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HISTORIC TABLEAUX
ON TILES
HISTORIESE TABLO'S
OP TIELS



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hose #103



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South African Airways is privileged to present in this souvenir album reproductions of a series of tableaux in tiles from Holland, depicting scenes from the Anglo-Boer war of 1899 – 1902 and portraits of four of the Boer Generals concerned. This album is dedicated with appreciation to Dr. Willem Punt, Director of the Simon van der Stel Foundation, whose immediate evaluation of the historic value of the tile paintings and his untiring efforts to obtain this art treasure against heavy bids from other countries, safeguarded this valuable piece of Africana for South Africa. The Afrikaans text was compiled by Dr. C.J. Scheepers Strydom while the English version was provided by Mr. Harry Klein.

Die Suid-Afrikaanse Lugdiens is bevoorreg om in hierdie aandenkingsalbum afdrukke aan te bied van 'n reeks tablo's op teëls uit Holland wat tonele uit die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog van 1899 – 1902 uitbeeld, asook van afbeeldings van vier Boeregeneraals wat daarby betrokke was. Hierdie album word met waardering opgedra aan dr. Willem Punt, Direkteur van die Stigting Simon van der Stel. Sy onmiddellike besef van die historiese waarde van die teëlskilderye en sy onvermoeide pogings om die kunsskat te bekom ten spyte van groot aanbiedinge uit ander lande, het hierdie waardevolle stuk Africana vir Suid-Afrika beveilig. Die Afrikaanse teks is opgestel deur dr. C.J. Scheepers Strydom, terwyl die Engelse teks deur mnr. Harry Klein versorg is.

DIE ONTSTAAN VAN 'N KUNSSKAT EN SY HERONTDEKKING

Die verrasende ontdekking van teëskilderye onder die munitiepapier van 'n oud-tent in Rotterdam en die feit dat al die tablo's daarop weergawes van veldslae uit die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog en afbeeldinge van Boersgeneraals in swerp nêre lig op 'n Europa wat die Boere op alle moontlike maniere wou verstaan. Sewel geskied- en etnografies as ook 'n maak van wêreldwye belang was vir die volker van die Europese vasteland 'n uiterste seldsaamheid. Trouens, want hier was daar in die voorafgaande vyf honderd jaar so 'n emosionele eenheidsband van die Boere tot by die Oeral? Regerings-let om diplomatieke redes lig geloop, maar die breë volk het met hulle demonstrasies aan die Boerskant ingedruip op 'n wyse wat bewindhebbers, behalwe die Duitse keiser, gedwing het om die knellende bande van die diplomatie op te los en mee te doen. Europa het 'n emosionele ontgiffing beleef.

"Wilhelmus (van die Nederlande)," so het 'n hoof Fransman hom uitgelat, "is die enigste man op die troon van Europa." Pies Kruger kom in 'n Franse laas aan op die Nederlandse oorlogsbodem die *Geduld* wat die Nederlandse koning vir die deel gestuur het. Die Franse vertaling en vertaling makend in die taal: „Vive Kruger, vivent les Boers!“ So jaag duisende Katolieke die oer-ortodokse Protestant toe.

En so gaan dit deur België, in die Duitse stad Keulen, in Nederland, en ook waarheen hy reis. Vandag nog wys die buste van die Hotel Des Indes in Den Haag die balkon aan waar die President gaan staan het om die stans op die Voorhoutplein die geleentheid te ges om hom met te sien. As hy sy kopsig erkenning lig, gaan daar 'n magtige geïmpresie.

Op hierdie tydperk veg Lord Roberts reeds met 200 000 soldate en die kanonne in Suid-Afrika teen die twee klein landelike republieke wat selfs aan die begin van die oorlog met sowat 35 000 man in die veld kon stoet. Toe die Boere eindelik op 31 Mei 1902 oorgee, was daar nog 21 256 Britse soldate onder hulle ook uitlanders – om die wapen neer te lê nadat altesaam 450 000 soldate in die loop van byna drie jaar teen hulle gebruik is. „Die Boer,“ aldus Colonel Doyle, „is die goddelike teenstander wat ooit in die pad van die Britse Ryk gekom het.“

Getoos aan hulle groot kunstenaar bet voor die hande kunstenaars, veral in die samewerking Nederlande, spandig te verskyn. Hulle het hulle eie watterveel, etse, beeldhouwerk, foto-albums en ander kunstoplasies. Aan beide kante van die Engelse Kanaal word die geestes met pen en penseel veld. Terwyl dit ook nie aan foto's dink van die slagvelde van die Boere gebruiklik geword om strate, pleine en geboue Boersname te gee, wat algemeen is oor die hele Westerse wêreld geleef: 'n plakkaat met die afbeelding van genl. Christiaan de Wet is selfs in Sibiese opgemerk. Saam met korante, tydskrifte, boeke en vlagskrifte, het 'n massa dokumentasie oor hierdie oorlog – Brittanje se grootste sedert Napoteon – ontstaan.

Toe die goedsrif vir die Boersaak sy toppunt bereik in die aanvanklike Boersesep op die slagvelde, kom 'n Nederlandse op die gedagte om die voorportaal van sy teater met muurteëls te versier waarop die heldedade van die Boere in kunst verewig sou word. Hier was iets oorspronklik, 'n nuwe blyng om hulle te heroon. Groot veldslae en die afbeeldings van beoemde generaals is as tablo's op gekleurde wêre aangebring en vandag is hierdie teëskilderye historiese dokumentasie van die hoogste kunsgedele. Dit is iets waarmee weinig ander lande kan spog.

Die verhaal van die ontdekking van die teëskilderye uit die jaar 1900 en die aankoop daarvan deur Suid-Afrika, klink soos 'n onbeswaarde uit 'n sake-kontrak.

Op 29 Januarie 1969 bereik 'n brief dr. Willem Punt, direkteur van die Sogang Simon van der Stel. Wat betoef het om 'n doorgewone Vrydag op kantoor in Pretoria te wees, word onmiddellik omgeskep in een van die opwindendste dae wat die direkteur in sy klesaryke loopbaan beleef het. Die brief is uit Amsterdam, uit die kantoor van die Nederlands-Zuid-Afrikaanse Vereniging, Keizergracht 141 – daardie lewensaan van kulturele verbinding tussen twee lande sedert die tagtigerjare. Die sekretaris, jonkheer K.E.D. van Bore, skryf aan dr. Punt dat 'n kunstskat ontdek is wat vir Suid-Afrika van ontsaglike waarde is. Dit kan vir Suid-Afrika verlore gaan, want kopers uit Amerika en Nederland is gereed om groot aanbiedinge te doen. Amerika betaal selfs van honderd duisend dollar.

Twee hoofdelemente in die situasie ondersaers dr. Punt se gedagtes onmiddellik: die enorme bedrag aan geld, en die absolute noodsaaklikheid dat hierdie waardevolle versameling nog dieselfde naweek vir Suid-Afrika beveilig moet word.

Die nasionale voorsitter van die Stigting, dr. S. Meiring Naudé, is nitstendig en vandag nie beskikbaar nie. Die eerste stap is dus om telefonies met jonkheer Von Bose te skakel en hom te se dat Suid-Afrika groot belang stel. Dit troos, en die terugweelgehoor heet daar aan die Keizergracht sal minstens wees dat sy brief Pretoria op hoërsig het.

Die tweede stap: Ná kontak op Saterdag met dr. Naudé, stuur dr. Punt 'n kabel na Amsterdam: „Reserveer muurteëls vir Suid-Afrika.“

Gelukkig was die huidige eienaar van die betrokke teater, mr. M.J. Rook, getig dat die versameling nie vir Suid-Afrika verlore moes gaan nie. Hy het self ook eerste aan Suid-Afrika gedink toe die pragtige teëwerk so onverwags van onder die munitiepapier te voorskyn kom en het jonkheer Von Bose dadelik van die vonds versigtig. Hy gee die gevraagde opsig. Twee kleurfoto's van 'n paar van die panele later in Pretoria aankom, het die goedsrif nog hoër gestyg. Hier is kunst van hoër gehalte. Dit is skitterende versameling. Die tablo's is met die hand geskilder; is in natuurlike kleur en op Hollandse teëls van 15 cm x 15 cm.

Maar in hierdie stadium is daar nog baie vree waarop antwoorde ontbreek. Wie was die kunstenaar? Waar en wanneer is die werk gesien en wie het die opdrag gegee?

Dr. Willem Punt is 'n historikus wat van veldwerk hou; dit is hy wat die moordtonnel van die Van Rensburgtrek gevind het; ook het hy die waspore van die Trichardttrek gevind, die onbekende in. Las hom in 'n beknopte landjie was Nederland en hy sal die mligting onder al die miljoene mense uitaanfel.

Vergesel van sy slagter stap dr. Punt die Teater Victoria in Rotterdam binn. Volgens sy die getuens gaan 'n rilling deur hom by die aankoue van die groete kultuurhistoriese skat. Dis nog mooier as wat hy ooit gedroom het!

Die kooptransaksie is afgehandel, en saam met mr. Ton Kunt van die Bond Heemlust, soek hy na die antwoorde op sy vree. In die dorpie Earen spous hulle Willem van Norden op, 'n grysaard van agt en tagtig jaar. Hy het in 1900 'n teëwerk om die teëls te versier. Soos die watermerk agterop die teëls aandui, is dit inderdaad 'n produk van die bekende teëlfabriek De Distel in Amsterdam.

Van Norden het ook onthou wie die kunstenaar was wat die tablo's geskilder het. Hy was Cornelius de Bruin, gebore 7 April 1870 in die stad Utrecht en oorlede in Amsterdam op 27 Augustus 1940. Sy vakopleiding het hy ontvang onder toersig van prof. Augustus Allebé (1838-1927), in lewe direkteur van die Amsterdamse Rijk-Akademie van Beeldende Kunste. Hy was as teëlfabriek in diens van De Distel en van die Dordtsche Kunstpottery. Hoewel hy self woorde van sy dierke uitgestal het, was hy veral as teëskilder bekend.

Cor de Bruin het sy werk met liefde, talent en vakmanskap uitgevoer en sy ontwerp by 'n meesterstuk, hoewel hy nooit in Suid-Afrika was nie. Vir daardie getrek aan kennis het hy deur noukeurige studie van illustrasies uit Engelse en Nederlandse bronne verges. Daaraan het dit nie ontbreek nie: in tydskrifte, boeke en albums was foto's en sketse te kus en te keur. As voorbeeld van lasgenode was daar die luywe publikasie van 35 cm x 27 cm, *De Zuid-Afrikaanse Oorlog: Herinnering Gedenkboek* (ongedateer) deur G.L. Kepper, genl. J.H.M. Kock, genl. H. Coster, en deur skrywer en uitgewer ongedra „aan den Staatpresident van Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, den Hoog Edelen Heer S.J.P. Kruger, den onvermoelden strijder voor vrijheid en recht“. Die werk was ook met foto's en sketse, ook uit Engelse bron.

So was daar *De Oorlog in Zuid-Afrika* uitgegee in Amsterdam. Tekeninge daarin van die Engelse militêre kunstenaar Colin Woodville was ongetwyfeld die basis van De Bruin se pragtige ontwerpe van Ladysmith en Colenso.

Die teater in Rotterdam is in hierdie verboude die gebou. Die eerste eienaar, C.N.A. Loos, kies 'n naam daarvoor wat by die tydges inskakel: dit word die Teater Transvalia, Borsbeelde van presidente Kruger en Steyn is in die voorportaal geplaas waar die pragtige teëls teen die muur aangebring is.

Maar die opdrag aan die kunstenaar het van sekere Hulstkamp gekom, vertel mr. Van Norden. Hulstkamp was eintlik bekend as die baas van 'n jeneverzaak.

Om van te stel of die versameling volledig is, het dr. Punt die hele geskiedenis van die teater nagespog. In 1907 is veranderinge aangebring en van persberigte word afgehaal dat die pragtige muurversiering gelos is. In 1935 het verdere verbouing plaasgevind en die naam van die kompleks is na Victoria verander. Hoewel persberigte nie melding maak van versteuning wat die teëtablo's betref nie, skyn dit of daar tog by hierdie geleentheid enkele stukke verlore gegaan het.

Mr. Van Norden onthou – en dit word deur persberigte uit die jaar 1900 getuig – dat daar teëportrette aan die muur was van kornmandant-generaal Louis Botha, genl. J.H.M. Kock, genl. H. Coster, genl. De Villbois-Mareuil, genl. P.A. Cronjé, genl. C.R. de Wet, genl. J.J. de la Rey, genl. P.J. Joubert en genl. W. Penn-Symons.

Van die laaste vyf krygsmans is daar op die oomblik geen spoor nie behalwe die onderskrif van genl. Cronjé se afbeelding.

Die teëskilderye beeld die volgende veldslae uit: Spijoenkop, Coleson, Ladysmith, Stormberg, Reddersburg, Magersfontein, Modderrivier en Paardeberg. Die tablo's van 2,3 m x 1,5 m is in die Jugendstil uitgevoer en getuig van hoër kunstenaarstalent.

'n Deskundige restaurateur, J. Curvers, kry opdrag van dr. Punt om die teëls van die muur te verwyder. Elkeen word noukeurig nagesien, gerestoureer en vernu. Ná ses maande is almal weer nuut, genummer en verpak – twee duisend daarvan. 'n Lynboot van die Holland-Afrika Lijn vervoer dit gratis na Kaapstad.

Kultuurverenigings, o.m. van die Suid-Afrikaanse Polisie en die Weermag, het die aankoop van die versameling geïdelek geborg, maar op 24 November 1970 word 'n uitstalling daarvan deur mr. P.W. Botha, Minister van Verdediging, in die T.P.A.-gebou, Pretoria, geopen. Hy is so getref deur die gehalte van die kunstskat dat hy die hele versameling oorgenoem het ten bate van sy departement, wat juis besig is met die aithoung van krygsmuseums. 'n Meer gepaste hidrae int 'n Suid-Afrikaanse krygsmuseum is noufiks denkbaar.

'n Sakaeseriaal dus waardeur Suid-Afrika se kultuurbares aansienlik versterk is.



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THE ORIGIN OF AN ART TREASURE AND ITS REDISCOVERY

The exciting discovery of hand-painted tiles under the wallpaper of an old theatre in Rotterdam and the fact that all the tableaux depicted on the tiles are renderings of Anglo-Boer War battles and portraits of Boer generals, throw fresh light on a Europe anxious to discover new avenues for leading their heroes.

Such spirit and unanimity of purpose were rare in the peoples of Europe. In fact, it is hard to find a period in the preceding five hundred years, when there had been such a bond of emotional unity stretching from the North Sea to the Ural. For diplomatic reasons governments were treading warily, but the people in general did not hesitate to express their sympathies with demonstrations in favour of the Boers in a manner which forced their rulers, with the exception of the German Kaiser, to discard the restraining encumbrances of diplomacy and to join in the general wave of support.

"Wilhelmina (of the Netherlands)", said a senior Frenchman, "is the only 'mae' on the thrones of Europe", when she sent the Dutch ship *Goederland* to bring President Kruger to Europe after the tide of war had turned against him. When he arrived at a French port, the French people jostled and fringed one another in the streets with their enthusiastic welcome. "Vive Kruger: vive les Boers!" Thus did thousands of Catholics acclaim the most orthodox of Protestants.

The old President was acclaimed throughout Europe - in Belgium, in the German city of Cologne, in the Netherlands, and wherever he travelled. In the city of the Hague he was welcomed to the Hotel des Indes in the Hague, where President Kruger stood to acknowledge the tribute of the crowd gathered in the Voorhout Square below. When he raised his top hat in greeting, a mighty roar filled the air.

At this stage of the war in South Africa, Lord Roberts, the British Storm Commander, had 200 000 men and 400 artillery pieces in the country to use against the two small rural republics of the Transvaal and Free State which, even at the outset of the war, could muster no more than 35 000 men. When the end came in May, 1902, there were still 21 256 die-hards - including Dillanders - in the field to lay down their arms.

This was after a total of 450 000 men had been thrown against them in the course of almost three years of war. "The Boer", said a Frenchman, "is the most formidable antagonist who ever crossed the path of Napoleon."

Time to their great creative traditions, leading artists, especially in the Netherlands, soon began turning out oil paintings, watercolours, sketches, sculptures, photo albums and art publications, envisaging the struggle on the sides of the English Channel the struggle was recorded in pen and paint, and by photographs direct from the battlefields. It became common practice to name streets, squares and buildings after Boer leaders. Boer generals were praised all over the Western world; a poster depicting General Christiaan de Wet was to be seen even in Siberia. Through newspapers, magazines, books and leaflets, a mass of documentation was built up covering the war - Britain's greatest since Napoleon.

At the zenith of the ardour for the Boer cause, after their early victories, a Dutchman struck upon the idea of decorating the foyer of his theatre with tiles on which the heroic deeds of the Boers would be artistically immortalised. Here was something original: a new way of expressing praise. Pictures of great battles and famous generals were used as tableaux on coloured tiles. Today these tile paintings are historical documents recorded in art of a high order and of a kind few other countries can boast.

The story of the discovery of the tile paintings dating from the year 1900, and their purchase by South Africa, has the ring of a success story from an executive office.

On the 29th January, 1969, a letter arrived for Dr. Willem Punt, director of the Simon van der Stel Foundation. A day that promised to be just another ordinary Friday in his office in Pretoria, changed into one of the most exciting days in the colourful life of the director. The letter was from Amsterdam, from the office of the Nederlands-Zuid-Afrikaanse Vereniging, 141 Keizersgracht - that pulsating cultural vein which has joined the two countries since the eighties. The secretary, Jonkheer K.E.O. van Bose, wrote to Dr. Punt that this art treasure of great value to South Africa had been discovered. Unless quick action was taken the tiles could be lost to South Africa, as buyers from America and the Netherlands were prepared to offer substantial sums of money for them. A tentative offer from America mentioned one hundred thousand dollars.

Dr. Punt's mind was dominated by two major elements of concern; one, the enormous sum of money required and, two, the absolute urgency to secure the valuable collection for South Africa during that weekend. The national chairman of the Foundation, Dr. S. Moring Naudé, was out of town and not available that day. The first thing to be done was for Dr. Punt to telephone Jonkheer Van Bose and to intimate that South Africa was very much interested. It was some consolation that the eminent gentleman on the Keizersgracht would at least learn that his letter had caused great excitement in Pretoria.

Secondly Dr. Punt, after contacting Dr. Naudé on the Saturday, sent a further cable to Amsterdam: "Reserve wall tiles for South Africa."

Fortunately, the present owner of the theatre concerned, Mr. M.L. Rook, was keen that South Africa should not lose the collection. His first thoughts, when the beautiful tiles were discovered under the old wallpaper, were for South Africa, and immediately he informed Jonkheer Van Bose of the find. He agreed to the option asked for. New heights of enthusiasm were manifested in Pretoria when colour prints of a few of the tiles were received. This was art of a high quality. A brilliant collection. The tableaux were hand-painted in natural colours on Dutch tiles measuring 15 cm x 15 cm.

But at this stage answers to many questions were missing. Who was the artist? Where and when was the work executed, and who commissioned it?

Dr. Willem Punt is a historian who enjoys field work. It was he who discovered the scene of the murder of the Van Rensburg trek. He, too, it was, who followed the wagon tracks of the Trichardts into the unknown, Laysa him in a small country like the Netherlands and he will ferret out the information from among its millions of people.

Accompanied by his daughter, Dr. Punt visited Holland and the Victoria Theatre in Rotterdam. According to his own testimony a pleasant shudder went through him at his first sight of this cultural-historical treasure. It was even more beautiful than he had imagined in his wildest dreams.

The deal was concluded and together with Mr. Ton Kort of the Heemschut Foundation Dr. Punt endeavoured to find the answers to his questions. In the village of Laren they traced the aged Mr. Willem van Norden, already in his eighty-seventh year. In 1900, he had helped to manufacture the tiles. As indicated by the watermark on the back of the tiles they were indeed products of the well-known tile factory, De Distel, in Amsterdam.

Mr. Van Norden also recalled the name of the artist who painted the tableaux. He was Cornelius de Bruin, born in the city of Utrecht on 7th April, 1874, and died in Amsterdam on 27th August, 1940. De Bruin received his artistic training under Prof. Augustus Allebé (1838-1927), during his life-time director of the Amsterdamse Rijks-Academie van Beeldende Kunsten. He was also a tile painter in the service of De Distel and of the Dierdtsche Kunsthandel. Although he sometimes exhibited his canvases, he was really known as a tile painter.

De Bruin put love, talent and artistry into his work. Although he did not visit South Africa his paintings were masterpieces. He compensated for his lack of knowledge of the country by a careful study of illustrations from English and Dutch sources. These were plentiful. Magazines, books and albums gave him a wide choice of photographs and sketches. As an example of the latter, there was the voluminous publication of 35 cm x 27 cm of *De Zuid-Afrikaansche Oorlog (The South African War)* (undated) by G.L. Kepper, published by A.W. van der Stoep, author and publisher, to den Staatspresident der Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, den Hoog Edele Heer S.J.P. Kruger, des overregeren standes voor vrijheid en recht." (the State President of the South African Republic, the Right Honourable S.J.P. Kruger, the unremitting fighter for freedom and right). The work was freely illustrated with photographs and sketches including many from English sources.

There was also *De Oorlog in Zuid-Afrika* published in Amsterdam. Sketches in this publication by the English military artist Colin Woodville, undoubtedly formed the basis of De Bruin's beautiful designs of Ladysmith and Colenso.

The theatre in Rotterdam was built in these eventful days. The first owner, C.N.A. Leos, chose its name in tune with the spirit of the era. He named it *Transvaal*. Busts of Presidents Kruger and Steyn stood in the foyer where the magnificent tiles decorated the walls.

However, according to Mr. Van Norden, the artist's commission came from a Mr. Hulsikamp, who was known to be the head of a gin factory.

In establishing whether the collection was complete, Dr. Punt traced the entire history of the theatre. Alterations were executed in 1907 and from Press reports it could be deduced that the magnificent tiles were left untouched at that time. Further structural changes were undertaken in 1935 and the name of the complex was changed to *Victoria*.

It would appear that a few pieces were lost in this second alteration, although Press reports do not mention that the tile tableaux were disturbed.

Mr. Van Norden remembers - confirmed by Press reports from the year 1900 - that the portraits of Commandant-General Louis Botha, General J.H.M. Kock, Lieutenant Dr. H. Coetzer, General De Villiers-Marsull, General P.A. Cronjé, General C.R. de Wet, General J.H. de La Rey, General P.J. Joubert and General W. Penn-Symons were on the walls at one time.

Up to the present the tile portraits of the last five distinguished soldiers have not been traced, with the exception of the caption to the drawing of General Cronjé.

All tile paintings of the battles covered in the series have been preserved. These include Spierenkop, Colenso, Ladysmith, Stormberg, Reddersburg, Magersfontein, Modder River and Paardeberg. The tableaux of 2,3 m x 4,5 m in size were executed in the Jugendstil and bear testimony of a great artistic talent.

An expert restorer, J. Curvers, was commissioned by Dr. Punt to remove the tiles from the wall. Each was carefully checked, restored and varnished and when the task was completed after six months they were once more numbered and packed - 2 000 pieces in all - and shipped to South Africa free of charge by the Holland-Afrika line.

Various cultural associations, among them those of the South African Police and the South African Defence Force, financially sponsored the acquisition of the collection. On 24th November, 1970, the Minister of Defence, Mr. P.W. Botha, opened an exhibition of the tiles in the new T.F.A. Building in Pretoria. So impressed was he with the quality of this art treasure that he acquired the entire collection for the Department of Defence, which at present is occupied in extending its military museums. There could hardly have been a more suitable contribution to a South African Military Museum.

The acquisition of this unique tile collection reveals a success story which has considerably enhanced South Africa's cultural assets.



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DIE SLAG OM LADYSMITH

By die verstryking van die Republikeinse ultimatum van die twee Republieke Natal op 12 Oktober 1899 tussen die Transvaalse moontlikheid oor Laingsnek en die Vrystaatse hoofmag oor Vaanrooivlei, reuske byna 13 000 man. Die Transvaalse het die Drakensberge af om die strategiese passie na die benede-Tugela suid-oos van Ladysmith te beset, terwyl die Vrystaatsers op die teenoorgestelde flank ook in die rigting van Acton Homes, west van Ladysmith.

As hierdie teenoewerliggende 'n dreigement infuus vir genl. George White in Ladysmith, dan is die positie van genl. W. Penn-Symons by Dundee, noord-oos van Ladysmith, inderdaad naglik. Dit is nie as George se wens dat hy daar moet wees nie. Die jonger generaal het egter daartoe aangehoop en die volle ondersteuning van die Natalse kabinet gekry. Sir George White het die argument gewonne.

By Dundee bevoorm Penn-Symons se wêreldse Takahawewal met sukses maar hierof word deurelik gewaarsku in die bevel gaan oor op kol. J.H. Yule, wat tot brigadier-generaal bevorder word.

Yule val op Ladysmith terug en om te verhoed dat die Republikeine sy terugtog afsonderlik White aanvallen agter. Dit was vir jou en een vir my as hy die Transvaalse en Uilanderkorps onder genl. J.H.M. Kock by Ulandslaagte verslaan maar die aftog moet plaas by Rietfontein, die Vrystaatsers se eerste geveg van die oorlog. Hoewel hy in laasgenoemde geveg die slagte daarvan afkom, het hy sy doel bereik om Yule te help. Die Boere Ladysmith veilig na die groot verliese wat die Britte teen Lucas Meyer by Tlaint gely het.

Alte wesenand wat die Britte op die oomblik in Natal kan hê, is nou in Ladysmith saamgepak - slegs die Republikeinse ower 13 000 man. Die Boere sluit Ladysmith byna geheel in en hulle voorhoede beweeg by die dorp verby tot aan die Tugela. So is die eerste fase van die oorlog in Natal.

Die twee kante maak hulle gereed vir 'n botsing om die besit van Ladysmith. Die een van die partye het tyd om te verhoed om. Die Boere moet othou dat genl. sir Redvers Buller nee enige oomblik in Kaapstad kan aankom en dat dit aan die Weske van Afrika se deel van troepeskepe op pad na Durban. Aan die ander kant voel White dat ower burgers en met groot hancome mag aankom wat die posisie vir hom onhoubaar kan maak.

Die Britse generaal besluit om in die omstandighede onmiddellik slag te lewer en te verhoed dat 'n moedlaag vir die Boere hom geensydig sal gee om aan te kom tot Buller by Natal aankom. Dit is die slag Bale gevestig verhoop, mag hy in staat wees om met sy troepemag oor die Tugela in die rigting van Pietermaritzburg terug te val.

Hierof sluit voort die dag van Nicholson's Nek en Modderspruit. Die twee slagge agter se een beskou word. Hulle vind dan ook gelyktydig plaas en hulle afloop kan inderdaad die lot van Ladysmith bepaal.

In die nag van 29 Oktober 1899 begin die troepbewegings om Ladysmith. White stuur twee van sy betroubaarste regimente na Nicholson's Nek, sowat 10 km noord van Ladysmith, te bewes. Dit die Irish Fusiliers en die Gloucesters. Solank hulle die nek kan hê, sal sy linkerflank gedek wees wanneer hy met sy hoofmag na die Modderspruit aanval. Die afsonderlik man staan onder bevel van kol. Carlton van die Irish Fusiliers. Die Gloucesters is swaarswaars gewoone troepe. Die swaart word deur kol. Ian Hamilton aanvoers. Die swaartery staan onder kol. John French. Laasgenoemde sou in die Eerste Wêreldoorlog die opperbevelhebber van die Britse troepe in Vlaandere en Frankryk word.

Toe dit by oort, bespied 'n lugballon - iets betreklik nuut in oorlogvoering - die posisie.

Wat die lugballon ook al te rapporteer het, een ding verskrik merk hy nie, en dit is die deperite sein van Carlton op Nicholson's Nek. Hy het geen waarskuwing nie. Die muller met die bergkanonne het die nag op-loop gestel en het skoon verduyn.

Maar dit is al nie. Die Boere het geveg op die koms van Carlton gewag. Hulle het die sothoerende posities beset en vir Carlton is plek gereserveer. Feitlik kol. Carlton is km. J.M.J. van Dam met die Zappe (Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek Police) mook veldkornet Christiaan de Wet van die Heilbronn kommando.

Die geveg begin op die nek en daar onder aan die Modderspruit. Die Britte het baie meer kanonne maar dit van die Boere skiet verder. Conan Doyle sê: „Yulke bonnie - die grootste wat ooit op 'n slagveld ontplof het - geslinger oor afstande wat ons syttendeiers nie kan haal nie, het ons batterye in rook en stamme. Een kolossale Creusot (die Long Tom) weeg 'n ton van 36 lb oor 'n afstand van vier myl, en verskeie houwilters van 40 lb het ons veldkanonne in die skadu.”

Die eerste wat nie meer kan uithou nie, is Carlton op Nicholson's Nek. Hy wys die wêreldslag, en alle soldate wat nog orent kan kom, staan op en gee oor.

Deneys Reitz vertel: terwyl hy nog met sommige van die Britse offisiere staan en praat, al een skrik. „My God, look there!” Die hele heide mag aan die Modderspruit slaan op die vlag, terug na Ladysmith. Reitz hoor hoe Christiaan de Wet mumpel soef by met Piet Joubert daaronder praat: „Los jou ritter; los jou ritter!”

Maar die Kommando-generaal is nie 'n ritter nie en White se oorgebliewe slagte bereik Ladysmith, terwyl die Boere hulle nou daar beestemal inhou. White se verliese was sleglik meer as 1 500; by Nicholson's Nek alleen het 850 oorgegee. Dit van die Boere was 86.

Twee dae later bereik Buller Kaapstad en houe twee maande het hy 'n les van 20 000 man aan die Tugela opgebou, wat die groot veldslag van Colenso, Spioenkop, Vaalkraam en Pietermaritzburg al word, altes om Ladysmith te bevry.

Sir George White was egter nie doodstil op die verstryking of nie. Hy het hom moedig geweer en enige waaghagige onvulle gemaak om die Boere te kom dat sy troepe nog glad nie afgeskryf kan word nie. Net voor die Boere hom finaal ingesluit het al „Mooredat Monday”, soos die Britte die droewige dag van hulle aanslag aan die Modderspruit genoem het, kom hy 'n aantal skeepskanonne uit Durban in ontvangs neem. Dit het hom samesidelik groter weerbaarheid beoort.

Die vier daande later - 27 Februarie 1900: „Hall! Who goes there?” so word 'n waggas aan 'n buitewyck van Ladysmith gedag. „Friend”, kom die antwoord. Ladysmith was weer vry ná 118 dae van beleëring.

THE BATTLE OF LADYSMITH

On 12th October, 1899, forces from the Transvaal and Free State invaded Natal within hours after the outbreak of war the previous day.

The Transvaalers crossed the border at Laingsnek and the main Free State body passed down the Drakensberg at Van Renssen's Post, a total of almost 13 000 fighting men from the two Republics.

A wide encircling movement with Ladysmith as its main objective was developed. The Transvaalers descended the Drakensberg in a three-pronged move to occupy the strategic passes on the way to the lower Tugela, south-east of Ladysmith, while the Free State's on the opposite flank proceeded in the direction of Acton Homes, west of Ladysmith.

Apart from threatening the safety of General Sir George White in Ladysmith, with the main body of the British forces in Natal, the encircling move by the Boers made desperate the position of General W. Penn-Symons at Dundee, north-east of Ladysmith.

Boldly driving on Ladysmith from the north and west, General Joubert succeeded in dislodging the British from Dundee after the spirited action at Tlaint Hill in which General Penn-Symons was mortally wounded. Colonel Yule, later Brigadier-General, who succeeded in command, carried out a splendid withdrawal in the face of great odds to rejoin the main body of the army at Ladysmith. To keep the way open for him General White on October 21st, dispatched a column to Klondlasagte to hold off the Boers driving in on the flank from the north-west.

It was here and hereabout in the British enemy against the Transvaalers and the Foreign Corps under General J.H.M. Kock at Ulandslaagte, and the Boers success at Rietfontein, the Free State's first action of the war.

With these preliminary actions out of the way the stage was set for the drama of Ladysmith.

At the outset of the campaign in Natal Sir George White desired to undertake a fighting withdrawal from Ladysmith to the more readily defensible hilly country below the Tugela, and to hold this country until reinforcements arrived from England. Political considerations dictated otherwise, and Sir George White was obliged to hold Ladysmith at all costs.

Practically all the resistance the British were able to muster in Natal at this stage was about 13 000 men now concentrated at Ladysmith. The Boers, about equal in number, pressed on hard after the temporary setback at Klondlasagte and almost encircled the town, with their vanguard on the Tugela. Mindful of the massive British reinforcements already en route on the way to Natal, and that General Sir Redvers Buller was due from England to take command of the Natal front and the supreme command in South Africa, the Boers had little chance to lose if they were to succeed in reducing Sir George White's army before the inevitable passed. Accordingly, they prepared for their attack on Ladysmith.

Sir George White in turn decided that unless the Boer advance could be checked by a fighting defeat, it was inevitable that Ladysmith would be isolated and invested. The time for a strategic withdrawal had passed.

Dauntless soldier he was, Sir George White refused to acknowledge a mere acceptance of the inevitability and he determined on a bold stroke to break the circle which was steadily being drawn around him; even though a major mishap to his forces would have meant that Natal would have been at the mercy of the Republican forces.

Accordingly, on Monday, October 30th, the British garrison called forth to attack the Transvaal and Free State commandos in a general action.

In preparation for the battle White dispatched from Ladysmith during the night of October 29th two of his most trusted regiments - the Irish Fusiliers and the Gloucesters - to occupy Nicholson's Nek, about 10 km north of the town. As long as these two crack regiments could hold the neck, the Boer's left flank would be covered while he attacked with his main force on the right.

The 1 000 men of the Irish Fusiliers and the Gloucesters were under the command of Colonel Carlton of the Fusiliers. Simultaneous with the move of this force, General White sent two experienced troops to cover his right flank. The centre force was under the command of Ian Hamilton, and the cavalry by Colonel John French, who in later years was for a time to be the British supreme commander in Flanders and France during the First World War. Ian Hamilton was to attack the Dardanelles in that war of the future.

At first light on October 30th an observation balloon - something relatively new in warfare - was floated into the air above Ladysmith to follow the course of the battle.

Whatever the observer in the balloon had to report, one thing he did not notice was the desperate signals from Carlton on Nicholson's Nek. He had no gun, for the pack mules carrying them, and the ammunition mules, had panicked during the night, taken flight and had vanished into the darkness. This incident was the precursor of the British disaster at Nicholson's Nek.

Unknown to Carlton a strong Boer force, under Commandant G.M.J. van Dam, had taken up its position on the Nek awaiting him. With him Van Dam had a detachment of the six-sided Field Cornet Christiaan de Wet of the Heilbronn commando, as well as newly arrived the Modder Spruit and the Heilbronn commandos.

Down on the Modder Spruit the crash and roar of artillery fire heralded the opening of the main battle. The Boer gun, outnumbered by the British, had the longer range and - the largest that ever hoisted upon a battlefield - hurled from distances which were unobtainable by our field guns, enveloped our batteries in smoke and flame. One enormous Creusot gun on Pypswarth Hill threw a 36-pound shell a distance of four miles, and several 40-pound howitzers outweighed our field guns.

While the main battle flowed on the plains below, Carlton's column on Nicholson's Nek was pulverised into defeat and surrender.

Deneys Reitz relates that while he was talking to one of the British officers who had surrendered on Nicholson's Nek he suddenly exclaimed: "My God, look there!" The entire British force on the Modder Spruit had turned tail and were in retreat for Ladysmith. Reitz heard Christiaan de Wet mutter, as if talking to Piet Joubert down below: "Let go your horsemen. Let go your horsemen!"

But the Commandant-General did not let loose his horsemen on the retreating British who got back safely to Ladysmith. Sir George White's total losses that day were some 1 500 killed, wounded and missing, prisoners on Nicholson's Nek amounting for 850. Those of the Boers were 86.

The Battle of Ladysmith, fought that dismal day - *Mooredat Monday* as the troops called it - proved to be beyond the scope of the British. They were out-manoeuvred, out-shut and out-generalled by the resourceful Boers.

With Ladysmith completely encircled by the Boers, *The Times* historian summed up the battle in terse analysis -

"The Boers won on their merits. Their mobility completely paralysed the cumbersome tactics of their opponents."

Two days later General Buller landed at Cape Town poor to moving to Natal to take command of the Tugela front. Within two months he had built up an army of 20 000 men on the Tugela, where the major battles of Colenso, Spioenkop, Vaalkraam and Pietermaritzburg were to be fought for the relief of Ladysmith.

Within the beleaguered town Sir George White and his men were not idle during the four long months of the siege. Not content to remain quietly on the defensive, the Ladysmith garrison staged during night sorties and raids and showed the Boers that they were not yet ready to be written off.

Four months later, on 27th February, 1900, a terse interchange between British soldiers signalled the end of the long, 118-day siege. "Hall! Who goes there?" a guard post challenged on the outskirts of Ladysmith. "Friend!" came the reply. The siege was over.



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LADYSMITH



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MOOPERRIVIER

DIE SLAG BY STORMBERG

By die uitbreëte van die oorlog was dit die Britse plan om van die hawentende Kaapstad, Port Elizabeth en Oos-Londen langs die spoortyne oor De Aar, Noupoort en Stormberg na Bloemfontein en Pretoria op te ruk. Die kragtige inval van die Republikein in Natal het genl. Sir Redvers Buller by sy aankoms laat besluit dat Durban in belangrikheid toegeneem het en hoewel Kaapstad – De Aar nog steeds belangrik bly, kon Stormberg – Noupoort desnooie swaak word om elders te hulp.

'n Belangrike oorweging was egter die groot aantal Kaaplenders wat by die republikeinse armate. Daarom was 'n bloot magvertoon in die sektor Stormberg – Noupoort vir die Britse aanvoerder aanvaar dit as korrek. Hy verander dus sy plan en sal die vyand daar in 'n nagtelike aanval versla. Die Londense *Times* het immers die vorige dag reeds gesê dat genl. Gatacre hom gereed maak om die belangrike spoortwegaansluiting te herower.

Twee dae later by Moltens aankom, verneem hy dat die Boere aan die suidelike hang van die Kisteberg stelling ingesamels het. Die inligting is nie heeltemal juist nie, maar die Britse aanvoerder aanvaar dit as korrek. Hy verander dus sy plan en sal die vyand daar in 'n nagtelike aanval versla. Die Londense *Times* het immers die vorige dag reeds gesê dat genl. Gatacre hom gereed maak om die belangrike spoortwegaansluiting te herower.

Op Saterdag die 9de word treinvrugte siddate op Moltens afgelaai, hulle kom van Putterskrag en was reeds om vieruur die more op die been. 'n Afdeling wat van Penhoek moos kom, is nie daar nie omdat die instruksie hulle nie bereik het nie. Gatacre se mag is dus nie die volle drie duisend wat hy beoog het nie.

Sommige voorbereidings is deeglik getref, ander is op verstonemde wyse vernaglig. Die stasiegebou is deeglik getref, ander is op verstonemde wyse vernaglig. Die stasiegebou is deeglik getref, ander is op verstonemde wyse vernaglig.

Sir William Gatacre is 'n ervare generaal. Hy het baie oorlogsendersendinge gemaak, veral in die Soedan. Hy is roekeloos depper maar was nooit danig gewild by sy soldate nie, omdat hy altyd te veel van hulle verwag.

Die opmars begin om kwart een nags uit Moltens. Die aand is betowerend. "A night made for sleep or love, rather than battle", so Johannes Mentjies.

Die Vrystaatse magte in Noordwes-Kaapland, reorganiseer onder hoofkommandant J.H. Olivier en genl. E.R. Grobler. Hulle sluit groot getalle Kaapse rebelle in, wat met die republikeinse kommando's getuigver is. Die kommando's van Roussville en Smithfield is swaak die spoortwegaansluiting. Maar terwat wes staan komdt. P.A. Steenkamp en komdt. Floort du Plooy groot getalle rebelle by die Vrystaters, en die sowat 700 van hierdie Boere wat met Gatacre sal slaags raak.

Die Boere weet dat die Engelse kom, maar weet nie watter draai en ewante die gids in die nag gemaak het nie. Hulle is dus in die duister ontrent die rigting van die aanval.

Selfs Gatacre het nie geweet waar hy hant bevind nie. Toe hy die tweede kant van die spoortyn gaan, was hy oortuig dat die gids die spoor byster gemaak het. Dit was egter 'n oynspoor en nie die hoofspoorweg nie. In werklikheid het die gids nie juis verdwaal nie hoewel hulle daaronder die skuld van die mistaking moes dra. Die gids moos hulle loms omwee kies en dit het bygedra tot die verstraging wat hulle op 10de hant het.

Ligdag kom die Britte op die plaas Klipfontein aan. Die Boere het hulle daar in 'n val net.

Die past Bessie wat hier is, trae blitsomrig op. Kruid. Du Plooy wat sy manne vroeg hant opstaan het, moos nie net sorg dat die aanwagende manskappe hant opstaan, maar versker dat die nabyspoel laers die boodskap kry: „Die Kakies is hier!”

Met verhasende spoed kry Du Plooy dit alles agterom. Gou het hy vyftig man agter hom. Steenkamp kry die boodskap en stuur nog vyftig na veldkornet Barend Kruger, hyself met ander manskappe jaag agter Du Plooy aan.

Insussen het die Boere dan waar die Britte opgedaag het, die reier gewen om eerste by die mees strategiese posisie aan te kom. Hulle brand los op die verhasste Britte, en voor die nog behoudlik kan terugruk, val Du Plooy hulle op die flank aan. Steenkamp kom by, meer en meer burgers en rebelle daag op. Olivier daag ook op. Die Boere neem 'n klan af en keur 634 krygsgevangenes aan.

Die Britse verliese word in elke dokument verskillend aangegee maar dit skyn nie of daar meer as 25 gedood en 61 gewond is nie. En dit was hierdie klein getal aan dodes en gewondes wat die groot getal krygsgevangenes vir die Britse publiek so 'n swaar pd gemaak het om te sluk. Dat so 'n groot mag so maklik so baie krygsgevangenes kan agterlaai, wintoor daar so min soldate val, het byna onmoontlik gelyk.

Toe dit later blyk dat die Boere nie die oorwinning van Stormberg opvolg deur verder suidwaarts deur te dring nie, het die Britte hulle daaraan getoos dat Gatacre se aandsag, ofskoon 'n mistukking, tog die Boere deuglik getoon het watter sterk magte daar in Noord-Kaapland teenoor hulle staan. Daarvolgers sou die swak batakende aanval as 'n stuk bang-maaktaktek dus veel 'n gelaagde manoeuver gewees het.

THE BATTLE OF STORMBERG

British plans formulated in the early days of the war for a series of advances to the interior from their coastal bases at Cape Town, Port Elizabeth and East London – along the railway lines through De Aar, Noupoort and Stormberg – on to Bloemfontein and, ultimately, Pretoria, received a severe setback as the result of the successful Boer drive into Natal.

With Durban menaced by Republican forces, which had driven as far south into Natal as the Mgeni River, General Sir Redvers Buller, on his assumption of the British Supreme Command in South Africa, postponed the northward drive through the Cape Colony until he had dealt with the situation in Natal. Nevertheless, British pressure was maintained on the De Aar – Magerfontein axis to Kimberley and to a lesser degree in the Stormberg – Noupoort sector.

Because of the increasing number of Cape Colonial Boers who were joining the Republican forces and as a deterrent to this development, a show of strength was decided on against the Boers in possession of Stormberg.

At a quarter to nine on the night of December 9th., General Sir William Gatacre, a fearless and impetuous soldier who bore a high reputation for tireless energy and purpose, set out from Moltens with his column of close on 2 000 men and with two batteries of artillery on a night march for Stormberg junction. His purpose was to achieve surprise and to fall on the Boer positions in a dawn attack. The soldiers already had a long day; they had entrained at Putterskrag for Moltens 4 a.m. that morning to start the night march.

It was a glorious night. "A night made for sleep or love, rather than battle," Johannes Mentjies said.

The British column moved out of Moltens and struck out in bright moonlight across the veld. The wheels of the guns and ammunition limbers were wrapped with fide cloths to shield the noise of their passing on the stony trails.

From the start all went wrong for Gatacre. His advance was not secret and his attack, whether it was to be at night or at dawn, would not be a surprise to the Boers. Indeed, the *London Times* had reported the previous day that General Gatacre was preparing to regain the important Stormberg railway junction. His information that the Boers had taken up their positions on the western slopes of the Kisteberg was not accurate. The two guides who led the expedition were thought to have lost their way and the solid body of tired men, moving in slow formation, blundered forward to disaster.

The Free State forces in the Northern Cape were under the command of Chief Commandant J.H. Olivier and General E.R. Grobler. A large number of Cape rebels had joined with the Boer commandos. At the time of Gatacre's advance the railway junction at Stormberg was guarded by the Roussville and Smithfield commandos while to the west Commandant P.A. Steenkamp and Commandant Floort du Plooy stood ready with their men to meet the challenge. All told, some 700 Boers awaited the oncoming British column.

Although they knew Gatacre was on his way the Boer commanders were not certain as to the direction of his attack, due to the deviations of his guides during the night.

At daylight came and revealed the column still looking for its objective. The fiery General Gatacre, worried by the fact that his plans had miscarried, walked at the head of his men making his horse. The country was wild and rocky, providing a ready-made setting for the tactics of surprise and ambush at which the Boers excelled. And yet the British plodded on aimlessly in dense formation, with little or no attempt of scouting ahead or on the flanks.

At daybreak, on the farm Klipfontein – now known as Vagkoppiet – the Boers first caught sight of their enemies. The few Boers there under Commandant Du Plooy acted like lightning. Apart from getting himself into position with 50 men, Du Plooy sent messages to the neighbouring laagers: "The 'Kakies' are here."

At a quarter past four in the clear light of a South African morning a shot, followed by a volley of musketry, told the bewildered British that they had fallen into a Boer trap.

High on the face of a steep line of hills the Boer riflemen lay hidden. They had been first to arrive at the strategic position and they fashed the astonished British with a hailade of fire before the latter were able to recover from the surprise encounter. Du Plooy attacked on the flank. Olivier with his men, Steenkamp and others reached the site of the battle. The bewildered British troops were pinned down, unable to advance or retire without serious loss to themselves. Many withdrew down the hill, turning the gauntlet of Boer fire, while others clung to their positions in the faroer hope that something would emerge from the disaster. All the infantry who remained on the hillside were captured. The rest called at a point 1 500 metres from the scene of the surprise, and began an orderly retreat to Moltens.

The British losses have been variously computed and it would appear that not more than 28 were killed in action and 61 wounded. But, of bitter gall for British pride to readnow, was the total of some 800 men made prisoners by the Boers. Tho such a big force could so easily leave behind so many prisoners with so few soldiers killed and wounded, seemed almost impossible to accept.

The Boer losses at Stormberg were negligible.

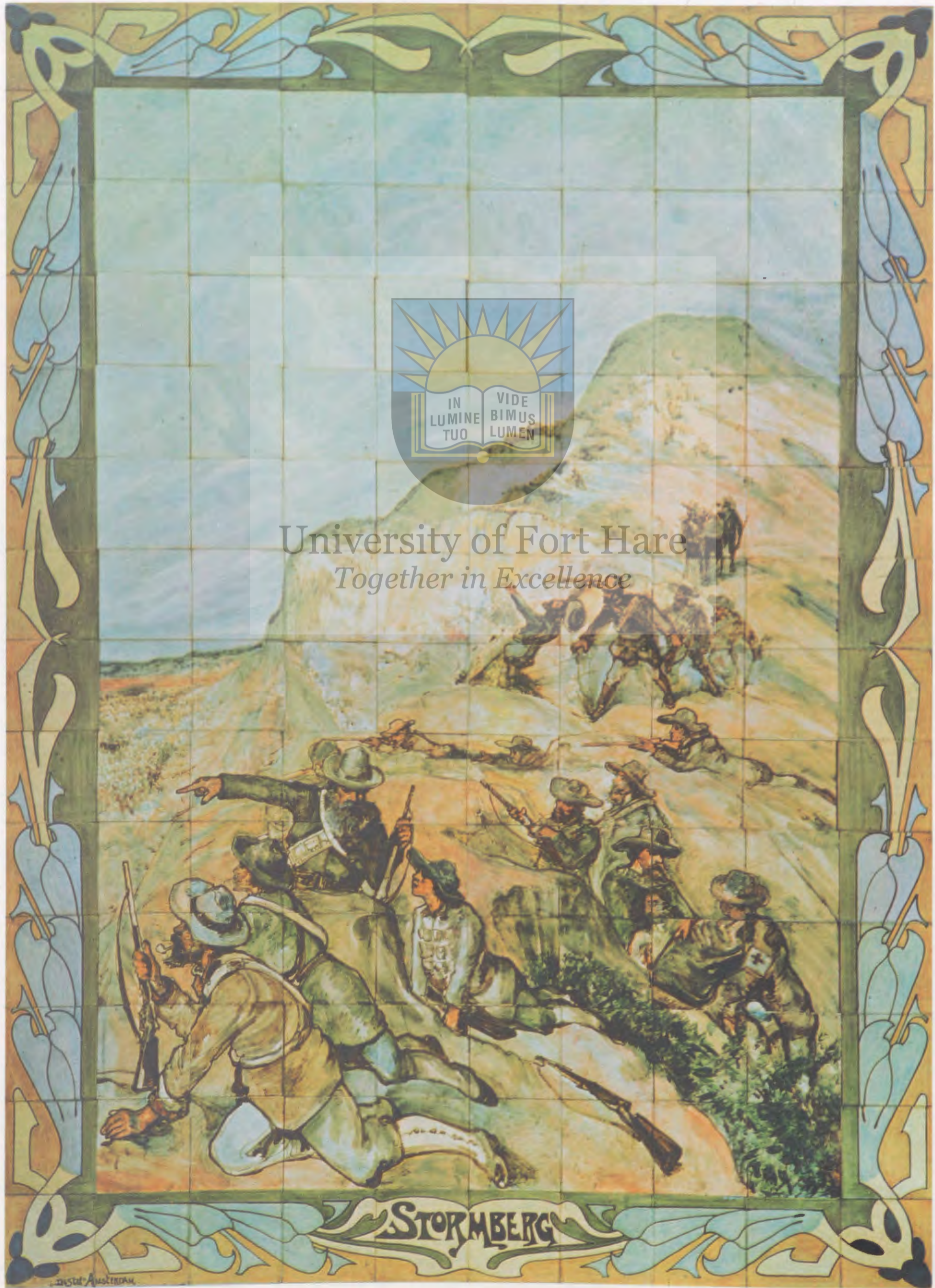
When it became apparent that the Boers were not going to follow up their victory at Stormberg by penetrating further south, the British concluded themselves that Gatacre's advance although a failure, proved to the Boers what strong forces they were faced with in the Northern Cape, and that the ill-planned attack could be accepted as a manoeuvre in war tactics.



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STORMBERG



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COGENSO

THE BATTLE OF SPIOENKOP

General Buller's failure at Colenso set the stage upon "Black Week", as that week of British setbacks in December, 1899, became known throughout the English-speaking world - Sunday 10th December at Stormberg, Monday 11th December at Magersfontein, Friday the 13th at Colenso.

Immediately on receipt of the news of this last setback the British Cabinet appointed another supreme commander in South Africa, General Lord Roberts of Kandahar, with General Lord Kitchener of Khartoum as his military assistant. General Sir Redvers Buller, previously supreme commander, was left in command of the Natal Depot. General Sir Charles Warren was sent out to South Africa to serve as his second-in-command.

Late in January, 1901, Buller made his second attempt to lift the siege of Ladysmith by an attack across the Tugela River far to the west of Colenso. By the time of General Warren's arrival Buller's forces on the Tugela had risen to 30 000 men.

Buller's new plan envisaged an attack across the river to the west of Colenso, having as one of its main objectives the capture of Spioenkop, the mountain feature which lay in the way of the British left flank to Ladysmith. He delegated this task to Sir Charles Warren.

General Louis Botha, commanding the Boer forces on the Tugela, saw the direction of the attack in time to re-deploy his forces so that his main body was farther west than his left flank had been during the battle of Colenso.

Warren's first manoeuvre was brilliantly executed. He pretended to seek a crossing at Potgietersdrif by shelling the drift, but simultaneously threw in his main effort at Trichardt'sdrif, eleven kilometers farther to the west, where he forced a crossing. By January 23rd strong British forces were bridged on the northern banks of the river.

On that day a cable was sent to London: "Tonight Spioenkop is being attacked."

Moving among the troops that night was war correspondent and future British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and among the stretcher-bearers was Mahatmas (Mahatma) Ghandi, likewise destined to become a world figure.

Almost vertical rock faces characterized the Tugela side of Spioenkop, but a long broad spur on the south-western slope provided the access route for the British attack. On the hill Warren was assisted by General Chery, but command of the attacking force was entrusted to General Sir E. R.P. Woodgate of the Lancshires, who led a North of England force.

Under cover of a violent night the main British force stole up the winding and ill-defined path, which led to the summit.

The Boers on Spioenkop were largely veterans. The small guard from the western commando who was on the hill at the time fled before Woodgate's 1 700 men and gave the alarm of the British occupation of this vital position.

On hearing the news General Botha immediately decided that Spioenkop must be recaptured. Messengers were sent to the different sectors of the Tugela laagers to bring together as many men as they could to reinforce the Boers at Spioenkop.

Among all the brave men who reacted to Botha's appeal was one who may be called the hero of Spioenkop - Commandant Hendrik Prinsloo of Carolina, who later died that same year in the battle of Witkoff near his own home town where he was killed by the guns from the hands of British soldiers.

Commandant Prinsloo's commando was stationed north-east of Spioenkop at a small place called Two Peaks. Reacting swiftly to Botha's appeal he called for volunteers. All of his commando moved forward. Warning them of the still task ahead, he said: "Burgers and friends, the choice of General Botha has fallen on us to undertake a dangerous task today ... if it could be that not a single one of us would return." Under cover, Prinsloo's men swiftly took up their positions on Spioenkop.

Botha's message also reached Commandant Roodhooft, Deputy of the Pretoria commando who rushed to reinforce Prinsloo on the kop.

Once again the British made a fatal error. Woodgate's force on the night of the 23rd, falling, at a spot which he thought was the crest of the hill. His error was attributable to the poor light as he was not to know that the top of Spioenkop, which was a long ridge, is divided into two more or less equal parts linked by a saddle. The ridge was occupied by Woodgate was dominated by the other part.

The British commander did not rely for cover only on the boulders on the ridge, but gave orders for the digging of trenches. Because of the shallow soil and solid rock beneath the trenches were dug to a depth of only 45 cm.

Loading his men through the mist which had enveloped the hill, Prinsloo reached the summit and deployed them in extended order from Aalwynskop to close on the British positions. He was reinforced at daylight by Commandant Eppenaar with his Pretoria commando.

To their absolute surprise a murderous fire was unleashed on the British. So close were the combatants driven that at places they were involved in hand to hand fighting - the British with fixed bayonets, the Boers with their rifle bolts.

Of Prinsloo's 54 men, 37 were casualties by nightfall.

At Botha's behest small groups from other commandos were sent to reinforce their comrades on the hill. They came from the Heideboers, Vryheid, Jhannenburg, Bethal and Ermelo commandos. While their companions were engaged in the battle which flared along the whole Tabaanysfontein, they were locked in fierce struggle in the unique battle for Spioenkop. There were men there that day who accomplished superhuman deeds against their equally courageous British opponents.

The British suffered grievous losses but were reinforced continuously during the day. Actually, there were far too many soldiers on such a small surface. While the Boers did not allow more than 400 men at a time in the battle area, the British maintained 3 000 men and more.

At a dangerous moment for the Boers, when a detachment in a key position no longer able to withstand British steel and murderous fire, took to flight, Commandant Prinsloo succeeded in halting them and led them back in counter attack.

Early in the action the gallant Woodgate fell and his command unit would expect to devolve on Colonel M.L. Cherton, the senior officer present. However, on the recommendation of Buller the impetuous Colonel A.W. Thorneycroft was appointed by Warren to command the British forces on Spioenkop.

The battle continued at fever pitch from morning through to the afternoon. A further 3 000 men of General Coke's brigade, the Middlesex Regiment, the Dorsets, Somerset and Imperial Light Infantry were thrown in during the afternoon. So great was the confusion that Coke did not know that Thorneycroft was in command.

By nightfall, with more than 1 000 of his men killed, wounded and missing, Coke gave the order to evacuate the position. Without knowing about this Thorneycroft gave a stouter command. Even he did not feel up to continuing the slaughter.

The British left quietly.

But, unbeknown to them, the burghers decided that they, too, could not endure another day of battle such as the one they had experienced. Without the permission of their officers they streamed down the mountainside in the dark.

A man on horseback arrived in the night and moved from one Boer group to the other, urging the burghers to return to their posts. With respect in his voice he told them of the disgrace that would ensue by their defection. His persuasion won the moment. Slowly the burghers returned to the scene of battle.

A whisper went the rounds that the man of the persuasive voice was Louis Botha. But today there is some doubt whether it was not in fact Prinsloo from Carolina.

At daybreak a mysterious quiet enfolded the scene. Three Ulster scouts, Jack Hudson, Heert Slagkamp and Albert de Roos moved forward to investigate the situation. Amazed, they found the British had departed. Quickly, the Vierkleur was hoisted Spioenkop was reoccupied by the burghers, unobserved.

So close on earth, it is claimed, did so many dead lie on such a small piece of ground, because of the tremendous concentration of British soldiers in a spot where there was hardly any room for movement. The living lay on top of the dead while they fired.

On the fiercest moment which was erected on the battleground in 1901, the names of 150 of those killed are engraved, but only 60 of them died on Spioenkop itself.

The Boers had the advantage over their adversaries in that their guns were sited in positions out of reach of any possible British counter-battery shelling. The accuracy of fire of the Boer guns was in large measure due to the personal courage of Hendrik Prinsloo who, with his signaller, Louis Bothma, a teacher from Carolina, directed the fire of the Boer gunners.

DIE SLAG VAN SPIOENKOP

Genl. Buller se mislukking by Colenso sit die wêreld op die "Black Week" van die week van Britse nederlae - Sondag 10 Desember 1899 by Stormberg, Maandag 11 by Magersfontein en Vrydag 13 by Colenso - algemeen in die Engelstalige wêreld bekend staan.

Die Britse kabinet stel dadelik 'n ander opperbevelvoerder in Suid-Afrika aan, genl. lord Roberts van Kandahar, met genl. lord Kitchener van Khartoum as sy militêre assistent. Maar aan die Natal Depot bly Buller in beheer. Genl. sr Charles Warren word gestuur om onmiddellik onder hom te dien. Laat in Januarie word Buller se tweede poging om Ladysmith te ontset. Met die kom van Warren is die krygsmagte aan die Tugela uitgerus tot 30 000 man.

Buller se nuwe plan is nou om die Tugela wes van Colenso-oewer te steek. Botha het die bevelings om in daardie rigting toe te slaan vroege-dag reënval en die reëlige aanpogings gesaak sodat sy hoofmag onder was staan as sy oewer-oewer gestuurd die slag van Colenso.

Buller besluit dat sy nuwe poging na Ladysmith vinnig sal wees indien hy Spioenkop kan owerwee, en hy die die hielik om hierdie kop te beset. Genl. sr Charles Warren word gestuur om die van die Tabaanysfontein-weg te versterk deur van Ladysmith.

Warren se eerste waaklike werk word skitterend uitgevoer. Hy maak oewer hy 'n deuring by Potgietersdrif maak, bombardeer die drif, maar syen eerste op Trichardt'sdrif toe, alhoewel daar was, Teen 23 Januarie staan sterk Britse magte op die noordewes van die oewer. Op daardie dag gaan 'n kabel na Londen: "Vandag word Spioenkop aangepal". Kabinet en oewer-oewer Britse lede Minster, Winston Churchill, besoek ook daardie dag om te sien die slag, en onder die Britse oewer-oewer is Mahatmas (Mahatma) Ghandi wat ewentyd bekend is om 'n wêreldfiguur te word.

Byna vertikale rotsklippe gekarakteriseer die Tugela kant van Spioenkop, maar 'n lang breedte spoor op die suid-wes kant verskaf die toegangsweg vir die Britse aanval. Op die heuwel was Warren bygestaan deur genl. Chery, maar die kommando van die aanval was toegeleë tot Genl. sr E.P. Woodgate van die Lancshires of Noord-Engeland.

Die Boere word owerloofde gevang. Op Spioenkop is 'n klein weg van die Vryheidse kant. Hulle vlug van Woodgate se 1 700 man uit en gee die alarm deur in gear en hulle te gaan versterk was daar op die kop aan.

Botha besluit onmiddellik dat Spioenkop herower moet word. Besidders word by verskillende sektore van die Tugela-geleë om te sien of 'n koepel van versterking by Spioenkop.

Maar as daar een man onder al die dappers is wat die heid van Spioenkop groen kan sien, dan daardie is Hendrik Prinsloo van Carolina toe. 'n Kommando wat nog nie die eerste jaar in die slag van Witkoff naby sy eie dorp ontbreek, bring om te sien die hielik uit die hande van die Britse soldate te ruk.

Knutt, Prinsloo se kommando het sy manne van Spioenkop gestaan op 'n vlakke wat Two Peaks genoem word. In 'n ongewone bet by vrywilligers gevra en almal het in ere gekom. "Burgers en vriende," was die byblyf. "Die kommando van genl. Botha het sy oewer om vandag 'n gewandte taak te onderneem ... al binne wees dat die een van ons oewerom die ..."

Botha se boodskap het ook Knutt, Maj. Dael Opperstein van die Pretoria kommando, om te sien van Prinsloo by te slaan.

Prinsloo het die heid 'n onontdekte heid geges. Woodgate het in die donker aangepal, om daardie die bergkruis te sien. Maar die kop is op-ontrent 4 km lank en word deur 'n saal in min of meer twee gedeeltes verdeel. Die deel wat Woodgate gesien en beset het, word oewers deur die ander gedeelte.

Die Engelse aanvoerder maak nie net op onontdekte staat sy dekking nie. Hy lei ook loopgrawe maak - net 45 cm diep - in die vlak grond op die oewer oewer.

Prinsloo het sy manne deur die diep na die kruin. Daar plaas hy hulle in verspreide orde van Aalwynskop tot by die Britse skanse. Teen liging is Opperstein ook daar met die Pretoria. Tot verbasing van die Britse word 'n noordelike vuer op hulle geges. Op die juis, ook die strydende partye handgemeen, die Engelse met gevulde bajonet en die Pretoria die gewandte. Van Prinsloo se kommando 34 man van 37 teen die saal dood of gewond is.

Op Botha se oproep word ook klein groepe van ander kommando's na Spioenkop gestuur. Beethal, Vryheid, Jhannenburg, Bethal, Ermelo. Terwyl hulle makkers daarvoor toe die hielik Tabaanysfontein weg, saam hulle aan hierdie unieke stryd op Spioenkop deel.

Die Britse is ontaglike oewer en word gestung versterk. Daar is hertemaal 'n veld oewer op 'n klein oppervlakte. Terwyl die Boere maar twee of ses honderd daar oewer, is onderhou die Britse daar meer as drie duisend man.

'n Gewandte oewer vir die Boere kom toe 'n afdeling in 'n sleutelposisie dit nie langer teen die noordelike staat en Britse kommando kan uithou nie en vlug. Prinsloo deeg daardie om hulle te laat hoewel dit nie van sy kommando is nie, en hy doen self 'n kommando wat die posisie herstel.

Die Britse seilou genl. Woodgate. Kol. M.F. Crofton is nou die senior offiser. Op aanbeveling van Buller stel Warren die vroege-ende kol. A.W. Thorneycroft aan as senior. 'n Kommando van die berg op 'n heid die heid van die kommando. "Jy is gewandte oewer". Die geveg gaan voort. Daar kom nog 3 000 man van Middlesex aan die hielik. Die Somerset en die Imperial Light Infantry onder genl. Coke. Coke was nie van die Thorneycroft hielik hielik is nie. Met meer as 1 000 man dood, gewond en vermis, gee Coke toe die stad bevel om die posisie te verlaat. Sonder daaraan te weet, gee ook Thorneycroft 'n bevel. Vir nog 'n slagting sien self hy nie klein nie. Die Engelse verrek stil.

Die burgers besluit ewentyd dat hulle die nie nog 'n dag kan uithou nie en hul of saam oewerom van hulle oewer stroom hulle die berg in die donker af.

Op hielik oewer dat 'n man te geel in die donker verskyn en van groepe tot groepe beweg. Sy stem is vreeskend as hy die burgers toesig en vertel watter skande dit toe wees as hulle die posisie verlaat. Hielik besluit die burgers om te hielik. Daar word gefluit dat dit Louis Botha is. Vandag bestaan daar twee of drie mitiese Hendrik Prinsloo van Carolina was toe.

Toe dit hy word, hang daar 'n geheimagtige stilte van die toneel. Drie Ulster-oewers, Jack Hudson, Heert Slagkamp en Albert de Roos gaan onderoewer hielik en eind dat die Engelse hielik verrek het. Hulle hielik die Vierkleur en twee burgers stroom op die heid.

Spioenkop behoort weer aan die Boere. Niemand in die wêreld, so word beweer, het daar alle in twee jaar verspreid, soveel daardie op so 'n klein kollektie geel nie. Dit is as gevolg van die ontaglike konsentrasie van Britse soldate waar geen bewoende was toe. Terwyl hielik op-ontrent 4 km lank.

Op die Boerenmoment wat in 1964 op Spioenkop uitgeg is, staan 108 name van gewandte burgers maar net hielik van hulle het op die kop gesien. Die ander name is toe van burgers wat in die sandlaag die vunder Spioenkop gesoek het.

Die Boere het die verskeie van kanonvuer gefel en daardie vuermaand het in posisie gesien was die Britse kanonne hulle nie kan bykom toe. Die hielik vuer se akkuraat was toe oewer-oewer se danke aan die persoonlike moed van Hendrik Prinsloo, wat met sy signaal, Louis Bothma, 'n onderwyser van Carolina, die kanonne se vuer geel het.



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SPIONSKOP



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PARDEBERG

THE BATTLE AT REDDERSBURG

Although in itself only a limited action, the Boer success at Mostertshoek, near Reddersburg, had far reaching effect on the character of the war in that it proved the correctness of General De Wet's tactical approach to the harassment of the numerically superior British forces, then preparing to resume their march to Pretoria after the fall of Bloemfontein to Lord Roberts on 13th March, 1900. As well, the British defeat at Mostertshoek spelled the final downfall of General Gatacre.

After taking Bloemfontein Lord Roberts needed time to rest and regroup his forces. This time of waiting provided the Free State leaders with a splendid opportunity to put into practice new tactics they had devised at a conference held at Kroonstad. There they agreed to use only a limited number of commandos to dispute Lord Roberts' advance to the Vaal River, while the greater proportion of the Free State forces would be used to disrupt the British supply lines and to do the enemy as much damage as possible in limited operations whenever the opportunity was presented.

This type of warfare was entirely suitable for the great talents of the formidable General De Wet, who immediately proved the efficacy of the plan with his successful surprise attack on Sannaspos.

In seeking further opportunities for the commandos under his command, which were part of the disruptive force, he went on a scouting expedition in the direction of Dewetsdorp and learned that a detachment of British troops had arrived there.

Scouts were sent in various directions to arrange for a concentration of burghers at strategic points. On instructions, Generals J.B. Wessels, C.G. Froneman and C.J. de Villiers planned a co-ordinated advance with 1 500 men and three guns.

De Wet's impudent attack on Sannaspos forced Lord Roberts to concentrate detachments at danger points and along the railway lines. Other detachments were being staged at suitable points in preparation for the resumption of his advance to the north. In all there was an abundance of British troop movements for the Boers to harass and disrupt.

The troops who occupied Dewetsdorp on April 1st were advance elements of General Gatacre's force, and comprised three detachments of the Irish Rifles, under command of Captain W.J. McWhinnie. A patrol he sent out that night to reconnoitre the road between Dewetsdorp and Bloemfontein was fired on and he signalled General Gatacre of the presence of the enemy.

McWhinnie received orders at midnight to hold his troops in readiness to proceed to Reddersburg on receipt of further instructions. These arrived by messenger the following afternoon. At 5 p.m., in pouring rain, the Irish Riflemen set out for Reddersburg.

Meanwhile De Wet, anticipating the British move to Reddersburg, had occupied a strategic position at Mostertshoek, on a ridge which dominated the road to Reddersburg.

At nine o'clock on the morning of 3rd April, McWhinnie's scouts were fired upon from De Wet's position at Mostertshoek. Obvious of the danger to the rear, the Irish Rifles in various directions, McWhinnie's men were ordered to occupy the eastern and central parts of the ridge, as well as the connecting saddle between the two positions.

Before action was joined the British captain was vastly surprised to receive a message from General De Wet who bore a demand for his surrender. McWhinnie refused.

Unbeknown to him his position was surrounded and Boer reinforcements were on the way with three Krupp guns. Throughout the day desultory firing took place and when darkness fell, four-out of twelve British officers had become casualties - two dead, two seriously wounded. Rifle fire was heard intermittently throughout the night.

Early next morning the Boer guns joined in and by eight o'clock had forced the surrender of the British mounted infantry. Later in the morning the rest of the defenders hoisted the white flag. Due to a misunderstanding a section of the British started firing again and the Boers returned the fire. The confusion was quickly sorted out and it fell to the unhappy lot of General Gatacre, albeit in his absence, to hand over 470 prisoners of war when his losses in killed and wounded amounted to forty-five only - ten killed and 35 wounded.

It is doubtful whether any other British commander would have fared better in the circumstances, but the Boer victory at Mostertshoek placed the seal on Gatacre's previous failure at Stormberg. He was relieved of his command and returned to England. Help which was sent to Captain McWhinnie at Mostertshoek arrived too late, only in time to engage De Wet's rearguard in a skirmish.

DIE SLAG BY REDDERSBURG

Hoewel die veldslag by Mostertshoek, Reddersburg, slegs van beperkte omvang was, staan dit in die teken van groot en belangrike gebeurte wat die hele karakter van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog sou verander.

Lord Roberts beset Bloemfontein op 13 Maart 1900. Hier beplan hy nou die opmars na Pretoria. Hy het tyd nodig om sy magte te hergroepeer en veral om hulle te laat rus. Van daardie geleentheid maak ook die Vrystaters gebruik.

Die dag breek aan vir genl. De Wet om handelend op te tree. Op Kroonstad het die Boerleiers besluit om net sekere kommando's in gebruik om Roberts se opmars na die Vaalrivier te betwis. Die ander sal die Britse verbindingslinies ontwig en die vyand soveel skade moontlik toedien. Vandaar dan genl. De Wet se suksesvolle verrassingsaanval op Sannaspos.

Met hierdie groot oorwinning agter die rug, soek die gedugte aanvoerder verdere sukses en verdere buit. Sy kommando's is omlet die wat die ontwrigting moet veroorsaak. Hy vertrek op 'n verkenningstog in die rigting van Dewetsdorp en verneem dat 'n afdeling soldate daar aangekom het. Rapportyrs word in verskillende rigtings gestuur om te reef dat Boers op strategiese plekke saamtrek. Genls. J.B. Wessels, C.G. Froneman en C.J. de Villiers kry opdragte. Sasame sal hulle met 1 500 burgers en met drie kanonne opruk.

Breussen het die astante aanval van De Wet op Sannaspos Roberts genoop om troepe onder aan die govaarpte en die spoorlyne te bring. Ander afdelings is nodig vir die opmars na die noorde en moet ook solank op geskikte plekke bymekaarkom. Daar is dus genoeg weespelbewegings om dop te hou en te ontwig.

Die troepe wat op 1 April 1900 uit Smithfield op Dewetsdorp aangekom het, is deel van genl. Gatacre se magte. Dit is 'n drietal afdelings van die Irish Rifles onder kapt. W.J. McWhinnie. 'n Patroolie word die sand uitgestuur om die pad tussen Dewetsdorp en Bloemfontein te verken, en toe daar op die patroolie gevuur word, stel McWhinnie Gatacre in kennis.

Dit is middernag van McWhinnie telegrafies antwoord ontvang dat hy sy troepe gereed moet hou om op verdere instruksies na Reddersburg te vertrek. Daardie instruksies kom die volgende dag per boodskapper op Dewetsdorp aan; dit is halwies die middag en om vyftien vertrek die Irish Rifles in rietende reën.

Die 3de April is 'n nat dag. Die môre word daar naby Mostertshoek op McWhinnie se posisie gevuur. Die Irish Rifles is in die beste posisies; die vuur kom van 'n bergtop wat die pad na Reddersburg versper. Die Irish Rifles, onbewus van die gevaar wat uit ander oorde dreig, beset die oostelike en die sentrale uitkloep van die rug, asook die verbinding tussen die oostelike en die sentrale uitkloep van die rug. Die Britse kaptein is verbaas om 'n boodskapper van genl. De Wet te ontvang wat sy oorgawe die kry wys dit besit van die hand.

Maar die Britte is reeds omsingel en verdere Boeroversterkings is op pad met drie Kruppkanonne. Teen donker is vier uit die twaalf Britse offisiere buite peveg gestel - twee gedood en twee ernstig gewond. Gewesennar kan af en toe dwarsdeur die nag gehoor word.

Vroeg die volgende môre begin die Boerkanonne ook aan die stryd deelneem. Die berede infanterie ger reeds teen agtuur oor en later die môre hys ook die ander verdedigers die wit vlag. Moontlik as gevolg van 'n misverstand begin die Britte weer skiet en die Boere beantwoord die vuur. Maar dit was gou oor en dis weer die lot van Gatacre om 470 krygsgevangenes aan die Boere af te staan (hierdie keer in sy afwesigheid) vir die geringe verlies van tien gesneuweldes en vyf en dertig gewondes.

Dis twyfelagtig of enigma van die ander Britse aanvoeders in hierdie omstandighede beter sou gevaar het. Maar dit sit die seël op Gatacre se vorige mislukking en hy word teruggestuur na Engeland. Hulp op pad na Mostertshoek het te laat aangekom, net baryds om met De Wet se agterhoede in 'n skermutseling betrokke te raak.



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REDDERSBURG



LOUIS BOTHA

Louis Botha is op 27 September 1862 op 'n plaas naby Greytown in Natal gebore; van sy sewende tot sy twee en twintigste jaar is hy Vrystater; die daaropvolgende twee jaar is hy 'n burger van die Nuwe Republiek (Vryheid), en daarna Transvaal. Dan sit hy die saal op hierdie kleurryke lewe deur die eerste premier van 'n verenigde Suid-Afrika te word. Voor hom het net een gebore Suid-Afrikaner 'n betrekking beklee wat met die presiesheid van 'n verenigde Suid-Afrika vergelyk kan word, en daardie man het presies twee seite vroeër geleef: Abraham van Riebeeck, aan die Kaap gebore waar sy vader kommandeur was, het gouwerneur-generaal van Nederlands-Indië geword.

Louis Botha se oupa, Philip Rudolph Botha, en sy vader - wat ook Louis geheet het - sowel as sy oupa aan moederskant, Gerrit Reznier van Rooyen, het al drie by Bloedrivier geveg; Louis se vader was toe maar elf jaar oud.

Die toekomstige Eerste Minister van Suid-Afrika was die negende van dertien kinders by Greytown groei hy saam met die Zoeloe-kinders op en praat die taal van sy nieseëre; nagtertjies so goed as sy ma. In 1869 trek sy vader na die distrik Vrrede in die Vrystaat. Klein Louis woon plaatskooltjies by; en sy formele skoolopleiding duur slegs tot twee jaar.

Toe hy negentien jaar oud was, stuur sy pa hom vir die winter met die veer na Zoeloland. Dit gebeur jaar na jaar, en in 1884 besoek dit hom 'n groot avontuur.

In daardie jaar volg Dinuzulu, die Zoeloe-troonopvolger, vir sy teenstander Ushibepu. Lucas Meyer en ander blanka boere van die omgewing kies Dinuzulu as koning en die Vrystater, Louis Botha, wat met sy pa so ver in Zoeloland is, duit by Lucas Meyer aan. Hulle verslaan Ushibepu en plaas Dinuzulu op die troon. Daarvoor kry die blanka boere en hulle stig die Nuwe Republiek met Vryheid as hoofstad.

Louis Botha is die voorsitter van die verskillende kommissies wat die plaas opmeet en uitdeel en saam met twee ander deel hy die dorp Vryheid op. Hy voltooi die taak in 1884. Trou in 1886 met die Ierse dame Annie Emmett en vestig hom op die plaas Waterford wat aan hom toegees is, 39 kilometer oos van Vryheid. Hy word verkies tot die eerste Volksraad van die Nuwe Republiek (die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek), word hy in die verkiesing van 1890 lid van die Transvaalse Volksraad. Twee lode moet gekies word en daar is vier kandidate. Botha kry self meer stemme as die invloedryke Lucas Meyer, die ander suksesvolle kandidaat. Hy is slegs 34 jaar oud.

So 'n suksesvolle boer is Botha dat hy teen die tyd toe die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog in 1899 uitbreek, 4 000 skape besit binne 600 heeste en 100 perdmerries. Verskeie stoetstamme en 'n volbloedperd is uit die buiteland ingevoer.

Toe die oorlog uitbreek, is Botha sonder militêre rang maar genl. Lucas Meyer gebruik hom as sy militêre raadgever. Midde in die slag by Ladysmith aan die Modderspruit, kry Meyer, wie se gesondheid swak was, 'n insorling, en die bevel gaan op Louis Botha oor. Hy hanteer die slag so behendig dat hy as generaal aangestel word.

Met kniel-genl. Piet Joubert by hom, lei Botha 'n verkenningstog tot die by Pietermaritzburg. Ook Winston Churchill val in sy hande.

Joubert se gesondheid gee in en Louis Botha neem wat as bevelhebber aan die Natalse front. In daardie hoedanigheid beheer hy die slag aan die Tugela, Colenso, Spioenkop, Vaalkrans, Pietersburg ens. Toe Eiel Joubert in Maart 1900 sterf, word Botha agterste kommandant-generaal van die Transvaalse magte. Hy bly dit tot die vrede van Vereeniging op 31 Mei 1902.

Louis Botha was 'n gebore krygsman met 'n voorliefde vir 'n groot operasie op die Tugela en by Daimanutha. Tydens die sogenaamde guerrilla-oorlogvoering het sy hart steeds na die groot stellingoorlog met manoeuvre en teenmanoeuwe gehunker. Maar toe die enigste onder die Boeregeneraals, van wie die bekendste sulke uitsprake gemaak het, was. Sy hantering van die rebelle van 1914, wat die militêre sy betref, is 'n uiters vernuftige Duitssewelding getuig ewensoms daarvan.

Botha het 'n wonderlike beheer oor mense gehad. Daar het 'n magtige invloed van hom uitgegaan wat hy van aangegang tot aangegang in tye van krisis met sy volgelinge te doen gekry het. „Ek werk met sake; genl. Botha werk met mense“, het Jan Smuts op 'n keer gesê.

Botha se laaste groot avontuur is die ondersoeking namens Suid-Afrika van die Verdrag van Versailles in 1919 nadat hy, die man uit die plaatskooltjies, die verteenwoordigers van die volkere oor die verdrag toegesprek het. In daardie toespraak beklemtoon hy dat ook hy die bitterheid van 'n nederlaag ken en dus weet hoe die Duitse ondertekenaars op daardie oomblik voel. Na sy mening was die vredesvoorwaardes te streng en kon dit alles tot 'n verdere oorlog lei.

Toen die wil van 'n aantienlike deel van sy volk teken Botha nogtans die verdrag. Hy meen dat dit nodig is om Suid-Afrika op die wêreld vir die eerste keer in die ry van die volkere te bring.

Die beewagtertjie uit Zoeloland se heuwels bevind hom nou in die wêreld se hoogste geselskap. Presies twee maande en een dag voor sy skielike dood in Pretoria, teken hy sy naam onder die verdrag in die *Galerie des Glaces*, die spieëlsaal van die Paleis van Versailles.

LOUIS BOTHA

Louis Botha was born in Natal, on a farm near Greytown, on 27th September, 1862. His grandfather, Philip Rudolph Botha, and his father - also named Louis - as well as his grandfather on the dutch side, Gerrit Reznier van Rooyen, all fought at Blood River. Louis senior was their only slevan.

The future Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa was the ninth of thirteen children. At Greytown he grew up with Zulu children and could speak the language of the young Zulu herdboys as proficiently as his own. In 1869 his father moved to the Vrrede district of the Free State. Young Louis only had a little more than two years' formal schooling at small farm schools.

He lived in the Free State until his twenty-second year, then became a citizen of the New Republic (Vryheid), and finally became a Transvaal burgher.

At the age of nineteen his father sent him in charge of his sheep to Zululand for the winter grazing. This was repeated in successive years and in 1884 led to one of Louis Botha's great adventures.

In that year Dinuzulu, the successor to the Zulu throne, fled before his adversary, Ushibepu. Lucas Meyer and other white farmers took the side of Dinuzulu in the resulting struggle for the Zulu throne. The Free Stater, Louis Botha, in Zululand with his father's stock, joined Lucas Meyer who, with his followers, defeated Ushibepu and placed Dinuzulu on the throne. For this support Dinuzulu rewarded the white men with gifts of farms and they established the New Republic, with Vryheid the capital.

Louis Botha was chairman of the various commissions which surveyed and allotted the farms and with two others he surveyed the town of Vryheid. He completed the task in 1884 and settled on the farm Waterford, 39 kilometres east of Vryheid, which had been allotted to him. He married an Irish girl, Annie Emmett, in 1886.

He became a field cornet and when the New Republic was incorporated in the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, he became a member of the Transvaal Volksraad in the election of 1896. Two members had to be elected from his district and out of the four candidates Botha received more votes than even the influential Lucas Meyer, the other successful candidate.

Louis Botha was then 34 years old.

He was such a successful farmer that when the Anglo-Boer War broke out in 1899, he owned 4 000 sheep, 600 cattle and 100 merries. Several stud rams and a thoroughbred horse had been imported from overseas.

At the outbreak of the war Louis Botha had no official rank and Lucas Meyer used him as his military adviser. During the battle of Ladysmith, at Modderspruit, Lucas Meyer, whose health was indifferent, had a breakdown and he handed over his command to Botha. So successfully did he handle the battle that he was appointed a general.

Among Louis Botha's many military exploits was the reconnaissance raid he led, accompanied by Commandant-General Piet Joubert, near to Pietermaritzburg. Winston Churchill, too, fell into his hands.

When Commandant-General Joubert's health failed and he withdrew from the command, Louis Botha was appointed commander of the Natal front. He led the Boer forces with distinction in the battles at the Tugela - Colenso, Spioenkop, Vaalkrans and Pietersburg.

On Piet Joubert's death in March, 1900, Louis Botha became Acting Commandant-General of the Transvaal forces. He held his command until the end of the war and the signing of the Peace Treaty at Vereeniging on 31st May, 1902.

Louis Botha was a born soldier with a predilection for the big occasion such as at the Tugela and Daimanutha. During the two years of guerrilla warfare following the fall of Pretoria to Lord Roberts in June, 1900, despite his success as a guerrilla general, Botha hankered for the set-piece battles of positional warfare with its manoeuvre and counter-manoeuve. In this respect he was unique among the Boer generals whose celebrated military leaders faced so unobscurely well as guerrilla fighters. Botha's handling of the military operations of the Boer forces, and his outstanding strategic planning for the successful campaign of General Buller in the Orange River valley in 1900, also bear witness to his natural flair in this regard.

Botha had remarkable control over people. He studied a powerful influence over his men. "I deal with affairs, General Botha dealt with people," Jan Smuts said.

On the formation of the Union of South Africa on 31st May, 1910, General Louis Botha became the first Prime Minister of his united country.

Before him only one other born South African rose to a position comparable with the premiership which Botha had attained. That man lived two centuries before him. He was Abraham van Riebeeck, born at the Cape where his father was commander, and who became Governor-General of Dutch East India.

General Louis Botha's last great achievement was at the Peace Conference in 1918, at the signing of the Treaty of Versailles which formally concluded the First World War; when he, the man from the little farm schools, the little herd boy from the hills of Zululand, addressed the representatives of the great powers and warned them of the harshness of the treaty they were imposing on defeated Germany.

In his speech he stressed that he, too, knew the bitterness of defeat and thus knew how the German signatories felt at that moment. In his opinion, the conditions of the treaty were too severe and could only lead to a further war.

Despite his personal feelings, and against the wishes of a considerable section of his own people, Louis Botha nevertheless agreed to the terms of the treaty. Exactly two months and one day before his sudden death in Pretoria, he signed his name to the Treaty of Versailles on behalf of his country, with the conviction that by so doing the Union of South Africa gained admittance to the family of nations.



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HERMANUS JACOB COSTER

Lieutenant Dr. H.J. Coster, who died in battle on 21st October, 1899, at Elandslaagte as a member of the Hollander Corps, was assured of his place of honour on the tile paintings of the Transvalia Theatre in Rotterdam for his death as a soldier.

Born of a wealthy Dutch family in the city of Alkmaar in the Netherlands on 30th June, 1865, Herman Coster obtained his doctorate in law at the University of Leiden in 1890. A bright future was assured for him in Amsterdam, but the call of the South African Republic drew him to Pretoria where he was called to the Bar in 1891. When Ewald Esselen resigned as State Attorney in 1895 Herman Coster succeeded him.

He achieved an international reputation for the part he played as State Attorney in President Kruger's Government for his actions against the Uitlanders in Johannesburg who took part in the Jameson Raid.

When in 1897 Joseph Chamberlain protested against a law on foreigners and President Kruger yielded, Coster resigned as State Attorney and resumed his practice at the Bar. After his return to private practice he was a well known lawyer on the Witwatersrand. He was succeeded as State Attorney by Advocate J.C. Smuts.

In 1899 Dr. Coster was one of the founders of the Hollander Corps raised for service with the Boer forces. Given the rank of lieutenant his military career ended with his death in battle at Elandslaagte shortly after the outbreak of the war.

In his book *Zes maanden bij de commando's* Nico Hofmeyr, official historian of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, says of Dr. Coster: "The best, the noblest, the most talented and the most unforgettable man who died at Elandslaagte, was Dr. Coster, a Hollander by birth . . ." The author also expressed his conviction that this young lawyer would live on in revered memory for his pure patriotism and honourable death.

A Herman Coster Fund was established in 1901 to commemorate his sacrifice for his adopted country. The fund was for the benefit of South African students who wished to study in Holland, and vice versa. A plaque in his honour was unveiled in 1901 in the main court of the University of Leiden. The inscription reads: "He worked and died for the name of the Netherlands and for the good of his new fatherland."

A bust of Dr. Coster by Anton van Wouw, donated by the Herman Coster Fund, has its place in the Palace of Justice in Pretoria. A monument, subscribed for and erected at Elandslaagte by the Dutch war veterans of the Hollander Corps, commemorates the deaths of their comrades where they were killed in action.

Dr. Coster was reburied in the old cemetery in Pretoria on 9th December 1961. In January 1968 the Commandant-General of the South African Defence Force General R.C. Hiemstra unveiled a monument at the grave in his honour.

HERMANUS JACOB COSTER

Luit. dr. H.J. Coster wat as lid van die Hollanderkorps op 21 Oktober 1899 by Elandslaagte gesneewel het, is op 30 Junie 1865 in die stad Alkmaar, Nederland, gebore. Hy promoveer as dokter in die regte aan die Universiteit van Leiden in 1890. Van 1891 praktiseer hy as advokaat in Pretoria en toe Ewald Esselen in 1895 as staatsprokureur bedank, volg hy hom op. Deur sy optrede teen die Johannesburgse uitlanders wat aan die Jamesoninval deelgeneem het, maak hy wêreldbekend.

In 1897 protesteer Joseph Chamberlain teen 'n wet op vreemdelinge, en toe pres. Kruger toegee, bedank Coster as staatsprokureur en praktiseer weer aan die balie.

Dr. Coster is een van die stigters van die Hollanderkorps in September 1899. Hy word 'n luitenant en sneewel in die slag van Elandslaagte.

As gevolg van sy roemryke dood is daar in 1901 'n Herman Costerfonds gestig vir studente uit Suid-Afrika wat in Nederland studeer en omgekeerd. 'n Gedenkplaat ter ere van hom is ook in die binneplein van die Universiteit van Leiden aangebring en in 1901 onthul. Daarop staan onder meer die volgende woorde: „Hy het vir die Nederlandse naam en vir die heil van sy nuwe vaderland gewerk en gesterf“.

So ook staan daar 'n borsbeeld deur Anton van Wouw in die Paleis van Justisie in Pretoria. Die borsbeeld is eweneens 'n geskenk van die Herman Costerfonds. En danksy die ywer van die Nederlandse oud-stryders, staan daar 'n monument ter gedagtenis aan die gesneewelde lede van die Hollanderkorps op Elandslaagte.

Dit lê dus voor die hand dat luit. dr. Coster sy plek gekry het op die teëlskilderye van die Teater Transvalia in Rotterdam.

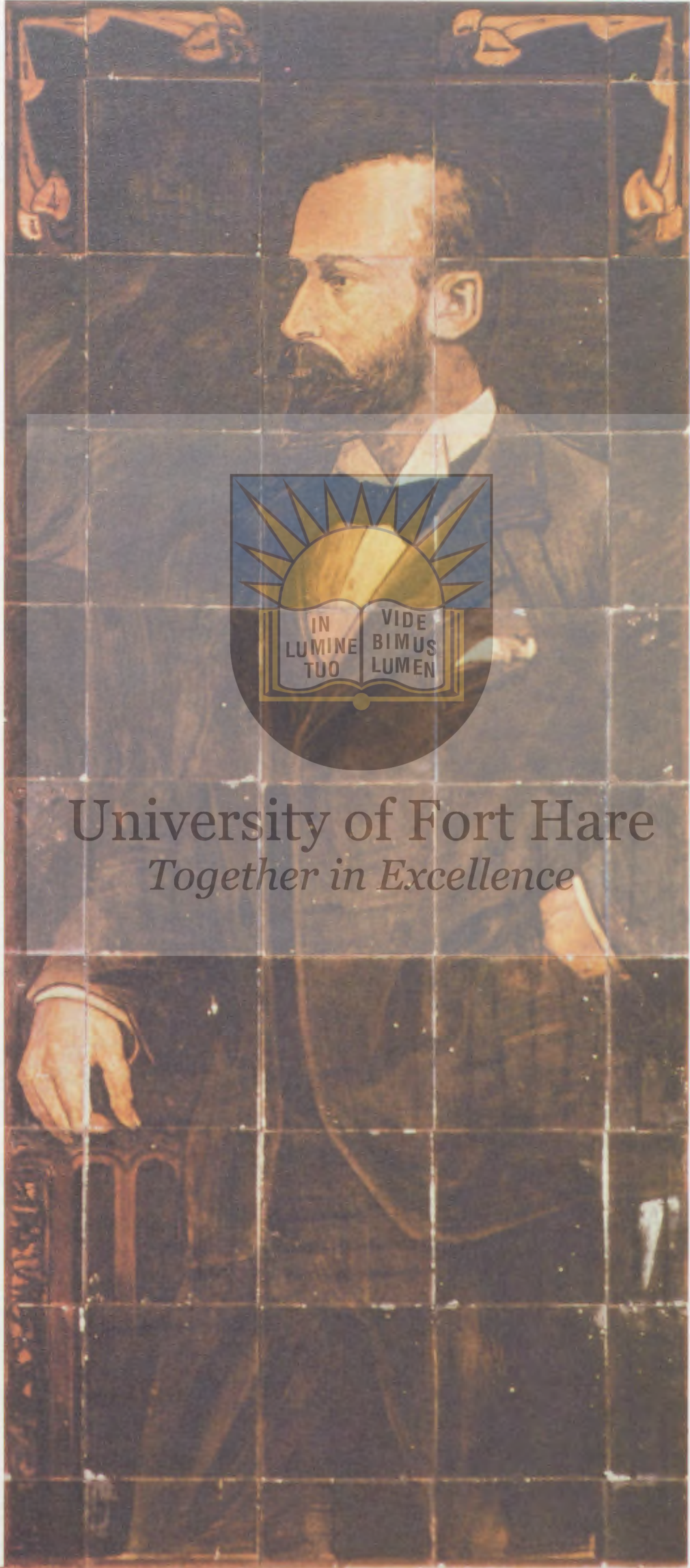
Op 9 Desember 1961 is dr. Coster in die ou kerkhof in Pretoria herbegrawe waar genl. R.C. Hiemstra, Kommandant-Generaal van die weermag, in 1968 'n grafmonument ter ere van hom onthul het.

Dr. Coster kom uit 'n welgestelde familie in Nederland en in Amsterdam was daar vir hom 'n uitstekende toekoms as regsgeleerde. Hy was egter vasbeslote om sy lot by die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek in te werp. In die begin het hy dit moeilik gevind om 'n bestaan te maak en moes hy by 'n Pretoriaanse prokureursfirma in diens tree voordat hy as staatsprokureur aangestel is. Ná sy terugkeer tot die balie was hy algemeen aan die Witwatersrand as regsgeleerde bekend. Adv. Jan Smuts het hom as staatsprokureur opgevolg.

Van dr. Coster se Nico Hofmeyr, amptelike geskiedskrywer van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, in sy *Zes maanden bij de commando's*: „Die beste, die edelste, die talentvolste, die gowegtelikste egter van almal wat te Elandslaagte gesneewel het, is dr. Coster, Nederlander van geboorte . . .“ Verder spreek die skrywer sy oortuiging uit dat hierdie jong regsgeleerde deur sy reine patriotisme en ridderlike dood in eervolle gedagtenis sal bly wêreld.



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GEORGES DE VILLEBOIS-MAREUIL

Op 27 Julie van die jaar 1214 onderskei Jean en Hugues de Mareuil hulle in 'n veldslag teen koning John van Engeland en sy bondgenote naby die klein dorpie Bouvines op die Frans-Belgiese grens. Albei word deur die oorwinnaar, Philippus Augustus II, koning van Frankryk, op die slagveld tot ridders gemaak.

Byna sewe eeuë later sterf 'n direkte afstammeling van die twee dapper ridders in 'n heilige geveg van vier uur teen die Engelse op die plaas Tweefontein, naby die ewe klein dorpie Boshof in verre Suid-Afrika.

Op een tydskip binne daardie lang reeks van vyftig jaar wat die luisterryke geskiedenis by Bouvines van die magiese toneel by Boshof skei, het een van die adellike Mareuils met 'n vrou uit die kasteel Villebois getrou. Vandaar die naam De Villebois-Mareuil wat so 'n ereplek in die Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis verworw het.

Generaal Georges Henri Anne-Marie Victor de Villebois-Mareuil is op 22 Maart 1847 in Nantes, Frankryk, gebore. Sy militêre opleiding ontvang hy aan die militêre akademies van St. Cyr. Twee jaar doen hy diens in Agter-Indië en keer net betyds na Frankryk terug om hom op 28 Januarie 1871 by Blois in die rampspoedige Frans-Prussiese oorlog te onderskei. Hy word bevorder tot kaptein en ontvang die Croix de Guerre. Tien jaar later onderskei hy hom in Tunisië en later in Algerië waar hy tot volle koloniel bevorder word. Daarna word hy 'n aanvoerder van die Franse Vreemdelingelegioen.

Om persoonlike redes verlaat De Villebois-Mareuil in 1895 om op die lys van reserve-offisiere geplaas te word. Dit word toegestaan en by sy kom aan die militêre wetenskaplike en politieke leesstof. By die uitbreek van die oorlog in Suid-Afrika sluit hy by die Boere aan.

Die dapper Franse koloniel kom in Pretoria aan net voor die slag van Magerfontein en Colenso. Hy word aangestel as adviseur van komdt.-genl. Piet Joubert en doen diens aan die Natal, die suidelike en die westelike front. Op 9 Maart 1900 voer hy 'n vrywilligerskorps van vreemdelinge in die verhoë geveg by Abrahamskraal aan. Agt dae later word hy as 'n krygsvaad in Kroonstad genooi en waar albei presidents teenwoordig is, tot vee-generaal bevorder met opdrag om 'n internasionale legioen uit alle vreemdeling-vrywilligers saam te stel. Die emosionele Franse krygsvaad was trotse op hierdie aanstelling as op enige ander oerbewys wat hy in sy militêre loopbaan ontvang het; die saaklike mededeling van hierdie opdrag is deur prins. Kruger self gedoen.

Dog nadat die later word die Fransman met 'n sewentigtal van sy vrywilligers by Tweefontein omsingel. Hy was op pad om die spoorwegstelsel te ontwrig, en getrou aan sy Europese tradisie van oorlogvoering, verkies hy om teen 'n oormag slag te lewer in plaas van die vyand te ontwyk. Hy aanval op 5 April 1900 en word die volgende dag deur sy vyand met volle militêre eer op Boshof begrawe. Eiehandig skryf lord Methuen 'n brief van woorde van die oorlede se dogter. Hy woon ook self die begrafenis by.

In Frankryk word De Villebois-Mareuil met 'n nasionale held. Straatwaaie na hulle verhoë en monumente tot sy eer word opgerig. So staan daar vandag 'n indrukwekkende monument voor die *Palais de la Bourse* in sy geboortedorp, en ander monumente in Montargis, taigus en St. Nazaire.

En oorkant die Engelse Kanaal, in die dorpie Latimer, Buckinghamshire, is 'n monument vir sy perd wat in 1911 in Engeland dood is en wat deur genl.-maj. lord Chesam gen. gesêkennar, van „Colenso" na „Villebois" verdoop is.

Geen wonder dat die Hollanders hom saam met Boeregeneraals op die pragtige teel-skilderye van die Teater Transvalia in Rotterdam verewer het nie!

En nou rus hy by die monument op Magerfontein waar hy op 14 Augustus 1971 deur die S.A. Weermag met volle militêre eer herbegrave is.

GEORGES DE VILLEBOIS-MAREUIL

On the 27th July of the year 1214 Jean and Hugues de Mareuil distinguished themselves in a battle against King John of England and his allies near the village of Bouvines, on the French-Belgian border. Both were knighted on the field of battle by the conqueror, Philip August II, King of France.

Nearly seven centuries later, a direct descendant of the two brave knights died in a violent battle of four hours against the British on the farm Tweefontein, near the equally small village of Boshof, in far-off South Africa.

At a point in time in the long span of 686 years which separated the distinguished incident at Bouvines from the tragic scene at Boshof, one of the noble Mareuils married a woman from the castle Villebois. Hence the name De Villebois-Mareuil which attained a place of honour in South African history.

General Georges Henri Anne-Marie Victor De Villebois-Mareuil was born in Nantes, France, on 22nd March, 1847. He received his military training at the military academy at St. Cyr. He served for two years in Indo-China and returned to France in time to distinguish himself at Blois, on 28th January, 1871, in the Franco-Prussian War. He was promoted to captain and was awarded the Croix de Guerre. Ten years later he distinguished himself again in Tunisia and later in Algeria, where he was promoted to full colonel. Subsequently he commanded the French Foreign Legion.

In 1895, for personal reasons, De Villebois-Mareuil requested to be placed on the reserve of officers. His request was granted and he devoted himself to military, scientific and political writing. At the outbreak of war in South Africa, he joined the Boers.

The French colonel arrived in Pretoria shortly before the battles of Magerfontein and Colenso. He was appointed adviser to Commandant-General Piet Joubert and served on the Natal, the southern and western fronts. On the 9th March, 1900, he commanded a foreign Volunteers Corps in the fierce battle at Abrahamskraal. Eight days later, at Kroonstad, he was invited to join a council of war and with the two presidents present, he was promoted to the rank of combat-general with orders to establish an international legion of foreign volunteers serving with the Boer forces.

The emotional Frenchman was prouder of this appointment than any of the honours he had received during his military career. The relevant communication of the order of his appointment was made by President Kruger himself.

Only sixteen days later, on April 5, the gallant Frenchman was killed in an action at Tweefontein when on a mission to disrupt the railway line. With 70 men of his volunteer corps he was surrounded by a superior force. True to his European tradition of warfare, he preferred to engage the numerically superior enemy rather than to evade the issue.

De Villebois-Mareuil was buried by the enemy at Boshof the next day with full military honours. Lord Methuen, the British Commander, attended the funeral and wrote a personal letter of condolence to the French general's daughter.

In France De Villebois-Mareuil immediately became a national hero. Streets were named after him and monuments were erected in his honour. An impressive monument still stands in front of the *Palais de la Bourse* in the town of his birth, and others in Montargis, taigus and St. Nazaire.

Across the English Channel, in the village of Latimer in Buckinghamshire, a monument stands to his horse, which died in England in 1911, and which was renamed from „Colenso" to „Villebois" by Major General Lord Chesam, an equine expert.

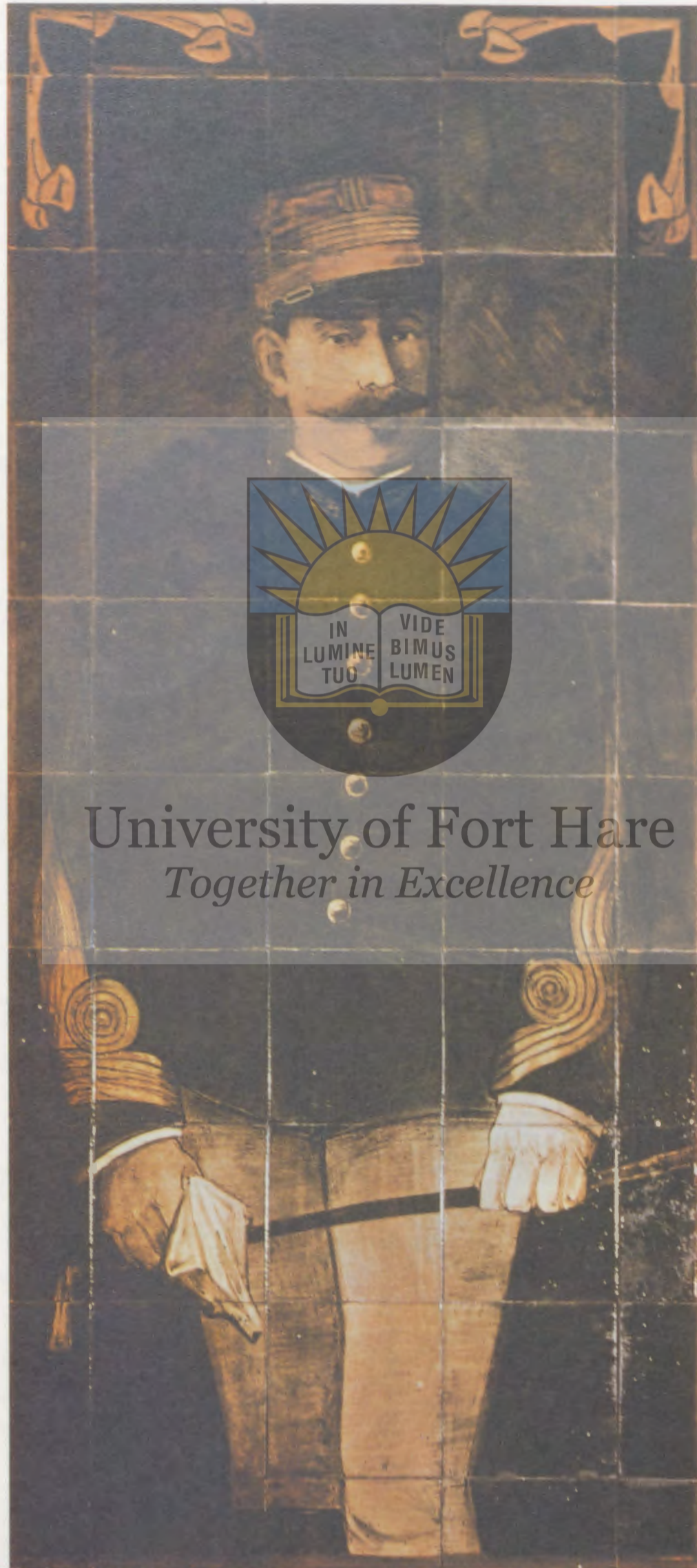
Small wonder then that the Hollanders honoured him, together with the Boer generals, on the tasteful tile paintings of the Transvalia theatre in Rotterdam.

General De Villebois-Mareuil found his last resting place at the monument at Magerfontein where he was reburied with full military honours by the South African Defence Force on 14th August, 1971.



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JOHANNES HERMANUS MICHEL KOCK

One of the Boer heroes of the battle of Elandslaagte, General J.H.M. Kock, who fell mortally wounded that grim evening of 21st October, 1899, was the son of Commandant Jan Kock, the fiery leader of the Voortrekkers in the Trans-Oranje.

Surprisingly, General Kock did not originate from the old Cape Kock families. In fact, his Hollander Corps who fought under him at Elandslaagte, were more closely related to him than were the burghers of the Transvaal. His grandfather, also Johannes Hermanus Michiel, came from the Netherlands, from Oldenzaal in the province of Overijssel.

This progenitor of the youngest branch of the Kock families in South Africa, arrived in Cape Town at the beginning of the 19th century. On 3rd January, 1813, he married Anna Rosina Sommers, daughter of Franz Jürgen Sommers, from Bergen, Norway. The latter served with the Dutch East India Company as an assistant surgeon and he also practised at Swellendam.

The entry in the baptismal register of the couple's eldest child, Johannes Hendricus Lambertus, later Commandant Jan Kock, born 28th October, 1813, is in the handwriting of the Graaff-Reinet parish scribe, who registered the family name as "Kok". In later baptismal entries it is, however, consistently spelt "Kock".

Johannes Hendricus Lambertus married Elsje Magdalena Smit and on the 20th April, 1835, they brought the child destined to become a general to be baptised in the church at Graaff-Reinet. Their son was born on 11th March, 1835, and with the transcription from one register to another the name "Michiel" was inadvertently omitted. Even in the original register the name Michiel was clearly only added afterwards by the scribe.

It is possible that the boy fought under his father at Boomplaats at the age of thirteen, as has been claimed.

General Kock had an interesting background. Before his election to the Transvaal Volksraad for the district of Potchefstroom, he was a field cornet and subsequently a landdrost of that district. He took part in almost all the wars of his time against the Bantu tribes in the interior and he also served in the First Anglo-Boer War.

In 1891 he became a member of the Executive Council of the Republic and also the Council's secretary. On the outbreak of the Second Anglo-Boer War in 1899 he was appointed a combat general on the Natal front.

It was decided by the council of war at Newcastle in Natal on October 16 that General Kock, with the Johannesburg Commando and the Uitlander (Foreign) Corps serving with the Boer forces, should occupy the Biggarsberg pass. In this way he would be in a position to disrupt the railway line between Dundee and Ladysmith and could simultaneously reconnoitre the routes for other commandos moving towards the front.

By taking up his position as far south as Elandslaagte, General Kock did not obey his orders. He lost touch with other commandos in the area and had no supporting force to cover him in the case of a withdrawal.

As it was, General Kock was faced with an overwhelming attack in the late afternoon of October 21, and after putting up a gallant resistance was overrun by the British. General Kock was mortally wounded in the action and fell into his enemy's hands. The British commander permitted his wife and a nurse, a Miss Annie Rothmann, as well as his adjutant, to nurse him. Despite all their endeavours General Kock died in Ladysmith on 31st October 1899.

General Sir George White gave permission for General Kock's body to be transported to Pretoria where he was buried with full military honours.

The township Kocksoord, presently part of the Randfontein Municipality, was named after General Kock in August, 1896.

JOHANNES HERMANUS MICHEL KOCK

Genl. J.H.M. Kock was die seun van kmdt. Jan Kock, die vorige leier van die Voortrekkers in die Trans-Oranje. Verrassend is die feit dat hy glad nie uit die ou Kaapse families Kock staan nie. Trouens, sy Hollanderkorps wat by Elandslaagte onder hom geveg het, was byna nader aan hom verwant as selfs die ou landburgers van Transvaal. Sy oupa, ook Johannes Hermanus Michiel, kom direk uit Nederland en wel van Oldenzaal in die provinsie Overijssel.

Hierdie stamvader van die jongste spruit van die families Kock in Suid-Afrika, kom eers aan die begin van die negentiende eeu in Kaapstad aan. Op 3 Januarie 1813 trou hy met Anna Rosina Sommers, dogter van Franz Jürgen Sommers uit Bergen, Noorweë, Laasgenoemde het die H.O.I.K. as onderoffisier gedien en was ook geneesheer op Swellendam.

By die doopskrywing van die jong egpaar se eerste kind, Johannes Hendricus Lambertus, die latere kmdt. Jan Kock, gebore 28 Oktober 1813, staan die vader se familie-naam in die handskrif van die Graaff-Reinets skriba as „Kok“. By latere doopskrywings is dit egter deurgaans „Kock“.

Johannes Hendricus Lambertus trou met Elsje Magdalena Smit en op 20 April 1835 bring hulle die kindjie wat bestem is om generaal te word in die kerk op Graaff-Reinet ten doop. Die kind is op 11 Maart 1835 gebore en by die oorskrywing van een register na die ander, is die naam „Michiel“ per abuis weggelaat. Selfs in die oorspronklike is dit duidelik deur die skriba agterna eers bygevoeg.

Dis is bes moontlik dat die seun op dertienjarige leeftyd onder sy vader by Boomplaats geveg het soos gereeld beweer word.

Die latere geskiedenis van die generaal is welbekend. Voor sy verkiesing tot lid van die Volksraad vir die distrik Potchefstroom, was hy veldkornet en vervolgens landdrost van daardie distrik. Hy het ook aan nagehoeg al die binnelandse oorloë teen Bantoestamme deelgeneem sowel as aan die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog. In 1891 word hy lid van die Uitvoerende Raad van die Republiek en potulchouer van die Raad. By die uitbreek van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog bied hy weer sy dienste aan en word as vee-generaal na die Natalse front gestuur.

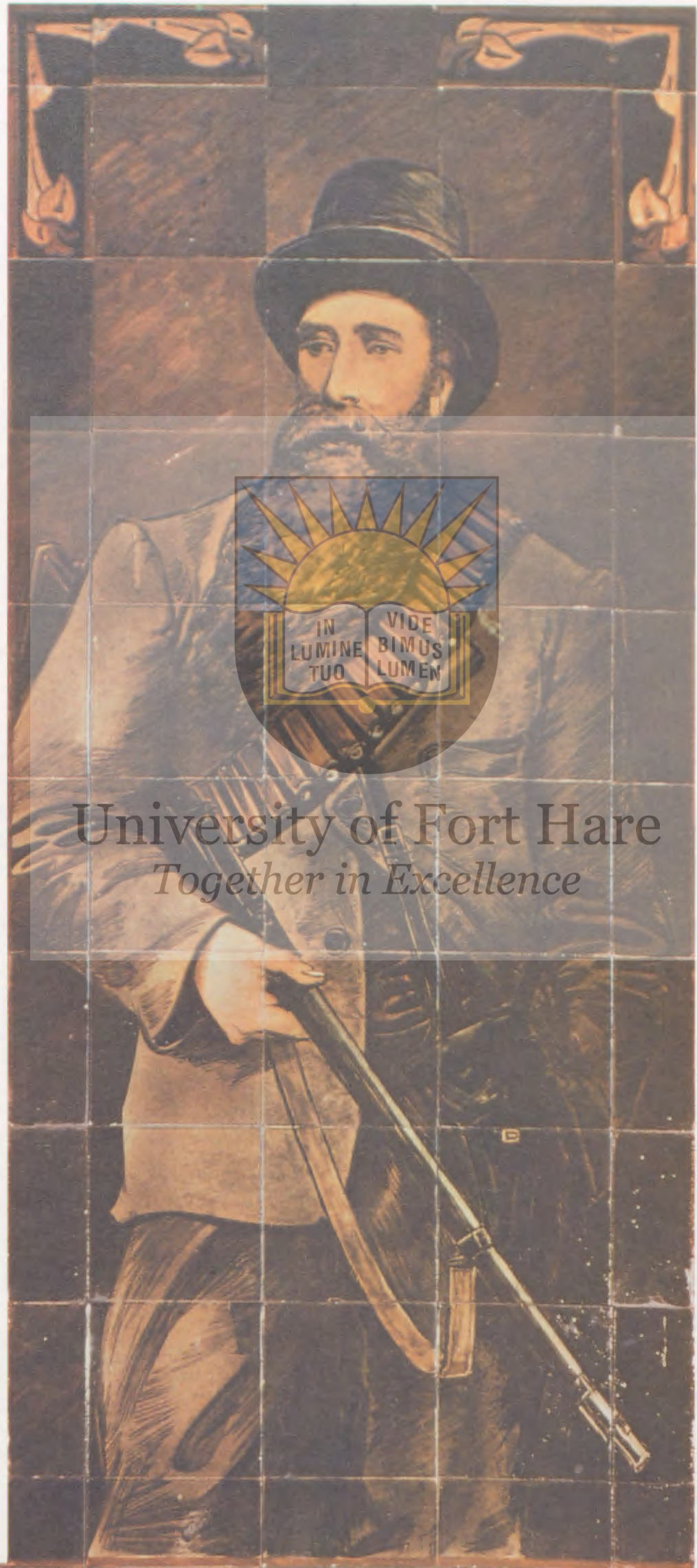
Die krygsraad besluit op 16 Oktober te Newcastle dat genl. Kock met sy mag van Johannesburgers en uitlanderkorps die pas op Biggarsberg moet beset. Sodoende sal hy die spoorwegverbinding tussen Dundee en Ladysmith kan ontwig en ook terselfdertyd die roete van die ander kommando's kan verkeer.

Dis bekend dat die generaal, deur so ver suid as Elandslaagte stelling in te neem, hom nie in sy opdrag gehou het nie. Hy het daardat voeding met die ander kommando's verloor en dit was geen ondersteunende mag om 'n terugtog, indien nodig, te dek nie. Die generaal het dan klapper teen 'n oormag gewes maar hy is verslaan. Met twee wonde in die bors en 'n wond in die sy, is hy gevang geneem. Die Britse bevelvoerder het toegelaat dat sy gade en 'n pleegster na, Annie Rothmann, sowel as sy adjutant hom verpleeg. Maar hy starf op 31 Oktober in 'n klein kamertjie te Ladysmith. Met verlof van sir George White is die lyk na Pretoria vervoer waar die generaal met volle militêre eere begrawe is.

Die dorp Kocksoord, tans deel van die Randfontein munisipaliteit, is op 24 Augustus 1896 na genl. Kock vernoem.



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