honour, down there. And I took the company down there and we looked 'round to see if (there were) any souvenirs and things like that. They were all damned thirsty and so there was a branch hanging down – I suppose it had been hit by a shell or something – into the river. I hung on this branch and I took this man's canteen here and I drank about two of them solid, straight away, muddy water of course, all muddy water.

Then I thought to myself, this is a funny taste. I didn't taste anything, you know when you are really thirsty. And then I looked on the other side of the branch and there was a mule been hung up by this thing, putrefying there. The water had been coming straight through it.

Captured

Bertie was left behind in Bloemfontein because of a bad knee, then was told to rejoin his regiment. There was a convoy going towards Pretoria which he joined, but he had to travel sitting on top of an ox wagon for a few days.

One day there was a long delay and he found himself confronted by about a dozen Boers who wanted him to go with them. As he was merely a passenger, and the man in command – a driver – had no troops, he had to go with them. He was taken to Nooitgedacht in the eastern Transvaal, being joined by a few Yeomanry along the way.

Eventually the officers in this camp were moved to Barberton, but knowing that the other men would not be taken there because the Boers could not feed or transport them, he disguised himself, then snuck into their camp. Some of the men had dug a hole to try to escape and he was allowed to join them, so searchers did not find him. After the gates had been opened and the men were told they could go, he struggled along the valley, following the old railway line, until he met up with a cavalry regiment and was sent to Pretoria where he was in hospital for about a week because he was so weak.

Langverwacht

The New Zealand Monument

(Bothasberg, near Warden, Free State)

This was the original monument to the 23 New Zealanders who died here. 40 were wounded. 14 Boers were also killed. We had difficulty finding this in 1997, but finally we found what we were sure was the correct location and asked the gentleman in the photo if he knew of a monument or graves. He led us through some empty pig styes to this site.

Since then a tree has fallen and destroyed the cairn but the New Zealand authorities rebuilt it with the help of our photo and re-dedicated it in 2009 (107 years later). It has since been vandalised and repaired again. The bodies were re-interred in Vrede Cemetery in the 60s.



*Erected in memory of New Zealanders
who fell here in the Anglo-Boer War.*

*Lt ML Dickinson,
Lt WG Forsythe,
Far.Serg AH Turner,
Sgt AR Noonan,
Cpl A Firth, Cpl AH Russell,
L/Cpl D Anderson,
L/Cpl P Nation,
L/Cpl W Roddick,
Far LC Retter,
Pte JW Ashmore,
Pte D Bruce,*

*J Counihan,
Pte W Dunlop,
Pte H Finch,
Pte P Fletcher,
Pte A McLean,
Pte WG Monahan,
Pte A Scott,
Pte W Stevenson,
Pte HE Tims,
Pte AJ Whitney*

All were with the 7th New Zealand Mounted Rifles.

Mafeking

Oct 1899–May 1900

Helen Buchan

We were lucky enough to be lent a copy of Helen Buchan's diary by her grand-daughter, Zimbabwean-born Mrs Joy Cooke, a highly regarded photographer who lives in Western Australia. Joy has shot pictures for *Time* and *Life* magazines, as well as the South African Government in the 50's.



*Molly, Helen with "Baby"
and husband Jim Buchan*



*Sister Craufurd RR. A nursing sister in
SAC after peace was declared, stationed
outside Bloemfontein.*

Helen was the sister of Molly Craufurd, a nurse during the Siege of Mafeking, (though not formally trained) who also wrote a well-known diary.

Helen was married to Jim Buchan, then 3rd in charge of the Railway Volunteers and later an engineer on the Victoria Falls Bridge.

Molly married Captain Edward Reading, a British captain in the Canadian Cavalry who was present at Paardeberg. He was a friend of Deneys Reitz. Edward later became Secretary to the Public Service Commission in Pretoria.

Both women were "Mentioned in Dispatches" to Lord Roberts and received the "Red Cross Award for Bravery and Service". The following is an extract from General Orders 13/5/1900:

And he (Colonel Baden-Powell) desires to express his warm admiration of the heroism and devotion displayed by the ladies in charge of the Women's Hospital, namely Miss Craufurd and her sister Mrs Buchan. These ladies, in spite of the heavy fire going on around them, remained at their post although they had the opportunity of coming away, and they took in and tended the Boer wounded, working under fire in doing so. The Boers themselves express the greatest appreciation of the courage and kindness of these ladies.

This photo appeared in *With the Flag to Pretoria*.



These two ladies, under Boer escort, carried food and medical supplies to the captive officers in Colonel Hore's fort, under heavy fire from both friends and foe.

Excerpts from Helen Buchan's Diary, written during the Siege of Mafeking, 10th Oct 1899-28th May 1900:

Treatment

Molly came over from the Hospital to doctor me. I have a very bad cold. She rubbed my chest with turpentine and put on a mustard plaster, gave me an onion pill and a drink of hot milk.

Food

March 18th. A notice in the 'Slip' tonight about starch. Anyone who has a stock to inform Captain Ryan. I suppose it is running short. The men have been using it for eating to make their food spin out a little more.

April 28th. Got an extra piece of ration meat this morning in the way of a cow's hoof. Will make a nice soup tomorrow. Every 3 days we have horse meat. I shall make a curry of it

April 29th. Made a curry of the horse meat. It made me feel rather ill. I could not eat it.

Jim had some fried donkey for tea. He said it was the nicest bit of meat he had had for a long time. We got the donkey meat from some soup Jim bought this morning. I took the meat out of the soup and fried it for tea.

May 1st. Made some nice fritters for tea with sowen (forage oats) and pearl barley and carbonate of soda. Had a jelly tonight made out of cow's heel.

Poetry.

The following is a piece of poetry from Colonel Baden Powell:

Which is the gun that makes you run
When you hear the warning bell?
You bet your boots, it's the gun that shoots
The high velocity shells.

On April 6th Helen includes the following:

Molly's poem is in the 'Slip' [*The Mafeking Mail*] tonight, so I will write it here.

BP

Our Colonel's a mighty fine fellow
An out and out stunner is he,
And this you may bet, that we'll never forget
Our gallant Commander, BP

Do you mind how the Boers that first morning
Thought to walk into town with Cronje [*cron/yeer*]
But from Dixon lookout they were soon put to rout
They found 'twas no joke with BP

They brought their great 94 pounder
A blustery person is she,
But soon o'er the town there were holes to run down
And again they were sold by BP.

Snyman fired at our women and children,
Nine shells in the laager sent he,
So Dutch spies straight away were sent there all day,
That was wonderfully cute of BP.

They think we are eating each other
And that is because they can't see,
The wonderful way we are fed on ground hay
Through the forethought and care of BP.

And when in the general rejoicing,
When troops have arrived and we're free,
I fear there'll be sighs, and tears in our eyes,
When bidding farewell to BP.

(Trish)

Major James Francis Thomas

Defender of Morant, Handcock, Witton

A blighted life

For decades there has been a never-ending controversy, both in Australia and South Africa, about the execution of Harry 'Breaker' Morant and Peter Handcock, of the Bushveldt Carbineers. They were the two main accused in the Court Martial into the deaths of a German missionary and 12 Boer prisoners in the Spelonken area, 80 miles north-east of Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal.

Many thick books have been published on the subject and a film made (*Breaker Morant*). Recently (2012) there have been more calls for pardons for Morant and Handcock, and feeling is very fierce for and against this. We do not intend to enter into the debate. However, the lawyer who defended the accused men, Major James Francis Thomas, attracted our interest because of his involvement in the story of Emily Back, the heroine of Koster River,

where we have included his letters to her. (qv)

There is almost as much differing of opinion about Thomas as there is about the guilt of the men he defended.

There is a plaque on the grave of Major Thomas, in Tenterfield, NSW, that tells his story (he never used the title after the war). The simple inscription on the headstone says:

James Francis Thomas, died 11th November 1942, aged 81 years. Major, Australian Bushmen's Contingent, South Africa, 1900.



Major James Francis Thomas 1861-1942 (Inscription)

Commanding Officer 'A' Squadron, New South Wales Citizen's Bushmen. Country lawyer, volunteer soldier and friend to the death.

James Francis Thomas began his career in law on 8 May 1887. After practising briefly in Sydney, he moved to Emmaville in 1888 and then Tenterfield in January 1890.

Thomas served for some years in the Tenterfield arm of the voluntary Upper Clarence Light Horse where he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in 1891 and Captain by 1895.

He was among the early officers to volunteer for service in South Africa at the outbreak of the Boer War, in 1899. Having been given command of a Squadron, Thomas sailed for South Africa in February 1900 and was promoted to the rank of Major on 29th January 1901. He served with courage and distinction, especially during the Rhenoster Kop and Elands River battles. He was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal with four campaign clips.

Major Thomas is best remembered for his defence of Lieutenants Harry Morant, Peter Handcock, George Witton and other Bushveldt Carbineers officers in the general British Court Martial proceedings held at Pietersburgh [sic] in the northern Transvaal in early 1902. The execution of Lieutenants Morant and Handcock shook Thomas. After the end of the Boer War on 31st May 1902, Thomas remained in South Africa and became associated with local sympathisers in a crusade for Witton's release from jail in Britain.

In civilian life, apart from his law practice, Thomas, for a period, owned the *Tenterfield Star* newspaper. He retained a lively interest in researching and writing the history of Tenterfield and supported many causes to further the progress of his community.

In an informative article printed in *The Bulletin*, April 4th 2000, in a section *National Pride*, with a headline 'Tenterfield Battler', Anthony Hoy tells us that Thomas was a poet, newspaper proprietor and editor, legal practitioner, gallant soldier, and forthright community leader. He calls him 'a figure of national importance'.

The Tenterfield Visitors' information sheet, also remembers him well as a man of gentle nature, humble, and writes that 'he would give his last shilling to a needy person'. It also notes, as a balance, that he had also been termed 'eccentric and stubborn'.

However another article I read, by a legal historian and Churchill Fellow, is very unflattering about both Thomas's ethics and his performance at the trial.

Thomas was born on 25th August 1861 and attended King's School, Parramatta, NSW. He was at the Elands River Siege and the battle of Rhenoster Kop. He was unmarried and became reclusive as he grew older. The Trial had had a profound effect on him, because he was obviously out of his depth against the military prosecution team and truly believed at the time that the men were not guilty of murder. The Trial and its outcome became an obsession with him for many years.

Poor JF Thomas' health and reputation disintegrated and he was made bankrupt, spent some months in prison for debt, was in disfavour with the solicitors' professional body, and barely eked out an existence on his small holding. Such a sad life.

(Trish)

Modderfontein Farm

Deney's Reitz and the 17th Lancers

17th September, 1901

[Elandsrivierfontein, eelands/r'fier/fontane, near Cradock, E/Cape]

When I was a boy at St John's College in Johannesburg we boarders were required to have a period of silent reading after lunch each weekday. One of the books I read was *Commando* by Deney's Reitz (published in 1929) and this was the catalyst for my abiding passion for military history. Reitz has been my hero for more than 69 years (so far!).

Deney's was a Dutch-speaking young Boer who, in 1899 at age 17 with his brother Joubert (18), enlisted in the Boer Army in the Pretoria Commando and went off to the Natal Front to fight the British Empire. He was present at Spionkop. When the Boer War ended, nearly three years later, he was still in the field. He refused to sign the oath of allegiance to the British Empire and was evicted from the country. The story of how he eventually came back to South Africa, became a successful lawyer and got into politics is covered in his second book *Trekking On*.

In 1914 he became swept up in another war, this time fighting on the side of the British. First he helped General Smuts suppress the 'Maritz Rebellion' in the Northern Cape Province, and then served on Smuts' army staff in the German West Africa campaign. This was skilfully conducted and the Germans were driven out of German South-West Africa (now Namibia) in 1915. This was followed by a much more difficult campaign, to drive them out of German East Africa. After about 18 months, and now holding the rank of Colonel in charge of a mounted regiment and suffering from malaria and other tropical maladies, he was retired back to the Union of South Africa.

But Reitz had become addicted to war and as soon as he had regained his fitness, took passage to England as a civilian and once in London went to a recruiting office in Chelsea and enlisted as a private in an infantry regiment.

By twists of circumstances that would defy the imagination of the most inventive novelist, when the war ended on 11th November, he was the Colonel in command of the 1st Scots Fusiliers in France. He was severely wounded early in 1918, but he returned to active service to lead his men to the Rhine after the Armistice and the Army of Occupation in Germany.

He returned to England in June 1919 and took ship for the Union of South Africa, and soon continued public life as a Member of Parliament, Cabinet Minister, Deputy Prime Minister (1939-1943) and South African High Commissioner (1944) to London where he died suddenly.

Deneys knew he had been in action against the Royal Scots Fusiliers during the Boer War, the very same unit he was to command in WW1, but does not refer to this in "Commando". Very recently I was looking at some old photos I had taken in 1965 while climbing hills with a friend near Ladysmith in Natal, and to my delight one photo revealed the answer.

During the days preceding and including the 27th February 1900, the British had subjected the whole Boer Front on the Tugela River to the heaviest artillery barrage ever seen in the southern hemisphere until the Falklands in 1982. This shelling had so demoralised many of the Boers, that a lot had started to drift away, lacking the discipline to force them to hold fast. Reitz, together with his brother and uncle, had become separated from their companions in the Pretoria Commando earlier that day, when the big British push to relieve the siege of Ladysmith at last looked like succeeding. When they got to where their horses were still tethered, they found their comrades had gone to a new defensive position (now known as Barton's Hill), overlooking Pieter's Station. Following on they were nearing the base of the hill, then smothered in bursting shells, when charging British soldiers with fixed bayonets swarmed over the skyline, driving any surviving Boers into pell-mell defeat. That was the end of the unit and Reitz and his group took to their heels with the other remnants.

Note. By a strange quirk of fate, in 1916 when Winston Churchill decided to leave the British Parliament, after the failure of the Gallipoli Campaign, and made up his mind to serve in the front line in Belgium, he was posted as a Colonel, as CO of the 6th Battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers.

Deneys on commando. His father had been Chief Justice, and Secretary of State to President Kruger. He had handed the Boer Ultimatum to the British in October 1899 and was present at their surrender in May 1902.

This Modderfontein is near Tarkastad, not far from Cradock in the Eastern Cape. It was here that Deneys Reitz, as part of General Smuts' Commando, accidentally and fortuitously, (for him) came upon the camp of the 17th Lancers. Four officers, including Lieutenant Richard Sheridan, and 26 men were killed and 39 (including Lord Vivian) were wounded.

The Boers were in a desperate condition, with little food or ammunition, wearing tattered clothing in icy weather. The Commando was able to re-outfit themselves here and Reitz did particularly well, as Lord Vivian – seeing the inevitable – advised him to be first to claim his gear. (See *Jack Baxter* in Section 2, Part A)



In 1997 we found the farm where this took place and were made welcome by the Du Plessis family. Sadly, Jacobus has since died. They showed us their scrapbook and the bullet graze on the wooden ceiling. Then we went to find the kraal Reitz described and (*above*) the graves of the 17th Lancers.

In Cape Town, we were fortunate enough to meet Jan Reitz (*below*), the son of Deneys, then an elderly man. He and his wife kindly invited us to their home for afternoon tea. Jan himself was an amazing man. As a 14 year old lad he had lost several fingers in an accident and was also blinded in one eye, but in spite of this he was a signaller in WW2 and went on to become a well-



known consulting engineer in Cape Town. He had also attended the same school as I had – St John's in Johannesburg.

Amongst other things, Jan showed us the rifle that Deneys had used during the Anglo-Boer War and which had been returned to him in London where he was the South African High Commissioner. This is a Mauser 7mm pattern 96 carbine, with his name carved on the butt.

In my diary that evening (30th March 1997) I wrote:

He fetches Deneys Reitz's old Mauser 7 mm pattern '96 carbine, which is in good clean nick. His father's name is carved into the butt. Michael (his son) helps me to photograph it. This was not lost at Modderfontein as some reports state, but earlier and came back to him from an old Boer'.

31st March. I phone Michael Reitz to clear up a point about Deneys Reitz's rifle and how he got it back, because in his papers, now being translated by Michael, he did not have it at Modderfontein, Eastern Cape, but a little while before he had exchanged it for a .303 with a burgher named Rabie in the southern OFS, who knew where he could get more 7mm 57 Mauser ammo. How Lord Vivian acquired it is a puzzle, but he did get it and returned it to Deneys Reitz when he was High Commissioner in London in the 1940s.

Over the years we had been told that it was Lord Vivian who returned the rifle, but believed that this was probably not true as Vivian and Reitz had already been friends for years.

Marius van Blerck, author of *Pillars of Dust* (the full story of Denys Reitz) told us:

In his unpublished diaries, Reitz records the following on 30th June 1943. 'A man named Major Tuffs brought my Mauser rifle I used in the Boer War over 40 years ago. My name is carved on the butt and I remember where and when I cut the lettering'.

In London we then met the current Lord Vivian, who showed us this portrait (right) of his grandfather and allowed us to photograph it.



Midge.

Paardeberg

A surprise shot

17th-27th February, 1900

Ken Gillings reminded me recently, “I think that one of the most memorable outings we (the South African Military History Society) did was to Paardeberg. We found the precise location of General Piet Cronje’s surrender and you fired a live .303 cartridge we found nearby”.

I had taken a Boer 7 mm Mauser and a British Lee-Enfield rifle to show the other members what they looked like and to point out their differences. The farmer on whose property we were, urged me to fire the cartridge. I told him that it was too precious. ‘Ag man’, he said, ‘I’ve got more’.

I held the rifle in one hand with the butt against my hip and to our amazement it fired, after at least 66 years lying there in the dirt.

Railway Hill KZN

Boer mass graves

‘Welly’ Hyde phoned me to say that he was overseeing, in his role with the War Graves Commission, the exhumation of a mass Boer grave on Railway Hill, for re-interment on Wagon Hill, so I joined him. The number of bodies that were found did not tally with the number on the marker. As with a similar exhumation at Bakenlaagte, the boots disintegrated when lined up and exposed to the air.

On another occasion, when the old road on Railway Hill was being re-aligned, Llewellyn had found the skeleton of a red-haired Highlander. Due to the high arsenic content of the soil, much was preserved. Part of the kilt was intact and the special safety pin, and the sporran contained a brand-new half-crown dated 1888, I think, in mint condition.

Sannaspos, F/State.

An interesting discovery.

31st March, 1900

When we visited New Zealand in 1997 after five months wandering around South African battlefields, we went to the Wellington Library and to our delight, found a map of the Sannaspos battle by J Thorpe, NZMR, showing little details such as 'The Boer guns which opened the battle before I had time to cool and drink my coffee'. With consent, we sent a copy to the Bloemfontein Museum of the Boer Republics as we knew they were updating the display at Sannaspos.

Some of Thorpe's other comments (difficult to make out in places):

I rode alongside an officer here and marked his face as a bullet found his knee. They won! Didn't he make a wry face! Screwed up you know. Never forgot it. Saw him on the waggon next.

Two odd men behind stone wall. It was amusing to see them ducking. I saw their helmets etc but rarely their guns. My position gave me first rate chance for observation'.

Note by a military critic.

All we had to do was to lie down at the station etc not a shell would have touched us and not a waggon lost. But we would have had to shoot a few mules as the Boers tried to take them away along the road towards Thaba 'nchu. But [*difficult to read*] from what goodness only knows. And for what ditto. But Lord Roberts described it as a 'masterly retreat.' (By evening the relief from Bloemfontein arrived!)"

When I saw the Rimingtons working their way, I remarked to Hornby that the intention was no doubt to sh.. the ambushade from behind. I advised him (!) to tell his men to get under shelter and to await the scout from the Boers (?) from the drift, but the Rimingtons went further up stream to find not an opening for outflanking etc but to scout. Uncle Hagnar (the old scout of the Rimingtons who was chief scout of Broadwood), told me afterwards that this

was the very course he suggested to Broadwood but.... onlyhis hands nervously and seemed absolutely lost. [*All difficult to read*]

‘I inspected along the banks and saw heaps of empty cartridges.’

‘I had got this far, yarning with a 10th Hussars man when the shooting started.’

Trooper James (Jim) Thorpe was an engineer surveyor. After the ABW, he remained in South Africa, and became a surveyor for the Imperial Military Railways in Johannesburg, returning to NZ in 1910. He died of pneumonia in the flu epidemic, 1918, aged 48. (See *Kiwi versus Boer* by Richard Stowers, Hamilton NZ, 1992)

Trish

Spionkop/Spioenkop KZN.

“Do you know where Spionkop is?”

23rd-24th January, 1900

In 1950 I became the proud owner of a new Ariel 500cc motor cycle. I was 19 years old and living in Jo’ burg. At last I had a machine capable of taking me wherever I wanted to go and one place I was keen to find was Spionkop, inspired in me by Deneys Reitz’s recounting of the battle (in *Commando*, of course).

I had a general idea of its whereabouts, but at that time there was not the interest in the Boer War that later developed. So I set off up the Bergville Road and started asking farmers where Spionkop was.

Two or three farmers had no idea, but then a farmer said, ‘That’s the big hill behind my farm’.

‘How will I get there?’ I asked.

‘Drive through my cattle pen here.’ And he opened the gate.



MC describes the Boer attack 75 years earlier

I drove through the slushy cattle poo, covering my lovely new bike with generous amounts of cow manure, went as far as I could up the hill on the bike, leant it against a bush when I could go no farther, then climbed, climbed, climbed.

Eventually I could see a tall monument, then neglected graves, so I knew I had found what I was seeking. I wandered around this sad, forgotten area for a long time, then went back to my motor-cycle and rode home with a heavy heart.

Over the next five to six years I spent three years working in England and exploring Europe on my motor-cycle with various colonial friends. Coming back unsettled, I went to Rhodesia for more than four years. I married Jean Paxton there and our first child Kerrin was born there. At this time I was offered an excellent job in Durban and so we moved back to South Africa, this time to the Durban area.

I visited Spionkop several times then and on one visit I sat with *Commando* and while reading Reitz's account of his commando's experiences, gained a good picture of what had taken place. I reburied this thigh-bone and other bones that had been washed out of the long grave.

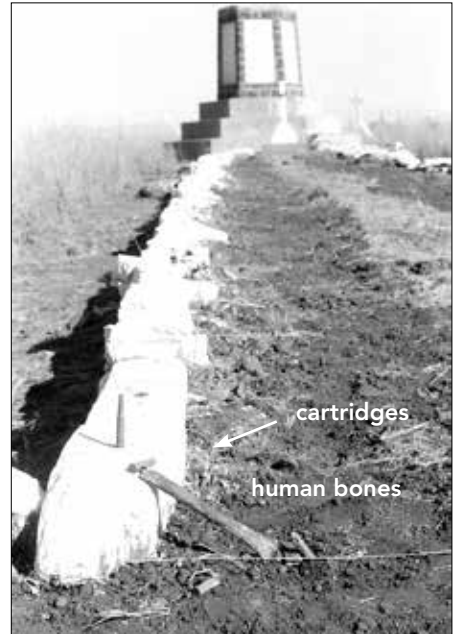
On one occasion I went there with my friend Llewellyn Hyde in his company Landrover. 'Welly' worked for the Natal Provincial Administration, doing maintenance work on memorials, graves etc. He also looked after many stray cats and was a talented sculptor. The beautiful memorial at Clouston was done by him.

He was asked to accompany Welsh actor and documentary film maker Kenneth Griffith, who, pictured centre right, later wrote *Thank God we kept the Flag Flying*, to Spionkop and Welly took me with him.

On the 75th anniversary of the battle, a group of motor-cycle fanatic friends and I spent the night on the summit of Spionkop. One of these was Linda Bic, an English girl who had ridden her bike alone from England down through Africa! We spent the misty night in the cemetery, singing with the help of a guitar someone had taken.

All of this was well before roads were built and markers put in place to show the now many tourists and historians what had happened and where. Being there is an amazing experience, but so sad.

Note. Gandhi, Churchill, Reitz, Jack Hindon were all present at Spionkop.



West Australia Hill

near Slingsfontein, Colesberg. F/State

An important action was fought here in February 1900 and is often erroneously named Slingsfontein.

Finding the hill

Trish was born in Western Australia and I came here in 1987, so when we read the following excerpt we were keen to find this hill when we spent 5 months in South Africa in 1997. This action is often referred to as Slingsfontein, although WA Hill is some distance from there.

General Clements was so much impressed by the courage and fortitude of Moor's little party that the next day he caused the men to be paraded, and formally congratulated them on their fine day's work. The following was subsequently put in orders:

Operations at Slingsfontein, 9th February, 1900. The General Officer Commanding wished to place on record his high appreciation of the courage and determination shown by a party of 20 men of the West Australians under Captain Moor, in the above operations. By their determined stand against 300 or 400 men they entirely frustrated the enemy's attempt to turn the flank of the position.

The position so magnificently defended has since been named West Australia Hill.

History of WA Contingents serving in South Africa during the Boer War by J Campbell 1910, Government Printer Perth.

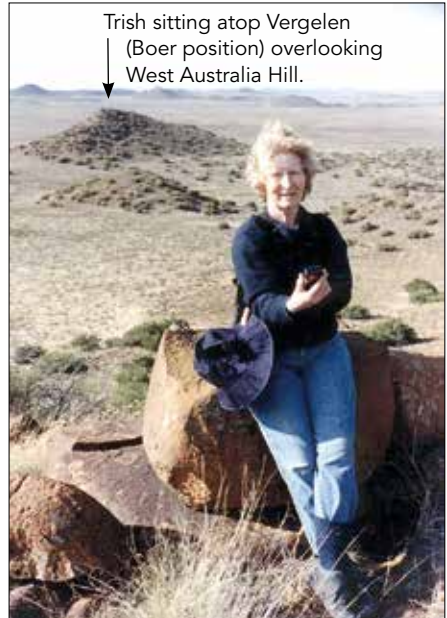
So off we went to Colesberg to seek help from Belinda Gordon, a friend for many years when she was in Greytown, but who was now the Curator of the Colesberg Museum and is quite a 'fundi' on the local Anglo-Boer War actions. (She has since retired.) As there are so many hills here where battles were fought, it was not easy to identify the right one as WA Hill, but after a lot of research, climbing and false leads, we were certain that we had found it, on the farm 'Vergelegen' on the Steynsburg Road. As well as

spent cartridges cases and a horse-shoe, we also found an exploded 15-pounder shrapnel shell there.

We set to work to ensure that a marker stone could be placed on the hill in time for the centenary in 2000, Midge had arranged, long-distance, to have a beautiful black granite marker stone made by AVBOB in Bloemfontein (the funeral stone masons), plus a similar one, with a map, to install at the Museum in Colesberg. We had enough money left over to also have a West Australian marker stone made for Eland's River, in the Transvaal (now North-West Province).

Setting the marker in place was not without its amusing moments! We had gone to South Africa this time with five West Australians and were joined for the ceremony by Belinda Gordon, a Dominee to give a blessing, and two Victorians.

Before the due date (9th February) four of our band of merry men set off across the veldt carrying the base stone, which proved to be quite an effort and involved several rests and changes of position. When the team of Africans we had hired to set the marker in place arrived next day, they carried the wheelbarrow of cement up the hill and then ONE young fellow picked up the aforementioned base stone, popped it on his shoulder and marched half-way up the hill to the chosen spot. The men did a great job and we are very proud of the results, funded by groups here in Perth (named on the stone). Our small group then had a solemn and touching memorial ceremony.



Trish sitting atop Vergelen
(Boer position) overlooking
West Australia Hill.



The action, 9th February, 1900

Early in the morning of 9th February 1900, a small group of West Australian Mounted Infantry under Captain Moor were on patrol with the 6th Inniskilling Dragoons in the Slingersfontein area near Colesberg. Large numbers of Boers were observed among the small horse shoe shaped ring of hills on their right, So Captain Haig ordered Captain Moor to take his men to hold a distinctive kopje to delay the enemy.

Moor had with him Captains Darling and Parker and 26 other ranks. They found that the hill was very rocky and exposed to the ridge from where the Boers were firing. Lieutenants Darling and Hensman (at that time Sgt), and Privates Kruger, Conway and Dunn, were given the task of defending a small knoll or kopje to the left of the hill in order to protect the horses.

After four hours of heavy firing from the Boers overlooking their position, Hensman was hit in the left hip by an explosive bullet and had a severe injury. Conway and Kruger went to his aid using Kruger's puttees and field dressings to dress it. When Conway moved in order to obtain earth to pack under Hensman's hip as he was so uncomfortable, he was hit in the head and died instantly. He was buried in Slingersfontein camp next morning but later was moved to de Aar cemetery.

Kruger built a small wall of stones to protect Hensman and Conway's body, which he also covered with branches. Unfortunately poor Hensman was partly pinned down by Conway's body until the stretcher bearers freed him that evening.

During the day Captain Moor sent messages to request permission to retire. The messengers each managed to get out safely but were not allowed to return to the hill.

At about 7pm Moor ordered a retirement, collected all men apart from the injured Hensman and poor Conway, and returned to the camp. The small party had managed to hold off an estimated 400 Boers throughout a long, exhausting day, and so save the access route between Arundel station and the camp at Slingersfontein.

The party had had very little food or water all that very hot day. So by the time, later that night, when Kruger was able to guide Major McWilliams, (the medical officer), plus the stretcher bearers to where the two men lay, Hensman was in a bad way, as he had been hit in five other places as well. Kruger had been hit by four bullets but only mildly.

Casualties

Poor Hensman lived for a few days but later died and is buried in Maitland Cemetery in the Cape. L/Corporal Bishop suffered so badly from exposure that he died several days later. Five others were wounded.

Trish's note. The following letter was written to the Chief Staff Officer in Perth, Major Campbell, from Maitland Camp, Cape Town, on 13th March 1900. In it Lance-Corporal Grave Gifford tells of Hensman's death.

The doctor felt certain that the bullet was a dum-dum or an explosive of some sort, and that it had most probably been set in verdigris or some other similar poison. This alone would account for the 'worst smash he had ever seen and the rottenest wound' as proved after amputation. During the operation, I regret to say, Dr Robinson cut his hand slightly, and has poisoned his arm up to the shoulder, and is afraid of very serious consequences to himself.

Sometimes Life is quite unfair! In reading casualty lists etc, I have been struck by the large number of medical officers, including civilian doctors and surgeons, who were killed or died of 'enteric' or some other virulent disease .

Private Kruger/Krygger. The elusive VC.

Private Alexander Kruger (later known as Krygger), No 94, 1st West Australian Mounted Infantry, had served in the Victorian Militia, so he was an experienced soldier and an excellent marksman. He joined the West Australians, having worked in WA for a decade.

Kruger was later invalided back to Australia, having contracted enteric fever. Now for the mystery of the VC he was never awarded. He was one of the VC winners featured on the cigarette card collection printed in 1902 'for assisting and defending a dying officer under withering fire'. He was mentioned in a British newspaper, at least two West Australian papers, one in Ballarat, Victoria and possibly others, as having won the VC. However Major Moor said very little about Kruger in his reports apart from this: "Sgt Hensman, until put out of action, and Private A Krygger both doing splendid work, the latter especially."

There are strong suggestions that Kruger had been brought before Major Moor by Hensman the day before, for 'neglecting' to obey an order. Three months later he was charged by Moor for sleeping on duty, when actually he had been suffering from enteric fever, but remained on duty. [Reference: John Sweetman's article *Krygger VC?*]

Apparently Kruger was given a purse of sovereigns 'from a few Adelaide admirers'.

Major Moor, RA.

Major Moor, 28, was killed on July 19th 1900 at Palmietfontein, in the Transvaal, by an explosive bullet wound to the leg (in a letter home, Bert Maley said the bullet ‘blew half his leg off’) and he only lived for about a quarter of an hour. Another WA man was killed, one lost a leg and Fred Bell was badly injured in the stomach. Bell won a VC as a West Australian, because Federation did not take place until 1901.

Trish had read that there was a stained glass window in the chapel at Shrewsbury School in England, honouring its former pupil Major Moor. She emailed the archivist, Dr Mike Morrough, who kindly sent her these photos of the window. The inscription reads:

Here Captain Hatherley George Moor RA, a British officer commanding the West Australian Contingent, for xiv (14) hours holds a fortified hill near Colesberg, South Africa, with xx (20) men against a greatly superior force of Boers with bravery unsurpassed.

Moor had spent some time in Rhodesia and South Africa before going to WA to take command of the fort at Albany and then the 1st WAMI. There was an outpouring of grief and tributes from all quarters when his death was reported.

Another plaque is at Albany, Western Australia:

Major Moor, RA

Ubique quo fas et gloria ducit.

[Royal Artillery motto, *Wherever Duty and Glory Lead*]

In memory of Major Hatherley George Moor RA who was killed in action in South Africa at the Rheinoster (sic) River on the 19th July 1900, while gallantly leading the first detachment of the West Australian Contingent under his command.





Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.

[‘Sweet and seemly it is to die for one’s country’. Horace]

The South African Monument in Perth, WA

The Slingersfontein (WA Hill) action is shown on a bas-relief panel on the South African War memorial in Kings Park, Perth, West Australia. Originally this was called the Soldiers’ Memorial, but Kings Park now has many memorials to honour our service men and women, and an avenue of trees, each dedicated to a man lost in WW1. Every year now a moving memorial service is held here close to the 31st May, with representatives of Government and Forces, mounted Light Horsemen, and the wonderful addition of SAMVOA (South African Military Veterans Organisation of Australia)



in uniform, and Afrikaner women and children, dressed in the clothing of the era. Ceremonies are now held in other States as well.

Inscription: This foundation stone was laid by HRH the Duke of Cornwall and York (later King George V) on 23rd July 1901. At the same time he renamed Perth Park 'The King's Park' in honour of the accession of his father King Edward VII.

The bronze statuary and plaques of the memorial are by sculptor James White of Annandale New South Wales, and show scenes of the South African Campaign. The gun is a 75 mm Krupp gun of German manufacture, captured from the Boers at Bothaville. It was placed here in 1906.

East-facing panel (*top*) A 4.7" gun at Ladysmith. The Naval Brigade engaged in working a 4.7" gun behind a gun shelter. (*bottom*) A night attack upon a Boer convoy. (After R. Caton-Woodville).

West-facing panels (*top*) Major Moor refuses to surrender to the Boers at Slingsfontein. (WA Hill, 9.2.1900.) (*bottom*) Majuba Day, Paardeberg. The last attack on General Cronje's position in the river bank on Majuba Day.

South-facing panels (*top*) Australians entering Pretoria. Australian Mounted Infantry passing before Lord Roberts and Staff. (*bottom*) Dispersing train wreckers. Mounted Australians dispersing Boers who have wrecked a train near Bloemfontein.

The main panel In memoriam of the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the West Australian Contingents who were killed-in-action or died from wounds or disease in the war in South Africa 1899-1900,



Major HG Moor RA (p), Lieut. AA Forrest(g), Lieut SW Hensman (m), Lieut GA Moris, Lieut SS Reid (m).Privates TH Angel, FT Adams (m), R Alday, PT Blanck, WH Cross, M Conway (m), WM Collett, CC Clifford, J Delahunty, WW Dunstan, H Force(g), DE Fry, WM Fraser, B Fisher(m), EA Hambly(g), A Hammond, J Hume, EG Iles, Jas Kay, WS McPhee(g), W Parker, F Page(m), J Roscoe, J Semple (m), H Solomom, RW Spencer (g), JBM Thurston, G Westcott, H White, TW Wilson.

[*Note.* If we have a photo of their grave or their name on a monument, we have indicated it by (g), (m) or (p) plaque.]

And in the Great War 1914–1918.

Lt Col TJ Todd CMG, Maj D Mills, Maj FMW Parker DSO , Capt RT McMaster, Capt CA Barnes, Lt WC Mills, Lt NC Sherard, Sgt Maj SG McWhirter, Sgt HA Campbell Sgt EH Welchman, Pte EW Bell, Pte E Brady, Pte E Cunningham Pte W Davis, Pte S Jones, Pte GF Lidington, Pte TF Mansbridge, Pte J Marshall, Pte EW Seccombe, Pte JH Wilson.

The gun is a 75mm QF Krupp with the inscription Oranjevrystaat [or/arn/yuh fray start]. (Orange Free State) See Bothaville, Section 1.

Tributes.

The following tributes were printed in a Perth, Western Australia newspaper on the 3rd anniversary of the battle on WA Hill.

In Memoriam

In memory of Pte M. Conway, killed in action, and Lieut. G Hensman, mortally wounded at Slingsfontein, February 9th, 1900; also of Serg. Bishop, who died of the effects of the terrible strain and exposure on the same day.

Their end was easy, and cheered by the thought that the battle was fierce and bravely fought.

Inserted by their comrades, HT and SL Shaw.

Slingsfontein

“You are rather untrained, but never mind that,
You’re as good as ever rode”,
These were the words the Colonel said
As o’er the veldt they trod.”

And each man as he pondered over those words
While riding to the front,
Wished in his heart that the WA lads
Would soon bear the battle’s brunt.

That night on piquet their work began,
But sterner still next day,
A short, sharp skirmish out on the veldt
And Cunningham wounded lay.

Next day a spy was found at work,
Our lads went out that night;
Caught in a trap, at morning’s dawn
They turned at bay to fight.

That Thursday’s fight shall linger on
In their memories when they are old,
And the noble deeds accomplished here
Shall oftentimes be told.

Trathan and Messer, Edwards and White,
All nobly played their parts,
Their gallant rides and Murray’s dash
Were watched with throbbing hearts.

But reinforcements could not go
To help them in their plight;
So there they clung full fourteen hours,
And still maintained their fight.

“Retire” was passed along,
 As the night came on apace,
 And all ranks settled firmly down
 To ride that awful race.

Through hail of hissing lead they dash,
 All riding straight and fast,
 Till the frenzied cheering in their camp,
 Proclaimed them safe at last.

L'Envoi

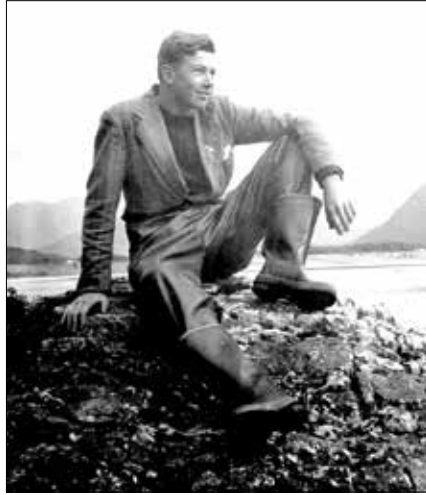
Conway sleeps hard by the hill,
 That he had fought to hold;
 Hensman's grave is at the foot
 Of Table Mountain grim and bold;
 While Bishop's buried at De Aar.
 (As though a link between) –
 Reminds us of the path they trod;
 And keeps their memory green

No. 121371 Bunbury February 9 1903.

Part B

Sidetracks & Snippets

A potted history of an interesting life



Midge was born in Sydney, on 30th November 1930 of New Zealander parents. He had one brother, Gavin (a dentist, mountain climber and good bloke), who died of skin cancer at 39. In early 1932 the family moved to South Africa when his father who worked for an American company was retrenched when they closed up and took all their American staff back to the USA. Work in Australia was almost impossible to find. His Dad had served in France in WW1; his Mum was a trained nurse who had completed her paediatrics nursing in the USA. In South Africa the family prospered, until Dad lost nearly all they possessed on the Stock Exchange crash in 1939.

Christened Matthew Charles like his father, he was called ‘the midget version’, then ‘Midge’ – but soon grew to be 6 foot 2 inches.

Midge was educated at St John’s College in Johannesburg, which – especially after the War – was a backbone-strengthening existence which he hated at the time, but left wonderful memories and



he is a life member of the 'Old Johannians'. He is still in regular email contact with friends he made there, more than 70 years ago.

After he left school, he listened to his Mum and joined a firm of accountants in Jo'burg, then subsequently a merchant bank. At 16 he had acquired his first motor-cycle (a Royal Enfield 125cc, 2-stroke) along with a passion for photography, females and travel, all of which continue until today and have led to some unexpected and amazing experiences.

Fired by derogatory comments about young men's lack of 'get-up-and-go' by his girl-friend's father, Midge took on a second job at night at the 'Doll's House', a drive-in diner, and saved enough so that he would be able to buy a motor-bike and support himself for several months overseas. Then, in 1953 off he went on the R.M.V. *Stirling Castle* to England, arriving just in time to sleep in the Mall and see the Queen go by to her Coronation on 2 June 1953. He vowed to be as far away as he could if there was ever another Coronation in his lifetime... there hasn't been one!

His naïve mother gave him a diary as a parting gift, so that he could record his adventures for the family to read when he returned. His father was more worldly and just made him promise himself to stick it out for at least a year, no matter what. Midge has since always religiously kept a diary when he travels and that is paying off with these memoirs.

What a fantastic three years lay ahead! With an old Johannesburg friend, then working in Manchester, he went to Europe on his motor-bike, meeting other friends along the way, and spending 6 weeks riding through France, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy. At that time Britain and Europe were still cleaning up and rebuilding after WW2. The boys visited the Opel car works in Heidelberg, the Lancia factory in Turin and the Mercedes-Benz works in Stuttgart. (Oh my, such excitement!!! I'm so sad I missed them. I lie.)

Back in England he started working at Vauxhall Motors in Luton and after three months got transferred to their London office.

He had a South African girl friend who lived in a women's hostel annex. This had a strict curfew, but he soon learnt where the creaking floorboards were in the wooden staircase.

The UK weather was an eye-opener for him. One night returning to Luton on his motorbike he encountered a sudden bank of fog, which was like riding into a brick wall. This condensed on his helmet and soon turned into a sheet of ice which eventually fell off with a clunk as it shattered on the tank. Another time the fog was so thick that he could only proceed by riding



with his left foot dragging along the edge of the kerb to maintain progress on the correct side of the road. He did accidentally turn into several driveways and intersections. He quickly decided to give the bike a rest for the winter.

Midge went to live with other South Africans and Aussies at 53 Oakley Street, Chelsea (and is still in touch with them). What a warm, friendly atmosphere this was for kids a long way from home.

He had wanted to watch the annual Isle of Man TT races and, soon after the Coronation, set off for that island, along with thousands of other motorcyclists from all over the World. He still talks longingly of the fantastic time he had.

The next year he went again and took his friend Leo with him on pillion. They went via Wales and returned to London via the Lake District.

Later that year together with friend Graham they rode to the most northern part of Scotland, John O'Groats and back. That took a week.

Nearly 4 years earlier, his great pal Donald Harrison had suggested that the 2 of them should do a tour of Europe before they settled down and got married. This did not happen, but in 1955 he decided to join Midge and this was just in time to go with Leo and Midge on a skiing trip to Norway. In Oslo, while waiting for the train to Lillehammer, there was another young chap also waiting for the train, so Midge went up to him and asked him if he could speak English. He could and came from London and was going to the same place. His name was Peter Nockles and he has remained a life-long friend.

As summer approached Don and Midge planned for a really long European Continental tour. This time for 10 weeks. Some of the countries and cities they visited were Paris, Madrid, Valencia, around the Mediterranean coast, Monte Carlo, Genoa, Pompeii, Sorrento, ferry to Capri, Monte Casino, Venice, Germany, along the Rhine, through Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland, Hamburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Oslo, Bergen, North Sea ferry to Newcastle, and home to London once more.

While in Denmark, Matthew received the devastating news that the 'love of his life', beautiful Ann, had been killed in a car accident in England. He had dreamed the previous week that she had been calling his name and reaching her hand out to him and he had made up his mind to ask her to marry him. He has never really got over this loss.

By 1955, as he had been in England for over 2 years, he became eligible for two years military conscription. He had to make up his mind to do it or leave the country, so he decided to go home to South Africa. He signed on as a waiter on the 'MV *Braemar Castle* back to Durban – another thing he has no wish to do again. He sometimes wonders how his life would have turned out if he had joined the British Army then. He would have possibly gone to a variety of trouble spots such as Cyprus, Malaya, Suez and others.

Back home he was very unsettled, so went to Rhodesia and lived there for three years, ('the closest place to Paradise that I have been').

A big influence in his life was his involvement with a church Youth Forum. When we went to SA in 1997, a large group of ex-members got together for a reunion with him. Some said he had been the uniting force in keeping them all in touch over the decades.

During this time he met another beautiful girl, Jean, whom he married. They had four children, Kerrin, Ann, Peter and Stephen. In 1981 he and Jean were divorced and Midge, after careful investigation, came to Perth, Western Australia in 1987. Jean and the kids have since emigrated here too.

Very gregarious, Midge has always been very active in many societies, usually as a President or committee member. Most activities involve travel, motor-cycles, photography, military history, electronic gadgets and PEOPLE. He would never have lasted as a banker or accountant. For many years in South Africa he was involved in the sale of heavy earth-moving equipment, then built up a successful floor epoxy-coating business.

Apart from his travels around Europe, Midge took part in several distant motor-cycle rallies in Southern Africa, including two Trout Rallies in Zimbabwe which went from Durban to different places in neighbouring



Rhodesia, once alone and once he led a group of friends, adding a day flight from Bulawayo to visit the spectacular Victoria Falls, and two Buffalo Rallies in South Africa.

He also started up a popular Sunday morning bike run which went within 200km of Durban. On one memorable occasion, he rode from Durban to Cape Town in one day... 1,753 km! He also took part in the DJ, which is a race for vintage motor-cycles from Durban to Johannesburg. He is now a member of the Veteran Motor Cycle Club in Perth.

Over the years Midge has visited numerous battlefields. These include Waterloo, WW1 French and Belgian sites, and Gallipoli (x2), American Civil War areas, among others.



Motorists along Bulawayo's Selborne Avenue stopped their cars and stared yesterday afternoon as this group of motorcyclists revved their powerful machines en route to the City centre.
The bikes and their owners left Durban on Thursday morning and the group plans to tour Rhodesia before going on to Fort Victoria for the Trout Motorcycle Rally

at Lake Kyle next weekend. The leader, Mr. Midge Carter, said that they are all "casual motorcycle enthusiasts" from the Durban, Howick and Pietermaritzburg areas of Natal.
Today they fly to Victoria Falls for an overnight visit. After collecting their bikes tomorrow they will leave for Salisbury and then go on to Umtali.

Since we met we have been lucky enough to travel extensively and have wandered over battlefields and cemeteries in France, Belgium, Gettysburg and other Civil War areas in the USA, Changi Prison in Singapore, the infamous 'Death Railway' in Thailand (x 5), the Cu Chi tunnels in Vietnam, Hastings and other places in the UK, as well as 10 months in South Africa.

Midge is best described as curious, gregarious, loyal, adventurous, fascinated by electronic gadgets, disorganized. He has a phenomenal memory for history, but cannot find anything (unless it is in a pile somewhere). He values people and has kept in regular contact with friends from school, a youth group, former girlfriends, fellow back-packers met through the decades, his first job, fellow military historians, etc. He knows the names of all the workers at the local shops, most of the neighbours in our street, people we have met on cruises, etc – and they remember him. Most of his time, interest, anger and skill involves his computer. Much of my amusement comes from his 'atrosbus' spelling! He has suffered some very serious health issues, but thinks porridge will cure all. Patience-trying as he can be, I will keep him because – no matter where we are –he always brings me coffee in bed at 7 am.

And me?

I (Patricia Margaret Woodman, née Green) was born in Cue, Western Australia, on 28th November 1940, so our birthdays are two days (and 10 years) apart. My grandparents included Irish convicts who arrived in NSW in 1816 and free settlers from Germany in 1853, so I am a dinki-di Aussie and fiercely patriotic.

I have three sons and a daughter with wonderful spouses, six grandchildren, and three brothers. My cherished mother is still feisty at 97. No-one could be prouder of their family than I.

I taught junior school children for 35 years (B.Ed) but, after breast cancer and a serious hand injury, retired early. Midge and I had just met in 1995, and that was the beginning of our battlefield wanderings together. We share a passion for military history and travel.

Apart from my family, my other passions are Australian and war poetry, reading, volunteering, Wasgij jigsaw puzzles, giving talks about the Anglo-Boer and Zulu Wars, finding the stories behind the names on graves and monuments, and coffee with friends.

This project to share Midge's photos and experiences with you has consumed my time and interest for a year or two, so I hope that you will enjoy them and gain from it.

The following are offshoots which were inspired by our interest in the Anglo-Boer War. Some are intriguing items we have come across or people we have met; some are activities that we got involved in.

Lord Baden-Powell's Letter

This very sensible advice from Major-General RSS Baden-Powell, was recorded in the Regimental Orders of the 3rd Bushmen's Contingent, which Trish transcribed.

I want all ranks, especially those of Corps which have more recently come into the country, to take note of the experience gained in recent encounters with the Boers and to use them for further guidance. My remarks are intended to apply equally to a leader of a small patrol as to an OC, a Squadron or a Regiment.

British Training. You should understand that the British Army training is only intended to give a general military grounding for action in any part of the world and it has then to be finally adapted and altered to suit the particular enemy we happen to be engaged against and the country we are working in.

Dash and fearlessness are our usual conspicuous attributes but in dealing with a cunning foe, in a trappy country, these have to be tempered with a certain amount of care and discretion if you want to succeed.

Boer Methods. The best road to success is to take a leaf out of your enemy's book, to study his methods, and to use the best of them against him. We all recognize that the Boers are remarkable:

1st for their accurate knowledge of our moves, whereabouts and numbers—through good and thorough scouting

2nd for their cunning. They scarcely ever do a move without employing some cunning ruse or laying in ambushcade [sic] for us etc

3rd for their quickness and individual intelligence in action in getting round our flanks and coming upon hidden numbers from unexpected quarters.

In these points we have only to learn from them to equal them at their own game- with the additional advantage that we have the pluck that they lack.

Scouting To put these points into practice, improvement in our scouting is the first essential. Scouts must not be mere parade ground images hanging about close to the force, but must be as it were hunters, using all their cunning and woodcraft to find out where the enemy is and what he is up to, and they must be a good distance from their force so as to have lots of time for examining ticklish places, and to give the main body warning of enemy being about in good time to prevent surprise.

No commander should move until he knows, through spies, native patrols or scouts, that the ground about him is clear, or if the enemy are about, pretty well where [sic] they are and in what numbers and what the geography of the country is and [note: The above remarks are not intended for mere phrases, but to be really digested and acted up to] *open formation and use of supports*. It does not show even common sense to blunder into a trap laid by the enemy for you, and then helplessly have to wait like a sheep in a ditch til somebody comes to pull you out, yet it is what has often happened in this war, when we might by efficient scouting have seen through their game and got them under our fire instead.

One useful point is never to have your force in one body but to keep part of it in reserve as a support. In a small party there is seldom any necessity to have a main body at all, you can move as a number of small groups or patrols, so long as the leaders of these groups work intelligently, conforming to the commanding officer or his signals.

There is no reason for riding knee to knee that I know of except that it looks nice on parade at Aldershot or might be useful in the cavalry charge; on the other hand, if you ride at open files you do not afford a target, you can take your own line of ground, and the horses don't get jostled and tired. You have got to do it when under fire, so why not be in the habit of it always

so it becomes natural, but when in formation every man must himself look out for signals and wishes of the leader and act accordingly. A large body should always, whether on the march, in attack, in defence of a position or in bivouac, have parties out to protect its flank and always a reserve to act as reinforcements to be used at any point requiring it. When on the march in command, you should be careful to note in your minds as you go along of all places likely to be useful or dangerous, should you have to return that way under pressure of enemy.

Similarly when in patrols every man of you should note carefully the country as you go along in case your patrol should have to scatter under a sudden attack, so that each of you would know your own way back to the next supporting body or rallying point.

It is a most useful practice for the commander of a patrol frequently to select and point out a kopje, farm, drift, pass or other feature as a rallying point should the patrol be obliged temporarily to scatter. Don't use all your force at once, but always if possible try and keep a bit up your sleeve, out of sight and silent, ready to use against sudden emergencies, especially surprises against your flank or rear, which the Boers are so fond of trying, and never on any occasion omit to have scouts or vedettes out on all sides by day and night, whether halted or on the move or whether enemy are near or not. By these means you will never be caught unawares and may spring a surprise on the enemy.

Attack on position. If it becomes necessary to attack position, avoid attacking directly in front. It will often be best to feign attack in front & work around one or (both?) flanks of the enemy to any favourable ground which your scouts can discover. If the position is too strong, you may even evade it altogether and draw the enemy out by passing by it. The capture of a position is not done nowadays so much by bayonet charge as by bringing a telling crossfire to bear on the defenders and do not forget that point when, on the other hand, you are occupying the position yourself. See that you are able to receive attack from every possible direction. If you make yourself really strong in a position it will take 6 to 8 times your number of Boers to turn you out.

Led horses. When dismounted to attack, common sense will tell you that horses must be kept at some distance from the fight or under good cover

from fire and from view. They should have a guard to protect or drive them and vedettes should be posted to warn the guard of enemy's moves.

Care of horses. As I have pointed out, all these precautions are useless, all attempts to do good work unavailing, if your horses are not kept in good condition to carry them out, and in practice the effectiveness of the horses mainly depends on the amount of care that each individual man takes of his mount, not only in patting him at morning stables with a brush, but more particularly in riding him as you would like to be ridden yourself, easily and quietly, relieving him on every possible occasion by dismounting when at a walk or in heavy ground, and in not riding him at any pace beyond his ordinary speed or for longer stretch than he can easily keep it up. With such consideration, coupled with close attention to saddle fitting and frequent watering and feeding, you will find yourself well mounted and able to cope with all demands of service with complete confidence in your mount.

Individual intelligence. One secret of the Boers' dodgy manoeuvring is that they are told what the move is to be and each man works his own way to carry it out. Commanders of parties should similarly tell your men what is known of the enemy and what your own plan is. In this way you will find the men doing the job twice as intelligently as if only directed by words of command.

Rustenburg. 26.7.1900. RSS Baden-Powell, Major General, Commanding Frontier Force.

Regimental Orders of the 3rd Bushmen's Contingent. (*West Australians & Victorians*)

Some random selections from the Orders which Trish transcribed:

Bulawayo, 24.6.1900. Any Officer who wishes to be inoculated as a protection against Typhoid or Enteric Fever, will report himself to the Brigade Major by 2pm tomorrow. The PMO assures them that it is quite harmless and will not incapacitate anyone from duty. He strongly advocates it, as Enteric is very prevalent down the line.

Piensaars River, 10.10.1900. 'The practice of throwing rounds of ammunition on the fire must cease. Men should be careful to see that their bandoliers are closed when sitting near a fire'.

Piensaars River, 11.10.1900. 'The practice of wearing feathers, hyena tails and other ornaments in hats must be discontinued'.

Belhoek, 7.11.1900. 'The Commanding Officer has noticed that men are in the habit of leaving camp without arms. It is to be clearly understood that men are to take their rifles or bandoliers with them whenever they leave camp either to water horses or for any other purposes. This order has been issued repeatedly and in future any case of disregard will be severely dealt with'.

Eestefabriken, 22.11.1900. 'When leaving camp, the officer in charge will see that nothing is left behind. At the last camp bandoliers, side arms and nose bags belonging to men of the Force have been picked up after the troops had left'.

Eestefabriken, 24.11.1900. 'The following wire from the Military Secretary dated 18.11.1900, is published for information. As there appears to be some misunderstanding with regard to the burning and breaking in of farms, the

Commander in Chief wished to be the lines on which G.O.Cs are to act. No farms are to be burnt except for acts of treachery and where troops have been fired on from the premises or the punishment for breaking up of the railway or telegraph lines or where they have been used as a base of operations for raids and only then by direct consent of the G.O.C, which is to be given in writing. The mere fact of a burgher being absent on commando is on no account to be used as a reason for burning the house. All cattle, wagons and foodstuffs are to be recovered from all farms. If that is found to be impossible they are to be destroyed, whether the owner be present or not.'

Roodepoort, 27.11.1900. Extracts from Brigade Orders by Lt Col Craddock, commanding 1st Australian Bushmen.

'O.C. Regts will see that the men under their command understand to what Brigade they belong and by whom it is commanded. Several instances have occurred of men not knowing to what they belong and saying they have never heard of the Bushmen Brigade.'

Pretoria, 25.3.1901. 'The C.O. notes with regret that the men have ceased to take the slightest trouble and care of their bayonets. They must recollect that at any time they fall short of ammunition they are to fight with their bayonets and it is impossible for mounted infantry when doing an attack, to take a position stubbornly held without using their bayonets.'

These phrases – taken from the above orders – made me giggle: “leaving camp without arms”, “nose bags belonging to men”. *Trish*

Horse Sickness



Horse Monument Port Elizabeth

“The greatness of a Nation consists not so much in the number of its people or the extent of its territory as in the extent and justice of its compassion”

Erected by public subscription in recognition of the services of the gallant animals which perished in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902

In the Regimental Orders there were continuing notes about the care and treatment of the horses and mules, including the following

14.8.1900

A) Owing to the outbreak of Glanders and Farcey amongst transport mules of the Australian Bushmen, the following will be carefully noted:

- 1 OC Squadrons and Transport Officers will make frequent inspections of the animals of their command or charge.
- 2 Conductors will make daily inspections of all mules and report any sickness and so forth at once to the Transport Officer. Veterinary officers of Brigades will arrange for a weekly inspection of all animals in their charge. They must be informed of any deaths or sickness occurring.

- 3 Animals found with suspicious symptoms of Glanders or Farcey will be at once isolated.

Symptoms of Glanders

- a) Glutinous discharge from one or both nostrils
- b) Ulcers in nostrils
- c) Hard swellings in the glands under the jaw

Note: In Strangles the swelling under the jaw becomes an abscess and bursts and there are no ulcers in the nostrils.

Farcey

Small ulcers running in lines on various parts of the body, chiefly on the outside of the legs. The disease is very contagious and incurable.

21.10.1900, Pienaars River

B) Horse sickness season.

Brigade Orders of Lt.Col JS Nicolson, commanding 1st Brigade, Australian Bushmen.

Precautions to be observed during horse sickness season.

- a) Early morning and late evening watering should be avoided as much as possible.
- b) Animals should be picketed in the open on ridge sites, so as to be above night and morning mists. They should be securely fastened so as to prevent their breaking loose and wandering to rivers in the neighbourhood during the night.
- c) Animals should not enter spruits until the sun has dispersed the mists.
- d) Between the hours of 8am and 4pm all animals while in their standing should have their nose bags sprinkled with a weak solution of carbolic acid or creosote.
- e) At standing camps and during marches the highest sites should be selected for horse lines.
- f) All refuse etc should be burnt and allowed to smoulder, at early morning and in the evenings to windward of the horse lines, so that the smoke will drive between the horse lines.
- g) Animals should not be allowed to graze between the hours of 4pm and 10am under any circumstances and not at all on cloudy days. Animals unavoidably employed between 5pm and 10am should receive 5 grs of

white arsenic at the sick horse lines before proceeding on duty, and preferably administered the previous evening. Orderlies' horses, mules, engaged to draw supplies etc at early market.

- h) Animals should be worked lightly and not sweated in this season when climate predisposes them to disease.
- I) Use of green grass as feed or bedding should be strictly prohibited.
- j) It is desirable to avoid early morning and late evening marches.
- k) In all cases where the disease has been established a change of site is absolutely necessary, if possible to a higher location.
- l) It must be borne in mind that animals' vitality is most lowered at this time of the year. Therefore excessive exhaustion of every kind should be avoided and good stable management, in conjunction with the foregoing rules, will confer comparative immunity from this disease.
- m) OC Mounted Troups of various stations should make enquiries from old residents etc as to which areas should be avoided and when the disease may be expected, duration of time etc.
- n) Horse sickness commences about the end of November and ends about the 1st frost in winter.

C) Captain Thomas, (later Major, of the Morant and Handcock trial) wrote from Marandellas:

“Up to date the NSW Contingent has lost 103 horses. You ride out on your horse in the morning and he is to all appearances in high fettle. At midday he shows symptoms of sickness and at evening or next morning may be dead. In one form, the tongue turns blue or purple colour and this is called ‘Blue Tongue’. In fact, the disease is not understood.”

Cholera

An infallible cure

Amongst my treasured books is an old household guide that was my grandmother's, entitled *Dr Chase's Receipt Book and Household Physician* (1894). It contains:

Practical Knowledge for the People, from the Life-Long Observations of the Author, embracing the Choicest, Most Valuable and Entirely New Receipts in Every Department of Medicine, Mechanics and Household Economy.

This custom, of giving every noun a 'capital letter', has come back into vogue, if the death notices and other social notices in our local paper are anything to go by!

The author is AW Chase, MD, who was also the author of *Dr Chase's Family Physician, Farrier, Bee Keeper and Second Receipt Book*.

Dr Chase includes the following 'infallible cure for Cholera', from Dr Jordan of the Mining Record, adding 'I know that a dozen drops of chloroform in a little water will at once correct a gaseous condition of a dyspeptic stomach, so why should it not correct a much more disturbed condition by using larger quantities? I would certainly 'go for it' on the 'double quick'.

'A half teaspoon of chloroform in about eight times as much water is an infallible cure for Cholera. A doctor who lived in Mobile, Alabama, and had great success in curing people during a cholera epidemic there, told me about it. When, in the Cuban Revolution, I went to Cuba to help organize the insurgent army, I had the chance to try the remedy, for a cholera epidemic broke out among the troops. My first experiment was on a Negro who was in the last stages. It cured him and hundreds after him. When we marched the officers carried bottles of chloroform, and if a man fell out sick with cholera, the remedy was given and he was able to resume his place. I have seen men lying by the roadside in a state of collapse, almost dead. An officer would ride up, dismount and give him the remedy, and before the column had passed the man would be in the ranks again'.

Dr Chase had a cure for everything, including removing the ‘taint’ or ill-smell from meat, how to destroy bed-bugs, a recipe for ‘Fly Stickumfast’, how to stop horses kicking, how to clip a queen bee’s wing and a hair-restorative (which had raised a thick head of hair on a bald scalp)! His explanation of Malaria however, shows how far we have come in medical knowledge: ‘Bad air; air which tends to cause disease, supposed to arise from decayed vegetable matter.’

I don’t want to be seen to be trivialising Cholera. I just want to show the levels of mis-information and treatments available a century ago. Another book (*The Family Physician*) that my grandmother, living far from ‘civilisation’, would have consulted, gives a prescription for each ailment. Ingredients include opium, aconite, belladonna, cresote, mercury, Indian hemp, chloroform, hydrochloric acid!

Note. Read the notes from Dr ‘Weary’ Dunlop’s description of cholera (Benalla, in *Other monuments*).

I Killed A Man at Graspan

I always find this poem most moving, horribly sad. I wonder how many soldiers have found the burden of similar thoughts overwhelming and been tortured by them for the rest of their life.

Graspan (Enslin) is about 70–80 km south of Kimberley on the N12 road to Cape Town. This battle took place on 25.11.1899. Midshipman Huddart was killed here.

Notes. When I was investigating the copyright for this poem, I found that it seems to have been rediscovered by bush poets, etc. It was written by Montague (Monty) Grover 1870–1943, and published in the *Coo-ee Reciter* in 1904.

Trish

I killed a man at Graspan

The tale of a returned Australian Contingenter done into verse

I killed a man at Graspan', I killed him fair in a fight,
And the Empire's poets and the Empire's priests swear blind I acted right.
The Empire's poets and the Empire's priests make out my deed was fine,
But they can't stop the eyes of the man I killed from starin' into mine.

I killed a man at Graspan, maybe I killed a score
But this one wasn't a chance-shot home, from a thousand yards or more.
I fired at him when he'd got no show; we were only a pace apart,
With the cordite scorchin' his old worn coat as the bullet drilled his heart.

I killed a man at Graspan, I killed him fightin' fair,
We came on each other face to face, an' we went at it then and there.
Mine was the trigger that shifted first, his was the life that sped.
An' a man I'd never a quarrel with was spread on the boulders dead.

I killed a man at Graspan; I watched him squirmin' till
He raised his eyes an' they met mine; an' there they're staring still.
Cut of my brother Tom he looked, hardly more'n a kid;
An' Christ! He was stiffenin' at my feet because of the thing I did.

I killed a man at Graspan; I told the camp that night;
An' of all the lies that ever I told that was the poorest skite.
I swore I was proud of my hand-to-hand an'the Boer I'd chanced to pot,
An' all the time I'd ha' gave my eyes to never ha' fired a shot.

I killed a man at Graspan, an hour ago about,
For there he lies with his starin' eyes, an' his blood still tricklin' out.
I know it was either him or me, I know that I killed him fair,
But, all the same, wherever I look, the man that I killed is there.

I killed a man at Graspan; my first and, God! my last;
Harder to dodge than my bullet is the look that his dead eyes cast.
If the Empire asks for me later on it'll ask for me in vain,
Before I reach to my bandolier to fire on a man again.

“Regrets, I’ve Had a Few”

Midge

When I was invited as a schoolboy to the opening of the Johannesburg War Museum (see ‘Ship Models’), I was too shy to meet my hero General Smuts.

When I was selling up and packing to come to Australia in 1987 I was sorting things into tea chests – some to bring and the other to send to the tip, unfortunately they got mixed and I eventually received that full tea chest of *rubbish* in Perth.

I had to prune the amount of possessions to bring with me, so I sold my huge weapon collection (the red tape was far too difficult to deal with) and either sold or gave away some of my military memorabilia. Among the latter was my Dad’s WW1 helmet, he having been on the Western Front with the NZ Field Artillery.

Ship Models

I have always had a passionate interest in ships and one of the saddest memories of my childhood was of my Dad waking me and my brother to tell us that HMS *Hood* had been sunk. I was eight or nine years old. I was devastated.

So, when I was 13 or 14 and attending boarding school at St John’s in Johannesburg, I used to go to the War Museum in Johannesburg to look at the displays. (The Museum was housed upstairs in the Johannesburg Library at that time.)

There were no models of German warships on display then and I wanted a model of the German Pocket Battleship, *Graaf Spee*, which had done a lot of damage around the South African coast. The British had trapped it at Montevideo, Uruguay and the Germans had scuttled it. So with Dad’s help but only newspaper and magazines photos to guide me, I made a model out of wood, pins, toothpicks and bits and pieces. Once painted and finished I needed to see how it compared with the professionally made models at the War Museum.

Off I went to the Museum and placed it on the glass cabinet to compare it with the models of British ships there. I was soon grabbed by one of the Museum Staff and dragged off to the Curator, a Captain Belwood, in spite of my protests of innocence. He could see at once that this was not one from the display case, but asked me to donate it, which I didn't want to do. So he asked me to make some for the Museum.

I said that I had no plans but he introduced me to the Chief Reference Librarian who showed me a copy of *Jane's Fighting Ships* and gave permission for me to trace the pictures on to graph paper. My *Graff Spee* turned out to be to a scale of 60 feet to one inch whereas the models in the museum were the more common 50 feet to the inch. I decided to stick to 60 feet to the inch, perhaps not a wise one in hindsight..

I made models of *Tirpitz*, *Scharnhorst*, U-boats U-570 and U-41, *Max Shulz* (destroyer), and *Deutschland* among others. They were displayed from 1944 until 1995. In 1997 I tried unsuccessfully to have them returned to me



WORLD WAR II GERMAN WARSHIPS

SCALE MODELS MADE BY MATTHEW CARTER (MIDGE) AGED 13/14, FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN WAR MUSEUM, JOHANNESBURG WHERE THEY WERE EXHIBITED FROM 1944 TO 1995.

THESE ARE MADE FROM WOOD, PAPER, PINS, TOOTHPICKS, COTTON AND PAINT. NO ACCURATE SCALE PLANS WERE THEN AVAILABLE, ONLY OUTLINE DRAWINGS FROM "JANE'S FIGHTING SHIPS" AND CAREFUL OBSERVATION OF AVAILABLE PHOTOGRAPHS WERE USED.

as they were no longer on display, then in 2000 my friend and new Director, John Keene, gave them back to me. There should have been 10 models but I only got 9, as a model of an American 'Essex' class aircraft carrier had been missing for some time and may have been souveniered by someone.

When the new Museum was opened in 1946 by General Smuts (whom I admired) I was the only schoolboy invited to attend. I was given time off from my school, St John's in Jo'burg, and walked and ran all the way there. However I was too shy to meet General Smuts or other dignitaries. Something I have always regretted. At the time I was 15.

HMAS *Australia*

In January 1946 (when I was 15), HMAS Australia called into Durban from the UK, where she had undergone major repairs for damage done by the Japanese in the Pacific. She was hit by more Kamikaze suicide planes than any other Allied war ship in World War Two and survived. I took photos of the ship and of my family and friends aboard.

Sir Percy Fitzpatrick

1862– 1931

Sir Percy led a very adventurous life and played an important role in the history of South Africa. Many South Africans will immediately think of his book *Jock of the Bushveldt* featuring his dog, Jock. He was instrumental in establishing huge citrus estates, both near Uitenhage and in the Sundays River area. He was also involved in mining and politics.

His brother George was killed during the Anglo-Boer War at Willow Grange (see grave). He lost his three sons tragically. Major Nugent FitzPatrick was killed in action on 14.12.1917 at Beaumetz, France, and was buried in Beugny. In 1927 his remaining two sons died within 2 weeks of each other, Oliver of typhoid fever and Alan in a shooting accident. His daughter, my friend Cecily, lived to a grand old age.

Nugent's death led to his father, Sir Percy, suggesting to Lord Milner that it be put to the War Cabinet that a two minute silence be observed annually at 11 am on 11th November, for all fallen soldiers. (During World War 1 a daily two minute 'pause' had been observed in South Africa.) When put to the King he agreed and it was proclaimed on 7th November 1919.

Coincidentally it would seem, an Australian journalist Edward George Honey (under the name Owen Foster) had suggested a five minute silence in a letter to the London *Evening News* on 8th May 1919, but this was not acted upon at the time. Both men have been given credit for the suggestion, but with some conflicting opinions on whose idea it was.

Sir Percy was the prime mover in securing, as a perpetual memorial, the Delville Wood site in France, where so many South Africans were killed in WW1, in replanting the forest and reburying the fallen in the cemetery opposite the memorial, and he played an important part at the dedication ceremony. I was given his copy of the Dedication Ceremony booklet by his daughter Cecily. (See also Delville Wood, Section 2).

Ian Player had asked me to show him around the Natal battlefields and later suggested to Cecily (then in her 80s) that she would enjoy these experiences. Luckily we did not use my old 'banger' VW and we used her Mercedes-Benz! Subsequently I enjoyed several trips to Kruger National Park also, where she and her husband had donated a 'camp' site. She was very knowledgeable about all forms of African wildlife and especially its birds, so it was a delight to be with her, and I visited her home Amanzi in Uitenhage several times too.

Stanger, KZN

A visit to Shaka's monument

In 2001 we called in to Stanger, Natal, to look at this memorial to Shaka, not realising that it was his anniversary. To our surprise and delight we found ourselves the only whites in a crowd of people who had come – in ceremonial gear – to commemorate him. There was much dancing etc and everyone was very welcoming to us, even finding a chair for Trish to stand on so that she could see better. What a pity that many of our friends were horrified when they heard we had been to Stanger, believing that we were in a hostile situation.

Shaka's memorial:

*In memory of Tshaka
Senzangankona
The Founder, King and Ruler of
the Zulu Nation
Born about 1787. Died 24th
September 1828.
Erected by his descendent and heir,
Solomon ka Dinizulu, and the
Zulu Nation.
ad 1927*



South African Military History Society

Midge

I was among a small group which started up the Durban branch so many decades ago. It became an adventurous and active Society, with many members writing well-respected books, serving as an editor of 'The Military Journal', becoming tour guides, giving talks etc, and large numbers (including their wives and children) wandering far and wide on battlefield excursions. Sadly many of these men and women have died, but they leave behind a valuable store of information that was gathered when graves and battlefields were still untouched and people were still living who had memories of the 2nd Anglo-Boer War.

This society is an excellent resource for those interested in South African military history, especially of the Zulu and Anglo-Boer Wars. They also have branches in Johannesburg, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth.

Fiona Barbour. Fiona is an artillery expert and was curator of the McGregor Museum in Kimberley for many years. She has a wide knowledge of the military history of the area and played an important role in their centenary displays etc. She took part in the centenary climb of Amajuba. She has always warmly welcomed me/us into her home over several decades.

Bob Benardie. A school headmaster at Discovery on the West Rand. A great and knowledgeable companion and long-time friend until his death in the 90s.

'SB' Bourquin was a man who was held in high regard by the Zulu people. He was the Bantu Administrator and was very fluent in their language. He was also very knowledgeable about the many wars fought in Natal and surrounding areas, and I went with him on many an exploration, including Itala, Mome Gorge and Amajuba. He trudged up Amajuba with my 4 year old daughter Ann on his back!

George (GA) Chadwick produced several extensive “Notes” on the Zulu War battles, photocopied in foolscap format with maps and tables, of which I have several. They cost 45c and 50c, and we used them on our trips to battlefields. They were headed *Natal Educational Activities Association*.

Belinda Gordon was for many years the Curator at Greytown and then Colesberg Museums, but is now retired, Belinda is a real fundi on the battles in the Colesberg area. She and husband Harry also ran a delightful B & B in Colesberg for many years.

Maurice Gough-Palmer. Maurice was on the War Graves Commission

Ken Gillings has been a real force behind the interest in and promotion of the battle fields for visiting military historians and tourists, particularly in the Natal area and for the Centenary of the Anglo-Boer War. He is a very knowledgeable and experienced tour guide and has written several reference books and articles, including *Battles of Kwa-Zulu Natal* published by Art Publishers P/L, Durban. We were both on the Amajuba commemoration climb in 1981 (see Part A) and on the trek to Mome Gorge to Cetshwayo’s grave. A valued and long-time friend.

Darrell Hall, author of *Halt! Action Front! With Colonel Long at Colenso* (of which I have a draft copy) and *The Hall Handbook of the Anglo-Boer War*. Darrell, who sadly died in 1996 before the latter was published, had been a Major in the British Army and was an expert on artillery. He had been involved in the War Graves Commission and, as Chairman, the SA Military Society. He introduced slide-show talks to the meetings, produced by “Metro-Goldwyn-Hall” and these were very much enjoyed.

Justin Hulme , was a colonel in the Royal Durban Light Infantry, and a major player in getting the Durban branch of the SAMHS going. Now living in Victoria; took part in the visit to Cetshwayo’s grave; wrote several articles for the Military History Journal.

Llewellyn Hyde (see Part A, Spioenkop).

Nick Kinsey. A great bloke who was very knowledgeable and wrote for the *Military History Journal*.

Mervyn Robinson. For more than 40 years I have been sure of a bed in the Robinson home in Ladysmith. Mervyn and I have spent countless hours traipsing over battlefields in the Ladysmith area and beyond. Shirley's brother Brian Scott and I climbed Isandlwana together in 1969. (qv)

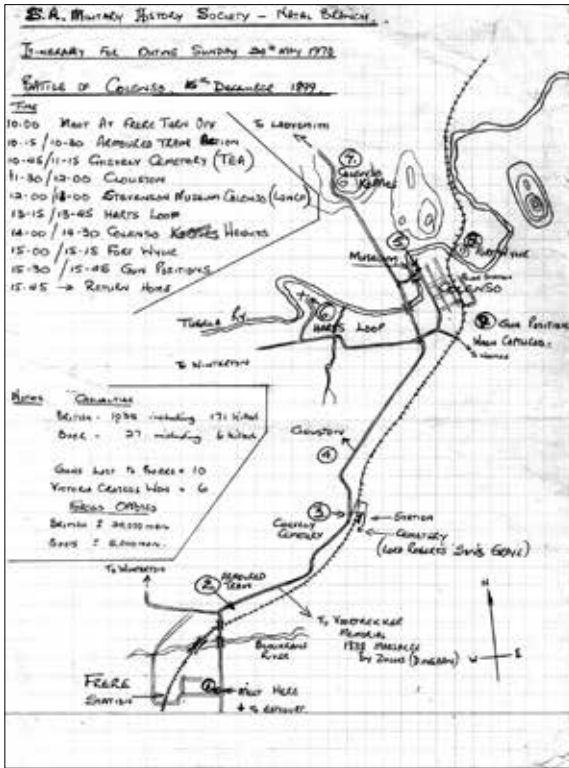
Bertie Simpkins. A retired colonel. Very active in the Society despite his age, and great fun.

Ian Uys. Ian is the author of several books, including *Victoria Crosses of the Anglo-Boer War*, *Roll Call*, *The Delville Wood Story* and *Heidelbergers of the Boer War*. Now based in Knysna, South Africa, he also took part in the centenary climb of Amajuba.

Tania van der Watt (Johnston). Tania was "SB's" private secretary and went on many SAMHS excursions. She typed the two volumes of Zulu War newspaper clippings from *The Illustrated London News* and *The Graphic* and helped him to compile them.

Steve Watt. Steve took part in the centenary climb of Amajuba. He has an enviable collection of ABW photos. He has written four books, including *In Memoriam*, *The Roll of Honour Imperial Forces Anglo-Boer War*.

Lionel Wulfsohn. Not a member of SAMHS, but he was a well known figure in the Rustenburg area. He maintained the Moedwil military cemetery and acted as a guide there and at Eland's River. He is the author of *Rustenburg at War*. During World War 2, while serving in Italy in May 1944, he was hit by German mortar and seriously injured, with multiple wounds. Eithne and Lionel were very hospitable to us and we enjoyed their company immensely.



A sample itinerary.
 This is the itinerary that I planned for a visit to Colenso on Sunday, 24th May 1970. Sometimes it is a positive trait to never throw bits of paper away, Trish!

Sundry Organisations

Even in sleepy Perth there are several very active and keen organisations that study aspects of military history and here are some that we are currently involved in. In the past I have also been a member of the “Arms and Armour Society” and “The Confederate Society”. Trish refuses to include a photo of me dressed as a Zouave.

Anglo-Boer War Study Group of Australia, based in Melbourne. An excellent resource for ABW students. Members are committed to the study of and the sharing of information about that war. Several members have published books on the subject and all are very knowledgeable about the ABW. The President, and Editor of the top-class newsletter, *The Kopje*, is Rob Droogleever (English born, brought up in South Africa), who has devoted years to building up the Society to its high standard. He has written or edited

several books, including *The War with Johnny Boer. Australians in the Boer War 1899-1902* (with Max Chamberlain).

Military History Society of Western Australia. Through this group we have had the honour of meeting veterans of conflicts from World War 2 onwards and listening to their stories. Members tell us about their visits to battlefields overseas or share their knowledge about a wide variety of military topics, involving many countries and allied interests such as weaponry.

SAMVOA

(South African Military Veterans Organisation of Australasia) Including aspects of MOTH meetings, this group usually has a guest speaker or film that focuses on the Border Wars in South Africa.



Surrender Hill

Free State. 10km from Clarence.

A large Boer Commando surrendered here on the 31st July 1900. The British then destroyed numerous weapons, field guns, wagons containing countless rounds of ammunition (Mausers, so not of use to them).

When I first went there, the road went around the hill and the signs of the devastation were amazing. The ground was littered with piles of burst cartridges, metal bits of old wagons etc., but when the road was later tarred a cutting was made right through it so a lot of this detritus was lost. In 1997 despite the new road you could still see vast patches of bare earth, where nothing will grow, as you approached the hill and can still find odd remnants of burnt cartridge cases.

Telegram

“They don’t make men like they used to!”

Trish

A telegram about very keen recruits in Western Australia.

The Third Bushmen’s Contingent of the Mounted Infantry, comprised of West Australians and Victorians, left for South Africa on the Maplemore on the 13th March 1900. The Contingent was disbanded on 18th August 1901.

The following telegram (# 30) was sent to the Premier of Western Australia on 14/2/1900 from the remote outback town of Lawlers and illustrates the eagerness of the young men of the time to be part of the great adventure.

On receipt of your wire yesterday at 6 pm saying all men for bushmen’s contingent must be in Perth this week, I gave up all hope of anyone from here being able to get down in time, and posted copy of wire also public notice on your behalf, thanking all those men who had volunteered. They all seemed bitterly disappointed and four of them, viz Gilliland, Keally, Jackson and Nugent, determined to at once start for Menzies on their bicycles so as to catch Friday’s train. This was 9pm and they had to get their certificates from the doctor and myself, also discharges and wages from where they were working, some of them two miles from town, settle their private business, say goodbye to friends etc. All this they succeeded in doing by 1.30 am, when all government officers and private friends met to bid them goodbye. They seem determined that if they do not get in with the Contingent they will go to South Africa in hopes of being able to join there. At 2 am they started on the one hundred and fifty miles journey over heavy roads and this in weather that has been ranging one hundred and fourteen degrees in the shade. Such patrician and dogged determination is very gratifying and shows at heart some of the essential qualities and deserves reward. I sincerely hope they will pass examination. They expect to reach Perth Saturday morning and call your office for instructions.

AG Clifton, Warden, East Murchison.

Note. Jackson, Nugent and Gilliland (special mention in despatches) were successful in enlisting and serving in this contingent.

Transcription/Pronunciation/ Translation

Transcription.

Trish has spent countless hours transcribing letters, diaries etc, to make them easier for people to read, because nowadays most of us are unfamiliar with the style of handwriting in use pre-computers, and she is always concerned that we may trust the transcriptions of family members, who had no knowledge of the places and names in the letters. For example, the following are taken from a typed letter given to us by a Western Australian school archivist.

Machadodon (Machadodorp), Lydenbury (Lydenburg), Waterval Nuda (Waterval Onder, meaning ‘lower’), Romate Koort (Komati Poort), Walagba Bay (Delagoa Bay).

“Skrints, they are called here, the term being equal to an Australian creek”. The transcriber means ‘spruits’, pronounced ‘sprates’, or a small stream.

Next he refers to Gilatey (Gellatly) and Warling (Darling). The latter is a serious error, as Lt. Darling (1st West Australian Mounted Infantry) was quite a well-known soldier, who played an important role at West Australia Hill and Bothaville. (See his headstone in the ‘graves’ section.)

Another soldier refers to Heartebeestefontien (Hartebeestefontein), Moddu River (Modder River) and Swazirenniki (Schweitzer-Reineke), which isn’t too bad considering the rest of the spelling throughout his letters.

Trish admits to being nearly caught out herself when she wrote about the ‘Listers’ in Mafeking, (*Listers*), until she realized it should have been the ‘Sisters’ (*Sisters*) at the Convent. The difference in the two letters is only the loop on the tail of the ‘L’ (*L* and *S*).

Pronunciation.

We become quite annoyed when “experts” mispronounce the names of the identities, battles and towns they are giving a talk about. So Trish produced a slim, pocket-size *Pronunciation Guide of Afrikaans words pertinent to the Anglo-Boer Wars (with a Zulu supplement)* to try to help non-South Africans to not only pronounce these words, but also because a basic understanding of Afrikaans can help us to picture the type of terrain that the men were covering.

Most place names consist of a descriptive beginning, ie wit (white), klein (little), twee (two) and a geographical ending, ie berg (mountain), burg (town), krans (cliff), pont (ferry crossing point)).

Some examples of the entries, which include names and military terms, are:

olifants [ool/i/funts], elephants e.g. *Olifantsrivier* [Ool/i/funts/r/fee/r]

spruit [sprate] creek, rivulet, e.g. *Nelspruit* [Nel/sprate]

Bezuidenhout [buh/saden/hote]

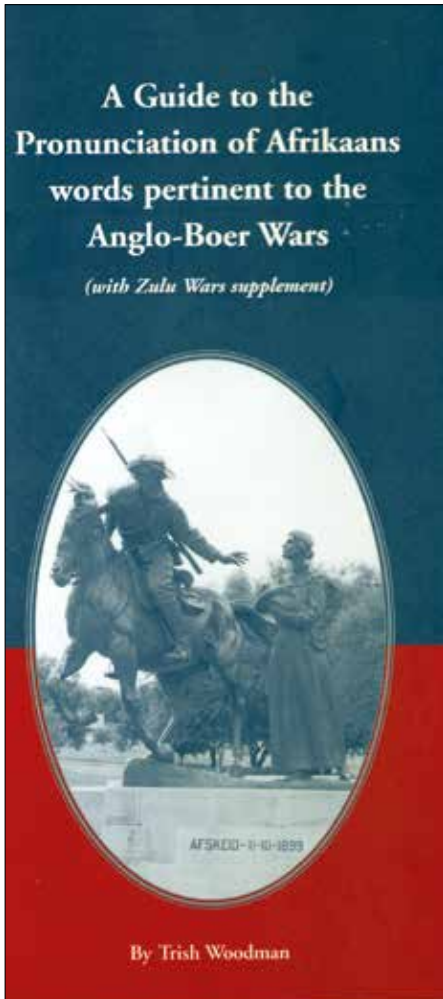
I made an audio-tape to complement her Guide, but sadly tapes have long been replaced by CDs! (The guidebook and tape are still available from

trishw23@iinet.net.au)

We think it is rather rude to anglicize a person's name just to make it easier for ourself. For example, Mr Olivier has been known all his life as Mr Ool/uh/fear, not Ol/iv/ee/uh, so common Christian names and surnames are included.

Translation

I had already painstakingly translated the Afrikaans inscriptions on many monuments and badgered South African friends for help, when I discovered 'Google Translate' just as we completed the book. Believe me, even this came up with some strange and unlikely translations – ('roosters' appeared in one of these!) It did give me some pointers though, especially when Dutch words appeared among the Afrikaans. Special thanks to Fransjohan Pretorius for checking my efforts and filling in the blanks. *Trish.*



Treasured Books

We have an extensive library of books on military history of all wars, but the following are special for us:

My friend “Copper” Smail, who died far too young at 60, wrote books with splendid hand-drawn maps that are often reproduced by modern authors. We went together on field trips and he acknowledges my input in *Those Restless Years*. He also gave me a signed copy of *From the Land of the Zulu Kings*.

SB Bourquin went to a lot of trouble to collect all the references to the Zulu War in the *Illustrated London News* (1971) and *The Graphic* (1966). I had these bound into book form for each of us.

Cecily Niven, daughter of Sir Percy FitzPatrick gave me her copy of *The Delville Wood Memorial Book*. Sir Percy played an important role in the establishment of this memorial site and in the Dedication ceremony.

In 1966 I sent to Foyles Bookstore in London for a second-hand set of seven volumes (with maps) of the *Times History of the War in South Africa*. The previous owner had bought it in 1910.

My then wife patiently typed the letters of Dr Fielding and I had the two volumes bound.

A copy of all the newsletters of the Military Historical Society of WA, (*War Diary*), that I had produced. Trish had these printed and bound for me as a birthday present.

Military Experience

Umkomaas Commando



School Cadets was compulsory when I was at St John's. Then, after I had been in England for three years, I got my British call-up papers, so decided that I would return to South Africa as originally planned. Who knows I may have been sent to Cyprus or the Malayan Emergency and my life may have taken a different path!

As there was evidence of trouble looming as close as the borders of Rhodesia, I decided to join the local Commando and signed up, initially for two years. This was a *skiet* ("shoot") commando, teaching us how to use military weapons. The purpose of these commandos soon changed and became para-military units with platoons etc, and I ended up as a Staff Sergeant.

After moving from Amanzimtoti and being part of the Zululand Commando, our family moved to Durban where I joined the Umkomaas group (named after the Umkomaas River). I was in the Army for just short of 21 years. We learnt bush tactics etc, and were on stand-by for any trouble, such as insurrections, riots, terrorism attacks. Our unit had to protect a huge key electricity distribution station and a very high radio mast at Alveston Ridge.

One night when I was patrol commander, with instructions to shoot anyone acting suspiciously, we detected movement, turned on all the car lights and discovered... our foolish company commander, who was checking up on us. Close shave!

Fortunately for me, I was too young for service in WW2 and too old for the Border Wars with Angola, but I did enjoy my experiences with the Commandos.

My Weapon Collection



It all started with a desire to own a Brit and a Boer rifle from the period of the Anglo-Boer War. Then I wanted a Zulu War Martini-Henry, then...

As you can see, along with my great friends Vere Bresler and Terry Willson, I amassed quite a varied and valuable collection of more than 100 weapons of that period. To help fund my move to Australia in 1987 I sold them all. Where did I find them?

I met Harry Lugg (who had been at Rorke's Drift) because he had a Swinburne carbine with intact firing pin. The Swinburne, which had a firing pin which often broke, was a cheap copy of the Martini-Henry. He was then about 90 years old. He had, luckily for him, realised that the black soldiers who were in his unit would be killed when the Zulu Impi arrived at Rorke's

Drift, and left in time. If only I had been as intrigued by the history of the Zulu Wars then as I soon became, I would have interviewed him about his experiences!

Another time I heard that some rifles (5 German and Portugese made Mausers) were discovered hidden in a ceiling of a village hall. The owner of the hall gave them to me and I shared them with my friends.

I came across a Mauser pistol with the name R Acutt, BMI on the butt and looked the name up in the phone book. There was an R Acutt living on the Berea in Durban, so I took the pistol around to show him. He said that it wasn't his but probably had belonged to his cousin, "Just the flashy kind of thing he would have bought".

Now for the naughty bit! When I went to a Round Table Conference in Copenhagen in the 70s, a group of us were discussing weapons and one Danish fellow said that he had a 9mm high performance Luger pistol he was concerned about because he had no licence for it. He had worked with the Danish underground during the War (WW2) and, when a German officer was killed in the dark one night, he took the pistol, holster and spare magazine. He sold this to me for a pittance, as he had no chance of getting a licence and it would be confiscated. At the time, airport security was not strict but I will gloss over how I got it home.

I once hit a triangular-shaped rock in a river 660 yards away with a very accurate 9mm broom handle Mauser pistol.

In the movie *Zulu Dawn*, Burt Lancaster played the part of Durnford who had an injured arm, so he had to reload the pistol by holding it under the other arm to eject the used cartridge. Luckily I had a Mk.6 Webley pistol that worked that way, so he used that in the film.



Part C

Haunting Graves

Preface

For over 60 years the graves of those soldiers who died during the Anglo-Boer War and earlier wars, have remained peacefully at the places where they were originally buried. These graves and cemeteries marked the sites of many battlefields and skirmishes, of hospitals and camps that, for good or bad, have become part of our colourful and often bloody history.

To those interested in visiting these sites, these graves and the monuments often erected with them, were the markers for all interested in the story of our past. They remained the only tangible evidence of the dramas that unfolded there. It was often possible to reconstruct the skills and follies of those who had fought at those places.

In recent years more and more South Africans have shown interest in visiting our historical sites and what do they find? In many cases nothing! During the past few years the War Graves Board has removed to central “Gardens of Remembrance” most of the war graves in the Transvaal, Orange Free State and Cape. These are, in most cases, nowhere near the sites of the actions but are in the general cemeteries of towns and cities far removed from the battle sites.

These removals cost a lot of money, taxpayers’ money, to desecrate the taxpayers’ heritage. These gravestones and monuments were, in the majority of cases, paid for lovingly by the wives and families of those fallen. To make matters worse, the monuments have by and large been destroyed or removed.

Fortunately for Natal, the local committee has prevented this destruction taking place and only where vitally necessary have graves been moved.

Today many sites cannot be traced without highly detailed maps. To find –for example– Bakenlaagte or Nooitgedagte and many others, is well nigh impossible for the average visitor, for nothing has been left. Much at Magersfontein and Belmont has been removed. Why has this been allowed to continue and why have no markers been left when this work has been carried out? Our history is our heritage. It has made us what we are. It should be treasured and valued and preserved for those who come after us.

Midge Carter

[This preface was for an article I wrote in the mid-60s and I believe it still has something to say.]

Update April 1999

Now, of course, the interest in these wars has widened to include military history enthusiasts from several countries, as well as those whose ancestors took part in these battles. Full marks to those areas that whole-heartedly attempted to bring back to life the museums, signage etc in time for the Centenary.

Types of Military Grave Markers in South Africa



There are several styles of grave markers.

1 The first photos show an interesting feature, where we found a few double-ups like this one in Middelburg Cemetery.

a) *In memory of No. 436, Pvt R Spencer, W. Australia M I. Died 15.5.1901. Aged 22.*



b) *For King and Empire. West Australia. (around the outside), Pvt R Spencer, 436, 15th May 1901. (in the middle)*



2 As you can see from this headstone the lead is often picked out from the letters, making it difficult to read now, which is why we have included so many headstones and monuments in this collection.

To the dear memory of my(?) son John William Powell, Lieutenant 1st South Australian Contingent, killed in action at Hobkirk's Farm, Feb 12 1900. A loving son, a loyal churchman, a fallen soldier. First South Australian to fall.



3 Although the Queen was on the throne when these soldiers were killed, by the time the stones were erected she had died and "For King and Empire" was engraved on them.



4

4 Very simple markers for unknown soldiers.

These graves are on Spionkop. The inscription reads:

VR 1900. Here lies a brave British soldier known only unto God.



5

5 Canada had uniform and easily identifiable headstones.



6

6 This type of private headstone is quite popular. The grave belongs to George Fitzpatrick, brother of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick. He died at Willow Grange (Brynbella) on the 13th November 1899 and was buried on Mr Symon's farm.



7

7 This shows the more modern style of military headstone.

Glascock, Conductor HH, VC

Maitland Military Cemetery, Cape Town

T550. Conductor, HH Glascock VC. SA Service Corps T & R.

20th October 1916. Aged 36.

Words on Boer monuments translated

Note: *ge* denotes past tense.

aan wonde oorlede

died of wounds

ander oorsake

other cause

as krygsgevangenes in Natal oorlede

died of wounds as a prisoner of war
in Natal

beleg

siege

Boere krygsgevangenekamp

Boer POW camp

elders

elsewhere

elders vermoor en begrave

murdered or massacred and buried
elsewhere

graf

grave

begraawe, begraaf

to bury

begrafnis

funeral;

begraafplaas

cemetery;

gedagtenis

memory, remembrance

gesneuwel

killed, died in battle

geval

fell

gevegte

fight, struggle

held

hero

heldhaftig

heroic, brave

kinderen

children

konsentrasiekamp

concentration camp

kryg

war, fight

krygsgevangene(s)

prisoner-of-war

krygsraad

court martial; council of war;

krykswet

martial law

landgenote

compatriot

lewe

lives

'n vonnis voltrek

sentence carried out

ontsnaptes

escaped

onbekende

not known

<i>oorlog</i>	war
<i>opgeoffer</i>	sacrificed
<i>opgerig</i>	erected
<i>op slagveld begrawe</i>	buried on the battlefield
<i>siekte</i>	illness
<i>slag</i>	battle
<i>teregstel</i>	executed
<i>velgende</i>	following
<i>verdedig</i>	defend, protect
<i>veroordeel</i>	to convict, sentence
<i>vir sy land</i>	for his country
<i>vrouens</i>	women
<i>wonde</i>	wound
<i>geb(ore)</i>	born

Note: a pronunciation guide to these words and phrases can be found in the booklet *A Guide to the Pronunciation of Afrikaans words pertinent to the Anglo-Boer Wars* by Trish Woodman. Contact trishw23@iinet.net.au

The following pages mainly contain photos of graves, monuments, statues, plaques, with their inscriptions, etc. Pre-1997 photos were all taken by Midge, later ones by either of us.

“Just a name on a stone”

This is the title of a talk Trish gives to groups such as Probus.

Each of the following headstones hides a story, sometimes courageous, sometimes infamous, but always fascinating. Unhappily most of these men are long forgotten and their graves are often difficult to reach. Of course there are many more that we have missed. Sometimes you will see ‘just a name on a stone’, which gives no hint of the story behind the man’s death, some of which we have tried to record in this chapter.

Until recent years you would find graves where the men died – on the veldt, on farms, on the top of a koppie, Now it is strange to find a grave in a Garden of Remembrance stating that the soldier was killed ‘near this spot’, when there are now few clues where this may have been.

NB. To these graves and the memorials in the next chapter, Trish has added snippets that she found interesting, but she does not claim to have researched these in depth.



Aberline, Trooper Alexander & Edith Mathews

Lichtenburg Cemetery, NWP.

Trooper Aberline, NSW Bushmen (Australian), was shot in the stomach on 28th September 1900 by an explosive bullet while patrolling in the Lichtenburg area. He and three others were taken to the Lichtenburg Hospital, where he was lovingly tended by Edith Mathews but died 4 days later.

Edith Mathews was a young Boer nurse whose family were of British descent and were a founding family of Lichtenburg. Though committed to the Boer cause and having a brother on commando with a local unit, Edith cared for Boer and British troops alike. When the young trooper died she wrote a most moving letter to his mother in NSW, Australia. This was published in the *Melbourne Age*, 25th June 1901 (and has appeared in various publications since).



Edith Mathews's letter to Trooper Aberline's mother

After waiting for more than a month at last I have obtained your address. I thought you may be glad to hear from one, who though an utter stranger to you, yet God granted to be at the bedside of your dying son, and before I tell you of him I want to tender my sympathy to you and your family. I know such a loss must be very great. I must mention that I am not a professional nurse, only an amateur trying to do my little for my country

and my people. The hospital belongs to the so-called Boers. Your son with four of his companions was brought here by some of his own people because they were mortally wounded and could not be taken to the field hospital. They were all in very great pain, poor lads. Your son was a general favourite in the wards. I always used to call him "my laddie" which he seemed to like very much.

One day after dressing wounds and giving the young man something to drink, your son asked me to hand him a photo which he had in a case in his pocket. After taking it out of the case and gazing at the portrait he closed his eyes and pressed the photo against his breast: he always kept that photo next to his bed. One afternoon when one of his wounded companions had died, he called me to his bedside and said, "Poor Mother. How I wish I could be back with you in Australia." So I told him we were going to make him quite well and send him back to Mother.

We all expected him to pull through, but God willed it otherwise. I tried everything to make his last hours pleasant and everything I thought you would have done had you been with him. I sat on his bed fanning him and gave him everything he asked for. Once he looked sad and despondent, so I said, "Poor laddy you will be better tomorrow". Fixing those large blue eyes on me he said "I'll be on the way to the Happy Land".

I said "You are looking forward to it?". He replied "Yes". He did not want me to leave his bed. If I knelt before his bed fanning him he would say "You are too good spoiling me in that way".

I thought I would spoil him for your sake. I remained at his bed holding his hand until he died. He fixed those large blue eyes on me until I closed them. There I remained. I could not leave my Laddie. I thought my heart would break and those tears that fall for your people as well as my own, dropped on the face of that laddy whose mother and sisters were so far away. I kissed him for all your sakes. Tell his sisters that I tried to be a sister to him. I am only 19 and he 20, so he must have adopted me for one, and we try to be even kinder to patients coming from the other side, because their loved ones are so far.

We had him buried in the graveyard, his name marked with a cross on which is written his name and regiment. His coffin was covered with beautiful wreaths. I attended to his grave as if it were one of my own people, so don't trouble about that.

I pray God that he will comfort you all as He alone can comfort.

Sadly, Edith had a very short and tragic life and died on 22nd August 1910. According to Professor John Bottomley, who wrote a paper on Aberline, Edith lost a baby boy (Colin) soon after birth, her second child (Iris) died of appendicitis in her teens and Edith died giving birth to her third child (little Edith), who was brought up by her grand-parents.

For many years Edith, and later her family, cared for Alex's grave.

Alex's sister named her son Alexander Matthew after her brother and his Boer nurse



Airlie, Lt. Col David Ogilvy

Diamond Hill Cemetery, Mpumalanga

Lord Airlie had already seen service in the Afghan War 1878-79, the Soudan Expedition 1884, the Nile Expedition 1884-85 and been twice mentioned in despatches. In South Africa he had fought at Modder River and Magersfontein and been mentioned-in-despatches.

The inscription reads:

David, Earl of Airlie, Lt. Col. 12th Lancers, who was, as he had always desired, killed in action at the head of his regiment. June 11th, 1901.



Allison, Lieutenant Martinus Stuart

Standerton Cemetery Mpumalanga

In memory of Lt. Martinus Stuart Allison, Intelligence Department, who was killed in action at Vlakfontein on the 16th January 1901, aged 30 years.

This stone is erected by those who loved him well and dearly mourned the loss of a faithful and loving son, a kind and affectionate brother and a true friend.

Also by the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the Rifle Brigade as a token of respect for a good comrade and a brave man.

He gave all that he had to give – his life – in service of his Queen and country.



Anderson, Lt Rainy

Middelburg Cemetery, Mpumalanga 1997

This impressive and moving gravestone is in the Middelburg cemetery (Military section), Mpumalanga, formerly Transvaal.

The inscription reads:

In everloving memory of our dearly beloved only son, Rainy Anderson, Royal Engineers

He gallantly distinguished himself in the Boer War 1899-1901. Was appointed to the Staff of General Beatson's Mobile Column as Staff Captain. In addition to his engineer duties acted as Intelligence Officer to the Column. His brilliant dash and gallantry were conspicuous and his death was deplored as a great loss to his Corps and to the whole army.

He was mortally wounded at Zeekogat 10th July and died of his wounds on the 11th July 1901. Aged 27 years. None more gallant than he.

There is also a memorial tablet in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral, London. Rainy had been present at the capture of Jack Hindon's camp, had had his horse shot from under him the day before he was wounded, and had been mentioned in despatches.

[Anderson's grave is near those of Lt Anthony Forrest and Jack Hindon qv]



Armstrong, Walter Douglas

Bloemfontein

In loving memory of Walter Douglas Armstrong, civil compounder, RAMC.

Born in New Zealand Nov 4th 1877. Died at Bloemfontein April 16th 1900.

The dearly beloved eldest son of Walter and Louise Armstrong, Wanganui, New Zealand.

And then the mournful tidings came,

That on a foreign strand;

Our darling not of fever died,

Far from his native land.



Arnold, Captain HM ,RCR

Paardeberg, Free State

Which should we believe? One headstone tells us that Arnold, the first Canadian officer to die in this war, was killed in action at Paardeberg on 18th February 1900. The other says that he died of wounds on 23rd February 1900.

According to Professor Carman Miller in *Painting the Map Red*, (page 94):

"An efficient and popular officer, Arnold had just taken out his field glasses to survey his opponents' positions, when he was shot in the head. Three stretcher-bearers in succession attempted to bring him from the firing line. When the third man fell, the



battalion's Surgeon-Captain, Eugene Fiset, rushed forward to attend to Arnold's wound and carried him from the field under enemy fire. Arnold died five days later in a hospital house on the south side of the Modder, close to the main drift".



Ava, Earl of

Wagon Hill, Ladysmith. KwaZulu Natal

The Earl had served with the 17th Lancers, had been in India and also previously in South Africa, but was now there as a war correspondent. He was shot through the head while taking a message from Sir Ian Hamilton.

On this spot the Earl of Ava was mortally wounded on 6th Jan 1900 while fighting in the front line of the Imperial Light Horse.

This monument is erected by a few of those who were with him during the siege.



Baxter, John Alexander.

Aberdeen Cemetery, Eastern Cape (Photo taken 2000)

Afrikaans

*Hierdie steen is opgerig ter
gedachtenis aan John*

Alexander Baxter

geb 20th January 1879

'n held uit die Anglo

Boere Oorlog 1899-1902

veroordeeld deur 'n

krygsraad op 13 Oct 1901

vonnis voltrek on die plaas

Goewermments-Vlei Aberdeen

English translation:

This stone is erected to

the memory of John

Alexander Baxter,

born 20th January 1879

a hero of the Anglo-

Boer War 1899-1902

sentenced by court-

martial on 13th Oct 1901

carried out on the farm

Goewermments-Vlei, Aberdeen

A little while before 'Jack' Baxter was executed, the situation of the men of General Smut's Commando had become desperate. Their plans to invade the Cape Colony were rapidly coming apart. In their determined efforts to avoid the pursuing British columns they had used little known mountain tracks and obscure valleys in a very cold and miserable winter, many men in threadbare clothing and worn-out footwear. It was at this point that the commando, by surprise, stumbled onto the 17th Lancers' camp at Modderfontein, near Tarkastad. Their sudden attack soon had the whole camp in their hands. Smuts' young friend, Deney's Reitz, in his book *Commando* wrote that 'the grain bag which I wore froze solid on my body like a coat of chainmail'.

At the camp they were able to re-outfit themselves with all the stores and clothing of this very exclusive British regiment and it was probably there that Jack Baxter acquired the khaki uniform that led to his death.

Due to incidents where Boers wearing uniforms had misled the British troops, with sad consequences, General Kitchener had ordered that any enemy found wearing khaki was to be court-martialled and executed. Baxter (aged 23) was unlucky that he was captured by Colonel Harry Scobell's unit that did things by the book. Baxter was tried, given a glass of whiskey, allowed to write some letters, then was shot.

Reitz said that the Commando was unaware of this proclamation at the time, that others had been shot, and that he himself must have had some close calls. See also Modderfontein.

(*Commando*, by Deney's Reitz, first published in 1929 and followed by *Trekking On* and *No Outspan* has recently been reprinted.)

Benson, Colonel George Elliott, RA

Primrose Cemetery, Johannesburg.

See Section 1, Bakenlaagte.



Bisdee, Lt/Colonel, John Hutton, VC,

Jericho, Tasmania, (between Richmond and Ross).

In memory of Lieutenant Colonel John Hutton Bisdee VC, OBE

1869-1930.

The first Australian born Victoria Cross winner. Awarded for exceptional bravery on the 1st September 1900 at Warm Bad, Orange River Colony, Transvaal, South Africa during the Boer War 1899-1902.

Lest We Forget

At the time Bisdee was a Trooper with the 1st Tasmanian Bushmen.

The Official Citation (*London Gazette*, 13th November 1900) records that Bisdee received the award for placing a wounded officer, whose horse had bolted, on his own horse, mounting behind him and taking him to safety, under 'very hot fire and in a very exposed place'. He himself was wounded and invalided home. He also served in WW1 and was wounded again.



Blake, Dr John Tower.

Middelburg Cemetery, Mpumalanga

Here's one a long way from home!

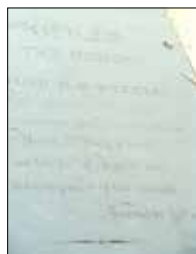
In memory of Dr John Tower Blake, born in Providence, R I, 1st December 1840. Wounded in Battle of Gettysburg, USA. Died in Middelburg, 22nd July 1927.



Boomplaats.

29th August 1848 Free State. (24km from Trompsburg, on Jacobsdaal road.) Photo taken 1997.

This was the scene of a battle between the emigrant Boers and the British troops under Governor Sir Harry Smith. The Boers, under AW Pretorius, were defeated and the British Resident re-instated in



Bloemfontein. The battle took place at a farm near Jagersfontein, in the then Orange Free State, on 29th August 1848. A few old headstones can be seen, including one belonging to Ensign MB Steele of the Cape Mounted Rifles who died 'in consequence of his wound'.



Borden, Major Harold Lithrop.

Braamfontein Cemetery, Johannesburg.

In memory of Major Harold Lithrop Borden 1st Canadian MR, only son of the Honourable FW Borden MP Minister of Militia, Canada, Aged 22. Killed in action at Rietvlei 16th July 1900, having been twice mentioned in despatches.

Lt. Birch, Canadian MI was also killed that day.



Brown, Frankie

Mafeking Cemetery, NorthWest Province 1997 (TW)

Frankie Brown, who was only 9 years old, died from the effects of a shell wound on 17th January 1900.

Inscription:

*He is gone but not forgotten
Never shall his memory fade
Sweetest thoughts shall ever linger
Around this grave where he is laid.*



Cheyne, QMS.

This grave is included to remind us that Ceylon, now Sri Lanka, also had troops involved in the ABW.

In memory of QMS Cheyne, Ceylon Mounted Infantry, 2.6.1900. For King and Empire.

Coulson, Lt. Gustavus Hamilton Blenkinsopp, VC, DSO

(See Lambrechtfontein, Part B)



Darling, Lt. Henry DSO

Bulawayo, Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. Photo 1997 (TW)

Grave No. 1050, Anglican Section, Bulawayo Municipal Cemetery, Zimbabwe.

In affectionate remembrance of HENRY DARLING who died April 21st 1935. Aged 68 years.

Lieutenant H Darling was born in Geraldton, Western Australia. He became 2 i.c. 1st West Australian Contingent to the Boer War. As Captain, re-enlisted as Commanding Officer, 5th WA Mounted Infantry.

He served throughout the Boer War, including at West Australia Hill and Bothaville, was wounded and captured at Waterval Onder, and was twice mentioned in despatches. He retired with the rank of colonel after WW1. He settled in Rhodesia and died in Bulawayo, Southern Rhodesia, in 1935.



De Kock, Meyer

Pretoria. Photo by Eddie Hadland, South Africa. 1999

In memory of our beloved father, Meyer de Kock. Born 5.9.1849. Died 12.2.1901

de Kock was the Chairman of a society of surrendered burghers called the 'Peace Committee' which circulated pamphlets etc amongst Boer troops, to impress on them the hopelessness of continuing the struggle and advising them to surrender. Envoys of the Peace Committee were to visit the commandos to explain the new situation. Kitchener had issued a proclamation that burghers who laid down their arms would not be detained in prisoner-of-war camps, but would be allowed to live with their family in special refugee camps.

We were told that de Kock was executed by the Boers for being a "hendsopper". de Kock was arrested, and incarcerated in the Roos Senekal gaol. He was tried by court-martial, and condemned to death.

Viljoen was given an order from the Government, bearing the President's ratification of the death sentence and ordered to carry it out within 24 hours.

According to Viljoen, de Kock was the man who suggested to the British that Boer women and children should be placed in concentration camps. (The English Press condemned this act as murder, according to Viljoen).

Reference: *My reminiscences of the Anglo-Boer War*, by Ben Viljoen. (P 177-180)

Execution of a traitor. (A 'hensopper').



de Montmorency, Captain, the Honourable, RH, VC.

Molteno.

To the ever dear memory of Captain, the Honourable, RH (Raymond Harvey Lodge Joseph) de Montmorency, VC, 21st Lancers, Montmorency's Scouts, who lies at rest here. Erected by Montmorency's Scouts, in memory of the officers, non-commissioned officers and men who fell at Schoeman's Kop, Stormberg, Feb 23rd 1900.

Capt. RH Montmorency, VC; Lieut. Col. Hesker, Middlesex Volunteer Artillery (attached); Corporals AR Rudd, J Weatherley. Scouts FS Collett, LA Maasdorf, H Vice.

Weatherley, Collett, Maasdorf and Vice each have a grave in the enclosure. De Montmorency won his VC at Khartoum. He was also mentioned in despatches twice.



de Villebois Mareuil

Magersfontein.

To the memory of the Count de Villebois Mareuil, Colonel of the French Foreign Legion, Transvaal General, died on the field of honour near Boshof on the 5th April 1900 in his 53rd year. RIP.



de Villiers, Désiré

Pretoria Cemetery 1997

Geusneuwel in Natal op 11 December 1899 in den ouderdom van 18 years.

(Killed in action in Natal on 11 December 1899 at the age of 18 years.)



Digby-Jones, Lt Robert VC, (posthumous).

Wagon Hill, Ladysmith. 1965.

During the attack on Wagon Hill on 6th January 1900, Lt Digby-Jones, RE, and Tpr Herman Albrecht, ILH, led the force which reclaimed the top of the hill. This was just as three Boers reached it, but were killed by Albrecht and Digby-Jones. Sadly the latter also was killed.



Duckworth, Private C.

Fort Prospect, Zululand

On 24th September 1900 at Fort Prospect in Zululand, the outpost manned by 80 British soldiers was attacked by 400 Boers.

The lonely grave of Pte Duckworth is now surrounded by forest. Trenches may still be seen here.



Elands River.

Read the poem *Eland's River* by George Essex Evans.

Lt JW Annat, Queensland Mounted Infantry, 6th August 1900.

Sergeant J Mitchell, August 5th 1900, No. 500. NSW Bushmen.

Trooper J Duff. August 4th 1900, No. 30. NSW Bushmen.



Erskine-Flower, Lieutenant

Rustenburg, North-West Province, formerly Tvl.

In loving memory of HNG Erskine-Flower, 1 Scottish Horse, only son of Rev. HH Flower and grandson of Col. Knight-Erskine of Pittodrie. Died November 22nd 1901 at the Battle of Moedwil, September 30th. Aged 20.

"No more the foe can harm. No more leagured camp and cry of night alarm. Grant him Lord eternal rest with the spirit of the blest."

FitzPatrick, George

Willow Grange/Brynabella, Estcourt.

(See 'Types of Graves' on page 166)

George FitzPatrick killed at Willow Grange on the 13th November 1899.

George was the brother of Sir Percy FitzPatrick who later lost three sons very tragically within a short time. qv



Forrest, Lieut. Anthony

Middelburg cemetery, Mpumalanga (was Transvaal).

Lieutenant Anthony Forrest, 2nd son of Alexander Forrest (explorer, and brother to Sir John Forrest, Premier of Perth, Western Australia), was only 16 when he went to South Africa as part of the 5th Western Australian Mounted Infantry.

Competition to be chosen to go with the contingents to South Africa was fierce, so Anthony's appointment did not go down well! This piece was printed in the *North Coolgardie Herald*, 25.2.1901.

There has been not a few scandals in connection with the organization of contingents for South Africa, but the most glaring thing yet done is the shocking nepotism displayed in the appointment of Master Forrest to be lieutenant in the contingent now almost ready to leave for the front. Master Forrest is no doubt a very good boy. We are willing to credit him with all the virtues of the illustrious stock from which he has sprung, but he is a mere schoolboy, possibly in his right place as captain of a cricket team, but certainly out of his sphere as a leader of soldiers. It may be that pains will be taken to give him no opportunity of doing any harm, but that implies that he will have no opportunities to make himself useful. To expect men to cheerfully work under this immature Forrest fledgling is asking rather too much of imperfect human nature, no matter how good a boy he might be. Babies and sucklings may occasionally utter counsels of wisdom, but it is not to the nursery that soldiers look for leaders. A Government capable of making such an appointment as this we refer to is capable of doing anything, however disgraceful, to favour its own creatures and one such act as this should be sufficient to damn any Government.

Lieutenant Forrest was killed in action at Brakpan in the former Transvaal on May 15th 1901, three months later. He had been mentioned in despatches on 8th July 1901. His 51-year-old father died only five weeks later – one cause being, we are told, 'a broken heart'.

A family member gave me this copy of the letter sent to the family.

Dear Sir,

It is my sad duty to place before you what details I can regarding the death of your son, killed in action near Brakpan on the morning of the 16th May.

Owing to absence in hospital of Lieutenant Scott, your son was in charge of the No.1 Division, B Company and had been almost since the contingent had been in the field.

On the morning of the 16th, B Company, under Lieutenant Brown, left the main body to go out on the left flank. They were heavily engaged with the Boers during the retirement of ? Company of the 6th and also while trying to get two waggons away loaded with Boer women and children. Your son and his division made a splendid stand, but were outnumbered altogether, and in some instances unable to distinguish friend from foe as the Boers came on in line as our men did, many of them wearing khaki.

Our reinforcements arriving, we were able to advance over the ground again and found your son, his sergeant and his corporal, all lying close together, your son and Sergeant Edwards both shot through the head, and Corporal Bollinger mortally wounded (since dead).

The Boers, before leaving, had taken their bandoliers and arms and also rifled their pockets.

The burial service was held at 7 am on the morning of the 17th inst at Grobler's Recht, about 4 miles from the place of the fight.

The graves are on the top of the hill, about 50 yards east of the road. A wooden cross, made at the time by the men, was erected. Your son's grave on the right, Sergeant Edwards next and then 4 men of the 6th contingent.

The service was attended by General and Staff and a party from every unit forming the force. Lieutenant Brown had photographs taken of the graves and hopes soon to be able to forward prints.

Inscribed on your son's grave:

Sacred to the memory of Lieut. AA Forrest, killed in action at Brakpan on 16th May 1901. 5th WAMI.

Herewith annexed an inventory of kit in possession. Another kit was stored at Machadadorp.

The respect and esteem held by officers and men for your gallant son and his comrades who fell that day can never be forgotten by those on parade on the morning of the 17th.

And for days there was an unusual quietness in camp and quite a gloom.

Should there be any further information you require or if I can be of any service, please command,

Yours etc (Signature indistinct).

Note. Next to Forrest's grave is that of Sergeant Edwards, Privates John Semple, F Adams, F Pace and B Fisher, of the West Australian Mounted Infantry, all killed at Brakpan on May 15th & 16th 1901.



Frankham, Trooper Harold.

No 1480. Died at Albany Western Australia, of meningitis 4.7.1901. (*Kiwi versus Boer*).

Photo included because it shows the deterioration some headstones are suffering.

In memory of Trooper Harold Franknam, late of Auckland NZ, 4th NZ Contingent. Died at Albany June 4th 1901 aged 23 years. Jesus said "I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live."



Grieve, Lt Gideon James

1) Paardeberg.

Lieut. Gideon James Grieve, NSW Permanent Staff. Killed at Paardeberg, 18 Feb, 1900, whilst serving with 2nd Roy. Highl. Erected by friends and former comrades in NSW.



2) York Street, Sydney, NSW.

In memory of Lieutenant Gideon James Grieve, NSW Permanent Staff, formerly 1st Lieutenant 5th Regt. Scottish Rifles. Sailed in Oct 1900 for South Africa as a Special Service Officer, there attached 2nd Black Watch, and with it took part in the Battle of "Koodoosberg" with conspicuous gallantry and skill as a leader – the operations for the Relief of Kimberley – and the attack at Cronje's laager at Paardeberg Feb 18th 1900, where after shewing – as described by a brother officer – "most magnificent bravery" – he fell in the fore front of battle.

By his untimely death, NSW has lost a most able and gallant officer, and his widow and children a devoted husband and father.



3) Watson's Gap, NSW.

To the memory of the late Lieutenant Gideon James Grieve who fell fighting at the Battle of Paardeberg, South Africa, 18th February, 1900, aged 36.

Grobler, Jan

Ladysmith.

For freedom and for right.

Here lies Jan Adrian Pieter Grobler, his weapon down. Born 2 Nov 1880.

Wounded at Elandslaagte, died at Ladysmith 24 October 1899.

His sun set while it was still day.

Erected by his sorrowing mother.





Hadler, Edgar Schmitt

German born

Scheepers Nek, near Vryheid, Mpumalanga

Edgar Schmitt Hadler, Sergt Major 'E' Squad BMI (Bethune's Mounted Infantry). Born in Hamburg Dec 26th 1868. Fell in the battle at Scheepers Neck, (sic), Vryheid, May 20th 1900. Rest in the Lord.



Hall, George

Standerton Cemetery, Free State.

In memory of George Buceo Hall, son of Thomas W Hall Esq, of Timaru, New Zealand, who was killed near Standerton on the 29th December 1880 while gallantly fighting against the Transvaal Boers. Aged 30 years.



Hannay, Colonel Ormelie Campbell

Paardeberg, lone grave on the veldt

Darkness comes over me. My rest a stone

In loving memory of Colonel Ormelie Campbell Hannay (late Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders), killed in action on this spot whilst in command of 1st Brigade Mounted Infantry. 18th Feb 1900

On the back of the cross:

Obedient unto death.

God grant him a glorious resurrection.

Hannay had had long service in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Special Services. He had also taken part in the Zulu War and had been twice mentioned in despatches.

Colonel Hannay, and some of his companions, were killed when he tried to prove that a frontal attack, as ordered by his commanding officer, was suicidal. See Paardeberg panel in Part B for more details.



Hindon, Oliver John (Jack)

Middelburg Cemetery, Mpumalanga

Ter gedagtenis aan my man Kaptein Jack Hindon, tot die laaste druppel bloed onverskrokke dapper getrou en goed.

In memory of my husband Captain Jack Hindon, till the last drop of blood fearless, brave, true and kind.

Jack Hindon was a notorious wrecker of British trains. Born in Scotland in 1874, he had fought against the British in the Jameson Raid and at Spionkop. To learn more about his methods and his exploits, read the article *Oliver 'Jack' Hindon, Boer hero and train*

wrecker by Dudley Aitken, of the South African National Museum of Military History, in the SA Military History Journal, Vol 12, No. 1.



Hines, Sister Frances Emma

Bulawayo Cemetery, Zimbabwe 1997

In loving memory of Sister Francis Emma Hines. Died at Bulawayo Aug 7th 1900 Erected by her fellow sisters and 1st Victorian Bushmen's Contingent. Also the Hospital Staff.

Fanny Hines died of pneumonia on the 7th August 1900 and was buried in the Bulawayo Cemetery (Zimbabwe). The Anglo-Boer War was the first war in which Australian nurses fought.

She went to South Africa with the 3rd Bushmen's Contingent, which was comprised of Victorian and West Australian troops and became part of the Rhodesian Field Force.



Howard, Major Arthur 'Gat'

Wakkerstroom Cemetery,

Howard received his nickname from his enthusiastic promotion in Canada of the Gatling machine gun. In 1900 he volunteered for service in the 2nd Canadian Contingent. He recruited about 100 experienced men to form Howard's Canadian Scouts, who undertook extremely dangerous work and had heavy casualties, including Howard. Some reports suggested foul play caused his death at Evergreen, Eastern Transvaal on 17th February 1901. There was also a hint that his death

led to retribution, similar to that of the Morant/Handcock affair.

(See *Painting the Map Red* by Carman Miller, p 448).

Hughes, Captain Matthew Louis. RAMC

Colenso.

Rest in Peace. In memory of Matthew Louis Hughes, Captain, Royal Army Medical Corps, who was killed at the Battle of Colenso, 15th December 1899, aged 32 years.

Plaque inscription: Captain ML Hughes, RAMC, was a distinguished military medical officer. He was a pioneer in the field of bacteriology. If it had been possible for him to continue his research instead of to serve as a front line soldier, typhoid vaccine, crude but promising as it then was, might largely by his efforts have been perfected in time to save the lives of thousands of soldiers and civilians.



Jackson, Sergeant Keith

Buffelsfontein,

Erected by the Wodehouse Yeomanry in memory of their fallen comrade Sergeant Keith Jackson, killed in action at Buffelsfontein, Wodehouse District, on the 29th May 1901. Born 11th June 1838. Aged 62 years 11 months and 19 days. Peace, perfect peace.

Jones, Trooper Victor

Killed at Sunnyside, South Africa. Photo taken by Craig Machin in Mount Morgan, Queensland..

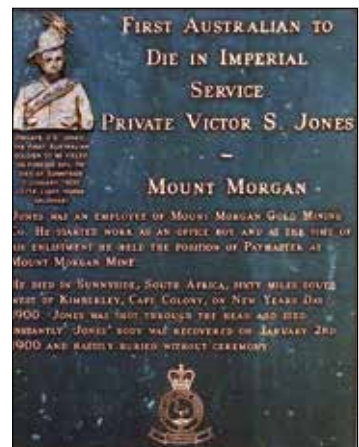
First Australian to die in Imperial service. Private Victor S Jones, Mount Morgan.

Jones was an employee of Mount Morgan Gold Mining Co. He started work as an office boy, and at the time of enlistment he held the position of Paymaster at Mount Morgan Mine. He died at Sunnyside, South Africa, sixty miles south-west of Kimberley, Cape Colony, on New Year's Day 1900. Jones was shot through the head and died instantly. Jones' body was recovered on January 2nd 1900 and hastily buried without ceremony."

Under the photo is inscribed:

Private VS Jones. The first Australian soldier to be killed on foreign soil. He died at Sunnyside, January 1st 1900. (2/14 Light Horse Archives).

See also Sunnyside, Part B.



Keith-Falconer, Brevet L.Colonel CE

Kimberley West End Cemetery

In loving memory of Cecil Edward Keith-Falconer, brevet Lt. Colonel, 1st Batt 5th Northumberland Fusiliers. Born Oct 11th 1860. Killed in action at Belmont Nov 10th 1899. RIP. Erected by his wife.

He was killed in action at Belmont, was mentioned in despatches three times. His brother, Lt. Victor Francis Alexander Keith-Falconer (also mentioned in despatches) was killed in action at Hussar Hill on 21st February 1900, three months later.



Kortright, Lieutenant Mounetey

Braamfontein Cemetery, Johannesburg

The inscription on this beautiful headstone reads:

In memory of my dearly beloved husband Mounetey Kortright, Lieutenant 3rd Kings Own Hussars, who died 21st June 1900, aged 28, of wounds received at Rietfontein Mine, South Africa.

With calm and heroic courage he gave his life to save the Brigade from what would have been a terrible disaster.

Sans peur et sans reproche. (Without fear and without reproach)

Be faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life.

Kruger, President Paul

Church Street Cemetery, Pretoria (right)



Lambie, Mr WJ, Private

Colesberg Cemetery, Northern Cape

War correspondent for *The Age*, Melbourne, was killed at Slingersfontein and buried in Colesberg.



Lindsay, Captain Michael Howard.

Primrose Cemetery, Jo'burg

Captain, Seaforth Highlanders, Adjutant 2nd Scottish Horse. Fell in action 30th October 1901. Aged 29 years. RIP

Mentioned in despatches March 16th 1900 for "gallant and conspicuous behaviour at Magersfontein when in control of Maxim gun". Killed in action at Bakenlaagte.

Lloyd, Captain Eyre.

Primrose Cemetery, Jo'burg. See Bakenlaagte, Section 1 and video clip.



Lötter, J and Wolfaardt, PJ

Middelburg Cemetery, Eastern Cape

The 'Chair Monument'

Translation:

What do these stones mean to you.

In honour of Kommandant J Lotter and PJ Wolfaardt who were executed here on 12.10.1901 and 15.10.1901 respectively.

Johannes Lötter aged 26, was a Cape Rebel, that is he was a British subject from the Cape who joined and later led a Boer commando and fought actively against the British.

When captured by Colonel Scobell he was accused of: being actively in arms; with the murder of several British subjects; of murdering two native scouts; of the flogging of young Johannes van de Merwe

and Theunis Gert Voster; marauding (stealing the goods of a storekeeper). This is a condensed version. 'Being actively in arms' amounted to high treason.

He pleaded guilty only to the floggings, but was condemned to death. He was executed on the outskirts of Middelburg. He and Wolfaardt were later re-interred in a single coffin. Their monument is known as the 'chair monument' because they both were tied to a chair to be executed.

His brother Zirk, a medical student, was the commando's doctor. He was shot in the eye which had to be removed.

Peter Wolfaardt, aged 32, was captured at Paardefontein 5.9.1901. He was accused of high treason, arms and murder, and pleaded guilty. After the commando had surrendered he had picked up his rifle and killed a 9th Lancer who had seen the white flag waving and ridden down on his horse.

Altogether five men were executed.

One of the burghers, Hermanus van Meyeren was only 14. He was tried, found guilty of being actively in arms, and murder. He was sentenced to hang, but this was commuted to imprisonment for the term of the war plus 12 strokes of the rod.

Reference: *Commandant Johannes Lötter and his Rebels, Taffy and David Shearing, Cape Commando Series No. 1, 1998.* Taffy and David have published several excellent books in this series.

Marshall, Sister E

Standerton Cemetery, Free State (*right*)

E. Marshall, nursing sister ANSR, of Glasgow, Died November 24th 1901, aged 32 years at Standerton.

Fallen asleep ... dawn.



Pte Joseph MacDonald (504)

Norval's Pont, near Colesberg

No.4 Company, Railway Pioneer Regiment. Aged 32 of Compton, Los Angeles County, USA, who died on the 14th May 1900 from injuries received whilst his regiment was repairing Norval's Pont Bridge. This stone was erected by the officers, NCOs and men of his Regiment.

(Note: pont is Afrikaans for a pontoon pulled across the river to ferry people and vehicles across, a ferry-boat.)

"Give my love to the Regiment". Sacred to the memory of No.3113 Colour Sergeant GH Gosling, 1st Batt. Royal Sussex Regt. who died at Norval's Pont 20th February 1901. Aged 33 years. Erected by his comrades in arms, in token of his virtues and his faith and his love for his regiment.



Millen Private E

Maitland Cemetery, CapeTown 1997.

This stone is erected to the memory of Private E Millen, Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders, who was killed by falling from a train near Worcester on 17th November 1899 enroute for the Front.

Hard luck.



Henry ('The Breaker') Morant and Peter Handcock

Joint grave, Pretoria

This controversial pair from Australia are buried in the Pretoria Cemetery, away from the other military graves, having been executed for murder. George Witton, who was also tried with them, had his death sentence commuted to penal servitude by Kitchener, and was free within a few years.

More than 110 years later they are still the subject of appeals for pardon, with very strong opinions, both for and against, raging to and fro, to which we do not wish to add. They had been part of the Bushveldt Carbineers, patrolling in the Spelonken area, Pietersburg, and were accused in particular of the murder of the missionary, Reverend Heese, and of a dozen Boer prisoners.

The lower plaque, missing in some of our photos of the grave, reads:

In memoriam Harry "The Breaker" Morant and Peter Handcock. Executed 100 years ago in Pretoria, 27th Feb 1902. "A man's foes shall be those of his own household".

The pair, have been the subject of several books and a film, *Breaker Morant*. Lieut. George Witton later wrote his own book, *Scapegoats of the Empire*. They were represented by Major Thomas (qv). Morant was fairly well-known for his poetry.

An historian acquaintance in Cape Town showed us a signature in the Officers' Registration Book, Bloemfontein, June–Oct 1900. Cheeky Harry Morant had signed (in RED ink, among all the black) "Harry Morant, War Correspondent , *Daily Telegraph*".



Kitchener Park. Breaker Morant Drive. Gunnedah, NSW. What an amazing and ironic pairing!

Henry Harbord Morant was born in Bideford, Devon, England in 1865 and migrated to Australia at the age of 19, working in Queensland and Northern NSW as a drover and horsebreaker. Known as 'The Breaker' because of his occupation, he is said to have broken wild horses and female hearts with equal skill.

Morant worked for a period on Pullaming Station, Gunnedah, during the 1890's and legend recalls that he rode horses over the jumps at Kitchener Park, among them The Rattler, owned by local businessman RR Pritchard. The Rattler was broken in by Morant and for several years held the Australian high jump record.

Joining the South Australian Mounted Rifles, Morant went to the Boer War. Later he became a Lieutenant in the Bushveldt Carbineers, but following the shooting of Boer Prisoners, Morant and two others, Lieutenant PJ Handcock and Lieutenant GR Witton, was court marshalled [sic], but the Commander in Chief of the South African War, Field Marshall the Right Hon. Sir Horatio Herbert Kitchener, Earl Kitchener of Khartoum and Broome, refused to amend the sentences imposed on Morant and Handcock.

On February 27, 1902, just outside Pretoria, Morant and Handcock faced a firing squad of eighteen rifles and were executed.





Murray, Capt Frederick

Primrose Cemetery.

In loving memory of Frederick Dymoke Murray, Captain and Sergeant Major, 42nd Royal Highlanders, (Black Watch). The son of Charles Frederick and Catherine Georgina Murray, killed while in command of 2nd Scottish Horse at the Battle of Brakenlaagte, 30th July 1901 in the 30th year of his age.



Neave, 2nd Lieutenant, Arthur Cormack

Paardeberg

Princess of Wales Own Yorkshire Regiment xix. Killed leading his Company. February 18 1900

Deeply lamented, his life's work well done, he lies far from his New Zealand home, but not forgotten. Blessed are the pure in heart.

Stowers (Kiwi versus Boer) says that Neave was a student and had originally been part of the 1st NZ Mounted Rifles.



Newdigate, Sergeant-Major Francis Henry

Kimberley West End Cemetery, N/Cape

To the loved and honoured memory of my husband Francis Henry Newdigate, Sergeant Major, (Cape Medical Volunteer Staff). Eldest son of William Newdigate of Forrest Hall. Born 7th April 1852. Killed by rebels here on May 30th 1900 while on ambulance duty with Sir Charles Warren's Force, joining the medical staff on Oct 16th 1899.

He endeared himself to all with whom he came in contact by his devotion to duty and tender care of the sick and wounded, Boer and Briton alike.

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.



Northcott, Lt/Colonel Henry Ponting, CB

Kimberley West End Cemetery, N/ Cape

Lt. Colonel HP Northcott, CB, Leinster Regiment, killed at Modder River Nov 28th 1899, aged 43.

Lt. General Lord Methuen erects this stone in memory of a true friend and a very able Staff Officer who died whilst carrying out his General's orders.

Lt/Colonel Northcott was present at Graspan and Belmont. He fell at Modder River on 28th November 1899. According to Mildred Donner, *The Last Post*, Lt/General Lord Methuen wrote in his despatches of 1st December 1899: "The Army has lost one of the ablest officers in the service, and I cannot express the grief his death has caused me."



Oosthuisen Ignatius Wilhelm

Willowmore Cemetery, South Western Cape

In fond memory of Ignatius Wilhelm Oosthuisen, aged 19 years, who was brutally murdered at Baviaan's Kloof in the division of Willowmore on the 18th May 1902, by Colonial rebels and thieves who had deserted their commandos.

"They that seek me early shall find me"



Parslow, Private EC

Mafeking Cemetery, North West Cape

Parslow, a war correspondent, died on 1st November 1899. In Helen Buchan's diary she writes:

"Such a terrible thing happened yesterday. Last night about 10 o'clock, some men came round for a stretcher. They said one of the reporters had been shot at Dixon's Hotel. He turned out to be Mr Parslow, a dear kind little man. He had a quarrel with a trooper and the trooper shot him through the head.

According to Brian Gardner, Mafeking. *A Victorian Legend*, EG Parslow worked for the *Daily Chronicle*, a local paper. He was shot by Lieutenant Murchison who was tried by Court Martial for murder. He was later sent to prison on the Isle of Wight. (Pakenham says he

was later released because of his gallant services in the Siege.)

[Note: Helen Buchan was the sister of Molly Craufurd who also kept a well-known Siege diary. She worked as a nurse through the siege and was helped by Helen]. Read more about Helen in Section 1.

Pechell, Captain Charles Augustus

Mafeking Cemetery, North West Cape.

Sadly Captain Pechell was killed at Cannon Kopje on 31st October 1899 and his brother, Captain Mark Horace Pechell, was killed at the battle of Talana on 20th October 1899. The latter's name appears on the monument there (see Talana Hill, this section).



Penn-Symons, General, William

Dundee.

This picture shows the badly damaged grave as it was in the 70s.



Potgieter, General Ferdinandus Jacobus.

Roodewal cemetery

General Potgieter was the Commandant of the Wolmaransstad Commando in the Transvaal. He had been involved in the Siege of Kimberley and at Magersfontein.

He had asked to be buried in the position in which he fell, so his grave is in a diagonal position.

Our friend, Professor Fransjohan Pretorius, explained that the inscription is in a Dutch-Afrikaans combination, because Afrikaans as a written language had then only been in existence for 2-3 decades and became an official language in 1925. He has kindly translated this inscription for me. He also checked my attempts for the entries: Graaff Reinet; Leliefontein; Dordrecht; Bergendal and Cradock Burghers monument. He has my deep gratitude.

Born on the 16th February 1851 (? 1857). Killed on Doornbult on 11th April 1902 with a complete trust in his God who called him: Leave your orphans behind. I shall protect them [keep them alive] and let your widow trust in me.

He remained loyal till death.

Commandant Wolmaransstad.

Thus speaks the Lord: Write (that) blessed are the dead who die in (the name of the) Lord from now on so that he may rest from his labour and his works. Follow the Lord, because he who believes in Me shall live even if he had perished.

NOTE: Fransjohan has written several books on the Anglo-Boer War including *Life on Commando during the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Human & Rousseau) and a new publication *The A-Z of the Anglo-Boer War* (Lanham, Md, Scarecrow Press). The hardback copy is entitled *Historical Dictionary of the Anglo-Boer War*.

Pretoria Cemetery

This contains a large number of military graves. Here you will also find **Handcock** and **Morant**, **President Kruger**, **Desiré de Villiers**, **Prince Christian Victor**.



Prince Christian Victor

Pretoria Cemetery

In loving memory of Christian Victor, Prince of Schleswig-Holstein, Captain and Brevet-Major, Kings Own Rifle Brigade, eldest son of Prince and Princess Christian of Schleswig-Holstein, and grandson of Victoria, Queen of Great Britain and Ireland and Empress of India.

He fought a good fight.

On another panel are listed the following battles: Hazaria 1891, Miranza 1891, Isazai 1892, Ashanti 1895, Soudan 1898. Thomas Pakenham writes that the Prince was the favourite grand-son of Queen Victoria and 'the Prince was a poor fish and no real use to anyone.' He had served under Clery at the base in Durban and as ADC to Lord Roberts. He was born at Windsor Castle on

14.4.1867 and died in Pretoria of Typhoid on 29.10.1900.

There is a monument to him near Windsor Castle, UK. See this on the Internet.

Prince Imperial

(See Section1.)

Rhodes, Cecil John

The Matopos, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

Inscription on the very imposing Rhodes' Monument in Cape Town:

*The immense and brooding spirit still shall quicken and control
Living he was the land and dead his soul shall be her soul.*

However Rhodes was buried in the Matopos Hills with a very plain marker stone. His request was that only these simple words be on his tombstone, 'Here lie the remains of Cecil John Rhodes'.





Richardson, Serg. ALH VC

Strathcona's Horse, (Canada)

The Victoria Cross. An act of valour.

On July 5 1900, at Wolve Spruit, (near Standerton) Sergeant AHL Richardson rescued a comrade under relentless enemy fire in one of the most daring feats of the entire war.

He had ridden under a very heavy cross-fire to pick up a trooper, wounded in two places, whose horse had been shot, and rode with him out of fire. He was himself riding a wounded horse.

According to Ian Uys, Richardson, who was born in Lancashire, had gone to Canada in 1892, worked as a dentist there, joined the Mounties and then Strathcona's Horse.

After he won the VC, his fellow Canadians presented him with a gift of £3 000! Sadly, the rest of his life was a story of poverty, failure and loneliness.

(Ian Uys *Victoria Crosses of the Anglo-Boer War*.)



Roberts, Lieutenant Frederick Hugh Sherston VC.

Chieveley Cemetery, near Colenso, Kwa-Zulu Natal (Photo: 1972)

The son of one of several prominent leaders, both Boer and Brit, who lost sons in the Anglo-Boer War, Freddy Roberts had won the VC as had his father Field-Marshal Lord Roberts.

The inscription on his headstone reads:

In loving memory of Frederick Hugh Sherston Roberts VC, Lieutenant Kings Own Rifles, only surviving son of Field-Marshal Lord Roberts and Nora, his wife, who fell mortally wounded at the Battle of Colenso on the 15th December 1899 and died two days afterwards aged 27 years and 11 months.

Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God.

Note: I believe that three of his six pall-bearers later died:

Prince Christian Victor (died of enteric, buried in Pretoria). qv

Colonel Buchanan Riddell killed on Spionkop, 24th January, 1900.

Capt, the Honourable Reginald Cathcart killed on Tugela Heights, 22nd February, 1900.

Saving the guns. A story of heroes

(Buller's first attempt to cross the Tugela River to relieve Ladysmith.)

On the 15th December 1899 at Colenso, Captain Schofield, ADC to Buller had been ordered by Buller to try to retrieve the guns of the 14th & 66th Batteries, Royal Field Artillery, abandoned because the men serving them had all been killed, wounded or driven from the guns by the heavy fire and were sheltering in a *donga* (a dry creek bed) close by.

First Attempt: Corporal Nurse, and two limber teams, volunteered to help and they actually brought two guns back to the donga. Private Ravenhill had left his sheltered position to help them hook the guns in. Schofield, Nurse and Ravenhill were awarded the VC and the six team members won the DCM.

Lieutenant Roberts, (ADC to General Clery) with Captain Walter Congreve, had also volunteered to help assist in limbering up the guns. Congreve took shelter because he had been wounded, but seeing Roberts fall badly wounded, he went out and brought him in, being further wounded himself.

Congreve was assisted in bringing Roberts in by Major Babbie, RAMC, who had been tending the wounded in the *donga*. Roberts, Congreve and Babbie were awarded the VC by Lord Roberts.

A second attempt by Lieutenants Schreiber and Grylls, Bombadier Knight and two gunners was unsuccessful. Schreiber was killed and Grylls wounded. Each man was awarded the DCM.

A third attempt led by Captain Reed with three teams plus his trumpeter, lost seven out of 14 men and Reed was wounded. Reed was awarded the VC and each man received the DCM.

What happened to these heroes?

Among other honours Babbie was honorary surgeon to King Edward the 7th.

Congreve was promoted to Lieutenant-General. He was awarded the VC and later the KCB and went on to become the Governor of Malta. He was in command of the 13th Corps at the Battle of the Somme and it was he who ordered the South African Brigade 'to hold Delville Wood at any cost'.

An amazing additional fact is that Congreve's son Major William (Billy) Congreve, who was shot by a sniper at Longueval, near Delville Wood, on the Somme in July 1916 also won a VC, posthumously, the DSO and the Military Cross. He had been married just six weeks when he was killed.

So this was the second father/son VC combination with a connection to the Colenso incident.

Walter Congreve's wife, Celia La Touche, had won three medals, including the Croix de Guerre, for bravery while serving as a nurse during World War One. And his younger son, Geoffrey, won the DSO for a raid on Norway and was killed in 1941

According to Ian Uys, Ravenhill had lived in abject poverty after the War and in 1908 was convicted of the theft of a vest. He was imprisoned for seven days as he couldn't pay the ten shillings fine and he had to forfeit his VC.

[References: Darrell Hall; Ian Uys]

Darrell Hall in *Halt! Action! Front! With Colonel Long at Colenso. Covos-Day, South Africa. 1999*. (I have a copy of Darrell's draft of his book.)

- Ian Uys. *Victoria Crosses of the Anglo-Boer War*. Fortress, Knysna. 2000

Robertson, Capt Claude William

Rustenburg Cemetery. See Koster River", Section 1.

In memory of Claude William Robertson, Royal Marine Light Infantry, commanding B Squadron, 1st Regiment Australian Bushmen, killed in action at Magato Pass (Koster River), July 22nd 1900. Born September 10th 1869.



Schiess, Corp. Friederich, VC.

Rorke's Drift. Photo by John Sweetman.

In memory of Corporal "Friederich" Schiess, 3rd Regiment, Natal Native Contingent, who won the VC for gallantry at the defence of Rorke's Drift on 22/23 January 1879. He died at sea on 14th December, 1884. He has no memorial but this.



Seymour, Major Louis.

To the memory of Louis Irving Seymour, citizen USA, major in her Britannic Majesty's Railway Pioneer Regiment . Born at Whitney's Point, (New York State), December 23 1860. Killed in action at Zand River in the Orange River Colony of South Africa, June 14th 1900.

American born. A distinguished engineer he worked in several capacities in South Africa. Raised this regiment. Killed while supervising the repair of the railway line to Johannesburg, and trying to clear out snipers. 'Fell while gallantly repelling an attack of the Boers upon the small garrison at Zand River'. (Times History)

Smith, Tpr WE.

Williamstown, S/Aust. Photo by Craig Machin (right).

Erected to the memory of Private WE Smith, once a resident of Williamstown, who was killed in the battle against the Boers at Anundel, South Africa, February 21st 1900. Also in memory of other South Australians who were slain.



Talana Hill

In memory of Lt. Col. (Robert Henry) Gunning, Capt. MHK (Mark Horace Kerr) Pechell, Lt RC Burnett, Lt NJ (Norman Joachim) Hambro, Lt J (John) Taylor, Kings Royal Rifles and Col. (John) Sherston DSO, Rifle Brigade, Irish Fusiliers. Killed in action at Talana Hill, 20th October 1899. This stone is erected as a token of affection and regard by their brother officers.

Notes

Hambro (19) was killed by friendly fire. Lost both his legs. Pechell's brother, Charles Augustus Kerr Pechell was killed at Cannon Kopje on 31st October 1899. They were the sons of Admiral Pechell. Col/Sherston was the nephew of Lord Roberts.

Weldon, Captain George Anthony.

His grave is in the background of the photograph for Talana Hill (*facing page bottom*).

In ever loving memory of Captain George Weldon, 2nd Batt RDT (Royal Dublin Fusiliers) eldest son of Col. T Weldon CIE and Helen Rachel Louisa, his wife, born 1st February 1866, killed in action at Talana Hill on 20th October 1899, while placing a wounded soldier under cover. He was laid to rest here under heavy fire on Oct 21st by 4 men of his Regt, for he was loved by all. 'Greater love hath no man than he lay down his life for his friends.'

Mildred Dooner (*The Last Post*) writes that the men couldn't find Weldon at first till they heard his little terrier Rose howling by his body. She says that he was the first officer killed in the war.



Tame, QMS Harry

Middelburg, Tvl.

This grave of QM Sergt M Tame, No. 3616, NSW Bushmen, belongs to one of the three Tame brothers who died of enteric fever in the war. A fourth brother survived. All served with the 3rd NSW Imperial Bushmen. They died within a few months of each other... October 1901, January 1902 and March 1902. (Source: Ron Austin, *The Australian Illustrated Encyclopaedia of the Zulu and Boer Wars*. 1999, Slouch Hat Publications.) We were devastated to hear of Ron's death in 2012, far too young.

Thomas, Major J Francis

Tenterfield NSW, Australia (See Section 1)



Vallentin, Major John Maximilien

Garden of Remembrance, Ermelo.

Major Vallentin was 'mentioned in despatches' four times during his service in South Africa. He had taken part at Elandslaagte and the siege of Ladysmith.

He was killed at Onverwacht (Bankkop), east of Ermelo, on 4th January 1902. 20 men were killed there, including 13 of the 5th Queensland Bushmen, 45 wounded and 70 captured. A small

number of Boers, including Commandant Opperman, were killed.

The inscription reads:

In loving memory of Major John Maximilien Valentin, 2nd Battalion Somerset Light Infantry, who fell leading his men at Onverwacht January 4th 1902.

Well done good and faithful servant. Enter thee into the joy of the Lord.



Von Zeppelin, Baron, Harra

(Photo: 1972)

Baron von Zeppelin, part of the Heidelberg Commando, died at Elandslaagte on the 23rd October, 1899. He was related to the German airship designer. This grave now has a headstone.

(Source: Ian Uys, *Heidelbergers of the Boer War*)



Wauchope, Major General Andrew Gilbert (Andy), CB, CMG

The words on this stone tell his full military history. It is situated near the fascinating and historic town Matjiesfontein (Mikees/fontane), in the Karoo, not Magersfontein.

On one panel is written:

In loving memory of Major General Andrew Gilbert Wauchope of Niddrie Marischal Midlothian, Scotland. Born 5th July 1846.

Joined the Army on 21st November 1865 and served in the Black Watch till 1898

He was engaged in the Ashanti War 1873-74; Egyptian Expedition 1882-4; Soudan Expedition 1884-5; Nile Expedition 1896.

Commanded the 1st British Brigade at the Battle of Ondurman 1898.

Commanded the Highland Brigade in South Africa, where he was killed in action at the Battle of Magersfontein, 11th December 1899 and buried here.

He was 4 times wounded in these engagements.

He devoted himself to the interests of the Church and State, and his life and energies were ever spent for the welfare of his country.

"Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God".

A second panel says:

Major General AG Wauchope, CB, CMG.

He commanded the Highland Brigade in the South African Campaign from the outbreak of hostilities until the 10th December 1899 on which date he was killed while leading his men to action at the Battle of Magersfontein.

This monument is erected by his fellow Britishers as a tribute to the bravery and gallantry of one who fell while doing his duty.





Welch, Capt Norman

Bothaville.

In loving memory of Norman Charles Welch, Captain and Brevet Major, Hampshire Regt. Born 16th July 1845. Died on 10th November 1900 from gunshot wound received at Bothaville. Erected by his brother officers.

A. Conan Doyle *The Great Boer War* wrote that he was a soldier of great promise, much beloved by his men.



Woodgate, Major General Edward RP

Mooi River, KZN

Major Woodgate had already served in the Ashanti War, where he was mentioned in despatches. He served in the Zulu War in 1879 (Kambula & Ulundi) again mentioned in despatches (twice). He was mortally wounded on Spionkop on 24th January 1900 and died at Mooi River on March 23rd.

The inscription reads:

Here sleeps Christ's faithful soldier and servant Major General Edward RP Woodgate KCMG; CB formerly commanding 4th Bat Kings Own (Royal Lancaster) Regt. Wounded on Spionkop while commanding the Lancashire Regt. Died March 23rd 1900.

We asked life of Thee and Thou gavest him a long life, even forever and ever

*If you, like me, find these stories fascinating I recommend
Not Forgotten by Neil Oliver, Hodder & Stoughton, 2006.
He refers to monuments in England.*

Part D

Memorable Memorials

South Africa has a wealth of monuments connected to its military history. You find them in every 'dorp', on top of many *koppies*, on farms and now-isolated roadsides. Many portray the grief and loss felt by the survivors far better than the more clinical memorials of more modern times. Most give interesting background information.

Some of these memorials (which are not only Anglo-Boer War memorials) have been included because they are now difficult to access or are damaged, but mostly because of the information or poignant inscription on them. As, often, these inscriptions are in Afrikaans, it is probable that some are passed by with their significance unnoticed.

We have not included monuments that are often published, except if the inscription is interesting or needed translation. Often those published do not display the text in a readable form. We hope that, in the future, we will be able to include others on a website.

These are ones that we have photographed over the years and thought would be of interest to those who have been unable to see them for themselves. We have many that are mainly lists of names and units so did not include them. We have not given much battle information as this is, mostly, freely available.

Ornate, poignant memorials to this war are also to be found in small towns, cemeteries, churches and schools in other countries which were involved. This is just a small offering.

Early Troubles and Voortrekker Memorials

Bulawayo.

Matabele Rebellion monument.

The Gardner machine gun on top of this monument, to those who lost their lives in the Matabele Rebellion 1896-97, is no longer in place. The rebellion was between the Matabele and the white settlers. Cecil Rhodes was in a small group of influential men who bravely walked into the Matabele camp and persuaded them to lay down their arms.

In 1893 there had been the Matabele War, in which the Shangani Patrol under Major Allan Wilson had been wiped out. This started with hostilities between Lobengula's Matabele and the Mashona, and spread to a conflict with the British. There is a magnificent stone memorial on the summit of a huge stone hill in the Matopos National Park to the men of the Shangani patrol, which bears the inscription 'There were no survivors'. Close by is the grave of Cecil John Rhodes with the simple inscription, 'Here Lie The Remains of Cecil John Rhodes'.

When I was about five years old I got a sharp clip from my mother for running over it. (Midge)

In 1961 or '62, I took a picture of this gun which was used by the "Pioneer Column" when they invaded Matabeleland in 1890. This was mounted atop a column in Abercrombie Street. A second column had a statue of Cecil Rhodes on top.

When Mr Mugabe's Government came to power and Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, both Rhodes's statue and the Gardner machine gun were removed to the Bulawayo Museum. The machine gun was completely overhauled to working condition in the railway workshops. While it was there an interesting discovery was made. A sheet of heavy gauge steel with some odd slots and bolt holes, that has been used as an anvil for 50 years or more, was found to be the gunshield for that gun and has now been restored.



Dick King's Ride, 1842

Durban

Richard Philip King was a wagon driver who had settled in Durban, Natal, in about 1828. In 1842 an armed force of new Boer settlers besieged the British Garrison defending the small settlement, in order to occupy this territory as their own.

The plight of the garrison soon became desperate and King offered to ride to the nearest British military post at Grahamstown,



1000 km (600 miles) away. This would be a hazardous journey through wild country full of hostile tribes, but Dick had been a wagon driver and knew the country very well.

King achieved his remarkable feat, on his horse Somerset, in 10 days and delivered his message before collapsing in total exhaustion. A rescue force was rapidly dispatched and Durban was saved in the nick of time. The Boers retired and never attempted to take Durban again.

His amazing ride is one of the greatest stories of heroism in South African history. Dick King received a reward of £15 and a tract of land at Isipingo near Durban, where he lived for the rest of his life.

His 16-year-old Zulu companion, Ndongeni, rode bareback, so his legs were raw and bleeding before they could reach Grahamstown, and he was left at a mission station to recover. He was told to wait until he saw a ship sailing in the direction of Port Natal and hurry back to tell the British that help was on the way.

The words on King's memorial reflect the measure of the value he was held in as a man.

On the front panel:



Sacred to the memory of Richard Philip King, born Chatham, England, 28th November 1813, died Isipingo, Natal, 10th November 1871 aged 57 years.

On the rear panel:

The gallant act of Richard Philip King in riding overland to Grahamstown for the relief of the remnant of the troops and others beleaguered by the Boers and reduced to great privations in May 1842, is a matter of history and will never be forgotten in Natal. His kindness and generosity were a household word, but his affection as a husband and father can but be known to his bereaved family who erect this monument as a slight tribute to him whose irreparable loss they now mourn.

There is also a plaque, very difficult to read, at the Old Fort and Warrior Gate Museum in Durban. It says:

On the 26th May 1824 Dick King set off from this fort on his memorable ride to His Honour Col. Hare CB KH at Grahamstown, Lt. Governor of the Frontier, asking help for Her Majesty's forces besieged here by the insurgent Boers.



Dingenstad

Ulundi area. 1838.

*Graf van Piet Retief en 70 burghers.
Rust in vrede.*

Grave of Piet Retief and 70 burghers. Rest in peace

The trekkers, under the leadership of Piet Retief, were brutally slaughtered by Dingaan's orders on 6th February 1838, near the site of the royal kraal at Gingindlovu. They had been invited to a meal by Dingaan where they were set upon in a most gruesome manner.



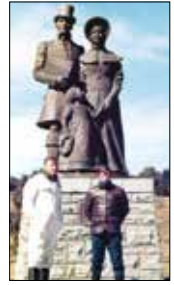


East London

The German Settlers Monument commemorates the arrival of more than 2000 German men, women and children in 1858.

Grahamstown

Midge and his mate Don Pearce at the Early Settlers Monument in 1978 (*right*). This monument is to remember the 1820 settlers.



Pretoria

Voortrekker Monument.

Zulu War Memorials

Note: For a comprehensive account of the Zulu Wars, the customs, and the people, and excellent photos of headstones, etc, read *The Zulu War, Then and Now* by Ian Knight and Ian Castle. 1993.

Blood River/Ncome, near Dundee, Natal

Boer Laager and Zulu Museum. Photos 2000.

There are several points of interest at this site, apart from the impressive laager of 64 bronze wagons erected in 1971.



This granite ox wagon was unveiled in 1947. The wagons were used as a home and a fort.



The mound of stones is the oldest monument, dated 1866. To commemorate the battle of 1838 each person put a stone on the mound. Next to it are the words of 'The Vow' in English and Afrikaans.



A modern mound of stones to promote "unity, solidarity and reconciliation."

The Battle of Blood River

Plaque Inscription.

Dawn, on Sunday 16th December 1838, revealed that this laager, with 464 whites, as well as several coloured servants and friendly Bantus, had been surrounded by a force of from ten to twelve thousand Zulus. Across the river, the main Impi, the white shields, under the command of Ndhlela, stood watching the progress of the attack launched by the younger impis, the red and the black shields.



Protected on the south by a donga and on the east by a fringed hippo pool, with a marshy hollow at the upper end, the laager was attacked mainly from the north and the east. On the orders of Commandant Andries Pretorius, the Voortrekkers waited until the Zulus were close to the wagons before firing their muzzle-loaders and guns. This checked the attack and when the gun-smoke lifted, the enemy had already retreated to beyond the range of fire.

This was followed by several similar attacks, all with the same results. Later, the main impi also joined in the battle. But despite fearless repeated assaults with shield and assegai, the Zulus were unable to force their way into the laager. After about two hours Pretorius sent out a mounted commando to continue the engagement outside the laager. This turned the tide. The Zulus began to flee.

In the confusion which followed, they suffered severe losses, especially in the donga in which large numbers were crowded together, as well as along the river, including the drifts and on the Matambo Flats beyond. After a pursuit of approximately two hours, the commando returned to the laager, a Thanksgiving service was held and the Vow was re-affirmed.

This impressive memorial represents a laager of 64 bronze wagons drawn up to defend the Voortrekkers, under Andries Pretorius, against the Zulus led by Dingaan. The Zulus were defeated.

Earlier, Dingaan had made a friendly agreement with Voortrekker leader, Piet Retief, but Dingaan brutally murdered him and his companions (1838). He had become chieftain after treacherously murdering his half-brother Shaka in 1828.

Dingaan's Day, later known as the Day of the Covenant, the Day of the Vow and the Day of Reconciliation, became a national holiday in South Africa (16th December).

The Voortrekker Vow (as on the plaque)

My brothers and fellow countrymen we stand here now for a moment before a holy God of Heaven and Earth to make a promise to Him if he would give us His protection and be with us and give our enemy into our hands so we may defeat them, we shall pass the day and date each year as an anniversary and a day of thanksgiving in His honour like a Sabbath. And we promise that we shall build a temple to His honour as it shall please Him, and that we shall tell our children, so that they may share in this with us to remembrance. Also for our rising generations so that the glory of His name may be sanctified thereby, and the glory and honour of victory shall be given unto Him.

The Church of the Vow was built in Pietermaritzburg in 1841.

NB. An excellent museum, completed in 1996, on the other side of the Ncome River (later better known as Blood River) portrays the Zulu story.

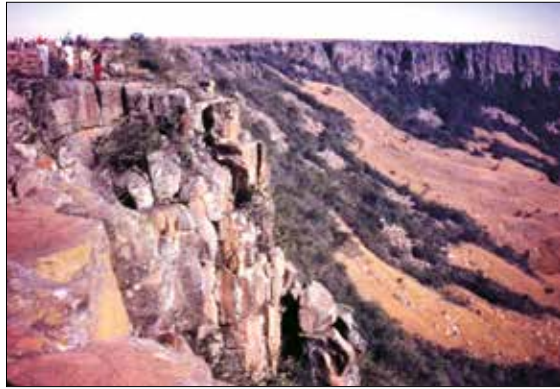


Edendale

Mission churchyard (near Pietermaritzburg) Photo May 1978

Men of the Edendale Contingent, killed in action at Isandlwana almost 100 years before I took this photo.

In memoriam Ezra Tyingila, Klass Sopela, killed in action January 22nd 1879.



Hlobane

28th March 1879.

The British forces, whose leaders included Sir Evelyn Wood, Lt.Col Redvers Buller and Lt.Col John Russell, were defeated by the Zulus. It was for his actions here that Buller received a VC. Pietrus Uys a prominent Boer farmer, who had joined the British, was killed here and the pile of stones marks the spot.

The late David Rattray, in his *Guidebook to the Anglo-Zulu Battlefields*, says that this is 'one of the most magnificent of all Zulu battlefields' and it 'is a notoriously difficult battlefield to visit'. Ken Gillings in *Battles of KwaZulu Natal* calls the descent of the Devil's Pass 'hair-raising'.

The area earns its name 'The Devil's Pass'. There are precipitous cliffs and rough, rocky terrain. Note people at left top of photo top right.



Isandlwana

24th Regiment of Foot.

To the memory of 22 officers and 590 non-commissioned officers and men of the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 24th Regiment who fell in action on the field of Isandlwana on the 22nd January 1879, and in the defence of Rorke's Drift on the 22nd and 23rd January 1879. Erected by their comrades, past and present and by old friends of the Regiment. Anno Domini 1913.

Isandlwana

22nd January 1879.

Around this hill a British force under the immediate command of Lt/Col AW Durnford and Brevet Lt/Col HB Pulleine was annihilated by a Zulu impi of between 20,000 and 25,000 under the command of Ntshingwayo ka Mhlo Khoza. 52 officers, 806 non-commissioned officers & men, as also 471 native troops and non-combatants lost their lives. This led directly to the heroic defence of Rorke's Drift, which lies ten miles to the west.



Isandlwana

Zulu Monument.

This represents the traditional necklace ('Iziqu') worn by warriors to show their deeds.

A vast collection of memorabilia from Isandlwana is preserved at Brecon, in Wales.

The film *Zulu Dawn* was about the tragic events here. *Zulu* was about the happenings at Rorke's Drift.

See also Section 1 for more about the film *Zulu Dawn* and Isandlwana.



Kambula

Vryheid area. 29th March 1879.

Plaque. Here a British force of 2000 men commanded by Colonel (afterwards Field Marshall Sir) Evelyn Wood VC, CB successfully defended itself against a Zulu impi 20 000 strong, under Mnyamana Buthelezi. After a series of determined attacks on the British laager lasting from 13h45 to 17h30 on 29 March 1879, the Zulus were forced to withdraw suffering some 2000 casualties. The Indunas regarded this as a major reverse, specially as many of the regiments that took part had been victorious at Isandlwana. (In the distance, to the left of the trees, is where the small fort was situated.)



Ntombe Drift

north of Vryheid, 12th March 1879 Staffordshire Regiment.

This monument was erected on the 1st January 1911 by the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the 2nd Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment (late 3rd Regiment), then serving in Pretoria, to the memory and to mark the burial place of their sixty-five comrades of 'H' Company who fell on the 12th March 1879 at Intombi Drift during the Zulu War and whose names are recorded in Lichfield Cathedral.

In memory of Captain Moriarty , Surgeon Cubbin, NCOs and men 80th Regt who fell at Intombi River March 8th 1878. Erected by 4th Kings Own.



Rorke's Drift

22nd & 23rd January 1879

100 British soldiers defended this position against 4,000 Zulu warriors in a short but terrifying battle. A record 11 Victoria Crosses were awarded to the brave defenders.

An excellent museum portrays the battle.

Sadly, David Rattray, a well-known local historian who used to tell the story to fascinated groups, was murdered on 26th January 2007 at his home overlooking Rorke's Drift. He had been very active in his support of the Zulu people. The film *Zulu* was about the action here.

Rorke's Drift Zulu Monument.

The words on this simple memorial to the Zulus who died here are in English, Zulu and Afrikaans.

In proud memory of the brave Zulu warriors who fell at the Battle of Rorke's Drift 22nd January 1879, some of whom lie buried here.

Utrecht, KZN

Military Graves. Utrecht Cemetery.

This section of the old cemetery, which is laid out in the form of an arrow, dates from December 1877.



In April of that year Britain annexed the Transvaal against a back-ground of deteriorating relations with Zululand. In December 1877, three Companies of the 80th Regiment were stationed in Utrecht, to be joined a few weeks later by three Companies of the 13th Regiment. A portion of this cemetery was then set aside for use by the military. War with the Zulu Nation broke out in January 1879 and by May, before the second invasion of Zululand, more than four thousand British soldiers were stationed in Utrecht. Sections of the Army's Administrative Services remained at Utrecht until the end of the war.

In October 1878, the Reverend MSW Arlington, Vicar-General of the Anglican Church in Zululand, died and was also buried in the military allotment. Casualties from the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902 are also buried in this allotment and elsewhere in this cemetery.

Utrecht Military Cemetery. Anglo-Zulu War 1879. To the glory of God and in memory of Imperial and Colonial officers, non-commissioned officers and men who died in their country's service and who are buried here at Utrecht.

Then follows the names of 38 Anglo-Zulu War soldiers who died in 1879 plus Reverend Arlington, Civil Surgeon Garland and 15 Anglo-Boer War men, mostly in 1901.

ANGLO-BOER WAR MEMORIALS

1st Anglo-Boer War 1880-1881



AMAJUBA, KZN ("The Hill of Doves")

1st Boer War (See Section 1)

58th Regiment Monument, Natal 27th February 1891 (left)

Erected by the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the 58th Regiment in memory of their comrades who were killed or died of wounds received in action at Amajuba on the 27th February 1891



O'Neill's Cottage. KZN

(See Section 1)

This was used as a make-shift hospital for the British soldiers wounded on Amajuba. Many of them were buried here. The peace treaty was signed here and ratified at Hilldrop, the home at that time of Rider Haggard. Haggard, (1856-1925), who knew South Africa well, was the author of *She* and *King Solomon's Mines* among others.



Paardekraal

(1880-1881 Transvaal Rebellion)

The Paardekraal monument, near Krugersdorp, Gauteng, was erected in 1880 when burghers of the Zuid-Afrikaan Republiek gathered there to voice their objection to British annexation and to restore the Government of the Republic as it had existed before annexation, an act which two days later led to the 1st War of Independence. Each man placed a stone on a pile to show his support.

2nd Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902



Belfast

Monument Hill (Old Boer monument)

It was around this hill that heavy fighting took place during the Battle of Belfast and the British position was finally over-run by the Boer attack.



Bloemfontein

War Museum of the Boer Republics. Free State 1997.

The following statistics were taken from a museum publication.

This Museum gives an excellent insight into the Boer involvement in the ABW. President M. Steyn, General C de Wet, Emily Hobhouse and the Reverend J Kestell (qv) are all buried here. Amongst the moving memorials in the grounds are the following:

Afskeid (Farewell). A truly moving sculpture of the Boer saying goodbye to his wife and child, dedicated to the 54,000 burghers between the ages of 16 and 60 who left their families to join the Boer commandos.



Die Bittereinder (The Bitter-ender) monument to those who had fought to the 'bitter end'.

Die Banneling (The exile). This honours the 577 burghers who died at sea or in exile in the POW camps abroad in Bermuda, Ceylon, India and St Helena. Almost 24,000 prisoners were sent to camps.



The Women's Memorial is dedicated to the 26,370 women and children who died in concentration camps during the war. 22,074 were children under the age of 16.

Translation: *To our heroines and beloved children. 'Thy will be done'.*



This national monument is erected in memory of the 26,370 women and children who died in the concentration camps, and the other women and children who died elsewhere as a result of the war 1899-1902.

(On the right side) *For freedom, people and fatherland.*

I will not fail you, I will not forsake you.

Blood River Poort, KZN.

17th September 1901. Photo 1968/9

The late SB Bourquin inspects the memorial.



Boschbult

Near Ottosdal, NW Province 1997

(Canadian monument). The very hospitable owners of the farm (the Kriel family) where the battle took place, told us that the men who were killed here were originally buried in a section of their front lawn, close to their house.



Cape Town.

1997 The Parade, now a car park, opposite the Castle, Cape Town (right).

To the undying honour of those sons of the City who gave their lives for love of the Motherland and in defence of the Colony during the Anglo Boer War 1899-1902. This memorial is erected by the citizens of Cape Town.



Chieveley, KZN

Armoured Train Wreck site.

This marks the place where the armoured train was wrecked and the Rt Hon. Winston Churchill captured by the Boer forces. November 18th 1899.

Chieveley site of military hospital.

In this vicinity, at No 4 Stationary Military Hospital, all the British wounded in the Battles of Colenso (15 December 1899) and Tugela Heights (14-27 February 1900) were treated. The Royal Army Medical Corps, commanded by Capt F Treves, worked under difficult conditions, but had good equipment and ample supplies, and were provided with comforts by 'The Ladies of the Colony'. There were four grass-floored operating and dressing stations, each surrounded by bell tents which would accommodate 100 patients. The wounded arrived by train or ambulance or were carried here by Indian stretcher-bearers, often over long distances. National Monument Council 1988.





Clouston

Llewellyn Hyde's sculptured plaque.

The bas relief is very impressive and the inscription reads:

"They could not know the splendour of their dying."

Colenso

Beneath this stone lie the remains of twenty-nine unknown British soldiers who were killed at the Battle of Colenso on 15th December 1900.

Without cover and with ammunition spent, they stood by their guns.

Ubique. Quo fas et gloria ducunt (Everywhere. Where right and glory lead.)



Colesberg

See also:

- Grave of W Lambie (War Correspondent)
- Royal Artillery marker.
- Guards' graffiti.
- Suffolk Monument. (Lt/Col. Arthur John Watson)
- West Australia Hill. (See Section 1).
- Worcester Monument

Colesberg.

Outside the Colesberg Museum (right)

14. (Cole's Kop) Battery Royal Artillery.

This memorial is in remembrance of the bravery and resourcefulness of 14th (Cole's Kop) Battery Royal Artillery who, in January 1900 as 4th Battery Royal Field Artillery conducted operations in the area of Colesberg. Cole's Kop, the 800 feet flat-topped hill overlooking the Boer position, gave an ideal vantage point to the British forces. Assisted by the Royal Engineers and the Essex Regiment, a 15 pounder was borne to the summit and brought into action. At dawn on 12 Jan 1900 the solitary gun opened fire, causing confusion and forcing a withdrawal of the opposition out of range. A second gun was subsequently taken to the top. In all 3,383 rounds were fired between 6 Jan and 12 Feb 1900.

Major Butcher, the Battery Commander, was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. In 1928 14 Battery was granted the Honour Title COLE'S KOP which it retains to this day.

The marker has a map of the action, as well as the motto: *Ubique. Quo fas et gloria ducunt* and the Cole's Kop icon. What an amazing feat this was!





Cradock

Boer Memorial.

The inscription reads:

To the memory of those who sacrificed their lives (in this district) in the war 1899-1902.

Johannes Coetzee (Cradock); Willem Kruger (Cradock); Dirk C. Breedt (Bethulie, OFS); Frans E du Randt (Adelaide); Louw Pretorius; Jacobus Vermaak; Barend Marais; Peter Erasmus; Francois Lotter (all Cradock); Peter du Randt (Somerset East); Thomas Hugo (Rouxville OFS); Stephanus de Bruin (Tarkastad); Jacobus Standert (Philipstown); Charel du Plessis (Philipstown); Jacobus van Wijk (Middelburg, Cape Town).

Resting until the Resurrection. Also their memories rest in the hearts of their fellow Afrikaners.

We are thankful to the brothers for laying down their lives. 1Jon3,16

Erected by members of the Dutch Reformed Church, Cradock. 1907.

Dordrecht

Burghers' Memorial statue. Translated:

Remember.

To the memory of the burghers who placed the highest sacrifice on the altar of the Fatherland in the Second War of Freedom. 1899-1902.

The homage of the descendants to them who laid down their lives in the Dordrecht district.



Dullstroom

(Elandspruit battlesite)

Monument to Major ATP Hudson and other men of the Manchester Regiment about 16 km from Dullstroom on the Lydenburg road.

Erected by all ranks of the 1st Manchester Regt in affectionate remembrance of their comrades who were killed or died of wounds received in action near this spot on the night of 19th December 1901.



Durban Cenotaph

Victoria Street, near Civic Centre.

Memorial to those who fell in World Wars 1 & 2.

This picture represents 'the fallen warrior being transported to Heaven in the arms of two angels'.

Inscription reads: *Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.*





Elandslaagte, KZN

Colonel Scott Chisholme.

In memory of John James Scott-Chisholme, late of the 5th Lancers, who commanded the Imperial Light Horse and fell while leading that Regiment at Elandslaagte 2nd October 1899. Erected by the officers, NCOs and men of the 5th Lancers and Imperial Light Horse.

This monument is erected by their comrades in memory of Sergeant Major EH Cuthbert, Sergeant CH Hendley, Troopers FJT Hunt, ACW Sillery, K McClintock, RS Farran, HJ Wolseley, FC Fisher who fell in action at Elandslaagte on October 21st 1899 and are buried on this spot.

"Tell England ye who pass this monument we, who died serving her, rest here content"



Elands River

North-West Province

When we first went to Elands River in 1997 the area was very overgrown, but you could make out the defence works. Local man, Koos Olivier, set about clearing the site, and by the time of the centenary in 2000, several countries, that had been involved in the Siege, dedicated monuments to their units. A problem that occurs with using bronze plaques is the probability that these will be stolen for their monetary value, so most have to be locked away for most of the year. For this reason we (Western Australia) used beautiful black granite instead, as we had at WA Hill, Colesberg, which was done at the same time. There are several memorials here but we have only included the following. [See also Section 1: Eland's River. The flag.] We have many photos of the various points of interest, but had to consider space.



Dis Al is a well-known Afrikaans poem by Jan F E Cellier (1865-1940).

Dis die blond	Gold
dis die blou	blue
dis die veld	veld
dis die lug	sky
en 'n voël draai bowe in ensame vlug-	and one bird wheeling lonely, high-
dis al.	that's all
dis n' balling gekom	An exile come back
oor die oseaan	from over the sea;
dis'n graf in die gras	a grave in the grass,
dis 'n vallende traan-	a tear breaking free-
dis al	that's all.

On the adjoining panel is inscribed in Afrikaans:

The Siege of Brakfontein (Elands River). 4-16 August 1900.

To the memory of the Boer Commando under the command of General Koos de la Rey, that 100 years ago was involved at the siege of a British camp on this ground.

Rustenburg Commando. Commandant P.Steenkamp; Wolmaranstad Commando. Commandant FJ Potgieter; Marico Commando. General HR Lemmer; Griqualand and Vryheid Rebels. Commandant PJ de Villiers.

Unveiled by Peet Coetzee,

Elands River Siege

Rhodesian monument

Elands River Siege 4-16 August 1900

In proud memory of members of the Rhodesian Field Force who defended this post, in particular those who made the supreme sacrifice whose bodies lie buried nearby.

Erected by the Rhodesian Association of South Africa and the BSA Police Regimental Association. Dedicated 5 August 2000.

Rhodesian units included elements from:

British South Africa Police

Rhodesia Regiment

Southern Rhodesia (became Rhodesia, then Zimbabwe)

Volunteers

Although subjected to exceptionally heavy artillery and sniper fire, and in spite of being called upon to surrender, the Garrison held out gallantly until relieved by Brigadier General Broadwood on 16th August 1900.



Fort Nongqayi

Eshowe Photo 2001

These new plaques were displayed here during the Centenary services:

In memory of the inhabitants of the Eshowe Concentration and surrendered burghers camp, (from Dec 1900-April 1902) situated at Fort Curtis during the Anglo-Boer South African War, in a cause of which they knew nothing.

In memory of the 400,000 horses and mules killed and wounded during the Anglo-Boer War



Gelykwater

Zululand.

The 21 burghers buried here were re-interred at the Burgher Memorial, Platrand, Ladysmith in 1979. The farm house served as temporary headquarters for the burgher attack on Itala.

(Ken Gillings and Midge, on the right hand side, at the ceremony, 2001)

Graaff Reinet

Eastern Cape (1982)

This impressive Boer monument, on the corner of Somerset & Donkin Street, has several inscriptions. As you can see, Kommandant Gideon Scheepers is among the dead remembered here. The monument features General de Wet and Scheepers. The rifle has since been broken off.

The front panel is difficult to translate as it is not in modern Afrikaans.

In memory of the fallen in the struggle for freedom and right. Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902.

*Guide us! Dull our fate
Deep in the grave O God
And yet together we praise Thee.
Might, strength and glory
Are yours forever.
Guide us, Almighty! Amen.*

A side panel has the following names of men from Scheepers' commando.

Translation: *There is One who judgeth. John viii, 50*

The following were sentenced under martial law and were brought to death along one or other of the main roads or at the various exits from the town.

*Be not far from me for trouble is near, there is none to help. Ps xxii, ii
'Verily the bitterness of death is past'. Samuel xv, 32*

PJ (PieterJacobus) Fourie. 19.8.1901. (Father of 8.)

JBL (Jan B.van Rensburg, 19.8.1901. (Aged 22.)

LFS (Ludewick) Pfeiffer. 19.8.1901.

IW (Ignatius) Nel. 26.8.1901.

(Aged 21. Mentally like a child.)

DF (Daniel) Olwagen, . 26.8.1901. (Aged 18.)

JH Roux. 7.10.1901.

Kmdt. GJ. (Gideon) Scheepers, . 18.1.1902. (Aged 23.)

JF (Jacobus Francois) Geldenhuys. 14.2.1902.



They were each charged with one or more of the following offences: “Actively in arms”; attempted murder; murder; arson; “engaging with the military forces of the enemy”; and marauding.

Alice Greener, the writer of the poem *The Four Roads*, claims that she was told by a local that “the bodies were buried in the four roads leading out of town, so that we shall always have to tread on their heads”. [I can find no source for this poem.]

Each verse begins:

“Four roads lead out of the town,

And one of them runs to the South, (East, etc.)” The side panel seems to bear this out.

In verse 4 she writes,

“And Scheepers lies ‘neath the road that leads to the land he loved till death.”

It is noteworthy that a young 6th Inniskilling Dragoons officer, Lieutenant LEG Oates (Lawrence Edward Grace, later known as Captain ‘Titus’ Oates), was involved in the chase after Scheepers in the Aberdeen area. [An excellent source about the Oates/Scheeper encounter is *Commandant Gideon Scheepers and the search for his grave* by Taffy & Davis Shearing, *Cape Commando Series No. 2*. These books are self-published.]

Oates received a serious bullet wound to the femur and this was to have tragic consequences years later.

Much has been written about what happened in March 1912 and accounts vary slightly. Oates went with Scott’s expedition to the South Pole, where they suffered dreadfully. Oates’s old leg wound flared up and he begged to be left behind as he was slowing them down, but he was of course denied. According to the Inniskilling Museum website, Oates went outside during a blizzard and was never seen again, and Scott and the two others perished, starving and frozen. Legend tells us that Oates said, “I am just going outside and I may be some time”. It was his 32nd birthday.

Groenkop

(Twefontein). Boer Memorial Photo 1969

Inscription translation:

Christmas battle 1901

Battle between Boer & Brit

General de Wet.

Colonel Firman and his men, laagered on Groenkop, were busy building blockhouses between Harrismith and Bethlehem as part of the British offensive against the Boers.

General Christiaan de Wet with 500 men attacked their camp from the steep western side in the early dark hours of Christmas Day and achieved a stunning victory.

On the English side 116 dead or wounded and 210 captured.

On the Boer side 14 dead and 30 wounded.

Erected by Voortrekker Commandos. Krestell & Witzieshoek Sculptor: A Smuts





Groenkop

(Tweefontein) British Memorial Photo 1969

Erected by their comrades in memory of those who were killed or died of wounds received in action at this spot. Christmas Day 1901.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John xv 13

YAL Field Artillery. Lieut. ST Hardwick; Gr Act. Bp D Hassett T section Vickers Maxim; Act BpP Hanley, Gunners McLellan, Murphy & Driver Knight 9th Batt. ? Bn Grenadier Guards No 36 Pte. E Hawker; 1st Staffordshire Regt. Major GA Williams; Lc Corp A Denning; 11th Batt Imperial Yeomanry Capt. C Grice (Scottish Rifles) Adjutant; Lt JS Watney, machine gun section; Capt CE Hall 34th Middlesex Squadron;

? Hudson & Lt HMA – - East Kent Squadron; Capt HHS Crawley 53rd East Kent Squadron; Civil Surgeon GF Reid



Hart's Hill. KZN

Connaught Rangers. 1965.

Sacred to the memory of 22 NCOs and men of the 1st Battn, Connaught Rangers, who were killed in action near this spot on the 23rd and 24th February 1900 and are here buried. Also 26 NCOs and men who were killed at the Battle of Colenso, 15th December 1899. Also to the memory of the Irish Brigade, Royal Inniskilling Fusilliers, the Border Regiment, Royal Dublin Fusilliers, who fell with them. This monument is erected by the officers, NCO and men of the 1st Battn Connaught Rangers. RIP

In this photo of the Hart's Hill Quarry, you can see *schanzes*, the Connaught Rangers' Monument and, in the

middle left, more graves and monuments. Stone from the quarry was used in the re-alignment of the main railway line,



ILH Monument

Braamfontein Cemetery, Johannesburg

This monument is erected by their comrades in memory of officers, non-commissioned officers and troopers of the Imperial Light Horse who fell at Witklip on the 7th July 1900.

Cpt WM Currie, Lt EK Kirk, Serg JT Marshall, Farrier Serg C Woolley, Corp EO Atherstone, Troopers CW Drennan, Grahame King, H Lane, APD Moodie. Died of wounds received Trooper A Bouchier.

"Tell England, ye who pass this monument, we who died serving her, rest here content."



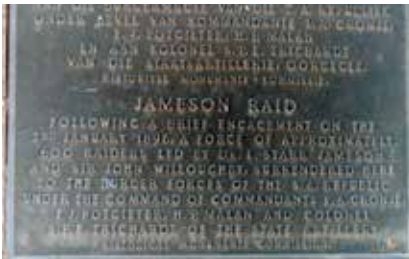
Jameson Raiders

Doornkop, Gauteng (Johannesburg) Photo 1997

Inscription reads:

Following a brief engagement on the 2nd January 1896, a force of approximately 600 raiders led by Dr L Starr Jameson and Sir John Willoughby, surrendered here to the Burger forces of the SA Republic under the command of Commandants PA Cronje, FJ Potgeiter, HP Malan and Colonel SPE Trichardt of the State Artillery. Historical Monument Commission

As you can see from this photo, the memorials are not easy to find. The area backs onto the township of Soweto. We were taken there by Maurice Gough-Palmer in 1997. Graves in Roodepoort Cemetery.



Kestell, Reverend John Daniel.

Memorial stone on Wagon Hill, Ladysmith.

Reverend Kestell (1854-1941) served as a chaplain during the Boer War and later served as secretary at the Peace Conference in Vereeniging. After the war he was very involved in seeking aid to help poor widows and children. He is buried at the foot of the Boer monument to women and children in the grounds of the War

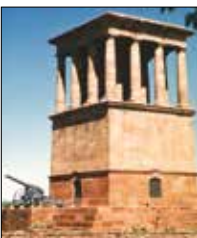
Museum of the Boer Republics, Bloemfontein.

Words on the memorial stone (in English then Afrikaans):

It was here that during the battle on 8th Jan 1900 the Reverend John Kestell, Minister of the Harrismith Commando, in great danger and under heavy fire, brought succour to wounded foe and friend alike.

A grievously wounded British sergeant said to him: "You are preaching a good sermon today".

Erected at the wish of British soldiers.



Kimberley

The Honoured Dead memorial

This for a charge for our children in sign of the price we paid. The price that we paid for freedom that comes unsoiled to your hand. Read, revere and uncover. Here are the victors laid. They that died for their city being sons of the land.

To the glory of God and in honoured memory of the undermentioned officers, non-commissioned officers and men who fell during the Siege of Kimberley at Carter's Ridge on the 28th November 1899

In honoured memory of George Frederick Labram, born Detroit, Michigan, USA, who designed this gun known as Long Cecil and was killed by a Boer rifle at Kimberley on the 9th February 1900.



Koster River

2nd June, 1900 Boer monument. (Rooipooierspruit) ; roy-pweer-sprate).

Inscribed on the panel of this Boer monument at the top of the hill:

Gesneuwelde burgers. (Burghers killed in the battle).

PW Venter, J Viljoen. C Malan, S Drake. Opgerig (erected) 23 Nov 1938

For freedom and for right.

To remember our old soldiers in the battle for Rooipooierspruit who were present on Sunday 22 June 19010 [sic] during the second Freedom War.



The Australians who were ambushed and who died here are buried in the Rustenburg Cemetery. It was here that Emily Back came out offering to ride for help, but as this was not needed she stayed to tend to the wounded.



Kroonstad

Garden of Remembrance.

This monument was unveiled on the 12th November 1977.

Here lie the remains of the British and Commonwealth forces who answered the call of their countries and sacrificed their lives in the Anglo Boer War of 1899-1902. Theirs was not to reason why. They were soldiers and in doing

their duty paid the supreme sacrifice.

Ladysmith

The Burgher monument on Caesar's Camp. The English inscription reads:

The pillars portray hands and point in the direction of the battlefields where the burghers lost their lives. These hands represent sturdiness, intrepidity, fearlessness as well as anguish, suffering, sorrow.



The protective hands surround the remains of the dead and reach upwards in faith.

781 burghers made the supreme sacrifice in the campaign in Natal during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902.

The remains of 310 burghers rest in the crypt. The rest (marked with an ★) are buried elsewhere.

Two small girls died. One in the Boer prisoner-of-war camp and one in the concentration camp at Ladysmith.



Ladysmith

Devon's Monument, Wagon Hill (Platrand) 1965.

To the glory of God and in memory of the following officers and men of the 1st Battalion, Devonshire Regiment, who fell in the gallant and successful charge made across this place by three companies during the fight on 6th January 1900

During this action Lieutenant James Masterson won a VC for his endeavours to try to take a message to the Imperial Light Horse, who were holding a ridge 100 yards behind them. He had to cross an open space under heavy cross-fire and 'although badly wounded in both thighs, managed to crawl in and deliver

his message before falling exhausted into the ILH trench'. [London Gazette June 4th 1901. *From Victoria Crosses of the Anglo-Boer War* by Ian Uys.]



Ladysmith

ILH monument 1965.

Lambrechtfontein, OFS.

18th May 1901. (Photo: Ken Gillings).

This action took place in the Bothaville area. Coulson had been present at Paardeberg and was in Hannay's suicidal charge. He was at Bothaville where Lt-Col Le Gallais fell. He and Captain Welch, who also died at Bothaville, were great friends (*see Part A*).

Inscription:

In memory of the following soldiers who fell in a rear guard action at Lambrechtfontein on 18th May 1901 and are buried near this location.

1st Kings Own Scottish Borderers (7th MI).

Lt & Adj GHB Coulson VC, DSO

Lt/Col Riddle

Pte A Horton

2nd Durham Light Infantry

Pte GH Woolam



During the action Lt & Adj GHB Coulson successfully rallied the men to save the guns, and on returning to the column picked up a dismounted soldier whose horse had been shot. After a short distance Lt Coulson's horse was wounded and he gave it to the soldier, [Cpl Cranmer] telling him to save himself. Seeing Lt Coulson's position of danger, Cpl EJ Shaw of the Lincolnshire Regiment rode out from the column on his horse. After a short distance both were struck by the same bullet and Lt Coulson fell mortally wounded. For their conspicuous gallantry Lt Coulson was awarded the Victoria Cross and Cpl Shaw the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Langverwacht

(Lung/fer/varkht) NZ monument

This monument was later destroyed by a tree falling on it, but it has since been rebuilt. (See Section 1)



Leliefontein/Liliefontein

Mpumalanga 7th November 1900 Photo 1997

This monument is in a paddock about 4 km north of a pan (a little lake), between Belfast and Carolina, Mpumalanga. At this battle, 3 Canadians received a VC. They were Lieutenant Hampden Zane Cockburn, Royal Canadian Dragoons, (who had also saved two brothers from drowning in 1897); Lieutenant Richard Ernest Turner, 13th Royal Canadian Dragoons, (who later had a very distinguished military career and a swag of awards); Sergeant Edward James Holland, Royal Canadian Dragoons.

(See *Victoria Crosses of the Anglo-Boer War* by Ian Uys, p 75-77)

Translation:

'How the heroes have fallen' (2 Sam 12)

General JC Fourie and Commandant HF Prinsloo fell in battle here while they heroically led the Boer forces against General Sir HL Smith-Dorrien on 7 November 1900. Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902



Lindley

Free State 13th Imperial Yeomanry Monument

Near this spot fell in action Captain Keith, Lt. Sir John Power and 25 NCOs and men of the 13th Imperial Yeomanry .

Also in memory of the following who lost their lives elsewhere in South Africa during the war.

Veterinary Lt. W Fenner. Lt CD Kimber. Troopers McLernan, Gargan, Armstrong and (name hidden).

This is a very modest monument to the men of the 13th Imperial Yeomanry who were operating between Kroonstd and Lindley. In *The Last Post* Dooner writes that Lt. Charles Dixon Kimber, a solicitor before the War, had previously been taken prisoner but had escaped. On 17th July 1901 he endeavoured to save an unmounted sergeant of his troop. While the sergeant was attempting to mount behind him, Kimber was shot through the heart - the sergeant was uninjured. He was buried on the road to Ventersdorp.

Among the troopers whose names are inscribed on this marker is E (Wilmot) Chetwode. Trish found the following letter which had been published in the school's Record of old Haileyburians who fought in the South African War . It was written by a Mrs du Plessis to his mother.

"I am the Dutch minister's wife and in our quiet little village no arrangement had been made for the wounded, and so for the first weeks I and some other ladies did the nursing and providing. I at once took to him, so young and boyish in his ways, and he in turn looked to me for all he wanted." On his birthday June 12th, "I brought him breakfast on a special tray with flowers (it is winter now and they are very scarce) and a little keepsake from my children – poor fellow he was so pleased". They had hoped he would recover in spite of three wounds, but lockjaw (Tetanus) set in at last. "We were thankful he did not suffer quite as much as was expected. My husband buried him in our little graveyard among so many others of his yeomanry, and many tears were shed at his grave. All liked him, my own children were heartbroken. We know where he lies....The night he was brought in he said, "I am glad my mother does not know I am so badly wounded". I will be glad to know that this has reached you. May the thought that friendly hands cared for him, in a small way comfort you – it might have been so different."

[See also Trooper Aberline in Section 2, Part A, for a similar letter]

Magersfontein

Boer Cemetery, OFS

A young unknown Scottish bugler who died of wounds and was buried here by the burghers at Magersfontein, 11th December 1899.

Since identified as Drummer William Milne, Seaforth Highlanders.



Magersfontein, OFS.

Highland Brigades' Memorial

Erected by Scots the world over in memory of the officers and men of the Highland Regiments who fell at Magersfontein 11th December 1899.

"Scotland is poorer in men but richer in heroes".

The regiments represented here are:
The Highland Light Infantry, Seaforth Highlanders, Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders, The Gordon Highlanders, The Black Watch (The Royal Highlanders).

Sacred to the memory of:

Lt Colonel JH Goode

Capt. & Adj W McFarlane 2nd Royal Highlanders. Black Watch

Lt NG Edmonds

2nd Lt WB King 1st Argyll & Sutherland H/landers

Major GLS Ray 1st Northumberland Fusiliers and 36 officers and men who fell in action in front of the Boer trenches at Magersfontein, December 11th 1899.



"And there shall be no more deaths, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

Rev.24.1

This memorial is next to another which explains where the men are now buried.

In memory of the following officers and men who were killed near this spot during the Battle of Magersfontein 11th December 1899, who were originally interred here and now lie buried in the Garden of Remembrance, West End Cemetery, Kimberley. South African War Graves Board 1963.

(See also Colonel 'Bertie' Laing, Interview with a Veteran. Section 1).



Boer Trenches, 1968

Scandinavian Monuments



"Till minne av har Skandinaver 11 December 1899. De kunde icke vicka, blott falla kunde de."

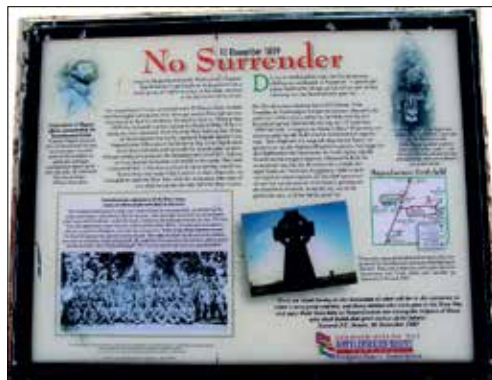
"In memory of the Scandinavians who fell here, 11 December 1899. Theirs was not to retreat – only to die."

(Translation taken from a McGregor Museum, Kimberley, leaflet compiled by Fiona Barbour, the well-known Kimberley historian).

Magersfontein, OFS. Scandinavian monuments.

The description board text:

No Surrender. The Scandinavian Corps comprised some 52 Danes, Finns, Swedes and Norwegian immigrants who, although exempt from war service, volunteered to fight for the Boers. During the night of 10th December 1899 they occupied a sentry outpost on Horse Artillery Hill but, in doing so, were separated from the main Boer defence line. When the Boers opened fire on the Highland Brigade approaching Magersfontein Hill at dawn the following day, some Highlanders broke back and advanced towards the Scandinavian outpost. Although totally outnumbered, the Scandinavians stood firm, fighting from behind the bushes and anthills in this area. They were surrounded and, in the ensuing hand-to-hand combat, wiped out. Twenty-three men were killed in action or died of wounds, six managed to reach the Boer lines, while the remainder who were all wounded, during the skirmish, fell into enemy hands.



Middleburg, Cape.

The 'Chair Monument' records the place of execution of Commandant Johannes Lötter and V/C Petrus Wolfaardt. See 'Graves', section A.

Another monument records these men plus Marais.



Translation:

In memory of those who sacrificed their lives(from this district) in the war 1899-1902.

Frederick Marais born 10th July 1868 (Cradock), put to death 10th July 1901.

'Like sheep to the slaughter'. Rom 8,v36

Commandant Johannes Lotter born June 1868 (Somerset East), shot dead 15 Oct 1901.

Petrus J Woolfaardt born June 1868 (indistinct) shot dead 10th July 1901. They rest until the Resurrection. Their memories also live in the hearts of their fellow Afrikaners.

We are thankful to the brothers for laying down their lives.

[For a full account of this incident, read *Commandant Lötter and his rebels*.

Taffy and David Shearing, Cape Commando Series No. 1, 1998.]



Modder River, OFS

Guards Brigade Memorial. Photo 1968.

Tria juncta in uno. ['Three joined in one'.]

In memory of the non-commissioned officers and men of the Brigade of Guards who fell at the Battle of Modder River. November 28th 1900.

Modder River, OFS.

KOYLI monument (right)

To the memory of 10 officers, 1 warrant officer, 1 colour sergeant, 4 sergeants, 4 corporals, 119 privates, The Kings Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, who lost their lives in the service of South Africa between 11th Oct 1899 and 21st May 1902. Requiescat in Pace.



Norval's Pont.

Concentration Camp Panels.





Paardeberg, OFS,

18-27 Feb 1900.

Cornwall's Light Infantry, 18.2.1900. 26 names include Lt/Col William Aldworth DSO, Capt. BA Newbury, Capt & Adj. EP Wardlaw, Sergt R Jordan.

Mildred Dooner says that Aldworth raised himself on his elbow and urged his men forward, his last words being "Go on men and finish it".

Paardeberg, 18-27 Feb 1900.

Information panel.:

The Battle of Paardeberg

The laager of Gen PA Cronje, on the banks of the Modder River, approximately where this observation post is situated, was bombarded by Gen JDP French at 11h15 on 17th February 1900, causing 4000 burghers to occupy the practically dry banks and bed of the river, extending about 12 miles.



The following morning, Lord Kitchener decided to launch a full-scale attack on the laager from the west, south and east with 20 000 soldiers, supported by more than 40 guns. The burghers repulsed the determined attack, inflicting heavy losses on the British units.

During the attack, Col OC Hannay and some of his companions, were killed when he tried to prove that a frontal attack, as ordered by his commanding officer, was suicidal. His grave is across the road, directly west of this observation post and marks the spot where he died in action.

Gen CR de Wet's intervention, occupying Oskoppies, prevented a second British frontal attack that afternoon. De Wet's proposal that an immediate escape should be undertaken, was thwarted by Cronje's apparent success and his reluctance to abandon the laager of wagons.

The disappointing result of the frontal attack forced Roberts, Commander-in-Chief, to send reinforcements of several thousand troops on 19th February. He himself arrived at the battlefield to take command after a temporary indisposition.

The appalling loss of human lives caused him to abandon Kitchener's direct attack on the laagers and it was decided to lay siege to the laagers. During the subsequent day, the burghers were intermittently bombarded by 90 guns in their shelters and the situation became untenable, also due to the swollen river. A mass escape was prevented when the British killed Cronje's draught animals and demolished his wagons.

General de Wet, driven from Oskoppies, failed in recapturing it as a key to Cronje's possible escape. However he could not accept the surrender of so many burghers. During the night of 24 February Danie Theron, his master scout, penetrated the British lines to prevail upon Cronje to fight his way out with de Wet's support. Cronje considered the proposition, but his council of war was unwilling and insisted upon a speedy capitulation.

After moving closer to the laager, the 19th Brigade launched a determined frontal attack, forcing Cronje and his 4 000 demoralized burghers to surrender at 06h00 on 27 February 1900, known in history as the Day of Amajuba.

This observation post and the one at Oskoppies, were erected by the War Museum of the Boer Republics in 1989, in collaboration with the Council of National Monuments, who proclaimed this site, the one at Oskoppies and that of Col. Hannay's grave as National Monuments on 5 December 1986.

Note: See Hannay's grave in Part A and Theron's monument in Part B.



Paulpietersburg, KZN

'Our Heroes'

Honour our Heroes. These stones mark the spot where General Louis Botha in April 1902 met the Utrecht Commando to elect delegates to the Peace Conference in Vereeniging.

Paulpietersburg local Board. 1935.



Pieters Hill

near Ladysmith. Barton's Brigade Monument 1965

This position was captured on 27th February 1900 by a Brigade under the command of Major-General Geoffrey Barton CB.

Composed of 2nd Battalion, The Royal Scots Fusiliers Lt. Colonel F Carr; 2nd Battalion The Princess Victoria's Royal Irish Fusiliers Colonel Reeves; 2nd Battalion The Royal Dublin Fusiliers, Colonel GD Cooper

[The following is very indistinct]

The Brigade (crossed?) the Tugela by the British bridge above the Falls along left bank of river for about two miles, then scaled the heights and drove the Boers from the ridge on which this monument is erected.

The enemy, being reinforced and aided by artillery, offered determined opposition throughout the day, but the Brigade stubbornly maintained the ground until sunset, by which time the opposite hills on the west, across the railway line, were captured by the remainder of the British force, and thus the relief of Ladysmith was secured.

Casualties: Killed 8 officers; 40 NCOs & men; Wounded 17 officers; 162 NCOs & men. Those who fell lie buried on the plateau, north-east of this monument. This memorial was erected by the Staff and Battalions of the Brigade.

Pinetown, KZN

St John's Church cemetery,

This commemorates those who died at the Princess Christian Hospital in Pinetown, including Petrus Pretorius, Prisoner-of-War.

This cross is erected by the Guild of Loyal Women and the SA Soldiers Graves Association.

To the glory of God and in memory of the following officers and men who died at the Princess Christian Hospital during the Boer war, 1899-1902 and are interred in this plot.

Then follows a list of 38 names, plus Pretorius

There is also a memorial to 22 who died in the Zulu War.



Pom-Pom Bridge

Jean Carter sitting on the remains of Pom-Pom Bridge, near Hart's Hill, as it was in 1967.



Port Elizabeth

The horses' statue.

The greatness of a nation consists not so much in the number of its people or the extent of its territory as in the extent and justice of its compassion. Erected by public subscription in recognition of the services of the gallant animals which perished in the Anglo Boer War 1899-1902.

Reverse side panel: Erected by public subscription with the addition of a liberal donation from the Metropolitan Drinking Fountain and Cattle Trough Association, London

See also the plaque, at Fort Nongqayi and the horse & trooper memorial at Tamworth, NSW.



Port Elizabeth

Boer War statue. Photo c1974. Yes it really was PINK!

Potchefstroom

Danie Theron Monument. (Darnie Tair-on). 1870-1900. Photo 1997

Danie Theron was a lawyer prior to the Anglo-Boer War. He then formed a corps of cyclists (Theron's Scouts), doing reconnaissance work. Among other deeds, he won fame for slipping through the British lines to take a message from de Wet to Cronje at Paardeberg. He was a hero to the Boer people and his men were devoted to him. He was killed by a stone shard, dislodged by artillery fire, which struck him on the head.

The inscription (translated) reads:

This monument was unveiled on 9th September 1950 – exactly 50 years and 4 days after the death of the hero Danie Theron – famous Boer scout leader of the Second Freedom Struggle – on this kopje also known as Theronkop.

The sail consists of 50 rings which symbolises the 50 years since September 1900 to September 1950.

The metal part at the top represents a flame – the flame of freedom, which burnt in the heart of Danie Theron and the Boers who defended their freedom, independence and their beloved four coloured flag.

Master builders: The firm L Fokkens Pty Pld'. Architect: Mr Hillebrand, Krugersdorp. Built with funds collected by the Voortrekkers.





Potchefstroom.

In memory of the British Garrison at Potchefstroom who died in the War of 1880-1881 Photo 1968

Rock Inscriptions



Caesar's Camp Ladysmith

(Anchor symbol).NNV Galley. WA Hatch, JS Bennett, cooks. Boer War Ladysmith. Photo 1972.



Manchester Fort

built by F & H Coy 1st Bn Manchester Regiment garrisoned during the Siege of Ladysmith 1899.

As follows; H Coy Capt A Menzies, Lt W Beddows, 80 NCOs and men.



Thomas's Farm.

This farm is situated in the Northern Cape, between Kimberley (90 km) and Hopetown (30 km). There was a British camp (because of the open water holes, with plenty of crystal clear water) and a British hospital here. 27 British soldiers who were either killed in action or

died of wounds were buried in a nearby cemetery. Photo 1997

One 'autograph' reads WG Hodgkinson 21.1.1900. B Coy Queensland MI.

Also H Buckle, 9140 and E Lacey..



Grenadier Guards, Colesberg.

Grenadier Guards, 9th ? Nov 1901. Long live our King. (As well as several names.)

Photo 1997.

Scheepers Nek, (Vryheid vicinity), KZN.

This cemetery is often hidden by a very tall crop of mealies. Here 31 men of Bethune's Mounted Infantry met their death on 20th May 1900. They were led by Captain W.E.D Goff, 3rd Dragoon Guards.



We are told that the brass plaque has been replaced by a granite one and a monument added for the three Hamilton brothers. Ernest died here, Kenneth died in Bloemfontein four days earlier of enteric and Alistair was killed by lightning near Machdadorp in 1902. [Robin W Smith, *Military History Journal*, Vol 16, No 5]

(See also Hadler in graves section.) Photo 1966



Silikaats Nek

In this cemetery, hidden away behind houses, is a monument and some graves of those who died at Silkaats Nek.



Spionkop/Spioenkop

Kwa-Zulu Natal

This photo was taken in 1966 when I went there with the British TV crew and shows another view of the mass grave.

(See also Section 1. Photo 1965. showing exposed bones and cartridges).



Strathcona's Horse

(See also Sgt AJ Richardson, VC in Graves section).

Sunnyside, south of Belmont.

1st January 1900. Photo taken 1997

At this remote battlesite, Queensland Mounted Infantry, Canadian Infantry and British Mounted Infantry under Lt.Colonel T Pilcher, attacked a Boer camp and 15 Boers were killed.

Australia's first casualty of the war died here. This cairn records the deaths of Trooper McLeod and Private Victor Jones.

On this spot was fought the engagement of Sunnyside. January 1st 1900.

This cairn is erected by their comrades in memory of No. 91 Private DG McLeod, No. 219 Private VS Jones, both of Queensland Mounted Infantry, who were killed in action on that date. (See photo and tribute to Jones in Graves section.)

[I have vivid memories of opening 13 farm gates –all different types– on the way to this cairn! Trish]



Worcestershire Regiment

Battle of Rensburg.

Firm

In memory of the following officers, NCOs and men of the 2nd Btt Worcestershire Regiment who were killed in action or died of wounds received in action near this spot while doing their duty in defending this position on 12th February 1900.

Lieut. C Coningham; Major AK Stubbs; Capt H Thomas; Sergt Watkins; Sergt WE Carter; Corp J Pritchard; L/Corp J Allen; Ptes W Mason, J Panton, A Parker, J Morris, L Carrington, E Banks, A Lammas, F Deverill, J McNaughton, W Pimm, W Weissner, A Turley, W Bennett, O Wheeler, A Crumpton.

Lieutenant Coningham is said to have told his men, "Don't trouble about me, men".

(The Last Post, Mildred G Dooner)

This stone, near Colesberg, is quite difficult to get to and is on a private property. We were lucky enough to be taken up the hill (1997) by the sprightly owner of the farm, Des Collier. He and his wife Ruth treated us with great hospitality.



Memorials and Graves in other Countries or from other Wars

Some of these monuments etc are included because of the message they convey, that amongst the horrors of war there can exist courage, compassion, integrity, humanity.

The temptation to include numerous other photos is almost over whelming.

Australia

ALBANY, Western Australia and Gallipoli

Albany was the port that most Australian troops would have passed through on their way to wars. The harbour is now named after Mustapha Kemal Atatürk, whose statue stands overlooking it. The words on the plaque, his words, are among the most moving we have ever read or heard. They are a copy of the original at Anzac Cove in Gallipoli.

Mustapha Kemal Atatürk, 1881-1938.

Founder of modern Republic of Turkey. Commander in Chief of the Turkish Forces in Gallipoli.

His famous words are: "Peace at home. Peace in the world".

At a Dawn Service in 1934 in Gallipoli he said:

"These heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives.....You are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehments to us, where they lie side by side. You the mothers who sent their sons from far away countries, wipe away your tears. Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. Having lost their lives they are now our sons as well."

Benalla, Victoria WW2

Benalla is the home town of Edward “Weary” Dunlop, (the “Quiet Lion”) the highly regarded doctor, himself a prisoner-of war on the infamous ‘Death Railway’ in Thailand, who kept many young Australians alive with his innovative methods and by standing up to the Japanese on their behalf. He was much-loved and is still revered by ex-prisoners-of-war. Weary was only one of the doctors and other medical people who cared for them, bravely and compassionately, under horrific conditions.

Several times we have been on the annual pilgrimage to Thailand, with the Burma-Thailand Railway Memorial Association (Western Australia) to attend a poignant Dawn Service in Hellfire Pass, and the ANZAC Day Service in Kanchanaburi. A marvelous feature of the tour, is that each year more than thirty 15-16 year old high school students play an active role in the ceremonies and listen to the stories of the ex-POW veterans who are still able to attend.

We have had several friends who lost their youth and their health as prisoners, brutalised by the Japanese, as they were forced to build the railway between Thailand and Burma. They all maintain that you could only survive if you had mates to watch out for each other. To add to their misery, some were sent on to Japan to work in mines there when the railway was completed, and some of the ships these soldiers were on were bombed and sunk by the Americans, who did not know that there were Allied prisoners aboard. This statue shows ‘Weary’ and another man trying to help a cholera victim.

The inscription reads:

Sir Edward “Weary” Dunlop, AC; Kt; CMG; KCSJ; MS (Melb); FRCS (Eng); FRACS; FACS; LLD (Melb, Hons); D.Sc Punjabi (Hons).

*Proudly remembered in Benalla and district.
Home of his boyhood and youth.*

“A great Australian who never forgot his humble beginnings”. 12th July 1907–2nd July 1993.

Around the bottom are his attributes:
Friendship. Courage. Forgiveness.
Leadership. Humility. Integrity.

In his diary (19th July 1943), he describes cholera:

“The symptoms and signs of this disease are unforgettable. The piteous shrinkage and dehydration, the earthy cyanosis, faint husky voice, agonising cramps and abdominal pains, rapid breathing and icy cold breath, the clammy almost pulseless cold limbs, and terminal restlessness and delirium. One rather disconcerting aspect of the patient is cholera sleep – the habit of lying with the eyelids open and their eyes turned up so that the pearly whites stare from between the lids. Almost all complain of roaring in the ears in the early stages.”

The doctors also had to deal with deadly illnesses such as malaria, beri-beri, dysentery and tropical ulcers (which sometimes led to amputation of the leg). They became very innovative,



using bamboo and discarded tins etc. The Army Museum in Perth, has set up a very moving recreation of the camp hospital and these improvised treatments. Of course, a similar camp can be seen in Home Phu Toey, near Kanchanburi, Thailand, where Weary, in particular, is honoured.

Note. In Section 1, “Sidetracks and Snippets, Trish has have included a ‘cure’ for cholera taken from one of her Grandma’s medical guides. It becomes farcical when we read the above symptoms.

Canberra, Australia

Proposed Boer War Memorial.

An unforgettable experience is a visit to the War Memorial in Canberra, and to the memorial-lined avenue leading up to it. Now, at last, there is to be one to those Australians who took part in the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902. It will be worth the wait. “The centrepiece will be four, 1.5 times, life-size realistic bronze statues depicting a section of Australian troopers mounted on warhorses on patrol in the South African veldt”. (Taken from the information leaflet of The National Boer War Memorial Association). See proposed memorial on the Web

Launceston, Tasmania

Lest we forget

On one panel:

This memorial was erected by the public of Northern Tasmania in affectionate remembrance of those Tasmanians who gave their lives for throne and Empire in the South African War 1899-1902.

This is followed by the names of 11 killed, 4 who died of wounds and 16 who died of disease.

Another panel reads:

This memorial was unveiled on the 20th day of Feb 1904 by Lieut-Col Cameron who commanded the First Tasmanian troops in South Africa.

Perth, Western Australia

The South African memorial.

A splendid memorial to the West Australians who were killed in the ‘South African War’ stands in Kings Park, overlooking Perth, the capital city of Western Australia. There are 4 bas-relief panels, one depicting Slingersfontein (where the 1st West Australian Mounted Infantry held West Australia Hill and thus protected the supply line). [See ‘West Australia Hill’ in Section 1, for a description of the battle, and photos of the memorial.]

Throughout the park are monuments to many units from wars Australians have participated in, this being the first one built. There is an avenue of honour also, with a small plaque at the base of each tree honouring a soldier who died in WW1.





Mount Morgan, Queensland

Mafeking Bell. This bell was cast in 1900 from pennies donated by Mount Morgan school children, to commemorate the Relief of Mafeking. The defence of Mafeking was under the command of Lord Baden-Powell who later

founded the Boy Scout Movement. Presented by the Mount Morgan Shire Council. October 1962.



Photos, Bob Willis, WA.

France

Near Beaumont Hamel

Newfoundland Memorial Park Photo 1997.

Although this monument has no relationship to South African military history, we felt that it should be included for its beautiful message which could apply to any battlefield.

Inscription reads:



Tread softly here! Go reverently and slow!
You let your soul go down upon its knees
And with bowed head, and heart abased strive hard
To grasp the future gain in the sore loss!
For not one foot of this dank soil but drank
Its surfeit of the blood of gallant men.
Who, for their faith, their hope – for life and Liberty,
Here made the sacrifice, – here gave their lives.
And gave right willingly – for you and me.
From this vast altar-pile the souls of men
Sped up to God in countless multitudes.

On this grim cratered ridge they gave their all,
And giving, won
The peace of Heaven and Immortality.
Our hearts go out to them in boundless gratitude;
Yours – then God's: for His vast charity
All sees, all knows, all comprehends – save bounds.
He has repaid their sacrifice: – and we –?
God help us if we fail to pay our debt
In fullest full and all unstintingly!

John Oxenham

Delville Wood

Somme, France. July 1916.

We will not attempt to describe what took place, as it deserves to have the whole story told. Look on the Web for the Battle of Delville Wood, World War 1 and under an entry “Images” you will see dozens of graphic photos. Only one tree was left standing after the battle, the area was absolutely devastated, yet here the South Africans fought fiercely, for six days and five nights, until the end. Today it is a very pretty, peaceful scene.



Inscription translation:

To the Immortal Dead from South Africa who, at the call of duty, made the great sacrifice on the battlefields of Africa, Asia and Europe and on the sea, this memorial is dedicated in proud and grateful recognition by their countrymen.

At the Memorial's Dedication service, in 1926, the Prime Minister of the (then) Union of South Africa— the Honourable JBM Hertzog, said:



This monument, dedicated to these our sons, will stand here in remembrance of that Great Sacrifice — an inspiration and a warning. A warning against human passion and folly; an inspiration to all that is good and noble in human action and devotion, and in national unity of heart and endeavour. May the memory of the heroic, self-

renunciation of our sons bring comfort and peace to the desolate heart of the mother and widow, and fill us with a spirit of humble devotion to the task of our Great Master, enjoining peace and goodwill!

Nancy, the springbok mascot.

A few notes. Nancy was the springbok mascot of the South African Brigade in France. Much loved, she led the ceremonial parade at the 1st Delville Wood Service on 17.2.1918. She died of pneumonia in Belgium and was given a funeral with full military honours. Parades were cancelled. Later, after taxidermy, she was displayed in the war museum in Johannesburg.

Another South African mascot was Jackie, the baboon.

Villers-Bretonneux

This school building is the gift of the school children of Victoria, Australia, to the children of Villers-Bretonneux, as a proof of their love and good-will towards France. Twelve hundred Australian soldiers, the fathers and brothers of these children, gave their lives in the heroic recapture of this town from the invaders on 24th April 1918 and are buried near this spot. May the memory of great sacrifices in a common cause keep France and Australia together forever in bonds of friendship and mutual esteem.



Photo 1997

New Zealand

We don't yet have many photos of monuments in NZ, but there is a book titled *The Sorrow and the Pride, New Zealand War Memorials*, by Chris Maclean and Jock Phillips, produced by the Historical Branch of Internal Affairs, 1990, and this covers all wars (to that time).

South Africa



Cradock, Eastern Cape

Faulds, VC memorial

Private William Frederick Faulds VC , MC (19.2.1895- 16.8.1950. Buried in Harare)

The then Private, later Captain, Faulds, won his VC at Delville Wood. (15-20 July 1916) for helping to rescue Lieutenant Craig. Then in March 1918 at Marrières Wood, he won the MC. Their ammunition exhausted, he was part of the less than a hundred men, most of them wounded, who surrendered when overrun by the Germans.

Faulds also served in World War 2.

A conference and function facility at the South African National Museum of Military History in Saxonwold, Johannesburg, was dedicated to Faulds on 29.11.1995. His VC was later stolen from the Museum.

The main monument reads:

Lest We Forget

To the glorious memory of the men of Cradock and district who gave their lives in the service of their country in the Great War, 1914-1918.

Under this is the following plaque:

In proud memory

William Frederick Faulds VC, MC

19.2.1895-16.8.1950

A son of Cradock and a member of the Cradock Commando prior to 1914 who, on the 19th July 1916 under heavy German attack during the Battle of Delville Wood, rescued a wounded officer. Two days later he again went out under heavy fire and carried a wounded comrade to safety.

"For most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty" he was awarded the Victoria Cross.

Braamfontein Cemetery, Johannesburg

Enoch Mankayi Sontonga

Buried on this site are the mortal remains of the author and composer of "Nkosi Sikel' I Africa".

Born in Uitenhage, Cape Province. A Christian and a teacher. Laid to rest on 19th April 1905, aged 32.



The hymn God Bless Africa was adopted by the African National Congress in 1925. On 20th April 1994 it was officially declared part of the National Anthem of South Africa.

A spark of God's own light he died too young, wept for then, honoured now and forever in the voices of their national song.

Port Elizabeth

Though this memorial has no link to military history it is so poignant that I had to include it. (The plaque is on a cairn.) Photo 1997

Elizabeth Frances, Lady Donkin

Eldest daughter of Dr George Markham, Dean of York

Died at Mirat in Upper Hindoostan of a fever after seven days illness on the 21st August 1818, aged not quite 28 years.

She left an infant in his seventh month. Too young to know the irreparable loss he had sustained, and a husband whose heart is wrung with undiminished grief.

He erected this pyramid August 1880

On another panel:

To the memory of one of the most perfect of human beings who has given her name to the town below.



Pretoria

Union Building (the seat of South African Government)

This bronze group is a replica of that which surmounts the South African National Memorial erected in Delville Wood, France, to the memory of South Africans who fell in the Great War 1914-1918.



USA

Arlington War Cemetery

Photo: Trish 1980.

The modest and moving graves of two brothers, President John FitzGerald Kennedy 1917-1963 and Senator Robert Francis



Kennedy, 1925–1968. An eternal flame burns there and a wall features the inspirational words of his speech “Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country”. John’s infant son, Patrick, is buried here too.



California

I have included this memorial, although it has no connection with military history, because the message is soothing for those affected by wartime loss. It is situated on the road into Yosemite National Park, California. Photo 1997

In memory of David Erickson, a US Forest Service crew leader from Siskiyou County, California. Lost his life while fighting the Stanislaus Complex fire, which destroyed 147,000 acres. For the love of the forest he gave the ultimate sacrifice, September, 11th 1987.

“Sit and rest awhile. Listen to the pines whisper in the light wind. Gaze at the trees and look upward, where branches reach the sky, where clouds pass by and day turns to night. Where memories are everlasting”.

UK

Cardiff City Hall Wales

The Boer War memorial in front of the City Hall, Cardiff, Wales. The uprooted tree, the lute with broken strings, signify lives ended too soon. Unfortunately the tablets are too weathered to read and I was unable to find a copy of the words. Photo 1997.



Scotland

Commandos’ Monument

“United we Conquer”

In memory of the officers and men of the Commandos who died in the Second World War, 1939-1945. This country was their training ground.

Dedicated to British commando forces raised during WW2. Midge took this photograph on one of his motor-cycle trips as a 23-year-old.

The Boers, who used guerilla tactics, called their unit a Commando. Photo 1954.



Photos Taken by Friends

We have devoted this section to photos taken by our friends John Sweetman and Craig Machin of Perth, WA. We felt that this would be a good opportunity for Craig and John to show part of their collection which they both have willingly allowed us to use here.

Note. The following photos were taken by **Craig Machin**. Craig went with us to South Africa in 2006. His interest in military history is wider, in particular WW1, but in his travels since 2006, in the UK, France, NZ and Australia, he has been faithfully taking photographs of interesting military monuments and headstones.



Allora, Queensland

Caskey, Lieut. Lachlan John

In loving memory of Lieut. Lachlan John Caskey, who, during the Boer War, was kill'd in action whilst bravely leading his men against overwhelming numbers, at Mokari Drift, South Africa on the 7th Sept 1901.

An endearing upright lad; an eminent teacher; a gallant and brave officer faithful and obedient unto death.

Erected by his school mates and admirers at Spring Creek, 24th May 1902.

In Toowong, Queensland is a fascinating memorial to Caskey which features emblems of his interests – a young man of great promise.



Four soldiers from the district were killed in South Africa. One plaque reads:

*They heard the Empire's call dear Motherland to shield,
And bade farewell to all they loved to face the battlefield.
But at the Front they fighting fell, and died like warriors grand.
Sleep then in peace, thy deeds shall live. Ye died for Motherland.*



Bendigo, Victoria

Plaque of Zulu and ABW soldiers.

In remembrance and esteem of our members who, at all times and in all places, served in the forces for King and Empire.

Zulu War, 1879. Bowrey FR, awarded VC at Rorke's Drift.

The interesting fact is that Bowrey did *not* win a VC! Research is being undertaken to find out more

Boer War. Geo Brain; OG Lehman.



Branxholme, Victoria.

Pte MacKinnon.

A Soldier's Grave.

In memory of Private C McKinnon of 4th Imperial Contingent, who died 17 July 1901, aged 22 years. The victim of disease contracted amid the hardships of the South African Campaign. He was commended by his superior officers, beloved by his comrades, and he is mourned by all who knew him.

Hector MacDonald Tower

Dingwall, Scotland.

This tower was erected as a national memorial to Major General Sir Hector MacDonald, KGB, DSO, ADC. AD 1907.

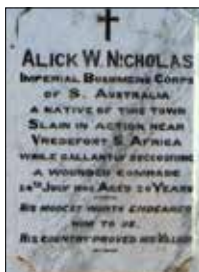


Hemmant, Queensland.

Anning. L/Corp John

In memory of Lance Corporal John Harry Anning of the 5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen killed in action at Koppiesfontein Sth Africa, 6th Aug 1901. Born at Morningside, 15th Nov 1882. Erected by his friends and comrades.

*He died the death of those who for their country die,
Sink on her bosom to repose triumphant where they lie.*



Lyndoch, South Australia

Alick Nicholas.

Alick W Nicholas, Imperial Bushmen's Corps of South Australia. A native of this town, slain in action near Vredefort, South Africa, while gallantly succouring a wounded comrade, 24th July 1900. Aged 20 years. His modest worth endeared him to us. His country proved his valour.



Maitland, NSW.

Dedication

To the memory of the 275 volunteers from Maitland and 44 surrounding towns and the 13 volunteers who paid the Supreme Sacrifice.

To all Australian, British, Allied, and Afrikaner Boers who served, and to those Australians who gave their lives in the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902.

To the 56, 000 civilian Afrikaner men, women and children and African Natives who died in the Concentration Camps.

Clergy: Father Lex Levy, Catholic; Rev. Roy Woolton, Anglican; Rev. F Brouwer, Protestant.



Melbourne, Victoria

Major General Gordon.

Erected by the people of Victoria to honour the memory of Charles George Gordon, Major-General Royal Engineers, who fell at Khartoum January 28, 1885.

"I have tried to do my duty".

"This is the happy warrior. This is he that every man in arms should wish to be."

Plaque 1 China 1863-4. *"He rescued provinces from anarchy, but would accept no reward."*

Plaque 2 Soudan 1874-80. *"He sought to save the lost and bid the oppressed go free."*

Plaque 3 Khartoum 1885. “*He would not desert those dependent on him while life remained.*”

Plaque 4 *"Warrior of God, not laid below,
But somewhere dead, far in the waste Soudan,
Thou livest in all hearts, for all men knew
This earth has borne no simpler, nobler man."*

St Helens, Tasmania

Boer War 11.10.1899- 1.6.1902.

The war was an outcome of rivalry between the independent republics of Dutch-Afrikaaner settlers (known as Boers) and mainly British subjects, as to who should control Southern Africa.

Our six Australian colonies, and Australia after Federation on 1 January 1901, sent troops to this conflict which initially favoured the Boers, who had declared war on Britain. After 2 ½ years of fighting, the Treaty of Vereeniging marked the final surrender of the Boers.

It is believed that 16,000 Australians signed up to serve in South Africa – mostly in mounted units. Disease created havoc for our soldiers, particularly during the early stages of the Boer War. 606 of those enlisted men died – near half in battle and the remainder from illness.

The beginning of Australian service and sacrifice in the name of peace.



Boxer Rebellion. 6.8.1900–25.4.1901.

A bloody uprising against foreign influence in China, saw the slaughter of many of those supporting western ideas and the destruction of those things considered foreign. Eight countries, including Britain, Japan and the USA, crushed the widely supported Boxer Rebellion. With all Australian colonies committed to the Boer War, only NSW, SA and Vic were involved in supporting Britain by way of 560 naval personnel. Six of those Australians died from sickness or injury.



Stirling Castle, Scotland.

Argyle & Sutherland Highlanders memorial

Erected by the officers, non-commissioned officers and men of the xci (or 1st Battalion) Princess Louise's (Argyle and Sutherlanders) to the memory of their comrades who lost their lives in the service of their country during the South African War, October 1899 to May 1902.

Tamworth, NSW.

The horse memorial. (WW1)

About this memorial. The sculptor has depicted an Australian Trooper saying farewell to his Waler horse in the deserts of the Middle East at the end of World War One.

The horses were either killed in action, sold to other armies or shot in the desert by a Trooper's mate, rather than leave their old companion behind to become beasts of burden.



The Trooper's uniform and the military saddlery on the horse has been based on the original WW1 equipment. The actual equipment used belongs to the late Bob Gunning.

A march lasting several days would see both horse and trooper carry equipment, rations and ammunition weighing approx 130 kgs. Lest we forget.

On another plaque are the following facts:

The horses were known as Walers. Only one came back. In memory of the Waler. Between 1861 and 1931, approximately 500,000 horses were exported from Australia to the Indian Army, the Boer War and Egypt, with the Australian Light Horse, as remounts. Of all these horses, only one returned, a gelding Sandy, belonging to Major General Sir William Bridge.

They were mainly bred from Blood, draught and pony breeds. These were the forbears of the Australian stock horses and were purchased from properties throughout Australia and, in the early stages, from NSW, which gave them their name of Walers, coined by the English.

The most famous of all feats of the Waler at war was the Light Horse charge on Beersheba in 1917. The horses were without water for 48 hours in the hot Sinai desert and then undertook a 4 km cavalry charge across the burning plains, under Turkish gunfire, to take Beersheba and its wells.

Note. The following photos were taken by **John Sweetman** and will be found in the 'Graves or 'Monuments' sections. John, who is very knowledgeable about Australia's involvement in the ABW, accompanied us to South Africa in 2000 and 2006. A novice with a camera at that time, he took many photos of monuments and graves in South Africa and has been very generous in sharing these.

Armstrong, Walter Douglas, civil compounder, RAMC. Bloemfontein.

Chieveley. (Site of Military Hospital)

Colenso (29 unknown gunners)

de Montmorency (and others), Molteno. ,

Elands River, Rhodesian plaque.

Pretoria. Pres. Kruger's statue. 4 burghers.

Schiess Corporal, VC. Rorke's Drift.

Sri Lanka Ceylon Mounted Infantry statue, Kandi

Mount Morgan, Queensland. Mafeking Bell Photo by **Bob Willis**.

We are grateful to **Ken Gillings** of South Africa for the following photos:

Amajuba. From his book, *Battles of Kwa-Zulu Natal*.

Lieutenant Coulson's memorial at Lambrechtfontein

Cetshwayo's modern headstone.

Part E

Forts & Blockhouses

Fort Hendrina

Louis Trichardt

Inscription:

This fort, which was named after the wife of General PJ Joubert,, Commandant General, is one of three iron forts which were ordered by the ZAR Government in 1887. The fort was originally erected on the farm Klipdam in 1888 and was hereafter moved to various sites. In 1969 when Mr Menne donated it to the Town Council of Louis Trichardt, they transferred it to this site. The Fort occupied the same site for a short period in the 19th century when it formed part of an artillery camp of the ZAR.

Monuments Council 1978. Photo 1997



Fort Pine, near Dundee

This was built by Royal Engineers in 1878 for the protection of civilians after the Battle of Isandlwana. As you can see it was in ruins in 1974. Photo: 1974



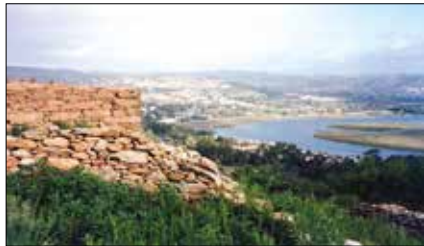
Harrismith, OFS

A friend had planned to dismantle this old blockhouse and rebuild it in Pietermaritzburg, but this never eventuated.

Knysna.

“Thomson’s Folly”. The most southerly fort of the ABW, overlooks Knysna town and estuary. Little remains.

NOTE: other forts and blockhouses can be viewed on YouTube. Click on “Battlefield Wanderers”





*High above the road tunnel in
Kogman's Kloof, Montague.*



Laingsburg



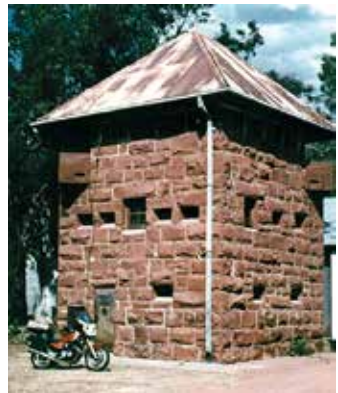
Meyerton, Gauteng



Orange River



*Peddie Blockhouse,
E/Cape Frontier Wars*



Warmbaths, Transvaal

Part F

Statues & Plaques

Cape Town

Jan Smuts At the top of Adderley St

Durban

The Lady in White

The statue of 'The Lady in White' stands on the North Pier in Durban. It reads:

To the memory of Perla Gibson, 'The Lady in White', who sang to countless thousands of British Commonwealth and allied servicemen as they passed through Durban over the years 1940 to 1971. This tablet is presented by the officers and men of the Royal Navy.

Dressed in white and wearing a white hat, Perla Gibson sang patriotic songs for more than 1000 troopships and over 350 hospital ships into and out of the harbour, meeting and farewelling them, often with the aid of a megaphone. She lost one of her own sons in the war.



LADYSMITH

Mohandas Gandhi (Mahatma – a great soul)

Trained as a lawyer in London, Gandhi went to South Africa in 1893. He involved himself in the struggle for the rights of Indians who had been taken to Natal to work on the sugar plantations. During the Anglo-Boer War he joined and trained other Indians in the dangerous task of stretcher-bearer. He was assassinated in New Delhi on 30th January, 1948.

As we had lost our photo of his statue when a camera was stolen, our kind friend Mervyn Robinson, who lives in Ladysmith, took this photo for us.

The inscription reads: *The Ram. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Servant and Saint. Born 2nd October 1869. Died 30th January 1948. The statue was unveiled in 1970.*



Melbourne, Victoria

Cymbeline Huddart, RN, St Paul's Cathedral

For the glory of God and in loving memory of Cymbeline Alfonso Edric Huddart RN of HMS Doris South African Station, youngest son of Lois and James Huddart, born at Melbourne 6th January 1881, Killed in action at Graspan, Cape Colony on 25th Nov 1899. Conspicuous Service Cross CSC was posthumously conferred by the King.

"It is with deep regret that I have to report the death of Midshipman Huddart who behaved magnificently and still advanced after he had been twice wounded until he was finally struck down, mortally wounded."

"The Queen read with feelings of admiration and pride the record by his commanding officer of the noble conduct of your son whose heroic but untimely death Her Majesty deeply regrets."

"The Doris sent one of the most gallant boys that ever lived, Midshipman Huddart, who charging up the hill at Graspan continued to advance after he had been twice wounded and at last fell mortally hurt in the moment of victory."

Extract from speech of First Lord of the Admiralty, Royal Academy Banquet, 5th May 1900.
Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God.



Mtonjaneni. (KZN)

Dingaan's Spring, near road D168.

"According to Zulu tradition, this is a spring from which Dingaan had his drinking water drawn". It is said that the poor girls had to walk several kilometres each way every day to collect it.

Pretoria

President Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger

Panel five (far right below) says:

Kruger calls the people at Paardekraal for the first freedom struggle, December 1880.



Johannesburg

Rhodesian Troopie Statue

The statue of a 'Troopie', (Rhodesian Bush War), as it was, in the Johannesburg War Museum in 1988. We are told it was made from thousands of cartridge cases.

The same statue, with weapon missing, in the Museum in 1997.





Rustenburg

Kruger, President Stephanus Johannes Paulus ("Oom Paul")

Paul Kruger was born on the 10th October 1825. As a lad his family had been Voortrekkers with Potgieter. He was married when he was 17.

This statue was sculptured in 1901 by the French sculptor, Jean George Achard, who stated that the tragic greatness of Kruger was to him so apparent "that it was forever chiselled in my mind. I had to make the statue".

Dr Engelenburg discovered the statue in Paris during 1919 whereafter it was purchased for the Union Government by Generals Smuts and Botha. General Smuts then, as the statue was too small for Church Square, Pretoria, at the request of the Town Council donated the statue to Rustenburg. The General on 16 December 1921 unveiled the statue with the following words

"I hope that the life of this man will set an example to us right to the last generation"

Erected by Dames Aktueel 10th October 1982. (Rustenburg Branch).

Part G

Lesser Known
or
Smaller Cemeteries



Badfontein.

(Near Lydenburg).



Gruisbank

(Paardeberg)



Helvetia. 1985

This is 200 metres off the forest road and about 800 metres from the main R36 Machadodorp/Lydenburg Road.



Elands River

Cemetery



Moedwil,

Thistles on the gate to this small cemetery honour the members of the Scottish Horse buried there. The late Lionel Wulfsohn, from nearby Rustenburg, cared for this cemetery for many years and held the keys. He is shown in this photo. He was a well-respected local historian and the author of *Rustenburg at War*.



Eshowe.

Old Zulu War cemetery.



Noupoot,

Eastern Cape.



Ntombe Drift

(also Intombi Drift).

The SAMHS visits the Ntombe Drift Cemetery 1973.



Paardeberg.



Rhenoster River

Military Cemetery. 7th June 1900.

Part of simultaneous attack by de Wet on Roodeval 1900.

Brief information from the panel: General de Wet launched 3 simultaneous attacks on Rooiwal (Roodewal), Vredeford Road and Rhenoster River camp.

At 3am General Froneman's 300 burghers surrounded this camp, which was repairing the bridge. By 10am 36 British soldiers were dead and 104 lay wounded. One Boer died. As Lt.Colonel Douglas was dead, the men surrendered. The bridge and camp were destroyed.



Pinetown, KZN.

St John's Church-yard

The graves of those who died in the Princess Christian Hospital.

A Boer prisoner-of-war is also buried here.



Roodewal (Rooiwal)

British Military Cemetery. 7.6.1900.

Site of one of General de Wet's most stunning victories.

Brief information points from the panel: This railway line served as the logistical lifeline between Bloemfontein and the Cape ports. There was a large consignment of stores at the station. The British were given no opportunity to surrender. At 5.45 am, de Wet shelled the station and the British were pounded into submission.

The stores were looted and the remainder burned; (a cost to Britain of £750, 000 sterling).

Casualties: British 47 killed. 109 wounded. 486 captured. Boer 1 killed.



Roodewal (W.Tv).

This is where General Potgieter is buried, in the direction that he fell.



Silikaats Nek.

This cemetery is tucked away behind some houses.



Tweebosch (de Klipdrift).

This cemetery, south of Sannieshof, is where Lord Methuen was shot and captured by de la Rey's Commando



Waterval Onder



Wynne Hills

near Colenso. Photo: 1965

NOTE: You can view several other cemeteries on YouTube. Click on "Battlefield Wanderers".

Part H

ABW Guns



Bothaville gun.

See Kings Park, Perth. (Section A)

Lelifontein gun

in Ottawa War Museum. A British 12 pounder recaptured by Canadians near Carolina, Tvl.



Rensburg Drift

75 mm Krupp gun. Canberra War Memorial.

Inscription:

Captured from de Wet at Rensburg Drift on 27th October 1900 by the NSW Mounted Rifles, when acting as advanced guard to De Lisle's forces, and presented to the Regiment by Lord Roberts as a mark of his appreciation of the excellent work done by the Regiment in the South African War.



Ross, Tasmania.

BL 15 pounder Mark 1 No. 788. Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902.

This gun is one of six delivered to New South Wales circa 1898. Used by Australian troops in their first action outside Australia. Presented to Ross township.

Range 6,000 yards = 5490 metres / Calibre 1 inch = 76.2 mm.

Weight of ammunition 14 pound = 6.4 kg.

Documented by The Artillery Historical Trust of Tasmania, Northern Branch,, 10th November 1996.

My gun collection. See Section A. Part B.

A List of our Video Clips

A list of video clips which go hand-in-hand with entries in this book.

Armoured Train Site x2	Border Regt. mass grave.Dumdum bullets.
Bakenlaagte.	A look at the battlesite. See also Primrose cemetery.
Barberton blockhouse.	An unusual type of blockhouse (corrugated iron).
Belfast.	Monument Hill Boer monument. Manchester Regt cemetery.
Berg-en-Dal.	Battlesite and impressive Boer monument.
Bethlehem.	A short look at the cemetery.
Bloemfontein.	War Museum of the Boer Republics.
Blood River.	Battlesite, monuments, Zulu Museum. Bronze laager.
Boomplaats.	Tiny cemetery near Trompsburg. (1848)
Boschbult.	Canadian battlesite.
Bothaville.	Battle site; Colonel Le Gallais grave; source of the Kings Park Gun in WA; de Wet memorial.
‘SB’ Bourquin.	Short interview with Midge, 1997.
Braamfontein.	Peaceful cemetery in J/burg. ILH (Witclip); East Lancashire Regt with honours; touching memorial to Enoch Mankayi Sontonga (SA National Anthem).
Brakpan.	Estimated site of battle where Fred Bell of WA won his VC and Lt Anthony Forrest was killed.
Brecon, Wales.	Cathedral. Gen Penn-Symons plaque, plaques of Isandlwana & Rorke’s Drift; flags.
Brecon, Wales	Museum. Isandlwana & Rorke’s Drift memorabilia (flag, VC medals etc).
Bronkhorstspuit.	Small cemetery. 1st ABW. Grave of Anstruther.
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.	Graves of Sister F Hines, Henry Darling, Troopers Hambley & McPhee (WA)
Caesar’s Camp, Wagon Hill	A walk around the battlefield. Many monuments to local actions.
Cape Town Castle.	A look at the interior.
Cardiff, Wales.	ABW Monument with uprooted tree, lute with broken strings etc; Monuments to Lt/Col Crichton-Stuart (Loos) & Viscount Tredegar, Balaclava.
Chair Monument.	Monument to executed Lotter & Wolfaardt at Middleburg.
Chieveley	Lt F Roberts grave in G/Remembrance
Colenso.	Siting of the guns.
Coleskop and Noupoot.	A distant look at Coleskop. Small Nnooport cemetery.
Danie Theron.	Short clip of monument, Potchefstroom. It has 50 rings to represent 50 years anniversary.

Delville Wood.	WW1. A walk around this battlesite and cemetery. The NZ monument.
Diamond Hill.	Cemetery. NZ, Australian & Canadians. Lt Col. Lloyd CB, DSO; Earl of Airlie; Rhenoster Kop dead.
Doornkop.	Jameson Raiders plaques & monuments. A look at the battlesite.
Dundee & Talana.	Very good museum at Talana; place where Penn-Symons fell; his monument at Dundee church; Talana relief maps; graves.
Dwarspruit.	Small cemetery of Boers who died at Moedwil. Monument. Grave Kmdt Boshoff. Far off the road.
Elandslaagte.	Cemetery. Battlesite. Col. Scott Chisholme & Nederlanders; Monuments.
Ermelo.	Garden of Remembrance. Grave of Vallentin. Queensland Imperial Bushmen.
Faber's Put.	Battlefield where Canadians fought.
Fort Klapperkop.	Pretoria.
Fort Mtonjaneni.	The layout of the fort – no buildings remain.
Fort Prospect.	Lonely grave of Pte Duckworth. Defence works.
Gandhi.	Statue, Ladysmith.
Hart's Hill.	Battlefield, graves, monuments.
Helvetia.	Cemetery.
Isandlwana.	
Itala, Zululand.	Battlefield. Cemeteries. Old kraal.
Jacobs, Durban.	Concentration camp memorial.
Jacobsdal.	Unusual blockhouse.
Jo'burg War Museum.	Two clips of the vast collection of aircraft, tanks, weapons etc.
Kambula.	Descriptive plaque; redoubt; views of the site (Zulu). See description board & old photo with graves still there in the book.
Kimberley.	West End Cemetery. Graves of Capt Majendie, famous golfer Lt Freddie Tait, Lt/Col Northcott, monuments to local battles such as Magersfontein.
Kimberley.	Honoured Dead Monument and Labram plaque.
Kleinfontein, Zeerust.	Monument. Statue of Andries Potgieter.
Koffiefontein.	Short clip of quaint fountain & portraits by POW.
Kogman's Kloof.	Blockhouse high above road.
Koster River.	Boer monument.
Lady in White.	Durban statue of Perla Seidle Gibson who sang to the troops leaving the harbour.
Ladysmith.	ABW. Town features.
Ladysmith.	Inside the museum (models, large photos, etc) & church which was hit during ABW. Plaque & pulpit to Maj Vallentin; very long panel of casualties of the Siege.

Langverwacht.	Battlesite where NZ suffered heavy losses.
Langverwacht.	The original NZ monument (later destroyed and rebuilt) and the place where the men were buried.
Lelifontein.	Canadian battlefield. Gen. Fourie & Kmdt Prinsloo's grave.
Lichtenburg.	The approach to the town. Excellent Boer monument.
M/Gen Woodgate	Grave at Mooi River (wounded on Spionkop).
Mafeking.	Flight Lt Beauchamp-Proctor, VC, DSO & Bar, DFC, killed in accident 1921; Warren's Fort; Concentration Camp with 825 markers; Sol Platjie's house.
Magersfontein.	Approach area, relief map of action, trenches, museum, Boer memorial; monuments.
Matjiesfontein.	Monument to Maj/Gen Andy Wauchope.
Matobas Hills, Zim.	Graves of Rhodes, Jameson, Coghlan; Shengani patrol monument; scenic drive. (Was Matopas).
Middelburg.	Cemetery where Lt Anthony Forrest, trainwrecker Jack Hindon, Lt Rainy Anderson, Capt Slegtkamp DTD (a bitterender) are buried.
Modderfontein.	17th Lancers' cemetery. Battlesite.
Modder River.	Inside the blockhouse. Also 'Rice pattern' b/house.
Moedwil	A look at the Scottish Horse cemetery with its special gate.
Moedwil.	Lionel Wulfsohn tells us about the battle here and we look at the Selons River.
Norval's Pont.	Hidden blockhouse on the Orange River.
O'Neill's Cottage.	1st ABW battle of Amajuba. Graves.
Ottosdal.	Cemetery. Graves of Col. Wilson, CB, and Lt. Nesham who stuck to the guns at Tweebosch until last man. Monument to local battles.
Paardeberg.	Museum. Cemeteries (Paardeberg, Gruisbank), Col Hannay's grave.
Paardekraal.	Monument prior to 1st ABW.
Pinetown.	Church was hospital. Monument to those who died there, including Surgeon Lt/Col Waring and a Boer prisoner of war. Also Zulu War graves.
Port Elizabeth.	Famous horses' monument. Elizabeth Donkin pyramid.
Pretoria.	Cemetery. President Kruger, Eloff, Jopie Fourie, Australians Morant & Handcock, Prince Christian Victor.
Primrose.	Cemetery. Bakenlagte graves. Scottish Horse memorial. Canadian graves.
Rhode's Memorial.	Grand monument near Cape Town. Then see his preferred grave site in the Matobas National Park, Zimbabwe. Statue of 'Energy'.
Roodepoort.	Doornkop graves. Grave of Sister Gluyas, NSW.
Roodewal.	Cemetery where Kmdt Potgieter is buried as he fell.

Rorke's Drift.	1997. A look at the area, Zulu plaque, cemetery, view from ridge above, David Rattray giving a description of the battle.
Rustenburg.	Lionel Wulfsohn shows maps Elands and Koster Rivers.
Rustenburg.	Inside the church that was used as a hospital; Kruger's statue; Boer monument to Derdepoort.
Rustenburg.	Cemetery. Koster River graves (Australian).
Sand River.	Convention plaque 1852. A look at the area.
Sannaspos.	Battlesite, cemetery, station, Koornspruit.
Scenic.	Blyde River Canyon. Burke's Potholes.
Scheeper's Nek. 1997	The cemetery, tidy and cared for, unbroken plaque, directions to the farm and description of the battle.
Scheeper's Nek, 2000	The Bethune's Mounted Infantry cemetery, hidden among the mealies. The broken plaque. Grave of Serg/Major Hadler, on Hanover.
Simonstown.	Naval cemetery. Memorial to 82 burgher prisoner-of-war.
Spionkop, 1997.	In these two clips we walk around the site looking at monuments, mass graves etc. We show how steep the road to the top is.
Spionkop, 2000.	
Standerton.	This large cemetery includes graves of 3 St John Ambulance men, Royal Medical Corps, Lt Marthinus Allison of the Intelligence Dept and monument to many local battles.
Suffolk Hill.	On Suffolk Hill Belinda Gordon reads letters (exaggerated accounts) from the men. Monument.
Sunnyside.	1st Jan 1900. The cairn to Tprs Jones & McLeod, Queensland Mounted Infantry. 1st Australians to die.
Surrender Hill.	Huge amounts of Boer ammunition were destroyed here. Bare patches still remain.
The Old Fort.	Look at the Old Fort in Durban from which Dick King rode 600 miles to get help. Much more information in our book <i>We Wander the Battlefields</i> .
Thomas's Farm.	Near Kimberley. Was a hospital during ABW. Short clip.
Tweebosch.	Battlesite also known as de Klipdrift.
Tweefontein.	(Groenkop). A look at the area. (Monuments are in the book).
Union Buildings.	Pretoria. WW1 & WW2 memorial (replica Delville Wood); German Naval gun; statue Gen. Louis Botha.
Utrecht.	Military Cemetery in shape of broad arrow; Zulu War memorial.
Vrede.	Garden of Remembrance. NZ Langverwacht monument.
Vryheid.	Holkranz burghers' monument, including Frances Pratt. <i>Ontsnapt</i> means escaped.
Wagon Hill.	Ladysmith. ILA & Burgher monument. Manchester Regt Fort. Grave Earl of Ava. Plaque to Rev. Kestell.

A LIST OF OUR VIDEO CLIPS

Wakkerstroom.	Cemetery. Graves of “Gat” Howard; Sgt FC Douglas & Sgt Northway; Australians, Canadians & NZ.
Waterval Boven.	The very interesting tunnel and surrounding scenic views.
Waterval Onder.	Cemetery. ‘5 Arch Bridge’.
Wepener.	The area round the Siege town (16 days).
West Australia Hill.	Colesberg. A look at the hill from the Boer position.
Worcester Hill, Colesberg.	Battlesite. Monument to Worcestershire Regt. on top of remote hill.
Ysterspruit.	Well-hidden battlefield sign near Klerksdorp.
Zambia.	WW1 Northern Rhodesians’ monument near Victoria Falls.

Google these.

De la Rey. A moving song by Bok van Blerck, on Youtube, honouring de la Rey and recreating scenes of the hardships the Boers faced. You will be humming or singing it for hours.

A Pittance in Time. A thought-provoking song, made in Canada, showing a shop full of people honouring the Remembrance Day silence and a man being shamed into taking part. Youtube Terry Kelly (official version).

Good Resources

Rosie’s Roundup. A regular newsletter by Rose Willis in South Africa.

South African Military History Society newsletters.

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Entries in italics refer to the You Tube videos on pages 261-265

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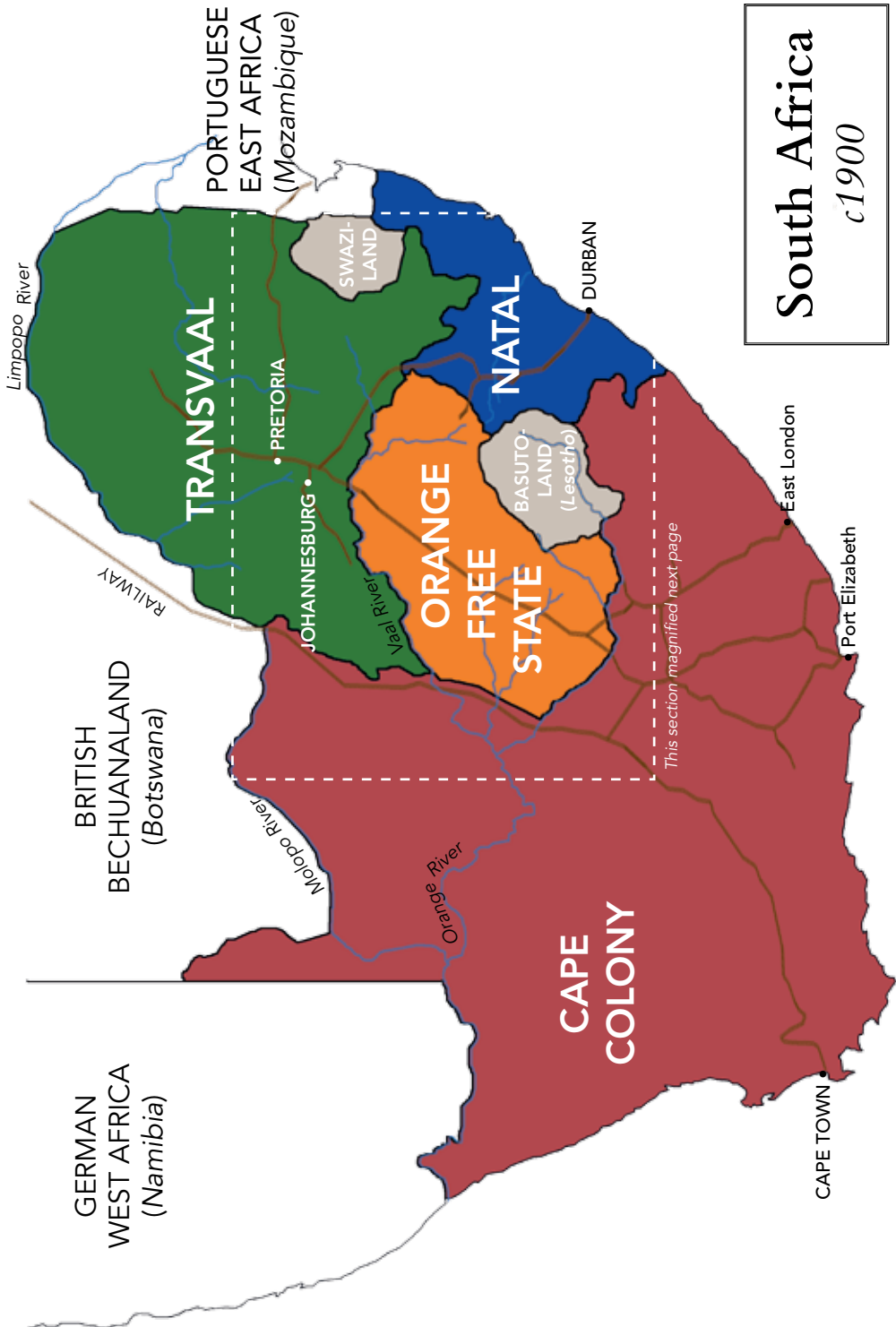
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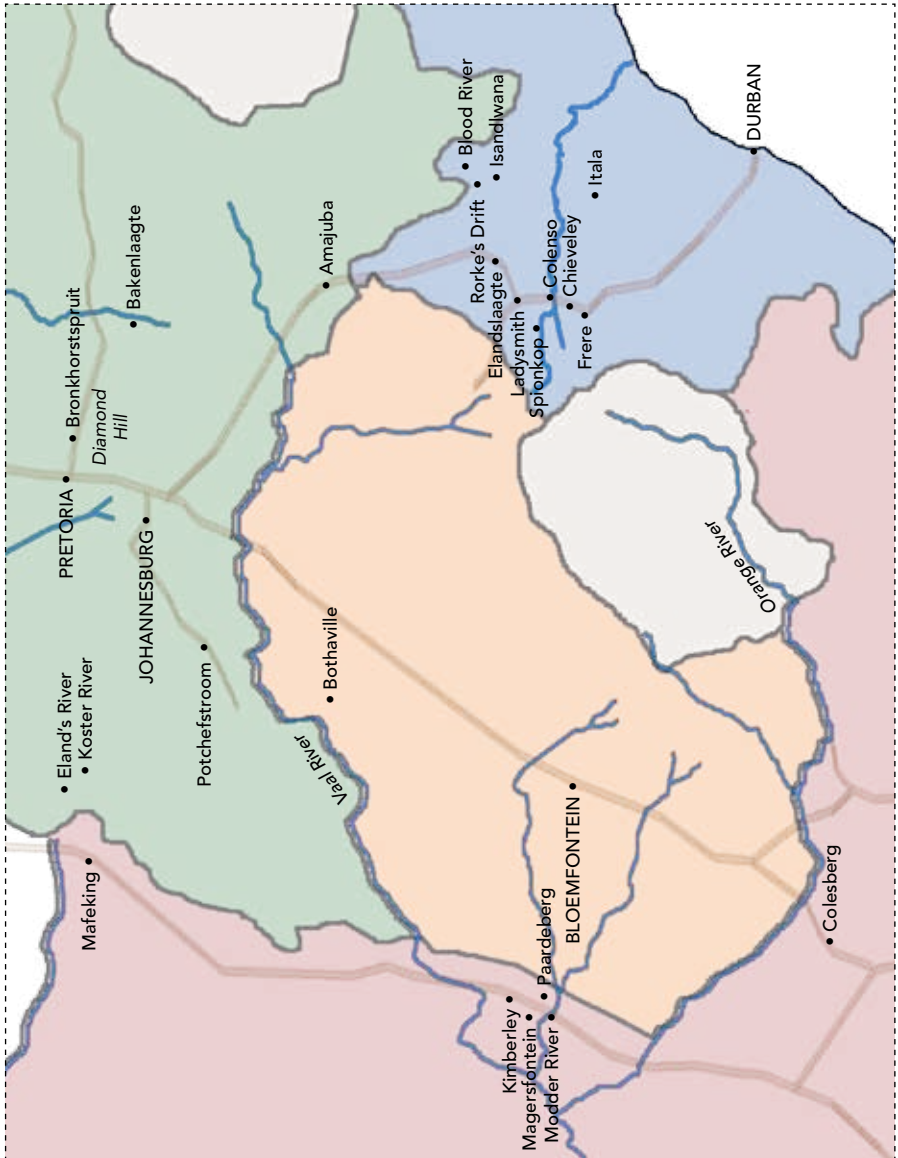
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