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**The British Army, the Regimental Officer, and the South  
African War: Command, Leadership, and Professionalism  
in the Coldstream Guards Middle Echelon (1899-1902)**

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Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

April 2023

I declare that the following thesis is my own work.

# Abstract

Between 1899 and 1902, Britain was engaged in its most extensive imperial campaign to secure dominance in Southern Africa. Pitted against a formidable and underestimated opponent, the South African War proved to be prolonged and costly – taking nearly three years to defeat the Boer forces. Studies of the British army in the conflict have focused on the generals or ordinary soldiers. By contrast, this thesis is the first study in recent years to concentrate specifically on middle-ranking British army officers in the South African War, focusing on the experiences of three regimental officers of the Coldstream Guards. The thesis is framed by reference to the Royal Commission of 1902, tasked to investigate the British army's performance in the South African war when the middle-ranking tier of military leadership was strongly criticised. It has two main aims: to dispel the myths regarding the ineffectiveness of middle command officers and to show that these officers were a critical driving force in the army's response to the problems of conventional warfare and the peculiar difficulties of guerrilla war. In the end, middle command officers made vital contributions to the army's success in the conflict, and in demonstrating this, the present work will add a new dimension to our understanding of the British army as it grappled with the complexities of war in South Africa. This thesis takes a micro-history based on the three mid-level leaders as a prism through which to tell a larger story about the unacknowledged role of middle leadership in the South African War, providing a more nuanced account of their contribution and explicitly considering prior socialisation concerning gender, class, education, and professionalism in late-Victorian Britain. It reconsiders the nature of mid-level leadership and its effectiveness and analyses the identity, social experiences, and self-perceptions of the three Coldstream Guards officers.



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# Abbreviations

AG	Attorney General
AB	Afrikaner Bond
ADC	Aide de Camp
ASC	Army Service Corps
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
BM	Brigade Major
CB	Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath
CB	Confined to Barracks
CDF	Colonial Defence Force
C-in-C	Commander in Chief
CG	Coldstream Guards
CGS	Chief of the General Staff
CID	Committee of Imperial Defence
CMG	Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George
CMR	Cape Mounted Rifles
CO	Commanding Officer
Coy	Company
CVO	Commander of the Royal Victorian Order
DAAG	Deputy Assistant Adjutant General
DCM	District Court Martial
Div. HQ	Divisional Headquarters
DMT	District Mounted Troops
DSO	Distinguished Service Order

FID	Field Intelligence Department
GCB	Knight/Dame Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath
GCIE	Knight Grand Commander of the Most Eminent Order of the Indian Empire
GCM	General Courts Martial
GCMG	Knight/Dame Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George
GCSI	Knight Grand Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India
Gen.	General
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GR	Graaff-Reinet
Gren. Guards	Grenadier Guards
GST	General Service Troops
Guards MI	Guards Military Intelligence
HLI	Highland Light Infantry
Hon.	Honourable
HQ	Headquarters
IO	Intelligence Officer
ID	Intelligence Department
KCB	Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath
KCVO	Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order
KG	Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter
KOYLI	King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry
KP	Knight of the Most Illustrious Order of Saint Patrick
LLD	Doctor of Laws

LSE	London School of Economics
Lt.	Lieutenant
Lt.-Col.	Lieutenant-Colonel
Lt.-Gen.	Lieutenant-General
MA	Master of Arts
Maj.	Major
Maj.-Gen.	Major-General
Magte.	Magistrate
MC	Military Court
MD	Doctor of Medicine
MI	Mounted Infantry
MIL SEC	Military Secretary
ML	Martial Law
MLB	Martial Law Board
MLC	Member of the Cape Legislative Council
MP	Member of Parliament
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
OC	Officer Commanding
OFS / OVS	Orange Free State
OFS ART	Orange Free State Artillery
OM	Member of the Order of Merit
ORC	Orange River Colony
OTC	Officer Training Corps
PE	Port Elizabeth
Pte.	Private

PMO	Principal Medical Officer
POW	Prisoner of War
QMG	Quarter-Master General
QSA	Queen's South Africa Medal
RAMC	Royal Army Medical Corps
RE	Royal Engineers
Regt.	Regiment
RFA	Royal Field Artillery
RGA	Royal Garrison Artillery
RHA	Royal Horse Artillery
RM	Resident Magistrate
RMA	Royal Military Academy
RMC	Royal Military College
RSO	Railway Supply Officer
SAR	South African Republic
Sgt.	Sergeant
Sgt.-Maj.	Sergeant-Major
SO	Supply Officer
TF	Territorial Force
TG	Town Guards
VC	Victoria Cross
2/CG	2 <sup>nd</sup> Coldstream Guards
2i/c	Second-in-Command
2/Lt.	Second Lieutenant

## **Note on Rank**

Lieutenant-Colonel Horace Robert Stopford, the battalion commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards was killed in action at Modder River on 28 November 1899. Major Arthur Henry Henniker as second-in-command assumed Stopford's role as battalion commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards. He was subsequently promoted to the brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and from that point onwards will be referred to by his brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

## **Note on Style**

Major Henry 'Harry' Gwynn Dean Shute added supplementary information to his diary after the South African War. A stylistic reminder, any such direct quotations used in this thesis which are in italics indicate Shute's later additions to his diary in 1905.



# Glossary

Afrikanerdom	Afrikaner people
Bangbroeke	Cowards
Bittereinder	Bitter-ender, someone who fights until the last stand
Dassie	Afrikaans term for the hyrax, a small herbivorous mammal also referred to as a rock rabbit (slang)
Donga	Gully
Dorp	Small town
Drift	Ford
Hensopper	Hands-upper, someone who surrenders
Hottentotsgod	Praying mantis
Klip	Boulder or rocky ledge
Kopje	Dutch, from Afrikaans <i>koppie</i> , a small hill
Laagte	Valley, dip
Nek	Mountain pass
Predikant	Reverend, a member of the clergy
Spruit	Creek
Veldt	Open, unforested grass country
Veldtkraft	Fieldcraft
Verraaiers	Traitors
Volk	Nation or people

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**For my Dad,  
Professor Cornelius Janse Nel.  
24/08/1939 - 01/02/2022**

# INTRODUCTION

## I

Between 1899 and 1902, Britain was engaged in its most extensive imperial campaign to secure dominance in Southern Africa. Pitted against a formidable and underestimated opponent, this colonial conflict proved to be prolonged and costly – taking nearly three years to defeat the Boer forces. Unable to bring the Boers to their knees, Britain resorted to destructive methods akin to total war, including the internment of women and children in concentration camps and a scorched earth policy that laid waste to the land.<sup>1</sup> The British made many mistakes on and off the battlefield, and the war, as Rudyard Kipling noted, taught the British forces “no end of a lesson.”<sup>2</sup> On 4 December 1902, Field Marshal Lord Roberts appeared in front of the Royal Commission tasked to inquire into the British army’s supposed failings in South Africa. In his testimony, Roberts criticised the performance of regimental officers, including the ranks of major, lieutenant-colonel and colonel, stating, “the proportion of failures among Commanding Officers ... was considerably larger than that in the junior ranks. I have told you what I thought that many of them had not had sufficient experience, that they should be younger men, and that they sometimes fail from not taking sufficient responsibility.”<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, several generals who were called upon to testify sought to deflect blame onto their subordinates and, by so doing, provided misleading and inaccurate interpretations of the

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle for South Africa* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2010), pp.11-7.

<sup>2</sup> Rudyard Kipling, ‘The Lesson’, *Collected Verse of Rudyard Kipling* (London, BiblioLife, 2009), p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> Field Marshal The Right Hon. Earl Roberts, K.G., K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., called and examined on Thursday, 4 December 1902, Questions 10333, 10446-7, 10475. Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F17), *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission On The War In South Africa. Volume I* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), pp. 436; 440-1; 443.

expertise and competence of the regimental officer. However, as Lord Roberts's words suggest, these regimental, or middle command, officers were better than their superiors thought. The thesis will thus examine the roles of three Coldstream Guards' officers, Colonel Alfred Edward 'Coddy' Codrington of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards and Majors Arthur Henry Henniker and Henry 'Harry' Gwynn Dean Shute of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards. Utilising the South African theatre of war as background, it is the experiences of the middle-ranking officers of the Coldstream Guards that form the focal point of this thesis. This thesis has two main aims: to dispel the myths regarding the ineffectiveness of middle command officers, and to show that these officers were a critical driving force in the army's response to the problems of conventional warfare and the peculiar difficulties of guerrilla war. In the end, middle command officers made vital contributions to the army's success in the conflict, and in demonstrating this, the present work will add a new dimension to our understanding of the British army as it grappled with the complexities of war in South Africa.<sup>4</sup>

Consequently, this study's contribution to the South African War scholarship is twofold. It reconsiders the nature of mid-level leadership and its effectiveness, and analyses the identity, social experiences, and self-perceptions of the three Coldstream Guards officers as soldiers and men. This work goes beyond operational military history to take on culture, society, and identity, reflecting both the cultural turn in historiography and the growing attention given to Empire and warfare studies and gender. Moreover, this thesis takes a micro-history based on the three mid-level leaders as a prism through which to tell a larger story about the unacknowledged role of middle leadership in the South African War, providing a more nuanced

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<sup>4</sup> For general overview of the history of the British army, see the political and military survey by Jay Luvaas, *The Education of an Army. British Military Thought, 1815-1940* (London, Cassell & Company Ltd., 1964). For wider coverage there is Correlli Barnett, *Britain and Her Army 1509-1970. A Military, Political and Social Survey* (London, Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1970), though for a more current assessment of the history of the British army refer to D.G. Chandler & I.F.W. Beckett (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994).

account of their contribution, and explicitly considering their prior socialisation concerning gender, class, education, and professionalism in late-Victorian Britain. It does so through a close micro-historical analysis of the individual diaries and letters of the Coldstream Guards' regimental officers. Accessing these kinds of sources allows for a cultural approach that illuminates more vividly lived warfare experiences. Thus, this regimental micro-study of the Coldstream Guards primarily contributes to our knowledge of human experience in a time of war by addressing issues surrounding the complex nature of command and leadership in the South African War.

In general, scholarly attention of the British army has been fixed on the First World War, which has tended to overshadow its performance during the South African conflict.<sup>5</sup> There is also a considerable body of writing on command and leadership in the British army, but it has not concentrated on the South African War.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the army's response to the war in South

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<sup>5</sup> John Terraine, *The First World War 1914-1918* (London, Leo Cooper, 1983); Ian F.W. Beckett, Timothy Bowman & Mark Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017), pp. 50-1; 275-6; Tim Travers, *The Killing Ground. The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare 1900-1918* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2009); Robin Prior & Trevor Wilson, *The Somme* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2016); Robin Prior & Trevor Wilson, *Passchendaele. The Untold Story* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2016); T. Travers, 'The Army and the Challenge of War 1914-1918', in D.G. Chandler & I.F.W. Beckett (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 211-34; K. Simpson, 'The Officers', in I.F.W. Beckett & K. Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms. The British Army in the First World War* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2014), pp. 63-98; S. Jones (ed.), *At All Costs. The British Army on the Western Front 1916* (Warwick, Helion & Company Ltd., 2018). For works on the 'learning curve' and analysis of command see, B. Bond (ed.), *Look to Your Front. Studies in the First World War* (Staplehurst, Spellmount, 1999); Simon Robbins, *British Generalship on the Western Front, 1914-1918. Defeat into Victory* (Abingdon, Frank Cass, 2005); Nikolas Gardner, *Trial by Fire. Command and the BEF in 1914* (Westport, Praeger, 2003); Tim Travers, *How the War was Won. Command and Technology in the British Army on the Western Front, 1917-1918* (London, Routledge, 1992). For an institutional approach to the army's learning process during the First World War, see Aimeé Fox, *Learning to Fight. Military Innovation and Change in the British Army, 1914-1918* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018).

<sup>6</sup> Martin Samuels, *Command or Control? Command, Training and Tactics in the British and German Armies, 1888-1918* (London, Frank Cass, 1995); G.D. Sheffield (ed.), *Leadership & Command: The Anglo-American Military Experience Since 1861* (London, Brassey's, 1997); S. Jones (ed.), *Stemming the Tide. Officers and Leadership in the British Expeditionary Force 1914* (Solihull, Helion & Company Limited, 2013); A. Fox-Godden, 'Hopeless Inefficiency? The Transformation and Operational Performance of Brigade Staff, 1916-1918', in M. Locicero, R. Mahoney & S. Mitchell (eds.), *A Military Transformed? Adaptation and Innovation in the British Military, 1792-1945* (Solihull, Helion & Company Limited, 2016), pp. 139-56; G.D. Sheffield & D. Todman (eds.), *Command and Control on the Western*



Africa would provide the template for the reform of command and leadership practices that the British Expeditionary Force took with them in 1914.<sup>7</sup> Thus, it is time to bring the South African War into the light rather than for it to remain in the shadows.

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*Front. The British Army's Experience 1914-18* (Stroud, Spellman Ltd., 2007); Peter E. Hodgkinson, *British Infantry Battalion Commanders in the First World War* (Farnham, Ashgate, 2015); Peter E. Hodgkinson & William F. Westerman, 'Fit to Command a Battalion: The Senior Officers' School 1916-18', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*. 93, No. 374 (2015), pp.120-38; Tim Travers, *How the War Was Won: Command and Technology in the British Army on the Western Front: 1917-1918* (London, Taylor & Francis Ltd., 1992); Robin Prior & Trevor Wilson, *Command on the Western Front. The Military Career of Sir Henry Rawlinson 1914-1918* (London, Blackwell, 1992); John Baynes, *Morale. A Study of Men and Courage. The Second Scottish Rifles at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle 1915* (London, Cassell, 1967); Gary D. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches. Officer-Man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War* (London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 2000); Gary D. Sheffield, *Command and Morale. The British Army on the Western Front 1914-1918* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 2014); John Terraine, *1914-1918. Essays on Leadership and War* (Dorset, Oakdale Printing Company Ltd., 1998); Tim Travers, 'Command and Leadership Styles in the British Army: The 1915 Gallipoli Model', *Journal of Contemporary History*. 29, No. 3 (1994), pp. 403-42; T. Travers, 'A Particular Style of Command: Haig and GHQ, 1916-18; J.M. Bourne, 'British Generals in the First World War', both in G.D. Sheffield (ed.), *Leadership & Command: The Anglo-American Military Experience Since 1861* (London, Brassey's, 1997), pp. 93-116.

<sup>7</sup> For reform in the regular army during the period of 1902-1914, see Edward M. Spiers, 'Reforming the Infantry of the Line, 1900-19', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*. 59, No. 238 (1981), pp. 82-94; E.M. Spiers, 'The Regular Army of 1914', in I.F.W. Beckett & K. Simpson (eds.), *A Nation in Arms. The British Army in the First World War* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2014), pp. 37-62; Edward M. Spiers, 'The British Cavalry, 1902-1914', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*. 47, No. 230 (1979), pp. 71-9; Edward M. Spiers 'Rearming the Edwardian Artillery', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*. 47, No. 231 (1979), pp. 167-76; and Jay Stone's contribution on army post-war reforms in Jay Stone & Erwin Schmidl, *The Boer War and Military Reforms* (New York, University Press of America, 1988), pp. 105-60. Timothy Bowman & Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), pp. 64-105. In this chapter, the authors compare the South African and the Russo-Japanese wars, the army's response to the conflicts and impact of resulting attempts to improve and transform training, and its lack of comprehensive doctrine impacted establishing professional command practices. And for tactical reform, see Spencer Jones, *From Boer War to World War* (Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 2012). Also, for inter-war preparations and manoeuvres see Simon Batten, *Futile Exercise? The British Army's Preparations for War 1902-1914* (Warwick, Helion & Company Ltd., 2018); Simon Batten, 'A School for the Leaders: What did the British Army learn from the 1912 Army Manoeuvres?', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*. 93, No. 373 (2015), pp. 25-47. For the impact of the Esher Committee reforms to the command structure, and tension and politics which surrounded the system of officer appointment and promotion see I.F.W. Beckett, 'Selection by Disparagement: Lord Esher, the General Staff and the Politics of Command, 1904-14', in D. French & B. Holden Reid (eds.), *The British General Staff. Reform and Innovation c.1890-1939* (London, Routledge, 2014), pp. 41-56. For a discussion on continentalism, the General Staff and Edwardian army command, see H. Strachan, 'The British Army, its General Staff and the Continental Commitment 1904-14', in D. French & B. Holden Reid (eds.), *The British General Staff. Reform and Innovation c.1890-1939* (London, Routledge, 2014), pp. 75-94. For the influence of army culture, attitudes to reform and the development of professionalism of the Edwardian officer, see Tim Travers, 'The Hidden Army: Structural Problems in the British Officer Corps', *Journal of Contemporary History*. 17, No. 3 (1982), pp. 523-44; Tim Travers, 'Technology, Tactics, and Morale: Jean de Bloch, the Boer War, and British Military Theory, 1900-1914', *Journal of Modern History*. 51, No. 2 (1979), pp. 264-86; Tim Travers, 'The Offensive and the Problem of Innovation in British Military Thought 1870-1915', *Journal of Contemporary History*. 13, No. 3 (1978),

The first accounts of the British army's performance in the war were driven by political and ideological factors. The official history by Frederick M. Maurice and Captain Maurice Grant was published shortly after the cessation of hostilities and aimed to reconcile Britain's relationship with South Africa.<sup>8</sup> Leo Amery's work was critical of the army's performance during the war and highlighted many deficiencies to promote the reform and modernisation of the British army.<sup>9</sup> Traditionally, accounts of military operations, battles, and campaign histories dominated these earlier studies.<sup>10</sup> In later years, scholars have considered how the transition from set-piece battles to guerrilla fighting during the conflict led to changes in strategy and tactics.<sup>11</sup>

More recently, scholarship relating to the war has come to include economic, social, and political factors and matters of strategy, operations, and tactics.<sup>12</sup> Some studies have sought to re-evaluate the performances of certain senior British officers who were deemed to have failed when in command.<sup>13</sup> Instead of blaming poor generalship for Britain's misfortunes, scholars have suggested that faults were systemic rather than singular.<sup>14</sup> Other accounts of individual

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pp. 531-53. For commentary on the Haldane reforms, see Edward M. Spiers, *Haldane: An Army Reformer* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh Press, 1980).

<sup>8</sup> F.M. Maurice & M.H. Grant (et al.), *History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902* (London, Hurst & Blackett, 1906-1910).

<sup>9</sup> L.S. Amery (ed.), *The Times History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902* (London, S. Low, Marston and Co., 1900-1909).

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Great Boer War* (London, Smith, Elder & Co., 1900); Oliver Ransford, *The Battle of Spion Kop* (London, John Murray, 1969); William Baring Pemberton, *Battles of the Boer War* (London, Pan Macmillan, 1969). Also see Fred R. van Hartesveldt, *The Boer War. Historiography and Annotated Bibliography* (London, Greenwood Press, 2000).

<sup>11</sup> H. Bailes, 'Military Aspects of the War', in P. Warwick & S.B. Spies (eds.), *The South African War. The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Harlow, Longman Group Limited, 1980), pp. 65-102.

<sup>12</sup> Byron Farwell, *The Great Boer War* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2009); Denis Judd & Keith Surridge, *The South African War. A History* (London, I. B. Tauris & Co Ltd., 2013); Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle for South Africa* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London, George Weidenfeld & Nicholson Ltd., 1979).

<sup>14</sup> Stephen M. Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army: Failure and Redemption in South Africa* (London, Frank Cass Publishers, 1999).

senior commanders have instead opted to look at how their earlier colonial war experience shaped their roles as commanders and how the changing nature of the South African War further influenced their abilities as generals.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, reconsidering British senior command roles and reputations led scholars to debunk long-standing views on particular military arms. For example, there was a widespread belief that the cavalry did not adopt progressive tactics of mounted and dismounted fighting during the war in South Africa. Some thought senior cavalry commanders did not recognise the war's transformative nature and subsequently derided the cavalry for its wartime performance.<sup>16</sup> Instead, scholarship has since shown that the cavalry had already adopted a modern offensive tactical doctrine before the South African War, and Stephen Badsey argues that senior commanders deserve to be recognised for their part in devising it.<sup>17</sup>

Before the South African War, issues relating to imperial defence led to a bitter power struggle between politicians and senior officers over the control of decision-making in strategic matters.<sup>18</sup> Scholars have argued that this long-standing enmity between politicians and generals peaked during the South African War. The struggle for authority over managing the conflict has contributed to the broader debate regarding the nature and evolution of British civil-military relations. These studies have shown how the war's complexities brought challenges that taxed relations between senior British officers and politicians in Britain and South Africa.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Rodney Atwood, *Roberts and Kitchener in South Africa 1900-1902* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Erskine Childers, *War and the Arme Blanche* (London, Edward Arnold, 1910).

<sup>17</sup> Stephen Badsey, 'The Boer War (1899-1902) and British Cavalry Doctrine: A Re-Evaluation', *The Journal of Military History*, 71, No. 1 (2007), pp. 75-95; Stephen Badsey, *Doctrine and Reform in the British Army 1880-1918* (London, Routledge, 2008). Also see Graham Winton, 'Theirs Not To Reason Why': *Horsing the British Army 1875-1925* (Solihull, Helion & Company Ltd., 2013).

<sup>18</sup> For more on civil-military relationships, see William S. Hamer, *The British Army. Civil-Military Relations 1885-1905* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970).

<sup>19</sup> Keith Surridge, *Managing the South African War, 1899-1902: Politicians v. Generals* (Bury St. Edmunds, St. Edmundsbury Press, 1998), p. 1. For further discussion on the complex nature of the dynamics between politicians and generals see the individual contributions by D. Steele, K. Surridge, I.F.W. Beckett & H. Kochanski in J. Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War. Direction, Experience and Image* (London, Routledge, 2000); K. Surridge, 'The Politics of War: Lord Kitchener and the Settlement of the

Also, recent work has highlighted how the politics and rivalries of individual senior officers, particularly over personal career ambitions, have shaped the development of the British army during the Victorian era and influenced its performance in South Africa.<sup>20</sup> The Victorian army experienced a time of technological change and military reform and was thus defined by the many small colonial campaigns it was involved in.<sup>21</sup> As a result, a vast number of studies cover a range of military topics during this time.<sup>22</sup> On the whole, scholarship on the Victorian army has provided comprehensive examinations of its role, performance and social and political

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South African War, 1901-1902', in G. Cuthbertson, A. Grundlingh & M. Suttie (eds.), *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902* (Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2002), pp. 213-32; André Wessels, 'Lord Kitchener en die Anglo-Boereoorlog (1899-1902): 'n Evaluering van sy Opperbevelheerskap', *Joernaal vir Eietydse Geskiedenis*. 34, Nr. 2 (2009), pp. 1-24.

<sup>20</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2018).

<sup>21</sup> For the Cardwell reforms and changes to recruitment, training and army organisation see, Brian Bond, 'The Effect of the Cardwell Reforms in Army Organization, 1874-1904', *RUSI*. 105, No. 620 (1960), pp. 515-24; Brian Bond, 'Recruiting the Victorian Army 1870-92', *Victorian Studies*. 5, No. 4 (1962), pp. 331-8; Albert V. Tucker, 'Army and Society in England 1870-1900: A Reassessment of the Cardwell Reforms', *Journal of British Studies*. 2, No. 2 (1963), pp. 110-41. For a more recent assessment, see Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 1-28. For small wars and the nature of colonial campaigns, see 'Part IV - The Army on Campaign: From Abyssinia to Zululand' in Lieutenant-Colonel H.E. Raugh, Jr. (ed.), *The British Army 1815-1914* (London, Routledge, 2018), pp. 415-557; Byron Farwell, *Queen Victoria's Little Wars* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2009); S.M. Miller (ed.), *Queen Victoria's Wars. British Military Campaigns, 1857-1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2021). For more on Africa and the colonial war experience of ordinary soldiers, see Edward M. Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004). For technology and army preparedness for modern warfare, see Ian F.W. Beckett, 'Victorians at War – War, Technology and Change', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*. 81, No. 328 (2003), pp. 330-8. And tracing the effect of technological changes to tactical development, see H.H.R. Bailes, 'Technology and Tactics in the British Army, 1866-1900', in R. Haycock & K. Neilson (eds.), *Men, Machines and War* (Waterloo, Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988), pp. 21-48.

<sup>22</sup> For more on the reputations and careers of imperial commanders, S.J. Corvi & I.F.W. Beckett (eds.), *Victoria's Generals* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2009). For a discussion on the issues facing high command in South Africa during the First Boer War, Ian F.W. Beckett, *The Victorians At War* (London, Hambledon and London, 2003), pp. 95-104. For a discussion of Victorian command and tactical development, see Michael A. Ramsay, *Command and Cohesion. The Citizen Soldier and Minor Tactics in the British Army, 1870-1918* (Westport, Praeger, 2002), pp. 75-86. For army preparedness and the importance of manoeuvres, see David M. Leeson, 'Playing at War: The British Military Manoeuvres of 1898', *War in History*. 15, No. 4 (2008), pp. 432-61. For the impact of lack of general staff and mobilising for war, see H. Kochanski, 'Planning for War in the Final Years of *Pax Britannica*, 1889-1903', in D. French & B. Holden Reid (eds.), *The British General Staff. Reform and Innovation c.1890-1939* (London, Routledge, 2014), pp. 9-25. For the role of the Victorian army and implementation of policy, see Howard Bailes, 'Technology and Imperialism: A Case Study of the Victorian Army in Africa', *Victorian Studies*. 24, No. 1 (1980), pp. 83-104. For more on education and staff training see Brian Bond, *The Victorian Staff College 1854-1914* (London, Eyre Methuen Ltd., 1972). And for work on the army cadet colleges see Sebastian Alexander George Puncher, 'The Victorian Army and the Cadet Colleges, Woolwich and Sandhurst, c. 1840-1902' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Kent, 2019).

history.<sup>23</sup> Given that this includes tracing the development and reforms of its officer corps between 1870-1902, it is surprising that none have focused on the South African War.<sup>24</sup>

Notably, for most of the twentieth century, the South African War was regarded as a white man's conflict and studied as such. As early as 1916, however, Sol T. Plaatje and Silas Molema produced writing on black participation within the British army.<sup>25</sup> Still, it would take another fifty years before professional historians acknowledged the scale and significance of the black South Africans' roles in the war. Ground-breaking studies on African involvement in the conflict from the late 1970s have demonstrated that the South African War was not merely a war between white men. Thousands of Africans served the British army as transport drivers, scouts and blockhouse guards. Some ethnic groups, such as the Zulu, even participated in the fighting.<sup>26</sup> There are other examples of Africans fighting on both sides and seizing

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<sup>23</sup> For a survey of the army and its relationship to Victorian society, Edward M. Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914* (London, Longman, 1980). For voluntarism, civic empowerment, and the development and role of the Reserve Forces, see Ian F.W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition 1558-1945* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1991); Ian F.W. Beckett, *Riflemen Form: A study of the Rifle Volunteer Movement 1859-1908* (Aldershot, Ogilby Trusts, 1982); I.F.W. Beckett, 'Britain', in I.F.W. Beckett (ed.), *Citizen Soldiers and the British Empire, 1837-1902* (London, Routledge, 2012); and Hugh Cunningham, *The Volunteer Force. A Social and Political History 1859-1908* (Kent, Croom Helm Ltd., 1975). For more on the image of the Victorian rank-and-file soldier and public perception see Edward Peter Joshua Gosling, 'Tommy Atkins, War Office Reform and the Social and Cultural Presence of the late Victorian Army in Britain, c. 1868-1899' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Plymouth University, 2015).

<sup>24</sup> Corinne Lydia Mahaffey, 'The Fighting Profession: The Professionalisation of the British Line Infantry Officer Corps, 1870-1902' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 2004); Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, 'The Development of Professionalism in the Victorian Army', *Armed Forces and Society*. 1, No. 4 (1975), pp. 472-489; Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977); Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992); Christopher Blackwood Otley, 'The Origins and Recruitment of the British Army Elite, 1870-1959' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 1965); Christopher Blackwood Otley, 'The Social Origins of British Army Officers', *Sociological Review*. 18, No. 2 (1970), pp. 213-39.

<sup>25</sup> Sol T. Plaatje, *Native life in South Africa* (London, 1916); Silas Molema, *The Bantu Past and Present* (Cape Town, 1963; original edition, 1920).

<sup>26</sup> D. Denoon, 'Participation in the Boer War: People's War, People's Non-War, or Non-People's War?', in B.A. Ogot (ed.), *War and Society in Africa* (London, Frank Cass, 1972), pp. 109-122; Peter Warwick, *Black People and the South African War 1899-1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983); Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991); Bill Nasson, 'Downing down their Masters': Africans, Boers, and Treason in the Cape Colony during the South African War of 1899-1902', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*. 12, No. 1 (1983), pp. 29-53; André Wessels, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. White man's War, Black man's War, Traumatic War* (Bloemfontein, Sun Press, 2011); Bill Nasson, *Uyadela Wen'Osulapho. Black Participation in the Anglo-Boer War* (Randburg, Ravan Press, 1999); Bill

opportunities to regain lost ancestral lands.<sup>27</sup> The contributions of Africans to the British war effort are now well understood.

Meanwhile, scholarship of the social and cultural history of the war has since challenged both the military narratives and Afrikaner nationalist interpretations and focused on the controversial issue of voluntary surrender and Boer collaboration, subsequently breaking the hold of Afrikaans nationalist narrative of Boer heroics, suffering, and blood-sacrifice.<sup>28</sup> As this growing body of scholarship further attests, studies of women's role in the South African War have confirmed that the conflict was not only fought between men.<sup>29</sup> This shift in emphasis and the widening of the ambit of the study was accompanied by and symbolised in the changed nomenclature from 'Boer War' to the 'South African War' to better capture the inclusive, all-encompassing nature of the conflict.<sup>30</sup> On top of that, historians have also addressed the impact

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Nasson, 'Black Communities in Natal and the Cape', in D. Omissi & A. Thompson (eds.), *The Impact of the South African War* (Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2002), pp. 38-55; J. Laband, 'Zulus and the War', in J. Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War. Direction, Experience and Image* (London, Routledge, 2000), pp. 107-25; Pieter Labuschagne, 'The Skirmish at Gatberg: A Perspective on the Utilisation of Black Auxiliaries during the South African War on the Transkei Border (1899-1902)', *Scientia Militaria. South African Journal of Military Studies*. 41, No. 2 (2013), pp. 78-91; B. Mbenga, 'The Role of the Bakgatla of the Pilaansberg in the South African War', and M. Genge, 'The Role of the EmaSwati in the South African War', both in G. Cuthbertson, A. Grundlingh & M. Suttie (eds.), *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902* (Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2002). For a regional approach on race relations pre- and post-war, see Wayne Dooling, 'Reconstructing the Household: The Northern Cape Colony before and after the South African War', *The Journal of African History*. 50, No. 3 (2009), pp. 399-416; Wayne Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule in South Africa* (Scottsville, University of KwaZulu Natal Press, 2007).

<sup>27</sup> For more see, Jeremy Krickler, *Revolution from Above, Rebellion from Below. The Agrarian Transvaal at the Turn of the Century* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993).

<sup>28</sup> Albert Grundlingh, *The Dynamics of Treason: Boer collaboration in the South African War of 1899-1902* (Pretoria, Protea Book House, 2006). Originally published in Afrikaans as *Die "Hensoppers" en "Joiners": Die Rasionaal en Verskynsel van Verraad* (Pretoria, Haum, 1979).

<sup>29</sup> H. Bradford, 'Gentlemen and Boers: Afrikaner Nationalism, Gender and Colonial Warfare', in G. Cuthbertson, A. Grundlingh & M. Suttie (eds.), *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902* (Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2002), pp. 37-66; S. Marks, 'British Nursing and the South African War', in G. Cuthbertson, A. Grundlingh & M. Suttie (eds.), *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902* (Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2002), pp. 159-85.

<sup>30</sup> Shula Marks. Review of G. Cuthbertson, A. Grundlingh & M. Suttie (eds.), *Writing a Wider War: Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902*; D. Lowry (ed.), *The South African War Reappraised (Studies in Imperialism)*; D. Omissi & A. Thompson (eds.), *The Impact of the South African War*. H-SAfrica, H-Net Reviews, June 2003. <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=7744>. (Accessed, 14/12/2016).

of British policy on non-combatants in the Boer territories, some going so far as to pose the question of whether the concentration camps were part of a civilising project that sought to assimilate Boers into British colonial society.<sup>31</sup>

It is evident that the ways in which historians have examined the South African War as a historical phenomenon has altered over the years, and the perspectives that have been opened up have widened considerably.<sup>32</sup> Regarding the British army during the war, for example, in focusing on the roles of British officers, there has been much more of a ‘bottom-up’ approach, and we now know much more about the experiences of the ordinary soldier, or ‘Tommy Atkins’ as he was generally known.<sup>33</sup> Both directions offer excellent analyses of soldiering at either side of the chain of command of the British army, and yet there remains a need to investigate the experiences of the mid-level leaders who fought in South Africa and assess their performance in the conflict.

As this thesis focuses on officers of the Coldstream Guards, it is appropriate to say something about the regiment. The origins of the Coldstream Guards can be traced back to when they were formed in 1650 as part of Oliver Cromwell’s New Model Army,<sup>34</sup> and were known as

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<sup>31</sup> S.B. Spies, *Methods of Barbarism? Roberts and Kitchener and Civilians in the Boer Republics January 1900-May 1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1978); Elizabeth van Heyningen, ‘A tool for modernisation? The Boer concentration camps of the South African War, 1900–1902’, *South African Journal of Science*. 1, No. 1 (2010), pp.1-10; A. Grundlingh & B. Nasson (eds.), *The War at Home. Women and Families in the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2013).

<sup>32</sup> J. Gooch, ‘Introduction’, in J. Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image* (London, Frank Cass, 2000), p. xi.

<sup>33</sup> Bill Nasson, ‘Tommy Atkins in South Africa’, in P. Warwick & S.B. Spies (eds.), *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (London, Longman, 1980), pp. 123-38; Edward M. Spiers, ‘The Learning Curve in the South African War: Soldiers’ Perspectives’, *Historia*. 55, No. 1. (2010), pp. 1-17; Chapter Nine in Edward M. Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 159-79; Sheila Bannerman, ‘Manliness and the English Soldier in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902: The more things change, the more they stay the same’ (Unpublished Master’s Dissertation, University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, 2005); David Ivan Hill, ‘Masculinity and War: Diaries and letters of soldiers serving in the South African War (1899-1902)’ (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 2011).

<sup>34</sup> J. Paget (ed.), *Second to None. The Coldstream Guards 1650-2000* (Barnsley, Leo Cooper, 2000), p. 1.

Monck's Regiment of Foot after their founder Colonel George Monck. In 1660, he supported the restoration of the Stuart monarchy, and his regiment then became part of the king's household troops, designated the 2<sup>nd</sup> Regiment of Foot Guards because Charles II already had a guards' regiment that had been formed in 1656 when he was in exile. Following Monck's death in 1670, the regiment took its name of Coldstream from the town where it had crossed from Scotland into England when marching to restore the monarchy. The regiment thus enjoys a unique place in the history of the British army as the oldest of Britain's surviving regiments, with an unbroken service from 1650 to the present day.<sup>35</sup>

Although ranked behind the 1<sup>st</sup> Regiment of Foot Guards, better known today as the Grenadier Guards,<sup>36</sup> the Coldstream Guards claim in their regimental motto that they are *Nulli Secundus* (Second to None).<sup>37</sup> Several histories have been written about the Coldstream Guards, and together, these works provide a comprehensive overview of the regiment, although few have much to say about the South African War.<sup>38</sup> The official Coldstream Guards histories and other

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> The Grenadier Guards were awarded that title in 1815 to mark their defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte's Grenadiers of the Imperial Guard at the Battle of Waterloo. See Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick William Hamilton, *The Origin and History of the First or Grenadier Guards. From Documents in the State Paper Office, War Office Horse Guards, Contemporary History, Regimental Records Etc., Volume III* (London, John Murray, 1874), p. 51.

<sup>37</sup> Paget, *Second to None. The Coldstream Guards 1650-2000*, p. 1.

<sup>38</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Ross of Bladensburg, *A History of the Coldstream Guards, from 1815 to 1895* (London, A.D. Innes & Co., 1896); Lieutenant-Colonel Ross of Bladensburg, *The Coldstream Guards in the Crimea* (London, A.D. Innes & Co., 1897); Colonel Sir John Hall, *The Coldstream Guards, 1885-1895* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1929); Lieutenant-Colonel Ross of Bladensburg, *The Coldstream Guards, 1914-1918* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1928); Michael Howard and John Sparrow, *The Coldstream Guards, 1920-1946* (London, Oxford University Press, 1951). Also see Arthur S. White, *A Bibliography of Regimental Histories of the British Army* (London, The Society for Army Historical Research in conjunction with The Army Museums Ogilby Trust, 1965), pp. 43-4; Colonel Daniel McKinnon, *Origin and Services of the Coldstream Guards* (London, Richard Bentley, 1835); Godfrey Davies, *The Early History of the Coldstream Guards* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1924); Colonel Sir John Hall, *The Coldstream Guards 1885-1914* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1929); Lieutenant Colonel Ross of Bladensburg, *The Coldstream Guards, 1914-1918* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1928). For later works on the Coldstream Guards, refer to Captain John Pereira, *A Distant Drum: War Memories of the Intelligence Officer of the 5th Bn. Coldstream Guards, 1944-45* (Yorkshire, E.R. Publishers, 1972); J. Blacker (ed.), *Have You Forgotten Yet? The First World War Memoires of C.P. Blacker* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 2000); Fen Noakes, *The Distant Drum. A Memoir of a Guardsman in the Great War* (London, Frontline Books, 2010); Robert Boscawen, *Armoured Guardsman. A War Diary June 1944 to April 1945*



influential works offer an impressive overview of decades of engagements and battle honours. While these provide excellent accounts of campaigns and battles, they do not use nor engage with the Coldstream Guards' primary source collection of personal testimonies holistically, although a recent study has used the correspondence of an officer during the First World War.<sup>39</sup> That being so, there remains sufficient scope for a thematic study of the lives and experiences of middle command Coldstream Guards regimental officers in the South African War, and such an investigation would enrich the existing body of work on the Coldstream Guards. Thus, by focusing on the South African War, this thesis will examine how the regimental officers' social and cultural backgrounds influenced their reactions to the war, the nature of which changed from a conventional conflict to a guerrilla war. Leadership and command practices had to change to fit the different demands of the war. The officers had to use all their professional training to cope with these demands: how they adapted will be a central theme of the thesis.

## II

By focusing on middle command officers of the Coldstream Guards, this thesis devotes particular attention to the concepts of professionalism, leadership, and command, because it was in these areas that the British army supposedly failed in South Africa. In the eighteenth century, the term professional was assigned to only some occupations: governmental positions, military appointments, the clergy, and the practice of medicine and law, but by the close of the

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(Barnsley, Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 2010); J. Paget (ed.), *Second to None. The Coldstream Guards 1650-2000* (Barnsley, Leo Cooper, 2000); John Fremantle, *Wellington's Voice: The Candid Letters of Lieutenant Colonel John Fremantle* (London, Frontline Books, 2012). Interestingly, a children's book *Jacob, the Famous Goose, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards. A True Story* by Sheila Marlin (Garston, self-published, 2015) tells the regimental mascot, Jacob's real-life story. Marlin's work is historical and novel in its approach and traces Jacob's journey from when he joined the battalion, stationed in a peace-keeping capacity in Canada in 1838. His remarkable journey continued in Britain, and when he died, Jacob was buried with full honours. Jacob's head was later mounted on another goose's body and placed on display at Wellington Barracks Regimental Headquarters to the present day.

<sup>39</sup> E. Pereira, S. Jones & M. Locicero (eds.), *Catholic General. The Private Wartime Correspondence of Major-General Sir Cecil Edward Pereira, 1914-19* (Warwick, Helion & Company Ltd., 2020).

nineteenth century, many others, such as teaching and those in the civil service were included. To distance themselves from those in the general workforce, Victorian professionals were assumed to be the holders of knowledge and expertise. They subsequently established training and certification measures and instituted professional bodies to which members would affiliate.<sup>40</sup>

As a result, the idea of professionalism became more pervasive in professions during the nineteenth century in Britain.<sup>41</sup> Victorians believed that professionalism was attained through the acquisition of skills and by undergoing necessary training, while specialisation and proficiency were cultivated. In the case of the army, professionalism was defined by how a soldier developed a specific skill set and mastered a chosen specialism through military training.<sup>42</sup> Scholarship on Victorian army professionalism addresses how professionalisation occurred, the rationale and motivation behind implementing improvements, and the development of means of measuring professionalisation efforts.<sup>43</sup> Having said that, none of these studies examines whether efforts to make the officer corps more professional worked in practice.

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<sup>40</sup> Albert D. Pionke, *The Ritual Culture of Victorian Professionals. Competing for Ceremonial Status, 1838-1877* (London, Routledge, 2016), p. 7.

<sup>41</sup> Sebastian Alexander George Puncher, 'The Victorian Army and the Cadet Colleges, Woolwich and Sandhurst, c. 1840-1902' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Kent, 2019), p. 9.

<sup>42</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2018), p. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, 'The Development of Professionalism in the Victorian Army', *Armed Forces and Society*. 1, No. 4 (1975), pp. 472-89; Corinne Lydia Mahaffey, 'The Fighting Profession: The Professionalisation of the British Line Infantry Officer Corps, 1870-1902' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 2004), p. 227. There seems to be some consensus that the evolution of British military professionalism happened gradually and slowly because the process was interrupted by several retractions along the way. For more, see Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier. A Social and Political Portrait* (New York, Free Press, 2017), pp. 5-6; Ian F.W. Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms*, pp. 5-6; Anthony Clayton, *The British Officer. Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present* (Harrow, Pearson Education Limited, 2007). For a framework on measuring professionalisation, see Ian F.W. Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2018).

Because of this, the thesis will shed light on the professionalism of middle command officers during the South African War through the use of a close micro-historical approach as a means by which to explore the impact and implications of British army professionalisation initiatives. In order to fully assess the professionalism of officers, the thesis will thus look at leadership and command as separate entities, not interchangeably, as historians have done in the past. Leadership and command are singular concepts but intimately connected. To differentiate the two, it is helpful to see leadership as a practice that motivates and inspires and, in contrast, to see command as a prescribed duty where an officer manages, controls, assesses and disseminates the necessary knowledge for the direction of military action. With this in mind, this thesis aims to provide a fuller analysis of leadership during the South African War by addressing the various factors that shaped it and exploring the formal side of command so that the relationship between the two concepts can adequately be understood.<sup>44</sup>

Still, before we look at how officers reacted in combat and brought their training to bear, it must be noted that this thesis will also examine their social and cultural conditioning because these would influence how officers behaved in battle and during the quieter periods of the war. As the men were born into an upper-class world, their home life and schooling would have endowed them with a distinct sense of culture and status within British society, especially for life in the army as commissioned officers.<sup>45</sup> This study thereby explores how being part of an

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<sup>44</sup> G.D. Sheffield, 'Introduction: Command, Leadership and the Anglo-American Experience', in G.D. Sheffield (ed.), *Leadership & Command: The Anglo-American Military Experience Since 1861* (London, Brassey's, 2002), p. 1.

<sup>45</sup> Also see Christopher Blackwood Otley, 'The Origins and Recruitment of the British Army Elite, 1870-1959' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 1965); Christopher Blackwood Otley, 'The Social Origins of British Army Officers', *Sociological Review*. 18, No. 2 (1970), pp. 213-39; Chapter Four in Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992), pp. 90-117; Chapter One in Edward M. Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914* (London, Longman, 1980), pp. 1-34.

elite regiment contributed to the officers' sense of self, their internal experience of identity, and how they were perceived, all of which impacted their performance as leaders.

In order to understand these officers and their decisions, it is essential to look at their social class backgrounds and the social mores they took with them to South Africa. Because the social and class identities of the three officers were profoundly gendered, the thesis will also look into ideas of gender and identity. Gender is a crucial analytical category, both in developing an interpretation of the roles and behaviours expected of the three regimental officers in this study and in comprehending their subjective experiences and understandings, their self-regulation and performances of their imposed and internalised gendered masculine identities. Indeed, as some scholars argue, there are various discourses of masculinity at any given time, such as manliness and manhood.<sup>46</sup> However, there is an essential distinction between manhood – as a state achieved – and manliness – as a set of practices and qualities related to a gendered identity.<sup>47</sup> Gendered identities are formed and influenced by society. They are fluid, denoting a continual process through which meanings are given by individuals through social interaction, whereas gender roles are assigned static and fixed expectations of social behaviour.<sup>48</sup> It has been maintained that it is necessary to treat masculinity as a social identity – an aspect of social relations and a subjective identity. Scholars have suggested that historians need to refocus their analyses away from masculinity as a set of cultural attributes and consider it as social status instead.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> M. Roper & J. Tosh, 'Introduction: Historians and the Politics of Masculinity', in M. Roper & J. Tosh (eds.), *Manful Assertions. Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London, Routledge, 1991), p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> J.H. Arnold & S. Brady, 'Introduction', in J.H. Arnold & S. Brady (eds.), *What is Masculinity? Historical Dynamics from Antiquity to the Contemporary World* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 10.

<sup>48</sup> Sharon R. Bird, 'Welcome to the Men's Club: Homosociality and the Maintenance of Hegemonic Masculinity', *Gender and Society*. 10, No. 2 (1996), pp. 120-2.

<sup>49</sup> John Tosh, 'What should Historians do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain', *History Workshop*. 38 (1994), p. 183.

The thesis will shed light on the concepts of masculinity and militarism inherent in Victorian Britain. These provided the determinants that shaped the officers' worldview before they went to South Africa. According to Peter Wilson, militarism can be explained as the intellectual and social acceptance to engage in acts of war.<sup>50</sup> Indeed, the Victorians saw the very act of war as a sacred path that led to moral purity, ascendancy, and domination over colonial peoples and provided a moral mandate that created a self-sacrificial warriorhood.<sup>51</sup> Lord Roberts himself advocated "war as a tonic of character"; similarly, Lord Wolseley believed that "war exercises a healthy influence on all classes of society."<sup>52</sup> Both supported war as "desirable on evolutionary grounds."<sup>53</sup> Empire was where the destiny of a man of the world was to be fulfilled. As an ideological concept, masculinity encompassed a sense of self-sacrificial service to the Empire.<sup>54</sup>

As such, Empire became an extension of an ethical imperative; it endorsed militarism, which meant the military became an instrument of imperial moral design where imperial heroes were representative of martial masculinity, a brotherhood.<sup>55</sup> Masculine honour in wartime had to be defined concerning the violence meted out to the enemy and non-combatants. Consequently, this thesis seeks to demonstrate how concepts of masculine honour shaped the protagonists' conduct on and off the battlefield in their engagements with the enemy and non-combatants. It can be said that a relationship existed between 'small wars' and the emergence of a militaristic

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<sup>50</sup> Peter H. Wilson, 'Defining Military Culture', *The Journal of Military History*. 27, No. 1 (January 2008), pp. 40-1. Also see, H. Strachan, 'The British Way in Warfare', in D.G. Chandler & I.F.W. Beckett (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 414.

<sup>51</sup> James A. Mangan, 'Duty onto Death: English Masculinity in the Age of the New Imperialism', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*. 27, Nos. 1-2 (2010), p. 126.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 126-7.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 129; 131; 135.

culture in Britain that influenced the army and suffused civil life and was closely associated with developing late Victorian masculine ideals.

According to Robert Paul Hogg, these masculine ideals were tested and reworked in the frontier environment where soldiers responded to its challenges with courage, fortitude and strength. The harsh physical conditions called for perseverance, self-reliance, and stoicism. The frontier provided a stage on which men could perform their manliness, where it could be used to fulfil their manly potential. The reality of the frontier was complicated. Many men struggled to adapt to this environment. In pursuing manliness, the inability to adjust to the foreignness of the space was problematic, and men responded in vastly different ways. Hogg demonstrates in his work the allure the frontier held for men in terms of adventure, opportunity, physical hardship, and risk.<sup>56</sup> Hogg's discussion on frontier life is thus relevant to this thesis because the Coldstream Guards regimental officers faced a similar frontier society in South Africa. It is an essential point to make, as it ties in with these new cults of militarism and masculinity in the late Victorian period but is profoundly shaped by the 'small wars' and the prevalent militarism at the time.

It has been noted that a valuable way of understanding the relationship between war and society is by focusing on cultural practices in war and the military.<sup>57</sup> Military culture is affected by its connection to society, technological change, military education and professional training, and

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<sup>56</sup> Robert Paul Hogg, 'Men and Manliness on the Frontier: Queensland and British Columbia in the Mid-Nineteenth Century' (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Queensland, 2007), pp. 3-4, 29, 33.

<sup>57</sup> Jeremy Black, *Rethinking Military History* (London, Routledge, 2004), pp. 50-5. For more on the social background of the Victorian army and the impact of ideology on the regimental system, see J. Keegan, 'Regimental Ideology', in G. Best & A. Wheatcroft (eds.), *War, Economy and the Military Mind* (London, Croom Helm, 1976), pp. 3-18. For more on military culture and army social development within the regimental system, see David French, *Military Identities: The Regimental System, the British Army, and the British People c. 1870-2000* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005).

prevalent political and social trends.<sup>58</sup> Military culture does not exist in a vacuum. It impacts and is, in turn, impacted by society's broader culture; how military culture influences the performance of active duty can be determined by considering all the factors mentioned above.<sup>59</sup> It has been argued that service in the colonies was commonly seen as subordinate to that of the home forces since the colonial-based army was fighting indigenous rather than European enemies.<sup>60</sup> However, for soldiers in the colonies, facing severe frontier conditions and an insurgent foe created an attitude of superiority in the belief that they represented authentic martial values compared to home-based soldiers who did not face similar hardships.<sup>61</sup> As Joanne Begiato explains, "scientific racism and new imperialism in the final quarter of the century instilled the idea that war was the way for the fittest, warlike races to succeed, generating a hyper-aggressive competitive masculinity."<sup>62</sup> The particular challenges of those colonial campaigns are very different from what would have been experienced in Europe, contributing to the cult of masculinity and militarism. In 1882, Henniker, Codrington and Shute served in Egypt during the British army's campaign.<sup>63</sup> Campaign experiences in Africa in the late nineteenth century undoubtedly would have shaped the cultural worlds of the Coldstream Guards middle commanders.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, all these factors influenced the kind of masculinist cultures and identities of the three protagonists when they were in South Africa.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> J. Burk, 'Military Culture', in L.R. Kurtz & J.E. Turpin (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Violence, Peace & Conflict. Volume 2* (San Diego, Academic Press, 1999), pp. 1250-3.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1249.

<sup>60</sup> Peter H. Wilson, 'Defining Military Culture', *The Journal of Military History*. 27, No. 1 (January 2008), p. 25.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> Joanne Begiato, *Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900. Bodies, Emotion, and Material Culture* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2020), p. 10.

<sup>63</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, *Officers' Statement of Services 1861-1913*, Miscellaneous, (1G3/A); Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, *Officers' Statement of Services 1861-1913*, Miscellaneous, (1G4).

<sup>64</sup> For more on gender, imperialism and British army officer construction of racialised attitudes in Africa see, Adam Dighton, 'Race, Masculinity and Imperialism: The British Officer and the Egyptian army (1882-1899)', *War & Society*. 32, No. 1 (2016), pp. 1-18.

<sup>65</sup> For more on scholarship covering gender issues relating to individual attitudes and prejudices about war, class and identity, see Sheila Bannerman, 'Manliness and the English Soldier in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902: The more things change, the more they stay the same' (Unpublished Master's Dissertation,

Consequently, a micro-historical study of key mid-level leaders allows this thesis to explore closely how socialisation, class, and gender ideologies such as masculinity influenced the leadership practices and subjective experiences of the Coldstream Guards' regimental officers in the war. Using the subjective experience of identity and socialisation as my interpretative lens of focus, I set out to do two things. In Chapter One of this thesis, I analyse the experience of growing up in Britain at the time for men of a particular class and education and the professional training they underwent as officers before they set off to war in 1899. Secondly, in the remaining chapters, I look at how the regimental officers performed within their social identities, how they internalised and interpreted those identities, and how those identities impacted these officers as leaders and soldiers. In order to do so, in my case study, I use the personal diaries and letters of Colonel Alfred Edward 'Coddy' Codrington of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, and those of Majors Arthur Henry Henniker and Henry 'Harry' Gwynn Dean Shute of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards. Such documents provide invaluable information because of their range and scope, and offer distinct insights into the British army on active service.<sup>66</sup>

Diarists have complete control over content and freedom of expression, are not bound by formal stylistic conventions, and, in essence, provide a flood of free-flowing thoughts and emotions while telling intimate stories. There are no limits on what diarists can or cannot say,

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University of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada, 2005); David Ivan Hill, 'Masculinity and War: Diaries and letters of soldiers serving in the South African War (1899-1902)' (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, 2011); N. Cooper & S. McVeigh, 'Men at war - masculinities, identities and cultures', in D. Kelly, M. Hurcombe & N. Cooper (eds.), *Journal of War and Culture Studies*. 5, No. 3 (2012), pp. 245-7; M. Brown, A.N. Barry & J. Begiato (eds.), *Martial Masculinities. Experiencing and Imagining the Military in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2019). And for more on the body at war, see Nicola Cooper & Martin Hurcombe, 'The Body at War: Wounds, Wounding and the Wounded', *Journal of War & Culture Studies*.1, No. 2 (2008), pp. 119-21.

<sup>66</sup> Edward M. Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 15.



which allows any sensitive or potentially harmful evidence that would otherwise be omitted in the official version of events to be included in personal diaries. As Irina Paperno points out, diaries are “not so much ... repositories of the quotidian or intimate, but [are] practices of daily life that create the private as the sphere of individual self-consciousness or intimacy.”<sup>67</sup> Diaries illustrate authors’ perceptions and interpretations and show what meaning diarists attach to their life experiences.<sup>68</sup> In these pieces penned by the regimental officers, we are invited to experience their war encounters and innermost reactions. Some diaries used in this thesis, such as Codrington’s and Henniker’s, were penned as more reflective, informal, and at times conversational. Other diarists, such as Shute, recorded events in a more direct and assertive style. Along with the rest of the correspondences penned by other regimental and company commanders included in this thesis, the diaries collectively represent the typicality of what topics were recorded about the war in South Africa. Moreover, although this thesis pays closer attention to specific diaries than others, it is demonstrated that they are part of a genre of diary writing of the time; it thus provides a sense that these narratives were representative, and shows that diary writing was a widespread practice in the South African War.

Epistemologically speaking, diaries are subjective and temporal constructs of human experience where the use of the personal pronoun ‘I’ indicates the diary’s subjective nature. It is through the daily ritual of diary writing that the temporal is connected.<sup>69</sup> Diaries record the individual experience and should not be read as a traditional narrative with a beginning, a middle, and an end but rather more as a self-reflective process.<sup>70</sup> While diary writing is a one-sided endeavour, letters denote more of a two-way process between the letter’s sender and receiver, and each letter tells us about the writer’s life and speaks to how the writer perceives

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<sup>67</sup> Irina Paperno, ‘What Can Be Done with Diaries?’, *Russian Review*. 63, No. 4 (2004), p. 565.

<sup>68</sup> Andy Alaszewski, *Using Diaries for Social Research* (London, Sage Publications, 2006), p. 37.

<sup>69</sup> Paperno, ‘What Can Be Done with Diaries?’, pp. 571-3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 573.

the receiver.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, letters are reciprocated products that connect the writer's world to that of the receiver, and the researcher must necessarily inquire into the roles of both parties.<sup>72</sup> Wartime letters constitute valuable first-hand observations of army campaigns and active duty. Despite errors of fact and a narrow frame of reference, letters function as records of soldiers' attitudes and motivations that seldomly, if ever, are evident in official records. At times, letters comprise the sole testimony of particular events, situations, or actions during campaigns.<sup>73</sup> For example, Shute's letters to his half-sister, Isabel, included war events that he did not record in his diary. The letters also have a more intimate and informal tone and clearly depict the close bond between brother and sister. The process of collecting these archival sources depended on the accessibility and availability of material. In personal correspondence, I based my selection of documents on the individuals' length of service, level of involvement in the conflict, the scope of the document, and the rank the officer held.

Consequently, I could trace the various connections between different individuals and get a sense of their importance and involvement in the lives of my three primary case studies. I could then build a picture of the relationships formed and how the various actors shaped and influenced the perceptions and identification of self and others. Also, I looked for indications of previous shared experiences that would contextualise the three men's past lives in the South African War. I searched for commonalities and any differences. Through this process, I started to see emerging middle leadership patterns. I decided to look at one regiment rather than doing a comparative study as the Coldstream Guards' sources were so rich that it would seem a disservice not to use them for close, in-depth analysis. More importantly, since no parallel

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<sup>71</sup> Ken Plummer, *Documents of Life 2. An Invitation to a Critical Humanism* (London, Sage Publications, 2001), p. 52.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> Edward M. Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 7-11.

works are available yet, focusing on a single case study enables me to analyse the Coldstream Guards' middle commanders in and of themselves to create a new understanding of a previously overlooked research area. This way, I can identify, develop and conceptualise several themes for future investigation. As such, my methodology lays the foundation for future studies of middle command experience of the war from the perspective of other regiments. It will enable other historians to say more about the middle command's actions, experiences, and motivations concerning their leadership, command, and professionalism in the South African War.<sup>74</sup>

When critically reading the material, I had to keep in mind the provenance of the documentation, who the intended audience was, what the motivations and intended purpose in writing the documents were; and were the private thoughts of the diarists private or were the documents perhaps written for families, for posterity and future generations.<sup>75</sup> For this reason, when reading the material, it is crucial to remember when the event occurred and when the diarists' writing recorded this occurrence since both factors play a role in shaping how the life story is told.<sup>76</sup> Both Codrington and Henniker's diaries were written during their time in South Africa, though Shute added supplementary information when typing his diary three years after the South African War. *The Boer War Diaries of Major H.G.D. Shute and Private G.J. Gullick 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, 1899-1902* by Roy George Stockman, was published by the Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society in 1999 for the centenary of the South African War.<sup>77</sup> In the Stockman compilation, Shute's post-war handwritten notes were reproduced in italics to

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<sup>74</sup> Jonathan Grix, *The Foundations of Research* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 52.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>76</sup> A. Thompson, 'Life Stories and Historical Analysis', in S. Gunn & L. Faire (eds.), *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2016), p. 112.

<sup>77</sup> Roy George Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries of Major H.G.D. Shute and Private G.J. Gullick 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, 1899-1902* (Burnham-On-Sea, Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society, 1999).

indicate where he had added more information to his original diary. In keeping with this, I decided to do the same.

Shute's handwritten notes are therefore shown in italics throughout the thesis to demonstrate which entries he wrote after the close of the South African War. The mixture of entries Shute wrote during the war alongside entries penned *post facto* pose issues such as the accuracy of events and the author's inherent bias. Also, it is even more important to remember that writing from memory causes problems, especially over a long time. The longer time passes after an event, the higher the probability of skewing events that took place previously. Authors will likely forget specific details or include false versions of events that never actually occurred. As Nigel C. Hunt states, it is vital to remember when analysing private sources to keep in mind that people think about the same events differently.<sup>78</sup> Particularly as they remember events differently, too.

That being so, the private, unpublished correspondence of these Coldstream Guards regimental officers forms the basis of my qualitative research, and their voices provide a unique perspective of command and leadership at the regimental level. The regimental archive at the Regimental Headquarters in St. James's Park holds the most extensive collection of private correspondence of the Coldstream Guards, and I was fortunate to have been granted unrestricted access by special permission of the Regimental Adjutant. Whilst researching an independent research project focusing on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards during the First World War, I was impressed by the wealth of first-hand primary sources of the South African War that depicted richly detailed and highly personal accounts of Coldstream Guards soldiers. I also utilise evidence from Coldstream Guards company commanders and other ranks as

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<sup>78</sup> Nigel C. Hunt, *Memory, War and Trauma* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. ix.

supporting evidence. Additionally, I have incorporated diaries and letters from other Guards' regimental officers and the personal writings from Guardsmen of other ranks.

In conjunction with the Coldstream Guards regimental archive material, sources are drawn from various archives in the United Kingdom and South Africa. I visited the National Army Museum, the British Library, Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre Archives, Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), Ditsong Museum of Military History (Johannesburg), Graaff-Reinet Museum Archives (Graaff-Reinet), National Archives of South Africa (Pretoria), and the National Library of South Africa (Cape Town). To provide an official viewpoint, the staff diaries of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards' have been utilised, including daily engagements, troop movements, skirmishes, and other details regarding equipment and transport. I have also incorporated the testimonies given by members of the upper echelon at the Royal Commission, published in 1903. Official material restricts what kind of content can be published, censoring any sensitive information. It is thus imperative to supplement official archival sources with additional types of material.<sup>79</sup>

I acknowledge that employing a small-scale intensive study limits the scale of investigation, which can present issues of representation.<sup>80</sup> As Robert K. Yin reminds us, “for case studies, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources.”<sup>81</sup> Using various source materials illustrates different perspectives, but collectively it endorses and contextualises personal views through each person's understanding and grasp of particular people, events, and situations.<sup>82</sup> Taken together, the extensive archive I employ

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<sup>79</sup> P. Burke, 'Overture: The New History, its Past and its Future', in P. Burke (ed.), *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 1991), p. 5.

<sup>80</sup> Iván Sziujártó, 'Four Arguments for Microhistory', *Rethinking History*. 6, No. 2 (2002), p. 210.

<sup>81</sup> Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research. Design and Methods* (London, Sage, 2003), p. 87.

<sup>82</sup> E.M. Spiers (ed.), *Letters from Mafeking. Eyewitness Accounts from the Longest Siege of the South African War* (Barnsley, Frontline Books, 2018), p. 187.

improves overall accuracy and representation. Moreover, it provides a multi-faceted view of middle command against which any omissions or factual inaccuracies can be checked and presents more of an opportunity for new interpretations.<sup>83</sup> Further new interpretations are made in this study by the inclusion of visual source material in addition to written documentation.

Because of this, I have used both official, and amateur visual materials as these tell us more about the command and leadership practices of the Coldstream Guards regimental officers. Inventions such as the Eastman Kodak camera in the late nineteenth century meant anybody could use and carry a camera.<sup>84</sup> The camera was part of an arsenal of tools that existed and developed in the late nineteenth century. People started to conceptualise space differently due to photography, as with other measuring implements. The camera was, moreover, a technological tool used to record the war and how it affected the nature of warfare, man's relationship to landscape, to each other and to the technology itself, and was a way in which the landscape was looked at and measured differently. The war photograph can therefore be a powerful source, but it is a medium which needs to be critically analysed for its technicality, origins, purpose, authenticity, and validity.<sup>85</sup> It does not merely function as a snapshot of the past or a captured memory; it also serves as a visual invention and narrative creation in its own right.<sup>86</sup> As a visual source, the photograph is, therefore, not a reflection of the past but an interpretation of it, and knowledge of the manner and context in which photographs are created helps to understand the intention for its use better.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Yin, *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*, p. 87.

<sup>84</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, 'The Boer War and the Media (1899-1902)', *Twentieth Century British History*. 13, No. 1 (2002), p. 9.

<sup>85</sup> For more on war photography, see Jorge Lewinski, *The Camera at War* (London, W. & J. Mackay Limited, 1978); Pat Hodgson, *Early War Photographs* (Reading, Osprey publishing Ltd., 1974); S. Badsey, 'A Print and Media War', in C. Wilcox (ed.), *Recording the South African War. Journalism and Official History 1899-1914* (London, Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 1999), pp. 5-16.

<sup>86</sup> Plummer, *Documents of Life 2. An Invitation to a Critical Humanism*, p. 66.

<sup>87</sup> L. Jordanova, 'Approaching Visual Materials', in S. Gunn & L. Faire (eds.), *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2012), p. 42.

Although photographs are not the primary source in this thesis, the place of war photography will relate specifically to arguments concerning identity and technology. For example, official photographs will be used as part of Chapter Two, which looks at the technical side of war. In this chapter, two areas are of particular interest: how the camera was used for gathering and disseminating intelligence and for identification to control and intimidate Boer rebels and those who supported their cause. In particular, the chapter shows that photographs were visual documents, depicting the participation and collaboration of the local photographers who took them, often to be used by middle command officers to identify Boer rebels who subsequently were caught and some executed. The significance of incorporating these kinds of source materials is that it provides an extra layer of evidence. However, this thesis exemplifies ways in which war photography can be used, specifically relating to middle command leadership in the South African War, and contributes to our understanding of the place of photography in the broader South African and British culture (including the army) at the time.

### **III**

The opening chapter of this thesis focuses on the formative factors that shaped the three regimental officers' lives in the metropole before the South African War and the different aspects of becoming an officer. For this reason, Chapter One, 'Introducing the Case Studies: The Making of Middle Command and Formation of Leadership (1850-1899)', considers the social and cultural determinants that shaped the identities of the three middle command Coldstream Guards officers before they went to war in South Africa in October 1899. Because Chapter One concentrates on the background and socialisation of these officers, it is, therefore, a foundation chapter that sets up the thesis in terms of who will feature in the chapters, why they are essential, and the factors that contributed to their character formation. In other words,

Chapter One is about the making of the three Coldstream Guards' middle command officers as men and as leaders, and argues the case that knowing more about their experiences of being reared in a particular place and time will shed more light on their actions and reactions as individuals and as soldiers in the South African War.

Each of the remaining thesis chapters investigates a different aspect of how the middle command worked and changed during the war. The chapters look at formalised active command and being a leader away from the battlefield, helping us look at the broader social forces that shaped the officers' command and leadership practices in the very unfamiliar and testing situation of the South African War. Because of this, it is thus helpful to delineate the phases of the war as it demonstrates the nature of wartime leadership required of the three middle command officers of the Coldstream Guards.

The initial part of the South African War from October 1899 to September 1900 was a conventional conflict characterised by several set-piece battles between the British and Boers. For the Coldstream Guards regimental officers, field command during these first stages of the conflict meant ensuring the men were supplied with equipment, food, water and clothing. The battalion commander and his second-in-command oversaw company officers set up outposts for guard duty when encamped and carried out inspections of the sentry postings. When on the trek, battalion officers were either in the vanguard leading their men, or in the rear guard protecting the stores transported as the marching men's columns advanced. Battalion and company officers had to ensure discipline and order prevailed in the ranks when on route marches, and especially in the heat of battle. Battalion commanders also tasked their company officers to oversee prisoners. Furthermore, it was the duty of the battalion commander to provide names of men to the general officer commanding for gallant behaviour in battle. Also,



it was the battalion commander's task to delegate fatigue and construction work to his company commanders to repair bridges and railways blown up by Boers trying to slow the progress of the advancing British army.

From September 1900 until the cessation of hostilities in May 1902, the war's nature transformed into a guerrilla conflict. Owing to this, the daily realities of war for the battalion commander entailed deportations of women and children to concentration camps, military courts, farm burnings, and constructing and guarding blockhouses. Towards the end of the war, duties included rounding up *bittereinders* (bitter-enders) to be deported as Prisoners of War (POWs) and executing Cape rebels deemed traitors to the Crown as the Cape Colony was subject to British rule. The battalion officers' duty was to oversee that raids on farms were carried out. After the dispersal of regiments in December 1900, battalions operated in smaller units formed into mobile columns and stationed in towns dotted around the South African landscape from where operations were launched. The battalion commanders were also in charge of sending out scouts and flying mobile columns of mounted men to carry out attacks and track down and capture any remaining Boer guerrillas. Moreover, for the regimental officers appointed as town commandants, military duties became more intermingled with civil administration, such as assuming the role of a magistrate. Alongside these duties, the regimental officer was also in charge of co-ordinating deployments between the mobile columns and responsible for the defence of the area surrounding the garrison town, which fell under his jurisdiction as administrator.

Chapter Two, 'From *Veldt* to *Voorstoep* (Front Porch): Transitions and Adaptations in Coldstream Guards Middle Command Practices in the South African War (1899-1902)' describes the changes and adaptations in soldiery, tactics, and command practices of the

Coldstream Guards officers and men that were necessitated by the shift from conventional to guerrilla warfare, in this instance the garrisoning of towns in the Cape Colony. Some of this, of course, entailed using newer technologies. The chapter thus considers the employment of modern weaponry and the use of smokeless cordite propellant in rifles and machine guns, as well as modern communication devices such as field telephones and the telegraph and the utilisation of war photography. In focusing on the experiences of the regimental officers, Chapter Two offers fresh insights into the nature of the British army, particularly the adaptations of middle command to the transformations in the nature of warfare. It offers an unprecedentedly detailed account of the garrisoning of the Cape Colony towns.

The chapter moreover considers British strategic and tactical developments, such as resorting to mobile columns, blockhouse lines, and using renegade Boer scouts and informants. It also analyses the Boer response to these developments through raids and sabotage and how the British dealt with and punished rebel Cape Boer activity, such as the trial and execution of Commandant Gideon Scheepers. As such, this chapter offers a rich portrait of garrison duty and its stark contrast to the conventional phase of the war. Chapter Two and the three subsequent chapters after that collectively focus on the social and cultural consequences for the Coldstream Guards battalion officers of the transition in the nature of the South African War and tie into the broader thesis argument of effective regimental officer command and leadership by addressing two main themes: adaptation and transformation.

Chapter Three, 'Emissaries of Empire: Civil-Military Relationships and Coldstream Guards Middle Command Professional Practices in South Africa (1899-1902)' focuses on the dynamics of middle command professional practices in the South African War. This chapter considers the nature of such institutional relationships and investigates how much influence

professional networks had on the mid-level leadership practices of the Coldstream Guards. Chapter Three scrutinises the professional character of regimental command; it explores the meaning and representation of the Coldstream Guards battalion officer's sense of leadership and questions the extent of influence on institutional conduct. Themes in this chapter include the working relationships of the regimental officers focusing on civil-military encounters, and it investigates the nature of the battalion officers' race relationships with African and Coloured auxiliaries. It demonstrates distinctions that existed between different kinds of working relationships, explains why such relationships were essential to the formation of middle command leadership, and the extent of the impact on the battalion officers' overall professional conduct. Chapter Three addresses the broader level of influence that the mid-level battalion officer's professional networking and leadership practices had on the South African War's eventual outcome.

Chapter Four, 'Soldiers, Comrades and the Leadership of Men: Gendered Identities and Social Relationships of Coldstream Guards Regimental Officers in South Africa (1899-1902)' examines how the Coldstream Guards middle commanders behaved within the social relationships they formed and considers the level of impact on leadership practices when away from the frontline's pressures and demands. This chapter shows the significance of social leadership's embodiment and enactment, a vital component within the officers' personal relationships. Themes in Chapter Four include comradeship and bonds between the battalion commanders, the army as a second family where the dependence of men on age peers was vital in the military, even more so than at home, and considers officer paternalism towards men of other ranks and the officer as a father figure. The discussion additionally takes a closer look at sport, religion, connections to home, and social life. Chapter Four argues that how an officer

conducts himself in his social sphere off the battlefield can provide further insight into the relationship between leadership, effective command, and professionalism.

Chapter Five, 'The Impact of Conquest: The South African War and the Professionalisation of the British Army (1899-1914),' demonstrates, as argued throughout this thesis, that mistakes made in the war were not due to a lack of professional commitment from the Coldstream Guards' middle command, but rather due to higher command incompetence, poor military organisation and failings in army administration. Above all, the level to which higher command professionalism and leadership performance impacted army efficiency, as displayed through sheer ineptitude or personal ambition by senior command, needs to be considered. For this reason, Chapter Five will discuss these and other factors, such as senior command rivalries, to better explain any shortcomings in the South African War that will substantiate its claim of effective leadership and command practices in the middle echelon. In order to do so, the chapter first focuses on the South African War (1899-1902) and investigates Coldstream Guards middle commanders' responses to senior command's conduct during the conflict and significantly provides a middle command perspective of senior officer failures in South Africa. Such an approach thus sheds new light on British army generalship and contributes to the existing body of scholarship on higher command conduct during the South African War.

After that, the chapter provides an overview of the Royal Commission's task to investigate the conduct of British military operations during the South African War. Appointed by Royal Warrant in 1902 and published its findings in 1903, the Commission inquired into the military preparations for the war in South Africa. It also looked into the supply of men, ammunition, equipment, and transport by sea and land connected with the campaign and Pretoria's

occupation on 5 June 1900.<sup>88</sup> Chapter Five thus evaluates the Commission's investigations into the alleged failings of senior officers during the war, where many were called to testify and justify their actions and decisions. This chapter will also provide an overview of the inter-war period 1903 to 1914, discuss the subsequent reforms, and analyse the impact on military middle management and organisation. In doing so, the chapter situates the battalion commanders' modest interventions within the broader development of military professionalism during this time. Above all, Chapter Five strengthens the thesis argument that mistakes made in the war were not due to a lack of professional commitment from the Coldstream Guards' middle command.

Significantly, as demonstrated in this introductory chapter, the present study of a small select group of officers is distinctive because it is shaped by pre-existing literature that has not always been brought together by historians before, but in this study, they are. These include general histories of war, military histories of the South African War, regimental histories of the Coldstream Guards, particularly war and society scholarship, cultural histories, and social histories of identity, class, race and politics. Indeed, all of these different streams inform this work and have to be considered, but this case study and methodology are unique since nobody else has done such a small-scale microscopic analysis on the Coldstream Guards that takes in all these themes. Moreover, this work demonstrates a new approach to using regimental histories, and, above all, it complicates and contests the narrative about the failure of British army regimental leadership in South Africa. In other words, this thesis uses these three mid-level leaders as a prism through which to tell a larger story, both about the unacknowledged role of middle leadership in the South African War to provide a more nuanced account of their

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<sup>88</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F20), *The South African War Commission – Its Report and Evidence Summarised and Analysed* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), p. 3. The commission sat on 55 days to take evidence and heard 114 witnesses.

contribution, but it also brings together tactics and operations with the cultural history of warfare.

In conclusion, the South African War forced upon Britain the need for introspection, resulting in change and reform both militarily and socially. Questions were asked nationally about widespread racial deterioration among the working classes. Significantly, Britain's devolution of power to its white dominions created a constitutional shift in power within the Empire due to the South African War.<sup>89</sup> The war's impact reverberated into South African and British cultural and political consciousness, forever etched in memory.

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<sup>89</sup> Saul Dubow, 'Reviews', *British Twentieth Century History*. 25, No. 3 (2014), p. 496.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introducing the Case Studies: The Making of Middle Command and Formation of Leadership (1850-1899)

### Introduction

“[My] Mother (the best) died eleven years ago today. I hope I may never disgrace her. Perhaps she prays for her soldier son even now, as she did in the days gone by. Dear old mother, how much I owe you!”<sup>90</sup> This tribute was written by Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards middle commander, on 10 May 1900, in memory of his mother, Anna Kerrison, Lady Henniker. As a young boy, Henniker loved listening to her tell him stories of past honourable family traditions, particularly about his grandfather’s military career.<sup>91</sup> In light of this, it was unsurprising that Henniker resolved to enter the same profession as his grandfather.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, it was not uncommon for upper-class officers like Henniker to acknowledge the strong influence that a long-established family tradition of soldiering exerted as a source of inspiration in pursuing a military career.<sup>93</sup> As Edward M. Spiers writes, “military service [was] a traditional and highly regarded career for many landed families.”<sup>94</sup> Alongside class, the family was a crucial determinant contributing to a child’s character development and socialisation.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, Diary, (F1C29), 10/05/1900.

<sup>91</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, *Arthur Henniker Biography*, (2H9), ‘From Some Churches’, extract from a sermon preached by the Reverend Colin A.F. Campbell at the Parish Church, Eye, Suffolk, 09/02/1912.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>93</sup> Edward M. Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914* (London, Longman, 1980), pp. 8-9.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Christopher Blackwood Otley, ‘The Origins and Recruitment of the British Army Elite, 1870-1959’ (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 1965), p. 9.

Chapter One considers the home background, social standing and peacetime activities of three Coldstream Guards battalion commanders, Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington (**Figure 1**), Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker (**Figure 2**) and Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute (**Figure 3**) before the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899. It is a foundation chapter in which the backgrounds and personal worlds of the three chosen officers in this study are closely analysed; these are crucial to our understanding of why they were ultimately able to adapt and act efficiently as battalion commanders in the South African War. The chapter considers cultural influences and socialisation in civil and military life and how each of these worlds contributed to shaping the gendered identities of the protagonists. In other words, this is a chapter about boys growing up and becoming men, and men becoming military officers.

Consequently, Chapter One focuses on the relationship between metropolitan and military masculinity by examining the protagonists’ upbringing, education, and early career as officers. Still, before concentrating on the military world of men, it must first be considered how metropolitan masculinities formed part of the process. Using masculinities to refer to men’s gender in the nineteenth century is somewhat of an anachronism since masculinities is a contemporary term that came into usage in the late twentieth century.<sup>96</sup> Accordingly, there are multiple aspects by which contemporary men’s gender is discussed and reflected in the plural usage of masculinities.<sup>97</sup> During the Victorian period, John Tosh explains, manliness was “always used in the singular; it implied that there was a single standard of manhood, which was expressed in certain physical attributes and moral dispositions.”<sup>98</sup> As such, the chapter

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<sup>96</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Harlow, Pearson Education Limited, 2005), p. 2.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.



prefers the term manliness as it is more time appropriate and the only way men's gender should be considered in this context.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, manliness in this period, explains Joanne Begiato, "is profoundly associated with [war], [and] martial manliness shaped civilian masculinities in numerous ways."<sup>100</sup>

Following the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, soldiering became glamorous, and officers were considered romantic heroes.<sup>101</sup> In the 1850s, the idea of the sensitive soldier, or as Begiato puts it, the "military man of feeling who could combine gentleness and care with combat, was still powerful."<sup>102</sup> Militarism gained immense popularity during this period in Victorian society. Above all, says Begiato, "the army and navy offered spectacle in the form of reviews, parades, and drills, processions, music, and the military accoutrements of flags and trophies. People also took trips to see new warships, dubbed naval gazing."<sup>103</sup> Victorian daily life thus became saturated with all things military. Adverts persuaded consumers to buy foodstuffs featuring a soldier or sailor on it.<sup>104</sup> Popular entertainment was often military themed, with famous battles inspiring plays, circus performances, and pageants.<sup>105</sup> In Victorian popular culture, the image of the British army underwent a significant transformation, and towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, the British military officer was no longer regarded as villainous but instead regarded as virtuous.<sup>106</sup> In magazines and weeklies, young boys were presented with great stories glorifying war, sport and adventure in which masculine ideals such as courage, stoicism

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<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> Joanne Begiato, *Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900. Bodies, Emotion, and Material Culture* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2020), p. 10. Also see J.M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1986).

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 11. Also see Holly Furneaux, *Military Men of Feeling. Emotion, Touch, and Masculinity in the Crimean War* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016).

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., pp. 10-11.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>106</sup> James A. Mangan, 'Duty onto Death: English Masculinity in the Age of the New Imperialism', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*. 27, Nos. 1-2 (2010), pp. 129-36.

and sportsmanship were eulogised.<sup>107</sup> Playing fields were created, and mandatory team games were instituted in schools. Alongside these changes, the myth of the fair-playing gentleman sportsman was created. The idea of fair play was essentially designed as a practical tool to be employed on the playing fields and intended to encourage the noble instinct inherent to a gentleman and control savage behaviour within a controlled physical struggle.<sup>108</sup> Rupert Wilkinson states, “a prime characteristic of the public school gentleman ideal was to attach great importance to a dignified bearing and aura of command.”<sup>109</sup> Officer command equated to status. Moreover, officer status pointed to the importance of rank and class. All this romanticisation and glorification of the army was essentially about the officer class. Ordinary soldiers, on the other hand, were not romanticised nor glorified. For instance, Rudyard Kipling’s poem, ‘Tommy’, points out the hypocrisy in Victorian society as to the way the ordinary soldier was perceived as villainous.<sup>110</sup>

For this reason, the main discussion in Chapter One opens with an overview of the genealogy and heritage of the three main case studies. It considers the class into which the men were born and explains relevant nomenclature. In doing so, the section helps better understand the upper-class culture, its system and social structures. The following two sections are chronologically structured and periodised according to the life stages of the protagonists from birth to boyhood and barracks. The first of these two sections, ‘The Early Years: Growing up in Victorian Britain

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> M. Roper & J. Tosh, ‘Introduction: Historians and the Politics of Masculinity’, in M. Roper & J. Tosh (eds.), *Manful Assertions. Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London, Routledge, 1991), p. 2.

<sup>109</sup> Rupert Wilkinson, *The Prefects. British Leadership and the Public School Tradition. A Comparative Study* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 13-4.

<sup>110</sup> Rudyard Kipling, ‘Tommy’, The Kipling Society.

[https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poem/poems\\_tommy.htm](https://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/poem/poems_tommy.htm). (Accessed, 04/04/2023). Edward Peter Joshua Gosling examines reform attempts to improve the image of the ordinary soldier in late Victorian popular culture. For more see, Edward Peter Joshua Gosling, ‘Tommy Atkins, War Office Reform and the Social and Cultural Presence of the late Victorian Army in Britain, c. 1868-1899’ (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Plymouth University, 2015).

(1850-1870),’ covers the mid-Victorian period from when the protagonists were born, their formative years, and coming of age and investigates their upbringing, home and family life. Spaces and places are two themes of interest here regarding the socialisation of our protagonists. How both the home environment and public school conditioned young boys readying them to be soldiers and officers. Outside spaces where pretend war games were played, games at school, and public school living conditions resembling army barracks all contributed to the physical toughening of the body.

Above all, asks Geoffrey Best, “what direct contribution to military efficiency did the public schools make?”<sup>111</sup> In part, Best argues, it “has to do with character. If there was one thing all public schools believed they were good at and agreed on as their *raison d’être*, it was the education of character.”<sup>112</sup> Schooling, therefore, played an essential role in how a child was socialised. For example, Henniker’s mid-term Michaelmas report of 1868 at Eton recorded his overall conduct as “excellent.”<sup>113</sup> For a public schoolboy to be bestowed such high praise was attributed to having outstanding character, and, to the Victorians, where so much emphasis was placed on possessing good character, it certainly added gravitas for those like Henniker who were keen to advance in the world. Victorians placed considerable emphasis on the notion of character; character meant quality. If a person had character, then they would be of high calibre stock and a high degree of emphasis was placed on this attribute in all Victorian professions, the military included.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> G. Best, ‘Militarism and the Victorian Public School’, in B. Simon & I. Bradley (eds.), *The Victorian Public School. Studies in the Development of an Educational Institution* (Dublin, Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1975), p. 140.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/19/8, Letters to the Hon. Arthur Henniker, chiefly personal (1903-1911), 14/12/1868. To note, some of the files Henniker included in this folder date back to earlier years in his life. These must have been particularly poignant to him, and he filed them in a leather-bound book marked as personal, which he filed in turn inside the large folder book dated 1903 to 1911.

<sup>114</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2018), p. 14.

For this reason, the professional world and early careers of the three case studies are considered in the last part of Chapter One, ‘The Late Victorian Army: Commissions, Commands and Military Life (1870-1899)’. It demonstrates how Codrington, Henniker and Shute each followed a different path in obtaining their commission as each individual’s circumstances dictated. For example, Henniker’s father and grandfather attended Cambridge; thus, he first completed his studies there and followed the landed class’s tradition of service in the Militia during his time at university. On the other hand, Codrington was directly commissioned to the Coldstream Guards upon completing his schooling at Harrow. Finally, Shute, as the only one of our protagonists from a military family, followed a more formal military education path and attended cadet college.

All three individuals were commissioned into the elite Guards Brigade. The special status of the Guards is evident as they were principally placed first along with the Household Cavalry, the Rifle Brigade, and the King’s Royal Rifle Corps within the army ranking order.<sup>115</sup> The existence of the dual rank practice meant an officer of the Guards was allowed to carry two ranks. If he was an ensign in a Guards regiment, his army rank was lieutenant. A Guards lieutenant held the army rank of captain, and captain of the Guards carried the army rank of a lieutenant-colonel.<sup>116</sup> For example, Codrington’s father, Sir William Codrington, who held the dual rank of captain and lieutenant-colonel in the Coldstream Guards at the start of the Crimean War in 1854, was promoted as General Commanding-in-Chief in the Crimea after the siege of Sebastopol in 1855.<sup>117</sup> Sir Colin Campbell, commander of the Highland Brigade, was reportedly hoping to fill the position. Campbell, a brigadier-general when war broke out in

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>117</sup> Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914*, p. 18.

1854, was most upset at the appointment of Codrington, and left the Crimea for England.<sup>118</sup> He returned to the Crimea at the behest of Her Majesty, and Campbell, according to Edward M. Spiers, allegedly scoffed, “I have come out to serve under a man who, at the beginning of the war, commanded a company in the division in which I commanded a brigade.”<sup>119</sup>

When the dual-rank system was dissolved in 1872, a Guardsman could still carry the rank of captain and lieutenant-colonel, though only if the officer had attained the substantive rank of lieutenant-colonel by length of service.<sup>120</sup> Officers were promoted to colonel when they served on staff or commanded a battalion, but this changed in 1888. A major in the Guards could then expect a promotion to colonel when commanding a company.<sup>121</sup> In other words, says Ian F.W. Beckett, there appears to be “a correlation between ‘smart’ regiments”, such as the Guards and that of obtaining positions of “higher command.”<sup>122</sup> Such an expectation of command opportunities for an officer in the Guards thus reinforced the Guards’ unique status in the army hierarchy.

Furthermore, a Guardsman was required to carry out his duties correctly and diligently. For example, Shute was promoted to captain on 27 January 1891.<sup>123</sup> As captain, he was in charge of company supplies, clothing and equipment, ensuring the pay sergeant’s accounts were balanced.<sup>124</sup> Drill was the responsibility of the regimental adjutant, and the role of the sergeant-major was as an assistant.<sup>125</sup> The musketry instructor oversaw rifle shooting practice, all done

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., pp. 18-9.

<sup>120</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. 64.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>123</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, *Officers’ Statement of Services 1861-1913*, Miscellaneous, (1G3/A).

<sup>124</sup> Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914*, p. 22.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

per the guidelines issued by the School of Musketry.<sup>126</sup> Generally, writes Edward M. Spiers, “the commanding officer supported by his adjutant, quartermaster and sergeant-major, and aided by a phalanx of sergeant-majors and colour-sergeants, discharged almost all the duties connected with the discipline, feeding and wellbeing of the men.”<sup>127</sup> Apart from parades and other formal duties, Guards officers were expected to set an example to the other ranks in their decorum, deportment, leadership and officership.

Finally, the section will examine officers’ social life in the metropole and how regimental culture and the regiment were essential to socialising officers. It addresses how the socialisation and cultural conditioning of the case studies contributed to their gendered identity formation by drawing on various kinds of source material. In the case of Henniker, I consulted the extensive family archive held by the Suffolk Archives in Ipswich. Significantly, the private and unpublished primary source materials from the Henniker archive have never (as far as I am aware) been used to shed light on how cultural conditioning and socialisation contributed to a better understanding of middle command and leadership practices in the South African conflict. This collection of private correspondence mainly comprises personal letters, financial statements and other materials such as school reports, but also includes a selection of army correspondence relating to Henniker’s military career. Because of the vast amount of family papers, it is possible to provide a detailed account of the nature of Henniker’s homelife and upbringing as a wealthy landowner’s son, schooling, and participation in the Militia before his commission into the Coldstream Guards in 1875.

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

However, circumstances and time precluded me from conducting a full consultation of the Codrington of Dodington family papers held by the Gloucestershire Archives in Gloucester, but since Henniker's background and upbringing closely resemble that of Codrington's, observations based on Henniker's life can also shed light on Codrington's. Henniker and Codrington had a shared status, as both came from landed families forming part of the upper social class or nobility.<sup>128</sup> Indeed, they also had similar schooling experiences as both attended public schools; Codrington was at Harrow, while Henniker was at Eton College.<sup>129</sup> The voluminous Codrington family archive may reveal fresh insights in future, but for now, their shared commonalities of class, status and family can yield useful insights.

It must also be acknowledged that I encountered difficulties locating source material about the early life of Shute. For instance, his biological mother's details are unknown; there are no records of who she may have been. Shute never mentions anything about her in his later war correspondences, not in his diary or letters. Due to the absence of any reference to his biological mother, one can only speculate that Shute may not have known who she was or that she had died in childbirth, and as such, the memory of that was possibly a painful subject. There are no records of where Shute grew up, went to school, or any surviving family correspondence that might shed light on his formative years. Owing to the scarcity of information, I interviewed Major Robert De Lérisson Cazenove, the Coldstream Guards Regimental archivist at Wellington Barracks, who is Shute's great-nephew. Major De Lérisson Cazenove assisted where he could and kindly provided original photographs of some family members.

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<sup>128</sup>A. Zelazko, 'British Nobility', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 04/11/22. [www.britannica.com/topic/British-nobility](https://www.britannica.com/topic/British-nobility). (Accessed, 10/03/2023).

<sup>129</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Officers' Statement of Services*, (1G3/A).

What we know about Shute's early life is limited to the bare facts of his place of origin, and that he was born into a military family, about whose members there is some information available. Also, the twenty-year gap between Shute's birth to when he finished cadet college in 1880 remains a mystery. In light of this, I produced a general account of Shute's family background and early professional career by drawing on various primary and secondary materials. It includes scholarship on nineteenth-century army families and army life, and offers a general idea of what it may have been like for young Shute growing up and attending cadet college. Therefore, from what is known about Shute's ancestry, his military record and related documents, a more comprehensive account can be produced through which it is possible to track his professional career progression up to the point when he went to war in South Africa in 1899.





**Figure 1.** Colonel Alfred Edward 'Coddy' Codrington.

**Source:** Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Albums and Scrapbooks, South Africa 1899-1902, (1V15).



**Figure 2.** Major Arthur Henry Henniker.

**Source:** Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Albums and Scrapbooks, South Africa 1899-1902, (1V15).





**Figure 3.** Major Henry 'Harry' Gwynn Dean Shute.

**Source:** Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Albums and Scrapbooks, South Africa 1899-1902, (1V15).

# I

## The Case Studies: An Introduction

Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute, the youngest of the three protagonists, was born on 4 December 1860 in India.<sup>130</sup> Shute’s grandfather was Thomas Dean Shute, son of Samuel Shute and Henrietta Anna Margarete Gwyn, and his grandmother was Charlotte Cameron, daughter of General William Neville Cameron, a Royal Engineer in the East India Company born in Calcutta in India on 12 May 1794.<sup>131</sup> Thomas and Charlotte married on 24 January 1815 at St. Mary, Ealing, London, England.<sup>132</sup> Thomas and Charlotte had a son, Shute’s father, Charles Cameron Shute, who was born on 3 January 1816 at Burton, Christchurch, in Hampshire.<sup>133</sup> Charles was schooled at Winchester College; he started his military career with the 13<sup>th</sup> Light Dragoons in 1835 and, in 1839, served with distinction during the campaign in the Kurnool region, India.<sup>134</sup> A promotion that the same year saw him rise to the rank of lieutenant.<sup>135</sup> Lieutenant Charles Shute transferred to the 6<sup>th</sup> Inniskilling Dragoons in 1840 and was on active duty in the Crimean War from 1854 to 1856; during this time, in 1854, he was promoted once more to major.<sup>136</sup> After that, Major Charles Shute was the commanding officer of the 6<sup>th</sup> Inniskilling Dragoons from 1855 to 1860.<sup>137</sup> In 1861 Major Charles retired from the army with the brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel but, in 1862, re-joined the military as regimental

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<sup>130</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Officers’ Statement of Services*, (1G3/A).

<sup>131</sup> *The Peerage. A Genealogical Survey of the Peerage of Britain as well as the Royal Families of Europe*, Thomas Dean Shute, Person Page – 71122. <http://thepeerage.com/p71122.htm#i711213>. (Accessed, 20/01/2023).

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Who’s Who & Who Was Who*, General Sir Charles Cameron Shute. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ww/9780199540884.013.U190918>. (Accessed, 20/01/2023).

<sup>135</sup> *The London Gazette*, 10/05/1839. <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/19732/page/969>. (Accessed, 20/01/2023).

<sup>136</sup> *The London Gazette*, 23/06/1854. <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/21565/page/1948>. (Accessed, 20/01/2023).

<sup>137</sup> *The Peerage. A Genealogical Survey of the Peerage of Britain as well as the Royal Families of Europe*, General Sir Charles Cameron Shute, Person Page – 71122. <http://thepeerage.com/p71122.htm#i711213>. (Accessed, 20/01/2023).

commander of the 4<sup>th</sup> Royal Irish Dragoon Guards until 1871, when he was promoted to Major-General.<sup>138</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Charles married Emma Caroline Rhoda Dowler, Shute's stepmother, in 1862. Emma was the daughter of Reverend Henry Turnour Dowler and Frances Harriet Emma Dickenson and granddaughter of Eliza, Lady Boughton (**Figure 4**) and Captain Newton Dickinson of the Coldstream Guards. Charles and Emma had a daughter, Charlotte Isabel Augustin, Shute's half-sister, born in 1863 (**Figure 5**).<sup>139</sup>



**Figure 4.** Eliza, Lady Boughton.

**Source:** Personal Collection of the De Lérisson Cazenove family.

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<sup>138</sup> *Who's Who & Who Was Who*, General Sir Charles Cameron Shute.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/ww/9780199540884.013.U190918>. (Accessed, 20/01/2023).

*The London Gazette*, 15/02/1861. <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/22480/page/653>. (Accessed, 04/04/2023).

<sup>139</sup> *The Peerage. A Genealogical Survey of the Peerage of Britain as well as the Royal Families of Europe*, General Sir Charles Cameron Shute, Person Page – 71122. <http://thepeerage.com/p71122.htm#i711213>. (Accessed, 20/01/2023).





**Figure 5.** Charlotte Isabel Augustin Shute.

**Source:** Personal Collection of the De Lérisson Cazenove family.

The second oldest of the protagonists is Arthur Henry Henniker, the third son of John, fourth Baron Henniker, and Anna Kerrison, Lady Henniker, born on 3 April 1855 in London.<sup>140</sup> Henniker's father, was a member of the peerage. The peerage is structured as a hierarchy, and status is determined, ranked and ordered by the position of seniority from highest to lowest: duke, marquess, earl, viscount, and baron.<sup>141</sup> Collectively, these nobles are known as peers, individuals upon whom an honourable title is bestowed.<sup>142</sup> Henniker's grandfather, John Minet, third Baron Henniker, the son of John, second Baron Henniker, was born on 19 April 1752. Schooled at Eton, John Minet then took up his studies at St. John's College, Cambridge, first completing a master's degree (MA), followed by his doctoral studies, and was awarded an LLD (Doctor of Law).<sup>143</sup> A barrister by profession, he became Member of Parliament (MP) for Romney from 1785 to 1790. Lord Henniker (John Minet Henniker) later married Mary Chafy, first daughter of the Reverend William Chafy of Canterbury and his wife, Mary, on 1 January 1799. They had eight children, of whom the eldest son, John, born on 3 February 1801, would later become fourth Baron Henniker of Stratford-upon-Slaney.<sup>144</sup> He likewise attended Eton and completed his MA at St. John's College, Cambridge. Lord Henniker (John Henniker) followed in his father's footsteps as a barrister and practised law at Lincoln's Inn, later becoming MP for East Suffolk from 1832 to 1847, again from 1856 to 1866 and High Sherriff of Suffolk in 1853.<sup>145</sup>

John, fourth Baron Henniker, married Anna Kerrison on 5 January 1837. They had five children. John Major, the eldest son, was born on 7 November 1842. When his father died in

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<sup>140</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/19/1, Letters and papers of General the Hon. Arthur Henry Henniker-Major (1855-1909), 03/04/1855.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> C. Mosley (ed.), *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage* (Delaware, Burke's Peerage & Gentry LLC., 2003), p. lxxxii.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., pp. 1870-1.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid.

1870, he inherited the Thornham estate as the firstborn male heir and became John, fifth Baron Henniker.<sup>146</sup> The second oldest brother was Edward Minet, born on 3 February 1848, who would later become vice-consul for St. Malo in 1880 and again from 1902 to 1919. After Henniker, the third eldest son, there were also two younger sisters, Mary and Anne.<sup>147</sup> The Henniker children's grandfather on their mother's side was Lieutenant-General Sir Edward Kerrison, first Baronet of Oakley and Brome.<sup>148</sup> A baronet, explains Beckett, holds "a lesser hereditary title [that does not] convey the rank of peer."<sup>149</sup> Nevertheless, the baronetcy (their collective term) shares commonalities with the aristocrats, even though they are not formally classed nobility.<sup>150</sup>

The third and oldest of the case studies is Alfred Edward 'Coddy' Codrington, born on 4 May 1854 in London, also a descendant of a baronet.<sup>151</sup> He was the second son of General Sir William Codrington and Mary Ames, Woman of the Bedchamber to Queen Victoria.<sup>152</sup> Codrington's great ancestor, William Codrington of Dodington, County Gloucester, was made baronet when the Codrington of Dodington baronetcy was created on 21 April 1721. He died in 1738. Sir William Codrington, second Baronet of Dodington, became embroiled in a family feud with his son, William. It is unclear exactly when the disagreement occurred, but owing to the seriousness of the rift, Sir William Codrington, second Baronet of Dodington, disowned his son and passed on his properties to his great-nephew Christopher William Codrington.<sup>153</sup> Because of some confusion about whether the 1721 baronetcy title was, in fact, part of the

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. xvii.

<sup>150</sup> A. Zelazko, 'British Nobility', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 04/11/22. [www.britannica.com/topic/British-nobility](http://www.britannica.com/topic/British-nobility). (Accessed, 10/03/2023).

<sup>151</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Officers' Statement of Services*, (1G3/A).

<sup>152</sup> Mosley, *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage*, p. lxxxii.

<sup>153</sup> Mosley, *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage*, p. lxxxii.



bequeathment of the Codrington estate, there followed a further dispute lasting sixty years between Christopher William and his father, also called Christopher, both of whom adopted the title of baronet, although only Christopher William was heir to the landholdings of Sir William Codrington, second Baronet of Dodington.<sup>154</sup> When a further Codrington of Dodington baronetcy was created on 25 February 1876, it fell to Christopher William's son, who became Sir Gerald William Henry Codrington, first Baronet Codrington of Dodington.<sup>155</sup>

Having said that, all male ancestors of Sir William Codrington, first Baronet Codrington of Dodington's fourth son, Edward, were in remainder to the 1721 and the 1876 baronetcies.<sup>156</sup> The phrase 'in remainder', as explained by *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage*, refers to "terms under which a hereditary title of honour may be transmitted ... [and] anyone in remainder to a title is a potential inheritor of it."<sup>157</sup> In other words, Codrington's grandfather, Sir Edward Codrington, born on 27 April 1770, would have been in remainder to the baronetcy. As titled gentry, Beckett states, "baronets took precedence over those holding other knighthoods."<sup>158</sup> Knighthoods are honorary titles which are not inherited.<sup>159</sup> The Most Honourable Order of the Bath (CB), an Order of Chivalry, was first created in 1725 and, in 1815, was expanded to award junior officers for distinguished service or gallant conduct.<sup>160</sup> Progressively these were awarded solely for distinguished service, but this practice changed in 1856 with the creation of the Victoria Cross (VC) that extended to distinguished service in all ranks.<sup>161</sup> For his gallantry in the Crimea, Sir Charles Shute was awarded the Victoria Cross in

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<sup>154</sup> Mosley, *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage*, p. 845.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 845-7.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 846.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxxxii.

<sup>158</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. xvii.

<sup>159</sup> Mosley, *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage*, p. lxxxii.

<sup>160</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. xvii.

Beckett provides a neat summary of the rankings of the Orders of Chivalry here.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*

1869.<sup>162</sup> In 1886 the Distinguished Service Order (DSO) was established to recognise outstanding leadership, and the creation of the DSO resulted from the CB not being deemed suitable to reflect a leadership award.<sup>163</sup> General Sir Charles Cameron Shute (**Figure 6**) was appointed Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath (KCB).<sup>164</sup> These awards, or Orders of Chivalry, are ranked by precedence according to the date of their creation.<sup>165</sup> Sir Edward Codrington, Codrington's grandfather, was appointed Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath (GCB) in 1815; Knight of the Order of St. Lazarus; and Knight of the Order of St. George of Greece.<sup>166</sup>

Sir Edward married Jane Hall on 27 December 1802, and they had a son, William John, born on 26 November 1804. William John, like his father, would later be appointed Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath (GCB).<sup>167</sup> Sir Edward enjoyed a prestigious military career; an admiral, he commanded HMS Orion at the battle of Trafalgar in 1805 and the allied fleets at Navarino in 1827.<sup>168</sup> As with his father, Sir William also had an illustrious military career. A colonel in the Coldstream Guards, Sir William fought in the Crimean War and in 1855 became commander-in-chief of the British forces in the Crimea.<sup>169</sup> Codrington's ancestry resembles Henniker's, characterised by his privileged background, upper-class prestige and status. Thus, seeing as the two cases share these characteristics, it is to Henniker's story that we now turn to shed light on the experience of growing up as a boy from a landed family in Victorian Britain.

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<sup>162</sup> *Who's Who & Who Was Who*, General Sir Charles Cameron Shute.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/ww/9780199540884.013.U190918>. (Accessed, 20/01/2023).

<sup>163</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. xvii.

<sup>164</sup> *The Peerage. A Genealogical Survey of the Peerage of Britain as well as the Royal Families of Europe*, General Sir Charles Cameron Shute, Person Page – 71122. <http://thepeerage.com/p71122.htm#i711213>. (Accessed, 20/01/2023); *Who's Who & Who Was Who*, General Sir Charles Cameron Shute. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ww/9780199540884.013.U190918>. (Accessed, 20/01/2023).

<sup>165</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. xvii.

<sup>166</sup> Mosley, *Burke's Peerage, Baronetage & Knightage*, p. 846.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*



**Figure 6.** General Sir Charles Cameron Shute.  
**Source:** Personal Collection of the De Lérisson Cazenove family.

## II

### The Early Years: Growing up in Victorian Britain (1850-1870)

Arthur Henry Henniker was baptised on 25 April 1855 at the Parish of St. George, an Anglican church in Hanover Square, London.<sup>170</sup> At that time, the Hennikers resided in their townhouse on Upper Grosvenor Street in Mayfair.<sup>171</sup> A townhouse in the metropole, especially in Mayfair, was a powerful symbol of landed wealth and prestige. As Christopher Otley remarks, it “would be the focus of a portion of ‘society’ [where the landowner] would move easily amongst the great and the powerful.”<sup>172</sup> The Hennikers divided their time between the townhouse and their vast country estate, Thornham, located in the High Suffolk region and known for its dairy farming back in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (**Figure 7**).<sup>173</sup>

As F.M.L. Thompson asserts, “property in land was not merely immovable, and therefore a guarantee that its owner would have an inescapable attachment to the concerns of a particular locality, but it also formed a real, tangible and visible domain, a territory naturally felt to be under the authority of its owner.”<sup>174</sup> Such authority and power were evident as the vast Henniker estate comprised the great Thornham Hall and several farms, such as Red House Farm, presumed to be the estate’s main farm.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> Suffolk Archives, Henniker-Major, Letters and papers, 03/04/1855.

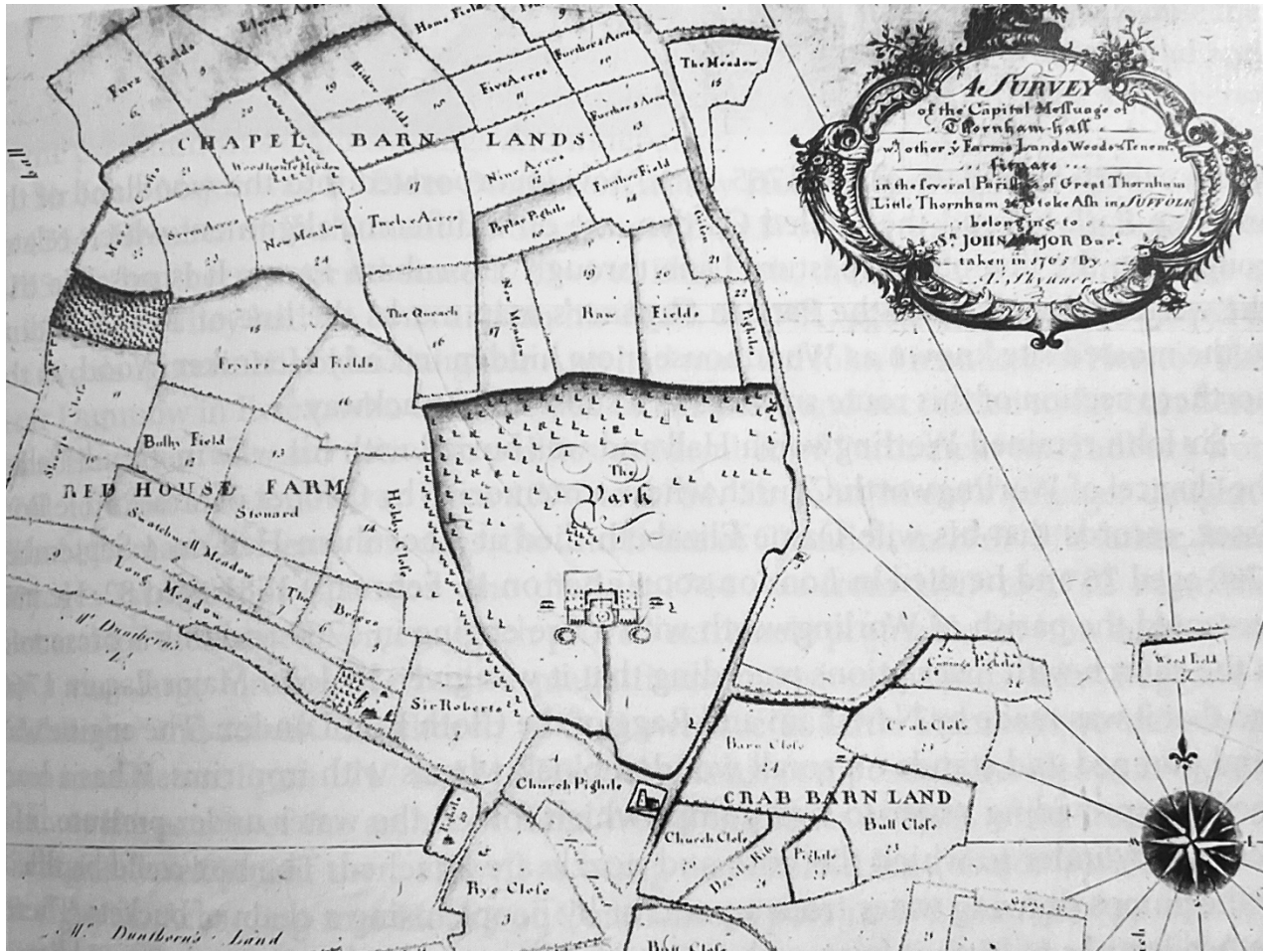
<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Otley, ‘The Origins and Recruitment of the British Army Elite, 1870-1959’, p. 25.

<sup>173</sup> John Fairclough & Mike Hardy, *Thornham and the Waveney Valley. A Landscape Explored* (King’s Lynn, Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd., 2004), p. 161.

<sup>174</sup> F.M.L. Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century* (London, Routledge, 2007), p. 6.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid., p. 179.



**Figure 7.** A 1765 map of the Thornham Estate.

**Source:** John Fairclough & Mike Hardy, *Thornham and the Waveney Valley. A Landscape Explored* (King's Lynn, Heritage Marketing and Publications Ltd., 2004), p. 165.





**Figure 8.** John, fourth Baron Henniker.

**Source:** Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/23/1/102, Box of Photographs (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> Century).

As a landowner, it was the duty of John, fourth Baron Henniker (**Figure 8**) to see to the provision of gainful employment for the grand estate servants and staff.<sup>176</sup> The census of 1851, for example, recorded that twenty staff resided at Thornham Hall that, according to authors John Fairclough and Mike Hardy, included:

A Swiss butler and his English wife, a housekeeper, a nurse and nursemaid, a stillroom maid, a governess, a French gardener, a needlewoman, a housemaid, four kitchen maids, a lady's maid, a cook, a labourer and two footmen, who stoked the fires in all the rooms.<sup>177</sup>

Ten years later, in 1861, the census showed a reduced number in the staff of thirteen at the Hall, but this could be in consequence of some of the other servants accompanying the family to other locations at the time of the recording.<sup>178</sup> Nevertheless, the estate staff and servants who were part of the census count at Thornham Hall in 1861 offer additional insights, as we know their names, their positions, and how they formed part of the workings of such a vast estate. For instance, there was Mary Cobb, the housekeeper, and John Perkins, the man in charge of Thornham's gardens.<sup>179</sup> For spiritual guidance, there was the Reverend James Farr and his wife, who lived in the Rectory with their three children and four servants. The estate also had two bailiffs. The primary bailiff of the estate, John Wilby, was housed at Red House Farm, and the secondary bailiff, James Smith, was at Street Farm.<sup>180</sup>

There were also tenant farmers cultivating the land of the estate. These farmers included Daniel Lamb, who farmed sixty-five acres of land and had four men and three boys as his workers. At Dog House Farm, renamed in later years as Grove Farm, Edward Dove farmed three hundred and twenty acres of land with the help of ten men and six boys. Lastly, at Star House Farm,

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<sup>176</sup> Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 5.

<sup>177</sup> Fairclough & Hardy, *Thornham and the Waveney Valley. A Landscape Explored*, pp. 200-1.

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.*

Alfred Cracknel worked one hundred and sixty acres of land, assisted by seven men and four boys.<sup>181</sup> Moreover, Charles Cubitt was employed as a schoolmaster and had his residence at the Lodge. There was also a governess at the Hall and a schoolmistress at Star House Farm.<sup>182</sup> Finally, a woodman was employed at the Gate House, gamekeepers at Chickery and Dormans Hall, a miller at Mill House and an innkeeper at the Horseshoes.<sup>183</sup>

Additionally, part of Lord Henniker's responsibility was to ensure that the properties on his estate were well maintained and that any necessary renovations were carried out.<sup>184</sup> Between September and October 1842, renovating work was ordered to improve the Red House, located on Red House Farm. It was a busy time for the estate workers.<sup>185</sup> Later on, in 1864, further remodelling was done to Red House, which also included building a vast property for Red House Farm's bailiff to live in.<sup>186</sup> Thornham Hall, too underwent renovation between 1839 and 1842 when the front-facing was converted to resemble a French *chateau* from white clay bricks made on estate grounds.<sup>187</sup> However, it was not an easy process, as Thornham estate steward Rolf Martin worryingly noted on 3 October 1842 that he "feared the whet [sic] [weather] would spoil those clay bricks. I should like to get them somewhere else undercover."<sup>188</sup> Despite threatening weather conditions, the remodelling was completed. When renovations first began in 1839, the previous estate steward of Thornham Hall, Sam Ennis, updated Lord Henniker on 12 May on how everything was progressing:

My Lord, I have to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's kind remittance of one thousand pounds on account of work done at Thornham Hall ... this week I shall have all the joiners work repaid ... Meady for the arcade ... also the

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, p. 181.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> David Morse, *High Victorian Culture* (London, Macmillan, 1993), p. 3.

<sup>185</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/4/10, Correspondence and papers of Lord and Lady Henniker [4<sup>th</sup> Baron] (1833-1843), 24/09/1841.

<sup>186</sup> Fairclough & Hardy, *Thornham and the Waveney Valley. A Landscape Explored*, p. 179.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid., pp. 179-80.

<sup>188</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/4/10, Henniker, Correspondence, 03/10/1842.



windows. I hope [to] forward the drawing request for the crescent works early [so] that no delay may occur. I shall soon be ready for more works to keep the men all at work.<sup>189</sup>

Not long after, Sam again wrote to Lord Henniker in October, this time to inform him that the flooring work for Thornham Hall was proceeding well.<sup>190</sup> Notably, the renovations at Red House and Thornham Hall demonstrate not only his wealth but also that it meant Lord Henniker was in the position to employ several skilled tradesmen and workers.<sup>191</sup> Lord Henniker was frequently petitioned by those wishing to procure gainful employment in the hope that he would use his standing and influence to their benefit. For example, there was a young man, Mr. Sheppard, who, in desperation, reached out to Lord Henniker, begging him:

To have the goodness to afford me your assistance to obtain for me appointment in the Public or Private Services or [an] appointment in the War Office, or Ordnance Officer, of which office I am eligible to be admitted. Should the appointment not be in your Lordship's power to obtain, I hope your Lordship will intervene [on] my behalf to procure a Clerkship in the East India Companies' Service, or employment in any other department ... for something to do.<sup>192</sup>

It is unclear whether Sheppard ultimately was successful in his petition. However, the vast amount of other correspondence illustrates the gratitude of successful petitioners. As demonstrated in a letter written by W. MacFarlane, who wanted to “offer his Lordship my most grateful thanks, for his Lordship having so kindly endeavoured to use his influence on my behalf, for which I shall ever feel myself under an obligation to his Lordship.”<sup>193</sup> In addition, Lord Henniker was an active participant in organising and funding many local charitable causes locally such as the construction of new churches.<sup>194</sup> Lord Henniker's benevolence also extended to those in need in the metropolis, as he was politically well-known, and other

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<sup>189</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/4/10, Henniker, Correspondence, 12/05/1839.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid., 10/10/1839.

<sup>191</sup> Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 5.

<sup>192</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/4/11, Henniker, Correspondence, 24/12/1833.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 21/12/1841.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

members of London's high society could press upon him for help in supporting charitable causes which required financial assistance. In November 1841, for example, he was approached by the National Benevolent Institution on behalf of Mr. John Creasy, No. 2, St. Mary's Place, Greenwich Road:

A Drawing-master for 47 years past, but now, owing to his age (68 years) totally unprovided for. His case, it is humbly hoped, has peculiar claims on your benevolence, from the fact of his being DEAF and DUMB, which, added to infirmities of decaying nature, render him incompetent for personal exertion.<sup>195</sup>

Lord Henniker also contributed twelve pounds a year to the Royal Naval Female School to help reduce fees for the daughters of naval officers who could not afford to pay the total amount.<sup>196</sup> His other charitable causes included the School for the Indigent Blind, St. George's Fields in Surrey, which selected eight male and five female pupils in need who would receive sponsorship.<sup>197</sup> Jose Harris argues that "organised charity" was "frequently instanced as the characteristic medium for Victorian upper-class dealings with the poor."<sup>198</sup> Indeed, Lord Henniker's charitable actions and benevolence indicated he was someone who, as a member of the ruling upper class, was a principled paternalist and took his responsibilities to rule, guide and help others very seriously.<sup>199</sup> One such individual he helped was the civil engineer Robert Stephenson who contacted Lord Henniker to discuss a proposed railway line that would run from Ipswich to Norwich and go through the Thornham Estate.<sup>200</sup> Stephenson needed investors, and Lord Henniker considered the proposed railway worthy of financial investment. In a letter dated 17 November 1841, Lord Henniker's willingness to fund this project is evident when Stephenson referred to "our conversation this morning respecting the estimate of the Yarmouth

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 09/11/1841.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 10/11/1841.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid., 18/01/1842.

<sup>198</sup> Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit. A Social History of Britain 1870-1914* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 39.

<sup>199</sup> David Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England* (London, Routledge, 2016), pp. 4-5.

<sup>200</sup> Fairclough & Hardy, *Thornham and the Waveney Valley. A Landscape Explored*, p. 187.

and Norwich Railway, I have not the least hesitation in stating that the amount exceeds what will be required.”<sup>201</sup> On the back of the letter, Stephenson wrote “prospectus” and jotted down a few ideas of what he wanted to call the new line, “Yarmouth and Norwich Railway Stephenson’s, or Valley Line.”<sup>202</sup> It all became a reality when, in December 1849, the Eastern Union Railway line was officially opened and later became part of the Great Eastern Railway in 1862.<sup>203</sup> Because of this, the landscape and surrounding Suffolk countryside changed forever.<sup>204</sup> The building of railways was a vast undertaking. As David Morse notes, “between 1840 and 1870, more than 15,000 miles of railways had been opened, which was one-half of the total amount of railway construction in the whole of Europe.”<sup>205</sup> Lord Henniker’s interest in railways and subsequent investment in Stephenson’s project significantly benefited the local community, the wider Suffolk region and beyond.<sup>206</sup>

Lord Henniker demonstrated a paternalistic attitude characteristic of the mid-Victorian landowner; it was father-like towards those in his care, yet commanding and demanding deference in return. The estate workers, tenant farmers, and estate servants were Lord Henniker’s dependants.<sup>207</sup> Naturally, the Henniker children were the primary dependants looking to their parents for guidance and care. Christopher Blackwood Otley argues that children from landed families “as a rule had stern authoritarian parents demanding and securing instant obedience”, accustoming them “to the heavy yoke of authority” and providing “a model on which to base their own personal development.”<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/4/21, Henniker, Correspondence, 17/11/1841.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Fairclough & Hardy, *Thornham and the Waveney Valley. A Landscape Explored*, p. 187.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Morse, *High Victorian Culture*, p. 2.

<sup>206</sup> Thompson, *English Landed Society in the Nineteenth Century*, pp. 4; 17.

<sup>207</sup> Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England*, p. 3.

<sup>208</sup> Otley, ‘The Origins and Recruitment of the British Army Elite, 1870-1959’, p. 27.

However, it could be said that the Henniker children were an exception to this rule, as it seems they grew up in a loving household. Lord Henniker called his wife “treasure” in letters; to Anna Kerrison, Lady Henniker, her husband was her “own dearest.”<sup>209</sup> For example, less than a month before Henniker’s birth, on 10 March 1855, she begins her letter with “my own dearest” and confides in Lord Henniker that she had been thinking about the upcoming event often, saying that she is worried about the labour but that she hopes the baby will be healthy.<sup>210</sup> Another of Lady Henniker’s notes further confirmed the warm relationship between her and her husband when she wrote, “I felt your warm kiss upon my cheek, long after you gave it.”<sup>211</sup> Annie, as she was informally known, was an attentive and loving mother to Henniker, and he would later attribute his caring nature and concern for the wellbeing of others to her mothering of him.<sup>212</sup>

When she was younger, Anna Kerrison kept a scrapbook, from which we can learn a lot about her personality and character that gives insight into why Henniker would say that she was caring and attentive as a mother. In keeping with such female leisure reading practices of the time, Anna copied poems and short stories onto the pages of her scrapbook with meticulously formed letters, her clear and fine handwriting done with deliberate and slow pen strokes (**Figure 9**).<sup>213</sup> Religion was important to her. She put newspaper clippings in her scrapbook about choral and instrumental performances and rehearsals in Westminster Abbey. Her faith

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<sup>209</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/4/20, Letters from Anna [Kerrison] Lady Henniker, to her husband, John 4<sup>th</sup> Baron Henniker (1837-1868), n.d.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 10/03/1855.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., n.d.

<sup>212</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 10/05/1900.

<sup>213</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/14/1, Scrapbook marked ‘Anna Kerrison 1833’ (1833-1836). For more on scrapbooks and female reading practices see, Leigh Ina Hunt, ‘Victorian Passion to Modern Phenomenon: A Literary and Rhetorical Analysis of Two Hundred Years of Scrapbooks and Scrapbook Making’ (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, The University of Texas at Austin, 2006); Alexis Easley, ‘Scrapbooks and Women’s Leisure Reading Practices, 1825-60’, *Nineteenth Century Gender Studies*. 15, No. 2 (2019), pp. 1-28.

may explain why Henniker excelled in Divinity, for which he received the highest marks in the class, according to his report in 1868 at Eton.<sup>214</sup> She was also artistic, sketched and painted; her scrapbook illustrates her preference for landscapes and houses (**Figure 10**).<sup>215</sup> As Otley states, “the nature of the relationship between the parent and the child helps to establish the child’s basic character structure.”<sup>216</sup> As such, how the parent nurtures a child contributes to how the child’s identity is formed and developed.

Moreover, nature and the outside spaces of the Thornham Estate provided the perfect environment for young Henniker to learn to shoot, fish, swim, and ride horses and, in general, toughen him up.<sup>217</sup> It can be said that the estate grounds were a training ground for a boy growing up to attain his physical manliness. Indeed, Otley remarks, “young men from such backgrounds inevitably developed stamina, field-craft, wood-craft and other skills which could readily be turned to military purposes.”<sup>218</sup> Like many sons of landed families, Henniker held the army in high regard. He admired his grandfather’s esteemed service in the military, read books about chivalrous soldiers, acted out mock battles, played toy soldiers, and drilled his siblings as if they were on parade, playing dress-up in military uniforms.<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>214</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), Henniker, Letters, 14/12/1868.

<sup>215</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), Kerrison, Scrapbook, 1833-1836.

<sup>216</sup> Otley, ‘The Origins and Recruitment of the British Army Elite, 1870-1959’, p. 9.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>218</sup> Otley, ‘The Origins and Recruitment of the British Army Elite, 1870-1959’, p. 27.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.



The two Bees—

Two Bees soared forth one sunny day,  
Early in the month of May,  
To get their winter store.  
The wise one gathered from the flowers  
Honey, in the fragrant bowers  
Which on his thighs he bore—

The other, careless, only sought  
To gratify his present thought,  
And to a plial flew;  
There, feeding on delicious sweets,  
A suffocating death he meets:  
Insuperate Pro. Adieu!

E. G. Harrison. St.  
Lang 31. 1831.

**Figure 9.** Poem by Anna Kerrison.

**Source:** Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/14/1, Scrapbook marked 'Anna Kerrison 1833' (1833-1836).



**Figure 10.** Sketch by Anna Kerrison.

**Source:** Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/14/1, Scrapbook marked 'Anna Kerrison 1833' (1833-1836).

Young Shute had quite a different experience. He would move wherever his father was posted as a military officer, and this possibly included several different localities and countries. As far as can be surmised, Shute probably spent some of his early life in India, where his father was on garrison duty. As Richard H. Sinnreich writes, “service in India, in particular, tended to attract ... officers ... [who] preferred the subcontinent’s greater opportunities for active combat experience, or simply sought a more exotic lifestyle [and] to pursue sports ranging from polo, pig-sticking, and spear hunting from horseback to big-game hunting.”<sup>220</sup> Moreover, explains Anthony Clayton, officers could expect:

Pleasant mess buildings with verandas, gardens and tennis courts. Officers would have at least three or four personal servants, with several more if they possessed a number of horses and ponies. Officers became members of the local Europeans-only club; both clubs and regiments organised a variety of theatrical and sporting activities.<sup>221</sup>

As the son of an army officer, young Shute would inevitably also have played toy soldiers and re-enacted battles like Henniker did with his siblings at Thornham. However, Shute’s upbringing was militaristic by nature; growing up in an army family meant that from an early age, Shute would likely have been exposed to stories of chivalric soldiering, of heroes and victory, the stuff that inspires young minds to become army officers.<sup>222</sup> Notably, military boys like Shute learnt to be obedient early on in their lives, often because they had authoritarian officer fathers, whose disciplinary parenting manner would have inculcated strong values of obligation and duty when they were growing up.<sup>223</sup> Having said that, Codrington and Henniker, as sons of landed parents, also knew the importance of duty, obligation and service because of the responsibility of the landed towards those of lesser social standing. In this regard, public

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<sup>220</sup> R.H. Sinnreich, ‘An Army Apart. The Influence of Culture on the Victorian Army’, in P.R. Mansoor & W. Murray (eds.), *The Culture of Military Organizations* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019), pp. 157; 169.

<sup>221</sup> Anthony Clayton, *The British Officer. Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present* (Harrow, Pearson Education Limited, 2007), pp. 130-131.

<sup>222</sup> Otley, ‘The Origins and Recruitment of the British Army Elite, 1870-1959’, pp. 36-40.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-8.



schools similarly reinforced the notion that being upper-class and attending an elite school meant one was responsible for others and must be concerned for their wellbeing. In addition, public schools subscribed to the same ethos of martial manliness: a boy needed to be physically tough, and he ought to be a skilled sportsman who also enjoyed activities outdoors.<sup>224</sup> The future gentleman officer was required to be a willing participant in all sporting activities, from field events that would include horse racing and team games like polo and cricket,<sup>225</sup> as well as early forms of rugby and football. Significantly, public schools were boys-only institutions. Because of this, they created male spaces where boys could indulge in being in the company of males, form friendships and become comrades without the intrusion of the female presence.<sup>226</sup> The public school fostered a homosocial culture that contributed to preparing for the military and life in the army.

During his time at Eton, Henniker often wrote to his parents. His letters provide interesting insights into his school experience and the kinds of topics he discussed and how he phrased them. The tone is conversational, and his enthusiasm for making new friends is palpable. His letters also convey the positive nature of the relationship that he had with his parents:

Dear Father, Many happy returns of the day. I am not quite shure [sic] which day your birthday is neither the first or third at all event I had better be in time so I suppose it to be the first. I will sent you a preasent [sic] as soon as I can get one that I think you would like. I will write and tell you how I get on soon. I have no more to say. Love to all. Especially to yourself. I am your most affectionate son, Arthur.<sup>227</sup>

Henniker's letters show a considerate young boy and a devoted son. Football, in particular, was a frequent favourite that Henniker mentioned in his letters home. In one to his father, dated 11

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<sup>224</sup> J. Keegan, 'Regimental Ideology', in G. Best & A. Wheatcroft (eds.), *War, Economy and the Military Mind* (London, Croom Helm Ltd., 1976), p. 9.

<sup>225</sup> Sinnreich, 'An Army Apart. The Influence of Culture on the Victorian Army', p. 168.

<sup>226</sup> Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 107.

<sup>227</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), Henniker, Letters, n/d.

October 1868, he seems disappointed as he complained there had only been one game to date.<sup>228</sup> However, his disappointment was short-lived as more games followed, and a month later, in a letter to his mother on 6 November, Henniker boasts, “I got a goal in a lower boy match the other day.”<sup>229</sup> A decade earlier, though, Eton had few games on offer, only occasional boating and cricket.<sup>230</sup> Nevertheless, it had all changed when Henniker began his studies at Eton because, from 1860 onwards, games in public schools were mandatory and sporting activities became more structured.<sup>231</sup>

### III

## The Late Victorian Army: Commissions, Commands and Military Life (1870-1890)

From 1874 to 1875, Henniker attended Magdelene College, Cambridge, where he read for his Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree.<sup>232</sup> While at Cambridge, Henniker was also active in the Militia, a reserve force.<sup>233</sup> The Militia, as Otley puts it, was “commanded exclusively by the landed class and responsible only to parliament.”<sup>234</sup> Indeed, it has been argued that being in the Militia was somewhat of an aristocratic pastime.<sup>235</sup> According to Geoffrey Best, the Militia was a “post-public school military experience [and] the backdoor into the army.”<sup>236</sup> That being so, for university graduates such as Henniker, the Militia made it possible for him to pursue a

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<sup>228</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), Henniker, Letters, 11/10/1868.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., 06/11/1868.

<sup>230</sup> David Newsome, *Godliness & Good Learning. Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal* (London, John Murray, 1961), p. 224.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid., p. 222.

<sup>232</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Officers' Statement of Services*, (1G3/A).

<sup>233</sup> Ibid.

<sup>234</sup> Otley, ‘The Origins and Recruitment of the British Army Elite, 1870-1959’, p. 2.

<sup>235</sup> Best, ‘Militarism and the Victorian Public School’, p. 139.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid., p. 132.

military career.<sup>237</sup> Following the abolition of purchase of commissions in 1871, Richard H. Sinnreich writes, “the most common route to a commission became the public school, either by direct commission or via Sandhurst or Woolwich.”<sup>238</sup> It was certainly the case for Codrington. After he completed his schooling at Harrow, on 1 February 1873, the eighteen-year-old Codrington, a tall young man fluent in French and German, obtained his commission as lieutenant to the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards.<sup>239</sup> During his time in the Militia, Henniker had already started to show signs of a promising military career ahead, as seen in an inspection report on 7 September 1874: “the Adjutant and the Permanent Staff [are congratulated] for their hearty co-operation in endeavouring to maintain efficiency, as well as to the men for their attention and good conduct.”<sup>240</sup> In the same way, when Henniker completed his training at the School of Musketry a month later on 3 October, his report, signed with the seal of John Edward Cornwallis, Earl of Stradbroke, Custos Rotulorum and Lord Lieutenant of the County of Suffolk certified:

Lieutenant Hon., A.H. Henniker-Major of the Suffolk Militia, underwent a course of training at the School of Musketry, Hythe, and that he is perfectly qualified to instruct in the Theory and Practice of Musketry, also that he possesses a satisfactory knowledge of the Theory of the motion of Projectiles, of the History, Manufacture and Explosive Force of Gunpowder, and of the history of Small-arms.<sup>241</sup>

Not long after he completed his musketry training, Henniker was commissioned to the Coldstream Guards in 1875, becoming adjutant shortly after.<sup>242</sup> Shute, fluent in French and German like Codrington, was gazetted to the Coldstream Guards after completing his course at the Royal Military College (RMC), Sandhurst, on 30 September 1880.<sup>243</sup> Attending

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<sup>237</sup> Otley, ‘The Origins and Recruitment of the British Army Elite, 1870-1959’, p. 92.

<sup>238</sup> Sinnreich, ‘An Army Apart. The Influence of Culture on the Victorian Army’, p. 170.

<sup>239</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Officers’ Statement of Services*, (1G3/A).

<sup>240</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/19/2, Letters and papers, personal and military, of the Hon. Arthur Henry Henniker-Major (1871-1896), 07/09/1874.

<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, 03/10/1874.

<sup>242</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Officers’ Statement of Services*, (1G3/A).

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*

Sandhurst, Best remarks, meant “you wanted serious military education in the nineteenth-century.”<sup>244</sup> Sandhurst’s recruitment policy, in part, targeted sons of army officers by offering them reduced fees, or in some cases no fees, depending on the father’s rank and financial means, as well as by reserving places for the potential cadets.<sup>245</sup> By the time Shute attended Sandhurst in 1880, two-thirds of cadets had filled the reserved slots.<sup>246</sup> When Shute was at Sandhurst, as Sebastian Alexander George Puncher explains, from 1877, the curriculum consisted of “Military Topography, Fortification (later Military Engineering), Tactics, Administration, and Law. There were also marks allocated to Drill, Riding and Gymnastics.”<sup>247</sup> As a result, the education and training provided by military institutions such as Sandhurst contributed to the development of officer professionalism in the late Victorian army.<sup>248</sup>

After the Crimean War (1854-56), it became apparent that certain deficiencies in the British army had to be dealt with, and that a more professional armed force was needed.<sup>249</sup> Later events in Europe further amplified that British army reform was necessary; first, there was the Prussian victory over Austria in 1866, and then the Prussian-led German victory over France that resulted in German unification in 1871. European nations were forced to rethink the strategic nature of their future military planning.<sup>250</sup> At home in Britain, these events were concerning, and it became imperative that the military receive a more explicit policy remit from the government as to what its role and function would be in the future. It seemed that substantial

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<sup>244</sup> Best, ‘Militarism and the Victorian Public School’, p. 131.

<sup>245</sup> Otley, ‘The Origins and Recruitment of the British Army Elite, 1870-1959’, p. 107.

<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>247</sup> Sebastian Alexander George Puncher, ‘The Victorian Army and the Cadet Colleges, Woolwich and Sandhurst, c. 1840-1902’ (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Kent, 2019), p. 267.

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>249</sup> Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, ‘The Development of Professionalism in the Victorian Army’, *Armed Forces and Society*. 1, No. 4 (1975), p. 474.

<sup>250</sup> H. Kochanski, ‘Planning for War in the Final Years of *Pax Britannica*, 1889-1903’, in D. French & B. Holden Reid (eds.), *The British General Staff. Reform and Innovation c.1890-1939* (London, Routledge, 2014), p. 9.

emphasis was placed on small instead of large-scale operations, and small war conflicts meant the army was not organised or administered in a way that would be of benefit if involved in a major European conflict.<sup>251</sup> It was almost, according to Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, as if the army was regarded as an “imperial gendarmerie.”<sup>252</sup> Regarding the professionalisation of its force during this time, little direction was provided regarding whether the army should focus on strategic planning and preparation for a large-scale operation in Europe, or if it was meant to continue efforts aimed at small-scale conflicts in the colonies.<sup>253</sup>

Within the army hierarchy, it was acknowledged that change was indeed necessary. However, there was uncertainty within the upper echelons as to what such a process would entail, and in practical terms, implementing training and educating British officers only complicated professionalisation efforts further.<sup>254</sup> In order to modernise the military, and improve efficiency and professionalism, army-wide organisational and administrative changes were introduced. Though a protracted and intricate process, under the direction of Edward Cardwell between 1868 and 1874, significant reforming measures were implemented to increase professionalism in the army; purchase of commissions was abolished, the length of service was shortened, and the War Office was reconstituted.<sup>255</sup> Cardwell also set in motion the system of linked infantry battalions completed in 1881 by Hugh Childers, Secretary of State for War.<sup>256</sup> The measures implemented by Cardwell were, as Albert V. Tucker suggests, “a vital part of that ministry’s legislation to diminish the influence of privilege and acknowledge the place of merit and

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<sup>251</sup> Harries-Jenkins, ‘The Development of Professionalism in the Victorian Army’, pp. 484-5.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 484.

<sup>253</sup> Corinne Lydia Mahaffey, ‘The Fighting Profession: The Professionalisation of the British Line Infantry Officer Corps, 1870-1902’ (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Glasgow, 2004), pp. 6-7.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>255</sup> H. Bailes, ‘Military Aspects of the War’, in P. Warwick & B. Spies (eds.), *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (London, Longman, 1980), p. 65.

<sup>256</sup> H. Strachan, ‘The British Way in Warfare’, in D.G. Chandler & I.F.W. Beckett (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Army* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 412.

efficiency in the professions, the civil service, education and the army.”<sup>257</sup> Further reform efforts in later years also partly reflected societal shifts, advancements in industry, technology and science and a marked increase in occupational professionalism.<sup>258</sup>

Consequently, factors that increased professionalism in the officer corps can be seen in commissioning, standardisation in testing skills and proficiencies, and opportunities for advancement and promotion.<sup>259</sup> Moreover, military education generated institutional expertise and proficiency, increasing effectiveness.<sup>260</sup> For example, in 1883, Codrington completed all instruction courses at Staff College, and he excelled at musketry, military engineering, signalling, cavalry pioneer class, mounted infantry, veterinary class, supply and transport courses, riding class, and gymnastics.<sup>261</sup> He served as adjutant from 29 December 1885 to 6 March 1888, and was promoted to major on 4 December 1889.<sup>262</sup> Five years later, in 1889, Henniker and Shute also attended the Staff College at Camberley.<sup>263</sup> Henniker’s family was delighted when he got accepted. In a letter addressed to “my dear Arthur”, his older brother Lord Henniker (Major Henniker) enthused, “Alice joins with me in congratulations in admission to the Staff College. We are very [Lord Henniker underlined ‘very’ twice] glad, and I hope it will all turn up thumbs now.”<sup>264</sup> Other staff appointments for Henniker followed, namely as Deputy Assistant Adjutant General (DAAG) in the Southern and Home Districts.<sup>265</sup> Henniker’s professional conduct impressed his superior officers:

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<sup>257</sup> Albert V. Tucker, ‘Army and Society in England 1870-1900: A Reassessment of the Cardwell Reforms’, *Journal of British Studies*. 2, No. 2 (1963), p. 110.

<sup>258</sup> Clayton, *The British Officer. Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present*, pp. 121-2.

<sup>259</sup> Brian Bond, *The Victorian Staff College 1854-1914* (London, Eyre Methuen Ltd., 1972), p. 14.

<sup>260</sup> D.E. Delaney & R.C. Engen, ‘Introduction’, in D.E. Delaney, R.C. Engen & M. Fitzpatrick (eds.), *Military Education and the British Empire, 1815-1949* (Toronto, UBC Press, 2018), p. 6.

<sup>261</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Officers’ Statement of Services*, (1G3/A).

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, (1G4).

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, (1G3/A).

<sup>264</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/19/2, Henniker-Major, Letters, 03/06/1889.

<sup>265</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Officers’ Statement of Services*, (1G3/A).

My dear Arthur, Just a note to tell you that I met the C in C tonight at dinner and he told me that all he saw pleased him immensely. He said that everything was good, Barrack rooms, kits, men, while the latter struck him as being so different from any other depot he had ever seen as everyone seemed so keen. He thought the whole thing so sound and good and said that it was quite different to anything he had ever seen before. I thought you might like to know this. Yours, Richmund Jones.<sup>266</sup>

As shown by the military education and career progression of Henniker, Codrington and Shute, joining the British army meant that they became part of an institution which contributed to how they were professionally socialised. “To speak of professionalism”, argues Morris Janowitz, “clearly means that the conduct of warfare is given over to men who have committed themselves to career of service, men who are recognised for their expertise in the means of warfare. It implies the decline of the gentleman amateur.”<sup>267</sup> The three officers were serious about soldiering and the military profession. The development of their respective professional careers is reflected in their awards, promotions and positions to which they were appointed. For example, Shute was promoted to lieutenant on 1 July 1881.<sup>268</sup> He was subsequently appointed Regimental Adjutant of the Coldstream Guards from 2 July 1891 to 31 December 1893 and Brigade Major of the Home District from 1 January 1894 to 31 December 1896.<sup>269</sup> He was promoted to the rank of major on 19 May 1897.<sup>270</sup> Henniker was promoted to second-in-command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards in 1898.<sup>271</sup>

By way of the professional process of making middle command, we can see the formation of the leadership of Codrington, Henniker and Shute as Coldstream Guards officers before the South African War. As explained in the Introduction of this thesis, leadership is a practice that

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<sup>266</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/19/2, Henniker-Major, Letters, 05/05/1896.

<sup>267</sup> Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier. A Social and Political Portrait* (New York, Free Press, 2017), p. 6.

<sup>268</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Officers' Statement of Services*, (1G3/A).

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

inspires and motivates. On the battlefield, leadership is an essential quality an officer ought to possess. In peacetime, leadership is sometimes referred to as officership.<sup>272</sup> Officership also means to inspire and motivate the men, but instead of doing so in the face of danger, in peacetime, it can be said officership is more like setting a good example to the men through demeanour and dress, as well as being a gentleman through gestures such as kindness to others in need. In particular, according to Spiers, the Guards were known for their benevolence and welfare as “regimental inspection reports contain numerous references to subscriptions raised by officers for benevolent, widows’ charity, and library funds [and] savings banks.”<sup>273</sup> Such charitable gestures and initiatives increased in scope towards the end of the nineteenth century. It can be said that the paternalistic tendencies of the upper class continued in the officer corps, which at the time, comprised a socially homogenous group of elites. Therefore, it was through welfare and charity that the ruling class’s status was maintained in the army, and the act of benevolence was one way in which officership qualities such as being of sound moral character were inculcated. It represented an effective means of perpetuating the class hierarchy, fostering officership and contributing to officer socialisation. Social life, in a manner of speaking, also contributed to officer socialisation, and came with certain expectations for a young officer who was beginning his career. As Spiers explains:

Officers based in or near London, especially the Guards, were expected to lead the life of a man-about-town. They were members of several clubs, where they could indulge in dining, drinking and gambling. Military clubs were particularly important [such as] the Guards Club [established in] (1810).<sup>274</sup>

The social life of the regimental Coldstream Guards officer in peacetime also included hunting at the well-to-do’s countryside estates, attending glamorous balls hosted by London’s elites

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<sup>272</sup> Puncher, ‘The Victorian Army and the Cadet Colleges, Woolwich and Sandhurst, c. 1840-1902’, p. 216.

<sup>273</sup> Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914*, p. 26.

<sup>274</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. 21.



and enjoying exquisite dinners held in the metropole.<sup>275</sup> In this regard, officers were not so different to their civilian counterparts who came from the same social class, similar backgrounds and schooling.<sup>276</sup> Officers had similar aspirations to those in civil professions and were equally concerned with status, prestige, advancement, and monetary awards.<sup>277</sup> It has been suggested that the regimental system is the most significant of British military institutions; it is the principal vehicle of the nation's military culture.<sup>278</sup> Indeed, says Ian F.W. Beckett, "educational background, attendance at RMC and RMA, regimental camaraderie, and more informal leisure pursuits such as hunting and other field sports, racing, gentlemen's clubs, and masonic lodges all contributed to a shared ethos."<sup>279</sup>

## Conclusion

Chapter One focused on the background, identities, and social standing of the individual men who form the selected case studies, as a critical concern of this thesis is to uncover how socialisation and cultural conditioning informed the conduct and performance of mid-level officers of the Coldstream Guards in the testing conditions of warfare in South Africa. By investigating the nature of the sections of Victorian society in which they were rooted and their cultural practices, this chapter demonstrated the durability of the ideals and norms of masculinity formed by family, schooling, and the prevalent gender discourse in Britain. To the Victorians, the norm of manly physical characteristics meant a man had to be vigorous, virile

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<sup>275</sup> Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914*, p. 22.

<sup>276</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, pp. 6-16.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> J. Keegan, 'Regimental Ideologies', in G. Best & A. Wheatcroft (eds.), *War, Economy and the Military Mind* (London, Croom Helm, 1976), p. 16.

<sup>279</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. 21.

and strong. In addition, a man needed to be decisive, courageous and able to bear life's hardships. Such qualities applied in life and to theatres of war.<sup>280</sup>

Notably, this chapter analysed how nineteenth-century manliness increasingly became more martial, subsequently improving the army's image through an infusion of all things war-related in Victorian popular culture. The chapter also considered how a child was socialised within the family unit and showed how landed and military families impacted a child's development and character formation. The child's experience at home, says Edward M. Spiers, "not only underlines the importance of family tradition but emphasises that it was sustained in different ways by different families."<sup>281</sup> For instance, this chapter demonstrated that Lord Henniker's authority was unquestioned as a landowner due to his wealth, property, and standing, established through many acts of benevolence and patronage. Indeed, as David Roberts asserts in Victorian Britain, "no social look had deeper roots and wider appeal than what twentieth-century historians call paternalism. It was an outlook held by landowners."<sup>282</sup> Subsequently, Henniker's father's paternalistic attitude would impress upon him the need that he, too, needed to have a paternal attitude towards others in later life. Such an attitude would manifest in his relationship with men of other ranks, as will be seen in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Chapter One also considered Victorian public school culture and how it contributed towards a child's socialisation. This chapter showed that public schools mirrored social class hierarchies, but this type of institution also created its own hierarchical order, such as that of the prefect system. This fostered an extra layer of elitism within an already privileged elitist institution. As such, it reinforced distinctions of class, status and rank. The public schoolboy was already

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<sup>280</sup> John Tosh, 'Gentlemanly Politeness and Manly Simplicity in Victorian England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*. 12 (2002), p. 458-60.

<sup>281</sup> Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914*, p. 9.

<sup>282</sup> Roberts, *Paternalism in Early Victorian England*, p. 1.

imbued with the idea of command over others from an early age in a landed family. He was indoctrinated at public school that it was his right to rule over others due to his privilege and class. Such perpetuation of ranks and hierarchies prepared a young man for the hierarchies, ranks, and command structures of being in the army. The public school, John Tosh explains, “was about learning to stand up for oneself in the company of men, both in the physical sense of showing courage, and in the social sense of finding one’s place in a deeply hierarchical society.”<sup>283</sup>

Moreover, the chapter demonstrated the socialisation process through sport, contributing to a sense of belonging and teamwork. At public school, that meant being part of a house team, the honour bestowed when one’s team wins, and the glorious feeling of defeating one’s opponent in a football, cricket or rugby match. It also contributed to forming bonds and establishing fair play and sportsmanship, essential in developing leadership skills and *esprit de corps* necessary for a future in the army. In particular, homosociality is a strong foundation for military comradeship and exactly how the formation of close bonds became a necessary attribute in battle. Reliance on one’s peers was potentially a matter of life and death, not just a social asset. It would soon be put to the test when political enmity between Britain and the Boer Republics worsened. Thus, in September 1899, with war looming, Henniker’s older brother Edward, whom he called Eddy, fearing for his brother’s safety, wrote:

My dear Arty, Seeing matters are not so promising in S. Africa, I conclude that you will have to go after all ... In any case, all S. Africans say it is only a matter of a war at some time not far off - some add the sooner the better, but enough about that. If you do not go, all the better I shall say, [but] if you do go, God bless you and keep you in health and bring you back safely and soon, is my heart’s desire. Your affectionate brother, Edward.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>283</sup> Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, p. 197.

<sup>284</sup> Suffolk Archives (Ipswich), HA116/1/19/2, Henniker-Major, Letters, 19/09/1899.

Not long after Eddy's letter, war was declared on 11 October 1899. We now turn to South Africa and the experiences of the middle-ranking officers of the Coldstream Guards in the South African War.

## CHAPTER TWO

# From *Veldt* to *Voorstoep* (Front Porch): Transitions and Adaptations in Coldstream Guards Middle Command Practices in the South African War (1899-1902)

### Introduction

When handing command over to Lord Kitchener on 29 November 1900, Lord Roberts reflected on the challenges of the South African War. He said that the army had been “continually shot at from behind *kopjes* (hills) by an invisible enemy, to whom every inch of the ground was familiar, and who, from the peculiar nature of the country, were able to inflict severe punishment while perfectly safe themselves.”<sup>285</sup> Roberts’s words encapsulate what the military was up against in their confrontation with the Boers. Between October 1899 and September 1900, the first part of the South African War was conventional in character, with many set-piece battles between the two forces. Unprepared to face an opponent armed with modern weaponry and equipped with the latest technology, the army lacked adequate intelligence, and was forced to navigate unfamiliar terrain and fight in an unforgiving climate. From September 1900 until May 1902, the conflict became a guerrilla war with Boer commandos using hit-and-run tactics against their British enemy, who were not experienced in this type of warfare and were forced to adapt quickly to its demands.

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<sup>285</sup> Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre Archives, Paul Sanford, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Methuen, Corsham, Miscellaneous correspondence and papers, South African War 1899-1902, Operational campaign papers, diaries and maps, Accession No: 1742/48/2, 29/11/1900.

Thus, Chapter Two will concentrate on the ways the British army reacted to the changing nature of the war. Firstly, this chapter will use the two phases of the war as a temporal framework to trace changes in British army tactics and operations. Secondly, it will show how the duties of the Coldstream Guards regimental officer changed and how he adapted his command practice to a fundamentally different kind of warfare. Above all, the chapter will show how the command practices of the Coldstream Guards' regimental officer changed because of the shift in the conflict from a conventional war to an irregular war.

In particular, Chapter Two will focus on middle command practices when officers were placed in charge of town garrisons and how they were obliged to use telecommunications technology and photography to help them combat Boer activities in their areas. Moreover, the chapter will also explore how the British dealt with the activities of Boer commandos through the use of mobile columns, blockhouses, and by the employment of Boer collaborators as scouts and spies. It will consider the British response to rebel insurgencies in the Cape Colony, and explain how Cape rebels were captured, punished and executed, as seen in the case of the firebrand Commandant Gideon Scheepers. Indeed, Chapter Two offers a vivid account of garrison command in the guerrilla phase of the South African conflict that starkly contrasts with the initial traditional phase of hostilities and, in doing so, provides a unique and detailed picture of garrison life in the Cape Colony that no other studies on the South African War have achieved.

The South African War began as Britain's last major war of the nineteenth century and ended as the first of the twentieth century.<sup>286</sup> It was a transitional conflict rooted in two eras; a traditional rural war of mobility with cavalry and infantry engaging in battle across open space,

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<sup>286</sup> Other conflicts involving the British in 1900 included the conquest of the Ashanti, the Relief of Peking in the Boxer Rebellion, the Mahsud Waziri blockade and the Caste War of Yucatan.

and a modern war owing to the use of technological innovations and advanced weaponry. The new and recent technologies employed by the British included railways, hot air balloons for aerial observation, electric power, field telephone communication, and the telegraph.<sup>287</sup> While recent advanced weaponry included, writes Howard Bailes “modern howitzers, quick-firing field artillery, cordite, lyddite explosives, magazine rifles, [and] machine guns.”<sup>288</sup> Of course, the army was not entirely unfamiliar with the effects of modern rifle fire, as demonstrated both in Afghanistan (1897-1898) and in Sudan (1896-1898).<sup>289</sup> However, having faced less well-armed indigenous opponents in colonial campaigns, the army was ill-prepared to cope with the effects of modern fire-power on the scale employed by the Boers, unlike the Afghan tribesmen and Mahdists.

From the outset of the South African conflict, which included the first Boer offensive from October 1899 to January 1900, the imperial forces were presented with a near-impossible task of subjugating a foe hidden in entrenchments and armed with rifles and artillery firing bullets and shells containing cordite, a smokeless propellant. Moreover, concealment and cordite provided burghers with a cloak of invisibility in every skirmish and every battle rendering the Boers an “army of ghosts.”<sup>290</sup> Lieutenant George Windsor-Clive remarked that the men could see nothing of the Boers and could only fire where they thought they might be.<sup>291</sup> Similarly, Captain Thomas Henry Eyre Lloyd noted that it “is extraordinary how little people at home seem to grasp how fighting has changed. As soon as fighting begins, you hardly see anyone

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<sup>287</sup> Bill Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle for South Africa* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2010), pp. 11-7.

<sup>288</sup> H. Bailes, ‘Technology and Tactics in the British Army, 1866-1900’, in R. Haycock & K. Neilson (eds.), *Men, Machines and War* (Waterloo, Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988), p. 23.

<sup>289</sup> Stephen Badsey, ‘The Boer War (1899-1902) and British Cavalry Doctrine: A Re-Evaluation’, *The Journal of Military History*. 71, No. 1 (2007), p. 87.

<sup>290</sup> Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London, Abacus, 1992), pp. 178-9.

<sup>291</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Lieutenant George Windsor-Clive, Diary, (12067), 28/11/1899.

moving unless one side is running away!”<sup>292</sup> One important advantage held by the Boers was that every fighter was in the saddle, and this gave them freedom of movement and thus the ability to redeploy as required, while the immense expanse of South Africa provided the Boers with the added advantage of time and space to evade capture.<sup>293</sup> With the onset of the guerrilla conflict in September 1900, the Boers changed their fighting practices. Instead of facing the British in open battle they switched to attacking British supply and communication lines, employing their only weapon of superiority – mobility.<sup>294</sup>

To counter the Boer mobility that enabled them to rapidly change location and lines of defence, Lord Roberts knew that he must attempt to outflank their positions, but the Boers were capable of moving quickly and ensuring that the British would end up making a frontal assault instead.<sup>295</sup> Roberts felt that traditional fighting formations had to change to meet the demands of guerrilla warfare and so, from 3 November 1900 until the end of the war, British army units including the Guards Brigade were dispersed in order to counteract Boer mobility.<sup>296</sup> As Roberts said later, “a battalion, as a rule, was seldom broken up; the Colonel, and majors, and captains, and subalterns, and men were all together; they moved like a machine, there was no need for anyone, but the commanding officer to think and give orders. The conditions are now completely altered.”<sup>297</sup> Initially, each battalion had separate duties to perform, but later, even

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<sup>292</sup> Ibid., 16/09/1901.

<sup>293</sup> Spencer Jones, *From Boer War to World War* (Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), p. 23.

<sup>294</sup> J. Gooch, ‘Introduction’, in J. Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image* (London, Frank Cass, 2000), p. xvii.

<sup>295</sup> Johan Ellis, ‘The British Tactical Reaction to Battlefield Conditions during the Anglo-Boer War’, *Southern Journal for Contemporary History*, 25, No. 2 (2000), p. 151.

<sup>296</sup> Field Marshal The Right Hon. Earl Roberts, K.G., K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., called and examined on Thursday, 4 December 1902, Questions 10333, 10446-10447, 10475. Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F17), *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission On The War In South Africa. Volume I* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), pp. 436; 440-1; 443.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid.



battalion companies were detached many miles from headquarters.<sup>298</sup> Dispersal thus had the effect of fragmenting the British army into scatterings of companies across vast geographical areas of South Africa, making effective command a significant challenge and requiring greater independence from battalion officers.

During this time, communication systems such as the telegraph and telephone enabled battalion officers to monitor Boer commandos and deploy and co-ordinate troop movements and mobile columns. These methods proved beneficial and effective because, as Lieutenant Sir Walter Barttelot recorded, it meant being “in immediate speaking distance of [Headquarters] by means of telegraph & telephone”, relaying information quicker than before.<sup>299</sup> Above all, during the South African War, the telegraph fulfilled a significant function, especially during the irregular phase of hunting and capturing Boer guerrillas.<sup>300</sup> Considered essential by the Boers and the British, it is no surprise that frequently, both would target the other’s telegraph communications systems. Crossing into British-held territories, guerrillas immediately cut telegraph lines and destroyed telegraph equipment.<sup>301</sup>

Alongside these communications technologies, war photography became crucial for Coldstream Guards garrison commanders in capturing Boers. War photography came into prominence in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>302</sup> Owing to the efforts of both amateur and

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<sup>298</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, *Digest of Services. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards 1899-1902 compiled by Lieutenant Colonel H. Shute D.S.O.*, Official Diary, (1GD), p. 29.

<sup>299</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Lieutenant Sir Walter Barttelot, Letters, (12324), 23/11/1901.

<sup>300</sup> Thean D. Potgieter, ‘Nineteenth Century Technological Development and its Influence on the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902’, *Southern Journal for Contemporary History*. 25, No. 2 (2000), p. 123.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

<sup>302</sup> S. Badsey, ‘A Print and Media War’, in C. Wilcox (ed.), *Recording the South African War. Journalism and Official History 1899-1914* (London, Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 1999), p. 11.

professional photographers during the American Civil War (12 April 1861-12 April 1865),<sup>303</sup> the conflict became profoundly visualised through their photographic images that captured events almost simultaneously alongside the unfolding conflict.<sup>304</sup> Because of this, the South African War attracted much attention from photojournalists.<sup>305</sup> Victorians were keen photography enthusiasts, and photographic magazines were plentiful at the outbreak of the war in South Africa.<sup>306</sup>

The South African War took place at a time when many technological innovations were occurring. The invention of George Eastman's Kodak box camera (1885), the Folding Pocket Kodak (1897) and the Brownie camera (1900) revolutionised a more widespread use for amateur photographers, particularly during the British campaign in Sudan in 1898.<sup>307</sup> For professional photographers, the Day-light (1891), Bullseye (1896), the Cartridge (1898), and the wide-lens Panorama (1900) broke further new ground.<sup>308</sup> However, the increased lethality of modern weaponry created a physical distance between the photographer and the action on the battlefield.<sup>309</sup> Many photographers thus tended to capture other aspects of the conflict away from the dangers of the frontline.<sup>310</sup> In the South African conflict, the camera was a recording device used as a control and observation method.<sup>311</sup> In particular, the camera's technology enabled the Coldstream Guards commander during the guerrilla phase to use photography as

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<sup>303</sup> For more, see William A. Frassanito, *Gettysburg. A Journey in Time* (New York, Scribner Book Company, 1975).

<sup>304</sup> Alan Trachtenberg, 'Albums of War: On Reading Civil War Photographs', *Representations*. 9, Special Issue (1985), p. 27.

<sup>305</sup> Badsey, 'A Print and Media War', p. 11.

<sup>306</sup> Emanuel Lee, *To the Bitter End. A Photographic History of the Boer War 1899-1902* (London, Penguin Books Ltd., 1986), pp. 3-4.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-9; Paul Fox, 'An Unprecedented Wartime Practice: Kodaking the Egyptian Sudan', *Media, War & Conflict*. 11, No. 3 (2018), pp. 309-10.

<sup>308</sup> Lee, *To the Bitter End. A Photographic History of the Boer War 1899-1902*, pp. 3-9.

<sup>309</sup> Badsey, 'A Print and Media War', p. 11. Also see Pat Hodgson, *Early War Photographs. 50 Years of War Photographs from the Nineteenth Century* (Reading, Osprey, 1974), pp. 132-54.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>311</sup> Ken Plummer, *Documents of Life 2. An Invitation to a Critical Humanism* (London, Sage Publications, 2001), p. 59.

an intelligence tool, to control and coerce the civilian population of the garrison town. Significantly, exploring the use of photography by the Coldstream Guards during this phase of the war yields new insights into how the war impacted the garrison townspeople, adding new understanding of how the South African War was documented, and demonstrating how much the character of the war had changed by then.

These broader themes of transformation and adaptation in Chapter Two will be addressed by concentrating on the experiences of the three Coldstream Guards battalion officers introduced in the previous chapter: Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, Major (later Lieutenant-Colonel) Arthur Henry Henniker, and Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards. The chapter also includes testimonies from officers, rank-and-file of other Guards’ regiments, and official documentation of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards *Digest of Services*, which recorded daily regimental activities.<sup>312</sup>

Before continuing, it is worth clarifying the terms strategy, tactics, and operations that recur in this discussion. Strategy is the “movement of armies to achieve the overall objectives of a campaign or war.”<sup>313</sup> Tactics refer to “the movement of battalions, brigades, divisions, and equivalent-sized groupings to achieve local objectives.”<sup>314</sup> When used in the singular, a tactic combines fire-power, formation and manoeuvre to achieve a military objective.<sup>315</sup> Finally, the term operation means a “military action or the carrying out of a strategic, tactical, service, training, or administrative mission; the process of carrying on combat, including movement,

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<sup>312</sup> A stylistic reminder, direct quotations used in Chapter Two in italics indicate Shute’s later additions to his diary in 1905.

<sup>313</sup> Richard Bowyer, *Dictionary of Military Terms* (London, Bloomsbury, 2004), p. 234.

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

supply, attack, defence, and manoeuvres needed to gain the objectives of any battle or campaign.”<sup>316</sup> A close focus on the three central case studies of Codrington, Henniker, and Shute will trace how middle command officers adapted to the transforming nature of warfare in the South African conflict, contributing to new a understanding of the British army in this period.

## I

### **Traditional Warfare (October 1899 – September 1900)**

The strained relations that existed for many months between Great Britain and the South African Republic, and the Orange Free State, reached a climax at the end of September 1899. On 7 October, a Royal Proclamation was issued, calling out sections of the Army Reserve. Army orders were published two days later, notifying the mobilisation of a Field Force for South Africa under the overall command of General Sir Redvers Buller.<sup>317</sup> The force consisted of an Army Corps of three Divisions, with a Line of Communication Troops and a Cavalry Division. The Guards Brigade formed the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division under Lord Methuen’s command.<sup>318</sup> The Guards Brigade comprised four battalions, each placed under the command of regimental officers who collectively formed the middle echelon, with each comprising companies commanded by junior-ranking officers. This Guards Brigade was explicitly constituted for service in South Africa and composed of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Grenadier Guards commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Eyre Crabbe, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards led by Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards under the

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<sup>316</sup> John Quick, *Dictionary of Weapons and Military Terms* (New York, McGraw-Hill Inc., 1973), p. 334.

<sup>317</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*

command of Lieutenant-Colonel Horace Robert Stopford, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Scots Guards commanded by Colonel Arthur Paget.<sup>319</sup>

### **The First Boer Offensive (October – December 1899)**

On 11 October 1899, the Boers invaded Natal and the north-western Cape (**Figure 11**) and besieged Mafeking (13 October), Kimberley (15 October) and Ladysmith (30 October). The town of Mafeking was an essential link for transport, supplies and stores.<sup>320</sup> Kimberley's significance lay in its riches, as the centre of the diamond industry. It was the crown jewel of former prime minister of the Cape Colony, Cecil John Rhodes, the 'diamond baron' and architect of the infamous Jameson Raid, who happened to be in town when the Boers invaded it.<sup>321</sup> The town was also strategically important as it was the primary railway connection to the Cape ports and the north.<sup>322</sup> Ladysmith, a British colonial garrison town in Natal, was a vital arms depot.<sup>323</sup> It was also a crucial intersection providing road and railway access north of the Tugela River.<sup>324</sup> With all three of these vitally strategic towns besieged by the Boers, the situation for the British forces appeared grave. Buller thus diverged from his original strategy of advancing the Army Corps into the Orange Free State. Instead, he dispersed the Corps on a three-front approach: Major-General William Forbes Gatacre arrived in Queenstown on 18 November and was ordered to keep the Boer forces in check in the Stormberg vicinity; Buller's

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Amelia E. Clegg, Review of *Letters from Mafeking: Eyewitness Accounts from the Longest Siege of the South African War*, by E.M. Spiers (ed.), *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*. 98, No. 392 (2020), p. 97.

<sup>321</sup> E.M. Spiers (ed.), *Letters from Mafeking: Eyewitness Accounts from the Longest Siege of the South African War* (Barnsley, Frontline Books, 2018), p. 18.

<sup>322</sup> André Wessels, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. White Man's War, Black Man's War, Traumatic War* (Bloemfontein, Sun Press, 2011), p. 30.

<sup>323</sup> Stephen M. Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa* (London, Frank Cass, 1999), p. 76.

<sup>324</sup> E.M. Spiers (ed.), *Letters from Ladysmith. Eyewitness Accounts from the South African War* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 2010), p. 2.

force would go to Natal, advance from Pietermaritzburg and relieve Ladysmith; and Lord Methuen was instructed to advance north from Orange River Station and relieve Kimberley.<sup>325</sup>

In a letter to Methuen on 14 November, Buller wrote, “if you can from there [Orange River] get a clear road to Kimberley so much the better, but [you must] act according to circumstances. The main object is to save time.”<sup>326</sup> Because time was of the essence, Methuen decided to follow the western railway line from Orange River to Kimberley as it offered the most direct and secure route, and since water and pack animals were in short supply, it also provided a means to replenish stores.<sup>327</sup> Moreover, since Buller ordered the evacuation of Kimberley residents, the railway proved to be the best means of moving many people to safety; its protection was thus of the utmost importance to the British, but this left Methuen with little choice but to follow the railway to Kimberley.<sup>328</sup>

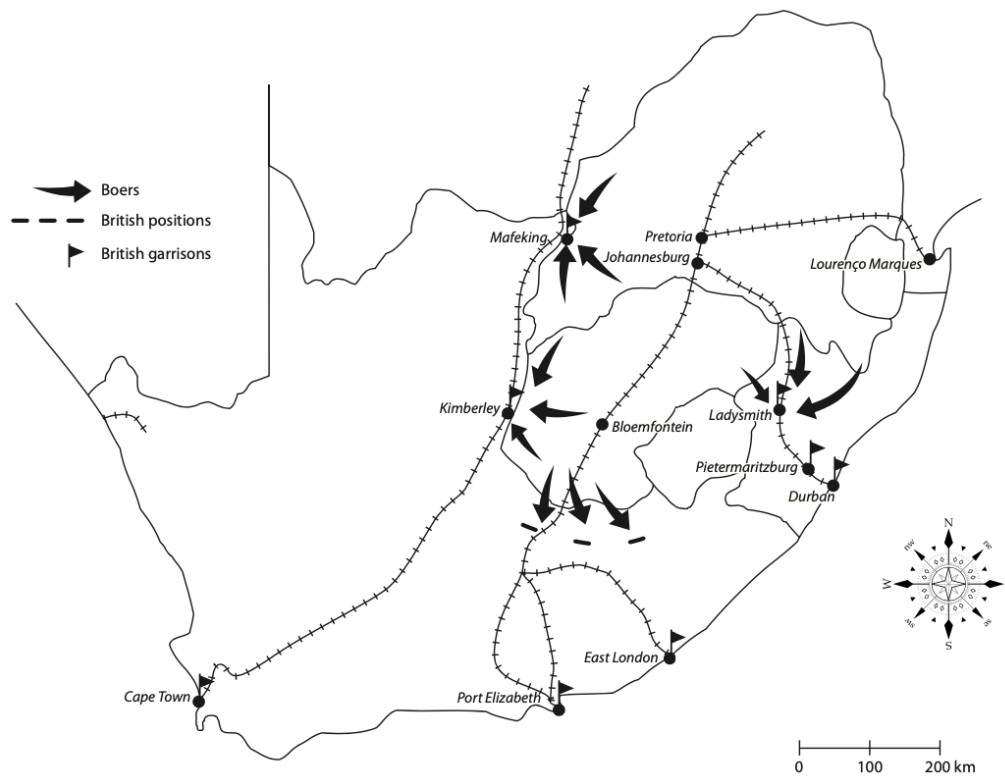
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<sup>325</sup> Wessels, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. White man's War, Black man's War, Traumatic War*, pp. 38; 42-46.

<sup>326</sup> Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre Archives, Methuen, Operational campaign papers, diaries and maps, Accession No: 1742/48/1, 14/11/1899.

<sup>327</sup> Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa*, p. 85.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85-6.



**Figure 11.** The First Boer Offensive.

**Source:** André Wessels, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. White Man's War, Black Man's War, Traumatic War* (Bloemfontein, Sun Press, 2011), p. 29.

Under Methuen's command, on 21 November, the 1<sup>st</sup> Division commenced the general advance northwards. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division consisted of the Guards Brigade (3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Grenadiers, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions Coldstream, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Scots), the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade (1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers, half of 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion North Lancashire, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Northampton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Yorkshire Light Infantry), the 9<sup>th</sup> Lancers, Rimington's Guides, 18<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Batteries Royal Field Artillery, Naval 12-pounders, and Military Intelligence companies.<sup>329</sup> The Division reached Witteputs, northeast of Orange River Station, at 9:00am, and mounted troops carried out reconnaissance to establish the Boer position.<sup>330</sup> It was ascertained that the Boers were in a firmly held position at Belmont, which was, as Thomas Pakenham states, "a mass of broken

<sup>329</sup> Wellington Barracks, Windsor-Clive, Diary, 20/11/1899.

<sup>330</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 21/11/1899.

ground and three strong-points astride *kopjes*.<sup>331</sup> Methuen planned to march at night to provide his men with cover and prevent high British casualty rates.<sup>332</sup> The attack on the three Boer strongholds of Table Mountain, Gun Hill, and Mont Blanc (**Figure 12**) would commence as dawn broke.<sup>333</sup> Divisional orders issued on 23 November stated:

The Guards Brigade will move at 3 am on Gun Kopje supported by 1 Battery on its right. The 9th Brigade having secured Table Mountain will swing its left round and take the ridge of heights beyond running from N. to S. The Guards Brigade will conform to the movement and will take as its objective the north shoulder of Mount [sic] Blanc.<sup>334</sup>

Additionally, mounted troops were to protect the flank of the Guards Brigade on the right and the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade on the left, with ground cleared by the 18<sup>th</sup> and 75<sup>th</sup> Batteries before the advance commenced.<sup>335</sup> On 23 November, the Guards Brigade advanced on Gun Hill with the Coldstream Guards in reserve to the Grenadier and Scots Guards.<sup>336</sup> Meanwhile, the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade began their advance on Table Mountain under cover of darkness, supported by the Northhamptons to their right, the Northumberland Fusiliers on the left, and the King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry (KOYLI) as their reserve.<sup>337</sup>

However, events did not go to plan, as the Guards Brigade started their advance late at 3:20am. Firstly, the Grenadiers failed to locate Gun Hill as they attempted to get there quickly since they were behind schedule; also, incorrect maps placed Gun Hill further away than they had anticipated.<sup>338</sup> Indeed, their battalion commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Eyre Crabbe, was under the impression they were actually on course towards Gun Hill when he was leading his men

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<sup>331</sup> Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p. 188.

<sup>332</sup> Johan Ellis, 'Musketry: The Anglo-Boer War Experience', *Historia*. 45, No. 2 (2000), p. 498.

<sup>333</sup> Denis Judd & Keith Surridge, *The Boer War. A History* (London, I.B. Tauris, 2013), p. 119.

<sup>334</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 23/11/1899.

<sup>335</sup> Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa*, p. 90.

<sup>336</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 21-23/11/1899.

<sup>337</sup> Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa*, p. 90.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid*.



away from it.<sup>339</sup> Nevertheless, despite the initial mistakes, the Grenadiers eventually ascended Gun Hill and drove the Boers away with their bayonets. In comparison to the Grenadiers, the Scots Guards were more successful in reaching Gun Hill.<sup>340</sup> The advance of the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade, however, was not going well. By the time they were ready to advance, the sun had risen, which meant they had lost the cover of darkness for their surprise attack, and the Boers let loose a hail of bullets on them.<sup>341</sup> As a result, the beleaguered 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade was forced to remain in place, and was eventually supported by the Coldstream Guards while the Scots and Grenadiers attacked Mont Blanc.<sup>342</sup>

Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute, the commander of No. 8 Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, recounted that after losing touch with the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade, General Henry Edward Colvile ordered him to rally all the men he could muster and proceed to Mont Blanc.<sup>343</sup> In a letter to his half-sister Isabel, Shute spoke of Colvile’s order, recalling, “I had a sort of independent command as when we came into action Colvile ordered me to take all I could get hold of ... three of our Companies ... ½ Co. Scots Guards & some of the Northamptons.”<sup>344</sup> One Coldstream Guardsman wrote that Shute “took us straight into the firing line”, and it seemed as if “bullets were hissing around us like hailstones.”<sup>345</sup> However, Shute and his men pushed on under severe enfilade fire (fire from the side) and reached Mont Blanc.<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Ibid.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>341</sup> Judd & Surridge, *The Boer War. A History*, p. 119.

<sup>342</sup> Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa*, p. 93.

<sup>343</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute, Diary, (F1D22), 23/11/1899.

<sup>344</sup> National Army Museum, Originals and transcripts of letters written by Major Henry Gwynn Dean Shute DSO, Coldstream Guards, to Isabel Cazenove, 1899-1900; associated with the Boer War (1899-1902), Catalogue No: 2013-08-2, 24/11/1899.

<sup>345</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Unknown Author, Diary, (12323), 23/11/1899.

<sup>346</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 23/11/1899.

Soon after, a party of Boers hoisted a white flag on a small *kopje* to the left of the Coldstream Guards and directly in front of the Yorkshire Light Infantry position. The firing had practically ceased when some of the soldiers stood up but were greeted with renewed fire from the Boers, resulting in several casualties.<sup>347</sup> Shute witnessed this and, despite the dangerous situation, decided to rescue the injured. Not having any stretchers at his disposal did not deter him, and he commandeered a horse to take the men to safety.<sup>348</sup> As the assault on the Boers' positions continued, the Boers retired but repositioned themselves. They were able to deliver individual fire on the British troops right up to the point where the safety of their position was in jeopardy, and only then they withdrew,<sup>349</sup> thereby avoiding being captured. Outnumbered by the British, they abandoned their positions.<sup>350</sup> As one Guardsmen wryly remarked afterwards, "the Boers did not wait long enough for us to get near them. When we got to the top, they were retiring [from] us as fast they could."<sup>351</sup>

On the morning of 25 November, the Guards Brigade marched to Enslin Siding with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream in the rear guard in support of the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade. Five hundred Boers were discovered en route, and the battalion was ordered to neutralise the opposing force in order to prevent a counter-attack on the right flank of Lord Methuen's advance. This directive was carried out, and the detached force of Boers retreated, after which their primary position at Graspan was captured. Following a day of rest, the 1<sup>st</sup> Division advanced on 27 November within striking distance of Modder River.<sup>352</sup> That night, Methuen planned a flank march on Modder River the following day. However, after the Cape Irregular Infantry Battalion

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<sup>347</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 23/11/1899.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> Ellis, 'Musketry: The Anglo-Boer War Experience', p. 498.

<sup>350</sup> H.A.P. Smit, 'Methuen's Northern Cape Campaign, Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902', in F.A. Galgano & E.J. Palka (eds.), *Modern Military Geography* (London, Routledge, 2011), p. 139.

<sup>351</sup> Wellington Barracks, Unknown Author, *Diary*, (12323), 23/11/1899.

<sup>352</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 25/11/1899.

Rimington's Guides (commonly known as Rimington's Tigers) and the 9<sup>th</sup> Lancers reported to him that the Boers were positioned on the banks of the Modder and Riet rivers by the Modder River bridge (**Figure 13**), which the Boers had blown up earlier, he reconsidered.<sup>353</sup> Instead, Methuen decided on a frontal assault even though he did not know exactly where the Boer lines were. Colvile deployed the Guards Brigade in two lines.<sup>354</sup> In the front line, the Scots Guards were to advance on the right, in the middle the Grenadiers, and to their left the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards; the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards was placed in the second line, as the reserve. The Riet river guarded their right flank. Because the Guards had still been unable to locate the Boers, they carefully began their advance towards the Modder river in extended order.<sup>355</sup> Seeing advancing British lines was a powerful and fearful experience for the burghers.<sup>356</sup> For Izak Meyer, the British advance at Modder River was an overwhelming experience that left him in awe of what was unfolding in front of him:

In dead silence, peering fixedly ahead, we lie waiting. All at once I see them, thousands of them ... The morning sun sparkles on a huge sea of glinting rifle barrels. Perfectly in step they march and ride, the ten thousand men. It is spectacular, and terrifying. Resolutely, ineluctably, they advance straight at us, a solid throng of humanity.<sup>357</sup>

To the east of the railway, the Guards advanced towards the Riet River, to the point where it joined the Modder River. While the Riet covered their right flank, it bent further north to join the Modder. It was there that the entrenched Boers were lying in wait. As the Guards were advancing, the Boers started firing suddenly and seemingly out of nowhere. As a result, the Guards Brigade, and the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade, on the west side, were unable to advance further and were forced to remain stationary for ten hours in the blazing sun and heat with no water. The 1<sup>st</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p. 189.

<sup>354</sup> Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa*, p. 108.

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> Fransjohan Pretorius, *Life on Commando During The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999), p. 139.

<sup>357</sup> J.H. Meyer, *Kommando-jare*, pp. 47; 50. As quoted in Pretorius, *Life on Commando During The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, p. 139.

Battalion Coldstream Guards were quickly deployed despite being in the reserve. Nevertheless, the Coldstream Guards managed to continue under the murderous Boer fusillade.<sup>358</sup> In trying to get into a good position on the right side of the Guards Brigade, Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, battalion commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, found that the Modder River ran perpendicular to the general line of advance, halting any further movement. Moreover, his view of the river from a distance of one hundred yards was obscured by sloping trees, meaning the river was not visible. A few companies were ordered to advance but could get no further, forcing the soldiers to find cover and keep on firing at their unseen enemy.<sup>359</sup> Owing to poor intelligence regarding the course of the Riet River, Codrington’s men could make no headway against the Boers.

Because of this, General Colville ordered the Coldstream Guards to turn back.<sup>360</sup> In his diary, Private Harry Brooker wrote “Col. Codrington & a few others crossed the river but had to return, it being too hot for them.”<sup>361</sup> Major Arthur Henry Henniker, 2<sup>nd</sup>-in-command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, remembered the intensity of the fight, “the fire was terrific at times ... one cannot understand in looking over the position how we got off the way we did.”<sup>362</sup> Because of the difficult circumstances of the Coldstream Guards’ advance, Henniker thought it was incomprehensible how some of them survived, especially as others did not. Even Lieutenant-Colonel Horace Robert Stopford, Battalion Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, was killed in action at Modder River.<sup>363</sup> As Henniker was second-in-

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<sup>358</sup> Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p. 196.

<sup>359</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, Diary, (F1C30), 28/11-01/12/1899.

<sup>360</sup> Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p. 196.

<sup>361</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Private Harry Brooker, Diary, (12317), 28/11/1899.

<sup>362</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, Diary, (F1C29), 11/12/1899.

<sup>363</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 28/11/1899.

command, he assumed Stopford's role as commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards.<sup>364</sup>

In a letter to his father, Shute wrote on 30 November that he believed nobody expected the Boers to hold such a strong position at Modder River.<sup>365</sup> Shute believed it was due to a natural depression where a long row of trees provided complete concealment to the front of the Boer entrenchments.<sup>366</sup> So did General Jacobus Herculaas 'Koois' De La Rey, the commander in charge of deploying the Boer forces at Modder River. The Boers held an almost impenetrable defensive position. Of that, De La Rey was certain.<sup>367</sup> The commander of the entrenched Boer force at Modder River was General Pieter Arnoldus 'Piet' Cronjé, an experienced veteran of the First Anglo-Boer War (1880-1). De La Rey felt that Cronjé, despite being known for his quick-temper and restless disposition, would be able to stand his ground against Methuen.<sup>368</sup> However, De La Rey had his doubts about General Jacobus Petrus 'Koois' Prinsloo and the Free State burghers for whom he had little regard.<sup>369</sup> At Belmont, Prinsloo, convinced that the Boers were doomed and defeated, had abandoned position and left the field.<sup>370</sup> At Modder River, De La Rey's fears became a reality when, once again, Prinsloo, shaken by the advancing British force and convinced the Boers would be overpowered, retired with his men as fast as possible.<sup>371</sup> Cronjé, after hearing about Prinsloo's departure, accordingly followed suit. When De La Rey heard both generals had abandoned their positions at Modder River, he was

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<sup>364</sup> Henniker was subsequently promoted to the brevet rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. From hereafter, Henniker will be referred to as Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker.

<sup>365</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 30/11/1899.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa*, p. 104.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid.

<sup>370</sup> Byron Farwell, *The Great Boer War* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2009) p. 94.

<sup>371</sup> Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa*, p. 109.

furious.<sup>372</sup> It can therefore be argued that the reason the Boers left such a well-placed defensive position was down to human error.

Following events at Modder River, Methuen decided that his men needed recuperation; after a fortnight, the advance to Kimberley continued. However, in the intervening time, while Methuen's men were resting, the Boers were preparing to defend their position at Magersfontein.<sup>373</sup> Unfortunately for Methuen, there was no choice but to capture Magersfontein in order to secure possession of the railway and open the way to Kimberley.<sup>374</sup> The new Boer position at Magersfontein dominated the surrounding countryside and needed to be taken. After sending out his scouts, their report only gave him a vague inkling that the Boers may have taken up a position in the hills, similar to their actions at Belmont.<sup>375</sup> Because of this, there was no reason for Methuen to think otherwise, and thus he planned to bombard Magersfontein Kop at daybreak, after which the Highland Brigade would lead the advance.<sup>376</sup> The Guards and the 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade were in reserve.<sup>377</sup> On 10 December, when the bombardment pounded the hills of Magersfontein, it was assumed that such force lasting an hour and a half had demolished the Boer defences, dispersing the burghers.<sup>378</sup> However, unbeknown to the British, the main Boer force of 8,500 burghers were not on Magersfontein Kop, but entrenched in a 12-mile line of cunningly camouflaged trenches positioned below the foothills that stretched nearly to the Modder River. This meant that the unsuspecting Highland Brigade, led by Major-General Andrew Wauchope, were heading directly towards deadly disaster.<sup>379</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>373</sup> Judd & Surridge, *The Boer War. A History*, p. 122.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid., p. 123.

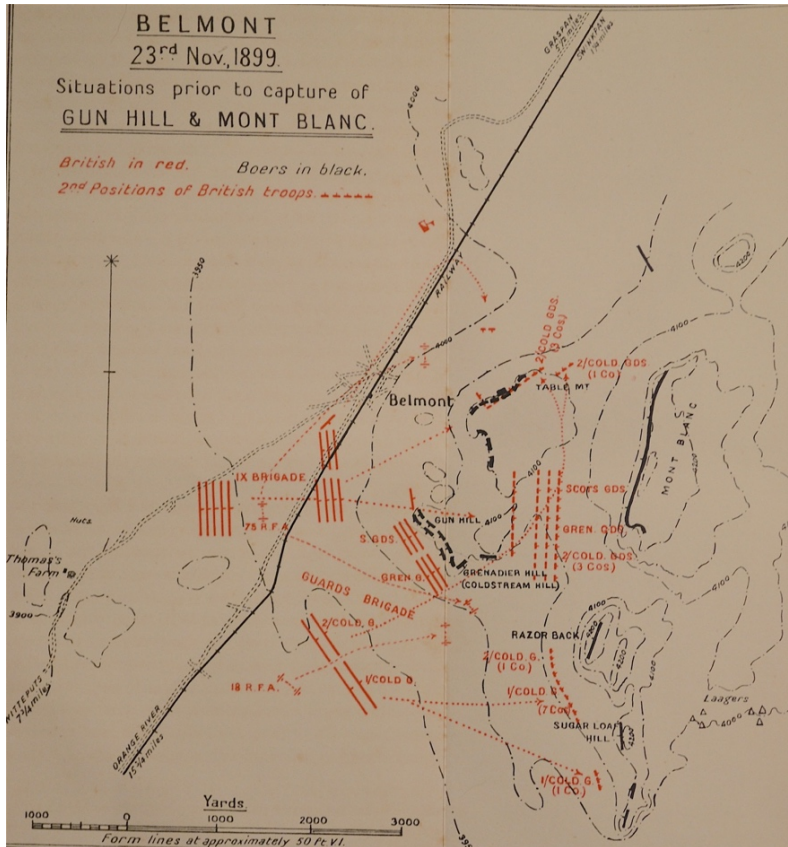
<sup>375</sup> Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p. 202.

<sup>376</sup> Judd & Surridge, *The Boer War. A History*, p. 123.

<sup>377</sup> Pakenham, *The Boer War*, p. 202.

<sup>378</sup> Judd & Surridge, *The Boer War. A History*, p. 123.

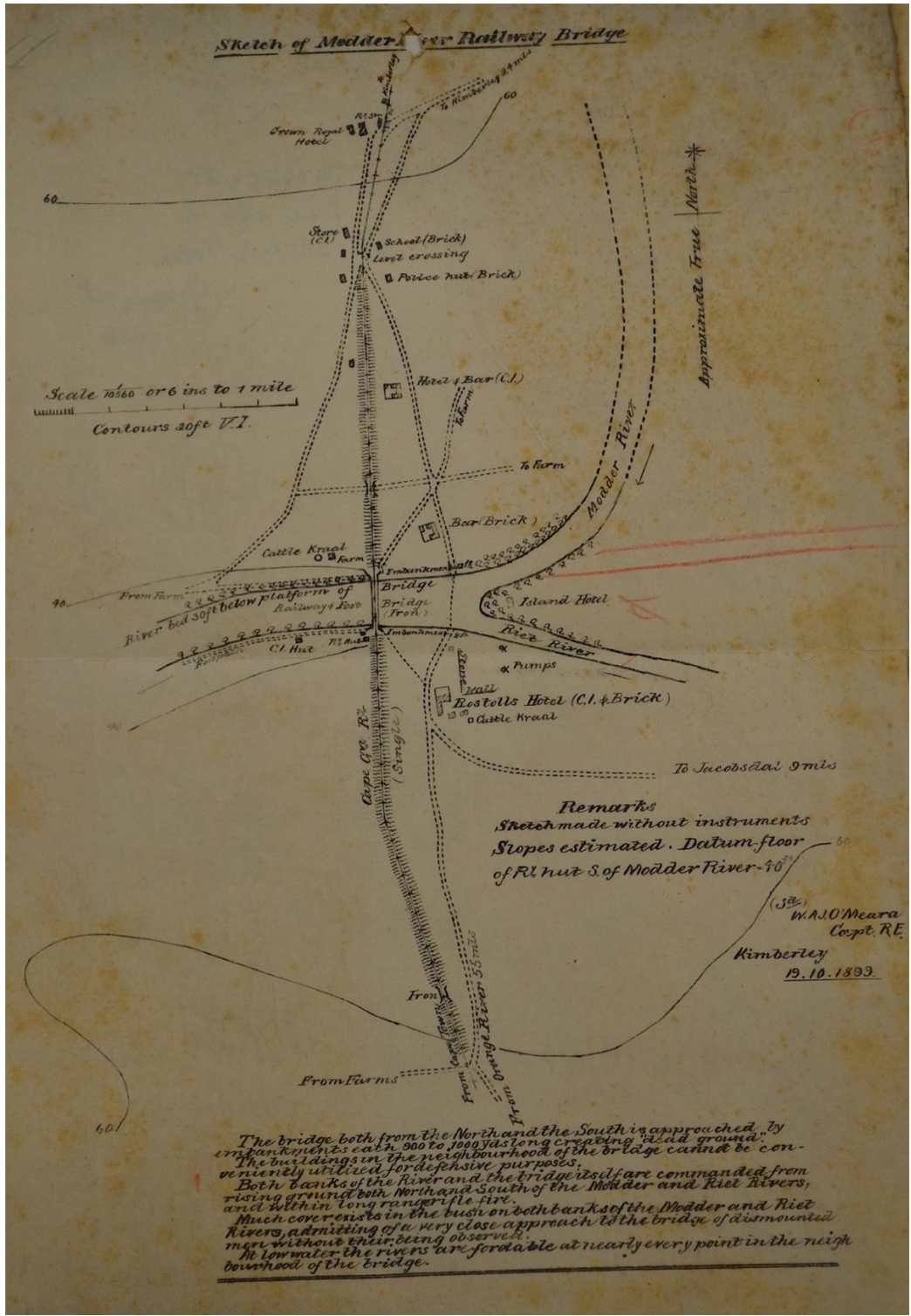
<sup>379</sup> Ibid., pp. 123-4.



**Figure 12.** The Battle of Belmont.

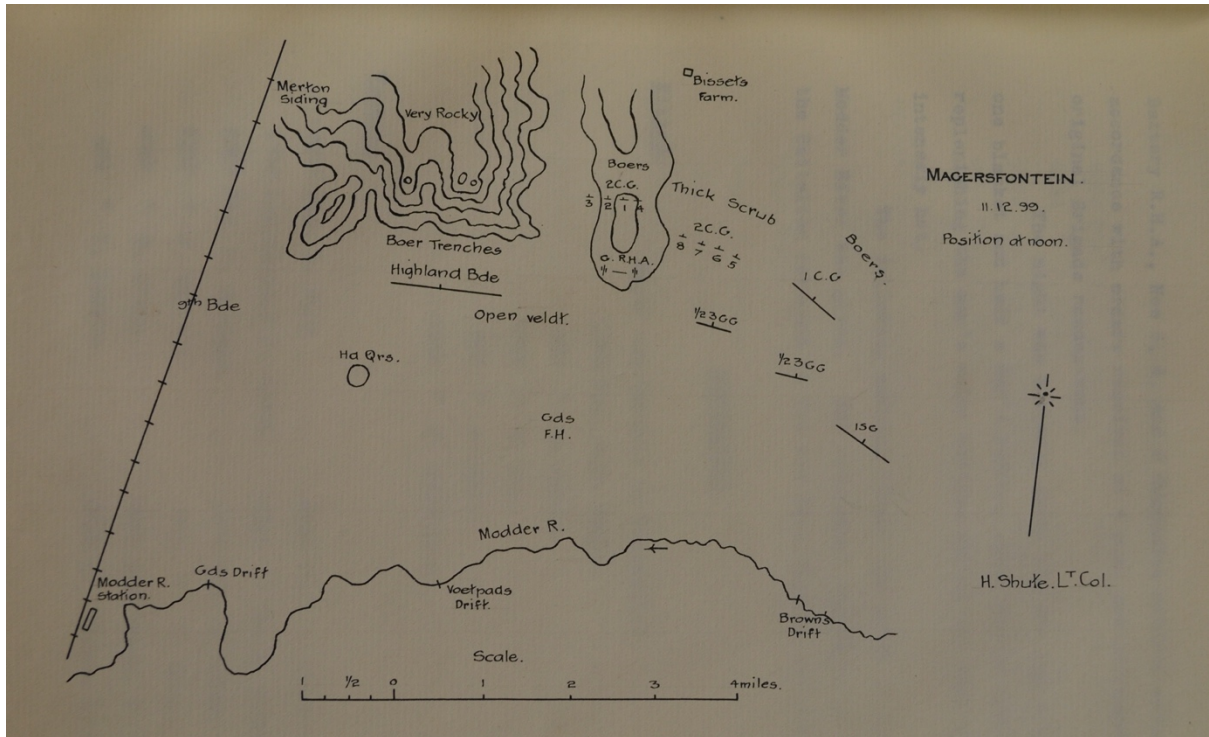
**Source:** Colonel Sir John Hall, *The Coldstream Guards, 1885-1914* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1929), p. 27.





**Figure 13.** Modder River Railway Bridge.  
**Source:** Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre Archives, Paul Sanford, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Methuen, Corsham, Miscellaneous correspondence and papers, South African War 1899-1902, Operational campaign papers, diaries and maps, Accession No: 1742/14.





**Figure 14.** Battle of Magersfontein.

**Source:** Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, *Digest of Services. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards 1899-1902 compiled by Lieutenant-Colonel H. Shute D.S.O., Official Diary, (1GD), p. 15.*

Meanwhile, the Guards who were in reserve at camp received their orders to advance.<sup>380</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalions Coldstream Guards were in the first line, the Grenadiers and Scots in the second line, and their objective was to advance to a low-lying hill east of the central position of the Boers. Instructions were not to commit to a serious engagement but to keep touch on its left with the Highland Brigade that would lead the attack.<sup>381</sup> In the early hours of 11 December, the Guards Brigade marched across the drift over the Modder and advanced about a mile, where they halted until 1:15am.<sup>382</sup> A further advance was made in heavy rain and thunder, and the

<sup>380</sup> Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa*, p. 131.

<sup>381</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 11-12/12/1899. Nos. 5, 6, 7, 8 Companies formed the firing line of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, Companies were in reserve.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*

Brigade again halted at 4:00am.<sup>383</sup> Henniker would later recall that when marching to Magersfontein, “darkness came up, I collected all the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, and some Grenadiers came up ... I then fell them in and called to all Guardsmen to number from the Right ... as steady as on Parade ... we left Modder River and marched to rendezvous 2 miles off. A terrible experience of a night march.”<sup>384</sup> Private Brooker remembered that “it was a pitch-dark night & we had great difficulty to keep touch, once we got lost, separated causing a halt for about an hour. I was tied up in barbed wire for a time.”<sup>385</sup> Codrington recorded that at 4:30am, the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards were to “advance and prolong line...and not to become heavily engaged.”<sup>386</sup> Before their advance, Wauchope had ordered the Highland Brigade to extend the line, and while the 4,000 men were doing so, the Boers began firing.<sup>387</sup> Private Brooker recorded the ill-timed attack, saying “just at daylight the Boers opened fire on the Highlanders on our left, they must have had the time given them for a light was burning & directly that was put out, they commenced firing.”<sup>388</sup>

Shute was under orders to make contact with the Highlanders and occupy Hill A but to resist engaging the Boers. Taking half of No. 8 company, Shute encountered many Highlanders who were “retiring at full speed.”<sup>389</sup> He continued his advance through a wire fence to within 400 yards of the Boers and, with only ten men at his side, collected any remaining stragglers in anticipation of the next assault. Keeping the men from running away proved difficult, as according to Shute, the Highlanders were petrified. In particular, he remembered an officer who was “very young ... had lost his helmet and was nearly off his head.”<sup>390</sup> Realising the

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<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

<sup>384</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 11/12/1899.

<sup>385</sup> Wellington Barracks, Brooker, Diary, 11/12/1899.

<sup>386</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 11/12/1899.

<sup>387</sup> Judd & Surridge, *The Boer War. A History*, p. 124.

<sup>388</sup> Wellington Barracks, Brooker, Diary, 11/12/1899.

<sup>389</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 11/12/1899.

<sup>390</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 27/11/1899.

situation called for drastic measures to bring order to the ranks, even if it meant using threats of violence, Shute ordered any man to be shot who tried to turn back.<sup>391</sup>

Captain Thomas Henry Eyre Lloyd witnessed the chaos when the Boers opened fire on the Highlanders. Under orders to form a reserve for the left half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, he advanced under “murderous fire” over an open plain towards the Boer trenches, and collected thirty-odd “stragglers and shirkers” who subsequently ran away. With No. 3 company entirely unsupported, Lloyd and Shute combined forces.<sup>392</sup> Shute recorded that with his “newly formed crew”, he was ordered to move in support of the 12<sup>th</sup> Lancers slightly east of Hill A, where he remained until further notice.<sup>393</sup> Following the initial early morning attack, Henniker moved his men into position to get better cover from Boer fire-power. However, he could not move forward and remained in place for the rest of the day. Henniker later wrote that while holding this position:

Was called upon by the BM [Brigade Major] of the Highland Brigade, Ewart, to make us charge ... I declined as I had less than 40 men and strict orders on the contrary. I went back with Ewart to try and get support ... We had to walk straight at our own guns in action ... got through them at last.<sup>394</sup>

Surviving Magersfontein, in Henniker’s opinion, was a surreal experience compounded by a confusion of orders and counter-orders where the Coldstream Guards “hung on like the grim death.”<sup>395</sup> In the day’s diary entry, he wrote, “so ended a disastrous day, badly planned by those in authority and fitting end to a miserably conceived plan of attack.”<sup>396</sup> Henniker was not wrong in his summation. It would take more than British aggregate strength to overpower the Boers,

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<sup>391</sup> Ibid.

<sup>392</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Captain Thomas Henry Eyre Lloyd, Diary, (F1C42-3, F1D1-2), 11/12/1899.

<sup>393</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 11/12/1899.

<sup>394</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 11/12/1899.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

who proved a formidable adversary, using trenches and masterful musketry.<sup>397</sup> As such, on 12 December, according to Denis Judd and Keith Surridge, “General Methuen decided ... to order a general withdrawal, after an armistice had allowed both sides to deal with their wounded and dead.”<sup>398</sup>

The initial engagements at the three key battles of Belmont, Modder River, and Magersfontein revealed several British tactical errors. Facing a well-armed adversary on the defensive left the army ill-prepared for the devastating effects of modern rifle fire. As Lloyd later remarked, it had made him realise that “nothing, but personal experience can teach one the effect of modern rifle fire in an Infantry attack.”<sup>399</sup> For example, on 23 November at Belmont, British losses vastly outnumbered Boer casualties. Boer fire-power and marksmanship demonstrated that they could repel British attacks, yet repeated frontal assaults on the burghers continued.<sup>400</sup> Similar mistakes were made at Modder River on 28 November; the army advanced in extended lines within Boer rifle range and deployed in line battle formations for a frontal attack while under enfilade-fire.<sup>401</sup> The continuation of frontal assaults was, as Stephen Miller argues, that Methuen “like so many of his fellow officers trained in the tactics of colonial warfare ... was unable to improvise to meet the new challenges which the opening phase of the South African War offered, relying instead on the tried and tested methods of the past.”<sup>402</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Ellis, ‘The British Tactical Reaction to Battlefield Conditions during the Anglo-Boer War’, p. 151.

<sup>398</sup> Judd & Surridge, *The Boer War. A History*, p. 124.

<sup>399</sup> Wellington Barracks, Lloyd, *Diary*, 27/07/1901.

<sup>400</sup> Ellis, ‘Musketry: The Anglo-Boer War Experience’, p. 498. British losses – 235; Boer dead or wounded – 35.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 499-500.

<sup>402</sup> Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa*, p. 252. Methuen did manage to adapt to the changed nature of the war as the conflict progressed.

Other tactical errors lay in time planning and infantry doctrine. Significantly, at Belmont and Magersfontein, night marches were attempted to attack Boer locations.<sup>403</sup> The marches were poorly time-managed, and close-range Boer fire left soldiers pinned down as dawn broke, with hesitant junior officers not knowing how to respond.<sup>404</sup> Moreover, at Modder River, the lack of available maps disadvantaged Methuen, who had to depend on ground intelligence to prepare and plan, limiting a full appreciation of the battlefield's nature.<sup>405</sup> The Field Intelligence Department (FID) report to Methuen indicated that both Modder and Riet rivers were shallow enough to wade through. However, this information was found to be false as the Riet proved unfordable, and as a result, the advance had to be made across open ground.<sup>406</sup> As Methuen later wrote in his diary, "the map supplied by the Intelligence department made by Major O'Leary R.E. on 17 October stated that the Modder and Riet were fordable in the vicinity of the bridge, which was quite untrue."<sup>407</sup>

Indeed, the British army's tactical failures demonstrated, among other things, Methuen's failure to reconnoitre Boer positions thoroughly.<sup>408</sup> For example, Modder River demonstrated how effectively Boer entrenchments were concealed, and softer ground limited the amount of damage British artillery could inflict at Magersfontein. By skilfully interpreting the geography of their surroundings, the Boers lay in wait on lower ground with the hills of Magersfontein behind them.<sup>409</sup> Unsurprisingly the effectively concealed Boers were thus primed to inflict heavy losses on the British. Lloyd testified to this, saying, "I lost 18 men and an officer killed

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<sup>403</sup> Badsey, 'The Boer War (1899-1902) and British Cavalry Doctrine: A Re-Evaluation', p. 87.

<sup>404</sup> Ibid.

<sup>405</sup> Smit, 'Methuen's Northern Cape Campaign, Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902', *Modern Military Geography*, p. 140.

<sup>406</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 27/11/1899.

<sup>407</sup> Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre Archives, Methuen, Private and personal correspondence and diaries, Accession No: 1742/18, 28/11/1899.

<sup>408</sup> Thomas G. Fergusson, *British Military Intelligence, 1870-1914. The Development of a Modern Intelligence Organisation* (London, Arms and Armour Press, 1984), p. 151.

<sup>409</sup> Smit, 'Methuen's Northern Cape Campaign, Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902', p. 140.

and wounded in my Company alone.”<sup>410</sup> Although the Boers were hidden from sight at Modder River, burghers were overly hasty in commencing fire as the 1<sup>st</sup> Scots Guards were over 1,000 metres away, thus removing the element of surprise and reducing British losses.<sup>411</sup> However, at Magersfontein, the Boers delayed opening fire until the British had advanced to under 400 metres from the Boer entrenchments.<sup>412</sup> The flatness of the terrain south of Magersfontein, similar to Modder River, meant that any British attempts to reconnoitre near Boer trenches were foiled.<sup>413</sup>

The defeat at Magersfontein was part of what became known as ‘Black Week’ between 10 and 15 December 1899. Major-General William Forbes Gatacre’s force had attempted to defeat Boer commandos occupying areas of the northern Cape but was beaten at Stormberg on 10 December. In an attempt to relieve Ladysmith on 15 December, General Sir Redvers Buller was defeated at Colenso.<sup>414</sup> As a result of these poor British performances, the highly popular and experienced Lord Roberts replaced Buller to take overall command of the field force in South Africa, although Buller retained his command in Natal. In the Afghan Wars in 1880, Roberts famously marched from Kabul to Kandahar, winning acclaim as the hero of the British Empire.<sup>415</sup> With Lord Kitchener, the recent conqueror of the Sudan, as his Chief of Staff, it fell to Roberts to turn the tide of the war.<sup>416</sup>

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<sup>410</sup> Wellington Barracks, Lloyd, Diary, 27/07/1901.

<sup>411</sup> Ellis, ‘Musketry: The Anglo-Boer War Experience’, p. 500.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid., p. 501.

<sup>413</sup> Smit, ‘Methuen’s Northern Cape Campaign, Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902’, *Modern Military Geography*, p. 140.

<sup>414</sup> A. Wessels (ed.), *Lord Roberts and the War in South Africa*, (Stroud, Sutton Publishing Ltd., 2000), pp. xiii-xiv.

<sup>415</sup> Kenneth O. Morgan, ‘The Boer War and the Media (1899-1902)’, *Twentieth Century British History*, 13, No. 1 (2002), p. 6.

<sup>416</sup> Fergusson, *British Military Intelligence, 1870-1914. The Development of a Modern Intelligence Organisation*, p. 153.

Indeed, Lord Roberts favoured well-executed intelligence and reconnaissance and believed in employing competent intelligence officers who could collect comprehensive information.<sup>417</sup> Roberts and his chief of intelligence, Colonel George Francis Robert Henderson, knew that British intelligence gathering methods required improvement and re-organisation.<sup>418</sup> Roberts understood that better scouting would lead to more British successes, and he consequently deployed many scouts on his march to Pretoria, leading to its occupation on 5 June 1900.<sup>419</sup> Henderson, too, acknowledged that reconnaissance methods had to change and pressed for improved scouting techniques.<sup>420</sup> In July 1900, Lieutenant-Colonel C.V. Hume took over as Director of Intelligence. His first task was creating an official document stipulating formal intelligence doctrine, which proposed that intelligence officers be posted with mobile columns and work in conjunction with staff stationed at departmental headquarters. By September 1900, Hume had instigated the necessary measures to improve the centralisation of the FID, including a proposal for counter-intelligence units and intelligence personnel to command their interpreters and scouts.<sup>421</sup>

At this stage in the war, the British were now occupying more territory as they advanced north, and further concerted efforts were made to improve intelligence-gathering methods through more widespread deployment of auxiliary forces. Indigenous African and Coloured auxiliaries who operated alongside middle-command officers proved significant to the British war effort, as will be evident in Chapter Four. As more territory was gained, towns became garrisons and headquarters where battalions were stationed to build defence posts and secure positions. Battalion officers were appointed town commandants and district commanders to maintain law

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<sup>417</sup> Ibid.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid., p. 155.

<sup>419</sup> Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid., pp. 155-7.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid.

and order. At times, a battalion itself was employed to police the towns. Even the Guards found themselves used for garrison duties. At the start of August 1900, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was detailed to Middelburg, a town situated east of Pretoria. Henniker was charged with reorganising the town's police and setting up the outer perimeter defence patrols.<sup>422</sup> Satisfied that the town's defences had been strengthened, Henniker wrote that he "got a good deal put right ... the 4.7 and 5 inch guns now cover the whole town."<sup>423</sup> Orders were subsequently called out for Coldstream Guardsmen for patrol and police duty.<sup>424</sup> Private George J. Gullick who was a constable in the Police Force before the war volunteered when he learnt police were needed in town.<sup>425</sup>

Assigned guard detail at Middelburg's main entrance into the town, Gullick was delighted and felt that "this job is all right."<sup>426</sup> In November 1900, Henniker was sent as commandant to garrison Potchefstroom, a town south-west of Johannesburg, to establish a police force and secure defence outposts.<sup>427</sup> Henniker disliked law enforcement immensely, expressing, "I shall be glad when I get back to the battalion ... this sort of police work has no sort of fascination for me, and I am not paid to do it."<sup>428</sup> Henniker thus felt aggrieved that the Guards Brigade were "rapidly becoming the ... Police, a corps for which they were not enlisted."<sup>429</sup> He was annoyed that guerrilla warfare dictated the scope of his duties. In particular, the close physical proximity of battalion command changed when in battle on the *veldt* with his men to standing on some *voorstoep* of a house in an urban environment away from any real action, overseeing

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<sup>422</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 02/08/1900.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid., 07/08/1900.

<sup>424</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 03/08/1900.

<sup>425</sup> Private George J. Gullick, Diary, 02/08/1900, in Roy George Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries of Major H.G.D. Shute and Private G.J. Gullick 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, 1899-1902* (Burnham-On-Sea, Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society, 1999), p. 63.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid.

<sup>427</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 09-11/11/1900.

<sup>428</sup> Ibid., 12/04/1901.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid., 17-20/07/1901.



duties like policing garrison towns. Henniker's grievances stemmed from the fact that from September 1900, the South African War changed to a guerrilla conflict.

## II

### **Guerrilla Warfare (September 1900 – May 1902)**

Because all Boer fighters were in the saddle, they enjoyed the freedom of movement and the ability to rapidly redeploy if required. It proved an invaluable asset given the vast expanses and challenging terrain with which they were familiar.<sup>430</sup> Lloyd recognised the dire situation the British faced, pointing out that the imperial forces had to do something different; otherwise, the war “will last forever!” He called for an adjustment in methods or, he said, the “infantry will never catch these Boers.”<sup>431</sup> Lord Kitchener thus amassed men for mobile flying columns as a strike force in adjusting to irregular operations.<sup>432</sup> Lloyd found mobile column fighting exhilarating and was thrilled by the gallop alongside the Pom-Pom gun when chasing Boers:

We caught the first wagon in about 4 miles and it was beautiful to see the Pom-Pom come into action at racing speed. We galloped on hard, passing wagons, sheep and cattle all the way, which the Boers dropped ... caught 6 wagons, 1 Cape cart, and destroyed another wagon ... and caught 3 prisoners and large quantities of cattle and sheep. The whole hunt was most enjoyable.<sup>433</sup>

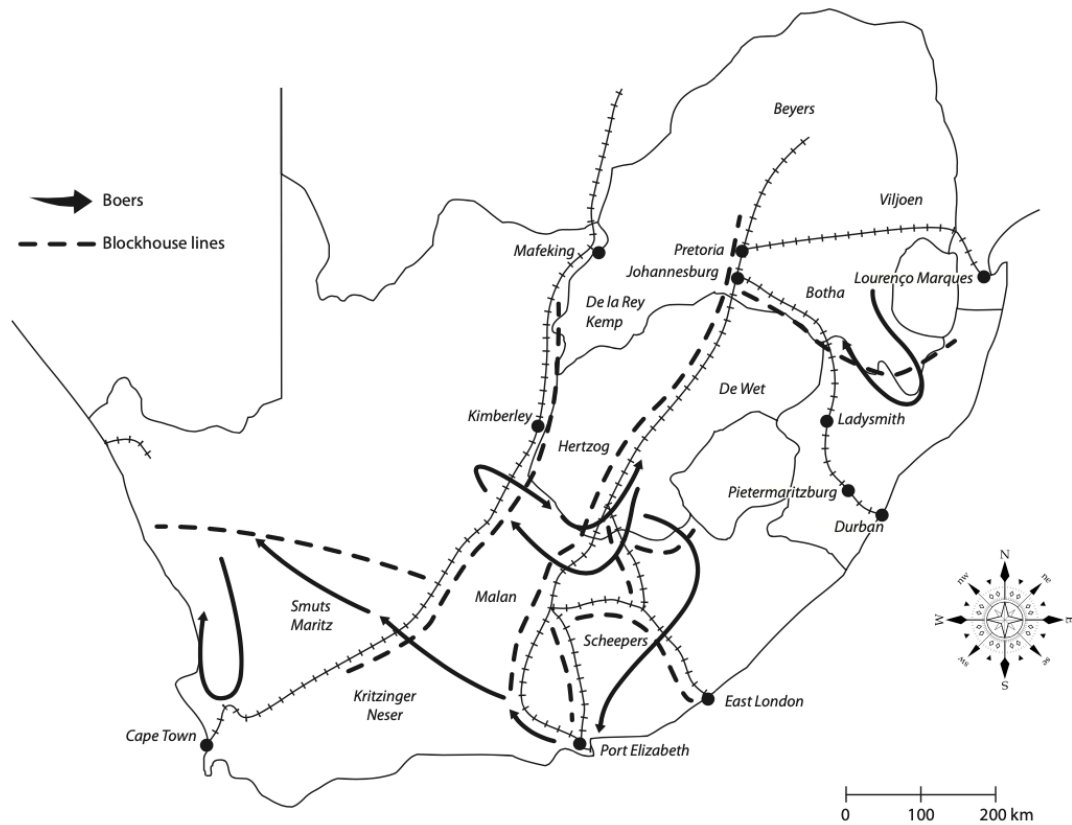
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<sup>430</sup> Deneys Reitz, *Commando. A Boer Journal of the Boer War* (London, Faber & Faber Limited, 1929), p. 15.

<sup>431</sup> Wellington Barracks, Lloyd, Diary, 22/07/1900.

<sup>432</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle for South Africa*, p. 231.

<sup>433</sup> Wellington Barracks, Lloyd, Diary, 22/03/1901.



**Figure 15.** Guerrilla Warfare.

**Source:** André Wessels, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. White Man's War, Black Man's War, Traumatic War* (Bloemfontein, Sun Press, 2011), p. 63.

He welcomed the opportunity to chase and hunt the Boer commandos without the constraints of formal, regimented fighting and considered a more fluid style of warfare suited him better.<sup>434</sup> Besides, Lloyd considered mounted work more interesting than foot-soldiering and better suited to the South African conditions.<sup>435</sup> In a similar vein, Lieutenant Henry Morris Pryce-Jones wrote in a letter to his mother, “there is no doubt that one feels very much better ‘trekking’ than sitting still. I am much fitter than I was.”<sup>436</sup> Not all battalion commanders welcomed the changes; Roberts remarked that it was “very difficult to change a system which

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

<sup>435</sup> Ibid.

<sup>436</sup> National Army Museum, Papers, Diaries and Letters of Lieutenant Henry Morris Pryce-Jones, Coldstream Guards and Northern Nigeria Regiment, 1898-1911, Catalogue No: 8901-125-73, 24/04/1901.

has been so ingrained in the military training, and to make people understand that cannot go on as before.”<sup>437</sup> On 19 December 1900, Henniker was ordered by Lord Kitchener to form a column at De Aar. Protection of the town was necessary as it was a prime depot for dispensing troops and supplies for the British advance north.<sup>438</sup> Dismayed by Kitchener’s order, Henniker lamented, “this Division must play the devil with the whole ... however, when a devil like K. drives one must go.”<sup>439</sup> Anxious about what was expected of him, Henniker felt:

My new Column is a phantom, like the rest I think ... I am full of worry, forming a column. It is no joke ... I have to do most of it myself ... I am supposed to command a Battalion of Guards, instead of which I command 2 Companies of them, and a Yeomanry detachment with two irregular guns. It is a most unfair system.<sup>440</sup>

Moreover, Henniker believed the junior officers under his charge lacked the necessary experience to handle the increased responsibility of mobile fighting. He complained that “Baillie and B. Doran are difficult to work with as they go off in the air and don’t keep touch ... W. Doran got into communication with that ass Baillie, but the latter went off without letting the former know where he was going, or what he was doing.”<sup>441</sup> Henniker thought the whole system of mobile column fighting seemed a “gigantic farce.”<sup>442</sup> The mobile column system had success later in the war, but at the close of 1900, there was an increase in Boer activity in the Cape Colony, where the Coldstream Guards operated at the time. The Cape Colony (**Figure 16**) was of interest to the Boers as it offered a means to re-stock their dwindling food supplies and obtain fresh clothing and horses. Moreover, an invasion of the Cape Colony gave Boer

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<sup>437</sup> Wellington Barracks, Roberts, *Minutes of Evidence*, 04/12/1902, Questions 10333, 10446-10447, 10475.

<sup>438</sup> L.L. Fordred, ‘Wireless in the Second Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902’, *Proceedings of Institute of Electrical Engineers Africon ’96*, as reprinted in *The Transactions of the S.A. Institute of Electrical Engineers* (1997), p. 67.

<sup>439</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, *Diary*, 06-25/12/1900; 28/01/1902.

<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*, 19/03-29/04/1901.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 21/09-01/10/1901.

guerrillas the opportunity to enlist Cape Boers to the *bittereinder* (bitter-ender) cause.<sup>443</sup> The Boers invaded the Cape Colony twice during the guerrilla war, having already done so during their first offensive in October 1899. From September 1900 to the end of the war, the Cape Police were employed in various districts of the Cape Colony to assist the army. Cape policemen possessed valuable knowledge of the terrain and inhabitants and were attached to mobile columns to serve as guides and scouts.<sup>444</sup> Shute favoured working with loyalist service personnel due to their disciplined work ethic, and he enlisted the help of local police volunteers with guiding and other intelligence work. Shute was particularly impressed by Corporal Carter, a Cape policeman who volunteered to work as a guide and proved himself invaluable.<sup>445</sup>

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<sup>443</sup> A.S. Ellard, 'South African Units. Cape Police', n.d. [www.angloboerwar.com](http://www.angloboerwar.com). (Accessed, 08/07/2019).

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 27/12/1900.



**Figure 16.** Map of the Cape Colony (1899-1902).

**Source:** Hilary Anne Shearing, ‘The Cape Rebel of the South African War, 1899-1902’ (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2004).

The initial invasion of the Cape Colony during the guerrilla war was executed in December 1900 by Free State commanders, spearheaded by General Christiaan Rudolph De Wet and President Marthinus Theunis Steyn.<sup>446</sup> The British were alarmed by the invasion, and measures were set in motion to repel these Republican Boers and the few Cape rebels who joined them.<sup>447</sup>

<sup>446</sup> Hilary Anne Shearing, ‘The Cape Rebel of the South African War, 1899-1902’ (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 2004), pp. 107-110.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid.

These fighters came from regions in the Cape Colony occupied by the British.<sup>448</sup> In response, Pryce-Jones wrote that Coldstream Guards units were dispatched “to guard the Orange River with the 1st Batt Grenadiers, who were scattered all along the drifts, to prevent [them from] getting into the Colony.”<sup>449</sup> A further measure implemented to prevent Boer incursions was the Colonial Defence Force (CDF), comprising loyalists and formed on 31 December 1900. These auxiliaries were organised into Town Guards (TG), General Service Troops (GST) and District Mounted Troops (DMT). The DMT were loyalist farmers who were closely acquainted with their regions. Moreover, they were familiar with the Boers and would help the British capture and identify notable Boer rebels.<sup>450</sup>

The town of Graaff-Reinet, located in the Cape Midlands (**Figure 16**), was particularly significant because, as Lieutenant George Windsor-Clive of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards explained in his diary, “it is about 180 miles from Port Elizabeth and is situated on the railway which connects that place with Rosmead Junction.”<sup>451</sup> Owing to its strategic location, Graaff-Reinet was in danger of being attacked by the Boers, and it subsequently became an epicentre of rebel activity.<sup>452</sup> A detachment of Nos. 1 and 2 Companies of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards under Shute’s command were thus sent to garrison the town and arrived at Graaff-Reinet on 1 January 1901.<sup>453</sup> As the local garrison commander, Shute kept contact with neighbouring commandants, who in turn alerted him to Cape rebel movements, and deployed troops to protect the towns and fend off any attacks.<sup>454</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> Kenneth Wyndham Smith, ‘From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910’ (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Rhodes University, 1974), p. 611.

<sup>449</sup> National Army Museum, Pryce-Jones, Papers, Diaries and Letters, Catalogue No: 1989-01-125-1, 10/12/1900.

<sup>450</sup> Shearing, ‘The Cape Rebel of the South African War, 1899-1902’, p. 111.

<sup>451</sup> Wellington Barracks, Windsor-Clive, Diary, 02/01/1901.

<sup>452</sup> Smith, ‘From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910’, pp. 629-29.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 621.

<sup>454</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 22/02/1901.

A month later, in February 1901, the another Boer incursion into the Cape Colony took place.<sup>455</sup> From March to May 1901, Boer saboteurs were especially active in the Northern Cape and Cape Midlands, where the Coldstream Guards were based, and Boers were blowing up railways, burning trains, and cutting telegraph lines to destroy the British lines of communication.<sup>456</sup> These actions disrupted Coldstream Guards' attempts to supply British forces further north, and their ability to communicate with units in the field and on garrison duties in garrison towns such as Graaff-Reinet and Aberdeen. Boer rebel sabotage attacks posed many challenges, leading to increased complications for the Coldstream Guards battalion officers in maintaining clear communication lines. For example, on 23 February, Boer saboteurs destroyed the telegraph instruments at Roodehoogte station, north of Graaff-Reinet. The Boers also attacked and severely damaged the railway at Fish River, located north-east of Graaff-Reinet, cutting the telegraph wires and severing all incoming and outgoing communication channels.<sup>457</sup> In an intelligence report on 21 March, Shute stated that the saboteurs also cut all the telegraph wires south of Marais Siding to the west of the town of Somerset East and were reportedly camped a mile and a half west from there. Further reports mentioned that the attackers had subsequently moved on during the night and were located near Aberdeen Road, south-west of Graaff-Reinet.<sup>458</sup>

The situation deteriorated further on 29 May when Aberdeen reported that the Boer forces encircled the town. In communication with Shute, Willowmore, situated south of Aberdeen, wired that they had been attacked at daybreak. Shute would contact construction trains to repair damaged lines, remove debris, and ensure troops escorting trains were aware of blockages on

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<sup>455</sup> Shearing, 'The Cape Rebel of the South African War, 1899-1902', pp. 107-110.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 23/02/1901.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid., 21/03/1901.

the line as part of his duties.<sup>459</sup> When Aberdeen alerted Shute to their situation, he at once despatched an armoured train to assist. In part, due to Shute's quick action, the Boers were eventually repulsed.<sup>460</sup> Maintaining and protecting railway lines was of utmost importance to the British due to increased operational and logistical cargo being sent north from the Cape.<sup>461</sup>

Consequently, on 7 July, the Boers torched Aberdeen Station. Both Pryce-Jones and Gullick noted the destruction the Boers had caused.<sup>462</sup> Henniker lamented that the failure to act in time was due to the lack of enough men; he reasoned that it was impossible to be effective without more men, and it felt like "great rot" not being able to prevent such acts of sabotage.<sup>463</sup> Henniker bemoaned in frustration that the Boers had not yet been successfully repulsed, and he was confident they would return "ad infinitum."<sup>464</sup> Thus, very quickly, blockhouses were constructed by mid-1901 in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony to deny the Boers the space to move safely. Some were built in the Cape Colony, but not all to the same scale.<sup>465</sup> Moreover, blockhouses served as intelligence bases and depots where troops could re-supply stores.<sup>466</sup> The blockhouses constricted Boer movements to such an extent that it became near impossible to escape and enabled the British to circumscribe Boer mobility.<sup>467</sup> The blockhouse lines forced the commandos to travel longer distances to avoid the mesh of soldiers and structures.<sup>468</sup> Blockhouses were systematically constructed and laid out as an inter-connected

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<sup>459</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 21/05/1901.

<sup>460</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 29/05-01/06/1901.

<sup>461</sup> Potgieter, 'Nineteenth Century Technological Development and its Influence on the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902', p. 119.

<sup>462</sup> National Army Museum, Pryce-Jones, Papers, Diaries and Letters, Catalogue No: 1989-01-125-3, 11/07/1901; Gullick, Diary, 11/07/1901, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 116.

<sup>463</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 06-12/07/1901.

<sup>464</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-20/07/1901.

<sup>465</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle For South Africa*, p. 231-2.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 234.

<sup>468</sup> Albert Grundlingh, *The Dynamics of Treason. Boer collaboration in the South African War of 1899-1902* (Pretoria, Protea Book House, 2006), p. 185.



network of forts from which the British force, that included the Coldstream Guards, could execute sweeping drives to capture Boer guerrillas.<sup>469</sup>

To illustrate, the garrison of each Coldstream Guards blockhouse numbered seven men; the oldest soldier was to command in the absence of a non-commissioned officer (NCO). The officers remained at the nearest station and inspected the blockhouses day and night.<sup>470</sup> Charged with holding the blockhouse line between Naauwpoort and De Aar in the Cape Midlands, on 15 July 1901, Captain Edward George Spencer-Churchill, a cousin of Winston Churchill, wrote that he and his men were to concentrate at Hanover Road.<sup>471</sup> In constructing the site at Hanover Road, Spencer-Churchill noted that once the entrenching tools had arrived, the fatigue party made an early start:

8.30 am lasting all day. Very hard work as ground solid rock. Crowbars, picks etc. broken in making tunnels. Floors of blockhouses to be on level with top of sleepers (at least) involving much labour near embankment ... Wire required nightly saying how blockhouses getting on.<sup>472</sup>

Lieutenant Sir Walter Barttelot explained that many blockhouses were circular and not rectangular as was widely reported in Britain, remarking that all the blockhouses were bulletproof and could withstand pom-pom attacks to a certain degree.<sup>473</sup> Furthermore, he pointed out, blockhouses had wire entanglements with mines and spring guns as deterrents, with deep trenches providing cover in the likelihood of Boer attacks.<sup>474</sup> Barbed wire was laid that connected the blockhouses sectioning the areas between each for the mobile columns to

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<sup>469</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle For South Africa*, p. 232.

<sup>470</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 01/12/1901.

<sup>471</sup> National Army Museum, Diary of Captain Edward George Spencer-Churchill, 1900-1902, Grenadier Guards, Catalogue No: 2016-10-23-51, 15/07/1901.

<sup>472</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-19/07/1901.

<sup>473</sup> Wellington Barracks, Barttelot, Letters, 06/10/1901.

<sup>474</sup> *Ibid.*

swoop in on the Boers systematically.<sup>475</sup> Codrington, who at the time was based at Steynsburg, located slightly north-east of Middleburg, put the organisation of his blockhouses on a business-like footing and conducted regular meetings of his defence staff. All operational troops, Coldstream Guards and Royal Engineers alike, answered to Codrington, who announced that he was “very much running this show.”<sup>476</sup>

Unlike Codrington, Henniker found his appointment as Superintendent of Graaff-Reinet and Aberdeen districts in May 1901 demanding. The constant pressure to send convoys and deploy troops for blockhouse duty significantly reduced Henniker’s defence capabilities – to the extent that he referred to soldiering as an “absurd profession.”<sup>477</sup> Despondent, he wrote “we are now reduced to a small garrison, and I suppose the rebels will shortly return.”<sup>478</sup> Gullick, also stationed in Graaff-Reinet, concluded that “Kitchener’s blockhouse system seems a very good one in lessening the number of troops required for garrison purposes.”<sup>479</sup> Henniker thought that blockhouses on the line were a tiresome existence for soldiers and felt it would be “conducive to slackness.”<sup>480</sup> Codrington disagreed, categorically declaring, “the officers and rank-and-file have worked quite splendidly, and I was never more proud of belonging to the Battalion than now.”<sup>481</sup> He was pleased when General Inigo ‘Bones’ Jones told him “the whole thing of putting up the blockhouses in so short a time had been a huge success. Kitchener was delighted with the swift building works and told Codrington that “we had done a “big thing”, so that is all right.”<sup>482</sup> After the structural building work was completed, Codrington reported the party

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<sup>475</sup> Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 312.

<sup>476</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 29/08/1901.

<sup>477</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 16/06/1901.

<sup>478</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-20/07/1901.

<sup>479</sup> Gullick, Diary, 12/09/1901, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 125.

<sup>480</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 29/11/1901.

<sup>481</sup> *Ibid.*, 01-28/08/1901.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 12/08/1901.

were “hard at work now ... in putting up telephones between the blockhouses, and there is correspondence going on as to where the telephones are to be.”<sup>483</sup>

The technology used between the various mobile columns and garrison towns delivered a better means of collecting, distributing, and acting upon intelligence received in conjunction with the extensive blockhouse line system. Barttelot explained that the battalion’s blockhouses were all “well-defended as possible and a system of telephones, by which [soldiers] may be in speaking communication with one another.”<sup>484</sup> Tactical employment of the telegraph in the field was well-established by the end of the nineteenth century, but the telephone was not.<sup>485</sup> The South African War changed that, and field telephones enabled the various detachments to communicate between their multiple positions or report where the opposing force was located.<sup>486</sup> To an old-fashioned soldier such as Henniker, the new way of making war was, in fact, a “rather curious experience.”<sup>487</sup> Indeed, advances in technology and the increased mechanisation of war affected how mid-level echelons identified as leaders. Codrington was concerned that it diminished officers’ involvement on the battlefield and removed the commander’s physicality among the men. He was vexed that General Jones did not take to the field himself and go with one of the central columns; instead, he directed the columns’ movements from his railway carriage by telegraph.<sup>488</sup>

Henniker, too, felt the distancing effect of modern warfare to his preference for a more personalised command approach. When conversing with General John Denton Pinkstone

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<sup>483</sup> Ibid., 01-28/08/1901.

<sup>484</sup> Wellington Barracks, Barttelot, Letters, 18/08/1901.

<sup>485</sup> H. Bailes, ‘Military Aspects of the War’, in P. Warwick & B. Spies (eds.), *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (London, Longman, 1980), p. 67.

<sup>486</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 02/08/1900.

<sup>487</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 01/06/1900.

<sup>488</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 26/03/1901.

French over the telephone, Henniker felt it was “rather hard work to make war in this way.”<sup>489</sup> The battalion officers had different experiences when it came to adapting and adopting new technological systems and communication methods. For example, Henniker felt there was no time to get “five minutes rest” and that “one gets quite worn out and annoyed at times.”<sup>490</sup> He was concerned that being over-worked would negatively impact the quality of his command and became irritated constantly having to answer wires to repair lines of communication:

The Boers are near Aberdeen which they attacked about 11.30 pm. The R.S.O. (Rose Innes) rushed into my room about midnight, saying that the telegraph instrument was broken, and Aberdeen taken. Luckily, I was only half awake, and only d---d him, as I was so angry at his concluding that No.1 2/C.G. would give in, that I should certainly have knocked him down if I had been more thoroughly roused.<sup>491</sup>

Nevertheless, Henniker realised the vital purpose of communication technology, and acknowledged that it enabled a faster flow of information and a quicker response.<sup>492</sup> Shute admitted that the most aggravating work for him at this time was the constant night calls answering incoming wires to clear communication lines, subsequently complaining it was impossible to get “a night’s rest.”<sup>493</sup> Pragmatic in dealing with the constant flow of communications arriving at all hours, Shute adapted his daytime routine instead; he took to having a “*siesta between 2 pm and 4 pm*” and gave orders not to be disturbed during that time.<sup>494</sup>

One example of the application of modern telecommunications can be found in the hunt and capture of prominent Boer rebel commandant Gideon Scheepers, which Shute co-ordinated as

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<sup>489</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 18/04/1902.

<sup>490</sup> Ibid., 28/05/1901.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid., 18/05/1902.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid., 21/04/1901.

<sup>493</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 24/01/1901.

<sup>494</sup> Ibid.

garrison town commander of Graaff-Reinet.<sup>495</sup> Signalling messages transmitting Scheepers's movements were communicated between Shute, Colonel Herbert Scobell and other officers.<sup>496</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Edward Longueville recorded that Scheepers eventually surrendered because he was suffering from appendicitis.<sup>497</sup> Found guilty of treason at his trial, Scheepers was deemed a traitor to the Crown because he had been born in the Cape and was, therefore, a British subject and faced execution. Concerning Cape rebels facing the death penalty, Shute's suggestion that executions be carried out in the district to which the condemned men belonged met General French's approval.<sup>498</sup> If caught, rebels faced summary execution as punishment. Henniker disapproved of executions; it went against his ethos of being a soldier and Guardsman, commenting, "... it is a sickening job. I would rather go into action twenty times than do this once. Rather dirty work for Guards to have to do."<sup>499</sup> Henniker was charged to read out Scheepers' charges at the promulgation of his sentence on 17 January 1902. He would later recall that Scheepers:

Took it very coolly and with a good deal of insolence, which did not impress me. He was found guilty of 30 charges out of 31 ... I got an order to stay the execution to hang Scheepers.<sup>500</sup>

The following day Henniker received a further order to shoot Scheepers instead and remarked that with this manner of execution, at least, death is painless.<sup>501</sup> Afterwards, Henniker reiterated his distaste for the punishment meted out to Scheepers, saying it was an "ordeal."<sup>502</sup> Pryce-Jones alleged that the change for Scheepers's execution from death by hanging to firing squad was due to no scaffold being available from which to hang the condemned rebel:

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<sup>495</sup> Ibid., 12-20/03/1901.

<sup>496</sup> Ibid.

<sup>497</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Edward Longueville, Diary, (F1C40), 10/11/1901.

<sup>498</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 01/09/1901.

<sup>499</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 17-9/08/1901; 17-8/01/1902.

<sup>500</sup> Ibid, 17/01/1902.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid., 18/01/1902.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

[He] was shot at 3 pm on the east of Oudeberg Road. I commanded the firing party of 20 men (15 loaded). Words of command ... FIRING PARTY - VOLLEYS - READY - PRESENT - FIRE!!!<sup>503</sup>

According to Henniker, the execution process “only took 1.min.15 seconds from the time the man left the Ambulance wagon in which he came up, to the time he was dead; and about 3 minutes before he was in his grave. He [Scheepers] showed courage, but I think it was due to the fact that he was half dazed.”<sup>504</sup>

Along with the telegraph and telephone used to capture rebels like Scheepers, photographic technology proved useful in the fight against the Boers. In garrison towns, the camera became a vital identification tool for the battalion commander in collecting and disseminating information, and photography was a powerful weapon to coerce and control potential intelligence threats. Shute used photography to identify suspected rebels who pretended to be Transvaalers to escape the noose and be classified as POWs instead. Because of this, Shute foiled such tactics by taking photographs of all incoming inmates, numbering each inmate on the photograph and then distributing them in his and other districts in the Cape Colony, thereby increasing the likelihood of identifying Cape rebels who posed as Transvaalers. Shute’s initiative was, moreover, a cunning intimidation tactic:

*All prisoners say they are Transvaalers in the hope they may be treated as prisoners of war and not as rebels, but the moment they come in here I have them photographed and copies sent to all districts, so the great majority of them are identified ... I think the rebels understand that I mean business and have the power to insist on my order being obeyed.*<sup>505</sup>

Photographs circulated by Shute particularly emphasise how much battalion command practice had changed by this stage in the war. In particular, the photograph had become part of what

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<sup>503</sup> National Army Museum, Pryce-Jones, Papers, Diaries and Letters, Catalogue No: 1989-01-125-3, 18/01/1902.

<sup>504</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 18/01/1902.

<sup>505</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 23/10/1901; 04/05/1902.

constituted regimental officer command, and, above all, the garrison commander used the visual image to intimidate and threaten possible dissenters. Moreover, the example shown in **(Figure 17)** is also a visual record of the participation and collaboration of Graaff-Reinet based professional photographers, such as Ivie H. Allan. Ivie was originally from Wimbledon in London and settled in Graaff-Reinet in 1898, opening a photographic studio. He was also a member of the Graaff-Reinet Town Guard.<sup>506</sup> The particular image Ivie captured was intended for identification purposes, which ultimately enabled more rebels to be captured, sentenced, banished to life-long penal servitude, or condemned to death.



**Figure 17.** Commando numbered for identification purposes.

**Photographer:** Ivie H. Allan.

**Source:** Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Albums, South African War, (2W11).

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<sup>506</sup> H. Baartman, ‘Sal die Ware Ivie H. Allan Vorentoe Tree?’, *Graaff-Reinet Museum Nuusblad* (Desember, 2008), pp. 8-11.

Another Graaff-Reinet photographer, William Roe, who also worked closely with Shute, was originally from Northampton in England. Roe arrived in Graaff-Reinet in 1859, where he opened a photographic studio and had another small studio in the town of Aberdeen.<sup>507</sup> While the Boer rebel fighters operated outside the garrison town, Boer women who were town inhabitants also posed a potential intelligence threat to the British from within the urban environment of the garrison. In January 1902, Shute got word of an all-female commando at Aberdeen commanded by Lettie Auret with Martha Joubert as the lieutenant. Shute intended to photograph the women and document their names and places of residence.<sup>508</sup> As Auret was an Aberdeen town resident, Shute would likely have sent Roe as the photographer.

The details are unclear, but Auret somehow managed to get hold of the negatives (possibly Roe had an attack of consciousness and handed them to her). She then refused to hand them over to Shute, fearing that she and her fellow commando members would be singled out as examples to prevent other garrison town residents from fomenting rebellion. To coerce Auret into cooperating and giving him the negatives, Shute threatened her with incarceration for disobeying his order and warned Auret she would be deported if she did not comply.<sup>509</sup> She continued to resist, and thus Shute incarcerated Auret. While imprisoned awaiting deportation, Auret was allowed to attend a church service where she:

*Met one of the captured rebels ... and opened a correspondence with him and became engaged to him. Unfortunately, one of her notes was found by a sentry. I had her searched and her clothes were lined with notes from the rebel. She was tried by the R.M. for a breach of prison discipline and given 5 days' short diet (half lb. of rice a day) after which she went off to a concentration camp.<sup>510</sup>*

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<sup>507</sup> C. Hardijzer & A. Malherbe, 'William Roe (1827-1916) – Long Serving Graaff-Reinet based photographer', *The Heritage Portal Newsletter*, 30/01/2018. <https://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/william-roe-1827-1916-long-serving-graaff-reinet-based-photographer>. (Accessed, 11/11/2022).

<sup>508</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 13/01/1902.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid., 14/01/1902.



When Shute and his detachment initially arrived at Graaff-Reinet in January 1901, he was sent two intelligence agents who reported directly to Cape Town. However, Shute disapproved of the quality of work they provided. He replaced the agents in May 1901 with a more able individual called Edwin Clement Tennant, a loyalist attorney from Johannesburg, forced to leave before the war's outbreak.<sup>511</sup> According to Shute:

[Tennant] was an extremely able man who knew every inch of the Dutch character. He had been sent here privately ... to obtain evidence. I asked him to come as my intelligence officer. He agreed and after considerable trouble got the appointment sanctioned, and his assistance has been simply invaluable.<sup>512</sup>

The partnership of Shute and Tennant was made possible by the vastly improved organisational restructure of the FID by Lieutenant-Colonel David Henderson, Director of Military Intelligence. Henderson instituted specific regulations for intelligence personnel. For example, in February 1901, Henderson created a standard template for submitting daily and weekly reports and insisted on specified times when these had to be submitted. Intelligence officers also had to compile monthly updates on Boer casualties. Under his leadership, intelligence was sent up the chain of command and down the ranks to subordinates.<sup>513</sup>

In addition, Henderson created four main intelligence divisions assigned by geographical positions: Cape Colony, Orange River Colony, Transvaal and Western District. Each Division was headed by an intelligence officer who then created a sub-division of personnel.<sup>514</sup> In the various sectors and sub-sectors where intelligence officers were stationed, they shared information with other intelligence officers who worked independently with mobile columns.

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<sup>511</sup> Ibid., 21/05/1901.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

<sup>513</sup> Fergusson, *British Military Intelligence, 1870-1914. The Development of a Modern Intelligence Organisation*, pp. 158-9; 162; 177.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

Divisional personnel were also in charge of issuing cypher codes for all telegrams sent. The traditional phase of the South African conflict highlighted the need for intelligence officers to work alongside operational units smaller than a division, and towards the end of the war, most, if not all, mobile units had an intelligence officer assigned to assist.<sup>515</sup> During the guerrilla phase of the war, it became clear that intelligence officers would also have to function in clandestine positions alongside battalion officers in garrison towns, as in the case of Shute and Tennant, who made a formidable pair. Their collaborative efforts proved highly successful, as is evident when Shute reported on a visit by him and Tennant to Aberdeen:

The whole place is in chaos. The Disloyalists defiant. Interviewed the D.R. Parson Celliers; a double-dealing blackguard ... Celliers had been deported to Port Elizabeth as an undesirable. He wanted to get back so wrote a long article to papers saying he had visited the women's concentration camps and they were most comfortable etc. On this he spoofed the authorities and returned to Aberdeen. He then told his flock he had lied to get back to them.<sup>516</sup>

Consequently, the Vigilance Committee was formed at Graaff-Reinet to identify suspicious activity amongst the local population, and Tennant acted as Shute's representative and adviser. Once identified, a list of individuals recommended for deportation to concentration camps was compiled. However, Shute had the ultimate approval to sign off any decisions the committee made on forming an "undesirables" settlement at Port Alfred.<sup>517</sup> Shute and Tennant also identified the infamous Judge Kock, who presided over the Jameson Raid case before the outbreak of the war. Kock was caught whilst en route to join a commando. Upon his capture, Kock concealed his true identity and tried to pass himself off as a merchant's agent, named Morees, and requested that Shute release him. Shute refused, and Kock was subsequently incarcerated.<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid., pp. 158-9; 162; 177.

<sup>516</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 13-5/01/1902.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid., 19/01/1902.

<sup>518</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 17/02/1902.

The impact of the Shute-Tennant alliance was far-reaching. As commandant of Graaff-Reinet, Shute divided his district into six sections. With Tennant's help, Shute recruited "two thoroughly reliable guides ... for each district" while Tennant also "raised funds from the disloyalists for the Town Guard and District Mounted Troops."<sup>519</sup> The men were paid, and had to agree to the conditions that they would live in Graaff-Reinet, and be prepared to turn out and act at a moment's notice night or day to join a column passing through. The guides worked in pairs and, according to Shute, did "really good work."<sup>520</sup> Other roles fulfilled by the guides included leading the British columns to farms of burghers that were then burnt and razed to the ground, and assisting in transporting deported women and children to concentration camps.<sup>521</sup>

Likewise, surrendered Boers assisted the British from mid-1900, providing intelligence in exchange for payments or rewards.<sup>522</sup> As such, they trained the British in the ways of the Boers. For example, the informants demonstrated how to conceal the sound of horse hooves, move undetected at night, and hide in mountain nooks and crannies to slip through unnoticed by the Boer commandos.<sup>523</sup> Boer traitors acted as informants and guides in an unofficial capacity as early as June 1900, and at the time, battalion commanders were ordered to ensure the co-operation of a prominent farmer in their region to assist with guiding.<sup>524</sup> Their actions exacerbated divisions and bitterness within Boer communities between *bittereinders* and collaborators. In effect, Kitchener profited from what was turning into a civil war. He understood the military and political leverage this enmity provided and seized the opportunity

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<sup>519</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 21/05/1901.

<sup>520</sup> Ibid., 29/06/1901.

<sup>521</sup> Grundlingh, *The Dynamics of Treason. Boer collaboration in the South African War of 1899-1902*, p. 246.

<sup>522</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle For South Africa*, p. 235. Numbering at nearly 4,000 in April 1902, this amount increased close to 5,000 by May 1902.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>524</sup> Grundlingh, *The Dynamics of Treason. Boer collaboration in the South African War of 1899-1902*, p. 221.

to deepen the rift further by employing surrendered burghers as scouts, guides and spies.<sup>525</sup> Collaborators possessed intimate knowledge of places where commandos chose to set up their *laagers* (camps) – resulting in many night-time attacks on sleeping burghers.<sup>526</sup> The surrendered Boers' collaboration was an advantage to FID efforts.<sup>527</sup>

The Boers did not look kindly upon fellow kinsmen or 'joiners' who either defected to the British or enlisted to fight against their people. Moreover, surrendered Boers were contemptuously referred to as *hensoppers* (hands-uppers). Both joiners and *hensoppers* were regarded as *verraaiers* (traitors) who betrayed their *volk* (people). There were several motivating factors for burghers to switch allegiance. Boer society was crumbling in the final phase of the war due to increasingly pronounced social and economic inequalities. For some, the loss of their homes, displacement and living in poverty became too much to bear any longer.<sup>528</sup> Disillusionment set in, and these burghers made the immutable decision to assist the British ensuring they would never be able to re-join their former commandos.<sup>529</sup>

Violent punishments were often inflicted on *verraaiers*, as illustrated in the case of J.S. Van Der Merwe. After surrendering to the Coldstream Guards, the young *hensopper* was sentenced to one-year imprisonment in July 1901.<sup>530</sup> However, after considering his predicament, Van Der Merwe decided the only way he might be shown leniency was to switch sides and collaborate with the Coldstream Guards. He asked his father, an upstanding member of the Boer community, to approach Shute on his behalf to arrange employment. Seizing the

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<sup>525</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle For South Africa*, pp. 235-6.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>527</sup> Fergusson, *British Military Intelligence, 1870-1914. The Development of a Modern Intelligence Organisation*, p. 161.

<sup>528</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle For South Africa*, pp. 238-9.

<sup>529</sup> Grundlingh, *The Dynamics of Treason. Boer collaboration in the South African War of 1899-1902*, pp. 198; 221.

<sup>530</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 30/07/1901.

opportunity to try and turn other Boers into collaborators with the promise of low sentences if they were to lay down arms, Shute accepted Van der Merwe's plea. Van Der Merwe was tasked to persuade Commandants Johannes Cornelius Jacobus 'Hans' Lötter and Daniel Jacobus Theron's commandos to surrender.<sup>531</sup>

Van Der Merwe set off on his mission in August 1901 with a letter from Reverend Charles Murray requesting the fighters' compliance. However, the rebels were not swayed and severely *sjamboked* (whipped) Van Der Merwe, who suffered appalling wounds.<sup>532</sup> Van Der Merwe was handed a letter from the commandants to Murray. In the reply, Murray was labelled a traitor and a fraud, that "it appears to us that you who profess to be a minister of our church are working in opposition to a cause that we consider holy ... by sending spies to our *laagers* under false pretences."<sup>533</sup> In no uncertain terms, the commandants furthermore continued that if such a breach were to happen again, as a collaborator, they would hold Murray responsible for the "blood of each person sent by you, whose blood will be on his own head, as he will be shot by us without trial."<sup>534</sup> Upon returning to Graaff-Reinet, Shute documented Van Der Merwe's injuries and released him from the remainder of his prison sentence.<sup>535</sup> Pryce-Jones recorded it came to light when Lötter was subsequently caught in September 1901 that it was "he [Lötter] who *sjamboked* [Van Der Merwe] who went out to try & persuade some more to come in."<sup>536</sup> Van Der Merwe was but one of several Boers who, feeling desperate, dejected, and defeated, collaborated to survive the war. Other collaborators offered information to the Coldstream Guards in exchange for being sent to Bermuda or St. Helena POW camps, such as Johannes

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<sup>531</sup> Ibid., 02/08/1901.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

<sup>533</sup> Graaff-Reinet Museum Archives, Anglo-Boer War File, No. 51/1, 31/07/1901.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid.

<sup>535</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 02/08/1901.

<sup>536</sup> National Army Museum, Pryce-Jones, Papers, Diaries and Letters, Catalogue No: 1989-01-125-3, 06/09/1901.

Petrus Du Plessis, who provided Shute with encryption details for a Boer cypher code.<sup>537</sup> Shute regarded the ex-rebel to be useful though considered him deceitful, saying Du Plessis only “*wanted to save his skin ... lied like a thief ... though he told us some things that were of use.*”<sup>538</sup> Du Plessis’s duplicitous ways caught up with him in the end. Pryce-Jones discovered that Du Plessis “had buried 1 bag barley, 2.5 bags wheat under the floor of his bedroom. Brought the bags into Blaauwater. Du Plessis has been at Middelburg for 6 months for harbouring Boers in Sept. last!”<sup>539</sup>

Shute, a master at gathering and disseminating intelligence, was, moreover, a skilled manipulator, as illustrated in the case of J.P. Steyneberg. Steyneberg, of Sundays River Hoek in Graaff-Reinet, offered to raise an armed corps of fifty farmers to defend Shute’s district.<sup>540</sup> However, it came to light that Steyneberg aimed to use the corps to aid the Boers instead. Shute defused the Steyneberg threat by releasing details of the ploy to all Cape newspapers and stated that Steyneberg was a “reformed disloyalist.”<sup>541</sup> As a result, Steyneberg was no longer trusted by the Boers, forcing him to turn loyal and, as Shute declared victoriously, “*spends his time doing dirty work for me.*”<sup>542</sup> In order to source highly sought-after intelligence, Shute applied traditional methods of espionage. He appreciated that a more systemised and centralised FID enabled him to organise his own secret service of spies, emphasising how essential it was to “*organise a thoroughly sound [intelligence] system at the very outset of a campaign.*”<sup>543</sup> Shute had “*every class of spy*” under his employ, in particular J.F. Schimper and Geoffrey Stewart. In Shute’s opinion, Schimper was:

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<sup>537</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 22-6/08/1901.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid., 24/02/1901; 01/07/1901.

<sup>539</sup> National Army Museum, Pryce-Jones, Papers, Diaries and Letters, Catalogue No: 1989-01-125-3, 06/04/1902.

<sup>540</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 09/02/1901.

<sup>541</sup> Ibid.

<sup>542</sup> Ibid.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid., 01/07/1901.

*A lying blackguard who worked for money [a] renegade Dutchman ... [who] consented, on payment, to have his house searched and to be sent to prison, nominally as a prisoner, but really as a spy. He reported surreptitiously all that was going on ... When I had no further use for him I sent him to Cape Town to be employed as a spy elsewhere.*<sup>544</sup>

Stewart, of Scottish descent and motivated to spy for Shute by his hatred for the Boers, according to Shute, was:

*Fearless ... a clever engineer and is employed by the Dutchmen to mend the American wells on their farms, so always has an excuse ready when he meets a Commando. He did really good work but is hot-headed ... After this, I got him a job on the Intelligence at Cape Town, and I think he was sent up to Prieska.*<sup>545</sup>

Shute's network of operatives had a far-reaching impact on Graaff-Reinet and its surrounding district. Pearston, a town approximately thirty miles south-east from Graaff-Reinet and located on the periphery of the Sneeuwberg mountains, was a crucial observation point to watch for Boer activity. George Palmer, a loyalist whose farm was located near Pearston and favourably positioned for surveillance, provided Shute with consistent and reliable intelligence.<sup>546</sup> In March 1901, Shute arrested Pearston's clergyman, Reverend, C.H. Radloff, for inciting dissent and rebellion after congregation members informed on him. Shute deported Radloff to Port Alfred, where he remained incarcerated until the end of the war.<sup>547</sup> The intelligence provided by Boer informants influenced the conflict's course and proved impactful, resulting in incarcerations and deportations, meaning that Shute's ever-increasing network of spies became part of what constituted garrison command at the time.

In August 1901, two schoolteachers were reported to Shute by one of his loyalist spies for telling their pupils that one of the executed rebels had been buried alive. The teachers refused

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<sup>544</sup> Ibid., 24/02/1901; 01/07/1901.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid.

<sup>546</sup> Ibid., 23/11/1901.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid., 02/03/1901.

to co-operate after being summoned for interrogation by Shute. Consequently, suspended from teaching, Shute placed the teachers under house arrest. The teachers were so distraught that they pleaded to be seen by Shute and expressed their regret and remorse. Shute considered their case and released them from house arrest but refused to let them teach again as a preventive measure.<sup>548</sup> Shute believed the Boer women in Graaff-Reinet exerted too much power, fomenting disaffection in the town, and had in mind to use C. Hoffman as his man on the inside. However, after Hoffman claimed that he had wanted to pledge his allegiance to prove his loyalty, Shute suspected Hoffman was lying and hiding something from him. Following his hunch, Shute interrogated Hoffman, who confessed to having been in the secret service of the Transvaal. It emerged that in 1898, he had worked in Natal and was paid £40 a month to report to General Ben Viljoen. Hoffman then promised to work for Shute to obtain various convictions against the Boer men by gathering information from the women.<sup>549</sup> Once again, Shute's elaborate and sophisticated intelligence initiatives had paid dividends.

## Conclusion

The South African conflict coincidentally was a curious mix of past and future, comprising both the use of traditional military practices and the incorporation of new and modern ways of waging war. Engaging the Boers in South Africa subjected the British army to a colonial conflict that presented a different set of challenges to those they had faced in previous wars, where the success of the campaign was heavily dependent on how quickly soldiers adapted to the conditions in which they found themselves.<sup>550</sup> In the first instance, Chapter Two analysed the challenges faced by the British army in the initial phase of the war, when Lord Methuen and his men, including the Coldstream Guards, attempted to wage war against an opponent

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<sup>548</sup> Ibid., 21/08/1901.

<sup>549</sup> Ibid., 31/01/1902; 28/05/1902.

<sup>550</sup> Ellis, 'The British Tactical Reaction to Battlefield Conditions during the Anglo-Boer War', p. 156.



who was highly adept, skilled and knowledgeable. The Boers were equipped with modern fire-power capabilities, which they used to the detriment of the British forces during this stage of the conflict. With the burghers adopting a defensive approach, British casualty rates escalated.<sup>551</sup> For example, at Modder River, the lack of higher ground prevented Methuen from observing Boer movements and locations, thereby obscuring their precise position and numbers.<sup>552</sup> British mistakes were also a consequence of an under-appreciation of geographical intelligence. Senior commanders over-estimated the ability of junior officers and the troops to navigate unknown territory, ultimately leaving the army ignorant of the ground over which they were expected to advance.<sup>553</sup> At Modder River, Codrington believed Methuen had failed to reconnoitre thoroughly, and he felt that if Methuen were familiar with the geography and topographical features of the area, his tactical approach would have been more effective:

I could have sent a couple of Companies along the riverbank to take the Boers in flank and rear ... I do not believe ... Methuen ... knew the geography of the river Riet when the order was given that the Guards were to turn the enemy's left; an operation which the course of the river Riet made impossible.<sup>554</sup>

However, Codrington was unaware of the full scale of the situation. Henniker, like Codrington, thought Methuen had neither understood nor considered all intelligence due to poor reconnoitring before the attack.<sup>555</sup> Soon after 'Black Week', Henniker recognised the need to address the failure of British intelligence gathering, and formally suggested forming scouts in each regiment, instituting physical drill and training of these operatives.<sup>556</sup> His suggestion was implemented, and at the beginning of 1900, six men per company were trained in scouting.<sup>557</sup> By September 1900, the battalion scouts had demonstrated they were beneficial to the

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<sup>551</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>552</sup> Smit, 'Methuen's Northern Cape Campaign, Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902', p. 140.

<sup>553</sup> Fergusson, *British Military Intelligence, 1870-1914. The Development of a Modern Intelligence Organisation*, p. 151.

<sup>554</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 28/11-01/12/1899.

<sup>555</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 17/02/1900.

<sup>556</sup> Ibid., 21/12/1899; 18/01/1900.

<sup>557</sup> Wellington Barracks, Windsor-Clive, Diary, 15/01/1900.

reconnaissance efforts of the mobile columns of the Coldstream Guards, a measure that improved officer attitudes in conducting intelligence operations. For example, Shute valued the men who worked with him:

*I had me the Battn. Scouts, 20 specially active and intelligent men who were carefully selected from each company and did excellent work. They were given small privileges such as getting off fatigues etc. and were each allowed to have a dog.*<sup>558</sup>

Nevertheless, by February 1900, Longueville already thought the battalion scouts were “first-rate”, which, as he said, enabled the Coldstream Guards to close in on the Boers.<sup>559</sup> Moreover, he admitted that by forming the battalion scouts, the army took a more proactive approach to improve reconnoitring and intelligence methods.<sup>560</sup> For example, on 14 February, Longueville recalled, “we had one [of our] reconnaissances in force to see if the Boers were still at Magersfontein, but ... it is certain that a large portion of the Boer forces was ... withdrawn.”<sup>561</sup> Also, the battalion scouts acted as raiding parties and gathered intelligence to locate any Boers in the vicinity who were hiding from the British.<sup>562</sup>

In the second instance, the chapter traced the evolution in the duties of the Coldstream Guards middle commander throughout the conflict – from *veldt* to *voorstoep* and demonstrated that what constituted command practice in October 1899 had come to look very different by September 1900 until the end of the war in May 1902. The chapter detailed how the command and leadership practices of the three primary case studies, Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, and Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute, adapted to meet the demands presented by the transforming nature of a guerrilla

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<sup>558</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 01/09/1900.

<sup>559</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 14/02/1900.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid., 23/02/1900.

war; especially what constituted middle command when garrisoning in the Cape Colony. As such, this chapter has demonstrated how profoundly the changes in the war in South Africa impacted the nature of command of the Coldstream Guards Battalion officers, both culturally and socially, and how they were able to adjust their conduct accordingly. This chapter has described how British army soldiery, tactics, and operations had to adapt to counter the shift of balance from traditional to irregular war. Above all, in its focus on the two main themes of adaptation and transformation, Chapter Two ties into the overall thesis argument of effective mid-level echelon leadership and command practices in the South African War.

## CHAPTER THREE

# **‘Emissaries of Empire’: Civil-Military Relationships and Coldstream Guards Middle Command Professional Practices in South Africa (1899-1902)**

### **Introduction**

“What is purely military in this country? Every military movement is so dependent upon political conditions and forecasts, that there can be no sound strategy without taking these into account.”<sup>563</sup> These words were spoken on 27 December 1899 by Sir Alfred Milner, the British High Commissioner for South Africa, in a conversation with Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies (1895-1903). Milner was complaining about, among other things, what he believed to be army failings in addressing the anti-imperial sentiment in the Cape Colony.<sup>564</sup> Milner made a valid point. As the South African conflict progressed, civilian involvement increased, and the British army encountered more and more non-combatants who became embroiled in hostilities. Significantly, the conflict was taken from the battlefield to urban settings. Towns were garrisoned, becoming strongholds from where the imperial forces directed and launched attacks on the Boers. Regimental officers were appointed garrison commandants, which meant closer military involvement in civil and political affairs. Throughout the war, battalion officers also came into closer contact with African and Coloured indigenous workers in the employ of the British army.

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<sup>563</sup> Keith Surridge, *Managing the South African War, 1899-1902. Politicians v. Generals* (Bury St. Edmunds, St. Edmundsbury Press, 1998), p. 76.

<sup>564</sup> *Ibid.*

This chapter sets out to demonstrate two things: firstly, how relationships between Coldstream Guards battalion officers and indigenous auxiliaries influenced the officers' conduct during the war; and secondly, how the shift to garrison conditions in towns, and the resulting increased contact with civilians, impacted Coldstream Guards regimental officers' command practices. Using the garrison town of Graaff-Reinet in the Cape Midlands as a case study, the first part of Chapter Three focuses on Coldstream Guards middle command officers' implementation of Martial Law regulations and its implications. To date, existing scholarship has only focused on the high command's attempts to put into place Martial Law rules and regulations,<sup>565</sup> but, in using a middle command approach, Chapter Three sheds new light on the administration and consequences of Martial Law for civilians.

In particular, this chapter will show how the garrison commander's strict adherence to, and execution of, Martial Law affected the social liberties of Graaff-Reinet townspeople. For example, curfews and the issuing of permits by the garrison commandant restricted free movement, while the formation of armed Town Guards led to a schism in the community between those who were loyalists and those who were not. As a result, these measures created a profound suspicion among loyalist inhabitants, who would then denounce anyone suspected of being a Republican supporter. Such actions, ultimately due to the garrison commandant's hard-lined approach to Martial Law administration, would result in deportations of those suspected to be Boer sympathisers. Fear was everywhere, and denunciations were rife. Moreover, information censorship offered another way for the garrison commandant to

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<sup>565</sup> For example, see Keith Surridge, 'Rebellion, Martial Law and British Civil-Military Relations: The War in Cape Colony 1899-1902', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*. 8, No. 2 (1997), pp. 35-60. For earlier works, see Richard A. Cosgrove, 'The Boer War and the Modernisation of British Martial Law', *Military Affairs*. 44, No. 3 (1980), pp. 124-7; John S. Galbraith, 'British War Measures in Cape Colony, 1900–1902: A Study of Miscalculations and Mismanagement', *South African Historical Journal*. 15, No. 1 (1983), pp. 68-84.

suppress, control and manipulate local and regional newspapers with an anti-imperial sentiment. Because of this, garrison commanders established close working relationships with like-minded members of the Press. Additionally, the garrison commander's fervent establishment of Martial Law rules attracted support from British politicians. Unsurprisingly, the garrison commander received considerable opposition from the Afrikaner Bond political party, and from members of the Cape Colony Government.

The Cape Colony, also known as the Cape of Good Hope, had been granted the status of self-rule in 1872, with a responsible government headed by a prime minister whose cabinet was answerable to the British parliament.<sup>566</sup> The Cape Afrikaners were the first to align as a political body rather than a special-interest group.<sup>567</sup> A political project of Stephanus Jacobus Du Toit, the party was founded in 1880 and played a contentious and complicated role within the political sphere of the Cape Colony. The Afrikaner Bond entered the local political stage primarily concerned with advancing the material interests of its mainly rural constituents, becoming the dominant political party in the Cape Colony.<sup>568</sup> The Afrikaner Bond was dissolved in 1908, but effectively, it was the forerunner of the National Party that ruled the Apartheid state from 1948 until 1994.<sup>569</sup> The arrival of the Bond changed the political climate in the Graaff-Reinet district and increased the enmity between the British settlers and Cape Afrikaners.<sup>570</sup> In particular, the Jameson Raid (December 1895 to January 1896) alarmed those

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<sup>566</sup> Hermann Giliomee, *The Afrikaners. A Biography of a People* (London, Hurst & Co., 2003), p. 214.

<sup>567</sup> Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War. A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press), p. 6.

<sup>568</sup> For further information about the social and political character at the time of the South African War, see M. Tamarkin, 'The Cape Afrikaners and the British Empire from the Jameson Raid to the South African War', in D. Lowry (ed.), *The South African War Reappraised* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 121-39.

<sup>569</sup> Thomas Rodney Hope Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond. The History of a South African Political Party, 1880-1911* (London, Oxford University Press, Cape Town), pp. 28-39.

<sup>570</sup> Kenneth Wyndham Smith, 'From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910' (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Rhodes University, 1974), p. 446. For more on the history of the Graaff-Reinet branch of the Afrikaner Bond, its significance in bringing about the amalgamation of the Afrikaner

who feared that the Raid was the start of attacks on the identity of the Afrikaner.<sup>571</sup> As a result, the Raid reignited calls for unity among all Afrikaners.<sup>572</sup> The Bondsmen sympathised with President Paul Kruger's policies which subsequently had several Bond members charged as traitors to the Crown.<sup>573</sup> The Boer rebel invasions into the Cape Colony of December 1900 and February 1901 brought the war closer to Graaff-Reinet, leading to divisions between townspeople, who either sympathised with the British or aligned with the Boers. This difference in opinion severely undermined social relations in the community.<sup>574</sup> On 28 May 1900, J.M. McCusker, a Graaff-Reinet resident complained of a boycott instituted by the Bond and the effect it had on loyalist business owners.<sup>575</sup> For example, stated McCusker, loyalist businesses depended in great measure, or in some cases, solely, on Afrikaner Bond support. He believed the boycott was done in "a spirit of persecution" because the loyalists did not support the Bond's position on the war.<sup>576</sup> As a result of his continued loyalism, McCusker, a businessman of nineteen years as editor of *De Graaff Reinetter* went out of business on 9 April.<sup>577</sup> McCusker believed it to be on account of:

The vindictive Bond ... The boycotting has ruined my business ... and I have virtually nothing to fall back upon. The pernicious Bond boycott has permeated everywhere here – in Masonic Lodge, Club, Church, business circles, Town Council etc. What protection have men like me ... our loyalty has cost us very dearly, I am afraid ... What degradation for Englishmen and other Britishers! ... Where is our much vaunted British freedom under our dear English flag?"<sup>578</sup>

Because of such complexities, the garrison commander had to navigate the broader civil and political landscape within a highly charged climate while executing an effective command that

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Bond overall, and the importance of the Afrikaner Bond in Graaff-Reinet town more generally, see Smith's chapter fifteen, 'A Racial Alignment, 1896-1910', pp. 601-646.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid., p. 448.

<sup>572</sup> Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond. The History of a South African Political Party, 1880-1911*, p. 323.

<sup>573</sup> Smith, 'From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910', p. 605.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid., pp. 628-9.

<sup>575</sup> Graaff-Reinet Museum Archives, Anglo-Boer War File, No. 51/1, 28/05/1900.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid.

<sup>578</sup> Ibid.

required a fair amount of adaptation on the part of the commandant. For instance, Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, battalion commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, remarked that the military in the Cape faced an uphill struggle as “the Cape Government, who either through weakness or self-interest, are working apparently against us instead of for us” and “all the inhabitants about here are Dutch, and much in sympathy with the enemy.”<sup>579</sup> In this respect, Milner’s earlier observation to Chamberlain rang particularly true, especially when it came to the situation in the Cape Colony.

After investigating civil and political factors in the first section of Chapter Three, the second focuses on the issue of race. In the South African conflict, the imperial forces employed African and Coloured auxiliaries as messengers, transporters, blockhouse guards, construction workers and sentries; these auxiliaries also fulfilled numerous communication, intelligence and defence roles.<sup>580</sup> The co-operation of these workers played a significant role in the Boers’ defeat. Undoubtedly, as Bill Nasson writes, the South African War’s “course and outcome cannot be fully appreciated outside the context of the engagement of black South Africans.”<sup>581</sup> As a result, this section highlights the nature of professional relationships and interactions between Coldstream Guards battalion officers and indigenous auxiliaries during the conflict. From this starting point, the section investigates the extent to which racialised attitudes impacted the professionalism of middle command focusing on officer attitudes towards and treatment of workers.

In Britain, racial beliefs were embedded in the fabric of Victorian society, and Victorians used race to distinguish between whites (who were thought to be superior) and non-whites, creating

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<sup>579</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, Diary, (F1C30), 01/03/1902.

<sup>580</sup> Nasson, *Abraham Esau’s War. A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*, pp. 22-3.

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xviii.



commonly accepted racial stereotypes.<sup>582</sup> Social Darwinian theories influenced racial views, and evolutionary language became a vehicle for establishing racial hierarchies. In racially classifying people, argue Bobby A. Wintermute and David J. Ulbrich, the “colonised and dominated non-white populations were subjected to presumed verdicts on their purported values.”<sup>583</sup> Africans were regarded as “lower on the evolutionary scale, and in need of guidance, direction, and encouragement” so that they may one day attain the same evolutionary standard as Europeans.<sup>584</sup> This constructed social-cultural racial divide perpetuated British societal power hierarchies in South Africa. Racial hierarchies that emerged in the South African War drew on earlier discourses of British colonial warfare experiences between 1882 and 1899 in Egypt and the Sudan.<sup>585</sup> Certainly, popular British views about the Cape Colony and its inhabitants were informed by experiences of frontier warfare throughout the nineteenth century, for example, the wars of the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony (1834-1853) and the Anglo-Zulu War (1879).<sup>586</sup>

Violent encounters between white colonists and indigenous people frequently occurred in South Africa before the conflict began in 1899. Throughout the nineteenth century, the northern

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<sup>582</sup> C. Bolt, ‘Race and the Victorians’, in C.C. Eldridge (ed.), *British Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (London, Macmillan Publishers Ltd., 1984), p. 130.

<sup>583</sup> Bobby A. Wintermute & David J. Ulbrich, *Race and Gender in Modern Warfare* (Berlin, Walter der Gruyter GmbH, 2019), p. 58.

<sup>584</sup> Paula Krebs, *Gender, Race, and the Writing of Empire* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 114.

<sup>585</sup> For more see, Adam Dighton, ‘Race, Masculinity and Imperialism: The British Officer and the Egyptian army (1882-1899)’, *War & Society*. 32, No. 1 (2016), pp. 1-18.

<sup>586</sup> See for example, Jochen S. Arndt, ‘Traacherous Savages & Merciless Barbarians: Knowledge, Discourse and Violence during the Cape Frontier Wars, 1834-1853’, *The Journal of Military History*. 74, No. 3 (2010), pp. 709-735; Denver A. Webb, ‘War, Racism, and the Taking of Heads: Revisiting Military Conflict in the Cape Colony and Western Xhosaland in the Nineteenth Century’, *Journal of African History*. 56, No. 1 (2015), pp. 35-55; Andrew Bank, ‘Of Native Skulls and Noble Caucasians: Phrenology in Colonial South Africa’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 22, No. 3 (1996), pp. 387-403. Also of interest is Vivian Bickford-Smith, *Ethnic Pride and Racial Prejudice in Victorian Cape Town. Group Identity and Social Practice, 1875-1902* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995). For more on the Anglo-Zulu War, see Samuel R. Martin, ‘British Images of the Zulu, c. 1820-1879’ (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Cambridge University, 1982).

Cape, for example, was the site of frontier wars, and the memory of white conquest remained fresh in the minds of indigenous people. Essentially these were wars of domination, and the colonists often went on commando raids to enslave Africans and Coloureds to work for them.<sup>587</sup> Against this backdrop, the British army came into a colonial situation shaped by histories of extreme conflict and violence. Within the broader context of the Empire, the extent to which racial bias impacted the professionalism of British soldiers is a critical issue to consider.<sup>588</sup>

These broader issues of politics and race surrounding the complex nature of British army command will be addressed in Chapter Three through a close analysis of Coldstream Guards regimental officers' diaries and letters. It must be noted that primary sources and archival material on black experiences in the South African War are limited. However, a fuller account is presented by drawing together available primary and secondary sources. Significantly, the diaries and letters of the three Coldstream Guards protagonists used in this chapter produce fresh insights concerning the issue of race and the military in the conflict in South Africa. The personal diaries and letters of selected Coldstream Guards company commanders and other ranks are used as supporting material, in addition to the diaries of officers and men of other Guards regiments. The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards *Digest of Services* recorded daily regimental activities and is included in the chapter as official source material.<sup>589</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> Wayne Dooling, 'Reconstructing the Household: The Northern Cape Colony before and after the South African War', *The Journal of African History*. 50, No. 3 (2009), pp. 399; 402.

<sup>588</sup> Stephen M. Miller, 'Duty or Crime? Defining Acceptable Behaviour in the British Army in South Africa, 1899-1902', *Journal of British Studies*. 49, No. 2 (2010), p. 331.

<sup>589</sup> As in the previous chapter, Major Henry 'Harry' Gwynn Dean Shute's later additions to his diary in 1905 will be shown in italics.

# I

## **Civil-Military Relationships: Middle Command and the Administration of Martial Law**

The successful invasion of the Cape Colony on 1 November 1899 by Orange Free State Boers, supported by the collaboration of Cape Afrikaner rebels, dashed any hopes held by the Cape Government, led by W.P. Schreiner, of avoiding involvement in the war between the British and the Boer Republics.<sup>590</sup> The commandos captured the towns of Aliwal North, Colesberg, Upington, Burgersdorp, Philipstown, Douglas, and Kuruman across the northern and north-eastern Cape territory.<sup>591</sup> Schreiner and his successor, J.G. Sprigg, appointed in June 1900, faced heavy criticism for their half-hearted response in prosecuting Cape rebels once the invasion had been repulsed.<sup>592</sup> The Cape administration's authority was in jeopardy, and legal measures were needed to re-assert it.<sup>593</sup> Thus, by 20 December 1900, Martial Law had been imposed in rebellious areas of the Colony. However, two further Boer invasions, which took place in December 1900 and February 1901, were the deciding factors for the harsher enforcement of Martial Law regulations. Sir Alfred Milner and Lord Kitchener welcomed such a move as they had agitated for the overall promulgation of Martial Law in the Cape for some time.<sup>594</sup>

Consequently, by 17 January 1901, the entire Colony was subject to Martial Law; only the Cape ports and the Transkei were exempt.<sup>595</sup> Previously cautious in its approach to

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<sup>590</sup> Bill Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle For South Africa* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2010), p. 123.

<sup>591</sup> Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War. A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-190*, p. 144.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid.

<sup>593</sup> Ibid.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid.

<sup>595</sup> Smith, 'From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910', p. 622.

implementing Martial Law, the Sprigg administration became an unwilling partner in enforcing stricter regulations.<sup>596</sup> However, the tighter Martial Law regulations were well received by the loyalists in Graaff-Reinet, who were determined to make life unbearable for Afrikaners and resulted in increased public confrontations between these groups.<sup>597</sup> For example, the loyalists hosted a fireworks show to celebrate the relief of Ladysmith, which infuriated the Afrikaners. In turn, the Afrikaners antagonised the loyalists by wearing the colours of the Republics.<sup>598</sup>

The arrival of Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute, 2<sup>nd</sup>-in-command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards and his troops at Graaff-Reinet on 1 January 1901 was witnessed by a handful of the town’s inhabitants. These selected loyalists were informed earlier to expect Shute and his men and were instructed to arrange food in the station when the soldiers arrived.<sup>599</sup> As Lieutenant George Windsor-Clive recalled, “we got to Graaff-Reinet ... and found the inhabitants had very kindly provided hot coffee and buns for us on the platform.”<sup>600</sup> The following day, 2 January, saw the arrival of Colonel Douglas Haig at Graaff-Reinet, who was in charge of the mobile columns rounding up Boers in the Cape Colony.<sup>601</sup> Shute consulted with Haig, and it was agreed that “I am to garrison this place and to be Commandant. Haig tells me to take severe measures.”<sup>602</sup> Martial Law thus gave the officers in charge of the garrison towns more latitude to implement regulations as they saw fit.<sup>603</sup>

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<sup>596</sup> Nasson, *Abraham Esau’s War. A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*, p. 144.

<sup>597</sup> Smith, ‘From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910’, p. 623.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid.

<sup>599</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute, Diary, (F1D22), 02/01/1901.

<sup>600</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Lieutenant George Windsor-Clive, Diary, (12067), 02/01/1902.

<sup>601</sup> D. Scott (ed.), *Douglas Haig. The Preparatory Prologue 1861-1914. Diaries and Letters* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2006), p. 184.

<sup>602</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 04/01/1901.

<sup>603</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, *Digest of Services. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards 1899-1902 compiled by Lieutenant Colonel H. Shute D.S.O.*, Official Diary, (1GD), 02/01/1901.

Shute immediately issued a notice for the town's inhabitants to surrender weapons and ammunition, declaring a 9 pm lights-out curfew.<sup>604</sup> By 9 January, Shute had also formed and armed the Graaff-Reinet Town Guard. Lieutenant Henry Morris Pryce-Jones recalled when the Town Guard "paraded for the first time in the Church Sq ... It was rather a funny sight; they were about 100 strong all ages from 14 to 70!"<sup>605</sup> However, not everyone in town had volunteered for the Town Guard. Republican sympathisers like Jury Laubscher were among those who refused. He felt it criminal to point a gun at a Boer let alone shoot the fellow. Needless to say, Laubscher was summarily arrested and incarcerated in Graaf-Reinet town jail for the remainder of the war.<sup>606</sup>

Matters came to a head when on 17 June 1901, Shute's solution was to order those who refused to join the Town Guard perform manual hard labour. He told the dissidents that every man was a subject of the Crown, and if their assistance were required, it was their duty to comply in defending their town. He rounded up fifty men and divided them into two groups, with an officer per party supervising and instructing the men to "cut down prickly pear, improve the field of fire, and construct obstacles etc. ... from 8 am to 12 noon daily."<sup>607</sup> The following day, on 18 June, the dissidents refused to work. Shute's first thought was to deport the refusers as prisoners of war but instead decided to imprison them. After a few days of incarceration, the group agreed to return to work; though Shute's punishment was harsh, it did end the strike.<sup>608</sup> However, Shute believed that Francois Johannes Jansen, a magistrate's clerk, was the main instigator behind the strike, and remarked that Jansen was a "clever and dangerous man, well-

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<sup>604</sup> National Army Museum, Papers, Diaries and Letters of Lieutenant Henry Morris Pryce-Jones, Coldstream Guards and Northern Nigeria Regiment, 1898-1911, Catalogue No: 1989-01-125-3, 03/01/1901.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, 09/01/1901.

<sup>606</sup> Graaff-Reinet Museum Archives, Anglo-Boer War File 50/1, n.d.

<sup>607</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 17/06/1901.

<sup>608</sup> *Ibid.*, 18-20/06/1901.

educated and with a good deal of influence.”<sup>609</sup> For this reason, Shute deported Jansen to Port Alfred to prevent him from fomenting further agitation.<sup>610</sup> Shute’s actions caused considerable concern for the Afrikaner Bond at the time, although it was not the first time since Shute’s arrival at Graaf-Reinet in January 1901 that he had clashed with the Bond. The initial confrontation was with the mayor of Graaff-Reinet, F.K. Te Water. F.K. Te Water was the father of Dr T.N.G. Te Water, a Cape Colony cabinet minister.

In 1896, Te Water junior was appointed Colonial Secretary to Sprigg’s Cape Ministry, later serving in W.P. Schreiner’s cabinet between 1898 and 1900. As a member of the Afrikaner Bond, Te Water junior made a series of public speeches between July and September 1900 in Graaff-Reinet, which resulted in several Cape colonists taking up arms against the British.<sup>611</sup> Also, Te Water vehemently opposed any interference by the imperial authorities into the internal affairs of the autonomously governed Cape Colony.<sup>612</sup> Charges were laid against Te Water for treason before the outbreak of the South African War in 1899, as he had relayed a secret telegraph code of the Cape Administration to President Marthinus Theunis Steyn of the Orange Free State.<sup>613</sup> The Te Water family was well-known in the Cape Colony, and when Shute became commandant of Graaff-Reinet, he too came to know of Te Water junior’s alleged action regarding the telegraphic code. That being so, to Shute, Te Water senior also needed to be dealt with.

Firstly, Te Water senior attempted to travel to Graaff-Reinet from Cape Town by using his political connections, but Shute denied his permit. Secondly, Te Water then attempted to

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<sup>609</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 24/06/1901.

<sup>610</sup> Ibid.

<sup>611</sup> Smith, ‘From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910’, pp. 197; 610-3.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid., p. 612.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid., pp. 612-3.

circumvent this restriction by going to Port Elizabeth, and after applying for a permit once more, Shute again refused. At his wit's end, Te Water put all his baggage on a train from Cape Town to Graaff-Reinet and without a valid permit, he and his wife travelled by Cape cart to Graaff-Reinet. Shute was alerted to this and sent officials to meet the Te Waters upon their arrival on 28 January 1901.<sup>614</sup> The following day, Shute ordered Te Water to see him, and during the meeting, Shute:

*Dressed him down properly, told him that he came here without my knowledge or consent, that I suspected him and would keep him under strict observation, and that if by word or deed he did anything to confirm my suspicions, I would send him straight back to gaol. He ... considers himself a 'big bug', but I think I put the fear of the Commandant into him and he was most circumspect.*<sup>615</sup>

Shute's troubles with the Afrikaner Bond did not end with Te Water. The next Bondsman who crossed Shute was Nicholaas Frederick De Waal. Originally from the Netherlands, De Waal arrived in South Africa in 1880 after failing health forced him to abandon travelling worldwide. De Waal first settled in Graaff-Reinet, then moved to Middelburg in November 1881, where he started a political newspaper, *De Middelburg Getuige* (The Middelburg Witness). This became a way for De Waal to publish many Afrikaans language news and opinion columns. De Waal was an obvious fit for the Afrikaner Bond; as Trevor Rodney Hope Davenport states, he was "able to identify himself quite easily with the aspirations of the Colonial Afrikaner."<sup>616</sup> De Waal thus joined the Bond in 1883 and became its Treasurer and Secretary in 1898 and held both these positions until 1908.<sup>617</sup> Shute grew suspicious of De Waal's activities and believed that De Waal provided funding to assist the Republican cause in his capacity as treasurer. Determined to trace the source of the money, Shute came to believe that De Waal was withholding valuable information that could have helped him resolve the matter.<sup>618</sup>

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<sup>614</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 28/01/1901.

<sup>615</sup> Ibid.

<sup>616</sup> Davenport, *The Afrikaner Bond. The History of a South African Political Party, 1880-1911*, p. 24.

<sup>617</sup> Ibid.

<sup>618</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 25/10/1901.

As a result, Shute wrote to Brigadier-General Henry Hamilton Settle, the General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Cape Colony District, south of the Orange River, about De Waal and suggested sending Captain Herbert ‘Bertie’ Studd to Middelburg as commandant so that “the present commandant and garrison exchange places with one of our companies on the Western Line.”<sup>619</sup> In the letter, Shute emphasised that the recently ennobled Lord Milner was intent on catching De Waal, and Studd’s transfer was approved so that he could collect information to build a case against the Bondsman.<sup>620</sup> Shute and Milner had established a close professional relationship in the war. Shute first met Milner in Cape Town on 21 December 1899, arranging Coldstream Guards baggage and stores, with whom he had a “very interesting talk.”<sup>621</sup> After the meeting, Milner entrusted Shute to personally deliver valuable documentation to Lord Methuen when he departed from Cape Town.<sup>622</sup> Shute admired Milner’s dedicated efforts to the Empire and his sense of duty:

Nothing struck me more forcibly than A. Milner’s strength of character and self-control at this time. He was surrounded by rebels and traitors. Receiving daily reports of disasters to our armies and urgent messages from all parts of Cape Colony reporting rebellion imminent, working from morning until night.<sup>623</sup>

The division of labour between military duties, civil service and politics became increasingly blurred and inevitably forced the British government to manage the South African War more closely.<sup>624</sup> Because of this, the position of High Commissioner provided Milner with considerable authority, and he felt validated that his political power could influence how the British army ought to operate in South Africa.<sup>625</sup> Milner, like Shute, thought very little of the

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<sup>619</sup> Ibid.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid., 28/10/1901.

<sup>621</sup> Ibid., 21/12/1899.

<sup>622</sup> Ibid., 07/01/1900.

<sup>623</sup> Ibid., 21/12/1899.

<sup>624</sup> Surridge, *Managing the South African War, 1899-1902. Politicians v. Generals*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>625</sup> Ibid., pp. 4; 76.



Afrikaner Bond and Afrikaners in general.<sup>626</sup> Shute remained in contact with Milner regarding Te Water's activities. Joseph Chamberlain, who had heard about the Te Water issue through Milner, wanted Shute to forward all related documents and reports for his attention.<sup>627</sup>

Moreover, Shute was now convinced that Te Water and De Waal, along with M.J. Pretorius, a Member of the Cape Legislative Council (MLC) for Middleburg and others, had conspired to incite rebellion in the Midlands region. Towards the end of the war, Shute had also learned that a prominent Bondsman, P. Michau, MLC for Cradock, would be willing to disclose all details and provide the names of those involved.<sup>628</sup> However, rumours of peace were circulating at the time, and when Shute approached Michau on 31 May 1902, Michau, to Shute's disbelief, "pretended he knew nothing ... I saw him walking with Te Water this morning!"<sup>629</sup> Frustrated that he had failed to get to the bottom of the alleged plot, in 1905, Shute added to the original diary entry he penned in 1902, "*trying to unravel [the conspiracy] ever since I came to Graaff-Reinet ... If we could only have got sufficient evidence to convict, the disloyalty in these parts would have ceased forever.*"<sup>630</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, battalion commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, too believed that "our Home Government will not understand that this Colony is, and has been, the Centre of disaffection, and will not make the d---d swine feel it. A really strong and cruel hand would stop this war and be kinder in the end."<sup>631</sup> In this respect, Henniker's sentiment echoed officers' fears that not enough was being done to curb the growing numbers of Republican sympathisers in the Cape Colony, and any leniency shown towards them would only prolong the war further.

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<sup>626</sup> Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>627</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 04/10/1901; 17/10/1902.

<sup>628</sup> Ibid., 31/05/1902.

<sup>629</sup> Ibid.

<sup>630</sup> Ibid., 31/05/1902.

<sup>631</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, Diary, (F1C29), 11/08/1901.

Consequently, due to his strict implementation of Martial Law, Shute faced severe opposition, especially from the Cape Premier, J.G. Sprigg. To illustrate, in August 1901, Shute ordered his intelligence officer, Edwin Tennant, to travel to Cape Town. Tennant, who, as Shute stated, “*had intimate knowledge of the Dutch character,*” was able to learn that there was laxity in how permits were issued. Shute believed that since Cape Town was not held to account under Martial Law, it was a haven for “*spies, rebels and disloyalists who combine together to send up-country to join the enemy, all Dutchmen who land, and there are many.*”<sup>632</sup> For this reason, Shute formally requested that the Cape ports be included under Martial Law and forwarded a copy to Milner. Even though Sprigg and other Cape officials were in complete opposition, on 9 October, Shute’s proposal was adopted and, according to him, had a “most salutary effect.”<sup>633</sup>

Having displayed talents as a meticulous and skilful commandant, in December 1901, Shute assumed the post of Administrator of No. 8 Area that included the districts of Graaff-Reinet, Aberdeen, Middelburg, Cradock and Somerset East as the administration of Martial Law was separated from military duties.<sup>634</sup> At a meeting on 15 December to go through all orders and instructions regarding the new changes, Shute arranged for Henniker to be the commandant of Graaff-Reinet. He personally handed over all the administrative paperwork regarding the transfer to Lord Methuen.<sup>635</sup> Henniker did not place much value on the administrative side of military work, believing that being in the field is where an officer would be best placed to perform his duties, saying, “fancy a second-in-command who means to leave as soon as possible to go and sit in an office.”<sup>636</sup> Nevertheless, Shute welcomed the new arrangement:

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<sup>632</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 28/08/1901.

<sup>633</sup> Ibid.

<sup>634</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 01-04/12/1901.

<sup>635</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 15-7/12/1901.

<sup>636</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 05/12/1901.

*Generally speaking the new scheme was to take away from Commandants the Administration of Martial Law which in future is to be conducted by Administrators whose deputies are to be the Resident Magistrates in the different towns. This worked all right in places where the Magistrates were loyal. I was lucky, as previous to this time, Robertson (Aberdeen), Witham (Middelburg), neither of whom could be trusted, had been removed chiefly through my instrumentality.* <sup>637</sup>

Keen to demonstrate his authority, Shute wrote to all the magistrates and emphasised that, as his deputies, he trusted they would loyally carry out all his instructions “in the spirit in which they were intended, and ... provided they did their utmost to assist, I would take the whole of the responsibility for their actions.”<sup>638</sup> Shute was also awarded the power to suspend any magistrate if he found such a step necessary.<sup>639</sup> As an administrator, Shute ensured that he kept a visible profile and maintained his influence by visiting various magistrates in his district. One such visit was to Magistrate Howe of Somerset East in May 1902. According to Shute, Howe was a lazy shirker with no sense of responsibility. Nevertheless, Shute believed Howe to be trustworthy and valued his loyalty above all other failings he thought Howe might have possessed. During his visit to Cradock, Howe informed Shute of Dr James McCall Fehrsen, allegedly a dissident Republican from the Transvaal.<sup>640</sup>

When the British entered Johannesburg in May 1900, it came to the attention of Lord Roberts that Fehrsen was purportedly spreading disaffection and he was summarily chased out of town. By Spring 1902, reports of Fehrsen’s reputed treasonous actions made their way to Shute in Graaff-Reinet. Shute understood that Fehrsen had travelled to the Cape Colony, where he allegedly fomented a rebellion, whipping up the population into defiance and turning them against imperial rule.<sup>641</sup> While Shute was visiting Cradock, Howe’s agents caught up with

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<sup>637</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 01-04/12/1901.

<sup>638</sup> Ibid., 19/12/1901.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid., 19/12/1901; 10/01/1902.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid., 04/05/1902.

<sup>641</sup> Ibid.

Fehrsen and brought him to Shute to be interrogated. Shute asked Fehrsen to produce his naturalisation papers as a Transvaal subject. Shute also made it very clear to Fehrsen that if there were any more trouble with him, Shute would have to deal with him swiftly and severely.<sup>642</sup>

Codrington appreciated the challenges Shute faced in administering Martial Law and noted that “it was with the greatest difficulty that anyone who assists the enemy, or who does not help us, is dealt with under Martial Law, which is administered by the commandants of areas, who have under them civilian magistrates in many cases Dutchmen.”<sup>643</sup> Lieutenant George Windsor-Clive also believed that “seventy-five per cent of the population of the town [are] Dutch and very disloyal.”<sup>644</sup> Henniker furthermore commented on the increasingly difficult position in which middle commanders were finding themselves, commenting that “no-one seems to grasp the situation here a bit. The Colony is rather shaky and will give more trouble in a year or two if they don’t watch it.”<sup>645</sup> That being so, Shute believed that the fundamental problem in administering Martial Law lay with the system under which it was supposed to be implemented. According to Shute, when Martial Law is proclaimed, precedent dictates suspending civil law and that country’s government, followed by establishing military tribunals to administer the territory instead.<sup>646</sup>

However, during the South African War, both civil and military law prevailed and ran concurrently. Consequently, as Shute explained in his diary on 22 April 1901, if he, as a military commandant, were to punish a civilian, the punishment would then be reported by the

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<sup>642</sup> Ibid., 05/05/1902.

<sup>643</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 01/03/1902.

<sup>644</sup> Wellington Barracks, Windsor-Clive, Diary, 05/02/1901.

<sup>645</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 01/04/1902.

<sup>646</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 22/04/1901.

Resident Magistrate (RM) to the Attorney General (AG), who would then require Shute to provide a reasonable explanation justifying his actions.<sup>647</sup> Frustrated by the concurrent administration of civil law alongside the legal authority of the Cape Government, Shute contacted Godfrey Walters of *The Times*, demanding the suspension of both civil law and the Cape government for the duration of Martial Law in the hope that the newspaper would support his position. Walters, however, declined, stating that Shute “took too a military view of the case.”<sup>648</sup> Meanwhile, Shute had also petitioned the Cape Governor, Sir Walter Hely-Hutchinson, with the aid of “a few energetic loyalists”, but who, as Shute came to believe:

*Apparently ignored it ... I feel sure that had the petition, at this time, been forwarded to the Government House, it would have been adopted and much future trouble in Cape Colony would have been avoided.*<sup>649</sup>

That being so, in January 1902, Cecil John Rhodes began another petition calling for the suspension of the constitution, but this initiative failed after he became ill and died. Shute later added that when he met Chamberlain in October 1902, Chamberlain explained to him:

*Although during the war he could with ease have carried the Bill through Parliament, when peace was once declared, such a measure would have been violent [sic] opposed and would have taken three months to pass and even then, if carried, it would only be a very small majority. Had my original petition been forwarded, the Constitution would have been suspended in August 1901. Had Rhodes lived and there had been no delay, it would have been law by 1902.*<sup>650</sup>

Meanwhile, following Shute’s petition in May 1901, Gordon Sprigg learned of it a couple of months later. Sprigg, according to Shute, was “furious with me re suspension.”<sup>651</sup> Henniker worried about repercussions, fearing that Shute “goes in too much for the political side. He is not too tactful.”<sup>652</sup> General Henry Hamilton Settle would later inform Shute that Sprigg had

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<sup>647</sup> Ibid.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid., 13/05/1901.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid.

<sup>650</sup> Ibid.

<sup>651</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 10/07/1901.

<sup>652</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 14/07/1901.

requested his removal from his post three times. However, undeterred by the reaction of the Cape Government, Shute pointedly refused to adhere to Sprigg's requests. Shute furthermore noted that General Settle was "much upset as K. [Kitchener] will not back him up in his rows with Sprigg, who appears quite impossible."<sup>653</sup> The enmity with Sprigg and others reached a climax in February 1902, and Shute was ordered to Cape Town to appear in front of the Martial Law Board.<sup>654</sup> Shute attempted to meet with Sprigg to discuss matters; however, Sprigg refused.<sup>655</sup> Despite this, the Martial Law Board was arranged:

*By Sprigg with Kitchener to receive, consider, and advise on all complaints made by civilians against the administration of Martial Law. President, Mr. Mitchell, General Manager Standard Bank. Members, John Graham, a pro-Boer Secry. Law Department, and Col. Fearon, Yorkshire Regt. I was under examination for 4 hours and 70 complaints against me were investigated.*<sup>656</sup>

One of the complainants was A.J. Herholdt, a Bondsman, who, on seeing Shute after the Martial Law Board meeting, realised "*that he was beaten and promptly cringed and asked me to lunch etc. which I refused!*"<sup>657</sup> Herholdt, whom Shute believed was "*thoroughly anti-British*", had been Minister of Agriculture in Schreiner's administration before the outbreak of the South African conflict and MLC during the war.<sup>658</sup> As Boer rebels were closing in on Murraysburg in July 1901, Herholdt demanded that Shute provide troops for protection and arrange for stores to be sent to him. Shute refused, stating that the town did not fall under his jurisdiction at the time. Herholdt's farm, 'Vleiplaats', was subsequently burnt on 6 July by rebels who did not trust Herholdt's claims of allegiance to their cause.<sup>659</sup>

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<sup>653</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 24/02/1902.

<sup>654</sup> Ibid., 23/02/1902.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid.

<sup>656</sup> Ibid., 25/02/1902.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid., 29/12/1901.

<sup>658</sup> Ibid.

<sup>659</sup> Ibid.

Fearful that he was in grave danger, Herholdt tried to apply for the post of Agricultural Minister in the Transvaal. Shute learnt of Herholdt's ploy and immediately wrote to Lieutenant-Colonel William Lambton, Military Secretary to Milner, and Herholdt's application was summarily denied. For this reason, Herholdt wrote letters to Sprigg and Rhodes proclaiming his loyalty and strongly condemned the action taken by the military and Shute following his intervention. Herholdt then went to Cape Town and, as Shute later wrote in December 1901, "*abused me to all the politicians, and [Cecil] Rhodes believed him.*"<sup>660</sup> Herholdt was not the first Bondsman to pledge allegiance to the British, but Shute was determined to expose any Bondsmen who, in his opinion, only "*pose as loyalists in order to gain pecuniary advantage when peace is declared.*"<sup>661</sup> In order to reveal leading members of the Afrikaner Bond who voiced their support for the imperial government, Shute devised a plan to determine the legitimacy of their publicly proclaimed loyalty. However, being a soldier, he could not be seen to be directly involved in political questions and so, quietly, enlisted the help of Welsh imperialist, Howell 'Taffy' Gwynne, Reuters chief correspondent in South Africa.<sup>662</sup>

Shute and Gwynne were introduced in March 1900 and, since then, formed a close working relationship. In his diary, Shute often referred to Gwynne as a "most excellent chap, travelled, able and gallant."<sup>663</sup> In November 1901, Gwynne travelled to Graaff-Reinet to meet with Shute. Gwynne arranged for an open letter addressed to T.P. Theron, President of the Afrikaner Bond, to be published in the *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, the local loyalist newspaper, "asking that the signatories should be removed from the list of the Bond, adding that there was no further use for the Bond as an organisation and suggesting that it should therefore be dissolved."<sup>664</sup> The

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<sup>660</sup> Ibid.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid., 11/11/1901.

<sup>662</sup> Ibid., 06/11/1901.

<sup>663</sup> Ibid., 28/03/1900.

<sup>664</sup> Ibid., 06-11/11/1901.

*Graaff-Reinet Advertiser* repeatedly accused Cape Afrikaners of dissidence in supporting the Boer Republics and claimed that Afrikaners were uninformed and inclined to trust information based on rumour and hearsay.<sup>665</sup> Given this, *Onze Courant*, the Afrikaans newspaper, the leading supplier of news on the Afrikaner Bond in the Cape Midlands,<sup>666</sup> charged the *Advertiser* with suppressing information about the conflict it deemed objectionable.<sup>667</sup> The *Onze Courant* was subsequently suspended in April 1901.<sup>668</sup> Still, the *Onze Courant* made a valid point. The allegations by the *Onze Courant* were not unfounded, as became apparent in August 1901, when this notice was issued:

The circulation of unauthorised reports of military operations, whether true or false, is strictly prohibited. Any person either originating or repeating such reports in writing, or by word of mouth, will be severely dealt with. Authorised reports are those only which have been passed by the Censor.<sup>669</sup>

Shute subsequently employed Jacobus Petrus Burger as press censor, who, in Shute's estimation, was a "*thoroughly loyal, honest Dutchman ... He was of great assistance ... he did admirably, having a level head.*"<sup>670</sup> If there was one thing that Shute valued, it was loyalty to the imperial cause. As he saw it, "we have two enemies here (1) the Republics (2) British subjects who have rebelled."<sup>671</sup> He felt it his duty to ensure all dissenters were held accountable for treasonous actions and thus had the editor of the *Courant*, C.H.O. Marais, deported in consequence of his defamation.<sup>672</sup> Therefore, Shute had succeeded in quelling further sedition in the Midlands through censorship and deportation.

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<sup>665</sup> Smith, 'From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910', p. 615.

<sup>666</sup> Monica Barlow, 'The Clouded Face of Truth. A Review of the South African Newspaper Press Approaching Union' (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Bristol, 1988), p. 57.

<sup>667</sup> Smith, 'From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910', p. 615.

<sup>668</sup> Frederick Mackarness, *Martial Law in the Cape Colony During 1901* (London, The National Press Agency Limited, 1902), p. 21.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21-2.

<sup>670</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 28/11/1901.

<sup>671</sup> *Ibid.*, 11/04/1902. For more on the subject of loyalism, see Andrew Thompson, 'The Languages of Loyalism', *The English Historical Review*. 118, No. 477 (2003), pp. 617-50.

<sup>672</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 19/03/1901.



Shute's involvement in Cape politics and his rigid approach to implementing Martial Law consequently resulted in demands from influential politicians such as Sprigg and other Cape notables for his transfer out of the Cape Colony, presumably to prevent him from further involvement in Cape matters. Shute recorded on 12 September 1901 that Henniker received a telegram from Major-General Ian Hamilton, Military Secretary at the War Office, "asking if I would like a small, mounted column in Transvaal. Refused, probably a ramp of politicians."<sup>673</sup> Shute did not seem troubled by this in any way, yet Henniker felt the situation to be more serious than what Shute believed, noting in his diary that "they want to get Shute out of this."<sup>674</sup>

Henniker was correct in his assumption as soon after, and it became evident that Shute's promotion prospects were in jeopardy. On 3 October 1901, Henniker received a telegram outlining promotions, honours and rewards. Incensed at what he saw when he read the list, Henniker fumed that "every duffer they can find has been promoted and all the best men left out."<sup>675</sup> Shute's name was not on the list. In a letter to his mother, Pryce-Jones wrote that "very naturally everybody is not pleased. Shute has been unaccountably left out, which means a lot to him."<sup>676</sup> Henniker wrote to Methuen to see if he held any sway in reversing the decision not to promote Shute. Methuen tried but was unsuccessful; Shute would not be promoted.<sup>677</sup> That being so, Methuen was not about to give up and contacted General Reginald 'Polly' Pole-Carew, though he too failed to turn the tide in Shute's favour.<sup>678</sup>

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<sup>673</sup> Ibid., 12/09/1901.

<sup>674</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 13/09/1901.

<sup>675</sup> Ibid., 03/10/1901.

<sup>676</sup> National Army Museum, Pryce-Jones, Papers, Diaries and Letters, 04/10/1901.

<sup>677</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 03/10/1901.

<sup>678</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 25/07/1902.

Nevertheless, there were those in senior command positions who supported Shute. General French met with Shute on 7 October 1902 and, according to Shute, “was most flattering as to my work in Cape Colony.”<sup>679</sup> A few days later, Shute had another meeting, this time with General Sir Frederick Stephenson, Regimental Colonel of the Coldstream Guards, who by then had also been working on Shute’s behalf and suggested that Shute approach Ian Hamilton directly to discuss the matter.<sup>680</sup> Though Shute thought it useless, he still met with Hamilton, who bluntly told him that “the game was up and I was not in the Gazette about to be published.”<sup>681</sup> At this stage, French, too, had learned of Shute’s promotion issue and personally took the matter up, writing to Hamilton to see what could be done.<sup>682</sup> French’s interference evidently carried weight, and Major Shute was subsequently gazetted as Lieutenant-Colonel on 31 October 1902.<sup>683</sup>

Shute’s strict adherence to Martial Law and his rigorous imposition of regulations produced favourable results despite all the opposition he encountered. Consequently, it is no surprise that his efforts caught the attention of influential senior commanders and British politicians alike. Shute had demonstrated that by cultivating and strengthening his political networks during his tenure at Graaff-Reinet, he could make a worthy contribution to the British war effort. Pryce-Jones appreciated Shute’s work saying, “we are awfully glad [to have Shute] as he makes an excellent commandant & has done wonders in the district.”<sup>684</sup> Equally, Henniker praised Shute’s diligent efforts in Graaff-Reinet and the Midlands on numerous occasions. For instance, on 15 April 1901, he wrote, “Shute has got the town and District into excellent order;

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<sup>679</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 07/10/1902.

<sup>680</sup> *Ibid.*, 10/10/1902.

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid.*, 15/10/1902.

<sup>682</sup> *Ibid.*, 26/10/1902.

<sup>683</sup> *The London Gazette*, 31/10/1902. <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/27490/page/6900>. (Accessed, 24/12/2022).

<sup>684</sup> National Army Museum, Pryce-Jones, Papers, Diaries and Letters, 12/04/1901.

quite as it should be. It is satisfactory to see one town well managed at last.”<sup>685</sup> Again, on 24 May, he noted that Shute was “in great form, and the town [G.R.] in a fine state of defence.”<sup>686</sup>

That being so, Shute’s administration had far-reaching political and social consequences for the town and people of Graaff-Reinet and the Midlands district. Without exception, those who denounced Republican supporters were believed by British commanders. On occasion, those suspected of harbouring Boer sympathies were summarily deported to a concentration camp.<sup>687</sup> As such, anyone suspected of treason could expect to be detained for a prolonged period of time in either a civilian or an army facility.<sup>688</sup> Shortly after the war’s end, G.H. Maasdorp, a loyalist supporter whose son died in British service in the field, fiercely criticised Shute’s administration of Martial Law in Graaff-Reinet, saying the community constantly lived in fear of retribution.<sup>689</sup> That an atmosphere of distrust pervaded the Midlands region was simply inescapable.<sup>690</sup> Above all, Graaff-Reinet society was not only marked by political discord but also by strained and volatile race relations. Towards the close of 1901, the town’s inhabitants’ political allegiances were determined by racial identities.<sup>691</sup> Graaff-Reinet was favourably positioned on a railway line between the harbour town of Port Elizabeth and the north of the country and was well-known for its wool production, so it attracted many settlers. Afrikaners, British colonists, and Germans flocked to it and comprised most of the population. Coloureds were the second-largest group, followed by Africans, who represented the minority of the

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<sup>685</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 15/04/1901.

<sup>686</sup> Ibid., 24/05/1901.

<sup>687</sup> Smith, ‘From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910’, p. 626.

<sup>688</sup> Nasson, *Abraham Esau’s War. A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*, p.145.

<sup>689</sup> Smith, ‘From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910’, p. 624.

<sup>690</sup> Ibid., p. 626.

<sup>691</sup> Ibid., pp. 616-7.

inhabitants.<sup>692</sup> Indeed, the likelihood of racial confrontation remained an ever-present threat within the Graaff-Reinet community and its neighbouring districts.<sup>693</sup>

## II

### **Attitudes of Race: Middle Command and Auxiliary Encounters**

During the guerrilla phase of the war from September 1900 onwards, the Coldstream Guards mainly operated in the Cape Colony, having to patrol a vast amount of terrain. The Cape Colony was a large geographical area with deserts to the west and mountain ranges to the east, a topography well-known to many Boer commandos whose mobility allowed them to cover long distances.<sup>694</sup> In order to overcome the Cape Colony's immensity, auxiliaries were employed to provide precious information that would ensure that British mobile columns were not stretched too thinly. Operating on the north-eastern Cape's blockhouse lines were the Scots Boys, a group of eighty African and Coloured scouts who, writes Bill Nasson were renowned as a "crack force" and frequently acted as the vanguard with the Scots Guards against Boer guerrilla operations.<sup>695</sup> Also, a regiment consisting of Zulu, Shangaan, Tembu and other Transkeians was formed.<sup>696</sup> The skills of the Border Scouts were moreover put to good effect by the Coldstream commanders. Codrington was directed by a telegram from General French in May 1901 to command the Border Scouts and his four companies and instructed him to organise the troops and auxiliaries as one moveable column. Codrington thought that the Border Scouts had:

A high reputation, they are all "bastards", that is the children of parents of different nations. They are coloured people, and there are three hundred of them.

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<sup>692</sup> Smith, 'From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910', pp. 124-5.

<sup>693</sup> Ibid., pp. 616-7.

<sup>694</sup> Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War* (London, Abacus, 1992), p. 526.

<sup>695</sup> Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War. A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*, p. 24.

<sup>696</sup> J. Comaroff et al. (eds.), *The Mafeking Diary of Sol T. Plaatje* (Cape Town, David Philip Publishers, 1999), p. 60.

They are not strictly speaking natives ... they are supposed to be the best in the country, which is comforting, and also the fact that they are one unit and therefore accustomed to working together.<sup>697</sup>

Codrington held the Border Scouts in high regard and frequently scouted with them to reconnoitre the lands and set up defensive posts.<sup>698</sup> Lieutenant Sir Walter Barttelot also thought the three-hundred Border Scouts to be a “very fine-looking body of men.”<sup>699</sup> As the war progressed, and to a greater extent the British also enlisted the Coloured Corps, who were experts in tracking and hunting and were proficient horse riders.<sup>700</sup> Officers like Codrington appreciated these auxiliaries’ wealth of knowledge and skilful methods. In the Cape Colony, most towns formed separate units of Africans and Coloureds alongside white Town Guards to keep order within the settlement and surrounding districts.<sup>701</sup> For example, Pryce-Jones noted on 14 March 1901 that a three-hundred-strong Coloured Town Guard was also formed in Graaff-Reinet.<sup>702</sup> In addition, civilian loyalists operated with African scouts and battalion officers. Codrington wrote of “being served as to information by a young Norval, whose father lives at a farm near Norval’s Pont. He has forty native Scouts under him, and his information is definite and I think accurate.”<sup>703</sup> African and Coloured men were also trusted to deliver sensitive and classified information sent by senior command members to mid-level officers.<sup>704</sup> Frequently auxiliaries knew of places where the Boers hid money and rifles.<sup>705</sup>

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<sup>697</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 25/05/1902.

<sup>698</sup> Ibid., 30/05/1902.

<sup>699</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Lieutenant Sir Walter Barttelot, Letters, (12324), 30/05/1902.

<sup>700</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle For South Africa*, pp. 248-9.

<sup>701</sup> Kenneth W. Grundy, *Soldiers Without Politics. Blacks in the South African Armed Forces* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1983), p. 39.

<sup>702</sup> National Army Museum, Pryce-Jones, Papers, Diaries and Letters, 14/03/1901.

<sup>703</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 20/03/1901.

<sup>704</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 15/02/1901.

<sup>705</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Edward Longueville, Diary, (F1C40), 17/07-22/07/1900.

Officers placed great trust in their auxiliaries and valued workers' accuracy in judgment, particularly when finding themselves in uncertain situations. In March 1900, near Kimberley in the Northern Cape, Henniker wrote that while on manoeuvres chasing Boers, an auxiliary, Tutin, grew suspicious of a group of African men approaching their party. The men were captured due to Tutin's instinct and correct interpretation of the situation. Following a thorough search, it was discovered that the group were all armed with long knives. Matthew, another auxiliary, thought the men lied about where they were from to disguise their whereabouts.<sup>706</sup> Henniker also worked closely with a scout called Solomon, who, in his opinion, was a "splendid youth."<sup>707</sup>

In contrast to Lord Roberts, who was reluctant to arm African auxiliaries, Lord Kitchener had no qualms in providing Africans with weapons.<sup>708</sup> Henniker supported Kitchener's view and armed the African scouts under his command.<sup>709</sup> Such a measure would prove helpful, as demonstrated when Henniker recorded Solomon's courage in standing up to a Boer named Troski. Solomon was alone when the Boer confronted him. An argument ensued, and as Solomon was armed, he shot Troski. Henniker saw this as a demonstration of bravery and quick thinking and was subsequently able to act; Troski's farm was burnt, and his wife was deported to the Port Alfred concentration camp.<sup>710</sup> Not all officers were as kindly disposed towards Africans, however. At Modder River in December 1899, Captain Thomas Henry Eyre Lloyd

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<sup>706</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 03/03/1900.

<sup>707</sup> Ibid., 16/05/1902.

<sup>708</sup> Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War. A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*, p. 21.

<sup>709</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 20/04/1901.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid., 14/02/1902.

wrote of an encounter while out on a scouting mission and, matter-of-factly, described that he “caught a nigger with a white flag, probably up to no good.”<sup>711</sup>

However, in August 1900, confronted by his prejudices, Lloyd’s personal bias against Africans changed after witnessing their skilfulness on dangerous missions carried out under cover of darkness. He acknowledged the auxiliaries’ valuable contribution and boasted that “these night marches of ours must make the Boers very uncomfortable, as they can’t know when we shall pounce on them ... [the] guides are wonderfully good at night. They seem to know every yard of this country. We seldom go on a road.”<sup>712</sup> Mounted African auxiliaries also assisted in vital night-time operations; these high-risk actions were ambitious yet often yielded favourable results.<sup>713</sup> For example, on 23 April 1901, Henniker was complimentary about the auxiliaries’ performance at Waterkloof, southeast of Pretoria and noted that they did well.<sup>714</sup> He marvelled that hardly a horse was scratched, and to him, it seemed almost unbelievable that, on occasion, the troops could have escaped so lightly but still managed to repulse the Boers successfully.<sup>715</sup> Therefore, the auxiliaries’ expertise and proficiency were essential in advancing British successes against the Boers.

Most British officers established close working relationships with auxiliaries based on respect, and they valued African and Coloured workers as allies who contributed to the war against the Boer forces.<sup>716</sup> However, several officers thought auxiliaries inferior and used violent methods to instil fear and thereby maintain discipline. In November 1899, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Edward

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<sup>711</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Captain Thomas Henry Eyre Lloyd, Diary, (F1C42-3, F1D1-2), 02/12/1899.

<sup>712</sup> Ibid., 05/08/1901.

<sup>713</sup> Nasson, *Abraham Esau’s War. A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*, p. 22.

<sup>714</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 23/04/1901.

<sup>715</sup> Ibid.

<sup>716</sup> Nasson, *Abraham Esau’s War. A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*, p. 192.

Longueville listed the transport arrangements of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, which consisted of “7 wagons, 34 natives, 2 carts, 127 mules, and a conductor named Wilkie”, who was reportedly a hard taskmaster and drove both men and animals under his charge at a relentless pace.<sup>717</sup> Despite his harsh treatment of workers, Longueville was complimentary about Wilkie’s work ethic, saying, “if a nigger annoyed him, he would let him have it straight in the eye, and they were afraid for their lives of him. I must say he managed them splendidly and I never had any bother with them while I had him.”<sup>718</sup> Longueville often referred to indigenous people disparagingly. For instance, on 27 July 1900, while out procuring food supplies from various farms dotted around Brugspruit, east of Pretoria, Longueville wrote that he “drove in a large herd of sheep which I came across, some niggers helped me, and I gave them a beast in return, there must have been three or four hundred of them – sheep, not niggers.”<sup>719</sup>

Using such language about African workers and when they were dealing with them indicates the casual racism exhibited by officers. A month later, Longueville recorded that while the Coldstream Guards were bivouacking at Magersfontein, a drought was cause for great worry lest the men received inadequate water provisions. Concerned about keeping discipline at the water cart and trying to figure out how to distribute food without complete chaos, it was decided that each battalion would draw their rations on a wagon away from the water cart. While the men were lining up to collect their food, the Boers started shelling the soldiers. Orders came that it was too dangerous to continue, so everyone was ordered to retire to safer ground. Rallying the men and ensuring everyone got to the allocated safe space, Longueville came to open ground where the 9<sup>th</sup> Lancers were in full swing readying their bivouac. At the same time as Longueville reached the 9<sup>th</sup> Lancers, they, too, were being shelled:

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<sup>717</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 20/11/1899.

<sup>718</sup> Ibid.

<sup>719</sup> Ibid., 27/07/1900.



I made the men jump on the wagon and ordered them to turn it around and gallop as we were getting the shells which had been prepared for the cavalry. But a buck wagon with ten mules is an unwieldy vehicle, and in turning we [got stuck] on an anthep. I talked loud and long to the nigger drivers and the odd soldiers I had with me jumped down; between us we pushed the wheel over the beastly anthep and then went off like blue blazes.<sup>720</sup>

Longueville's relationships with his workers were volatile and often violent, and he frequently punished workers, such as Thomas Matthews, for alleged disobedience:

I got up at 5 am and went over to a farm to take some evidence against one of my natives ... We did not get in until dark. I had to go over with my naughty nigger to the Provost Marshal and did not get to bed until very late.<sup>721</sup>

A few weeks later, when out on a scouting mission, Longueville and his scouts discovered a Boer farm and placed it under surveillance. After nightfall, the men crept silently and cautiously toward the homestead to get a closer look. Having surrounded the house, Longueville recorded that he was livid with Matthews, who made such a noise that he sent him home "in disgrace."<sup>722</sup> Like the Boers they fought, some British soldiers also placed little value on the lives of Africans. Notably, such racist attitudes extended to other regiments, and officers neither regarded Africans and Coloureds as equals nor believed them worthy of respect. Captain Edward George Spencer-Churchill of the Grenadier Guards spoke of workers as "darkies" or "darkey."<sup>723</sup> In March 1900, while encamped near Modder River, Major Sir Edward Seymour, also of the Grenadier Guards, complained there was "a lot to do about keeping camp clean; have kicked out a lot of filthy Kaffirs and made them put their kraal 1 mile away."<sup>724</sup> Using racist language reveal the disparaging and contemptuous attitude Seymour held towards Africans. Officers like Seymour regarded the indigenous auxiliaries as

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<sup>720</sup> Ibid., 11/12/1899.

<sup>721</sup> Ibid., 06/03/1900.

<sup>722</sup> Ibid., 17/03/1900.

<sup>723</sup> National Army Museum, Pryce-Jones, Papers, Diaries and Letters, 10/6/1901; 25/6/1901; 19/7/1901; 4/8/1901.

<sup>724</sup> National Army Museum, Diary of Major Sir Edward Seymour, January-May 1900, Grenadier Guards, Catalogue No: 2016-10-23-74, 28/03/1900.

a threat, and resisted adjusting their views, because they feared that such an accommodation would weaken their fundamental beliefs and values if they were to do so.<sup>725</sup> Although the indigenous auxiliaries provided valuable assistance to the British, their presence created racial tensions.<sup>726</sup>

After a march in August 1900 to Wonderfontein, a small town located south-west of Johannesburg, the 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Brigade bivouacked and rested for two days. While the Scots Guards were making camp, Longueville observed that they found “some newly turned earth in their camp [and] excavated; however, they were disappointed as nothing more interesting than a kaffir child’s body was the result of their investigations.”<sup>727</sup> Regarding punishment, beatings and brutality were frequently meted out to workers. At Graaff-Reinet in October 1901, after an argument with the supply officer, Barber, the auxiliaries under his command decided to go on strike and refused to work. The men were employed in storehouses and responsible for loading goods trains. Barber reported affairs to Shute, saying he could not resolve the situation and failed to ascertain the main agitators’ identities. Shute then decided to take matters into his own hands:

*[I] had them paraded and asked them what they had to say. Three or four of them stepped out and talked like mad, and after some minutes I gave my decision. The talkers were to receive 5 lashes with the cat and pay 2/6 for their flogging ... Draconian justice!! But it answered.*<sup>728</sup>

Such acts illustrate that workers were seen as tasked to obey and serve unquestioningly. In March 1900, at Klipdrift, south of Kimberley, Longueville again complained of his worker, Thomas Matthews, writing that he “had a good deal of trouble ... with my niggers who were

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<sup>725</sup> Peter H. Wilson, ‘Defining Military Culture’, *The Journal of Military History*. 27, No. 1 (January 2008), p. 25.

<sup>726</sup> Ibid.

<sup>727</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 21/08/1900.

<sup>728</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 08/10/1901.

always getting drunk, especially ‘Old Tom’; he was always breaking out of barracks, I caught him and even handcuffed him, but he escaped; I found him under a bed in the location, and flogged him well, also some of the others.”<sup>729</sup> Racial bias provided a way to exploit and misuse power. This imbalance perpetuated the widely accepted hierarchical system that replicated the master-servant relationships that many officers, being from the more privileged classes of British society, would have taken for granted in their own homes. As a result, white domination over non-whites continued and was enforced through casual violent acts and brutality.

Despite the racism, indigenous people volunteered as workers, borne out of necessity to bring in money to help their impoverished families. Nearly all African chiefs wanted to ensure that as compensation for their support of the British, they would receive political and monetary benefits, incentives encouraged by British propaganda.<sup>730</sup> In exchange, the chiefs pledged to provide transport such as horses, wagons, and oxen to the imperial troops. Additionally, the chiefs promised to arrange deliveries of grain and tobacco, and they were paid inflated rates due to an increase in supply and demand when war broke out.<sup>731</sup> Indeed, the British paid Africans comparatively more than the Boers did.<sup>732</sup> These professional relationships were formed with chiefs in locations such as the Transkei, Ciskei, Transvaal and Mafeking, and such collaborative acts are one reason why Africans supported the British war effort.

Of course, not all indigenous people who interacted with the army were men, nor did all these interactions occur within the context of combat. In Graaff-Reinet, the Coldstream Guards were

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<sup>729</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 14/03/1900.

<sup>730</sup> P. Warwick, ‘Black People in the War’, in P. Warwick & B. Spies (eds.), *The South African War: The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (London, Longman, 1980), p. 192.

<sup>731</sup> Ibid.

<sup>732</sup> B. Mbenga, ‘The Role of the Bakgatla of the Pilanesberg in the South African War’, in G. Cuthbertson, A. Grundlingh & M. Suttie (eds.), *Rethinking Gender, Race and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902* (Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2002), p. 103.

stationed in an urban environment where they encountered civilian women. In October 1901, Shute recorded an outbreak of venereal disease among the soldiers of the garrison:

*After ... ascertaining the names of the ladies of easy virtue [who] were mostly half-castes [Cape Coloured peoples] ... I gave instructions ... that they should be given the option of either being examined and treated by the District Surgeon or turned out of town. Most of them preferred the former alternative. About six refused and I sent them to Adendorp ... After a few days they changed their minds and consented to examination and treatment.*<sup>733</sup>

What is significant about this entry is that Shute only talked about identifying the women in question. Shute did not record any information about the soldiers involved, and he made no mention that any disciplinary steps were taken concerning the men nor remarked on any social problems that may have arisen from the venereal disease outbreak. It can be said that Shute's diary entry indicates how the gender hierarchy of male dominance and power was perpetuated and entrenched during the South African War. The domination of men over women was not only sexual but political. The right to enfranchisement afforded to men regardless of race was not extended to women, and gender inequality and hierarchies were similarly reinforced in the garrison context. Africans and Coloureds were becoming increasingly hostile to Afrikaner attempts to interfere with and curtail their political rights, and the Afrikaner Bond was widely regarded as a danger to the continued existence and growth of liberalism in the Cape Colony.<sup>734</sup> At a meeting with Coloured people in Cape Town in January 1901, Milner said that he "thoroughly agreed ... it was not race or colour, but civilisation which was the test of a man's capacity for political rights."<sup>735</sup> Henniker already observed the uneasy state of affairs in March 1900, saying, "we have a good deal of trouble about the Boers and the black business. The Boers make a dreadful fuss about everything."<sup>736</sup>

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<sup>733</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 26/10/1901.

<sup>734</sup> Warwick, 'Black People in the War', p. 190.

<sup>735</sup> Ibid.

<sup>736</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 15/03/1900.

In the Cape Colony, an enfranchised male, no matter his race, could register to vote if he could pass a basic literacy test. He also needed to fulfil one of two criteria; either he had to be a homeowner or annually earn more than £50. Even though only a handful of indigenous men met the requirements, the franchise was essential to their civil freedom.<sup>737</sup> Many of those who resided in the Cape Colony thought it best to remain British subjects, and to them, the fighting in the Colony represented a way of defending their civil liberties.<sup>738</sup> They believed that when the South African War ended with the British as victors, the civil liberties in the Cape Colony would be afforded to those living in the former Republics and that the franchise would be extended to the whole of the country. This hope was in answer to British promises that they would administer governance differently to the Boers.<sup>739</sup>

Indigenous loyalty to the imperial forces in their desire to fight the Boers stemmed from past violent clashes, which resulted in deep-seated animosity and bitterness towards the Afrikaners. In turn, the British encouraged this antagonism and used African and Coloured mistrust of the Afrikaners to advance their war objectives.<sup>740</sup> Despite their involvement in the war in support of the British, workers also waged their own war against their former masters and launched raids on Boer farms.<sup>741</sup> African tactics used in the war prevented the Boers from obtaining food resources and, in blocking off routes, denied the Boers access to vital corridors to pass through.<sup>742</sup> The Bakgatla in the north-west Transvaal fought the Boers to reclaim their ancestral

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<sup>737</sup> Warwick, 'Black People in the War', p. 110.

<sup>738</sup> Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War. A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902*, p. 11.

<sup>739</sup> P. Warwick, 'Black People in the War', pp. 189-90. For good examples of these attitudes see, A. Cobley (ed.), *From Cattle-Herding to Editor's Chair. The Unfinished Autobiography and Writings of Richard Victor Selope Thema* (Cape Town, Van Riebeeck Society, 2016); J. Comaroff et al. (eds.), *The Mafeking Diary of Sol T. Plaatje*.

<sup>740</sup> André Wessels, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. White man's War, Black man's War, Traumatic War* (Bloemfontein, Sun Press, 2011), p. 121.

<sup>741</sup> Shula Marks, 'White Masculinity: Jan Smuts, Race and the South African War', Raleigh Lecture on History, *Proceedings of the British Academy*. 111 (2001), p. 219.

<sup>742</sup> Jeremy Krickler, *Revolution from Above, Rebellion from Below. The Agrarian Transvaal at the Turn of the Century* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1993), p. 13.

lands, reunify as a people, and take revenge in response to endless Boer demands for Bakgatla servitude.<sup>743</sup> After the war, Africans and Coloureds felt betrayed by the British as the imperial forces reneged on their earlier pledge of continued political support. Many assurances of rewards had been made to indigenous people who were loyal to the Crown.<sup>744</sup>

For instance, when the siege of Mafeking ended on 17 May 1900, British forces praised the Barolong for their steadfastness and courage during the blockade. The Barolong were promised that their loyalty would not be forgotten and that the British would continue to protect them from the Boers. The Barolong chief assured the imperial forces that he would remain loyal to the Crown and the British government.<sup>745</sup> However, the British did not honour their pledges to the Barolong. For all their support for the British cause, indigenous people believed they would become farm owners when the conflict ended.<sup>746</sup> In the north-west of the Transvaal, Africans were in disbelief when Boer farms, which they thought would be rightfully theirs as recompense, were returned to former masters by the British. In the northern Transvaal, Africans were denied their ancestral land ownership despite their support of the imperial fighting force.<sup>747</sup> In assisting the British war machine, indigenous auxiliaries were a force to be reckoned with; their co-operation alongside the imperial forces' efforts played a significant and valuable role in the Boers' defeat.<sup>748</sup> However, allegiance to the British during the South African War ultimately did little to alleviate the struggle of Africans and Coloureds to attain their rightful place in South African society.

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<sup>743</sup> B. Mbenga, 'The Role of the Bakgatla of the Pilanesberg in the South African War', p. 87.

<sup>744</sup> J. Comaroff et al. (eds.), *The Mafeking Diary of Sol T. Plaatje*, p. 160.

<sup>745</sup> Ibid.

<sup>746</sup> Wessels, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. White man's War, Black man's War, Traumatic War*, p. 122.

<sup>747</sup> Krickler, *Revolution from Above, Rebellion from Below. The Agrarian Transvaal at the Turn of the Century*, pp. 20-1.

<sup>748</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle For South Africa*, p. 249.

## Conclusion

Chapter Three has provided a deeper understanding of race and demonstrated how Coldstream Guards' racialised attitudes towards and treatment of African and Coloured auxiliary workers impacted mid-level British army officer professionalism in a time of war. Relationships between the Coldstream Guards officers and African and Coloured auxiliaries in the South African War were varied and complex. Some commanders valued relationships based on mutual trust, respect, and loyalty which they considered the most precious assets for an auxiliary to possess, ensuring smooth co-operative working relations. Such attitudes resulted in positive encounters and produced favourable contributions to collaborative efforts in the war. These officers exhibited a strong work ethic, personability, and approachability that transformed their working relationships from a master-servant dynamic to one of partnership in which all parties worked towards the same goal: to overthrow the Boers and win the war. However, some saw themselves as overlords, fuelled by a sense of superiority, and these officers unashamedly revealed their racial bias toward auxiliaries in private diaries. Such accounts echoed social contemporary Darwinian depictions of colonised peoples who were either seen as worthy martial foes or regarded as lesser human beings in terms of civilisation and military effectiveness.

Moreover, Chapter Three exemplified the complexities of garrison command in dealing with civilians under Martial Law in Graaff-Reinet. Regimental officers such as Major Henry 'Harry' Gwynn Dean Shute, 2<sup>nd</sup>-in-command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, were appointed garrison commandants. Although Martial Law had been in force in the Cape Colony before he arrived in Graaff-Reinet in 1901, Shute thought it was being administered "with a very gentle

hand.”<sup>749</sup> As middle commander and garrison commandant, it was his duty to enforce Martial Law regulations. This chapter has demonstrated that the intensity of Shute’s administration of Martial Law had a tremendous impact on the civilians under his charge. Residents were threatened with arrest or, worse, deported to concentration camps if caught disobeying any Martial Law order issued. Townspeople were disarmed, they were constantly monitored, and free speech was censored. Equally, suspected Republican supporters were likely to face arrest, regardless of any available proof. Worse, they were even deported to concentration camps. As Kenneth Wyndham Smith remarks, it was a case of “whom did what and where, who attended the Congresses held where disapproval of the war was publicly broadcasted, who committed violent [treasonous] crimes, who were the readers of disloyal newspapers and other such printed material.”<sup>750</sup>

As such, the chapter shed new light on how middle command officers responded to and dealt with day-to-day life under Martial Law in the garrison town and what this entailed for civilians. This chapter also illustrated that garrison command entailed carefully manipulating political power to ensure effective command conduct. It has also shown how middle command officers adapted to new realities and changed circumstances. They were not doing something they were trained for. This was soldiering on an entirely different scale. To conclude, Chapter Three has offered fresh insights into how civil-military and race relationships influenced the middle command’s response to the peculiar difficulties of guerrilla war. It demonstrates how the Coldstream Guards regimental officers adapted command practices to the transformed conflict, ultimately contributing to the British army’s efforts to end hostilities in South Africa.

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<sup>749</sup> Graaff-Reinet Museum Archives, Lex Bremner, ‘The Gideon Scheepers Saga. The Second Battalion in Graaff-Reinet’, *Graaff-Reinet Advertiser*, 18/06/1984, Anglo-Boer War File 50/1, p. 3.

<sup>750</sup> Smith, ‘From Frontier to Midlands. A History of the Graaff-Reinet District, 1786-1910’, p. 624.



## CHAPTER FOUR

# Soldiers, Comrades and the Leadership of Men: Gendered Identities and Social Relationships of Coldstream Guards Regimental Officers in South Africa (1899-1902)

### Introduction

“MacHay has a sandy beard, a long pipe, a felt hat with a red feather, a khaki silk handkerchief around his neck and a generally dishevelled appearance. ‘Long-Tail’ looks like a bold bad pirate with a black beard. His spirits are all right.”<sup>751</sup> This diary entry was penned on 25 January 1900 by Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, battalion commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards. It provides a glimpse into the shared moments of friendships that bind officers together when they are away from the furious fighting of the frontline. Giving one another nicknames such as ‘Long-Tail’ identify idiosyncrasies; moreover, it shows individual character traits and illustrates the uniqueness of each man’s personality. The vignette shared by Codrington demonstrates that such close companionships made the war in South Africa (**Figure 18**) a little more bearable. Friendships formed off the battlefield contributed to the nature of an individual’s conduct on the battlefield.<sup>752</sup>

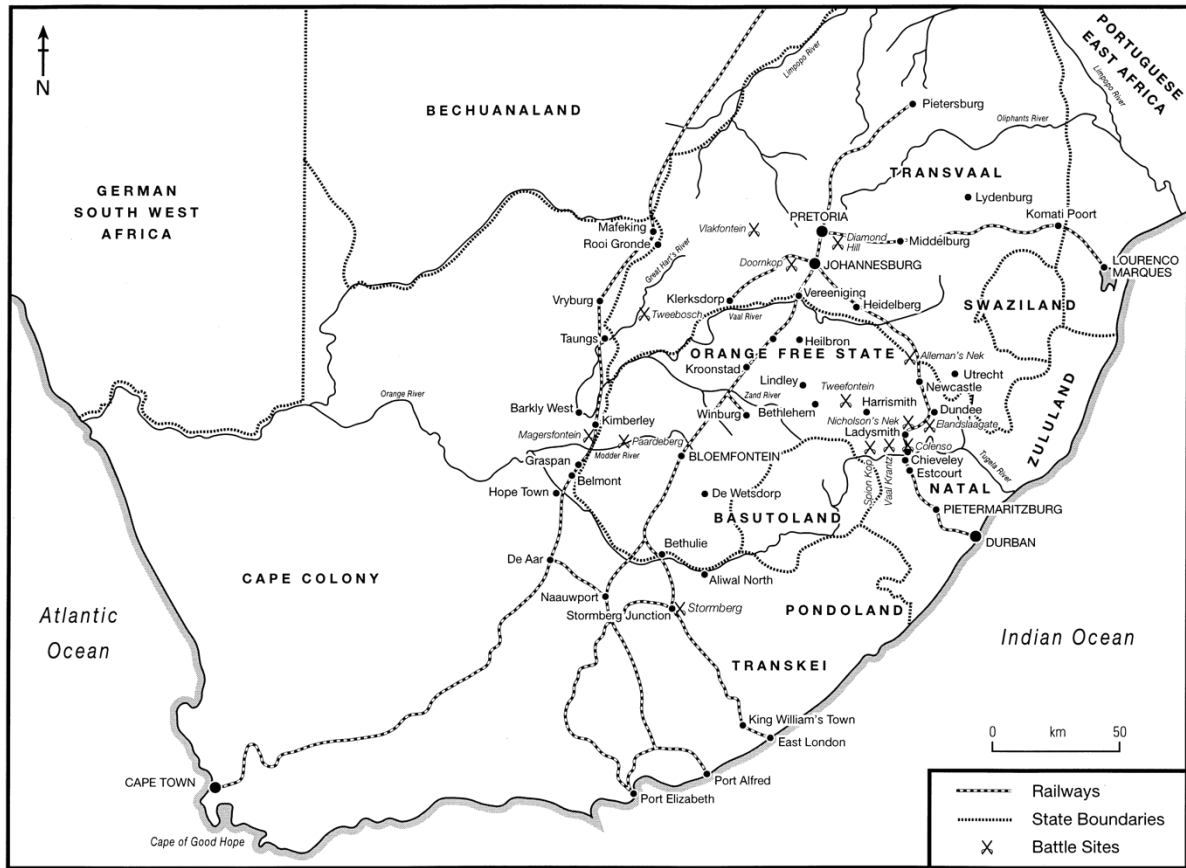
Chapter Four will demonstrate that wartime homosocial relationships were necessary because they affected performance on the battlefield, and conversely, because the battlefield experience

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<sup>751</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, Diary, (F1C30), 25/01/1900.

<sup>752</sup> David Ivan Hill, ‘Masculinity and War: Diaries and Letters of Soldiers Serving in the South African War (1899-1902)’ (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, 2011), p. 206.

impacted interactions away from the fighting. For this reason, the chapter argues that homosocial relationships were crucial for Coldstream Guards regimental officers to maintain their wellbeing and foster a sense of belonging that informed their leadership practices and relationships with their men. This chapter analyses connections between homosociality and leadership and investigates the social character of leadership, focusing on the gendered identities of the battalion commanders of the Coldstream Guards. In doing so, the chapter will discuss factors crucial to effective leadership, including comradeship and bonds, sport, religion, connections to home and the influence of kinship, and the establishment of domestic spheres and spaces. The surroundings in which the soldiers found themselves when not actively engaged on the battlefield varied vastly, from being on the move and marching to finding themselves garrisoned in towns and guarding the blockhouse lines for long periods. The chapter thus investigates how the Coldstream Guards regimental commanders made sense of their social realities within the broader framework of the conflict in South Africa. In doing so, Chapter Four contributes to the overall thesis argument that how an officer conducts himself in his social sphere off the battlefield can provide further insight into the relationship between effective leadership, command, and professionalism.



**Figure 18.** Map of South Africa.

**Source:** Edward M. Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 170.

By the late nineteenth century, an officer's role as a leader was to inspire and motivate his men to have the courage and determination to perform to the best of their ability in the field. More importantly, to be an effective leader, an officer had to be empathetic towards the men, celebrate each man's strengths, recognise his shortcomings, and have the necessary insight to accurately judge the disposition of his men at any given time.<sup>753</sup> Officer-men relationships of the late nineteenth century resulted from changes that had taken place over the course of the century, partly due to army reforms and partly in response to societal changes, whereby the

<sup>753</sup> Anthony Clayton, *The British Officer. Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present* (Harrow, Pearson Education Limited, 2007), p. 2.

other ranks tended to come from urban areas rather than rural ones.<sup>754</sup> Colonel Sir Garnet Wolseley advised officers in the 1871 publication of *The Soldier's Pocket-Book For Field Service* that when dealing with the men, an officer “should sympathise with their likes and dislikes, their pleasures and annoyances, being ready at all times to listen attentively to their grievances, be they supposed or real.”<sup>755</sup> Still, this kind of officer-man relationship did not evolve overnight.

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, some historians claim, officer-man relationships were characterised by elitist officer indifference towards their charges and pervasive apprehensiveness about the punishments inflicted on the men.<sup>756</sup> However, others have revised the idea of officers being indifferent to their men in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, demonstrating that even as far back as the mid-to-late seventeenth century, officers were concerned with their men's welfare in many cases.<sup>757</sup> For example, “prior to the storming of the Royalist stronghold of Bristol in 1645”, writes Roger B. Manning, “Sir Thomas Fairfax and his council of war decided to distribute 6s. to each soldier to give him heart.”<sup>758</sup> In addition, says Manning, “Sir Charles Cavendish, a Royalist colonel who had travelled widely and acquired military experience at [an] early age, was open and familiar with his men and won

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<sup>754</sup> Clayton, *The British Officer. Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>755</sup> Colonel Sir Garnet J. Wolseley, *The Soldier's Pocket-Book For Field Service* (London, Macmillan and Co., 1871), p. 2.

<sup>756</sup> Clayton, *The British Officer. Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present*, p. 2.

<sup>757</sup> Roger B. Manning, ‘Styles of Command in Seventeenth Century English Armies’, *The Journal of Military History*. 71, No. 3 (2007), pp. 671-699; Neil Sanghvi, ‘Gentlemen of Leisure or Vital Professionals? The Officer Establishment of the British Army, 1689-1739’ (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Oxford, 2017); Stephen Conway, *The British Army 1714-1783. An Institutional History* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 2021); David Lachlan Huf, ‘The Junior British Army Officer: Experience and Identity, 1793-1815’ (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Tasmania, 2017); J. Cookson, ‘Regimental Worlds. Interpreting the Experience of British Soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars’, in A. Forrest, K. Hagemann & J. Rendall (eds.), *Soldiers, Citizens, and Civilians. Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2014), pp. 95-113.

<sup>758</sup> Manning, ‘Styles of Command in Seventeenth Century English Armies’, p. 686.

their loyalty to an unusual degree.”<sup>759</sup> These examples demonstrate the paternal attitudes held by some mid-seventeenth century officers towards their men and signal the beginning of changes to the officer-man relationship. Even though it was a prolonged process, Spiers writes that “more and more officers adopted an enlightened approach towards man-management”, and they exhibited more concern with the “material lot and the spiritual welfare of the other ranks.”<sup>760</sup> This transformation furthermore mirrored that of other societal changes taking place over time.

Consequently, in Victorian society, ideas about the qualities a gentleman should exhibit began to change. More importance was attached to Christian values such as altruism, kindness, consideration, and an awareness that responsibility came with privilege.<sup>761</sup> Alongside this idea of the Christian gentleman taking shape in civil society, it did, too, in the military, raising awareness within the officer corps.<sup>762</sup> Accepting ideas inherent to the Christian gentleman’s obligation meant that officers more than ever realised the importance of their paternalistic duty towards the men.<sup>763</sup> The familial character of the regiment was predicated upon the notion of a shared camaraderie that superseded the bounds of class and prestige; it was intended to function in many respects as a second family headed by the officer patriarch.<sup>764</sup> Michael Roper and John Tosh argue that a paternal figure’s guidance is one of the constitutive elements of what has come to be known as the ‘father-rule’.<sup>765</sup> While the nomenclature of patriarchy does indeed refer to male dominance, Roper and Tosh consider the term ‘father-rule’ to characterise better

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<sup>759</sup> Ibid.

<sup>760</sup> Edward M. Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914* (London, Longman, 1980), p. 27.

<sup>761</sup> Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 113.

<sup>762</sup> Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914*, p. 29.

<sup>763</sup> Ibid.

<sup>764</sup> David French, *Military Identities. The Regimental System, the British Army, & the British People c. 1870-2000* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 79; 180.

<sup>765</sup> M. Roper & J. Tosh, ‘Introduction: Historians and the Politics of Masculinity’, in M. Roper & J. Tosh (eds.) *Manful Assertions. Masculinities in Britain since 1800* (London, Routledge, 1991), p. 10.

the form of social power founded within a familial hierarchy where the older male is responsible for the wellbeing of his *ménage*.<sup>766</sup> Such a classification addresses the power relations between men concerning age, class, occupation and race hierarchies. Consequently, the ‘father-rule’ denotes power transmission between a male in an authoritative position and those who depend on him for care and guidance.<sup>767</sup>

Alongside the evolution of the officer-man relationship, army discipline similarly underwent several changes in the years before the outbreak of the South African War. In the mid-nineteenth century, military law was intended not to punish crimes that contravene societal norms, in contrast to civil law, but rather to enforce obedience. Guidelines for dealing with misconduct were clear; soldiers were either rewarded or punished; there was no grey area where the law was interpreted and adapted to match the crime committed.<sup>768</sup> Nevertheless, changes in the practice and application of civil law towards the end of the nineteenth century also influenced the military. Two leading causes were responsible for this. Firstly, there was an increase in magistrates’ power and authority. Secondly, criminal tendencies were increasingly seen as the consequence of the environment rather than to be inborn, as previously understood. The effect in the army was that the power to award sentences for lesser offences was devolved from commanding officers to company commanders.<sup>769</sup> It would also mean that officers had to have a firm knowledge of the kind of man they were commanding and his service record to ascertain whether to be lenient or severe when delivering punishment.<sup>770</sup>

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<sup>766</sup> Ibid.

<sup>767</sup> Ibid.

<sup>768</sup> Stephen M. Miller, ‘Duty or Crime? Defining Acceptable Behaviour in the British Army in South Africa, 1899-1902’, *Journal of British Studies*. 49, No. 2 (2010), p. 313.

<sup>769</sup> French, *Military Identities. The Regimental System, the British Army, & the British People c. 1870-2000*, pp. 186-7.

<sup>770</sup> Ibid.

Moreover, the abolition of flogging in 1889 meant that leadership became far more critical to maintaining order within the ranks.<sup>771</sup> Instead, officers could authorise Field Punishment No. 1, according to which a soldier would be tied to a gun wheel for any given amount of time.<sup>772</sup> In addition, punitive sentencing, where a man was given hard labour, had increased from one to two weeks.<sup>773</sup> Commanders had the authority to dock a man's pay for property destruction or absence without leave, and the offender was given the choice of a court-martial in these instances.<sup>774</sup> For lesser offences, a man could expect to be given additional duties or confined to barracks for as long as twenty-eight days if awarded by his commanding officer, or seven days if awarded by a company commander, and no option was given to appeal against the sentence.<sup>775</sup>

Consequently, the themes of homosociality, officer-man relationships and effective leadership practices in Chapter Four will be addressed by drawing on the personal correspondences of Colonel Alfred Edward 'Coddy' Codrington of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, and Major Henry 'Harry' Gwynn Dean Shute of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards. Private documents of Coldstream Guards company commanders, other ranks, officers, and men from other Guards regiments are also included. Although the Introduction has already provided a methodological discussion about using personal correspondences as source material, it is also helpful to briefly mention how these will be used in Chapter Four, the nature of these particular diaries and letters and what they reflect. Letter-writing is a two-way process that establishes a relationship between the writer and the addressee and is a more succinct and direct form of communication than diary-writing.

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<sup>771</sup> J. Burk, 'Military Culture', in L.R. Kurtz & J.E. Turpin (eds.), *Encyclopaedia of Violence, Peace & Conflict. Volume 2* (San Diego, Academic Press, 1999), p. 1245.

<sup>772</sup> Clayton, *The British Officer. Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present*, p. 122.

<sup>773</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

<sup>774</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>775</sup> *Ibid.*

For example, Major Shute often wrote letters to his half-sister, Isabel, and his fondness for her and their close connection is evident in the frequency he wrote to her and the topics he mentioned. Shute often enquires about his family and how everyone is doing and loves to tell Isabel about the latest gossip he has heard.

In contrast to Shute's letters addressed to Isabel, the addressee of the letters written by Lieutenant Sir Walter Barttelot of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards is unknown. Despite us not knowing to whom he is writing, Barttelot's letters convey very well the rhythm of life on the blockhouse line and describe in quite some detail how his time away from the frontline was spent meticulously documenting South African fauna and flora. The tedium of blockhouse duty seems to dissipate when Barttelot describes vividly the different kinds of exotic plants and creatures he has seen, the excitement of going on an excursion to find more species, and how much planting flowers and feeding birds make him happy, so much so that he is yearning for the domestic comforts of home back in England.

In addition, diaries are another primary source used in Chapter Four. Diary writing, as Irina Paperno puts it, "means not only dealing with individuality but also with specific individuals."<sup>776</sup> Indeed, diary writing is far more of a solitary act than letters with a definite intended audience. Even though letters do reveal intimate details, diaries are more complicated, in the sense that the personal comments made by the diarists do contain the possibility of being read by someone else, of being made public perhaps. So the question we need to ask here is how do we then read what is being said? In some ways, we read it literally that these were the perceptions and feelings and experiences of the writers. However, it must be kept in mind when

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<sup>776</sup> Irina Paperno, 'What Can Be Done with Diaries?', *Russian Review*. 63, No. 4 (2004), p. 563.



tracing themes and analysing writings that, as Paperno points out, “diaries are not to be treated as if they provide an unmediated access to either experience or facts.”<sup>777</sup>

However, as this chapter will demonstrate, in the case of the officer-man relationship, it is, to an extent, possible to demonstrate the nature of such a relationship by using diaries from both officers and other ranks. Considering both officers’ and other ranks’ writings, the two-way process of the relationship between the officer and his man becomes more apparent, especially when both record the same event. For example, at Christmas time in 1899, Lieutenant-Colonel Henniker handed out puddings to his men, and took the time to ensure that each man was looked after and doing well.<sup>778</sup> Private George J. Gullick also recorded Henniker’s goodwill gesture.<sup>779</sup> Thus, when seen together in this way, we can see how each diarist entry recorded their own experience, interpretation and response to the event and one another. Collectively, it creates a fuller picture of what middle leadership entails and how it is received. Nevertheless, it must be remembered that the idiosyncratic nature of each diarist, as an officer or as a soldier, was as unique to each individual as were how these diarists reflected upon their war experiences.

Another crucial aspect to consider when critically reading these diaries is the frequency with which certain topics are written about, and why the diarist wrote a lot or little or nothing about them. It is significant because it can tell us how much officers valued their men and whether they valued their relationship with their men. For example, some officers wrote more about the men than others in their diaries. Those who did, did so mainly in a positive and paternal way,

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<sup>777</sup> Ibid., p. 565.

<sup>778</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, Diary, (F1C29), 25/12/1899.

<sup>779</sup> Private George J. Gullick, Diary, 25/12/1899, in Roy George Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries of Major H.G.D. Shute and Private G.J. Gullick 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, 1899-1902* (Burnham-On-Sea, Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society, 1999), p. 16.

though they also included when the ordinary soldiers were disciplined, but would add how they felt about having to punish the individual in question. Nevertheless, the failure of certain officers to comment on the men in their letters or diaries is an interesting point to emphasise. These diaries reveal that not only did these officers hold little regard for the ordinary Tommy as an individual but furthermore indicated an indifference in the officer's attitude toward establishing a close officer-man relationship. Other officers wrote of the men occasionally, and in such cases, we can surmise that these commanders placed greater value on the relationships they formed with their fellow officers, rather than inferring that they did not appreciate the men at all.

In assessing the contents of other ranks' diaries used in this chapter, it is apparent that they often wrote about their commanders. The men often scrutinised officer conduct, and in their diaries, there is more of a spotlight on officer personality and how they regard and treat their men – be it positive or negative. The writings of the other ranks who spoke highly of their superiors demonstrated they felt valued as human beings; as a result, they were loyal and trusted in the officer's leadership abilities. Conversely, soldiers who felt that they were being badly treated, who felt that they received no recognition for hard work, merely reinforced a type of master-servant hierarchy rather than a relationship, and this led to resentment on their part. So, in critically assessing these personal pieces, it is important to find themes that link up to the bigger idea of leadership and comradeship, as well as to analyse the content as a day-to-day recording of events, friendships, and feelings and experiences. In doing so, Chapter Four contributes to the body of scholarship on officer-man relationships, focusing on the middle command officer-man relationship in the South African War.

# I

## Homosociality, Comradeship and Bonds

When the British army was on the march with little or no shelter, officers and men alike had to endure hunger, thirst, and exhaustion, while exposed to the unforgiving African climate and conditions. While on outpost duty at Diamond Hill situated outside of Pretoria in July 1900, at nightfall and with the extreme weather showing no signs of abating, all would huddle together as close as possible where they tried to get a brief moment of respite under makeshift tarpaulins stretched between ox wagons.<sup>780</sup> Private Arthur Dye recalled that Lord Methuen told the men, “we were suffering greater hardships than the British army had done for many years.”<sup>781</sup> To illustrate the severity of what the soldiers underwent, one Guardsman remembered that following a particularly strenuous march in the scorching heat, “our lips were black and swollen by the sun.”<sup>782</sup>

Dust and sand are also frequently mentioned topics in soldiers’ diaries and letters. In a letter written to Isabel on 24 November 1899 at Belmont, northeast of De Aar, Shute complained, “we are here in a sandy, dusty blowy camp.”<sup>783</sup> Writing to his parents on 3 December, Shute compared the heat and dusty conditions at Modder River, south of Kimberley, to those he had experienced during his time in Egypt in 1882.<sup>784</sup> Also at Modder River, Major Sir Edward Seymour of the Grenadier Guards, on 1 February 1900, likewise bemoaned the awfulness of

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<sup>780</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Lieutenant George Windsor-Clive, Diary, (12067), 02/07/1900.

<sup>781</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Private Arthur Dye, Diary, (F1C7, F1D7), 26/11/1899.

<sup>782</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Unknown Author, Diary, (12323), 25/11/1899.

<sup>783</sup> National Army Museum, Originals and transcripts of letters written by Major Henry Gwynn Dean Shute DSO, Coldstream Guards, to Isabel Cazenove, 1899-1900; associated with the Boer War (1899-1902), Catalogue No: 2013-08-2, 24/11/1899.

<sup>784</sup> *Ibid.*, 03/12/1899.

the dust and flies, writing that he suffered a terrible headache due to the intense heat in his tent.<sup>785</sup> A week later, Seymour again lamented, “it is going to be hot. How I pray there will be no dust.”<sup>786</sup> In addition to these conditions, soldiers battled excessively high winds. As Shute described to Isabel in another letter also written at Modder River, “we had an awful night of it last night. A gale of wind started about 1 am & by morning my face, hands and everything in the tent were smothered in sand.”<sup>787</sup>

Furthermore, fierce thunderstorms brought bracing sheets of rain that drenched everyone and everything. When the Guards Brigade was at Klipdrift, south of Kimberley, in March 1900, after suffering a dreadful night of thunder and rain, Seymour wrote that “the camp [is] absolutely under water and no sleep for anybody.”<sup>788</sup> Shute concurred. Also at Klipdrift, writing to his father about the miserable and wet conditions and that he feared more rain was imminent, Shute seemed satisfied with the fortifications he created for himself in anticipation of bad weather:

I am lying full length in my shelter composed of 4 sticks & a waterproof sheet which I have fixed up in a little promontory between 2 dongas [ditches] which take the rainwater streaming down to the river & am fairly comfortable as I have a white umbrella to put up to windward.<sup>789</sup>

In the letter, Shute also gleefully related the misfortune of a few of the other officers when the Coldstream Guards had initially arrived at Klipdrift. The blazing sun and hot weather, he said, meant that some officers “made their shelter in the dongas themselves to get shelter from the sun but in the middle of the night there was a torrent of rain & they were washed out, drenched

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<sup>785</sup> National Army Museum, Diary of Major Sir Edward Seymour, January-May 1900, Grenadier Guards, Catalogue No: 2016-10-23-74, 01/02/1900.

<sup>786</sup> Ibid., 08/02/1900.

<sup>787</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 19/01/1900.

<sup>788</sup> National Army Museum, Seymour, Diary, 05/03/1900.

<sup>789</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 01/03/1900.

& homeless!”<sup>790</sup> Unfortunately, Shute’s good fortune ran out a month later when they encamped at Kaffir River, south of Bloemfontein. Fed up with the rain and soaked to the bone, Shute declared in a letter to Isabel that “if I ever go campaigning again, I shall have a complete Suit of India rubber or wash leather made – so that the cold & wet may be kept out & not much room taken up.”<sup>791</sup> At Magersfontein, north of Modder River, a month later, Henniker was upset that the men were plagued by enteric fever and worried about the grave amount of sickness amongst the soldiers.<sup>792</sup> It has been stated that “the worst problem ... facing regimental officers, and not properly understood by them, was disease, especially enteric fever, from dirty water.”<sup>793</sup> This statement, however, did not apply in Shute’s case. He was fully aware of the issue because his experience in the Sudan in 1885 had taught him that such weather conditions necessitated water to be boiled first before it was safe to consume. Owing to this, Shute observed in his letter that “there have been a good many slight cases of it since we got here. I suppose it’s the old thing – water – the river is sluggish & muddy & there have been a good many bodies of men & animals in it.”<sup>794</sup> Similarly noting the fragility of the corporeal body and the impact that enteric was having, Henniker wrote:

Lady Roberts arrived. I hope she will warm up the P.M.O. Do what he can, even Polly [General Pole-Carew] ... who is all powerful, cannot get a hospital for enteric cases, and our men are living in puddles on the ground. Poor old Magill [M.D.] is very low about it. The wonder is, that more do not die.<sup>795</sup>

Shute fell gravely ill with dysentery on 1 December 1899 when the Coldstream Guards were at Modder River. Doubled up in agony and unable to move, his dear friend Wilty called for a doctor and ensured a stretcher was available for Shute to be taken to the hospital.<sup>796</sup> In a letter

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<sup>790</sup> Ibid.

<sup>791</sup> Ibid., 15/04/1900.

<sup>792</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 04-5/01/1900.

<sup>793</sup> Clayton, *The British Officer. Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present*, p. 148.

<sup>794</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 03/12/1899.

<sup>795</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 19/04/1900.

<sup>796</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute, Diary, (F1D22), 01/12/1899.

written to his parents from his hospital bed a couple of days later, Shute said he was feeling better and expected to be released soon.<sup>797</sup> When the Coldstream Guards returned to Modder River, Shute complained in a letter on 19 January 1900 to Isabel that “this beastly dysentery ... still drags on & makes me horribly weak & slack ... I am living on nothing but milk & opium but hope in a few days to be able to digest something more solid.”<sup>798</sup> Likewise, when the Grenadier Guards were at Klipdrift in March 1900, Seymour recorded in his diary that he suffered severe diarrhoea, blaming his malaise on the terrible conditions the officers and men endured, and concluded that the only thing left to say was that “this is hardship indeed.”<sup>799</sup> Officers endured unimaginable cold or heat, suffered from thirst or hunger, were struck down by disease and illness and as a result faced terrible hardships alongside their men. Battling the elements meant that to be at war in South Africa was far more than simply fighting the enemy.<sup>800</sup>

Despite the danger and disease lurking within bodies of water, conversely, water and all functions relating to cleaning the physical body are often positively mentioned in officer letters and diaries. At Modder River on 30 November 1899, Captain Thomas Henry Eyre Lloyd was delighted with having the opportunity to bathe in the river, so much so that he bathed twice.<sup>801</sup> At the beginning of March 1900, when the men were at Poplar Grove, situated to the east of Kimberley, Henniker, thrilled to have a long hot bath in crystal clear water, waxed lyrical over the fact that it was the “first clean water I have seen for months.”<sup>802</sup> Later on, at Bloemfontein, and able to use proper sanitary facilities in the town, Codrington enthused that he had a “real

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<sup>797</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 03/12/1899.

<sup>798</sup> *Ibid.*, 19/01/1900.

<sup>799</sup> National Army Museum, Seymour, Diary, 05/03/1900.

<sup>800</sup> Hill, ‘Masculinity and War: Diaries and Letters of Soldiers Serving in the South African War (1899-1902)’, pp. 168-9; 206.

<sup>801</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Captain Thomas Henry Eyre Lloyd, Diary, (F1C42-3, F1D1-2), 30/11/1899.

<sup>802</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 05/03/1900.

full-length bath, with clean water! Such a treat!”<sup>803</sup> At Middelburg three months later, Henniker described that bathing in an actual bath made “one [feel] quite childish with pleasure, after so long a time without.”<sup>804</sup> On the whole, bathing was considered by the officers to be quite an extravagance, and such experiences brought soldiers sheer and utter delight.

Having said that, during long spells in the *veldt* when the Coldstream Guards were on the march, any body of water available for a wash was deemed a luxury. Approximately three miles north of Norval’s Pont, located east of De Aar, on 15 November 1899, Shute felt great relief when he found a pond, and officers and men had their first proper wash in four days.<sup>805</sup>

At Graspan, south of Kimberley, a few weeks later, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Edward Longueville described the sheer pleasure of bathing and said, “Reggie Acheson, Skeff and I went and bathed in the filthiest pool I have ever seen and enjoyed it awfully.”<sup>806</sup> On top of washing in dirty pools, officers also bathed in crocodile-infested waters. At *Kaapmuiden* (Cape Mouth) in the eastern Transvaal, on 27 November 1900, Longueville risked a wash in the Crocodile River. Keeping only to the shallows, he noted the men were warned not “to bathe out of our depth because of the crocodiles” and, said he, “none, however, were seen.”<sup>807</sup>

Campaign life, moreover, meant that officers endured the filth and rough terrain alongside their men. As Codrington detailed, “most of us [are now] with beards, and a very odd-looking crew we are ... I have a good white beard ... We are all dirty and hairy ... and we look great ruffians.”<sup>808</sup> The officers relished the freedom to grow beards and rough it up with their men,

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<sup>803</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 14/03/1900.

<sup>804</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 22/06/1900.

<sup>805</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 15/11/1899.

<sup>806</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Edward Longueville, Diary, (F1C40), 27/11/1899.

<sup>807</sup> *Ibid.*, 20/11/1900.

<sup>808</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 02/12/1899; 17-18/12/1899; 25/11/1899.

since it meant that for a fleeting moment in time, they were away from the physical constraints of the polished regimental officer. Besides the facial hair and grime, so as not to become targets for Boer shooters, officers modified their uniforms to blend in further with other ranks. Lord Methuen noted in his diary on 11 November 1899 that it was decided officers were to “to dress like the men and carry rifles” but pointedly stated that he was against the idea.<sup>809</sup> However, three days later, General Redvers Buller wrote to Methuen urging him to do so as a matter of safety, emphasising the officers “make any change in their dress or equipment to destroy the distinction between them and their men.”<sup>810</sup> For this reason, Shute recorded, officers gave up their swords and revolvers for rifles instead.<sup>811</sup> Likewise, Codrington observed further changes meant officers painting their uniform buttons khaki and that “our red feathers are no longer in our helmets.”<sup>812</sup>

Despite the pervasive image of the British army officer as an aloof and formal individual,<sup>813</sup> the Coldstream Guards battalion officers took great delight in their newfound anonymity. Shute felt that correct battlefield dress and a spit-and-polish appearance were nonsensical since the men spent almost all their time in the open terrain enduring the relentless and unforgiving African climate. He also believed that the clothes did not make the commander, and Shute’s laissez-faire approach to uniform protocol infuriated others opposed to his point of view.<sup>814</sup> Indignant at the hostility he received on one occasion, when the Coldstream Guards were at Bronkhorstspuit to the east of Pretoria, Shute wrote that he was “called every opprobrious

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<sup>809</sup> Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre Archives, Paul Sanford, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Methuen, Corsham, Miscellaneous correspondence and papers, South African War 1899-1902, Private and personal correspondence and diaries, Accession No: 1742/18, 11/11/1899.

<sup>810</sup> *Ibid.*, 14/11/1899.

<sup>811</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 24/11/1899.

<sup>812</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 02/12/1899; 17-18/12/1899; 25/11/1899.

<sup>813</sup> H. Callaway, ‘Dressing for Dinner in the Bush: Rituals of Self-Definition and British Imperial Authority’, in R. Barnes & J.B. Eicher (eds.), *Dress and Gender. Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts* (Oxford, Berg Publishers, 1997), p. 233.

<sup>814</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 25/07/1900.



name under the sun ... because I walked about with my umbrella (my constant companion) up in the rain. They think an umbrella is not the right thing to use in uniform. I disagree.”<sup>815</sup>

On the contrary, Henniker believed that an officer’s correct uniform should always be upheld and was unimpressed when Shute received his Distinguished Service Order (DSO) in December 1901. He felt that Shute did not take his rank as an officer seriously when the latter turned up, wearing only his “shirtsleeves.”<sup>816</sup> Henniker furthermore felt that a soldier ought to take pride in his status and how he presented himself to others and that good leadership lay both in the effective execution of duties and in how an officer was dressed. Uniforms symbolised military masculine strength, and it was through the correct attire that the values of the British army impressed upon others an officer’s self-dignity, discipline and courage.<sup>817</sup> Moreover, uniforms constitute a fundamental part of the aesthetic identity of what it means to look like a soldier and contribute to an innate self-identification compounded with the feeling of being a part of something larger, institutionalised and maintained through custom, rituals and tradition.

The British army maintained traditional institutionalised rites of drums and drills even when far away fighting colonial wars in foreign territories. It was done to ensure continuity and to create a sense of reassurance and familiarity. In particular, ceremonial custom and symbolism were intended to offset any threat that would upset regimental order and camaraderie.<sup>818</sup> Henniker took pride in the age-old traditions of the Coldstream Guards and was much pleased that “the drums were allowed again last night ... The Massed Drums of the Coldstream

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<sup>815</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 25/07/1900.

<sup>816</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 05/12/1901.

<sup>817</sup> Callaway, ‘Dressing for Dinner in the Bush: Rituals of Self-Definition and British Imperial Authority’, pp. 235-38.

<sup>818</sup> French, *Military Identities. The Regimental System, the British Army, & the British People c. 1870-2000*, p. 78.

played.”<sup>819</sup> In November 1900, the Coldstream Guards were stationed at Potchefstroom, southwest of Johannesburg, and Henniker took command of the town. As one of his first directives, he:

Issued an order to the inhabitants ... I sent the drums to play in the square and we played ‘God Bless the prince of Wales’ this being the prince’s birthday. I imagine that the tune was played for the first time for a long while. I sent out the wife of one of the men who has not signed the oath of neutrality to try and get some of them in ... I went round the town and arranged police posts, so had a long day. We hoisted the Union Jack ... at 5 pm ... We fired a Royal Salute, then gave three cheers for the Queen, and so home. There was a good deal of outside cheering. The children from the Convent came down to sing the ‘Queen’.<sup>820</sup>

A few months later, upon hearing the news of the death of Queen Victoria on 22 January 1901, Henniker lamented everyone was in mourning and reminisced:

We played the Coburg March and ‘God save the Queen’ for the last time at Tattoo ... the Queen was dead, and there is a great deal of depression among the small English population. The drums of Composite Battalion played the ‘Dead March’ at Tattoo, and then ‘God save the King’, to show these d---d swine of Dutch what we mean. It is probably the first time this has been played. I telegraphed to Marlborough House in the name of the Coldstream, and also to the Duke of Connaught.<sup>821</sup>

Henniker was a loyal and dedicated subject of the British Empire, and soldiering was important to him. It was a way in which Henniker felt that he could contribute to Britain’s imperial expansion. He took this very seriously. Apart from demonstrating his allegiance in active battle, he believed strongly in the holy grail of tradition and ceremony. Marching bands and other such public traditions were rituals of display that honoured the might of the Empire. In Henniker’s opinion, to be present and correct at all times was the patriotic duty of every British soldier.<sup>822</sup> Imperial dress and colours represented the all-powerful British Empire, with the

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<sup>819</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 20-21/12/1900.

<sup>820</sup> Ibid., 09-10/11/1900.

<sup>821</sup> Ibid., 23/01/1901.

<sup>822</sup> Callaway, ‘Dressing for Dinner in the Bush: Rituals of Self-Definition and British Imperial Authority’, p. 239.

vibrant and extravagant attire of the soldier denoting formal hierarchies of rank and social status.<sup>823</sup> Lieutenant George Windsor-Clive agreed with this sentiment, writing that when he was on guard in Bloemfontein at Government House at the headquarters of Lord Roberts in March 1900, every minute detail of customary tradition was upheld as if the Coldstream were on guard at barracks in England. However, he remarked that even though “all was done in Queen’s Guard style, slow marching and so forth”, the tattered state of the men’s uniforms and their dishevelled appearance to him seemed entirely ridiculous and out of place.<sup>824</sup>

More importantly, uniform shortages were common for British soldiers who were away fighting in South Africa. Often insufficient warm clothing contributed to almost unbearable levels of suffering. Even so, some soldiers shared their meagre supplies, such as boots, socks, breeches and hats, with comrades who were worse off than they were. While in Bloemfontein during the autumn of 1900, Lloyd enthused about the kindness of a Rifle Brigade officer, Major Arthur George Ferguson, who, upon seeing the tattered and dilapidated state of Lloyd’s breeches, gave him his own spare pair. To Lloyd, this was a marvellous gift, as he only had one pair of thin breeches, which was quite worn out. With such cold weather, the warmer and thicker breeches could not have come at a better time.<sup>825</sup>

In the same way, Codrington spoke of the kindness of Major John Maurice Wingfield of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards who possessed only two pairs of socks but eventually accumulated nineteen pairs from various donors. Sharing his wealth, Wingfield made Codrington one of the lucky recipients of two pairs with matching wool of the same colour so that he could mend them when necessary. Codrington gratefully accepted the prized socks and,

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<sup>823</sup> Ibid.

<sup>824</sup> Wellington Barracks, Windsor-Clive, Diary, 23/03/1900.

<sup>825</sup> Wellington Barracks, Lloyd, Diary, 29/04/1900.

together with his own woollen socks, considered himself relatively well-off.<sup>826</sup> Shute also received riches from Wingfield. Writing to Isabel on 20 May 1900, he said he was overjoyed when “Johnny Wingfield got me a big cape from Cape Town.”<sup>827</sup> Still, a lack of essential items affected all soldiers, and any acts of kindness were greatly appreciated and helped lessen the discomforts of soldierly life on the open *veldt*. Henniker recorded in November 1899, at the beginning of the British army’s campaign northwards, that after having endured a long march and sleeping in the open *veldt* with nothing more than the clothes they had “on their backs”, thanks should be given to the 9<sup>th</sup> Lancers who came to rescue of the Coldstream Guards. While encamped near the Orange River, the 9<sup>th</sup> Lancers gave seventeen blankets to the Coldstream Guards officers and men to keep them warm.<sup>828</sup> However insurmountable these conditions seemed, sharing tough times brought the men closer together.

## II

### **Killing, Death and Dying**

Faced with opponents on the battlefield, soldiers turned to one another for physical and emotional support, as reliance on one’s peers was potentially a matter of life and death. Wartime comradeships were fragile and, for some, short-lived, as killing, death, and dying were ever-present realities for the soldiers in South Africa. When comrades died in battle, the grief and loss deeply affected all, and officers recorded these sentiments in their diaries. To illustrate, Lloyd wrote of 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Arthur Collingwood Burton, who perished during the battle at Belmont on 23 November 1899. After the first wave of attack, Burton was shot, sustaining a mortal head wound. Lloyd was depressed at the loss of his friend and noted that it

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<sup>826</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 25/01/1900.

<sup>827</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 20/05/1900.

<sup>828</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 12-16/11/1899.

was terrible luck for Burton “to be hit in his first fight; he was a right good fellow, and I am very sorry to lose him.”<sup>829</sup> Henniker also described the awfulness of Burton’s death and other injuries that the men sustained at Belmont:

Poor Burton ... We have much to be thankful for, and I especially, for I was missed once at short range by a man who apparently let the front-line go on. Our loss is quite out of proportion with our success. It was like a bad Aldershot Field Day.<sup>830</sup>

The tragedy of losing Major Augustus John Henry Beaumont Paulet, fifteenth Marquess of Winchester, of No. 2 Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards — affectionately known to all as Wilty — affected those closest to him tremendously. Shute frequently referred to him in his diary, and greatly cherished his friendship. When the cease-fire was called at Belmont, Shute, leading his men on their return to camp, fell twenty feet into a ravine, seriously injuring his ribs. Wilty stayed with Shute, never leaving his side waiting for help to arrive, and Shute thought that Wilty’s act of friendship was “awfully kind.”<sup>831</sup> Wilty was fatally wounded at Magersfontein on 11 December 1899. Windsor-Clive witnessed and recorded a detailed account of the terrible events leading up to the final moment of Wilty’s death. After their initial advance, Wilty and Windsor-Clive, along with a few of their men, had to find cover from Boer fire, and they were forced to stay hidden until the darkness of nightfall could provide better cover for an escape. They remained stationary approximately 100 yards from the nearest Boer trench.<sup>832</sup>

Despite the close proximity to the Boers, the men were well-hidden and relatively safe but had to keep still and not move as the *burghers* would target them. Some hours later, Wilty, who had been lying down a few feet from Windsor-Clive and Lieutenant Herbert William Studd,

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<sup>829</sup> Wellington Barracks, Lloyd, Diary, 23-24/11/1899.

<sup>830</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 23/11/1899.

<sup>831</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 28/11/1899.

<sup>832</sup> Wellington Barracks, Windsor-Clive, Diary, 11/12/1899.

decided to stand up for no apparent reason and, as if he were in a daze, slowly started to walk towards the two officers. Both men begged Wilty to lie down and remain safely out of sight, but Wilty took no heed and continued to approach. Standing with his back to the Boer trench, he paused for a mere moment. That was all it took for a Boer rifle shot to fatally wound Wilty. Windsor-Clive rushed over to his friend and put himself in danger, risking his life urged Wilty to say where he was hit. Wilty struggled for some time and finally responded that he was “shot through the spine.”<sup>833</sup> Those were the last words he ever spoke. Windsor-Clive recalled:

The bullet had hit him in the middle of the back and after coming out in front, had torn the buckle off his belt, and made a great gash in his right wrist. In about twenty minutes, he was dead. We borrowed a blanket from Private Vingoe, No. 2 Company, who was near and then wrapped him up in it and wound his putties round the blanket.<sup>834</sup>

Because they were pinned down under severe enfilade fire from the Boers, the men were forced to retire, leaving Wilty’s body behind. However, when the firing had practically ceased, Windsor-Clive recalled that:

Studd, Corporal A. Webb, Private P. Barrett, and myself of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream ... and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Ruthven and Corporal Munro of the Black Watch, went back for Winchester’s body, and carried it back on three rifles ... [then] we found two stretcher bearers of the Scots Guards with their stretcher, and they carried the body back for us to where we found [Major] Henniker.<sup>835</sup>

Poignantly, Shute arranged for Wilty’s body to be sent home to his family back in England.<sup>836</sup> A year later, on 11 December 1900, the anniversary of Magersfontein, Henniker solemnly noted, “[today] one’s thoughts go back to dear old Wilty.”<sup>837</sup> After the death of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion’s commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Horace Robert Stopford, at Modder River on 28 November 1899, Henniker recorded that Stopford’s death was “a fearful blow.”<sup>838</sup> One

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<sup>833</sup> Ibid.

<sup>834</sup> Ibid.

<sup>835</sup> Ibid.

<sup>836</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 21/12/1899.

<sup>837</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 11/12/1900.

<sup>838</sup> Ibid., 28/11/1899.

Guardsman, whose identity is unknown, recalled that what had haunted him most at Modder River was the awfulness of “the cries of the wounded.”<sup>839</sup> In August 1901, Henniker visited Stopford’s grave at Modder River during a few days of leave. Afterwards, Henniker wrote that, sadly, the graves of the fallen were left “in a bad state” and noted it needed to be rectified. True to his word, a few days later in Kimberley, Henniker “saw Inspector Westermann and made arrangements.”<sup>840</sup>

Henniker often contemplated how much the pain of losing loved ones must have affected those left behind. In one such entry, he noted that not far from Driefontein, south of Modder River, where the Coldstream Guards were encamped at the time, they found a *koppie* (hill) where eight dead men were buried in shallow and roughly constructed graves. Close to one of the graves lay a book of hymns. Henniker believed it had belonged to whoever was buried there. Contemplating the fragility and futility of life, Henniker reflected how sad he felt that the “poor fellow, he lies there on the veldt, unknown, and there can be no news of him for the wife at home.”<sup>841</sup> The death of the nameless soldier and the discovery of his hymn book affected Henniker deeply. He accepted that death was an inevitable part of soldiering but mused that it did not mean that the fate of those killed in action should not be contemplated.<sup>842</sup> Indeed, Henniker took great care and time to write about each and all who were killed. Through these obituaries, he memorialised the dead and paid tribute to their sacrifice.

Some officers did not even make it to shore at Cape Town. During their journey at sea, Shute wrote of the sadness he felt upon hearing of the death of Major Alfred Edward Wrottesley.

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<sup>839</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Unknown Author, Diary, (12323), 28/11/1899.

<sup>840</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 25-28/11/1901.

<sup>841</sup> Ibid., 04/03/1900.

<sup>842</sup> Ibid.

Before embarkation, one of Wrottesley's men shot himself, and this loss affected him greatly.<sup>843</sup> According to Longueville, Wrottesley was "morbidly insane" and committed suicide by jumping overboard. It was thought that Wrottesley disappeared shortly before reaching the port at Tenerife for a scheduled stop to coal.<sup>844</sup> Wrottesley, who commanded the Telegraph Company, reportedly went missing around noon on 27 October 1899:

It appears that Wrottesley had been much overworked in mobilising his Telegraph Company. The surgeon who saw him warned his captain that his brain was affected and the latter in W's presence removed his razor and revolver from his cabin early this morning. No official report of this was made, nor was he watched.<sup>845</sup>

Documenting the deaths of friends in meticulous and intensely descriptive detail served as a way for the soldiers to process their emotions, loss and grief. Such accounts honoured the memory of lost comrades revealing a raw vulnerability. The diary entries of the men show that death and dying on the battlefields of South Africa became an unspoken symbol of the loss of comradeship.<sup>846</sup>

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<sup>843</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 26-27/10/1899.

<sup>844</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 21/10/1899.

<sup>845</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 26-27/10/1899.

<sup>846</sup> Hill, 'Masculinity and War: Diaries and Letters of Soldiers Serving in the South African War (1899-1902)', pp. 170; 180; 206; 270.



### III

## The (Social) Power of Religion

During the fighting, it was religion to which the men turned for their succour when comrades were killed in action. As Henniker reflected on 26 November 1899, “one can only put one’s trust in God.”<sup>847</sup> Religion in the British army resurged in the late 1850s, and successive devout officers continued to fervently endorse the importance of being a dutiful Christian.<sup>848</sup> Going to church with fellow officers represented an emotional and a fulfilling social experience for Henniker. While attending communion service with forty other officers, Henniker confessed in December 1899 that it was “curious how little we know of each other. However, such times as these bring out all that is best.”<sup>849</sup> Henniker’s social identity and sense of self were closely linked to his religious beliefs, as he chose to spend his birthday with friends and together, they attended two church services. In his diary entry of the day, Henniker wrote that he was thankful to still be in excellent health and felt blessed:

I am 45 years of age, but I feel young enough still and very fit. God has been very good to me ... I went to the Cathedral with Crabbe, and again at 10.30 with Crabbe and Ruggles. There was a great crowd of officers, the most I have ever seen in a church and it was a very nice service.<sup>850</sup>

Henniker was actively involved with the church throughout the South African War. While stationed in Bloemfontein in March 1900, Henniker donated money to the Dean, Father Vincent, to thank him for his civility towards the Coldstream Guards during their time there.<sup>851</sup> A few months later, in October, Henniker was invited to lay the foundation stone of the new Vestry of St. James’s Church in Cape Town, where he made a speech and socialised afterwards

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<sup>847</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 26/11/1899.

<sup>848</sup> Spiers, *The Army and Society 1815-1914*, pp. 27-8.

<sup>849</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 25-26/12/1899.

<sup>850</sup> *Ibid.*, 03-19/04/1900.

<sup>851</sup> *Ibid.*

at the church garden party.<sup>852</sup> He was a profoundly religious man who felt a sense of inclusion within a broader social order, adding purpose and value to his life. Henniker's Christian faith framed his worldview, social identity and sense of self. Together with his friends, Henniker often attended church services:

Went ... to a Thanksgiving Service at Pretoria; Skeff, Julian, Self and Titch ... The service was a very touching one. Granville, MacHay, Titch and Self stopped for the Holy Communion Service ... [At Middelburg] we had church in the little English church. Crabbe, Maude and I, the communicants. The Canon was in good form. We had an evening service, also.<sup>853</sup>

As an earnest Christian and devout churchman, Henniker acknowledged the often conflicting and challenging relationship between observing the Christian faith on Sundays and his duty as a soldier at war. On one occasion, he mused, "this is a lovely day, but it makes one sad to think that Sunday is spent like this time after time."<sup>854</sup> Observing the Christian faith functioned as a guide to moral and ethical self-hood, notably during wartime, and provided an emotional support system for soldiers. Moreover, practising religion sustained a positive outlook, and belief in a higher power was one of the ways through which soldiers maintained their faith during difficult times.

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<sup>852</sup> Ibid., 31/10/1901.

<sup>853</sup> Ibid., 10/06/1900; 19/08/1900.

<sup>854</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, *Arthur Henniker Biography*, (2H9) 'From Some Churches', extract from a sermon preached by the Reverend R.H. Sinclair, St. Anselm's Church, 11/02/1912; Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 11/03/1900.

## IV

### Connections, Home and Kinship Ties

Keeping contact with friends and family likewise provided much-needed emotional support to soldiers. Henniker testified to this when he recorded in December 1899 that the soldiers were all writing for the “English mail ... I got also letter from home. Several kind letters from people; one from General Milman.”<sup>855</sup> Letters and parcels from loved ones helped maintain a certain closeness to home, and these items were valued as prized and precious. England did not seem so far away when Lloyd received “a cardigan, Bovril, socks and a woollen jersey”; or when Codrington and Henniker held letters from of their wives in their hands.<sup>856</sup> Diary entries and letters addressed to their wives reveal that they shared close and loving bonds with their spouses. To illustrate, annually on 20 June, Henniker started that particular day’s diary entry with “this is my wedding day. I am thinking of Flo, and the happy time we have had together.”<sup>857</sup> Henniker was jubilant, writing, “joy, oh joy!” after receiving a pair of boots from his wife, Flo, and pleased to be all set and ready to march.<sup>858</sup> Codrington, in turn, was grateful to his wife for the pencils she sent to him.<sup>859</sup>

Significantly, the letters sent by officers’ wives were a means to connect soldiers to families. The wives collected news from home, which they relayed to their husbands, who in turn passed on the news to other ranks fighting under their commands. Codrington made it his priority to forward any news his wife sent to him.<sup>860</sup> The officers’ wives also ensured that wives of men

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<sup>855</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 22/12/1899.

<sup>856</sup> Wellington Barracks, Lloyd, Diary, 19-20/05/1900.

<sup>857</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 20/06/1900.

<sup>858</sup> *Ibid.*, 23/02/1900.

<sup>859</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 25/01/1900.

<sup>860</sup> *Ibid.*

of other ranks were cared for while their husbands were away. Henniker admired the exemplary gestures of goodwill that his wife, Flo, had shown:

I like your arrangement about the presents to the Staff Sergeants' wives. I cannot tell you how perfectly delightful it is to me to read your letters and see how everything is being done that should be done and how well the women are being arranged for in every way.<sup>861</sup>

Furthermore, officers' wives collected and sent parcels of clothing, writing equipment, and foodstuffs for their husbands and others with whom they served. Socks and hats were highly sought after. Codrington noted that it was very thoughtful of his wife to send many parcels of socks and hats that were swiftly distributed among the appreciative men.<sup>862</sup> Christmas parcels laden with treats were especially welcomed, as Lieutenant Sir Walter Barttelot reflected later in the war on 30 December 1901 that "the crackers have gone around ... and the men were all very pleased with them, and they were also very pleased with the parcels of eatables."<sup>863</sup>

Meanwhile, in his letters, Shute particularly enjoyed gossiping about the wives and their assistants to Isabel, his half-sister. In one letter dated 27 March 1900, written at Bloemfontein, Shute asked Isabel how she and "Mrs Joe Maude", wife of Brigade Major Joe Maude, were getting on with the project and could not resist by adding, "I expect she isn't very business-like. You ought to see Mrs Codrington ... she seems to be managing the show."<sup>864</sup> He especially relished talking about the relationship between Mrs. Codrington and Mrs. Henniker. In another letter he wrote to Isabel at Bloemfontein three months later, Shute alleged there was tension between the two women, saying "between ourselves, she [Mrs. Codrington] & Mrs Henniker hate one another like fury, so [they] never ... believe a word, one says of the other."<sup>865</sup> The

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<sup>861</sup> Ibid., 10-15/01/1900.

<sup>862</sup> Ibid., 08-15/01/1900.

<sup>863</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Lieutenant Sir Walter Barttelot, Letters, (12324), 30/12/1901.

<sup>864</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 27/03/1900.

<sup>865</sup> Ibid., 01/05/1900.

close bond shared between the two siblings is strongly indicated in Shute's reply written on 27 March 1900 at Bloemfontein:

Dearest Isabel ... Everything has arrived. Thanks so much for the various things they must have cost you a small fortune. The flea bag as we call the Jaeger blanket is delicious. I would not buy one when we came out as they were so expensive, & the khaki handkerchiefs are simply ripping. I have turned one into a scarf as one's neck gets so sore with the sun & dust ... I've only got thin khaki [breeches] but I dare say the thick drawers you've sent me ... will see me through.<sup>866</sup>

Shute's letters to Isabel show a brother who dearly misses his sibling, likewise, on her part, judging from the many items sent to Shute, indicates she cared for him deeply and was concerned for his wellbeing. Letters and parcels from loved ones helped maintain a certain closeness to home, and these items were regarded as prized and precious. Mail which arrived late or sometimes not at all was another source of great frustration, as Private George J. Gullick testified when he heard the "news that mail had gone down, probably with my parcel in it."<sup>867</sup>

Letters, too, were often mislaid. Henniker recorded that one of Flo's turned up eventually, and it irked him that her letter arrived after the mail had left for England as it contained information about the funeral of his lost comrade Wilty. Henniker was deeply disappointed that he was unable to write back to her about him.<sup>868</sup> Letters from home came in many shapes and forms and contained various things that were of significance. To some officers, it meant keeping up to date with news of the welfare of prized animals such as family-owned horses. In May 1900, Lord Kitchener censored all mail during the Coldstream Guards' march from the Sand River until they reached Pretoria. Censorship was done under the assumption that if the men received any bad news from home, it would likely lessen their ability to maintain focus during critical

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<sup>866</sup> Ibid., 27/03/1900.

<sup>867</sup> Gullick, Diary, 09/04/1900, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 37.

<sup>868</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 26/02/1900.

times in the conflict. When Kitchener placed the embargo, Lloyd was quite annoyed as he was waiting for news of his horses back home.<sup>869</sup>

Overall, the act of writing is considered a solitary process. Nevertheless, while away at war in South Africa, writing home served as a shared activity and was often done in the company of others. Codrington recorded that all the officers and men wrote their letters together whenever mail from England arrived.<sup>870</sup> Writing home was not always an easy feat to accomplish and was undoubtedly challenging in extreme weather conditions. Officers found that to pen thoughts, emotions, and experiences demanded devising clever plans, and the writing process was often performed in unusual places. At Modder River, south of Kimberley in November 1900, Codrington and his comrades used blankets and rifles to make shelters to protect them from the cold and rain, where they all huddled together to write to their loved ones back home.<sup>871</sup> In September 1901, the Coldstream Guards were stationed at Thebus, situated east of Middelburg. Barttelot wrote that the men always looked for places to write. Once they found somewhere that provided some shelter, it became somewhat of an endurance test to continue writing whilst simultaneously battling nature's elements.<sup>872</sup> Barttelot recalled that there were:

Gusts of wind strong enough to knock you over, and carrying with them an impenetrable cloud of dust, strike the camp with terrific violence every other minute. The dust finds its way through the tents as if they did not exist and the noise is terrific. Sleep is generally out of the question. Longueville and I have taken refuge in the ladies waiting room, where we are writing letters, but though fairly free from dust the noise is terrific.<sup>873</sup>

As with letters from home, another way of keeping up to date with current affairs in England was through popular newspapers. Towards the late nineteenth century, colonial warfare

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<sup>869</sup> Wellington Barracks, Lloyd, Diary, 17/05/1900.

<sup>870</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 25/01/1900.

<sup>871</sup> Ibid.

<sup>872</sup> Wellington Barracks, Barttelot, Letters, 08/09/1901.

<sup>873</sup> Ibid.

garnered extensive public interest with ample press coverage and falling newspaper prices that meant many Britons could follow news from the Empire.<sup>874</sup> After 1870 Britain was involved in several small imperial wars that offered plentiful material for editors to romanticise imperial conquests.<sup>875</sup> The Victorians were as such voyeurs of violence who had front-row seats for the colonial stage. Reporting campaigns to the public was the responsibility of war artists and reporters, and newspapers were Victorian society's only news source.<sup>876</sup> Codrington requested that his wife send him some newspapers as he was interested to see how the war news was reported back home. Codrington felt that reading English papers kept him up to date with current affairs and brought a feeling of comfort to him. However sparse the selection of papers he received, Codrington wished to receive more. In a letter to his wife, he wrote:

I see papers, but not many of them, except the weekly edition of *The Times*, *The Mail*, and the illustrated papers. I am anxious to see the written despatches about the various battles, when they are published; I have not seen any yet. And *Punch* I should like to have sent out too, as we do not get it. We get the *Spectator* occasionally. We got English papers today with the accounts of Buller's reverse. How well everyone seems to take the bad news in England; the attitude of the public at home fills us all with admiration!<sup>877</sup>

The officers were upset when they read what they believed to be misinformed or misrepresented accounts of conflict events. War correspondents did not always fact-check details and, at times, would also report incorrect locations of battles. Reading erroneous reporting merely served to fuel soldiers' fears of skewed and biased reporting, in that some regiments' performances were needlessly criticised, whereas others were exaggeratedly commended.<sup>878</sup> Officers and men partly wrote letters to provide their standpoint on alleged

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<sup>874</sup> Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 118.

<sup>875</sup> J. Springhall, 'Up Guards and at Them! British Imperialism and Popular Art, 1880-1914', in J.M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 49.

<sup>876</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>877</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 08-15/01/1900.

<sup>878</sup> Edward M. Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 182.

misrepresented events in newspapers.<sup>879</sup> As Henniker fumed on 28 January 1900, “the Coldstream as usual never got a word in the papers for Magersfontein and they and a couple of companies of Grenadiers saved the whole show.”<sup>880</sup> Codrington also felt that it was a reporter’s duty to ensure all information was correct. He was angered by:

An account in the “Times” of my crossing the river at the Modder River action [that] says ... Feilding and I were “under fire” etc. The river I crossed was the Riet. We were not under fire, either crossing or re-crossing, and the ford was first tried by Granville Smith. I do not yet see any official despatches published ... All else is rumour.<sup>881</sup>

Many correctly believed correspondents’ reports were impeded by censors when war events included unwanted details not meant for publication.<sup>882</sup> Shute recalled one such alleged instance where “an extraordinary young newspaper correspondent met me ... He produced a wonderful account of [Magersfontein] which he submitted to Strelty who is the censor and it was destroyed.”<sup>883</sup> Accessing and reading printed media from England made the fighting men in South Africa feel connected to current affairs and world events. However, above all, letters, parcels and other such items were considered valuable objects from home; they were reminders of the gentle lull of homely life and provided a welcome reprieve from the harsh realities of a colonial war.

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<sup>879</sup> Ibid., p. 183.

<sup>880</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 28/01/1900.

<sup>881</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 29/12/1899.

<sup>882</sup> Spiers, *The Victorian Soldier in Africa*, p. 182.

<sup>883</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 08/01/1900.



## V

### **Adaptations of Home: Garrison and Blockhouse Domesticity**

At Magersfontein in January 1900, Codrington recorded that the officers had nothing more than a makeshift tent as shelter, which they cobbled together using a wagon and a wagon cover.

They soon decided to improve this situation:

We have now built ourselves a house, where we sit at tables! It is open, with a veranda to the East, which is usually the sheltered side, and we have got a door and two windows on the other side, and a window at each end. It is a great comfort and is much better [than what] we have had up to now.<sup>884</sup>

After long spells out in the open at the mercy of the elements of nature, it was the homely comforts that the officers yearned for. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards were encamped on the outskirts of Johannesburg in June 1900, Henniker decided to go into town to explore. Whilst on his visit, he went to a “club and found a lavatory. It is a curious sensation to come right out of a ploughed field into this sort of civilisation.”<sup>885</sup> He further described what a strange feeling it was to experience an urban environment after weeks of nothing but *veldt* and dirt and to “sleep in a bed, and in a house.”<sup>886</sup> Codrington similarly wrote that having the luxury of a brick floor in his tent, with a bed and a bath, was a cosy and homely set-up that made him feel perfect and well with the world.<sup>887</sup> However, he does not elaborate how he managed to pitch his tent.

To reside in one place for more than a mere fleeting moment meant that the officers could if they so desired, re-create some semblance of what they left behind back in England, which

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<sup>884</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 02/01/1900.

<sup>885</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 01/06/1900.

<sup>886</sup> Ibid., 15/03/1900.

<sup>887</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 25/01/1900.

they sorely missed. At the garrison town of Graaff-Reinet in the Cape Midlands, where the Coldstream Guards were stationed from January 1901 until the end of the war in May 1902, Windsor-Clive described the normalcy of everyday life that brought home closer. Having access to fresh fruit and amenities and acquiring fresh eggs, butter and milk were the little domestic things that made their stay somewhat homelier.<sup>888</sup> Some officers were posted to remote parts of the country where they had to guard the ever-expanding network lines of blockhouses. In July 1901, Longueville and Barttelot were ordered to guard a twelve-mile stretch of railway line in the Karoo. Six blockhouses were under their command and situated approximately a mile apart, with ten men assigned per blockhouse.<sup>889</sup> Barttelot commented that he was becoming “as brown as a berry” during his inspections of the blockhouses. He commandeered a Cape Cart and ponies in his shirtsleeves and went around each blockhouse, which he enjoyed very much.<sup>890</sup> One of the first things Longueville and Barttelot did was to construct a “shower bath”, which they managed to do by blocking up one end of a wooden trough that carried water across a *donga* (ditch) about a quarter of a mile away, and they regularly went there every morning before breakfast.<sup>891</sup>

Barttelot’s diary further exemplifies the many ways in which he and Longueville domesticated their living conditions, and tried to make their everyday lifestyle resemble home life as much as possible. Some domestic tasks included planting and maintaining the gardens they had landscaped at each blockhouse. Barttelot proudly wrote that under their nurturing care, the plants were flourishing.<sup>892</sup> Much pleased, Barttelot added that he and Longueville also constructed a small mess house for themselves, and thought planting another garden would add

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<sup>888</sup> Wellington Barracks, Windsor-Clive, Diary, 02/01/1901.

<sup>889</sup> Wellington Barracks, Barttelot, Letters, 08/07/1901.

<sup>890</sup> Ibid., 03/11/1901.

<sup>891</sup> Ibid., 22/12/1901.

<sup>892</sup> Ibid., 30/11/1901.

to this domestic haven.<sup>893</sup> Everyday living arrangements were where the officers attempted to re-create domesticity and personalise their own home away from home. Flora and fauna were favourite topics to write about in letters and diaries. Barttelot noted that not long after, a small finch made a nest in the veranda the men had built, and he noticed some fledglings as well. Spurred on by his feathered tenants, he started to keep chickens and set three broody hens to work laying eggs.<sup>894</sup> Not long after the arrival of the first nesting finch, two more arrived and built an additional nest. Barttelot was also keen to discover as many different types of exotic local wildlife and went to find as many weird and wonderful creatures as he could. He frequently went out into the *veldt* as much as possible. Barttelot decided to expand the existing menagerie that he attentively cared for and to which he grew pretty attached:

[Found] a vulture, an owl, 3 meerkats, a tortoise and 3 hens. I had a young ostrich, but it died, and I was very sad about it ... I [further] added ... an iguana, a horrible snake like animal that lives in the crannies of rocks, but sad to say my poor little vulture had its wing eaten off by a rat last night and had to be killed ... I [also] have 2 rock rabbits [known also as *dassies*, an Afrikaans slang term, or hyrax in English] as pets.<sup>895</sup>

Animals were important to Barttelot, and his diary provides a substantial amount of evidence to this effect. In one of his many accounts regarding animals, Barttelot said how thankful he was and lucky he felt to have found a pointer he named “Bang, whom I brought up from PE [Port Elizabeth] on 10 days trial and I am going to buy.”<sup>896</sup> Victorian society was very sentimental regarding keeping pet animals, especially in Barttelot’s case. In South Africa, riders primarily formed close bonds with their equine friends, especially in the pursuit of leisure activities.<sup>897</sup> Longueville recalled going on a carefree horse ride; other times, his friend, Lieutenant John Vaughan Campbell, would join him. According to Longueville, the two

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<sup>893</sup> Ibid., 06-13/10/1901.

<sup>894</sup> Ibid., 17/10/1901; 03/11/1901.

<sup>895</sup> Ibid., 08-15/09/1901; 11/05/1902.

<sup>896</sup> Ibid., 08/07/1901.

<sup>897</sup> Sandra Swart, *Riding High. Horses, Humans and History in South Africa* (Johannesburg, Wits University Press, 2010), p. 122.

officers would ride all over the country and have a tremendous amount of fun.<sup>898</sup> In February 1901, Longueville was out in the *veldt* riding when he noticed some horses grazing. He recounted that he “rounded them up and brought them in ... it was quite an exciting ride as they went a great deal nearer the Boer lines than I liked; but I was not shot at. One was a very fine chestnut; but quite unmanageable.”<sup>899</sup> When officers were not on active duty, any precious free moments were spent socialising and partaking in leisure activities.

## VI

### Leisure Activities and Social Life

The private letters and diaries of the battalion officers and men offer many examples of how soldiers spent their leisure time away from battling the Boers. Longueville mentioned that when they were stationed for lengthy periods in one place, things had a “strange way of accumulating.”<sup>900</sup> He had a champion scorpion that he was very fond of, and he was saddened to let it go when the officers moved on to the next destination. Said scorpion was allegedly the “hero of a hundred fights.”<sup>901</sup> In the same way, Captain Edward George Spencer-Churchill collected creatures which he entered into competitions and experimented with pitting different species against one another. At Rosmead to the east of Middelburg, Spencer-Churchill satisfactorily noted in March 1901 that the scorpion and tarantula were a good match, though he begrudgingly admitted the decision to fight a scorpion and a two-spotted stink bug was less of a success than he had hoped for.<sup>902</sup> Other leisure activities included hunting and shooting. It is well-known that Victorians were quite fond of hunting, and the officers in South Africa

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<sup>898</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 23/02/1900.

<sup>899</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-4/02/1900.

<sup>900</sup> *Ibid.*, 27/02/1900.

<sup>901</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>902</sup> National Army Museum, Diary of Captain Edward George Spencer-Churchill, 1900-1902, Grenadier Guards, Catalogue No: 2016-10-23-51, 19-20/03/1901. The two-spotted stink bug, or *Bathycoelia distincta* (Pentatomidae), can be found in macadamia orchards around South Africa.

certainly had rich pickings to shoot exotic prey indigenous to the African wilderness. Arriving at Naauwpoort, north of Middleburg, on 25 December 1900, Longueville went on many hunting excursions while there:

Our headquarters remained [here] until the 28<sup>th</sup> of July 1902 ... When we first arrived I thought it was the most beastly place I had ever seen; but I must say that in spite of the dust ... I had an excellent time there. Plenty of ... shooting and a very good bobbery pack, made life quite worth living!<sup>903</sup>

In the appendix of his diary, Longueville goes into considerable detail about the various antelope he had hunted and provides more details of the bobbery pack, which consisted of “two couple and a half hounds and eight large lurchers [with which] we hunted steenbok. The lurchers would course the buck when possible and when they lost sight of him, the hounds would hunt until we got another view.”<sup>904</sup> Likewise, Barttelot and his hunting partner, Lieutenant Robert Francis Peel, also took advantage of the abundant South African game. Before setting off on a hunt at Klipfontein, south of Cradock, on 4 May 1902, Barttelot noted the previous week’s shoot in his diary. He reflected that it was particularly fruitful and was pleased that the two men had bagged themselves “9 brace sand grouse, 3 brace teal, 1 koran [sic], 2 coots. Today we hope to fall in with some [steenbok] or [rooibok].”<sup>905</sup> The hunters were not disappointed as Barttelot killed two rooibok and a wild goose on that day’s hunt.<sup>906</sup>

Baboons were also in the hunters’ crosshairs. Although these dangerous animals were more elusive to get as hunting trophies, this did not prevent the officers’ attempts. At Modder River in February 1900, Lloyd daringly “went up the mountain at the back of the house with a revolver to shoot a baboon but could see none. Had a desperate climb.”<sup>907</sup> Lloyd’s baboon

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<sup>903</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 25/12/1900.

<sup>904</sup> Ibid., Appendices, p. 49.

<sup>905</sup> Wellington Barracks, Barttelot, Letters, 04/05/1902.

<sup>906</sup> Ibid.

<sup>907</sup> Wellington Barracks, Lloyd, Diary, 14/02/1900.

hunting expedition exemplified, as one author describes, how the “scenery, the fresh air, the bright sunshine, and the knowledge that one may at any moment come upon anything ... lend to these excursions a most exhilarating interest.”<sup>908</sup> Similar to frontiers, colonial environments were also localities where masculine ideals were tested, challenged and re-shaped. Frontiers and colonies were tough places where settlements arose and eventually became communities and societies, environments where inhabitants had to persevere and be self-reliant and stoic.<sup>909</sup>

When stationed at the garrison town of De Aar, northwest of Middleburg, in 1900, Codrington’s lengthy and detailed descriptions of social life resembled that of polite English society back home. He wrote that officers were sometimes invited to play croquet and tennis, where all the elite of the towns were in attendance, old and young. Tea and coffee, biscuits, cake, and fruit were served as refreshments. Codrington described that when he attended a high-tea soiree, he felt a definite affinity with some older women and thought they were exceptionally gracious to him.<sup>910</sup> On one such occasion, Codrington made the acquaintance of a German woman:

Who professed to be delighted at my talking German to her as she had not heard her native tongue since she left the *Vaterland* some months ago ... the next thing will be at [the] cricket match, garrison versus town, with tea. [The inhabitants] say they are delighted at our being here as it enlivens the place, one lady had been here for twelve years, she told me.<sup>911</sup>

The Cape Colony elites also adhered to Martial Law like all inhabitants but did not think kindly of this compliance. They tried to use their social status as loyal colonists to gain certain privileges. At these events, the owners of horses whose animals the British army requisitioned

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<sup>908</sup> Unknown Author, *The Castle Line Atlas of South Africa* (London, Donald Currie & Co., 1895), p. 22.

<sup>909</sup> Robert Paul Hogg, ‘Men and Manliness on the Frontier: Queensland and British Columbia in the Mid-Nineteenth Century’ (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Queensland, 2007), pp. 3-33.

<sup>910</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 21/03/1901.

<sup>911</sup> *Ibid.*

as remounts approached Codrington and tried to wield their influence in order to persuade him to allow them to maintain ownership of their prized equine possessions:

I have received piteous appeals about pet horses being commandeered, and one lady who brought her sister to interpret for her wept copiously at me for about a quarter of an hour, yesterday. I let her talk on and run herself out, and then said what a horrid thing war was, and what misery it caused, and how, if I consulted my personal feelings, I would certainly let her have her horses, but that as long as I was fighting in the war, I was a machine carrying out my orders etc. Eventually, they went away, thanking me for my kindness and without the horses!<sup>912</sup>

Shute, on the other hand, enjoyed shopping and meeting notables for lunch and dinner dates, and on occasion, he would go “by train to Rondebosch to lunch with Lady Bentinck and Lady E. Cecil, who are keeping open house at Rhodes’ place in Groote Schuur ... [They have] a most lovely house and garden.”<sup>913</sup> Some officers preferred to meet small groups of friends in subdued and intimate settings; others attended social gatherings and were welcomed into the fold of colonial high society. Company officers who did not find themselves quite at the apex of the social order had to make their own entertainment and amusements. Barttelot described that many officers held theatre performances and singsong evenings. He fondly remembered a singing competition which was “really great sport, some of the comic songs were excellently sung. General Jones gave away the prizes [also] two men gave a theatrical performance.”<sup>914</sup>

Other social activities at garrison towns included hosting dances. On one such occasion, the officers of Nesbitt’s Horse were keen on organising a dance and negotiated to get around the payment issue by making a deal with the Coldstream Guards officers. It was agreed that the dance would be funded from the personal accounts of both the Coldstream and Nesbitt’s Horse officer echelon. Codrington jokingly noted that he wondered if other musical instruments

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<sup>912</sup> Ibid.

<sup>913</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 22/12/1899; 01-05/01/1900.

<sup>914</sup> Wellington Barracks, Barttelot, Letters, 02/06/1901; 17/01/1902.

besides an old piano were available. However, the event turned out to be quite a success.<sup>915</sup>

Codrington recorded afterwards:

I danced a certain amount. Several worthies in curious evening clothes, all of us officers in uniform, and most of us with heavy lace boots and gaiters. The ladies, with one or two exceptions, rather like a tenant's ball, and very full of energy. The room was the Court House, quite a good-sized room, and its only decoration was a broad strip of red, white and blue stuff put up on the end wall. All the Nesbitt's Horse were very much to the fore and we made Garratt dance a bit. Grant did his duty like a man. Most of the inhabitants and men of Nesbitt's Horse were looking in through the windows. A nice cool fine night, but one got rather hot dancing.<sup>916</sup>

We understand how the officers negotiated their social status and standing in wartime South African colonial society through this array of social interactions. What these men chose to do in their free moments, how they did so and with whom they socialised tells us more about how they viewed themselves as social actors. A soldier's life away from the battlefield happened with a host of different individuals and in varying contexts.

## VII

### Sport

Sport formed a considerable part of army life and culture. Sporting contests were thought to create a sense of cohesion, and in general, sport was seen as a social ritual of unity.<sup>917</sup> Sport contributed to a fit and healthy physique, and it was thought that the value of what it meant to be part of a team created diligence and a courageous character.<sup>918</sup> Many sports events were held at the garrison town of Graaff-Reinet in the Cape Colony between January 1901 and May

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<sup>915</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 21-22/03/1901.

<sup>916</sup> Ibid.

<sup>917</sup> James A. Mangan, 'Duty onto Death: English Masculinity and Militarism in the Age of the New Imperialism', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 27, Nos. 1-2 (2010), p. 124.

<sup>918</sup> Hill, 'Masculinity and War: Diaries and Letters of Soldiers Serving in the South African War (1899-1902)', p. 103.



1902. Sports field days included athletic races and offered opportunities for friendly manly competition that served as a collective social event for all to enjoy. The Graaff-Reinet College Athletic Meeting was held on 6 November 1900. As Lieutenant the Honourable Caryl Digby Baring recalled:

Much interest was taken in the match between Sergeant Norborne, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, and Trooper Finch, Imperial Yeomanry, to run 100 yards, 220 yards, and 440 yards. Sergeant Norborne well beat his opponent in every race. The Open Mile Flat Race was won by Private R. Enright.<sup>919</sup>

In particular, said Baring, the menagerie race attracted the biggest crowds and caused much amusement.<sup>920</sup> Some contestants included a guinea pig, a puppy, a tortoise, a worm, a *dassie*, a chicken and a *hottentotsgod* (praying mantis). When the starting pistol fired, a 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards officer “came dashing down the track with his ape in pursuit and was an easy winner.”<sup>921</sup> Public tennis courts were also available at Graaff-Reinet, and officers frequently used these facilities.<sup>922</sup> During the nineteenth century, sport, as Geoffrey Levett writes, “appealed not just to the middle and upper classes.”<sup>923</sup> The working classes also enjoyed playing sport. Privates George J. Gullick and Arthur Dye both mention cricket and football in their diaries. Gullick preferred to attend football games as a spectator, but he occasionally acted as a referee.<sup>924</sup> Dye, on the other hand, enjoyed playing football. On one such occasion, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards companies played against each other at De Aar on 6 May 1901. Dye of No. 7 Company recalled that during one match between Nos. 7 and 8 Companies, the “ball burst just before half time” resulted in a 2-1 win in favour of No. 8 Company, much to the disappointment of No. 7 Company.<sup>925</sup>

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<sup>919</sup> National Library of South Africa, Cape Town, C.D. Baring Collection (MSB 62), 1901-2.

<sup>920</sup> Ibid.

<sup>921</sup> Ibid.

<sup>922</sup> Wellington Barracks, Windsor-Clive, Diary, 02/01/1901.

<sup>923</sup> Geoffrey James Levett, ‘Playing the Man: Sport and Imperialism 1900-1907’ (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, 2014), p. 15.

<sup>924</sup> Gullick, Diary, 20/01/1901, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 93.

<sup>925</sup> Wellington Barracks, Dye, Diary, 06/05/1901.

Gullick was also an avid cricket supporter. On 31 January 1901, he attended a cricket match between Graaff-Reinet farmers and the Coldstream Guards, the latter winning “by 30 runs.”<sup>926</sup> Likewise, Henniker, too, was very fond of cricket. He always expressed himself through the metaphor of a fieldsman who missed a catch off his bowling. For example, Henniker’s signature response in life was that no matter what had happened, he felt it a pity for the sake of “the side”, a phrase Henniker was said to use often, as he believed himself to be a perpetual member of “the side.”<sup>927</sup> His conception of duty and conduct for himself and others were summed up in a phrase which was often on his lips, “Is it cricket?” and if anyone or anything failed to come up to that expressive standard, he would have none of it.<sup>928</sup>

Indeed, as Captain Cecil Edward Pereira wrote, he believed that even though the British officer’s passion for sport was often adversely commented upon by the general population, under Henniker’s leadership and his enthusiasm for sport kept the soldiers fit and made them much better horse riders after they left South Africa than when they first arrived.<sup>929</sup> Henniker, moreover, ensured that any leisure time the men could afford when garrisoned would be spent usefully. Pereira recalled that Henniker saw to it that “the men’s amusements were ... well cared for: cricket and football were encouraged.”<sup>930</sup> Henniker’s all-encompassing sense of sporting comradeship formed the basis of his leadership practice that contributed to his

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<sup>926</sup> Gullick, Diary, 20/01/1901, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 94.

<sup>927</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Biography, *Arthur Henniker. A Little Book for his Friends*, compiled by Florence Henniker, (2H9), ‘In Memoriam’, Unknown author, n.d.

<sup>928</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Biography, *Arthur Henniker. A Little Book for his Friends*, compiled by Florence Henniker, (2H9), ‘Reminiscences’, Lieutenant-Colonel Raymond Marker DSO, n.d.

<sup>929</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Biography, *Arthur Henniker. A Little Book for his Friends*, compiled by Florence Henniker, (2H9), ‘Reminiscences’, Major Cecil Pereira DSO, n.d.

<sup>930</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Biography, *Arthur Henniker. A Little Book for his Friends*, compiled by Florence Henniker, (2H9), ‘Reminiscences’, Major Cecil Pereira DSO, n.d.

sociability and personability as a leader. He was renowned for his endless energy and fond enthusiasm for sport which was met with “great approval from all ranks.”<sup>931</sup> Gullick agreed, writing on 10 May 1901 that he thought “Henniker [is] doing good works.”<sup>932</sup> Consequently, battalion officers who were agreeable, pleasant to their men and knowledgeable were generally held in high regard, and these officers inspired devotion in their subordinates.<sup>933</sup>

## VIII

### Officer-Man Relationships

Before the First World War, it became customary for British army officers to be father-like in their command of their men. As commanding officer, Henniker embodied the role of the quintessential father figure to his men. Concerned for their welfare following severe British losses during ‘Black Week’ between 10 and 15 December 1899, Henniker believed that an outward show of gratitude was essential to motivate and sustain morale in the face of adversity:

I gave the men a quarter pound of tobacco all round, and got them more beer ... It is very difficult to hear [of] our sick and wounded ... Got the men plum-pudding ... sad for me to respond seeing our losses ... I [made a speech] did not say much only that I hoped to God I might be able to do my duty and command the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion as I should wish to do.<sup>934</sup>

Gullick appreciated Henniker’s gesture on Christmas day, noting that after “bathing in [the] morning, dinner consisted of stewed meat and plum duff, 1 ½ oz. of tobacco [was given to] each man as well as a pint of beer.”<sup>935</sup> Indeed, it was the little things that encouraged a positive dynamic between a leader and his men. Private Harry Brooker testified to the kindness shown

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<sup>931</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, *Arthur Henniker Biography*, (2H9), ‘Some contemporary notices’, *Truth*, n.d.

<sup>932</sup> Gullick, Diary, 20/01/1901, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 108.

<sup>933</sup> French, *Military Identities. The Regimental System, the British Army, & the British People c. 1870-2000*, p. 286.

<sup>934</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 25/12/1899.

<sup>935</sup> Gullick, Diary, 20/01/1901, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 89.

to him at Bloemfontein in March 1900 by Major James Adare Drummond-Hay, after he told the Coldstream officer that “I hadn’t a shirt to my back so he gave me one of his, also pair [of] socks ... am alright now for a bit.”<sup>936</sup> Such a gesture both created and reinforced the concept of a close-knit soldier family, the officer tending to the physical needs of the private showing the type of intimacy one could expect to see between a father and his child.<sup>937</sup>

Since tobacco and cigarettes were in short supply, the men cherished receiving these items. As Private Dye wrote on 19 February 1901 at De Aar, “Colonel Codrington arrived here last night ... He gave each man one pound of tobacco.”<sup>938</sup> Shute also ensured that his men were well looked after. Writing in a letter to Isabel on 15 April 1900, when the Coldstream Guards were at Kaffir River, he said:

I got a whole heap of Tobacco & Cigarettes by the last parcel post. Thanks most awfully for them. I served them out to everyone & they were most gratefully received. Cigarettes are a great luxury here, & if you send me one box every 3 weeks or so it is better than sending a lot together as they are so bulky one cannot carry them.<sup>939</sup>

Equally as necessary to ensure the material needs of the other ranks were taken care of was for an officer ensure the wellbeing and morale of his men. By offering his help and support personally, the men felt that the officer valued them and recognised their worth. Henniker was in his true element when he was with the men. In March 1900, he proudly wrote, “I have got about 850 men now, and I hope we may keep them well ... I hope they are all happy.”<sup>940</sup> Henniker’s predecessor, Lieutenant-Colonel Horace Robert Stopford, similarly, according to

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<sup>936</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Private Harry Brooker, Diary, (12317), 29/03/1900.

<sup>937</sup> Hill, ‘Masculinity and War: Diaries and Letters of Soldiers Serving in the South African War (1899-1902)’, p. 170.

<sup>938</sup> Wellington Barracks, Dye, Diary, 19/02/1901.

<sup>939</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 15/04/1900.

<sup>940</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 22/04/1900; 30/04/1900.

Lord Methuen, was “devoted to [do] everything that helped to make his men happy.”<sup>941</sup> Above all, the bestowal of praise was priceless to that of good man-management. Gullick was delighted when the men were at Pretoria in October 1900 that Henniker “congratulated us ... and praised us for work we had done.”<sup>942</sup>

Dye also proudly proclaimed on 24 November 1899, following the battle of Belmont, “Lord Methuen said we fought splendidly.”<sup>943</sup> However, Codrington thought that Methuen disregarded the importance of keeping contact with the men when visiting outposts. Codrington believed that Methuen did not carry out inspections regularly, and when he did turn up on occasion, he did not always spend time with his subordinates when checking in on them. Codrington further observed that Methuen “hurries off the moment the business is finished” and no words of encouragement were offered to the fighting men.<sup>944</sup> On the other hand, Shute recorded on 23 November 1899 that he “heard P. Methuen’s voice in [Orange River] Camp. He came to see if the men were cold.”<sup>945</sup> Because Methuen and some other senior commanders like him were unable to sustain morale among the men, the responsibility was left to the regimental officers.

At times, campaign hardship became too much for some of the other ranks to bear, who refused to suffer without voicing their grievances. For this reason, the men put their complaints to pen and paper as a way to document and process both the experience in question and any resulting emotions. To illustrate, at Kaffir River in April 1900, Gullick was upset that the men were only given “cold coffee like dirty water” while the “officers [had a] ‘do’ all night” and, said he

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<sup>941</sup> Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre Archives, Methuen, Private and personal correspondence and diaries, Accession No: 1742/18, 28/11/1899.

<sup>942</sup> Gullick, Diary, 20/01/1901, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 78.

<sup>943</sup> Wellington Barracks, Dye, Diary, 29/03/1900.

<sup>944</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 25/01/1900.

<sup>945</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 23/11/1899.

disgusted, the “troops have nothing but biscuits – a few things came here in the way of eatables, men rushing like madmen for it.”<sup>946</sup> Using Gullick’s diary entry, an essential point must be made. That is, the food provisions available respectively for Tommy and his officer demonstrate a clear division in rank and acutely illustrate the difference in the war experiences between officers and their men. Private Brooker also documented his experience as an officer’s servant in his diary. In three separate entries, Brooker spoke of hunger, officer treatment of servants and, among other things, questioned the futility of army life. When at Komatipoort, northeast of Kaapmuiden, in the Transvaal in September 1900, Brooker noted in the first of the entries that while he waited for orders in the officers’ mess, he thankfully managed to get something to eat.<sup>947</sup> Sounding exhausted and frustrated, Brooker lamented that only four servants in the camp were assigned to cover all duties.<sup>948</sup> In the second entry, two months later, he bemoaned:

Officers’ servants are very uncomfortable here ... very much put upon & told we are lazy & I am sure we do more than the duty soldiers ... it is all the doing of one Officer H.S. ... average days’ work here up [at] 3 am make cocoa for 4 officers ... get coffee for our own Gentlemen at 7 am every two out of three days, make[?] breakfast & lay table ... 8 am ... lunch 1 pm... fetch milk ... 4 pm tea ... dinner 7 pm... between look [sic] after our own & masters kit parade at least once a day, wash, mend, clean etc. and every day we are on mess we miss two of our own meals.<sup>949</sup>

Brooker felt it was too much that servants were expected to perform their duties flawlessly at all times, only then to be given food rations that consisted of bread.<sup>950</sup> In the final entry, Brooker stated that he was “sick of this life & soldiering generally, roll on ... I’ll be glad to say goodbye to the army.”<sup>951</sup> Officer actions were much more observed and examined, and meaning was attached to behaviour by their men while sharing intimate spaces when away at

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<sup>946</sup> Gullick, Diary, 20/01/1901, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 38.

<sup>947</sup> Wellington Barracks, Brooker, Diary, 22/09/1900.

<sup>948</sup> Ibid.

<sup>949</sup> Ibid., 27/11/1900.

<sup>950</sup> Ibid.

<sup>951</sup> Ibid., 25/11/1900.

war that may not have otherwise been given much thought back at barracks.<sup>952</sup> A further parallel can be drawn between the difference in treatment that officers received to that of other ranks by looking at the issue of looting during the South African conflict. Officers and men alike were keen to obtain some spoils of war. Longueville chronicled the various items he looted while in South Africa. To start with, in November 1899 at Graspan, Longueville took a Boer prayer book while his comrade, Captain Nevile Rodwell Wilkinson, grabbed himself a belt.<sup>953</sup> His looting capabilities increased in May 1900, while at Smaldeel, he wrote, “we were given seven mounted orderlies from the Prince Alfred’s Guards volunteer MI ... a corporal and 6 men, two of them were under seventeen; but they were full of pluck and excellent fellows, and of course good thieves.”<sup>954</sup>

A month later, at Pretoria station house, Longueville took it upon himself to climb “through the window of the refreshment room ... and [I] took the opportunity to pocket a box of cigars which was lying about.”<sup>955</sup> Lloyd also wrote that when the Coldstream Guards marched into Bloemfontein in March 1900, he took the opportunity to pocket a variety of items at the fort, which included “two swords, a small revolver, helmet, etc., belonging to the O.V.S. Artillery.”<sup>956</sup> Significantly, it would seem none of the officers was given any reprimands or received any sort of punishment for their actions, whereas this was not the case for other ranks. Gullick noted in May 1900, when at Kroonstad, situated south of Bloemfontein, “men still getting severe punishment for rifling things.”<sup>957</sup> A few months later, in August, at Belfast, northwest of Johannesburg, Gullick was given “5 days C.B. [confined to barracks] for going

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<sup>952</sup> Hill, ‘Masculinity and War: Diaries and Letters of Soldiers Serving in the South African War (1899-1902)’, p. 186.

<sup>953</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 26/11/1899.

<sup>954</sup> Ibid., 06/05/1900.

<sup>955</sup> Ibid., 05/06/1900.

<sup>956</sup> Wellington Barracks, Lloyd, Diary, 14/03/1900.

<sup>957</sup> Gullick, Diary, 20/01/1901, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 46.

into a kaffir's hut to see what I could find."<sup>958</sup> Notwithstanding these apparent discrepancies in awarding punishment for looting, alcohol was a further cause of disorderly conduct.<sup>959</sup> Almost all of the officers and men discussed in this study mention instances of drunkenness. For instance, Gullick recorded on 21 February 1901 at De Aar:

Mounted Infantry had severe fight at Hanover Road ... Quite a scare occurred in [the] evening, one of [the] outpost[s] fired a shot, consequently the whole garrison to stand to arms and rush off to strengthen [the] outpost ... I firmly believe it was a ruse by Col. Codrington to see how smartly we could turn out. Half the troops drunk, returned to camp about 10 pm.<sup>960</sup>

Henniker worried about the level of drinking within the ranks, saying that "there is too much to drink among the men."<sup>961</sup> Consequently, in May 1901 at Graaff-Reinet, the rampant drinking forced Shute to order the "Graaff-Reinet Hotel Bar to be permanently closed; Mansfield convicted for the second time of selling drinks to soldiers."<sup>962</sup> As a result of the level of drunkenness, Gullick recalled that when garrisoned in Graaff-Reinet, by August, there had been "several Courts Martial here, several of our Coy. Getting discharged [and] 6 months for getting drunk."<sup>963</sup> Apart from dealing with disobedience caused by alcohol consumption, the Coldstream Guards middle commanders also dealt with defiance from men not following orders. At Kromhoogte, north of Cradock, in January 1902, Captain Eric Thomas Henry Hanbury-Tracy recalled he had to "take Summary of Evidence at No. 98 N. Blockhouse, against men refusing to clean kits."<sup>964</sup>

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<sup>958</sup> Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>959</sup> Clayton, *The British Officer. Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present*, p. 142.

<sup>960</sup> Gullick, Diary, 20/01/1901, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 99.

<sup>961</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 15/03/1901.

<sup>962</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 01/05/1901.

<sup>963</sup> Gullick, Diary, 20/01/1901, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 119.

<sup>964</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Captain Eric Thomas Hanbury-Tracy, Diary, (12326), 03/01/1902.



Commanders also felt it necessary to act when they believed junior officers were setting a bad example to the men, as did Henniker when he discovered they were gambling.<sup>965</sup> Loutish behaviour and troublesome attitudes among the ranks were issues Henniker dealt with, and he said that he found “it a difficult job to keep them in their place.”<sup>966</sup> A dedicated battalion commander, Henniker expected no less than absolute precision from his men. He believed that carefully nurtured relationships formed the basis for good working relations that, in turn, motivated soldiers to perform their duties to the best of their abilities. Even though deference from the men was not always guaranteed, it was, on the whole, maintained through officer paternalism.<sup>967</sup> Officer concern for the welfare of the men, alongside the challenging experiences of campaign life, brought officers and men closer together, far more so than it would back home in England.<sup>968</sup>

Relationships occasionally soured, and tensions rose despite a general shared consideration between officers and men during the South African War.<sup>969</sup> On the one hand, the strict delineation of rank became more fluid when both officers and other ranks faced similar hardships. On the other hand, entitlement and status within the army ranking order could mean that Tommy and his officer had different experiences during the conflict.<sup>970</sup> The rhythm of daily life away from the frontline gave the men time to reflect on officers’ leadership practices and to question and critically assess their treatment, place and position within the existing

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<sup>965</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 16/10/1900.

<sup>966</sup> *Ibid.*, 22/08/1901.

<sup>967</sup> French, *Military Identities. The Regimental System, the British Army, & the British People c. 1870-2000*, p. 182.

<sup>968</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>969</sup> Hill, ‘Masculinity and War: Diaries and Letters of Soldiers Serving in the South African War (1899-1902)’, p. 207.

<sup>970</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

military hierarchy.<sup>971</sup> For this reason, the quality of an officer's leadership and the homosocial relationships soldiers had formed were essential in maintaining morale on the battlefield.<sup>972</sup>

## Conclusion

Chapter Four demonstrated the significance of personal relationships by focusing on the social dimension of Coldstream Guards mid-level leadership and the homosocial society of regimental life, at a time when the British army was confronted with a very different kind of war. Quickly adapting to changes in the conflict meant friendships, comrades and compassion were as essential to survival as was being able to count on each other in the heat of combat. Moreover, officership entailed a dedication to care and concern for the men's wellbeing. Officer-man relationships were paternalistic by nature, and this chapter discussed how officer conduct towards their men was influenced by factors such as Christian duty and a sense of moral obligation. Despite hierarchies in rank, these officer-man relationships mimicked familial hierarchies characterised by loyalty and tenderness. By discussing the broader social environment away from the battlefield, the chapter addressed the subjective experiences of the Guardsmen to the war, revealing their emotional responses to loss and the impact of grief when comrades were killed in action.

This chapter also emphasised how suffering the harsh conditions of the South African climate affected officers and men and that their responses to these trying conditions manifested in simple acts of kindness, such as sharing food or procuring items of clothing for distribution to those who needed it most. Additionally, it was demonstrated how officers and the other ranks related to each other as human beings and as men were very much shaped by their shared war

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<sup>971</sup> Ibid., pp. 187-90.

<sup>972</sup> French, *Military Identities. The Regimental System, the British Army, & the British People c. 1870-2000*, p. 339.

experiences: fear, loss, anxiety, laughter, and boredom. This chapter argued that effective middle command leadership in South Africa was not just about strategic decision-making and the battlefield but also about the friendships, the bonds, and the social side of life away from the fighting. General Garnet Wolseley's statement, "if you want to win battles, make yourself loved by those who serve under you", rang particularly true.<sup>973</sup> Indeed, Chapter Four ultimately demonstrated how critical social relationships were to establishing effective mid-level leadership practices in the South African War.

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<sup>973</sup> Wolseley, *The Soldier's Pocket-Book For Field Service*, p. 3.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# The Impact of Conquest: The South African War and the Professionalisation of the British Army (1899-1914)

### Introduction

“Really, the more one hears, the more incredible some of the Generals’ blunders are,” wrote Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, while reflecting on the performance of the British army’s senior command in the South African War.<sup>974</sup> Indeed, the conduct of campaign operations cast doubt on the quality of upper-echelon generalship and overall army professional practice.<sup>975</sup> Because of this, Chapter Five argues, as it has been done throughout this study, that failings in the South African War cannot be attributed to deficiencies in Coldstream Guards mid-level officers’ professional practices. Instead, it contends that mistakes made were due to poor senior command performance compounded by the fact that the conflict in South Africa was a long, bloody, and costly affair that challenged the War Office’s capabilities, its organisation, and the army’s administration.<sup>976</sup>

As a result, this chapter will consider the impact of the South African War on the development of British military professionalism. Owing to little or no preparations before the outbreak of the war, the chapter will demonstrate that from the outset; transport arrangements were

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<sup>974</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, Diary, (F1C29), 01/01/1900.

<sup>975</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2018), p. 222.

<sup>976</sup> Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 328.

problematic, supplies and rations were insufficient, soldiers lacked proper equipment, and ineffective staff work all culminated in chaos and disaster. When the British forces set foot on South African soil in October 1899, they were confident that the Boer Republics would be easily defeated. Instead, as Lowell J. Satre remarks, “the colossal British Empire was placed on the defensive by two meagrely-populated Boer Republics.”<sup>977</sup> A quick, decisive victory was not to be, and hostilities only ended in May 1902. Because of this, several official inquiries followed to establish why the military found it so challenging to defeat the Boers, although these issues were already being investigated while the war was still ongoing.<sup>978</sup>

In 1901, the Broderick Commission’s reforms captured the interest of the Coldstream Guards officers.<sup>979</sup> Following the news about the inquiry in the paper, Captain Thomas Henry Eyre Lloyd had a few suggestions to make of his own, commenting, “who runs these Army Reforms. I see in the newspapers that we are not going to have any Pom-Poms. If this is true, none of the Committee can have ever been under Pom-Pom fire.”<sup>980</sup> Lloyd also believed that “a Committee of Commanders of Columns ought to decide what are best weapons for us to have. I should like to see a prism-sight made for our rifles by which a man could fire over the top of a rock without [showing] himself. I am sure this would improve the shooting.”<sup>981</sup> Lloyd’s views on army reform demonstrate that middle command officers took an interest in the lessons of the war to develop British army professionalism further.

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<sup>977</sup> Lowell J. Satre, ‘St. John Broderick and Army Reform, 1901-1903’, *Journal of British Studies*. 15, No. 2 (1976), p. 117.

<sup>978</sup> David French, *Military Identities. The Regimental System, the British Army, & the British People c. 1870-2000* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 146-7.

<sup>979</sup> For further reference, see Satre, ‘St. John Broderick and Army Reform, 1901-1903’, pp. 117-39.

<sup>980</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Captain Thomas Henry Eyre Lloyd, Diary, (F1C42-3, F1D1-2), 17/09/1901.

<sup>981</sup> *Ibid.*

Consequently, between 1902 and 1903, the Royal Commission investigated the British army and War Office administrative and organisational deficiencies revealed during the conflict.<sup>982</sup> Even though the Commissioners focused their questioning on these particular areas, some generals took the opportunity to deflect blame from themselves in order to settle personal scores or to accuse others of inefficient professional conduct. In particular, it was the middle-ranking majors and colonels who fought in South Africa whom the generals blamed. A further series of reforms followed between 1903 and 1914 to investigate ways to improve army performance and the professionalisation and functioning of the War Office. For this reason, Chapter Five is structured around the three broader themes of military performance, professionalism and reform.

The first section, 'The Performance of Higher Command in the South African War: Regimental Officer Responses', investigates how the Coldstream Guards regimental officers and other middle commanders responded to shortcomings in senior command practices. This section looks at how the transformation in the nature of the war, from set-piece battles to irregular warfare, influenced the generals' command conduct, their ability to perform, and whether they could adapt to the challenges that these two very different kinds of war presented. The section begins by assessing senior officers' command practices during the conventional stage of the South African conflict following the outbreak of war in October 1899. It considers how the ill-fated campaign of Lord Methuen in the initial months of the war, trying to overcome an invisible, entrenched Boer opponent armed with modern weaponry and familiar with the South African landscape, influenced middle command attitudes towards the general, and how

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<sup>982</sup> William S. Hamer, *The British Army. Civil-Military Relations 1885-1905* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 202.

Methuen's poor performance at Magersfontein contributed to him being scapegoated and his reputation being ruined.

This part of section one also examines the ill-treatment that regimental officers and their men endured due to inefficient organisation and mismanagement, and how they responded to and dealt with such problems. During this time, there was enormous pressure on the middle command to keep their men healthy, to be able to march and fight, and to maintain positive morale despite a lack of sustenance, equipment and clothing. Additionally, it investigates middle command responses to the change from regimental transport arrangements to a centralised transport system implemented by Lord Kitchener in January 1900. As Edward M. Spiers states, "the abrupt withdrawal of the subsistence transport from the regiments and the abolition of supply columns caused delays, confusion and resentment among many regiments."<sup>983</sup> Three months later, Major Henry 'Harry' Gwynn Dean Shute bemoaned the ongoing transport issue on 20 May 1900 in a letter to his half-sister, Isabel, saying, "there are ... so many difficulties about Transport."<sup>984</sup> In September 1900, as hostilities shifted from conventional to guerrilla warfare, the British army had to adapt its tactics and operations, resorting to mobile columns, blockhouse lines and the garrisoning of towns. Transport remained problematic. While guarding the blockhouse line at Gemsbokfontein, between Victoria West and Carnarvon in the northern Cape Colony, Colonel Alfred Edward 'Coddy' Codrington, battalion commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, commented on 15 March 1902:

The ox and mule transport along this line alone is costing a very large amount per month, far more than the interest on capital and expenditure in working a railway. By railway, a supply to last the troops near Carnarvon a month, could be taken up in twenty-four hours. By ox-waggon two days' supply takes about

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<sup>983</sup> Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902*, p. 323.

<sup>984</sup> National Army Museum, Originals and transcripts of letters written by Major Henry Gwynn Dean Shute DSO, Coldstream Guards, to Isabel Cazenove, 1899-1900; associated with the Boer War (1899-1902), Catalogue No: 2013-08-2, 20/05/1900.

a week! It all seems such a pity. The one thing in which we know we can beat the burghers is in railways and bridges, they can't approach us there, and it is a pity not to beat them where we can.<sup>985</sup>

Such disorganisation was a cause for much vexation among the battalion commanders, and the second part of section one investigates whether or not generals could adapt to the transformed war and how it impacted the middle commanders. For instance, some generals failed to cooperate with other senior commanders during mobile column operations, which resulted in missed opportunities to catch Boer commandos. Others would inconsistently issue orders creating confusion and chaos. Furthermore, personal rivalries among senior commanders caused those who fell out of favour to be removed, and, as Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, battalion commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, remarked on 12 April 1901, regimental officers “never know from day to day who is in command.”<sup>986</sup> To further support the argument that mistakes made in the war were not due to a lack of professional commitment from middle commanders but rather inadequate senior command practices and poor performance, the testimonies of the generals in this section were chosen based on who the regimental commanders came into contact with during the South African War in the field. Moreover, these testimonies also represent the senior command cadre with whom middle commanders worked when garrisoned in towns.

The second section of this chapter, ‘The Generals and The Royal Commission (1902-1903)’, concentrates on the generals and their testimonies given at the Royal Commission in the immediate aftermath of the war. The Commission was tasked to investigate shortcomings in the conduct of the British army in South Africa. This section demonstrates how several senior

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<sup>985</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, Diary, (F1C30), 15/03/1902.

<sup>986</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 12/04/1901.



commanders tried to justify their actions and decisions in the conflict. For instance, some generals insisted that failings in the war were due to insufficient quality of middle command practices. When further pressed on the matter, these generals testified that the performance of majors and colonels was questionable during the war; for example, Major-General Sir Charles E. Knox stated, “some ... of them ... are not so bright.”<sup>987</sup> Moreover, several senior commanders complained that mid-level officers lacked initiative in combat, which rendered them unable to act independently and efficiently. However, the disastrous performance of the army, especially during the initial months of the war in South Africa, must be attributed to the deficiencies of those who were in charge.<sup>988</sup> Alongside the inadequacies of the senior command, as Geoffrey Searle writes, “there needed to be a thorough overhaul of the military machine, with a view [to produce] a modern, efficient, fighting army.”<sup>989</sup>

Because of this, the third section in Chapter Five, ‘Inter-War Reforms (1903-1914)’, provides an overview of the main reforms implemented between 1903 and 1914 to improve War Office administration and military management and organisation. This section considers the recommendations of the Akers-Douglas Committee, which investigated officer education and training in 1903. In addition, it includes the work of the Esher Committee, under the guidance of Reginald Baliol Brett, second Viscount Esher. The committee examined ways to improve the functioning of the War Office in 1904. Between 1906 and 1912, the General Staff and British Expeditionary Force (BEF) were formed under the auspice of the Secretary of State for War, Richard Burdon Haldane. The question as to whether the South African War had an

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<sup>987</sup> Major-General Sir Charles E. Knox, K.C.B., 11/03/1903, Question 17623. Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F18), *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission On The War In South Africa. Volume II* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), p. 321.

<sup>988</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, ‘Selection by Disparagement: Lord Esher, the General Staff and the Politics of Command’, in D. French & B. Holden Reid (eds.), *The British General Staff. Reform and Innovation c.1890-1939* (London, Routledge, 2002), p. 41.

<sup>989</sup> G. Searle, ‘National Efficiency and the ‘Lessons’ of the War’, in D. Omissi, & A.S. Thompson (eds.), *The Impact of the South African War* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Palgrave Ltd., 2002), p. 195.

impact on generating military reform in the years up to 1914 is a matter of debate among scholars. For instance, it has been argued that reforms of the Edwardian army were not a mere consequence of what was experienced in the South African War.<sup>990</sup> Moreover, opinion within scholarship on the impact of the conflict on the transformation and development of Edwardian army professionalism is divided. Several scholars contend that the army's transition had already occurred before the war's outbreak.<sup>991</sup>

On the other hand, it is the view of others that the military transformation only began following the war in South Africa. It is argued that even though the process of professionalising the army was still in its developmental phase at the outbreak of war in 1914, much modernisation had taken place.<sup>992</sup> Yet, the argument that there was increased professional development in the inter-war years between 1902 and 1914 compared to efforts in the late Victorian period, has been met with some scepticism.<sup>993</sup> In response to these arguments, Chapter Five situates the experiences of middle command officers within the broader debate on military reform and the transformation and development of professionalism of the British army before the First World War. Doing so strengthens the thesis argument of efficient middle command practices and professional conduct in the South African War.

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<sup>990</sup> Edward M. Spiers, 'Between the South African War and the First World War, 1902-14', in H. Strachan (ed.), *Big Wars and Small Wars. The British Army and the Lessons of War in the Twentieth Century* (London, Routledge, 2006), p. 22.

<sup>991</sup> Ibid. For further reference, see Ian F.W. Beckett, 'The South African War and the Late Victorian Army', in P. Dennis & J. Grey (eds.), *The Boer War: Army, Nation and Empire* (Canberra, Army History Unit, 2000), pp. 31-44; Stephen Badsey, 'Mounted Combat in the Second Boer War', *Sandhurst Journal of Military Studies*. 2 (1991), pp. 11-27; H. Bailes, 'Technology and Tactics in the British Army, 1866-1900', in R. Haycock & K. Neilson (eds.), *Men, Machines and War* (Waterloo, Wilfred Laurier University Press, 1988), pp. 23-47.

<sup>992</sup> Tim Travers, *The Killing Ground. The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare 1900-1918* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2009), pp. 4; 26.

<sup>993</sup> Timothy Bowman & Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 39. For further reference on the topic that the development of Edwardian army professionalism saw more of an increase over that of the Victorian period see, Travers, *The Killing Ground. The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare 1900-1918*, pp. 3-36.

This chapter demonstrates that mid-level command professionalisation was already in flux during the conflict. It will do so through a close study of the personal correspondences of Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker and Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute of the Coldstream Guards. As additional supporting material, this chapter explores the private letters and diaries of Coldstream Guards company commanders, the rank-and-file, as well as that of other Guards’ regiments and senior command members. Furthermore, the chapter incorporates the findings of the Royal Commission, published in 1903.

## I

### **The Performance of Higher Command in the South African War: Regimental Officer Responses**

On 21 November 1899, the Divisional Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Guards Division, Paul Sanford, third Baron Methuen, met with Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute, 2<sup>nd</sup>-in-command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards at Orange River Camp, located north of De Aar in the Cape Colony. Methuen mentioned to Shute that General Sir Redvers Buller “had given him command of all troops at Orange River and that in the event of anything happening to Buller, or of his having to go to Natal, Paul would command both Divisions in Cape Colony.”<sup>994</sup> Instead, Methuen’s career took a downward turn following an attack on a thoroughly entrenched Boer force at Magersfontein on 11 December 1899, where the British suffered heavy casualties and ultimately failed to displace the Boers from their positions.<sup>995</sup> As

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<sup>994</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute, Diary, (F1D22), 23/11/1899.

<sup>995</sup> Thean D. Potgieter, ‘Nineteenth Century Technological Development and its Influence on the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902’, *Southern Journal for Contemporary History*. 25, No. 2 (2000), p. 127.

previously stated in Chapter Two, Methuen's poor performance at Magersfontein was one of three major British army failings during 'Black Week' between 10 and 15 December 1899.<sup>996</sup>

For this reason, Methuen became the object of much derision in the media and received harsh criticism for his performance. Bemoaning the abuse he received from the Press, Methuen lamented that a "large number of letters in the papers are from men and officers in the Highland Brigade throwing all the blame on my shoulders."<sup>997</sup> Shute similarly mentioned that a "scandalous letter [was] written in *The Times* by an officer abusing P. Methuen."<sup>998</sup> Likewise, Major Sir Edward Seymour of the Grenadier Guards noted in his diary that "Jim Whigham [was] ordered off for writing letter in 'Morning Post' against Lord Methuen."<sup>999</sup> Colonel Alfred 'Coddy' Codrington, battalion commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, also thought that Methuen was being unfairly treated. For example, at Modder River in January 1900, Codrington recorded that Methuen stepped in to rectify a potentially lethal decision made by General Henry Edward Colvile, who, as Codrington recorded:

Has become energetic as to laying out shelter trenches etc. and the other day we had to send two companies to dig trenches, the spot and trace being settled previously by Colvile. One of these trenches is so placed that men firing straight from it would fire into Carew's Brigade, which is now on the south of the Riet River; so now we have been told to fill the trench again. I am glad Methuen came round and put this right, as I did not think Colvile's idea was a good one.<sup>1000</sup>

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<sup>996</sup> The others were Major-General William Forbes Gatacre's defeat at Stormberg in the northern Cape on 10 December, and the defeat of General Sir Redvers Buller's force at Colenso, Natal, on 15 December 1899.

<sup>997</sup> Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre Archives, Paul Sanford, 3<sup>rd</sup> Baron Methuen, Corsham, Miscellaneous correspondence and papers, South African War 1899-1902, Private and personal correspondence and diaries, Accession No: 1742/18, 03/02/1900.

<sup>998</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 23/11/1899.

<sup>999</sup> National Army Museum, Diary of Major Sir Edward Seymour, January-May 1900, Grenadier Guards, Catalogue No: 2016-10-23-74, 03/02/1900.

<sup>1000</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 10-15/01/1900.

By February 1900, Methuen's command had been decreased to command only one brigade.<sup>1001</sup> Methuen told Shute of this development at Modder River on 13 February. Shute reflected on their meeting, saying Methuen was "awfully low at the Division being left behind [as] he had been deprived of command of the Division and placed in command of Kimberley District."<sup>1002</sup> Concerned for Methuen's state of mind, Shute added, "poor chap, he is heartbroken."<sup>1003</sup> Seymour similarly thought Methuen was unfairly treated when he heard that "Methuen [is] to be Military Administrator to Kimberley district. What a smack in the eye!"<sup>1004</sup> Shute wrote to Isabel on 16 April after the Magersfontein despatches were published on 23 March and told her that he was convinced, more than ever, that Methuen:

Was a very much maligned man & that there will be a reaction in his favour. I have read it through most carefully & as far as my knowledge goes every single statement is absolutely true. It makes one boil with rage to think of the abuse that has been heaped upon him owing to letters from a lot of funky Highlanders & a drunken useless Colonel of the 9<sup>th</sup> Lancers.<sup>1005</sup>

Unlike Shute, Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, battalion commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, did not support Methuen. After dinner on 14 February with Methuen and his staff at Modder River, he wrote that Methuen "still thinks that he was right, and that everyone else is wrong ... [Methuen's] personal ambition is the curse of everything."<sup>1006</sup> A month later, an enraged Henniker recorded that Methuen had ordered:

A force to prepare to go out to cut the wire! ... of the Free State Fence but was persuaded to change his mind. We could cut this wire any night with a few men but should certainly have got shot at for certain if we had gone out in force. He tried to prove that Magersfontein trenches were empty, but no-one was found to agree with him.<sup>1007</sup>

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<sup>1001</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. 235.

<sup>1002</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 13/02/1900; 17/02/1900.

<sup>1003</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1004</sup> National Army Museum, Seymour, Diary, 18/02/1900.

<sup>1005</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 16/04/1900.

<sup>1006</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 09/01/1900.

<sup>1007</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 14/02/1900.

Because of 'Black Week', Lord Roberts was sent to take over command in South Africa and Lord Kitchener was appointed as his Chief of Staff. Upon hearing the news, a deeply disappointed Methuen dreaded what it would be like for him under the new leadership of Roberts and Kitchener, and though he regarded Roberts highly, Methuen intensely disliked Kitchener.<sup>1008</sup> He noted angrily, "Kitchener's appointment [as Chief of Staff] is one to crush popularity, for he can know nothing of the works of COs."<sup>1009</sup> In a way, Methuen would be proven right. One of the first changes Roberts instituted was for Kitchener to oversee the reorganisation and centralisation of the army's transport system.<sup>1010</sup> Methuen met Shute on 18 January 1900 at Modder River and told him, "they are going to reorganise transport – abolish regimental transport and form it into companies independent of units."<sup>1011</sup> A few days later, Methuen wrote that Kitchener upset the battalion officers when he changed the transport system and that "this [is] doomed to failure... I am glad to say... for an officer [Kitchener] with no experience any other than camel transport... [it will be] simple chaos."<sup>1012</sup>

Indeed, as Methuen had predicted, the new arrangements angered the battalion commanders. After a dinner with Major-General Reginald 'Polly' Pole-Carew, Henniker noted, "I hope Lord Roberts will listen to him [Pole-Carew] on the question of Regt. Transport, which is in a very efficient state, but is now taken from us ... There are a lot of absurd things sent out about transport. We are apparently to live on air."<sup>1013</sup> Codrington, similarly, felt aggrieved by the

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<sup>1008</sup> Stephen M. Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa* (London, Frank Cass, 1999), p. 176.

<sup>1009</sup> Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre Archives, Methuen, Private and personal correspondence and diaries, Accession No: 1742/18, 24/12/1899.

<sup>1010</sup> Rodney Atwood, *Roberts and Kitchener in South Africa 1900-1902* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword, 2011), p. 115.

<sup>1011</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 18/01/1900.

<sup>1012</sup> Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre Archives, Methuen, Private and personal correspondence and diaries, Accession No: 1742/18, 23/01/1900.

<sup>1013</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 17-18/01/1900.

changes. On 23 February, Codrington wrote in his diary that he believed the reorganisation to be inadequate, complaining that:

We are told we move off on Monday early, and that a fresh arrangement of transport is to be made, with each battalion to have seven wagons, but then wagons to carry everything including as many days' supply as may be ordered. Each day's supply takes a wagon, therefore until we know how many days' supply we are to take, we do not know how many wagons we shall have available for baggage. So that every time we move a fresh arrangement is to be thought out and arranged for.<sup>1014</sup>

Somewhat frustrated, he stated, "this makes for inefficiency. We now have to send our chests back ... as only blankets will be carried in our limited transport. If only we could have exactly the same arrangements for transport every time we move, it would be a very great comfort to everyone."<sup>1015</sup> Codrington also thought that senior command failed to consider the detrimental impact on the distribution of resources and feared equipment would not arrive in time to designated places, if at all.<sup>1016</sup> Already annoyed with Kitchener taking their transport from them, the regimental officers held Kitchener responsible for the ensuing chaos in distributing supplies, subsequently leading to shortages of items. For example, in February 1900, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards were in desperate need of boots before setting off for Poplar Grove, situated southeast of Kimberley. Taking umbrage, Henniker took the matter directly to Kitchener on 22 February, and, as Shute recorded, Henniker:

Pressed [Kitchener] our great want, boots one hundred pairs were applied for a month ago, but none arrived yet, and we now want two hundred at least. Some sixteen men who were bootless were left at Modder and a few more at Klip Drift. We are worse off than most, having over six hundred reserve men who were only served out with two pairs of ordinary boots. The serving men had a pair of hand-sewn service boots.<sup>1017</sup>

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<sup>1014</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 23/02/1900.

<sup>1015</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1016</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1017</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 22/02/1900.

Two days later, there still was no indication whether Henniker's request to Kitchener for more boots was expedited. Because of this, Shute sought additional help from Methuen on 24 February 1900. He pressed upon Methuen on the importance of resolving the situation as soon as possible, telling Methuen that the men were "very short of boots."<sup>1018</sup> Methuen agreed to assist as best he could, and, said Shute, Methuen "went round to shops with me, and we eventually got one hundred pairs which are to be sent by wagon to Klip Kraal from Kimberley."<sup>1019</sup> A week later, Shute also remarked in a letter to his father how bad the men's boots were, saying there was "very little shoe leather left."<sup>1020</sup> However, the hundred pairs of boots that he and Methuen had procured in Kimberley had thankfully arrived at Klip Kraal by wagon as arranged, Shute told his father, but, he ruefully added, it "does not go far with 1000 men."<sup>1021</sup> Although both Henniker and Shute had raised the issue of essential item shortages to their superiors, the situation remained critical. Private George J. Gullick, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, testified to the deplorable state of affairs when he recorded on 1 March, "men from my Battn. had to re-join. [They] came back, [as they had] no boots."<sup>1022</sup> Aggravated by the situation, Henniker fumed on 7 March that the Coldstream Guards had done "fourteen and a half hours of [marching] ... with but little food and no blankets. It is a very high trial, as officers and men have no coats, and blankets, and it is too cold to sleep from 2 to 5 am, except for Shute and self, who had some rugs and things which came up on an extra horse."<sup>1023</sup>

Consequently, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards set upon their march to Poplar Grove on 7 March under-supplied and lacking equipment, and as Lieutenant Charles Montague Hamilton

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<sup>1018</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 24/02/1900.

<sup>1019</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1020</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 01/03/1900.

<sup>1021</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1022</sup> Private George J. Gullick, Diary, 03/03/1900, in Roy George Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries of Major H.G.D. Shute and Private G.J. Gullick 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards, 1899-1902* (Burnham-On-Sea, Anglo-Boer War Philatelic Society, 1999), p. 29.

<sup>1023</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 07/03/1900.



Massey noted, by 11 March, there was still an insufficient number of boots for the men.<sup>1024</sup> Because of this, it can be said that the British army was neglecting its fighting force and that senior command failed to look after the soldiers properly. Seymour echoed a similar sentiment when he stated on 16 March that “this is the most damnable expedition I have ever taken part in.”<sup>1025</sup> Due to the shortages of supplies, and inadequate food rations for the troops and animals, compounded by transport issues, frequently meant that soldiers marched on empty stomachs with little or no food. Indeed, planning and preparation were problematic right from the outset of the South African campaign.

When the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards arrived at Orange River Station en route to Kimberley on 14 November 1899, Captain Thomas Henry Eyre Lloyd recorded, fearing they may encounter ration shortages, he had an emergency supply at the ready if it were needed. He recalled, “I served out a tin of ten cubes of Maggi’s consommé and one packet of dry eggs to each man in the company. I had brought 130 of each from England to use as emergency rations for the company.”<sup>1026</sup> Three days later, Lloyd also noted that after reaching Green Point Camp, the Coldstream Guards found that “no arrangements had been made for our arrival, and there was no food in camp.”<sup>1027</sup> Again, after a hard day’s marching to Witteputs, northeast of Orange River Station, on 21 November, Lloyd recorded that officers and men had “marched WITHOUT breakfast (except a biscuit) ... 9 miles ... NOTHING to eat until midday.”<sup>1028</sup> A week later, on 28 November, Private Arthur Dye complained that the soldiers had to eat their emergency rations at Modder River because they had not had any food for thirty hours.<sup>1029</sup> On

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<sup>1024</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Lieutenant Charles Montague Hamilton Massey, Diary, (12325), 11/03/1900.

<sup>1025</sup> National Army Museum, Seymour, Diary, 16/03/1900.

<sup>1026</sup> Wellington Barracks, Lloyd, Diary, 14/11/1899.

<sup>1027</sup> *Ibid.*, 17/11/1899.

<sup>1028</sup> *Ibid.*, 21/11/1899.

<sup>1029</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Private Arthur Dye, Diary, (F1C7, F1D7), 28/11/1899.

top of that, Dye recalled, when the Coldstream Guards left Modder River on 9 December for Magersfontein, they had had to eat their emergency rations during the three days it took the men to reach their next destination; there was no other food ready for them.<sup>1030</sup>

As a result, at Modder River, Private Gullick recorded in his diary on 11 February 1900 that fighting broke out among the men over the insufficient amount of rations they received.<sup>1031</sup>

After the Coldstream Guards arrived at Klipdrift, south of Kimberley on 20 February 1900, Massey likewise took exception to the fact that they had been on half rations for a week.<sup>1032</sup>

Owing to this, a few weeks later, on 2 March, Henniker worryingly noted that the men had used their emergency rations.<sup>1033</sup> Anxiously waiting for foodstuffs to arrive, a disgruntled Shute wrote on 29 April:

Only 38 cases of our second consignment of mess stores have arrived here out of 72. Went to station and all over the place this evening to try and trace them. If they do not turn up before we start, we shall have only a bare month's supply for our advance. It was subsequently ascertained that Kitchener found a truckful of our mess stores on a train somewhere near Springfontein and turned them out on the veldt.<sup>1034</sup>

Incidentally, such occurrences only further antagonised the battalion officers towards Kitchener. Previously, following an ill-fated attack ordered by Kitchener at Paardeberg, located southeast of Kimberley, on 17 February 1900, Shute remarked that he thought it was "disastrous."<sup>1035</sup> Similarly, Henniker scoffed at Kitchener's attempt, saying, "another demonstration?"<sup>1036</sup> After talking with Pole-Carew about the blunder at Paardeberg, Henniker recorded that "Polly Carew says it was the greatest rot ever seen."<sup>1037</sup> Pole-Carew's comment

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<sup>1030</sup> Ibid., 11/12/1899.

<sup>1031</sup> Gullick, Diary, 11/02/1900, in Stockman, *The Boer War Diaries*, p. 23.

<sup>1032</sup> Wellington Barracks, Massey, Diary, 20/02/1900.

<sup>1033</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 02/03/1900.

<sup>1034</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 29/04/1900.

<sup>1035</sup> Ibid., 22/02/1900.

<sup>1036</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 17-18/01/1900.

<sup>1037</sup> Ibid.

indicated his and others' hostility towards Kitchener and the endemic rivalries and jealousies within senior command ranks. To illustrate, after the British army entered Pretoria on 5 June, a ceremonial march past Lord Roberts was planned, and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Edward Longueville was tasked to organise the event. Before the march was set to take place, Longueville was sent by General Inigo 'Bones' Jones to show the finalised details to Lord Kitchener. Longueville did so, and after painstakingly going through all the details, Kitchener remarked:

That it would not do at all, everything must be changed, and he gave me long and minute directions as to how he wanted it done. As it [was] now only about twenty minutes before the show was to commence it was rather late to alter. I raced back to the square as quickly as I could and told the General who sent me to Gen. Pole-Carew, the latter said that K. should be damned, everything was to remain the same. It all went off very well in spite of K's wishes being disregarded.<sup>1038</sup>

It has been argued that Kitchener's erratic disposition, and the dictatorial and obscure manner in which he operated in Sudan, also characterised his command in South Africa, where he tried to do it all by himself.<sup>1039</sup> As Longueville stated, Kitchener tended to "fairly made things move, as was his custom."<sup>1040</sup> Indeed, Methuen also complained that Kitchener never consulted anyone and took control of everything.<sup>1041</sup> Of Methuen, Pole-Carew believed him to be stubborn and ineffectual; he was slow to comprehend when something was explained to him, and Pole-Carew thought Methuen was a useless individual who failed to learn from his past mistakes.<sup>1042</sup> Meanwhile, back in February 1900, after Methuen's supersession, General Colville was made divisional commander of the 9<sup>th</sup> Division, and the position of brigadier went to Pole-Carew.<sup>1043</sup> Shute wrote that "we are all delighted" after hearing about Pole-Carew's

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<sup>1038</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Edward Longueville, Diary, (F1C40), 05/06/1900.

<sup>1039</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. 243.

<sup>1040</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 24/09/1900.

<sup>1041</sup> Miller, *Lord Methuen and the British Army. Failure and Redemption in South Africa*, p. 177.

<sup>1042</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. 232.

<sup>1043</sup> Atwood, *Roberts and Kitchener in South Africa 1900-1902*, p. 118.

promotion.<sup>1044</sup> Notably, Pole-Carew's appointment came as no surprise, as he was considered a protégé of Lord Roberts.<sup>1045</sup> In April, Pole-Carew was again promoted, this time to command the 11<sup>th</sup> Division, and Henniker remarked that he thought Pole-Carew "very lucky" in his promotion.<sup>1046</sup> Despite having said that, Henniker candidly added that in the British army, "kissing goes by favour", in that adopting a personalised command approach meant the promotion of favourites regardless of their competence.<sup>1047</sup> In the words of Ian F.W. Beckett, the military was regarded as "one of ins and outs."<sup>1048</sup>

Notably, the frequency in which some senior officers would lose favour while others gained favour did not escape the attention of the middle command. While waiting to hear who Pole-Carew's successor would be, Henniker reflected on 11 April that he feared the next commander might be someone "who knows nothing of this sort of warfare; however, we must hope for the best. It wants a bit of training to get used to this game, and those who have been out here longest naturally must know the most. The C.O's who have seen something will have to teach those who come to command them."<sup>1049</sup> Henniker similarly worried about inadequacies in senior command conduct and had previously asserted in April that "the generals don't know much, it seems to me, and let the Boers outmanoeuvre them everywhere!"<sup>1050</sup> He was not wrong to voice his concern about upper-echelon proficiency.

The absence of a general staff meant that the army had no organised staff system. Shute had also commented on staff disorganisation in June 1900 after visiting headquarters in Pretoria,

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<sup>1044</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 12/02/1900.

<sup>1045</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. 236.

<sup>1046</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 11/04/1900.

<sup>1047</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1048</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. 74.

<sup>1049</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 11/04/1900.

<sup>1050</sup> Ibid., 03/04/1900.

saying, “Brigades and Divisions moved while staff are ignorant, Chief of Staff packed off anywhere to get him out of the way. Headquarters is divided into about 10 messes ... P.M.O [principal medical officer] goes direct to the Chief and arranges for hospitals in barracks without Q.M.G. [quartermaster-general] knowing it. Polly also goes direct to Chief and most generals.”<sup>1051</sup> As Henniker remarked, “everyone does what he likes.”<sup>1052</sup> And therein lay the problem. For instance, at Donkerhoek, situated to the east of Pretoria, Henniker bemoaned that early on in the morning of 22 July 1900, the Coldstream Guards were told to be ready to march towards Middelburg; yet as the day went on, no orders came, and there was a general atmosphere of uncertainty.<sup>1053</sup> However, a barrage of orders was issued during the night, and a weary Henniker noted that it only stopped early the following morning, fuming that the “arrangements were simply disgraceful.”<sup>1054</sup> Declaring headquarters staff “the worst of its kind”, Henniker took exception to the lack of organisation, that no system was in place to speak of, and lamented, “it is almost, sometimes, more than one can stand. One has got so fed up with this sort of thing that patience is almost exhausted.”<sup>1055</sup> Besides, he protested, “that such a state of affairs can exist is ludicrous. The mistakes have to do with our rotten system, and still more [with our] rotten Generals.”<sup>1056</sup>

Indeed, it has been argued that several high command officers had advanced in rank simply on account of seniority.<sup>1057</sup> Henniker was not wrong to criticise the lack of skill displayed by so many generals. His criticism rang particularly true when the South African War changed in September 1900 from traditional conflict characterised by set-piece battles to irregular warfare

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<sup>1051</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 20/06/1900.

<sup>1052</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 18/11/1900.

<sup>1053</sup> *Ibid.*, 22/07/1900.

<sup>1054</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-24/07/1900.

<sup>1055</sup> *Ibid.*, 20/10/1900.

<sup>1056</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-24/12/1900.

<sup>1057</sup> Brian Bond, *The Victorian Staff College 1854-1914* (London, Eyre Methuen Ltd., 1972), p. 182.

with Boers striking in small groups and sabotaging communication lines. Guerrilla warfare was as unpredictable as it was dangerous. If the regimental officer were to adapt his command practice to irregular fighting, the same principle would apply to senior command. However, the change to guerrilla fighting proved problematic for several generals who were unable to align their command practices to the new ways of fighting, to the detriment of others, particularly the regimental officer and his men. To illustrate this, in November 1900, while at Potchefstroom south of Johannesburg, Henniker received a telegram from Major-General Geoffrey Barton, commander of the Pretoria District. Henniker reports that Barton urgently requested the following:

About 200 men, either to go to Klerksdorp with him, or to go back to garrison [at] Frederikstad. This ... must be appealed against if he persists in it. I replied that I preferred the garrison work as that at all events prevents the men being blundered into some mess by Barton; and that I could not guarantee [the] safety of the town if more than 120 men were taken away... Barton's force doesn't seem in much order ... He is a nice old man, just fitted for the command of a quiet Division at home.<sup>1058</sup>

Henniker's scepticism was not unfounded, as the generals' judgment errors did not inspire confidence within the mid-level command echelon. Equally, orders issued by some generals led to confusion and chaos for those under their command who were expected to carry them out. When at Matjiesfontein, a town situated northwest of Oudtshoorn in the central Karoo district in December 1900, Henniker was still worried about such inconsistencies and, as a result, he said, "I had a fearfully long and hard day. Nothing but orders and counter-orders from [Brigadier-General] Settle."<sup>1059</sup> A frustrated Henniker again commented on the erratic way orders were issued in January 1901, saying he was "ordered to go further south to Matjiesfontein, where the Boers are supposed to be coming. Settle is giving the most curious orders. I remonstrated, as the Movement seems dangerous, however, he has insisted ... Settle

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<sup>1058</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 12-18/11/1900.

<sup>1059</sup> *Ibid.*, 22/12/1900.

is in alarm about a Phantom Commando.”<sup>1060</sup> Indeed, the disorganised manner in which some generals operated created worrying situations putting the regimental officers and the lives of their men in danger.

Codrington similarly complained and said that everybody suffered because of “[one not] knowing what the other was doing. We [receive] contradictory telegrams several times.”<sup>1061</sup> Inefficiency in senior command practices was moreover compounded by their failure to co-operate with one another. For example, at Syferkuil by Kaalspruit, located to the northeast of Bloemfontein, Colonel Henry White of the Grenadier Guards wrote on 5 May 1901 that upon their approach to a nearby ridge, “a column of men to the south [appeared]. Expectations ran high. We sniffed a capture of Boer waggons.”<sup>1062</sup> However, scouts reported back that it was Methuen’s ox convoy and his main body of troops that were located five miles to the west:

So, we deflect our column and knock across the Boers south of west. For a time, no-one knows who is what or what is which and Boers ride about and are supposed to be Methuen’s lot. Eventually Methuen arrives on the scene and says ... we must support him on [the] left. More delay and we advance, [and] on arriving at Brakpan we find that Methuen has been chasing Boers, captured 4 waggons and left us in the lurch. Everyone [felt] very sick. A rotten bad day. Mistakes, no plans and no co-operation. Nothing done. If properly managed, we might have done a real good thing!<sup>1063</sup>

White had a point. Mismanagement of operations by the generals stemmed from their indifference to co-ordinate and co-operate with one another. It caused considerable annoyance among the regimental officers, as Henniker remarked how tiring it was for them when the senior command all simply “go on their own way.”<sup>1064</sup> It seemed, he continued, that “our Generals appear to be all alike ... So, it goes on, each general runs his own show, and all make

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<sup>1060</sup> Ibid., 04-12/01/1901.

<sup>1061</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 12/08/1901.

<sup>1062</sup> National Army Museum, Diary of Colonel Henry White, 1901-1902, Grenadier Guards, Catalogue No: 2016-10-23-44, 05/05/1901.

<sup>1063</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1064</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 21/05/1901.

out that the others are of little or no use.”<sup>1065</sup> Calling into question the quality of senior officer generalship, Henniker cast doubt on the performance of higher command in South Africa.

## II

### **The Generals and The Royal Commission (1902-1903)**

British army failings in South Africa were highlighted during the Royal Commission enquiries held between 8 October 1902 and 10 June 1903, where, among other things, the quality of army leadership was closely scrutinised.<sup>1066</sup> For this reason, Field Marshal The Right Hon. Earl Roberts, K.G., K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., testified on 4 December 1902. When asked about the calibre of British army regimental officers, Roberts responded, “I should ... say ...The first point is that officers should take their profession more seriously.”<sup>1067</sup> Roberts told the Commission that he believed that mistakes made by battalion commanders were significantly higher than by junior officers because older officers lose authority and struggle in their decision-making with age.<sup>1068</sup> Pressed to elaborate further, Roberts held firm and insisted, “I have told you what I thought, that many of them had not had sufficient experience, that they should be younger men, and that they fail sometimes from not taking sufficient responsibility.”<sup>1069</sup> In other words, Roberts’s response implied that battalion commanders were complacent in their duties and ill-equipped to deliver satisfactory results in South Africa. Therefore, in doing so, Roberts, like many other senior commanders who would also testify in front of the Royal Commission, attempted to underplay the valuable contribution of British

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<sup>1065</sup> Ibid., 07/02/1900; 01-02/08/1900.

<sup>1066</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, ‘The Annual Confidential Report and Promotion in the Late Victorian Army’, *British Journal for Military History*. 1, No. 1 (2014), pp. 12-28.

<sup>1067</sup> Field Marshal The Right Hon. Earl Roberts, K.G., K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., 04/12/1902, Question 10446. Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F17), *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa. Volume I* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), pp. 440-1.

<sup>1068</sup> Ibid., Questions 10333, 10446-10447, 10475, pp. 436; 440-1; 443.

<sup>1069</sup> Ibid.



army regimental officers in order to conceal deficiencies in their own leadership and command practices in South Africa.

Significantly, throughout the Royal Commission hearings, the lack of officer individualism and initiative repeatedly resonated in the generals' testimonies. In arguing that officers did not demonstrate these qualities owing to changes in the conditions of modern warfare, such as the employment of guerrilla tactics by the Boers, the generals were saying that they thought officers failed to adapt to the transformation in the nature of the war and that regimental officer performance and command practices were found wanting. For example, when General Viscount Kitchener of Khartoum, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.M.G, R.E. was called and examined on 14 October 1902, he criticised battalion commanders for a supposed want of individualism and told the Commission he believed personal agency in war mattered.<sup>1070</sup> Kitchener also emphasised that officers ought to be held responsible and accountable for their actions, that they should demonstrate initiative in their command, and that such initiative should manifest in their leadership abilities.<sup>1071</sup> In short, he argued that officers should “exercise their brains and ... strike out ideas for themselves, even at the risk of making mistakes, rather than to stagnate, or to follow the dull routine which at present affects the officers in our service and moulds them into machines of limited ability.”<sup>1072</sup>

Moreover, Kitchener exhibited favouritism towards junior officers when he stated that battalion officers should allow junior officers to be more involved in taking charge of decision-making and be given more opportunities to command in combat.<sup>1073</sup> However, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion Coldstream

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<sup>1070</sup> General Viscount Kitchener of Khartoum, G.C.B., O.M., G.C.M.G, R.E., 14/10/1902, Question 174. Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F17), *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission On The War In South Africa. Volume I* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), p. 7.

<sup>1071</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1072</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1073</sup> Ibid.

Guards regimental commander, Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, had already implemented such a practice in South Africa. Codrington wrote on 2 May 1902, “each of my captains has the powers of a battalion C.O. and every subaltern the powers of a captain, which is putting them ‘on their own’ and teaching them a great deal.”<sup>1074</sup> For example, on 1 February 1902, Lieutenant Charles Montague Hamilton Massey noted his appointment as commandant at Orange River.<sup>1075</sup> Likewise, Captain Eric Thomas Henry Hanbury-Tracy recorded a few months later, on 6 May, that he was “in charge of camp with 30 mounted & 60 dismounted men in addition to [the] Coldstream Detachment.”<sup>1076</sup> Another point is that Kitchener’s supposed expectations of officer individualism appeared discordant with his conduct, as witnessed in South Africa by the war correspondent Edgar Wallace. According to Wallace, Kitchener was very much the strict disciplinarian who bluntly told his subordinates he did not appreciate individualistic and ingenious commanding officers.<sup>1077</sup>

Having said that, Field Marshal the Right Hon. Viscount Wolseley, K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.M.G., also reiterated the issue of officer individualism and initiative on 27 November 1902. Wolseley declared during his examination that the characteristics of a good commander comprised individuality and a readiness to take responsibility, superior ability and natural confidence, and a profound interest in his profession.<sup>1078</sup> Equally, Roberts believed an officer ought to possess a general standard of practical knowledge, be devoted and duty-bound, and be ready to react under pressure in any given situation. In addition, he believed a battalion

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<sup>1074</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 02/05/1902.

<sup>1075</sup> Wellington Barracks, Massey, Diary, 01/02/1902.

<sup>1076</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Captain Eric Thomas Henry Hanbury-Tracy, Diary, (12326), 06/05/1902.

<sup>1077</sup> E. Wallace, ‘Kitchener – The General’, *Poverty Bay Herald*, Volume XXVIII, Issue 9146, 14 May 1901, p. 4. <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/PBH19010514.2.44>. Accessed, 26/03/23.

<sup>1078</sup> Field Marshal the Right Hon. Viscount Wolseley, K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.M.G., 27/11/1902, Questions 9183-9186. Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F17), *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission On The War In South Africa. Volume I* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), p. 388.

commander should be intelligent, display common sense and tact, and possess sound knowledge of army regulations.<sup>1079</sup> Echoing Kitchener, Wolseley proposed that officers be less averse to risk-taking, held accountable for their actions and display individual intelligence in the field.<sup>1080</sup>

Previously, both Wolseley and Roberts identified inadequate performance when reporting on officers in confidential reports. For instance, Roberts did so in October 1880, highlighting the unsatisfactory conduct of Lieutenant Louis Carden, Royal Artillery, and Wolseley raised a similar complaint about Lieutenant Colonel Robert Oxley, 2<sup>nd</sup> Gordon Highlanders, in November 1893.<sup>1081</sup> As Roberts would later reiterate to the Commission, it is imperative in combat that an officer must have a quick eye for the country and be able to rapidly appreciate the relative value of positions; that is, he ought to be an expert at reconnaissance. An officer also needs to be a bold rider, insensible to fatigue and must be resourceful.<sup>1082</sup> “Ultimately,” says Beckett, “what mattered most, as Wolseley and Roberts invariably stressed ... was how an individual performed on the battlefield.”<sup>1083</sup> Indeed, as Wolseley testified, a good leader must be adaptable to the demands modern warfare places on him.<sup>1084</sup>

After the South African conflict, many senior commanders became convinced that efficient soldiering rested on the individual actions and reactions of the soldier, yet they believed the army’s men fell short of such a prerequisite.<sup>1085</sup> Because of this, the Commission requested evidence of how the generals intended to rectify the issue. When Wolseley was asked whether

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<sup>1079</sup> Roberts, 04/12/1902, Question 10446, *Minutes of Evidence. Volume I*, pp. 440-1.

<sup>1080</sup> Wolseley, 27/11/1902, Questions 9183-9186, *Minutes of Evidence. Volume I*, p. 388.

<sup>1081</sup> Beckett, ‘The Annual Confidential Report and Promotion in the Late Victorian Army’, p. 26.

<sup>1082</sup> Roberts, 04/12/1902, Question 10446, *Minutes of Evidence. Volume I*, pp. 440-1.

<sup>1083</sup> Beckett, ‘The Annual Confidential Report and Promotion in the Late Victorian Army’, p. 27.

<sup>1084</sup> Wolseley, 27/11/1902, Questions 9183-9186, *Minutes of Evidence. Volume I*, p. 388.

<sup>1085</sup> J. Gooch (ed.), ‘Introduction’, in J. Gooch (ed.), *The Boer War: Direction, Experience and Image* (London, Frank Cass, 2000), p. xvi.

he thought the training the officers had received encouraged their individuality and a readiness to take responsibility, he had the opportunity to acknowledge that perhaps more responsibility should have been taken by the upper echelon to ensure such training. He did not. Instead, Wolseley placed the responsibility on the regimental officer:

Take the commander of a battalion. It is a very important position. The man has got in action a thousand men under him, and it is most important thing that every major under him should be very well instructed.<sup>1086</sup>

Despite this, not all generals painted a negative picture of the regimental officer and the performance of the middle echelon in South Africa. One such figure was Major-General Sir Reginald ‘Polly’ Pole-Carew, K.C.B., C.V.O., who was interrogated on officer initiative, responsibility and overall morale.<sup>1087</sup> When informed that evidence suggested officers were unwilling to take a sufficient amount of responsibility, Pole-Carew responded that he did “not think that they were unwilling to do it. I should not say that.” He also disagreed that mid-level officers displayed insufficient initiative; he felt the allegation was circumstantial at best. In answer to the points of age and experience raised by Roberts, Pole-Carew believed those factors to be positive assets for effective command.<sup>1088</sup> Defending the regimental officer, Pole-Carew said that, in his opinion, the quality of men was:

Very fine indeed. I had nothing to complain of. I commanded altogether three brigades. The 9<sup>th</sup> Brigade was an exceptionally good one, because some of them ... were not the young soldiers. The regimental officer, I know, is the target at which most people shoot, and I must say I am extremely sorry for it. The regimental officer and the regimental men absolutely fought this war, and a more devoted and a more excellent lot of officers I do not think you could wish to find.<sup>1089</sup>

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<sup>1086</sup> Wolseley, 27/11/1902, Questions 9183-9186, *Minutes of Evidence. Volume I*, p. 388.

<sup>1087</sup> Major-General Sir Reginald Pole-Carew, K.C.B., C.V.O., 24/02/1903, Questions 16541-16601. Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F18), *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission On The War In South Africa. Volume II* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), pp. 262-264.

<sup>1088</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1089</sup> Ibid.

As with Pole-Carew, Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen, G.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.M.G., also defended the conduct of regimental officers in South Africa during his examination on 13 February 1903. When questioned about the quality of regimental leadership and command, Methuen replied that up until the present, battalion officers made great strides in becoming more knowledgeable and professional.<sup>1090</sup> When the questioning turned to complaints made of the quality of sketches and reports, Methuen stated that he had none at all, and in his experience, these were:

As clear and comprehensive as they could well be under the conditions of modern warfare - that is the difficulties entailed by smokeless powder and long-range fire. Later on in the war the short reports sent me from the front were seldom misleading. What is required is not a well-finished sketch and a verbose report, but a rapid sketch, the situation described in as few words as possible in a clear hand.<sup>1091</sup>

Asked to clarify whether he was speaking of intelligence officers, Methuen replied, “no, I am speaking now of the regimental officers who had to give me their reports.”<sup>1092</sup> Furthermore, he continued, if regimental commanders in South Africa showed any weaknesses as alleged, not only was it the duty of senior command to “be fair and not lay the blame on them, but [also to] admit frankly the shortcomings belong to our system, and sometimes are our own.”<sup>1093</sup> It can be argued that Methuen was defending the regimental commanders’ performance in South Africa, saying that there were other factors to consider when judging the quality of their conduct, and that putting the blame on them as some senior commanders did was merely a way to hide their own failings, as well as that of the system in which they operated in. It was a stunning display of cowardice by the generals to shirk away from taking responsibility.

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<sup>1090</sup> Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen, G.C.B., K.C.V.O., C.M.G., 13/02/1903, Question 14247. Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F18), *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission On The War In South Africa. Volume II* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), p. 124.

<sup>1091</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>1092</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1093</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

In particular, food shortages, poor quality and supply of clothing and equipment created tension and frustration among the troops. Methuen assured the Commission that, in his experience, the men never lacked sustenance and that as far as he could remember, apart from one occurrence, rations were always plentiful.<sup>1094</sup> On the whole, said Methuen, food supplies were “excellent [and] from the beginning to end I have not one word to say against it.”<sup>1095</sup> However, contrary to what Methuen said, section one of this chapter has demonstrated otherwise. When the Coldstream Guards were under Methuen’s command, especially during the first few months between October and December when the British army experienced the total onslaught of Boer fire-power and defensive tactics, much marching was done when the men were hungry, and when they did not have enough clothing, nor the right equipment. Major-General Sir Henry Edward Colvile, K.C.M.G., C.B. testified on 26 February 1903 that concerning equipment distribution, it “reached the 9<sup>th</sup> Division at irregular intervals, and sometimes articles of clothing, such as boots, were completely worn out before they arrived.”<sup>1096</sup> Colvile moreover told the Commissioners that, in his opinion, the “food supply was extremely irregular. The greater part of the march from Modder River to Bloemfontein was done on half rations. After leaving Bloemfontein, the 9<sup>th</sup> Division rarely got a full ration.”<sup>1097</sup> Despite later improvements, co-ordinating the distribution of supplies continued to suffer.<sup>1098</sup> Nevertheless, Kitchener contended that all was plentiful and of an acceptable standard when urged to respond by the Commission.<sup>1099</sup> Indeed, he continued, “I consider that the soldier was better fed than in any previous campaign ... Complaints were few and far between ... and the majority were of a trivial

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<sup>1094</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>1095</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1096</sup> Major-General Sir Henry Edward Colvile, K.C.M.G., C.B., 26/02/1903, Question 16974. Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F18), *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission On The War In South Africa. Volume II* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), p. 287.

<sup>1097</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1098</sup> Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902*, pp. 324.

<sup>1099</sup> Kitchener, 14/10/1902, Question 190, *Minutes of Evidence. Volume I*, p. 9.

nature, which speaks well for the sufficiency of the ration and the general quality of the food supplied.”<sup>1100</sup>

However, these were not the only problems the men and their regimental officers had to contend with. Above all, centralising the regimental transport system caused much controversy, as stated previously in the current chapter. When questioned about this, Kitchener stated to the Commission that managing transport efficiently under the old arrangement was challenging, thus making the army dependent on the South African railway lines.<sup>1101</sup> Whereas with the new scheme, Kitchener explained:

Transport companies which took over the transport on charge of the units [were] formed into transport companies whose chief duty it was to carry food, forage, stores, and equipment for a mobile force, operating at a distance from the railway. These companies also provided the convoys necessary to furnish the Army in the field with food and ammunition. These measures admitted of the transport being effectively handled and utilised.<sup>1102</sup>

Likewise, Roberts defended his decision to implement the new transport system in a submitted report to the Commission, saying that “selected transport officers, with previous experience of the management of mules and control of European and Native subordinates, are better acquainted with their duties than ordinary regimental officers.”<sup>1103</sup> On the other hand, Methuen thought that “it is a very great thing for a regiment to know all about their own transport ... The

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<sup>1100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1101</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>1102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1103</sup> Field Marshal The Right Hon. Earl Roberts, K.G., K.P., G.C.B., O.M., G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., Report, Appendix No. 33 A, Question 10506. Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F19), *Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission On The War In South Africa* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), p. 235. For more on African and Coloured transport workers in the South African War see, Bill Nasson, ‘Moving Lord Kitchener: Black Military Transport and Supply Work in the South African War, 1899-1902, with Particular Reference to the Cape Colony’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*. 11, No. 1 (1984), pp. 25-51.

system ... certainly caused friction, and at once disheartened the regimental officer, who at the time the change was made was taking very great trouble about his transport.”<sup>1104</sup>

Owing to this, Methuen declared his support for the regimental system and said he felt it a shame to have been altered.<sup>1105</sup> One reason for the change in transport was that regimental transport was fine in a ‘small war’ campaign but unsuitable for the large army wielded by Roberts and Kitchener. However, the centralised system only worked insofar as the war remained conventional.<sup>1106</sup> As a result, when the conflict transformed into guerrilla warfare from September 1900 onwards, the centralised transport system was dismantled to accommodate the needs of the various mobile columns in their pursuit of Boer commandos.<sup>1107</sup> Despite the reversal, transport remained a thorny issue as late as 1902. Codrington remarked on 1 March that “I hear it is accepted that columns in [the] Cape Colony are not to live on the country and have therefore to drag their provisions about them in waggons! If this is true, it is the most discreditable thing I have heard yet I think.”<sup>1108</sup>

Even so, when Major-General Geoffrey Barton, C.B., C.M.G., was called and examined on Friday, 20 February 1903, he also expressed his preference for regimental transport “because I believe the supervision is much superior. It is better supervised by the regimental authorities; that they are more interested in it personally; their whole comfort and everything depends on it.”<sup>1109</sup> As with Barton, Methuen also believed that “regimental officers take immense trouble about their transport. They generally appoint a very good officer for it and take great pride in

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<sup>1104</sup> Methuen, 13/02/1903, Question 14323, *Minutes of Evidence. Volume II*, p. 127.

<sup>1105</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1106</sup> Atwood, *Roberts and Kitchener in South Africa 1900-1902*, p. 115.

<sup>1107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>1108</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 01/03/1902.

<sup>1109</sup> Major-General Geoffrey Barton, C.B., C.M.G., 20/02/1903, Question 1626. Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives (3F18), *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Royal Commission On The War In South Africa. Volume II* (London, Wyman and Sons, 1903), p. 250.



it.”<sup>1110</sup> Having said that, Roberts was adamant that “the regimental officer, however zealous, is an amateur, and the departmental transport officer is a professional.”<sup>1111</sup> Nevertheless, Roberts’s dismissive response was another tactic to detract attention from higher command incompetence.<sup>1112</sup> Even though senior command failings were a crucial factor that contributed to the course of events in the South African War, all aspects of the British army system had to be investigated if any improvements were to be made.<sup>1113</sup> Pole-Carew told the Royal Commission, “what is wanted is a man who can lead men ... [with] intelligence.”<sup>1114</sup> Because of this, in 1903, reformers looked at ways to improve officer education and training.

### III

#### Inter-War Reforms (1903-1914)

In March 1903, a report produced by the Akers-Douglas Committee indicated that the War Office had provided limited opportunities for the advancement of officer education and put forward some suggestions on how it could be improved.<sup>1115</sup> For instance, the committee members recommended it would be more beneficial if a practice-based learning system were instead incorporated and promotion awarded solely through merit.<sup>1116</sup> Moreover, the report concluded that insufficient officer training led to a weaker army and pointed out that the issue with officer training was systemic.<sup>1117</sup> The reason, they said, was due to limited incentives within the system that encouraged and fostered a willingness within the officer to learn and

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<sup>1110</sup> Methuen, 13/02/1903, Question 14323, *Minutes of Evidence. Volume II*, p. 127.

<sup>1111</sup> Roberts, Appendix No. 33 A, Question 10506, *Appendices to the Minutes of Evidence*, p. 235.

<sup>1112</sup> Bond, *The Victorian Staff College 1854-1914*, p. 182.

<sup>1113</sup> J. Gooch, ‘Britain and the Boer War’, in G.J. Andreopoulos & H.E. Selesky (eds.), *The Aftermath of Defeat. Societies, Armed Forces, and the Challenge of Recovery* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1994), p. 54.

<sup>1114</sup> Pole-Carew, 24/02/1903, Questions 16541-16601, *Minutes of Evidence. Volume II*, pp. 262-264.

<sup>1115</sup> Douglas E. Delaney, *The Imperial Project. Britain and the Land Forces of the Dominions and India 1902-1945* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017), p. 49.

<sup>1116</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1117</sup> Gooch, ‘Britain and the Boer War’, p. 44.

advance professional knowledge.<sup>1118</sup> Instead, what was apparent was that training consisted of long lazy days of doing very little, followed by short, intense cram sessions studying.<sup>1119</sup> For example, at the two cadet colleges of Woolwich and Sandhurst, Douglas E. Delaney argues, “far too much time [was] spent on inspections, show parades ... and not nearly enough time devoted to reflection and real learning.”<sup>1120</sup> Such a *laissez-faire* approach was mirrored in officer training. However, owing to criticism of the quality of staff officers in the South African War, it was decided that the best way to lessen officers’ inadequacies was to focus on improving staff officer failings.<sup>1121</sup> As a result, the committee suggested that the Staff College programme be updated and improved and this commenced in 1903 until 1906 under the auspice of Sir Henry Rawlinson.<sup>1122</sup> Rawlinson’s reform measures of the Staff College curriculum reduced the amount and emphasis placed on exams. Instead, he prioritised continued and regular evaluation, and its course content was revised and updated, including both the South African War and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905).<sup>1123</sup> According to Anthony Clayton, “staff officers were now trained in common standardised operational procedures and responsibilities.”<sup>1124</sup>

Nevertheless, opportunities for regimental officer professional development were few and far between, further complicated by determining what a command post entailed and how to distinguish it from that of a staff post.<sup>1125</sup> It was also unclear whether attending Staff College

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<sup>1118</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-5.

<sup>1119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1120</sup> Delaney, *The Imperial Project. Britain and the Land Forces of the Dominions and India 1902-1945*, p. 49.

<sup>1121</sup> Gooch, ‘Britain and the Boer War’, pp. 44-5.

<sup>1122</sup> Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>1123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1124</sup> Anthony Clayton, *The British Officer. Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present* (Harrow, Pearson Education Limited, 2007), p. 153.

<sup>1125</sup> Bowman & Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914*, pp. 39-40.

was a requirement to be able to fill either a command or a staff post.<sup>1126</sup> Improving the lot of the staff officers did little for the regimental officer since the army depended on the public school system to supply its cadre of officers.<sup>1127</sup> As such, public schools opposed any deviation from their trait-based curricula.<sup>1128</sup> Being loyal, compliant and obedient were deemed far more critical than intellectualism and being informed about political issues. In essence, a public school education was based on valuing character and self-assuredness.<sup>1129</sup>

As Christopher Blackwood Otley explains, “the social pre-conditions for an [Edwardian] army commission [remained to have] private means and a public school education.”<sup>1130</sup> For this reason, the Edwardian regimental army officer’s social background and class remained the same. In terms of recruitment, therefore, nothing had really changed. In the case of the upper echelon, Ian F.W. Beckett has suggested that in the years following 1904, even though there were new personalities to contend with, the mechanics of selection and promotion in the military chugged along in the same fashion as it had back in the late Victorian army alongside a deficiency in opportunities for higher command training.<sup>1131</sup> Apart from the issue of inadequate officer education and training, further inquiries into the War Office administrative apparatus were required to avoid repeating mistakes made during the South African War.<sup>1132</sup> Inefficient army organisation and poor management and administration by the War Office contributed to why the military struggled to beat the Boers and needed to be addressed.<sup>1133</sup>

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<sup>1126</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1127</sup> Gooch, ‘Britain and the Boer War’, p. 55.

<sup>1128</sup> Travers, *The Killing Ground. The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare 1900-1918*, p. 5.

<sup>1129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1130</sup> Christopher Blackwood Otley, ‘The Social Origins of British Army Officers’, *Sociological Review*. 18, No. 2 (1970), p. 234.

<sup>1131</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. 247.

<sup>1132</sup> Hamer, *The British Army. Civil-Military Relations 1885-1905*, p. 207.

<sup>1133</sup> R.H. Sinnreich, ‘An Army Apart. The influence of Culture in the Victorian Army’, in P.R. Mansoor & W. Murray (eds.), *The Culture of Military Organisations* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 177.

Because of this, in 1904, the Esher Committee, led by Reginald Baliol Brett, second Viscount Esher, examined the mechanics of the War Office in a decidedly resolute way that went beyond that of any similar investigation.<sup>1134</sup>

Esher was under no illusion that to rectify any military issues, it was the War Office which needed reforming first, and as Douglas E. Delaney so succinctly puts it, “the nerve centre had to be fixed before anything else could be accomplished.”<sup>1135</sup> In the first instance, it meant the outright abolition of the office of the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>1136</sup> Further reforms comprised creating the position of Chief of the General Staff (CGS), adding an affixed administrative office to the Committee of Imperial Defence (CID), and forming an Army Council.<sup>1137</sup> Esher’s measures had the potential for improved dialogue and deliberation, but there was no certainty that they would eradicate discontent between civilians and soldiers.<sup>1138</sup> Essentially, what this meant for Esher’s plan to be successful, was that it very much depended on who would be selected to carry out his vision and whether those officers appointed to the Army Council would be capable and efficient.<sup>1139</sup> The Esher Committee members were insistent that the new measures would fail abysmally if the current regime of officers in the War Office remained; they believed that a complete overhaul of personnel was necessary and the domination of the old guard (Roberts and his ring of officers) had to end.<sup>1140</sup> In addition, they suggested that a general staff was required to modernise the British army further.<sup>1141</sup>

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<sup>1134</sup> Keith Surridge, *Managing the South African War, 1899-1902. Politicians v. Generals* (Bury St. Edmunds, St. Edmundsbury Press, 1998), p. 74.

<sup>1135</sup> Delaney, *The Imperial Project. Britain and the Land Forces of the Dominions and India 1902-1945*, p. 9.

<sup>1136</sup> Searle, ‘National Efficiency and the ‘Lessons’ of the War’, p. 201.

<sup>1137</sup> Beckett, ‘Selection by Disparagement: Lord Esher, the General Staff and the Politics of Command’, p. 41.

<sup>1138</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>1139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41; 44.

<sup>1140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>1141</sup> Gerard J. De Groot, *Blighty. British Society in the Era of the Great War* (London, Longman, 1996), p. 23.

As a result, the General Staff was created when the post of Commander-in-Chief of the British army was abolished in 1904.<sup>1142</sup> In 1906, its title was changed to that of the Imperial General Staff by Richard Burdon Haldane, Secretary of State for War.<sup>1143</sup> Between 1906 and 1912, Haldane formed the British Expeditionary Force (BEF).<sup>1144</sup> In creating the BEF, he needed to consider that there was still no clear remit for the British army as a military force – was its purpose defending at home, policing the Empire, or European engagement?<sup>1145</sup> However, irrespective of what purpose the army was meant to serve, the real driving force behind Haldane's efforts to set up an efficient military force was that it had to be done within a strict budget.<sup>1146</sup> Restricted to only having access to limited funds and not matters concerning the continent at the time was what ultimately steered Haldane's reform measures.<sup>1147</sup>

Consequently, the disbandment of sections of the Royal Garrison Artillery (RGA) and Royal Field Artillery (RFA) and nine infantry battalions of the regular army took place.<sup>1148</sup> Because of this, Haldane subsequently restructured the infantry into six divisions and the cavalry into one division.<sup>1149</sup> In addition, new special reserves were created from the existing Militia for home defence purposes.<sup>1150</sup> Haldane also organised the Volunteer forces as the new Territorial Force (TF), comprising the infantry (fourteen divisions) and the cavalry (fourteen brigades).<sup>1151</sup> Haldane also created a trained officer reserve, the Officer Training Corps (OTC), which aimed

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<sup>1142</sup> Beckett, 'Selection by Disparagement: Lord Esher, the General Staff and the Politics of Command', p. 41.

<sup>1143</sup> De Groot, *Blighty. British Society in the Era of the Great War*, p. 24.

<sup>1144</sup> Satre, 'St. John Broderick and Army Reform, 1901-1903', p. 117.

<sup>1145</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, Timothy Bowman & Mark Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 7.

<sup>1146</sup> Searle, 'National Efficiency and the 'Lessons' of the War', pp. 203-4.

<sup>1147</sup> De Groot, *Blighty. British Society in the Era of the Great War*, p. 24.

<sup>1148</sup> Beckett, Bowman & Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War*, p. 8.

<sup>1149</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>1150</sup> Spiers, 'Between the South African War and the First World War, 1902-14', p. 31.

<sup>1151</sup> Beckett, Bowman & Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War*, pp. 7-8.

to serve as a body of publicly schooled and university-educated Volunteer officers for both the regular army and the territorial forces.<sup>1152</sup>

Meanwhile, by 1908, the critical lack of qualified staff officers compelled Haldane to take the unusual step of forming a partnership with the London School of Economics (LSE), where certain chosen officers were explicitly trained in administrative and organisational-based subjects such as business studies, organising railways, preparing contracts, and becoming proficient in accounting.<sup>1153</sup> Notably, Haldane increased the yearly minimum graduate numbers from eleven to forty-three and, owing to this, increased the number of staff officers to form a better-trained staff, producing a nerve centre to improve the overall functioning of the War Office.<sup>1154</sup>

## Conclusion

Chapter Five has provided a middle command perspective of senior officer failures in South Africa through Coldstream Guards' regimental officers' responses to senior command's conduct during the conflict. Significantly, such an approach has shed new light on British army generalship and contributed to the existing scholarship on higher command conduct during the South African War. This chapter evaluated the impact of the South African War on the development of British military professionalism by integrating middle command grievances during the war and senior command rebuttals in the immediate aftermath of the conflict alongside a discussion of the subsequent reforms between 1903 and 1914.<sup>1155</sup> Thus, to what

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<sup>1152</sup> Ibid., pp. 8; 17.

<sup>1153</sup> Delaney, *The Imperial Project. Britain and the Land Forces of the Dominions and India 1902-1945*, pp. 50-1.

<sup>1154</sup> Ibid., pp. 50; 53.

<sup>1155</sup> Also, see the now-dated, but still valuable work by Colonel John K. Dunlop, *The Development of the British Army 1899-1914. From the Eve of the South African War to the Eve of the Great War, with Special Reference to the Territorial Force* (London, Methuen, 1938).

extent were the various reforming measures successful after intense scrutiny of commissions and committees?<sup>1156</sup>

In the case of its officer recruitment base, there was no change in the inter-war years as it remained drawn from a small part of Edwardian society.<sup>1157</sup> For this reason, the social class of Edwardian army officers remained elitist, exclusive, and public-schooled. Moreover, within the higher echelon of the Edwardian army, the emphasis on, and influence of, character and gentlemanliness prevalent in the Victorian army remained strong on the eve of the First World War.<sup>1158</sup> It has been said that patronage continued to be a powerful influence on the personalised nature of the army after the end of the South African War and before the outbreak of the First World War, even to the extent of having a destructive impact on how the First World War was conducted.<sup>1159</sup> Still, Tim Travers believes that:

This does not mean that at the lower levels the army was not well trained and well led in 1914, or that serious efforts were not being made to modernise and re-equip the army in the Edwardian period, despite financial restrictions, but simply that the ethos and attitudes of the officer corps at the higher levels of command were often traditional, leading to the existence of an unofficial personalised system, through which the army operated.<sup>1160</sup>

Despite this, following the South African War, the British army questioned every aspect of military thinking and forced it to review its training, tactics, and equipment.<sup>1161</sup> Battling the Boers in South Africa was a complex undertaking where the army had to overcome the challenges presented by harsh conditions and rugged terrain, a skilled Boer opponent armed

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<sup>1156</sup> Spiers, 'Between the South African War and the First World War, 1902-14', p. 24.

<sup>1157</sup> Bowman & Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army, 1902-1914*, p. 39.

<sup>1158</sup> Otley, 'The Social Origins of British Army Officers', p. 232.

<sup>1159</sup> Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army*, p. 247.

<sup>1160</sup> Travers, *The Killing Ground. The British Army, the Western Front and the Emergence of Modern Warfare 1900-1918*, p. 6.

<sup>1161</sup> Bowman & Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training and Deploying the British Army 1902-1914*, p. 1.

with modern weapons, and a guerrilla war. Taking these factors into account, what lessons were learnt, and if so, how were they applied? At regimental level, according to Anthony Clayton, “infantry training absorbed the main lessons of South Africa ... using ground tactically in fire and movement, camouflage, digging in and shooting accurately at medium and long ranges.”<sup>1162</sup> Indeed, as Edward M. Spiers asserts, the South African War “transformed the fighting capacity of the army [and] the changes found reflection in the preparation, fieldcraft and rifle skills of the British Expeditionary Force of 1914.”<sup>1163</sup> On the whole, tactical lessons learnt from the South African conflict contributed significantly to the readiness of the British Expeditionary Force.<sup>1164</sup> Setting aside the differences in opinion for a moment on when the transformation and professionalisation of the British army occurred (this will be further discussed in the conclusion of this thesis), it can be said that from the ashes of the conflict in South Africa rose a more professional military force.

Notably, the conflict also ruined the reputations of some of its leading generals who fought the Boer forces.<sup>1165</sup> For example, in December 1899, Lord Methuen told Major Shute that he had overheard two private soldiers discussing General Redvers Buller and the dismal state of affairs at the time. According to Methuen, the one soldier said to the other, “I say, Bill, I hear old Buller is going in for a divorce” the other one said, “No, really, how do you know?”. One “I have just heard from a pal of mine at Cape Town who says Buller sits indoors & mopes & thinks of nothing else but Lady(S)mith.”<sup>1166</sup> The South African War may have shattered the military careers of senior commanders like Buller, but it also shaped the future career paths of some regimental officers and their ideas of empire. In particular, the professional connection

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<sup>1162</sup> Clayton, *The British Officer. Leading the Army from 1660 to the Present*, p. 152.

<sup>1163</sup> Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902*, p. 329.

<sup>1164</sup> Spencer Jones, *From Boer War to World War* (Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), p. 14.

<sup>1165</sup> Searle, ‘National Efficiency and the ‘Lessons’ of the War’, p. 201.

<sup>1166</sup> National Army Museum, Shute, Letters, 03/12/1899.



made during the conflict between Major Shute and Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster, Member of Parliament (MP) for West Belfast, is significant to Shute's post-war career progression and will be further discussed in the concluding chapter of this work.

# CONCLUSION

## I

“Coldstream Guards [commanding officers] are indignant at the ‘reward for three years’ service in South Africa in being all tarred with the same brush and called inefficient and accused of not being keen. I would give a good deal to be able to give evidence.”<sup>1167</sup> These words written by Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington encapsulate how the battalion commander’s performance in South Africa was perceived after the war. The officers were outraged, said Codrington, that there existed even the mere acceptance of the idea of inefficiency, want of zeal and lack of initiative within mid-level leadership as the upper echelon claimed.<sup>1168</sup> Indeed, as David French points out, “many of the most astringent criticisms of the lack of professional commitment of regimental officers were made in the wake of the setbacks of the Boer War.”<sup>1169</sup>

This thesis is framed by reference to the Royal Commission of 1902, tasked to investigate the British army’s performance in the South African war when the middle-ranking tier of military leadership was strongly criticised. The generals’ testimonies, says French, ultimately “produced a distorted vision of the professionalism of the regimental officer corps.”<sup>1170</sup> Because of this, the present study contested the validity of the claims made by senior commanders who testified in front of the Commission that mistakes made in the war were due to inefficient regimental officer command and leadership practices. In fact, it was the Higher

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<sup>1167</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, Diary, (F1C30), 12/07/1902; 11/08/1902.

<sup>1168</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 12/07/1902; 11/08/1902.

<sup>1169</sup> David French, *Military Identities. The Regimental System, the British Army, & the British People c. 1870-2000* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 146.

<sup>1170</sup> French, *Military Identities. The Regimental System, the British Army, & the British People c. 1870-2000*, pp. 146-7.

Command's lack of professionalism and poor leadership performance that impacted army efficiency in the war, as displayed through sheer ineptitude or personal ambition, alongside clashes and rivalries that impeded the success rate of the British army against the Boers and contributed to failures in South Africa. Senior command failings strengthen the thesis argument that mistakes made in the war were not due to a lack of professional commitment from the Coldstream Guards' middle command and leadership practices in the South African War.

Scholars have done much work on command and leadership in the British army, but none have focused on the South African War. Given the significance of this war, such an oversight is a crucial omission. Addressing this, however, promises to shed further light on reforms implemented after the war to improve command and leadership practices which the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) took with them when the First World War broke out in 1914. Some reforms instituted included proposals made by the Akers-Douglas Committee in 1903 into officer education and training and the Esher Committee on improving the functioning of the War Office in 1904. Additionally, between 1906 and 1912, the Secretary of State for War, Richard Burdon Haldane, created the General Staff and British Expeditionary Force (BEF).<sup>1171</sup> Indeed, as Tim Travers remarks, the “similarities between the [South African War] and the

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<sup>1171</sup> For more see, Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992); Lowell J. Satre, ‘St. John Broderick and Army Reform, 1901-1903’, *Journal of British Studies*. 15, No. 2 (1976), pp. 117-39; Gwyn Harries-Jenkins, *The Army in Victorian Society* (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977); Keith Surridge, *Managing the South African War, 1899-1902. Politicians v. Generals* (Bury St. Edmunds, St. Edmundsbury Press, 1998); I.F.W. Beckett, ‘Selection by Disparagement: Lord Esher, the General Staff and the Politics of Command’, in D. French & B. Holden Reid (eds.), *The British General Staff. Reform and Innovation c.1890-1939* (London, Routledge, 2002), pp. 41-56; Gerard J. De Groot, *Blighty. British Society in the Era of the Great War* (London, Longman, 1996); Ian F.W. Beckett, Timothy Bowman & Mark Connelly, *The British Army and the First World War* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017); E.M. Spiers, ‘Between the South African War and the First World War, 1902-14’, in H. Strachan (ed.), *Big Wars and Small Wars. The British Army and the Lessons of War in the Twentieth Century* (London, Routledge, 2006), pp. 21-35.

First World War, from the point of view of the British army, suggest an historical periodisation that links these two wars together.”<sup>1172</sup>

Where studies have looked at the British army in the South African War, scholars have focused on the generals on the one hand and ordinary soldiers on the other. As a result, this thesis is the first scholarly study of middle-ranking British army officers in the South African War, one that focuses on the experiences of three regimental officers of the Coldstream Guards, Colonel Alfred Edward ‘Coddy’ Codrington, Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, and Major Henry ‘Harry’ Gwynn Dean Shute. This thesis has explored and assessed the performance of these battalion commanders in South Africa to understand how, and with what effectiveness, they adapted to their roles within the unfamiliar and challenging situation presented by the South African conflict.

## II

The conflict began in October 1899 as a conventional war and was characterised by set-piece battles and changed to guerrilla warfare in the mid-1900s. This thesis assessed the challenges the British army faced in the first phase of the conflict when attempting to wage war against a highly adept, skilled, knowledgeable opponent. Under Lord Methuen’s command, the Coldstream Guards saw action during the initial engagements with the Boers at Belmont (23 November), Modder River (28 November), and Magersfontein (11 December). These encounters exemplify tactical mistakes made by the army and demonstrate the army’s unpreparedness to face a defensive foe, well-armed with modern rifles and artillery firing bullets and shells that contained cordite – making the enemy almost impossible to locate,

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<sup>1172</sup> Tim Travers, ‘The Hidden Army: Structural Problems in the British Officer Corps, 1900-1918’, *Journal of Contemporary History*. 17, No. 3 (1982), p. 544.

engage and subjugate. Fatal errors in judgement by senior command exposed the army to Boer fire that inflicted heavy casualties.

In the heat of battle, it was the duty of battalion and company officers to ensure discipline and order prevailed among the ranks. Shute's handling of the troops at Magersfontein demonstrated his steadfastness as a commander and showed that he could respond effectively to challenges on the battlefield despite facing a dire situation. Under devastating fire, Shute advanced with half No. 8 company and cut through a wired fence. Continuing his advance, while collecting more men, Shute's force eventually managed to get as close as four hundred yards from the Boers.<sup>1173</sup> The men were terrified, and Shute did what was necessary to stop these petrified soldiers from running away, telling them he would order them to be shot should they even try.<sup>1174</sup> These kinds of battlefield experiences of the Coldstream regimental officers show that even under the most trying circumstances and in the face of great danger, they performed their duties as well as they could be expected.

Scholars have written about what lessons in tactics and training could be learnt from the war.<sup>1175</sup> They have moreover likened the British army experience in South Africa to that of a 'learning curve', because by underestimating their Boer opponent, the British army suffered failures and heavy casualties during the initial few months of the war. These setbacks revealed

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<sup>1173</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, *Digest of Services. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards 1899-1902 compiled by Lieutenant Colonel H. Shute D.S.O.*, Official Diary, (1GD), 27/11/1899.

<sup>1174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1175</sup> Edward M. Spiers, 'Reforming the Infantry of the Line 1900-1914', *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*. 59, No. 238 (1981), pp. 82-94; Thean D. Potgieter, 'Nineteenth Century Technological Development and its Influence on the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902', *Southern Journal for Contemporary History*. 25, No. 2 (2000), pp. 116-35; Keith Surrridge, *Managing the South African War, 1899-1902. Politicians v. Generals* (Bury St. Edmunds, St. Edmundsbury Press, 1998); K. Jeffery, 'Kruger's farmers, Strathcona's Horse, Sir George Clarke's camels and the Kaiser's Battleships: the Impact of the South African War on Imperial Defence', in D. Lowry (ed.), *The South African War reappraised* (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2000), pp. 188-202; Edward M. Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1992).

to the British that this conflict was going to be different from anything they had experienced before.<sup>1176</sup>

During the campaign to relieve Kimberley in 1899, it became apparent to Henniker and Codrington that Methuen had neither understood nor acted on intelligence available to him, and because of this, did not execute an accurate reconnaissance before the attack at Modder River.<sup>1177</sup> The Coldstream Guards were aware of the shortage of up-to-date maps and, in frustration, improvised their own for the advance north from Orange River Station to Kimberley. Lieutenant George Windsor-Clive recalled he was “sent with Newton Butler to the Intelligence Office at Orange River Station [to] make copies of a rough map of the country ... which had lately been drawn.”<sup>1178</sup> Methuen admitted to Codrington that due to the changing nature of warfare, intelligence-gathering methods that were successful before the South African War no longer sufficed and simply did not produce the results they had previously.<sup>1179</sup> Indeed, Major Edward Seymour’s diary entry on 22 March 1900 demonstrates how much war had changed and how necessary well-executed intelligence was needed when retreating Boers were blowing up bridges as the British were advancing northwards. At Modder River, the “bridge was badly damaged by dynamite, might have been saved as Intelligence Department were warned in plenty of time, but of course, sent 100 men 12 hours too late - just like the Intelligence Department!”<sup>1180</sup>

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<sup>1176</sup> Edward M. Spiers, ‘The Learning Curve in the South African War: Soldiers’ Perspectives’, *Historia*. 55, No. 1 (2010), pp. 1-17.

<sup>1177</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker, Diary, (F1C29), 17/02/1900.

<sup>1178</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Lieutenant George Windsor-Clive, Diary, (12067), 16/11/1899.

<sup>1179</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 21/12/1899.

<sup>1180</sup> National Army Museum, Diary of Major Sir Edward Seymour, January-May 1900, Grenadier Guards, Catalogue No: 2016-10-23-74, 22/3/1900.

As a result, Coldstream Guards' regimental officers demonstrated the required initiative, particularly regarding intelligence gathering and scouting. In January 1900, Henniker's suggestion to form scouts in each regiment was met with approval, and physical drill and training of six men per company were instituted.<sup>1181</sup> They also conducted raids, gathering intelligence and located Boers who were in hiding.<sup>1182</sup> For example, at Klipdrift, south of Kimberley, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Edward Longueville wrote in February 1900 that the scouts had learned of:

A Dutchman named Nel hiding somewhere near. His daughter came to the door and on our telling her that we knew her father was not far away, she swore that he was in Natal and they had never heard from him and that they thought he was dead etc. [but] the scoundrel [was found] sitting behind a bush watching us.<sup>1183</sup>

As such, Henniker's battalion scouts were a successful addition to the reconnaissance efforts of the mobile columns of the Coldstream Guards.<sup>1184</sup> In this way, middle command professionalisation demonstrated that they could adapt their command practices and contribute to British successes in the conflict. However, as Edward M. Spiers explains, the Boers "prolonged the war by exploiting their superior horsemanship, scouting skills and knowledge of the country."<sup>1185</sup> This dogged persistence from Boer *bittereinders* (bitter-enders) prevented a swift end to hostilities.<sup>1186</sup> Coldstream Guards officers now had to face an entirely different kind of warfare as Boer saboteurs kept the British constantly busy with repairs to cut telegraph lines and equipment.<sup>1187</sup> Captain Eric Thomas Hanbury-Tracey recalled that on arrival at Kaapmuiden, situated to the east of Nelspruit, the Coldstream Guards found that "the Boers

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<sup>1181</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 21/12/1899; 18/01/1900.

<sup>1182</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Edward Longueville, Diary, (F1C40), 23/02/1900.

<sup>1183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1185</sup> Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902*, p. 312.

<sup>1186</sup> Thomas G. Fergusson, *British Military Intelligence, 1870-1914. The Development of a Modern Intelligence Organisation* (London, Arms and Armour Press, 1984), p. 161.

<sup>1187</sup> Bill Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle For South Africa* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2010), pp. 233-4.

had retreated after setting fire to all stores & railway trucks, & disabling engines ... Large amount of flour &c. covered with paraffin oil & burning.”<sup>1188</sup> In response to Boer tactics, the Coldstream Guards were obliged to carry out practices that they had not envisaged when the war started. When the Coldstream Guards marched from Bloemfontein to Pretoria in April 1900, Longueville commented on the British destruction of Boer property, of “burning the farms” and confiscating livestock in the wake of the advance.<sup>1189</sup> Later, farm burning and imprisonment of non-combatants in concentration camps radically increased Boer resolve as the *bittereinders* continued to hold an unwavering belief in pursuing freedom.<sup>1190</sup> British military leadership mistakenly thought the Boers would succumb to the implementation of a scorched earth policy, but it only served to lengthen the conflict. To illustrate, six months before the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards executed him on 18 January 1902, Commandant Gideon Scheepers wrote to General Christiaan de Wet, saying, “the blood of too many brave burghers had been shed for them to give up the struggle. The mere thought of leaving to the rising generation a legacy of servitude to Britain made them adamant that they would fight to the death.”<sup>1191</sup>

Despite this, the British army adapted its tactics and operations to the peculiarities of the conflict. They did so by forming mobile columns to chase roving Boer commandos, constructing blockhouses to restrict Boer mobility, and employing African and Coloured auxiliaries as scouts and guides to hasten an end to hostilities. During this time, communications technology such as the telegraph and telephone allowed Coldstream Guards battalion officers to monitor Boer commandos and deploy and coordinate troop movements

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<sup>1188</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Captain Eric Thomas Henry Hanbury-Tracey, Diary, (12326), 19/09/1900.

<sup>1189</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 26/04/1900.

<sup>1190</sup> Fransjohan Pretorius, *Life on Commando During The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902* (Cape Town, Human & Rousseau, 1999), p. 330.

<sup>1191</sup> *Ibid.*



and mobile columns. These technological advances were also used in blockhouses; as Lieutenant Sir Walter Barttelot explained, the battalion's blockhouses were all "pretty nearly complete and well-defended as possible and a system of telephones, by which [soldiers] may be in speaking communication with one another."<sup>1192</sup> The Coldstream Guards' use of Boer collaborators also advanced British war efforts by increasing clandestine operations by infiltrating Boer commandos.<sup>1193</sup>

In Shute's case, an ever-increasing network of spies and informants proved very useful in providing information. At times, Shute alternated his spies since the Boer commandos were such a tight-knit community and fighters were on familiar terms with one another. "Delport spy came back, Scheepers would not let him join Commando. He says Boers are entrenched at Langefontein ... Bower, spy to Kritzinger came in, he learnt Kritzinger had gone to see Botha, but Herzog, Fouche, Malan were with Commando. Herzog knows him, so he could not join them."<sup>1194</sup> Henniker recalled one such spy, Pieter Momberg, was "a cheerful youth and is getting quite military. He is a good hand at giving his pals away."<sup>1195</sup> It is thus vital to distinguish the different phases of the war as they each posed distinctive challenges – especially the guerrilla phase, which required significant adaptation and adjustment by the officers and the men, and where a higher degree of individualism and initiative was demanded of battalion officers in order to bring the war to an end.

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<sup>1192</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Lieutenant Sir Walter Barttelot, Letters, (12324), 18/08/1901.

<sup>1193</sup> Nasson, *The Boer War. The Struggle For South Africa*, p. 236.

<sup>1194</sup> Wellington Barracks, Coldstream Guards Regimental Archives, Major Henry 'Harry' Gwynn Dean Shute, Diary, (F1D22), 01-09/07/1901.

<sup>1195</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 19/09/1901.

### III

This thesis additionally focused on the gender identities and roles of the three protagonists and the significance of these assumed and ascribed identities for officers and soldiering. A gender framework helped better understand the self-identities of the three primary case studies and the enactment of their roles as commanders and leaders. This approach illustrated how notions of class superiority and martial manliness shaped their decision-making, command practices, leadership styles, and relationships. Using hitherto un-examined archives of the Coldstream Guards, this case study shed light on both mid-level leadership and an elite regiment, about which little is known about its South African War role and experience. Furthermore, a close micro-history of three mid-level leaders offered a prism through which to tell a larger story of regimental officer command and leadership practices could be told. Doing so permitted a micro-historical focus that provided a more nuanced account of their contributions to scholarship.

Additionally, the availability of sources such as private letters and diaries allowed for a cultural history that illuminated aspects of the lived experience of warfare and the complexities of middle command and leadership. The thesis investigated socialised leadership's importance in maintaining relationships during the South African War. It highlighted that positive officer-man relationships were established by Coldstream Guards officers who were concerned about and cared for the wellbeing of their men. These relationships echoed similarities between a landlord and his paternalistic attitudes towards estate tenants and were also influenced by firm convictions of Christian duty and a sense of moral obligation towards others. Moreover, this thesis addressed the homosocial society of regimental life and the significance of the regiment in army socialisation. It has been suggested that the regimental system is the most significant

of British military institutions; it is the principal vehicle of the nation's military culture.<sup>1196</sup> Richard Sinnreich argues that for "officers and other ranks, and especially those on active service, the regiment was home and hearth."<sup>1197</sup> The study demonstrated how vital homosocial relationships and comradeship were to sustain morale and that reliance on one's peers was potentially a matter of life and death.

The thesis additionally focused on the background, identities, and class of the three regimental Coldstream Guards officers. It considered how socialisation and cultural conditioning, such as family life, upbringing and public schooling, informed their leadership and command practices in South Africa. It also discussed how nineteenth-century metropolitan manliness increasingly became more martial in expression. From the mid to late Victorian period, the British were essentially characterised as a militaristic nation, as the army had been involved in many small colonial wars, which helped develop a martial culture emphasising military matters.<sup>1198</sup> It can be said that Victorian militaristic culture was primarily shaped by colonial campaigning, and a highly gendered culture would later inform the actions, behaviours and self-understandings of Codrington, Henniker and Shute in South Africa. Indeed, a relationship existed between 'small wars' and the emergence of a militaristic culture in Britain that influenced the army and suffused civil life, and was closely associated with developing late Victorian masculine ideals and the use of superior race ideologies to justify imperial conquest, war and colonisation.<sup>1199</sup>

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<sup>1196</sup> J. Keegan, 'Regimental Ideologies', in G. Best & A. Wheatcroft (eds.), *War, Economy and the Military Mind* (London, Croom Helm, 1976), p. 16.

<sup>1197</sup> R.H. Sinnreich, 'An Army Apart. The Influence of Culture on the Victorian Army', in P.R. Mansoor & W. Murray (eds.), *The Culture of Military Organizations* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2019), p. 159.

<sup>1198</sup> James A. Mangan, 'Duty onto Death: English Masculinity in the Age of the New Imperialism', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*. 27, Nos. 1-2 (2010), p. 127.

<sup>1199</sup> J.M. MacKenzie, 'Introduction', in J.M. MacKenzie (ed.), *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 3.

Within the testing environment of the South African War, the inculcated cultural conditioning and socialised knowledge of the officers, their upper-class status and landed interest influenced officer conduct in the conflict. For example, scholars have pointed out how the antisemitic attitudes of British army officers generated intense prejudices against Jewish mine owners in Johannesburg.<sup>1200</sup> One antisemitic slur in the diaries of the Coldstream Guards officers that the researcher is aware of is referenced by Henniker when he was in Graaff-Reinet on 13 January 1901, angered by rumours of Jewish businessmen spreading misleading and false information about the British army to aid the Boers.<sup>1201</sup> He wanted the “arrest of all Jew traders. They are passing the word as usual. I arrested six in the course of two days. I had up various prisoners and told them that they have rendered themselves liable to be shot or hanged.”<sup>1202</sup> Such attitudes reveal the class and social attitudes the officers brought from Britain to South Africa. Jewish people, Africans and Coloureds were written about in a racialised way because they were perceived to be ‘other’. It is thus crucial to consider officers’ attitudes, how they fell in with the existing racial order, and how they drew on their own classist and racial attitudes from their cultural conditioning, socialisation and experiences. These also applied to the Boers, particularly how class attitudes powerfully shaped Coldstream Guards officers’ perceptions of both Cape Afrikaners and Republican Boers. For instance, officers’ attitudes depended on a Boer’s rank, status, class, and education. If a Boer was, for example, an educated Cape Afrikaner civilian, the commanders would hold such an individual in higher regard than other Boers. Also, if a Boer were a combatant who held a high rank and was considered a worthy and brave opponent, no matter if he were a Republican, he would be considered highly by the officers.

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<sup>1200</sup> Keith Surridge, ‘All you soldiers are what we call pro-Boer: The Military Critique of the South African War, 1899-1902’, *History*. 82, No. 268 (1997), pp. 582-600.

<sup>1201</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 13/01/1901.

<sup>1202</sup> *Ibid.*

However, before the outbreak of war, British army officers generally thought of the Boers as uncivilised animals, and upon arrival in South Africa, soldiers expected to find, as Helen Bradford writes, a Boer “creature.”<sup>1203</sup> When the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards arrived at Hope Town in the northern Cape Colony in November 1899, Longueville wrote in his diary of his initial encounter with Cape Boers “I saw for the first time the Boer, as there were a lot of them sitting in a store which I went into; a more sulky or disagreeable looking lot I have seldom seen.”<sup>1204</sup> With the capture of the South African Republic’s capital, Pretoria, on 5 June 1900, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards formed the advance guard. On approaching the railway station, it was found that four loaded trains were about to leave in the direction of Komatie Poort. General Reginald ‘Polly’ Pole-Carew ordered the station seized, and the trains stopped.<sup>1205</sup> Longueville’s description of getting near the station illustrates how some officers regarded the Boers when he wrote:

We saw a train moving out; Farquhar, myself, and every mounted man who was near galloped after it ... The train following it was captured, the Coldstream firing a volley into the engine. I was then sent to order the arrest of all the employees ... and we had quite an amusing hunt round the engine sheds as some of them tried to bolt.<sup>1206</sup>

Longueville’s depiction of hunting Boers echoes the British nineteenth-century perception of Boer herds or flocks.<sup>1207</sup> Lord Kitchener initially held a low opinion of the Boers and thought them “savages with only a thin white veneer.”<sup>1208</sup> Kitchener thought that the Boers led an isolated rural lifestyle impervious to the influence of civilisation, and this mindset was

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<sup>1203</sup> H. Bradford, ‘Gentlemen and Boers: Afrikaner Nationalism, Gender, and Colonial Warfare in the South African War’, in G. Cuthbertson, A. Grundlingh, & M. Suttie (eds.), *Writing a Wider War. Rethinking Gender, Race, and Identity in the South African War, 1899-1902* (Athens, Ohio, Ohio University Press, 2002), p. 39.

<sup>1204</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 15/11/1899.

<sup>1205</sup> Wellington Barracks, *Digest of Services*, 05/06/1900.

<sup>1206</sup> Wellington Barracks, Longueville, Diary, 05/06/1900.

<sup>1207</sup> A. Becker, ‘Foreword’, in B. Nasson & A. Grundlingh (eds.), *The War At Home. Women and Families in the Anglo-Boer War* (Cape Town, Tafelberg, 2013), p. 13.

<sup>1208</sup> A. Grundlingh, ‘Why Concentration Camps?’, in B. Nasson & A. Grundlingh (eds.), *The War At Home. Women and Families in the Anglo-Boer War*, pp. 36-7.

characteristic of many British imperialists.<sup>1209</sup> Boers were considered uncultivated and unrestrained.<sup>1210</sup> This perception of Boers as a primitive people is evident in the officers' language for denigrating Boers when Henniker fumed that the burghers "blew off Surgeon Irving's head at about 10 yards range. They are a pack of brutes."<sup>1211</sup> Initially, Henniker wrote of the Boers disparagingly. He believed the Boer men dishonourable, contemptuously calling them "a fearful lot of blackguards."<sup>1212</sup> Above all, Henniker was convinced that "those Boers do not know what Truth means and will do any shady trick."<sup>1213</sup>

That being so, when General Pieter 'Piet' Arnoldus Cronjé and some 4,000 burghers surrendered to Lord Roberts at Paardeberg near Kimberley on 27 February 1900, Henniker had conflicting emotions when he witnessed the surrender and his deeply traditional respect for figures of authority evoked pity for the general.<sup>1214</sup> He commented that seeing Cronjé defeated and paraded in front of the troops; he felt it all to be "a curious sight ... one could not but feel sorry for him as he sat in his wagon smoking a pipe."<sup>1215</sup> Henniker also felt a sense of compassion towards President Marthinus Wessel Pretorius of the Orange Free State, who was originally from Graaff-Reinet, and upon meeting President Pretorius, Henniker declared that Pretorius was a "fine ... old man."<sup>1216</sup> Codrington, also present at the surrender, thought Cronjé "a thick-set fat man with a rather disagreeable face ... with his hat very much down over his eyes, and with the broad brim turned down." He also thought Mrs. Cronjé was "a sickly-looking insignificant person in black."<sup>1217</sup> Shute also remarked that Cronjé looked to him as "a cruel

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<sup>1209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1210</sup> A. Becker, 'Foreword', in B. Nasson & A. Grundlingh (eds.), *The War At Home. Women and Families in the Anglo-Boer War*, p. 13.

<sup>1211</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 02/04/1900.

<sup>1212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1213</sup> Ibid., 18/07/1900.

<sup>1214</sup> Ibid., 27/02/1900.

<sup>1215</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1216</sup> Ibid., 03/12/1900.

<sup>1217</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 27/02/1900.

under-bred sulky sort of chap” and his wife “an old hag.”<sup>1218</sup> Codrington furthermore believed Boers such as Cronjé, who surrendered, fell short of what he believed fighting men ought to be and therefore had no respect for them.<sup>1219</sup> Despite such dislike and low regard, the officers’ attitudes to the Boers were mixed. Many, such as Codrington, believed brave Boer fighters to be “fine” men.<sup>1220</sup> Similarly, after meeting one of Cronjé’s officers, Commandant F.J. Roos, Shute wrote how impressed he was by Roos, that Roos had travelled extensively throughout Europe and thus considered Roos an intelligent and agreeable man who was a merchant and farmer.<sup>1221</sup> Whilst escorting Roos, the two men made conversation, and Shute recorded afterwards:

Roos gave me a visiting card (F.J. Roos, P.O. Box 59, Klerksdorp, S.A.R) and said he hoped we would meet again under more fortunate circumstances. He began the war as a Burgher, was elected Field Cornet inside Kimberley and made a Commandant just before Magersfontein. Roos said that he had been kind to a wounded officer at Paardeberg and for this reason Lord Roberts had allowed him to keep his horse. In talking to Roos, I was careful to avoid any unpleasant topics.<sup>1222</sup>

Other encounters with the Boers affirmed preconceived classist attitudes of the battalion commanders. In March 1900, whilst at Venterstad, a town northeast of Graaff-Reinet, Codrington met with a Boer, Daantje van den Heever, who was a member of the Cape Parliament.<sup>1223</sup> At first, Codrington thought van den Heever was “a very big, dirty-looking, cross old man” but realised van den Heever was an important member of Cape society despite his broken English. Van den Heever offered Codrington grapes and some watermelon. Van den Heever’s four sons were also present and appeared to Codrington as “great, big, fine men” and showed him around the garden and vineyard. They spoke fluent English and were educated

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<sup>1218</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 28/02/1900.

<sup>1219</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 27/02/1900.

<sup>1220</sup> *Ibid.*, 28/02/1900.

<sup>1221</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 28/02/1900.

<sup>1222</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>1223</sup> Wellington Barracks, Codrington, Diary, 19/03/1900.

young men; one was a lawyer in Cape Town.<sup>1224</sup> This encounter left Codrington feeling impressed as he felt he had met burghers who were educated men of the landed class whose status, similar to landowners in Britain, demanded deference from those lower in rank.

As such, the officer had a sense of affinity with Boer landowners and admiration towards brave and worthy Boer fighters. It was especially the case with Commandant Pieter Hendrik Kritzinger. At Graaff-Reinet, Henniker had an opportunity to interview and spend time with the captured Kritzinger in January 1902 and commented, “Kritzinger is not at all a bad sort of man. He had wonderfully recovered from his wounds.”<sup>1225</sup> Henniker also recorded that after a telegram was received from Kritzinger’s *predikant* (reverend) at the end of the month, he was entrusted with guarding Kritzinger and taking him to Middelburg to see the *predikant*. On their journey, the two men conversed, and afterwards, Henniker wrote that he thought Kritzinger to be a charismatic man.<sup>1226</sup>

During their conversation, Kritzinger told Henniker that the Boers did not think much that the British cavalry used lances on the battlefield as they gleamed like beacons of light, making the British vulnerable and easy targets. Kritzinger said that he had some daring escapes when retiring from the British. He also confessed that he found it hard to “hit a galloping animal”, a rare admission as the Boers were known for their accurate shooting, especially when on the chase on horseback.<sup>1227</sup> Barttelot described Kritzinger as a “fine-looking man. Clean-shaven, but for a moustache and of great physical strength. A clean-cut jaw and brilliant features.”<sup>1228</sup> His admiration for Kritzinger as a fighter is evident, saying the Boer commandant was “a brave

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<sup>1224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1225</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 08-9/01/1902.

<sup>1226</sup> Ibid., 31/01-01/02/1902.

<sup>1227</sup> Ibid., 21-2/03/1902; 29/03/1902.

<sup>1228</sup> Wellington Barracks, Barttelot, Letters, 12/01/1902.



man, as he went back for wounded men, no less than 4 times.”<sup>1229</sup> When it came to light Kritzinger was to be tried for his involvement in the war, Henniker met with the commandant again:

I told him that all Englishmen knew that he was a brave man. He seemed pleased. We all feel sympathy with Kritzinger, who is a man of class ... [as he] is to be tried, which is a pity I think.<sup>1230</sup>

However, Henniker learned that Kritzinger would have excellent legal representation during the trial.<sup>1231</sup> Shute assisted with Kritzinger’s trial preparations. He was personally requested by Lord Balfour, who wanted Shute’s opinion concerning Kritzinger’s legal counsel:

Spoke to Balfour on Phonophone re Kritzinger. He then wired to ask whether I thought Auret sufficiently good to defend. I replied no, unless the trial was intended as a farce ... Went through evidence of prosecution in Kritzinger’s case. Court sat 2pm to 5pm ... Saw Kritzinger and his two ADCs afterwards. Four charges of murder and one of derailing ... Asked the Court to see the photos in Intell. Office, by which Jan Lowe identified K. A large photo among a lot of small ones. This breaks down identification in 4<sup>th</sup> charge.<sup>1232</sup>

Henniker recalled that Kritzinger’s trial went well; he was acquitted, and “... everyone is glad. The court shook hands with him, and the well-trained Graaff-Reinet mob made no sign [of trouble] ... I telegraphed to know if he might go to see his Mother at Norval’s Pont.”<sup>1233</sup> After his acquittal, the commandant also wished to thank Shute for ensuring he received a fair trial. Shute said when he met with him, “Kritzinger wanted to give me his watch chain as a memento and is awfully grateful for my help.”<sup>1234</sup> Garrison towns, therefore, played a big part in the evolution of the duties of the Coldstream Guards’ middle commander throughout the conflict. Garrisoning starkly contrasted what regimental officer leadership and command practices were in the field. As such, it can be said that although there were widely shared stereotypes of Boer

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<sup>1229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1230</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 27/01/1902; 16/02/1902; 26/02/1902; 22/03/1902.

<sup>1231</sup> Ibid., 21-2/03/1902; 29/03/1902.

<sup>1232</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 31/03-03/04/1902.

<sup>1233</sup> Wellington Barracks, Henniker, Diary, 05-6/04/1902.

<sup>1234</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 06/04/1902.

culture and society, the officers' attitudes shifted somewhat during the war itself. These were context-dependent (e.g. greater respect shown for educated, seemingly 'genteel' Afrikaners), and the shifts were especially a consequence of day-to-day relationships in the garrison towns of the Cape, in a situation of occupation rather than in the field. In other words, these attitudes of superiority and disdain towards the Boers also shaped regimental leadership culture and relationships. These shifts in attitudes reveal how space and place, race and class, and social conditioning influenced mid-level commanders' perceptions of Boers and their leadership and command practices.

In particular, this thesis has shown how different garrison command in the Cape Colony was from anything the regimental officers had known before, and how no amount of training could have prepared them for what it entailed. Garrison command demanded from the battalion officer a more nuanced response in dealing with civilians under Martial Law; middle command officers had to manage the intricacies of daily life and what that meant for the civilian population. Significantly, this study illustrated that garrison command entailed carefully manipulating political power to ensure effective command conduct. In doing so, it offered fresh insights into the dynamics of civil-military relationships that influenced Coldstream Guards' regimental command practices in South Africa. In switching between military and civil work, officers gained experience dealing with civil duties and learning what civil administration entailed. Civil work allowed the officers to create and strengthen a broader scope of professional networks and to get acquainted with public service, which made for a strong work commitment that increased dutiful service to the Crown and Empire.<sup>1235</sup> Above all, it also shaped middle command officers' imperialistic attitudes and political views.

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<sup>1235</sup> Spiers, *The Late Victorian Army 1868-1902*, p. 259.

## IV

Before the South African War, in the later years of the nineteenth century, the British military became more involved in politics. Despite proclaimed loyalty to Empire, officers maintained that they were, as Spiers argues, “above party politics” and could get involved in processes to do with army reforms.<sup>1236</sup> Such attitudes were undoubtedly true for officers who served in the war and had ideas about army reform and post-war reconstruction in South Africa. Lord Kitchener favoured a more conciliatory approach to constructing the peace and re-integrating the Boers into Britain’s post-war South Africa.<sup>1237</sup> Conversely, Lord Milner wanted absolute defeat, demanded strict terms, and excluded the top Boer cadre from any decisions made in British South Africa.<sup>1238</sup> “A militant ‘British race patriot’ like Milner”, asserts Jose Harris, “grounded his patriotism in defence of an ancient version of the British constitution rather than in an exclusive ethnic chauvinism.”<sup>1239</sup> In other words, Milner was a fervent imperialist who believed in British racial supremacy and that Britain was destined to rule the world.<sup>1240</sup> And so was Shute. In this respect, their ideological and political views aligned.

Shute met Milner on 21 December 1899 in Cape Town when he arranged the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion Coldstream Guards’ baggage and food supplies.<sup>1241</sup> Shute had wanted to further a plan that involved creating an employment scheme to establish a reservists’ depot at Cape Town. The settlement plan attracted attention and support from various political officials, particularly Milner, a great enthusiast of the idea. Milner wrote a series of letters to Joseph Chamberlain

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<sup>1236</sup> Ibid., p. 153.

<sup>1237</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *A British Profession of Arms. The Politics of Command in the Late Victorian Army* (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 2018), p. 244.

<sup>1238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1239</sup> Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit. A Social History of Britain 1870-1914* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 237.

<sup>1240</sup> Saul Dubow, ‘Colonial Nationalism, the Milner Kindergarten and the Rise of ‘South Africanism’, 1902-10’, *History Workshop Journal*. 43, No. 1 (1997), p. 56.

<sup>1241</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 21/12/1899.

during the summer of 1900, and in the correspondence, Milner stated that the settlement plan would be beneficial in redressing the disproportionate population representation between the British and Afrikaners.<sup>1242</sup> Chamberlain also favoured establishing a permanently based large peace-keeping force whilst Anglicising the South African colony.<sup>1243</sup>

A luncheon with Welsh imperialist, Howell ‘Taffy’ Gwynne, Reuters chief correspondent in South Africa, was organised for Shute in March 1900, to meet Rudyard Kipling of *The Times* and flesh out details of the proposed scheme.<sup>1244</sup> After meeting with Gwynne and Kipling, Shute asked Gwynne if he could contact the British government for travel assistance for the wives and families of the soldiers to South Africa. Gwynne also had to request that the government publish articles covering the scheme in British newspapers, which the correspondents in South Africa would send home. Shute meticulously wrote up his notes for Gwynne on the settlement question. Shute penned another letter to Gwynne a few weeks later, towards the end of May 1901, in which he included more details about the settlement scheme.<sup>1245</sup> In the letter, Shute explained:

This scheme of mine was for the double object of (1) Relieving the labour market at home which at the end of the war would be flooded with men out of [employment] ... (2) Planting in South Africa a nucleus of able-bodied men of British blood and loyal sentiments capable of bearing arms and of producing loyal descendants, in fact establishing a British breeding stock.<sup>1246</sup>

In October 1900, General Reginald ‘Polly’ Pole-Carew, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion’s Divisional Commander, also became involved. Intrigued by the scheme, Pole-Carew asked Shute for more information. Pole-Carew then showed the letter Shute had written to Lord Roberts, who was

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<sup>1242</sup> Christian K. Melby, “‘Of Paramount Importance to Our Race’: H.O. Arnold-Forster and South African Soldier-Settlement”, *The Journal of the Historical Association*. 102, No. 352 (2017), p. 604.

<sup>1243</sup> Lowell J. Satre, ‘St. John Broderick and Army Reform, 1901-1903’, *Journal of British Studies*. 15, No. 2 (1976), p. 135.

<sup>1244</sup> Wellington Barracks, Shute, Diary, 20/01/1900.

<sup>1245</sup> *Ibid.*, 28/03/1900; 26/05/1900.

<sup>1246</sup> *Ibid.*

greatly impressed and granted Shute leave to meet with Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster, Member of Parliament (MP) for West Belfast, who was in Cape Town at the time.<sup>1247</sup> Not entirely satisfied that the idea would gain enough attention, Shute wrote to Arnold-Forster to “take it up in the House of Commons.”<sup>1248</sup> However, Arnold-Forster instead appealed to the Press, which angered Shute. Shute told Pole-Carew about Arnold-Forster sending his letter to *The Times*, angrily saying that Arnold-Forster put “HIS signature instead of raising the question in the House of Commons as I wished.”<sup>1249</sup> Not having much luck with Parliament, Shute and Arnold-Forster took their plan to Headquarters in Pretoria to see if anything could be done there but to no avail.<sup>1250</sup> When Shute discovered that Arnold-Forster had no power to act, he wrote to Pole-Carew on 17 October. In the letter, Shute complained that the condition of him joining the 1900 South African Lands Settlement Commission and assisting in the settlement scheme was solely on the basis that Arnold-Forster had the authority to act, saying it was all pointless if Arnold-Forster was unable to do so.<sup>1251</sup> He also bitterly noted that “as far as I could see, A.F. would write a long report embodied in a blue book. This would be presented to Parliament next session and the following day consigned to the waste-paper basket.”<sup>1252</sup> Shute showed Arnold-Forster a copy of the letter he wrote to Pole-Carew. According to Shute, Arnold-Forster was “annoyed” but “took it very well.”<sup>1253</sup>

Nevertheless, when Arnold-Forster returned to Groote Schuur in the Cape, he left Shute his settlement notes for further study and “said I could do as I liked and suggested working on my own to secure places for men in [the] Cape Government Services.”<sup>1254</sup> As a result, Shute had

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<sup>1247</sup> Ibid., 10-11/10/1900.

<sup>1248</sup> Ibid., 01/04/1900.

<sup>1249</sup> Ibid., 05/10/1900.

<sup>1250</sup> Ibid., 28/03/1900; 01/04/1900; 05/10/1900; 07/10/1900; 18/10/1900; 23/10/1900.

<sup>1251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1254</sup> Ibid., 17/10/1900.

some success in furthering the scheme following Arnold-Forster's departure. On 28 August 1901, Shute wrote that he "got leave for 16-time expired men to remain behind at Port Elizabeth and take up civil employment. Selected the men, 15 to join the Harbour Board Police."<sup>1255</sup> It can be said that Shute's plan and involvement in the settlement scheme present a clear example of those united in their ideological beliefs proposing absolute imperial integration in the colony financially and through a permanent military presence.<sup>1256</sup> As Ian F.W. Beckett writes, Shute's involvement may have been borne out of a need to "intervene in politics ... or in circumstances of civil war but, equally, may feel obliged to intervene from their own sense of importance or perhaps frustration."<sup>1257</sup> Shute's professional involvement with Arnold-Forster moreover demonstrated an appreciation for networking with prominent members of parliament that would increase his standing and status, as well as recognising that garnering political support while he was in South Africa could benefit future career prospects. In 1903 Arnold-Forster requested that Lord Roberts use his influence to secure Shute's appointment as his Principal Private Secretary.<sup>1258</sup>

Shute's appointment occurred at a time when Arnold-Forster, then the Secretary of State for War, was carrying out critical army reforms. For example, Beckett explains, Arnold-Forster wanted to "create both long service and short service armies serving simultaneously."<sup>1259</sup> He also did not think much of the Militia and sought a contribution of thirty short-service army battalions to the proposed scheme that would ultimately lead to the disbandment of an

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<sup>1255</sup> Ibid., 29/08/1902.

<sup>1256</sup> Christian K. Melby, "'Of Paramount Importance to Our Race': H.O. Arnold-Forster and South African Soldier-Settlement", p. 615.

<sup>1257</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *A Guide to British Military History* (Barnsley, Pen & Sword Military, 2016), p. 32.

<sup>1258</sup> Christian K. Melby, "'Of Paramount Importance to Our Race': H.O. Arnold-Forster and South African Soldier-Settlement", p. 607.

<sup>1259</sup> Ian F.W. Beckett, *The Amateur Military Tradition, 1558-1945* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1991), p. 209.

additional thirty-four battalions.<sup>1260</sup> Retaining sixty battalions separately from the scheme meant a significant reduction of the volunteers, effectively dividing them and classing each separately in terms of efficiency.<sup>1261</sup> As John Keegan points out, Arnold-Forster's ultimate plan was to have a "large white Colonial Army, with interests and prestige invested in preserving the Empire ... if Arnold-Forster ... had had his way, he would have brought just such a body into being."<sup>1262</sup> Empire thus played a significant role in shaping British cultures and identities and how the Victorians thought about themselves both in the domestic sphere, and in relation to the world around them.<sup>1263</sup>

During the South African War, Shute believed that his interference in political matters and his strict implementation of Martial Law served a higher ideological purpose in securing a future for the continued existence of a great British Empire. Shute's involvement in Cape politics and hard-lined approach to Martial Law was strenuously opposed by influential Cape politicians and other notables who demanded that Shute be transferred out of the Cape Colony, thereby preventing him from further meddling in Cape matters. In Shute's case, his sense of civilisational superiority combined with a fervent commitment to the imperialist cause meant that his views aligned closely with those of Milner in the Reconstruction period for the priorities of the new administration. Shute's actions in the war, the various political and civil-military relationships he formed in South Africa, and how doggedly he applied his imperialism to his overall conduct and work ethic are crucial issues to consider when he returned to Britain and began working for Arnold-Forster. As such, this thesis proposes further study into how the development of imperial experiences influenced Britain and British domestic policy-making.

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<sup>1260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>1261</sup> Ibid., pp. 209-210.

<sup>1262</sup> J. Keegan, 'Regimental Ideology', in G. Best & A. Wheatcroft (eds.), *War, Economy and the Military Mind* (London, Croom Helm Ltd., 1976), p. 15.

<sup>1263</sup> Simon J. Potter, 'Empire, Cultures and Identities in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Britain', *History Compass*, 5, No. 1 (2007), p. 51.

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F1C29: Colonel Arthur Henry Henniker.

F1C30: Colonel Alfred Edward 'Coddy' Codrington.

F1C40: 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Edward Longueville.

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