THE NEW ZEALANDERS IN SOUTH AFRICA 1899–1902

The First Contingent leaves Karori, Wellington

THE NEW ZEALANDERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

1899-1902

by

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To the New Zealand Soldiers
who Died in South Africa, 1899-1902

FOREWORD

IN 1901 a staff officer of the New Zealand Forces was appointed 'to compile and edit a report on the part taken by New Zealand Contingents in the South African War, to form part of the Official History thereof, now being compiled by . . . the War Office.' In due course a brief report was sent. Then, in 1902, a Christchurch journalist and school-teacher worked on the history but gave up the task after some months. His successor, in 1903, was an officer of the New Zealand Forces; in a letter to the Commandant advising him of the appointment the Rt. Hon. R. J. Seddon, PC, Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, gave the project his full support: 'I am sure that with me you will have every desire to make the work as complete as possible and to see that full justice is done to our officers and men who fought in South Africa.'

In the forty-seven years that have elapsed since the end of the war, five writers have been employed on this task. But for the perseverance of the South African War veterans themselves, their resolutions at annual conferences, their letters and deputations to Ministers, the project would have been shelved and the authors' manuscripts buried in the Dominion's archives. The file dealing with their successive representations is a bulky one. Many reasons were given for deferring publication: earlier drafts were unsuitable or required revision, the expected return from sales was not high, sterling funds would have to be used for the replacement of stocks of paper and book cloth from abroad, and etcetera.

Undiscouraged, the South African War Veterans' Association of New Zealand made further representations when the War History Branch was set up, and in 1947 the Government instructed the Branch to prepare and publish an appropriate history. Mr. Hall was engaged as author No. 6 and was given full use of the Branch's facilities. His work will fill a gap in New Zealand's history.

Brief biographies of many of the officers and men mentioned in the history have been included as footnotes. Some explanation is

due to others named in the text who have not received similar mention: availability of material decided the selection. The difficulties were so great that at one time it was decided to dispense altogether with the biographies as the alternative to giving offence to those who had been omitted. But the men who fought in South Africa—some served with merit in two wars—deserve better and the decision to omit the biographies was later reversed.

The sources of the biographies as they now appear are the personal files of officers and men of the New Zealand Militia and New Zealand Staff Corps, Lieutenant-Colonel John Studholme's *Record of Personal Services during the War (1914-18) of Officers, Nurses, and First Class Warrant Officers*, Dr. G. H. Scholefield's *A Dictionary of New Zealand Biography* (published by the Department of Internal Affairs, 1940), and material supplied by the South African War Veterans' Association. It is regretted that more complete information was not available.

H. K. KIPPENBERGER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF,
NEW ZEALAND WAR HISTORIES

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PREFACE

WHEN I was asked to undertake the writing of a short history of New Zealand's part in the South African War, I felt some diffidence about accepting the task. The war had been fought before I was born. I had neither the time nor the opportunity to engage in extensive research. The spirit of chauvinism (to use a somewhat old-fashioned word) which had to some extent animated the British Government at the time of the war, I found repellent. I am glad, however, that I did accept the commission, because the work has been a good deal more interesting than I ever expected it could be, and has introduced me to a phase of New Zealand's development which I would not otherwise have studied closely. The men who fought in South Africa are worth getting to know.

It will be obvious from the text that little research has gone into the making of the present account of the New Zealanders in the South African War. I have found some comfort in leaning on the many ample volumes of *The Times History of the War in South Africa*, edited by L. S. Amery, with whose political point of view, however, I did not always find myself in accord. Other sources of information have been Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Great Boer War*, John Stirling's *The Colonials in South Africa*, Montagu Cradock's *Diary of the Second New Zealand Mounted Rifles*, F. Twisleton's *With the New Zealanders at the Front*, and Deneys Reitz's *Commando* and *Trekking On*. I have a special debt to acknowledge to my main predecessor in this field, J. A. Shand, whose account of New Zealand's part in the war, entitled *O'er Veldt and Kopje*, though officially commissioned, has remained unpublished. I have had access to the typescript of his book in the Alexander Turnbull Library, and my account is to a great extent based on his work. I wish to acknowledge gratefully the help I have received from the staffs of the War History Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs, of the Army Department, of the General Assembly Library, and of the Alexander Turnbull Library.

The reference above to Mr Shand as my *main* predecessor needs

explanation. He wrote his account in 1931. Before him a succession of writers had, at the behest of the Government, taken up the task of writing an official history and either abandoned it or found official interest in their completed work insufficient to secure its publication. As early as August 1901, Major N. L. D. Smith circulated to the commanders of the different contingents a request for co-operation and information for a history. Mr. W. D. Campbell worked on a history for some months in 1902, and then Captain J. R. Macdonald took up the task but abandoned it. The next writer commissioned, Lieutenant F. E. Beamish, completed in 1909, after several years' hard work, a long account which cannot now be traced. These four writers were all men who had fought in South Africa, and their former comrades-in-arms looked forward during many years, no doubt with a certain exasperation, to the publication of some result for so much work and so long an expectation.

The main difficulty of writing such a history is that its subject is difficult to see as a unity. Each New Zealand contingent had its own experience in the field under different commanders and in widely separated theatres. The contingents, small as they were, were split up into even smaller groups whose movements it is sometimes exceedingly teasing to follow in detail. I do not claim to have successfully mastered this intractable mass of material. The men who served in South Africa may well find many faults in the present summary, mistakes of fact or of emphasis. I think I may assure them that errors should be attributed to stupidity rather than to laziness or indifference. Moreover, I have been commissioned to write within a set length, and no two writers condensing longer material will ever choose the same facts to reject or to retain.

D. O. W. HALL

For convenience, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal or South African Republic are referred to by these names throughout. No notice has been taken of the attempt to change their status to British colonies by proclamation during the course of the war. Furthermore, no excursus is made here upon the juridical status of the two republics and their degree of independence before the war began.

For convenience also the different contingents are as far as possible referred to by that name rather than by the name of regiment or brigade.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

MANY men of British stock have today an uneasy conscience about the South African War. This is natural enough when two such ill-matched antagonists are seen to enter the ring together. The spectacle of a great empire marshalling all its resources to crush two backward republics of farmers, politically developed only in their intense love of independence, is an embarrassing one. When two boys fight, it is not the big boy knocking about a much smaller antagonist who excites admiration. He is seen as a bully who is passionately exhorted by the spectators to 'take on somebody his own size'. And if he receives a few shrewd knocks from his outmatched but plucky opponent, the bystanders jeer all the louder.

Britain had a case against the Transvaal, a strong case. Perhaps it seems a weaker case today than it must have appeared to the men of 1899, because we can see in perspective the events leading up to the war, the progress of the war itself, and in later years the new place won for themselves within the British Commonwealth by the sons of the burghers who rode on commando against the Imperial armies. The bitternesses engendered by the war have not all disappeared. We in New Zealand, who have never known a comparable disunity, cannot clearly appreciate the atmosphere of a country in which two nations live together beside the grave of a recently buried tradition of conflict and hatred. And yet the Union of South Africa is itself a nation today, a state in which two peoples, once irreconcilable enemies, live at peace and meet on common ground socially and politically. In one sense this is a victory for Britain; it is a triumph of statesmanship that the mastery achieved by force has been given back by peaceful evolution, that in South Africa the Afrikaans citizen is as good a man as the English, and has, if anything, the political preponderance.

The main case of Britain against the Transvaal (or South African Republic) rested on the inferior position of the Uitlanders (or foreigners) in that state. Most of the Uitlanders were British subjects. They had by their resource and energy created the city of Johannesburg and developed the gold mines on the Witwatersrand, but under the rule of President Paul Kruger they 'were practically denied any chance of participating in the citizenship of a state which they had to all intents and purposes created'.[1] The Uitlanders who had changed the poor squatter state into a wealthy mining community were effectively denied votes; at the same time they were subjected to the exactions of the holders of concessions, state-granted monopolies in a variety of commodities, a vexatious form of indirect taxation. The Netherlands Railway, whose line linked the Transvaal with the coast through Portuguese territory, and thus with the outside world, was a particularly extortionate monopolist. Burgher misgovernment even extended to the *Volksraad* (the South African Republic's legislature) deciding in its own favour, by resolution, actions being heard in its own courts.

The position of the Uitlanders

The political temperature rose sharply after the misguided raid of Dr. L. S. Jameson and his companions at the end of 1895—an attempt to assert Uitlander claims by force. This served to confirm in the suspicious minds of the burghers Britain's aggressive intentions, and it did not in any way diminish the contrary ambition of the burghers to achieve dominance themselves. They looked back on nearly a century of conflict with Britain, which they had always regarded as an ogre seeking to swallow them up. Britain had, in fact, occupied all the surrounding territorities (other than Portuguese possessions), in some cases to protect native peoples from Boer aggression. Unfortunately various European nations, particularly Germany, from jealousy of Britain's power, gave encouragement to Kruger in his policy of stiff resistance to reasonable British demands put forward by Sir Alfred Milner (Governor of Cape Colony and British High Commissioner in South Africa) at their conference in May 1899. The South African Republic had bought modern rifles and field guns from France and Germany, and

[1] *The Times History of the War in South Africa*, edited by L. S. Amery (Sampson Low, Marston and Co.), Vol. I, p. 17.

Kruger confidently expected European intervention on his behalf. Here he had overlooked the Royal Navy.

In late September and early October 1899, the Boer mobilisation, if not the Boer arrogance, induced most Uitlanders to leave the Transvaal hurriedly, as refugees abandoning all their possessions. On 9 October the South African Republic delivered an ultimatum to Britain demanding the withdrawal of troops from its borders and the recall of fresh troops then on the way to South Africa. This was immediately rejected. The war was begun by the Boers on 12 October 1899. The Orange Free State,[2] though not directly implicated in the quarrel, took up arms on the side of the Transvaal.

The war begins—12 Oct 1899

The self-governing colonies were not kept as closely informed of the various exchanges between Britain and the South African Republic as would be the case today, but before the war broke out they had very clearly expressed their readiness to stand behind Britain, strongly influenced, of course, by the possibility, emphasised by the anti-British clamours of the Continental press, of the war spreading. Queensland, as early as July 1899, had expressed approval of British policy in regard to the Transvaal, and the help of the first colonial contingents, which afterwards fought so effectively in Africa, was offered and accepted before war began.

Whatever the faults of Kruger and his corrupt and ignorant advisers, whatever the provocation of his actions and his incomprehension of the economic and social needs of a developing young community in a rich new country, we must regret that the statesmanship shown so abundantly at the end of the war, could not, with a little more imagination and more tolerance, have been exercised at its beginning and thus prevented the costly and bloody conflict ever occurring at all. Some things were particularly disgraceful: the muddle and poor hygiene which resulted in 20,000 Boer women and children dying in concentration camps form a worse crime, although entirely unintended, than many minor Boer treacheries.

From two important points of view the war, occurring when it did, was fortunate for the British Commonwealth. First, in the political

[2] British relations with the Orange Free State had long been cordial. However, once the war had begun, the Free State showed an even firmer will to resist than did the Transvaal.

sphere, it led to re-examination of Imperial relationships. The vanquished were freely accepted into the Commonwealth at the end of the war; and the members of the Commonwealth who joined in the fight against a common enemy developed a new pattern of Imperial relationship, preparing the way for the much more intense efforts of 1914-18 when the partnership had to stand a far sterner test. Second, the lessons learned in the art of war from the fighting in Africa revealed in time the weaknesses of British military organisation and helped to make Britain less unprepared for the first shock of German arms in Flanders in 1914.

The South African War has an interest as the last war fought with a fairly strict regard for international law, the last war in which both sides behaved, with very few exceptions, as the phrase goes, like gentlemen. Both Boers and British would leave their wounded where they fell, confident that the ambulance services, either theirs or their opponents, would give them immediate succour. Doctors passed freely from side to side attending the wounded of both combatant armies. As the Boers' resources were so much poorer than the British, this was to their advantage, but their own care of British wounded was limited only by their physical ability. The dead were often buried under flag of truce, the combatants of both sides gathering beside the graves to do them honour. On 7 January 1900, in the course of General French's[3] operations outside Colesberg (in which the First New Zealand Contingent took part), the Boers received a British burying party with great courtesy, and a grey-haired burgher gave a short address at the graveside. 'In a rough, simple way he deprecated war and the sacrifice of human life, and prayed for the time when all men should live at peace with each other. Then the assembled burghers sang a psalm.'[4]

The two lessons that most New Zealanders who fought the Boers brought home with them were admiration for the beauty of the South African uplands and a respect for their opponents. Few

[3] Lt-Gen Sir John French (later Earl of Ypres). General French is better known as the original commander of the British Expeditionary Force of 1914, which he commanded at Mons, on the Marne, on the Aisne, at First Ypres and Loos, and until the end of 1915.

[4] *The Times History of the War in South Africa*, Vol. III, p. 138.

who had encountered the Boers in the field had any feeling of vindictiveness towards them. Instead, men realised that they had been matched against enemies of great skill and courage who had fought on almost beyond the possibilities of physical endurance. To defeat such antagonists was indeed a title to honour.

CHAPTER 2

NEW ZEALAND'S SHARE

ON 28 September 1899, exactly a fortnight before the war began, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Rt. Hon. Richard John Seddon, moved in the House of Representatives that a contingent of mounted rifles be offered to the Imperial Government for service in South Africa. This offer was communicated to London and immediately accepted, although the War Office was said to have been reluctant to employ colonial volunteers on the ground that in matters of discipline they might be troublesome. Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania, and Canada all sent men to South Africa; Cape Colony, Natal, and Rhodesia made substantial contributions also to the British forces. Thus New Zealand was participating in an Empire-wide movement.

New Zealand's First Contingent of 214 officers and men was quickly mobilised and despatched. After a brief period in camp the troops sailed, with their horses, on 21 October 1899, in the *Waiwera*. They disembarked at Cape Town late in November.

This contingent had been quickly mobilised because there were trained men available in the Volunteers: it had been recruited from men already serving in Volunteer mounted units. The officer commanding the contingent, Major A. W. Robin[1] was the commander of the Otago Hussars. In the eighteen-nineties the Volunteer movement, which had suffered from official neglect and from fluctuations in policy, was beginning to show new vitality, the numbers enrolled rising to about 10,000. In addition, New Zealand had a Permanent Militia of about 200 officers and men: these were Regular soldiers,

[1] Maj-Gen Sir Alfred Robin, KCMG, CB, m.i.d.; Regular soldier; born Dunedin 1860, died Wellington, 2 Jun 1935; commanded New Zealand mounted troop at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, 1897; Chief of General Staff, New Zealand Military Forces, 19 Dec 1906-20 Dec 1910; New Zealand representative on the Imperial General Staff at the War Office 1912-14; Commandant and Quartermaster-General, New Zealand Military Forces (in New Zealand) 10 Sep 1914-10 Dec 1919; acting Administrator of Western Samoa 1920; retired Jan 1921.

and upon them fell the chief burden of instruction. Among them were a few Imperial officers of wide experience seconded to New Zealand for set terms of service. Though much should be credited to the enthusiasm of the Volunteers themselves, it is fair to say that the Regular officers made a decisive contribution to New Zealand's ability to meet such an emergency as the South African War. That these New Zealanders, the first to leave their country and fight overseas, did so well, shows that the Volunteer training, even though known to be inadequate by English standards, was worth a good deal.[2] The rapid mobilisation of the two companies of the First Contingent must also be placed to the credit of the Militia establishment.

In the First Contingent preference was given to men who could provide their own horses; the men were also expected, if they could, to pay for their own equipment, a matter of about £25; if they could not, patriotic fellow-citizens subscribed the cost. A feature of the war was the way in which the public directly subscribed money for the equipment of the troops. In later days the public has shouldered a different burden, that of the welfare of the men in the armed forces, while the provision of clothing and equipment has generally been accepted as the responsibility of the Government.

New Zealand sent to South Africa approximately 6500 men and, including remounts, more than 8000 horses—the latter part of the contribution was supremely important in a war which was waged largely by mounted troops.

The work of the ten New Zealand contingents of mounted infantry sent to South Africa will be described in detail later in this

[2] In *The Times History of the War in South Africa* due credit is given to the work of such officers as Col A. P. Penton, Commandant of the New Zealand Defence Forces between 1896 and 1901, who trained the Volunteer forces in New Zealand: ' . . . the tactics used with such effect by the colonial troops in the field were not the mere spontaneous product of colonial common sense, but were the direct outcome of the system of mounted infantry training introduced by a few Imperial officers.'—Vol. III, p. 33. Without wishing to minimise the excellent work of these officers, I must point out that the British Yeomanry regiments had mostly had the advantage of more up-to-date training and the services of many more experienced officers than were available in the different colonies, and yet were considered to be inferior, under South African conditions of service, to the colonial troops in the field.

account, but some general consideration of the strengths of the contingents and their sailing dates will help to put our contribution to the war in perspective. The First Contingent was followed in January 1900 by another two companies and a Hotchkiss gun detachment. A further two companies sailed in February, and the Fourth and Fifth Contingents, each a battalion strong with an additional detachment of about seventy reserves, in March. Thus approximately 1800 men had gone overseas to serve in South Africa during the first six months of the war.

Despatch of New Zealand contingents

No further contingent was sent until the end of January 1901, by which time it was apparent that the war was likely to be prolonged well beyond the optimistic forecasts of the middle of 1900. The Sixth Contingent of a battalion was followed two months later by the Seventh, also of battalion strength. (At this time a battalion consisted of four companies, with a total strength of between 500 and 600 men.) These two contingents numbered fewer than 1200 men.

The Eighth Contingent, sailing from New Zealand towards the end of 1901, was in time to see a good deal of hard service but was not heavily embroiled in action with the enemy. The Ninth and Tenth Contingents, sailing early in 1902, saw no action—if the encounter near Witvolgt between armed Boers and two Ninth Contingent officers is ignored. These three final contingents were each of approximately two battalions and together comprised more than half the total number of New Zealanders who went to the war.

This present study of New Zealand's part in the South African War will therefore be concerned largely with the first seven contingents. The New Zealanders served in almost every theatre of the war. They were paid and administered as part of the Imperial armies, and were divided into small detachments parcelled out among the different British columns and commands. When the Ninth Contingent sailed, the New Zealand Government stipulated, as it had already requested in regard to earlier contingents, that it should serve together as a unit.

The term of enlistment was twelve months. Although it was an embarrassment to the Imperial command to return the New Zealanders at the end of that term, this was done. The same condition

applied to the service of the contingents from the other colonies. Some men here and there might serve a little longer than a year, but the majority did not. A number of men volunteered to remain and join later contingents, and their experience was found very valuable.

In comparison with the other colonies and in proportion to our population, New Zealand's contribution to the war was large, surpassed only by that of Great Britain and of Rhodesia, which sent to the front 12½ per cent of its white population. Britain sent 358,000 men to the war, including 18,000 Regulars from India, Australia sent 16,600, and Canada 8400; Canada also provided a regiment to serve at Halifax to release the troops of the British garrison for service in Africa.

New Zealand's financial contribution to the war was in no way commensurate with our contribution in men. The First and Second Contingents were raised, equipped, and landed in South Africa at the expense of the New Zealand Government. The Third and Fourth were raised, equipped, and landed at the expense of the people of New Zealand, who contributed £113,256 by public subscription directly to the cost of the war. One squadron of the Third Contingent (about half its number) was equipped at Canterbury expense, and a substantial part of the cost of sending the Fourth Contingent was borne by the people of Otago. The total expenditure on the war by the Government (exclusive of the amounts raised by subscription) was £334,000, of which £194,000 was expense incurred in respect of the first four contingents. All the contingents after the Fourth were raised, equipped, and transported at the cost of the Imperial Government. Britain also undertook to pay all necessary pensions to the disabled or to dependants (single men only were accepted for service in the ranks), but New Zealand found it desirable to pay out about £3000 annually in pensions to persons not eligible under the British Army regulations. This summary of New Zealand's financial contribution to the war does not take into account the value of horses or equipment provided for themselves by individuals or given to them by their friends or sponsors.

New Zealand's financial contribution

In Africa the troops were all paid by the British Army. The New Zealand Government made up the pay of the first three con-

tingents to 4s a day, paying them the difference between the Imperial cavalry scale and this amount. The Fourth and later contingents were placed on the scale of pay for Colonial Irregular Forces and, at 5s a day, their pay did not need a subsidy from the New Zealand Government.

It might be thought a simple matter to find definite figures for the strength of each of the ten contingents and the total number of New Zealanders who served in Africa. Unfortunately, authorities which have equal right to be considered authentic do not agree. The *New Zealand Year Book* 1902 gives a total of 6411 officers and men actually sailing from New Zealand. Some of these men may have been to Africa in earlier contingents and returned to the war a second time. Statistics prepared for the War Office by the New Zealand Army in early 1903 give, allowing for the men who remained in Africa from early contingents to join later ones, a total of 6493. Some minor factors must affect the total: some contingents sailed with veterinary surgeons who looked after the horses on board and then returned to New Zealand, and a few New Zealanders also joined up in Africa. The table given at the end of this chapter is therefore offered with some diffidence. It is based mainly on the nominal rolls, as quoted by J. A. Shand. The total of 6495 New Zealanders[3] who went to South Africa, which is deduced from it, possibly includes some double-counting, the men here and there who, after returning to New Zealand with one contingent, left again to serve with another.

Late in 1901 Britain appealed to the colonies for volunteer teachers to help with the education of the Boer children held in concentration camps in Africa, and several teachers went from New Zealand to carry on this work.

[3] Overseas authorities are equally unable to arrive at a common figure. Stirling gives 6513 as the total number of New Zealanders serving in Africa (p. X) but elsewhere (p. 337) gives a table of the different contingents which totals 6378. *The Times* historian is at least self-consistent: his total of 6416 for New Zealand's ten contingents (Vol. VI, pp. 277-8) corresponds with his table (Vol. V, p. 611).

Embarkation Strengths of New Zealand Contingents

	Officers	*Men*	*Total*
1st Contingent	12	202	214
2nd „	13	206	219
Hotchkiss detachment ..	1	38	39
3rd Contingent	15	250	265
4th „	24	443	467
5th „	27	500	527
Reserves	2	74	76
6th Contingent	18	561	579
7th „	31	563	594
Details	3	70	73
8th Contingent	62	949	1011
Reinforcements	1	108	109
9th Contingent	65	991	1056
Reinforcements	—	15	15
10th Contingent ..	52	966	1018
Details and reinforcements	10	223	233
Total	336	6159	6495

CHAPTER 3

THE PROGRESS OF THE WAR

A BRIEF sketch of the main events of the South African War will help to make clear the purpose of the many detailed operations in which New Zealand troops were engaged. Some account must also be given of the Boers' military organisation, which enabled them to fight on with such tenacity when most of their country had been overrun and their main forces defeated in pitched battle after pitched battle.

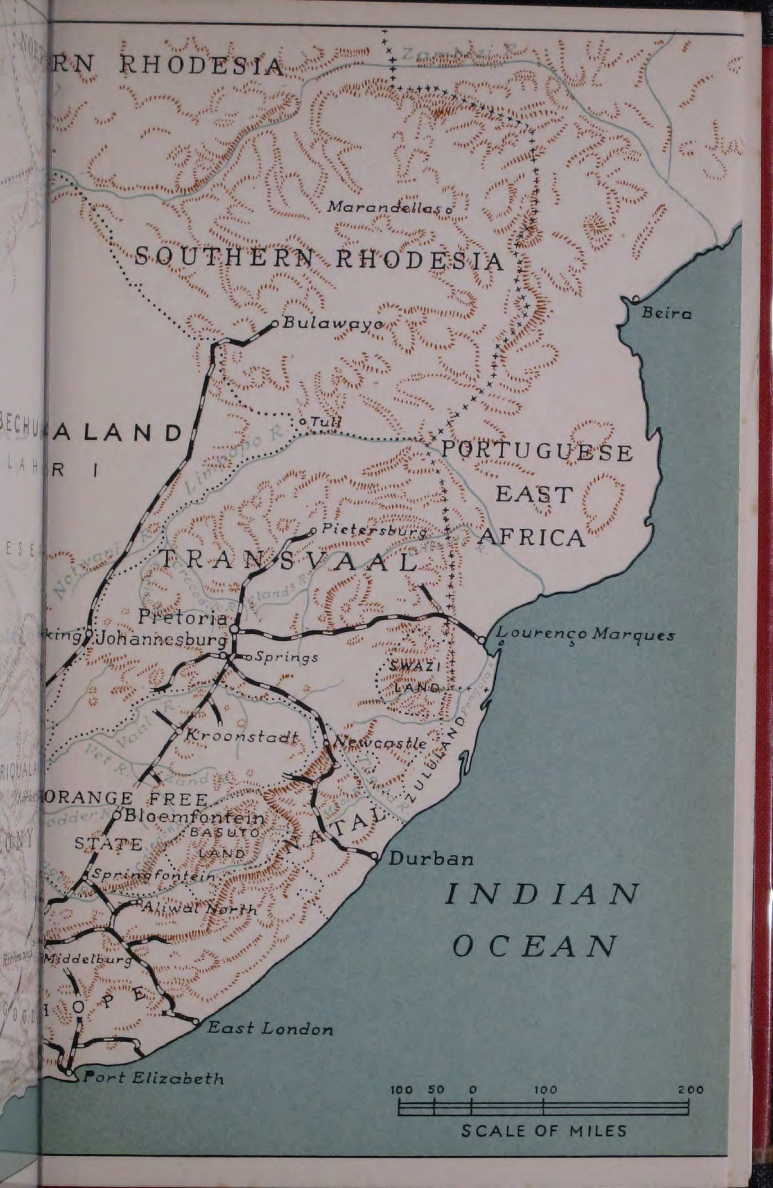
The Government of the South African Republic had imported modern rifles as early as 1895. At the outbreak of the war the Transvaal had 60,000 modern rifles[1] and some seventy million rounds of ammunition.[2] The Transvaal, wealthy through its goldfields, planned to arm the citizens of the poorer Orange Free State, largely a farming community, and still have rifles over for the Boers resident in Cape Colony, who, it was confidently hoped, would join their fellow-Dutchmen as soon as war began. The Boer artillery was not negligible.[3] The Transvaal had four 6-inch Creusots (nicknamed 'Long Toms'), four 4.7-inch Krupp howitzers, nineteen field guns, two Maxim Nordenfeldts, about twenty-two Vickers-Maxim automatic guns (the so-called 'pom-poms' which fired a series of twenty-five one-pound shells), and thirty-one Maxim machine guns. The Orange Free State had fourteen older 75-millimetre Krupp guns, about twelve older guns, and a few machine guns. Good stocks of shell ammunition had been built up by the time war broke out.

The Boer burgher and his tactics

Every burgher between 16 and 60 years old was liable to serve in the field. They served in commandos, bodies of troops based on electoral districts and varying in size from 300 to 3000. On mobilisation every man turned out with horse, rifle, ammunition, and ten days' food. Every Boer, it was said, was his own general. The burgher

[1] *Times History of the War in South Africa*, Vol. II, p. 67.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 69.


SOUTH AFRICA
LEGEND
Railways
Political Boundaries
International Boundaries
Mountain Features
NORTH
BECHUANALAND
KALAHARI
DESERT
GERMAN SOUTH WEST AFRICA
Nosop R.
Molopo R.
GRIQUALAND
Kimberley
CAPE COLONY
ATLANTIC OCEAN
CAPE OF GOOD HOPE
Richmond
Cape Town
Worcester


RN RHODESIA
Zambezi R.
Marandellas
SOUTHERN RHODESIA
Bulawayo
Beira
Tuli
PORTUGUESE EAST AFRICA
Pietersburg
TRANSVAAL
Pretoria
Johannesburg
Springs
Lourenço Marques
SWAZI LAND
Kroonstadt
Newcastle
ZULULAND
ORANGE FREE STATE
Bloemfontein
BASUTO LAND
NATAL
Durban
Springfontein
Aliwal North
INDIAN OCEAN
Middelburg
CAPE
East London
Port Elizabeth
100 50 0 100 200
SCALE OF MILES

in the fighting commando had initiative although he conspicuously lacked discipline. He was usually well-instructed in the objectives his commanders were seeking to gain and few orders needed to be passed in action. Paradoxically enough, although the burgher was compelled to serve, to ride on commando, he could not be compelled to fight, unlike the British soldier who, although originally a volunteer, had to obey orders. The Boers often dispersed to the rear whenever the fighting became too stubborn. It was, of course, an old tradition of their campaigns against native peoples not to risk their own lives unless this was absolutely unavoidable. The commando organisation had been thoroughly tested in war before 1899 and had shown itself capable of defeating hordes of savages on many occasions, British Regular troops several times (Majuba Hill in 1881 was the latest occasion), and Jameson's ill-organised freebooters.

The Transvaal had an efficient corps of 800 artillerymen, trained by foreigners; the Free State artillery of about 400 men was the most efficient part of its army. The Boer artillerymen were weak at co-operative action, for instance at concentrating fire on particular objectives. On the other hand, they performed prodigies of physical exertion in dragging their guns to the tops of mountains to open fire on selected British positions.

The Transvaal police force of about 1400 men was the most disciplined element in the Boer army. The Boers could muster about 50,000 burghers from the two republics. In addition they were joined by about 10,000 'rebels', Dutch British subjects from outside the two republics, and by 2500 foreigners. Their strength was at its highest about December 1899 when it probably reached 45,000 men in the field.[4]

The Boers knew their own country. They were masters of stealth and of surprise. Their generals were not conspicuously successful, even in the earlier phases of the war which went in their favour, perhaps because they were unused to commanding forces larger than a commando. Man for man the Boer soldier had two great advantages over his British opponent—mobility and endurance. The Boers were all mounted, and the opinion has been expressed that 'whatever the nominal superiority of a British force, it was almost

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 88.

always inferior in numbers at the decisive point of an action'.[5] This feature was well illustrated in the latter phase of the war when Boer generals quickly assembled many small groups of men and struck some vulnerable British force with overwhelming strength. The endurance of the Boer, his ability to live off his own country virtually without a supply train, and his ability to ride unpredictable distances on his wiry, jigging ponies: his ability, in fact, to put up with conditions his opponents would have considered intolerable (although the British troops felt they had plenty of hardship to endure), was the greatest factor prolonging a hopeless war.

The Boers' tactics had been developed in the main type of warfare in which they had been engaged during the previous hundred years: their clashes with the native peoples of Africa. Every Boer attack had the character of an ambush. The burghers chose their own ground and were always loath to fight on the enemy's terms; they made masterly use of ground and cover; they fought on widely extended fronts and were difficult to outflank. 'To get to within range of the enemy unobserved and to be protected from his fire while he is exposed to yours was the keynote of the Boer method. . . .'[6]

Although in the pitched battles of the first phase of the war the Boers made good use of their artillery, the rifle was their chosen weapon. They were, on the whole, not brilliant marksmen, but they had developed a combined fire-power with the rifle which made up for any individual weakness. In the early stages of an attack or a defence they engaged the enemy with individual aimed fire. As an attacking force of Boers neared its objective or an attacking enemy force approached a Boer position, heavy, continuous fire would be kept up. At close quarters the Boer used a third type of rifle fire, curiously anticipating the use to which such weapons as the Sten gun or Thompson sub-machine gun were to be put in the Second World War: this 'snapping' fire from the hip or shoulder was described as 'the Boer equivalent, and a very effective one, for the bayonet'.[7]

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 95.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 92.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

Both sides learned much from each other. The courage and doggedness of British infantry, however excellent in defence, was of small avail in attack against well-concealed burghers defending a position of their own choosing. The cavalry charge could not often be used because, even if the ground were not too steep or broken, the mounted man was too big a target for rifle fire directed 'into the brown'. The British Army had to use a new type of soldier, the mounted infantryman. He rode because he had great distances to cover to make contact with a highly mobile enemy, but when he came up with his opponents and settled down to fight it out, he sent back his horses and fought on foot, advancing from rock to rock or defending a previously erected 'sangar'.[8]

Lessons of the campaign

It may be put crudely that the Boers taught the British to 'use their heads'. The skill gained in the innumerable 'little wars', which made up the often very extensive experience of the British Regular troops, was not enough to outwit the Boers, who combined with guerrilla tactics modern weapons and a flexible, well-tested organisation. To the Boers, on the other hand, the British troops showed the value of discipline and of planning by a central command. Boer supply arrangements, rudely based on commandeering whatever flocks or herds or produce they needed, were suited only to brief campaigns near home. When the British denied them supplies by the simple, if ruthless, method of devastating the whole country, the Boers could live only by raiding British convoys or (like General Smuts)[9] by raiding undevastated British territory. They were starved out of the field as much as beaten out of it.

The progress of the war falls into two clearly marked phases. In a sense there were two South African wars. In the first war the armies joined battle, and the British, after initial reverses, dispersed the Boers and overran the country. In the second war the scattered Boer forces kept the field in remote districts, aided by their mobility, their knowledge of the country, and good scouting. They attacked when

The first phase of the war

[8] A 'sangar' was a parapet of stones erected as a cover in a prepared position.

[9] Field-Marshal Rt. Hon. Jan Christiaan Smuts, PC, OM, CH; Prime Minister of South Africa, 1919-24; Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, 1939-48.

they could compass superiority in numbers or position; they fled before stronger forces. The most extraordinary feature of this second phase was the strength of the Boer will to resist—their bitter determination to go on fighting although ultimate defeat was inevitable.

At the beginning of the war the Boers seized the initiative. On the west they cut the railway linking Cape Colony with Rhodesia and besieged Kimberley and Mafeking. On the east they invaded Natal and besieged Ladysmith. To the south they invaded Cape Colony. Their initial successes soon revealed the weaknesses of Boer generalship. In Natal, where in their first impetus they could have swept through to the coast, they allowed themselves to be stopped at Ladysmith; the investment of this town may have been a humiliation to the British, but it was fatal to the Boers. The latter had, during the first two months, the opportunity of developing two broad strategic plans, or a combination of both. They could have left small forces covering Kimberley and Mafeking, a somewhat larger force to enclose Ladysmith, and then pressed on with the main strength of their armies either into Natal, where they could have turned south and attacked Cape Colony, or directly into Cape Colony, where they had very reasonable chances of substantial local support. They adopted neither plan and remained just over the borders of their own states, ready to strike their enemies grievous blows, which, with every day that passed, could have less and less final effect. The burghers liked to go home frequently and take a holiday from war. Their leaders also seemed incapable of grasping imaginatively the necessity of carrying the war, not simply out of their own territory, but deep into that of their enemies. Both the Boer military organisation and the Boer outlook were fundamentally defensive.

Early in 1900 Lord Roberts[10] arrived to take command of the British forces, with Lord Kitchener[11] as his chief of staff and ultimately his successor. With the increasing flow of troops and supplies, Roberts was able to plan and carry out a vigorous

[10] Field-Marshal Rt. Hon. Earl Roberts, VC, Commander-in-Chief, South Africa, Jan-Nov 1900.

[11] General Viscount Kitchener, Commander-in-Chief, South Africa, Dec 1900-Jun 1902.

strategy: this was to hold the Boers on the eastern or Natal front, engage them on the western front, where both they and the British had their scantiest forces, and roll up their centre by advancing on a broad front from Cape Colony northwards in a number of strong columns pursuing parallel lines of march. The plan worked admirably. Roberts occupied first Bloemfontein, capital of the Orange Free State, on 13 March 1900, and after a pause of six weeks advanced into the Transvaal, occupying its capital, Pretoria, on 5 June. After a further pause at Pretoria, the advance was resumed, accompanied by 'mopping up' operations in districts aside from the main line of march, until on 24 September British troops occupied Komati Poort on the Portuguese frontier. Everybody then regarded the war as won. One chronicler, Arthur Conan Doyle, writing in the last month of 1900, stated that the hunting down of the remaining Boer forces 'becomes a matter for the mounted policeman rather than part of an organised campaign'.[12]

The reasons for this optimism proving unjustified were partly political. Lord Roberts had fought the campaign with the explicit intention of sparing the lives of his opponents to the utmost extent possible. This clemency had been even more marked in dealing with captured Boers. On signing a document that they would not take up arms again, they were released with passes to go home. They had surrendered their arms, but many had rifles hidden on their farms and in the sequel they proved adept at supplying themselves with new weapons from British sources. Although it cannot be said that the Boers universally broke their parole and took up arms again, many thousands undoubtedly did so.

The war, the command of which was handed over to Kitchener on 11 December 1900, was in the second phase carried on in a different spirit from the first. The British had the main towns in the two Boer republics and they held the greater part of the railways. The Boers lurked in the mountains and sallied forth to collect supplies from the farms or to harass the British. Boer generals like Christiaan de Wet made a series of brilliant raids and covered immense distances, gathering adherents wherever they passed. Kitchener's answer to these mobile

The second phase

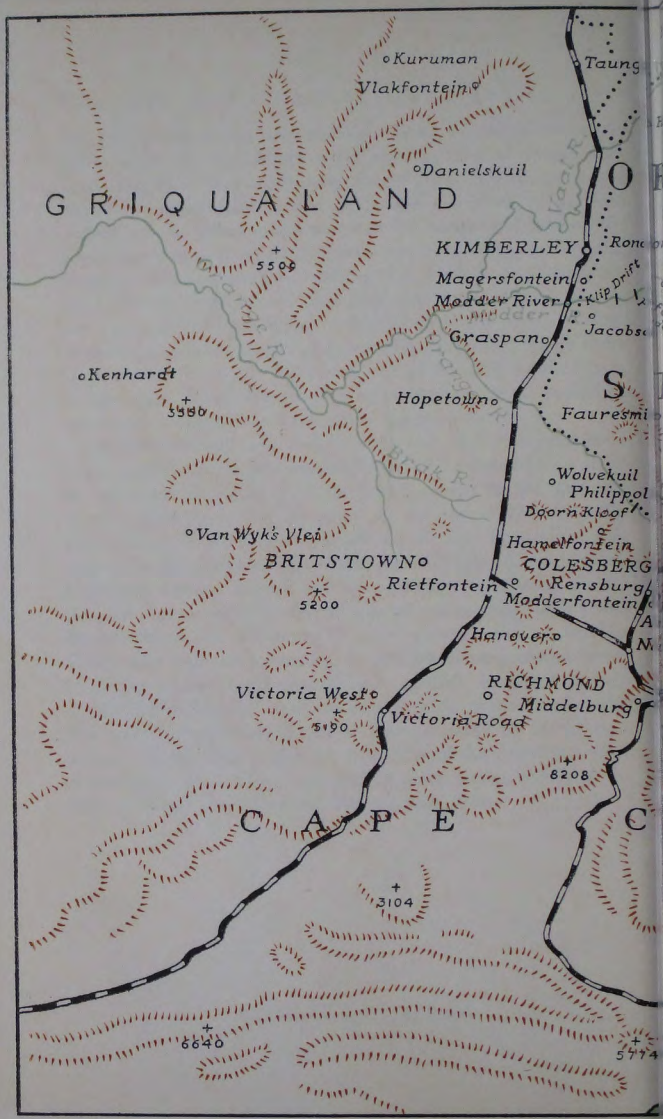
[12] *The Great Boer War*, A. Conan Doyle (Smith, Elder and Co.), p. 507.

and elusive opponents was twofold. First, to reduce the areas inside which the commandos could operate, lines of blockhouses were established, beginning along the railways. Second, the whole country was gradually cleared of people and stock. The Boer population was gathered into concentration camps, and food on the farms was destroyed so that it could not be used by the fighting burghers. Where resistance was offered or hidden arms found, the farm buildings were burned. The immediate result of the gathering into camps of the Boer women and children was to free the hands of their men on commando, who were thus relieved of the necessity of providing for them. The internment of the civil population in concentration camps had also the secondary motive of protecting the women and children from native depredations.

Gradually the long war dragged to its end. Roberts's great drive in his northwards advance was developed by Kitchener into a series of operations in which lines of British troops ranged over the country, combing it yard by yard. At the end of May 1902 the Boer leaders, at a conference inside the British lines, which they attended under safe-conduct, accepted the inevitable and made peace. They were hungry, ragged, and armed largely with stolen British weapons, but a number preferred to go into exile rather than accept British citizenship. The terms of peace were generous: it was the British who paid an indemnity, £3,000,000 being provided to rehabilitate the Boers and re-settle them on their devastated farms.

New Zealand forces were engaged in both phases of the war. The early contingents took part in Roberts's dispersal of the Boer armies, and the later ones had a full share of the guerrilla actions of the latter phase, which were just as sharp and as bloody as the more elaborate operations that had preceded them.

Map of Orange Free State


Kuruman
Vlakfontein
Danielskuil
GRIQUALAND
5505
KIMBERLEY
Magersfontein
Modder River
Klip Drift
Graspan
Jacobs
Kenhardt
3380
Hopetown
Wolvekuil
Philippol
Doorn Kloof
Van Wyk's Vlei
Hamelfontein
BRITSTOWN
COLESBERG
Rietfontein
5200
Rensburg
Modderfontein
Hanover
RICHMOND
Middelburg
Victoria West
5190
Victoria Road
6208
CAPE
3104
6640
5774


BOTHAVILLE
Roodewal
HEILBRON
FRANKFORT
Wakkerstroom
Rhenoster Kop
Vrede
Volksrust
Bothasberg
Charlestown
KROONSTADT
Langverwacht
Botha's Pass
Utrecht
Paardeplaats
NEWCASTLE
VRYHEID
Ventersburg
Dundee
ORANGE FREE STATE
Harrismith
Winburg
LADYSMITH
ZULULAND
Brakfontein
Doorn Kloof
Springfield
Doorn Kop
Brandfort
Wolverspruit
Driefontein
Jacobsrust
Houtrack
Sannas Post
Modder Poort
Thaba 'Nchu
BLOEMFONTEIN
BASUTO
NATAL
LAND
Wepener
Bastard's Drift
Mokari Drift
DURBAN
Boesman's Kop
Elandskop
Smithfield
Springfontein
Zastron
Rouxville
Bethulie
Venterstad
Aliwal North
Burghersdorp
INDIAN
East London
PORT ELIZABETH

CHAPTER 4

THE FIRST CONTINGENT

THE 1st New Zealand Mounted Rifles arrived at Cape Town on 23 November 1899. They stayed a few days in Maitland Camp, Cape Town, before moving by train to Naauwpoort in the northern part of Cape Colony. On 2 December they joined the forces with which General French, the celebrated cavalry leader,[1] was seeking to drive out an invading force of Boers.

The Boers had advanced down the railway and occupied Colesberg and Arundel, but although they fought back venomously whenever British troops made contact with them, they did not appear to be pressing their attack very vigorously. General French's first task was to drive in the enemy from his more scattered positions, and soon he was aggressively pushing him back up the railway. French was not yet in great strength, but most of his troops were mounted. They had to work hard.

On 7 December the newly-arrived New Zealanders occupied a ridge at Arundel to cover the detrainment of other troops.[2] It will be noted that they were taking their place in the field virtually without any further training. Even later, when the need was no longer urgent, men were sent on active service as soon as possible after their arrival in South Africa. This policy may have been justified so far as the men were concerned, but it was harsh treatment for their horses to be expected to work after nearly four weeks at sea and a long railway journey. The heavy losses of horses during the South African campaign were in great part due to this short-sighted policy of using them before they had either recovered from their sea journeys or become acclimatised and accustomed to the local fodder.

In the course of this operation of herding the Boers back into

[1] He commanded the Cavalry Division 1899–1900.

[2] *The Colonials in South Africa*, John Stirling (W. Blackwood and Sons), p. 338.

their base at Colesberg, the New Zealanders were first in serious action on 18 December at Jasfontein farm. The British guns shelled the farm buildings, which the New Zealanders immediately afterwards occupied. The enemy then brought up reinforcements, including artillery (our own had meanwhile retired), and concentrated heavy fire on the defenders of the farm. Our troops held on until the British artillery returned and extricated them by forcing the enemy to retreat. The New Zealanders earned commendations from General French for their steadiness in a difficult position.[3]

Jasfontein farm

It was during the fighting in front of the Boer army at Colesberg that the first New Zealand soldier lost his life in South Africa. He was Farrier G. R. Bradford, who on 28 December died of wounds in Boer hands.

On New Year's Day, 1900, the New Zealanders moved out of the newly-captured village of Rensburg to demonstrate in front of the Boer position. They were part of a force commanded by Colonel T. C. Porter which included also two squadrons of the 6th Dragoon Guards and a half-battery of artillery. The New Zealanders tested the strength of the Boer position and were reported to have behaved well under fire.

After a discouraging encounter between the reinforced Boers and the British troops, Colonel Porter, with a somewhat augmented force, on 9 January occupied Slingersfontein farm, some miles to the east of the railway; this move was intended to outflank the Boers and also to threaten their line of retreat up the railway back into their own territory. It worried the Boers so much that they made the position the objective a few days later of a very determined and skilful attack.

On 15 January, under General J. H. de la Rey, the Boers attacked a position at Slingersfontein held jointly by a company of the East Yorkshire Regiment and a half-company (about sixty men) of the New Zealand Mounted Rifles, commanded by Captain W. R. N. Madocks.[4] A hill, commanding the British camp at Slingersfontein, ran roughly north and

Slingersfontein

[3] Stirling, p. 339.

[4] Maj W. R. N. Madocks, RA; came to New Zealand in 1896 with Col A. P. Penton, Commandant New Zealand Defence Forces, as staff officer (1896–1901); appointed ADC to Lt-Gen Ian Hamilton Jul 1900.

south, protruding towards the Boer lines. The Boers made a feinting attack from the east while they used steep, dead ground on the west to press home their real attack. The Yorkshires suffered heavy casualties, including their commanding officer. 'The enemy came on briskly and the moment was critical.'[5]

Captain Madocks took some men over to help the hard-pressed Yorkshires and lined the sangar against the Boers. Then, as the enemy still came on unshaken by the fire of the New Zealanders, he 'gave the order to fix bayonets, and charged down the hill, upon which the leading Boers immediately turned and ran down the hill, followed by many others, who had been under cover of rocks, etc., unseen'.[6] One writer[7] states that Madocks 'engaged in a point-blank rifle duel with the frock-coated, top-hatted Boer leader, and had the good fortune to kill his formidable opponent'. The Boers had been formidable enough even in less pretentious garments, and the New Zealanders' gallantry and the presence of mind of their officers were recognised afterwards by General French, who named the hill from which they had so energetically repulsed the Boers 'New Zealand Hill'. More than twenty Boer dead were found on and below the hill after the action. (These casualties may appear trivial by the standards of later wars, but they were high for the South African War and especially high for the cautious Boer.)

Captain Madocks was promoted for his part in this action, and Lieutenant J. G. Hughes,[8] who later commanded the Canterbury Battalion on Gallipoli, was awarded the DSO.

Relief of Kimberley

In the first phase, the operations outside Colesberg had been aimed at holding the Boers. General French soon was able to do more than check the invasion of Cape Colony. He effectively used against the Boers their own tactics of constantly feeling and extending the flanks of their opponents. With the arrival of further troops and the development of Lord Roberts's advance in February into the Orange Free State, French's cavalry and mounted forces were detached to push on and relieve

[5] Stirling, pp. 340-1, quoting French's despatches.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] A. Conan Doyle, p. 239.

[8] Lt-Col J. G. Hughes, CMG, DSO, m.i.d.; Regular soldier; Adjutant of East Coast Battalion but enlisted as private in 1st Contingent; Assistant Military Secretary, 1st NZEF, 1914-15; commanded Canterbury Battalion on Gallipoli, 1915.

Kimberley. He moved forward so expeditiously that he outflanked the Boer forces blockading the town and entered it on 15 February 1900 after little fighting more serious than skirmishes. But it had been hard riding: the New Zealanders were said to have been the only troops to get to Kimberley with all their horses. The terrible wastages of horse-flesh, which were to be so common in the South African War, had already begun.[9]

The New Zealanders did not have long to enjoy the enthusiastic hospitality of the good people of Kimberley, among whom Cecil Rhodes had stood the siege. The First Contingent was divided: one group of men, exhausted by the ride, was ordered to act as rear-guard to a great convoy of nearly a thousand waggons; the others went on with French, whose task was to shepherd the Boers from the kopjes to the east of Kimberley back towards their own territory. The result of these operations and the parallel advance of Lord Roberts's main force farther to the east was to pin down the Boer army under General Piet Cronje at Paardeberg Drift[10] on the Modder River. Here, in a five-day battle, in which the British troops suffered severe casualties, Cronje was defeated. On 27 February he surrendered with 5000 men.[11]

Paardeberg Drift

The Boers still disputed the road to the Orange Free State capital, Bloemfontein. The New Zealand squadron with General French was several times in action clearing the flanks of the advance of Lord Roberts's army up the Modder River. On 8 and 9 March the New Zealanders were in touch with the enemy. They met the Boers at Osfontein, and on 10 March, at Driefontein,[12] where the enemy concentrated for a last attempt to save Bloemfontein, they came under heavy shellfire. In spite of this they held the ground they

[9] *Times History*, Vol. VI, p. 417. Throughout the campaign about a thousand horses a week were destroyed as being of no further use, besides those lost in action or died of disease. On the British side a total of about 350,000 horses and 50,000 transport mules died during the war, and the Boers were estimated to have lost 100,000 horses.

[10] Ford.

[11] The New Zealanders were not engaged in the actual battle of Paardeberg, but Lt A. C. Neave, who had been transferred to the Yorkshire Regiment, was killed in action with the British troops: he was mentioned in despatches for conspicuous services and gallantry. On the transfer of Lt Neave, Sgt J. G. Hughes was promoted lieutenant.

[12] Also called Abraham's Kraal.

had won until the enemy was outflanked by other cavalry units of French's force and obliged to retreat. Eight thousand Boers had been engaged in this action, in which some of the British troops suffered severe casualties. Next day, 11 March, the advance was resumed. The mounted forces were several times engaged by Boer artillery, which was continually dislodged by the British guns, and on the afternoon of 13 March Lord Roberts entered Bloemfontein.

The New Zealand squadron entering Bloemfontein that day numbered five officers, sixty men, and seventy-two horses. Their comrades remained at Kimberley to refit and recuperate until 1 March, when, except for seventeen men left behind in hospital, the squadron, with a strength of about sixty officers and men, marched out of Kimberley at the rear of the huge, slow-moving, ox-drawn convoy which followed the army to Bloemfontein. Although they were serving with the supply train, the New Zealanders made most of this journey on half rations and in alternate storms of dust and rain. They entered Bloemfontein on 14 March.

The halt in the advance at Bloemfontein, prolonged by an outbreak of enteric fever among the British forces, allowed the Boers time to regroup their forces and strike fresh blows where, as was usual with them, they were least expected. The reunited New Zealanders were serving in a column commanded by Brigadier-General R. G. Broadwood which had been sent out to the east of Bloemfontein to search for the enemy. On 30 March, Broadwood, finding that he had strong Boer commandos in front of him, fell back from Thaba 'Nchu on Sanna's Post,[13] near the Bloemfontein waterworks. Next morning the Boers reached a position in the neighbouring hills from which their guns could shell the British camp. The feat of arms by which on this occasion the Boer leaders, Louis Botha and de Wet, inflicted a sharp defeat on the British force, though very creditable to them, owed its success primarily to poor scouting and intelligence on the part of the British.

Boer ambush at Sanna's Post

Broadwood's column was encumbered with a heavy convoy, supply waggons, and guns. The Boers' fire created great confusion in the camp, and some of the native drivers panicked and abandoned their teams. None the less, Broadwood got the convoy away from

[13] Also called Koorn Spruit.

the untenable position and covered its retreat with his mounted troops. The second half of the Boers' ambush was the more deadly. At the risk of being caught between two British forces, they had boldly emerged from the shelter of the hills on to the plain leading to Bloemfontein, placing themselves on ground that Broadwood believed to be firmly in British hands. Where its way dipped down into a deep watercourse the British column had to run the gauntlet of the intense fire of about 300 Boer riflemen. The first waggons to enter the dip were captured by the Boers, who took them on up the opposite slope so that all might fall unsuspecting into their trap. But some soldier with the captured waggons fired a shot and gave the alarm to the troops behind. This hardly diminished the advantage of the Boers with whom Broadwood's force had to dispute the passage of the watercourse.

The qualities of the British force showed at their best in this emergency. One battery, just avoiding capture in the dip, took up position and opened fire, and the cavalry searched for and found another crossing, two miles to the south, by which the rest of the force escaped. The mounted troops covered the withdrawal, Roberts's Horse, the 3rd Mounted Infantry, and the New Zealanders sharing this work. 'The last to reach the drift, after the guns and all the rest had already gone safely across, were the New Zealanders.'[14] Our troops had behaved with exceptional steadiness in a situation 'where all seemed to have a noble emulation to save a comrade, or to retrieve the day from utter disaster.'[15] The arrival of strong reinforcements under Major-General Sir Henry Colvile forced the Boers to break off the action, but they carried off a number of British guns and about two hundred prisoners.[16]

Seventeen New Zealanders were captured by the Boers in this action. They were released when Pretoria fell, ten weeks later. One gallant action among many by the New Zealanders at Sanna's Post was singled out for an unusual reward. Trooper H. D. Coutts[17] brought away a wounded man under heavy fire: he was awarded one of four scarves knitted by Queen Victoria for distribution to

[14] *Times History*, Vol. IV, p. 43.
[15] *Ibid.*
[16] The British casualties totalled more than 300.
[17] Later Captain and Quartermaster in 7th Contingent.

the four most distinguished private soldiers in the colonial contingents.

In the last week in April the First Contingent joined Major-General Ian Hamilton's[18] column, in the country to the east of Bloemfontein, as part of the forces operating against the elusive de Wet. Afterwards the contingent served as escort to the convoy of Major-General H. L. Smith-Dorrien's brigade.

In the next few weeks the men of the First Contingent were chiefly engaged in guarding convoys. With the Second and Third Contingents they took part in the advance of Lord Roberts's army from Bloemfontein into the Transvaal. After the fall of Kroonstadt on 12 May 1900 the three contingents served together as part of Major-General E. T. H. Hutton's command. In this column there also served mounted infantry from each of the Australian states, from Canada, South Africa, India, Burma, and Ceylon. This mixed Imperial force was placed on the left flank of the new northwards advance.

The Boers contested the route to Johannesburg, and the New Zealanders were several times in action without serious losses—at Houtnek, Zand River, and Van Wyk's Vlei. But with the mounted troops feeling his flanks and the British artillery ousting him from his successive positions, the enemy on 31 May abandoned this city to Lord Roberts, retiring on the Transvaal capital, Pretoria. This city, too, was occupied on 5 June without any fighting that directly involved the New Zealand mounted infantry.

Occupation of Johannesburg and Pretoria

The Boers had still to be driven out of the territory traversed by the railway linking Pretoria to Portuguese East Africa, and the rapid advance had left a number of their commandos intact aside from the line of march of the British Army. De Wet was active in early June in the Orange Free State, harrying the British lines of communication. A detachment[19] of about forty New Zealand mounted infantry of all three contingents was sent south from Pretoria to join Lieutenant-General Lord Methuen in operations against de Wet in the Roodewal-Heilbron area, and during the next

[18] General Sir Ian Hamilton will be remembered as the commander of the Allied forces at Gallipoli.

[19] This detachment was commanded by Lt G. R. Johnston, and during his illness, by Lt M. Lewin.

few weeks it shared in much of the tedious and exacting work of pursuing or frustrating de Wet and his large commando. At the end of July this detachment had the satisfaction of seeing 4000 Boers, under Martinus Prinsloo, surrender[20] in the eastern Orange Free State, but de Wet and his own commando had eluded the net. Later, this same detachment was again in action in the pursuit of de Wet. As the result of these operations, Sir Hector Macdonald was added to the number of British generals who praised the abilities of the New Zealanders as scouts.

It is somewhat difficult to keep track of all the duties which the three contingents were performing at this time. After the occupation of Pretoria, the main work of all the colonial contingents was scouting: they were attached to many different, comparatively small columns which were quartering the country to find the remaining Boer commandos. The strength of the three contingents had in any case dwindled, through sickness and other causes, to about 300 men. An Army order of 8 June 1900 had called for volunteers to join the police and the railways department, both of which were under military control. Attracted by the high pay[21] and good conditions, and also believing that the war was practically over, 170 men left the three contingents to take up this work. Lieutenant-Colonel Robin[22] complained to the generals under whom he served of this continual dispersal of the New Zealanders, but although they regretted its necessity they pointed out that it was the New Zealanders' skill in reconnoitring untraversed country which caused them to be so much in demand. At this time of rapid movement, troops were frequently used to make up composite units, which in effect consisted of all those whose horses were at that particular moment still fit to travel.

Some of the First Contingent had been present at Diamond Hill on 11 and 12 June when Lord Roberts made a frontal assault on Botha's army holding a wide front in the hills only fifteen miles to the east of Pretoria, too close to the newly-captured town for peace

[20] This operation of surrounding and capturing the Boer army was known as Witterbergen.

[21] It was 10s. a day for privates.

[22] Promoted 25 Jun 1900.

of mind. This action is more fully described in the section dealing with the Second Contingent.

The New Zealanders took part in the advance towards Middelburg in July, and were several times in action. In the course of the operations to the east of Pretoria on the night of 25 July, near Balmoral, they experienced bitterly cold conditions which caused the deaths during the night of an officer and three men of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and of nearly a thousand animals.

Relief of Rustenburg

In late July and early August the New Zealanders of the three contingents marched in Brigadier-General B. T. Mahon's column to relieve Major-General R. S. S. Baden-Powell, who was being hard-pressed by the Boers at Rustenburg. (It is curiously ironic that the defender of Mafeking should once more be besieged.) Brushing aside the Boer opposition which sought to hold the different passes against him, Mahon reached Rustenburg on 5 August, already finding the Boers' reluctance to stay and fight a fallacious index of their real strength. The British forces moved to the north and east from Rustenburg, reaching Warmbaths on 24 August after several skirmishes. By the end of the month the three contingents were back in Pretoria.

At this time the effective strength of the three combined contingents compared very favourably with that of other British units. Eighty of the First Contingent, 110 of the Second, and 100 of the Third, in addition to officers, were still serving; at this time 90 men were on detached duty with different columns, about 60 in the railway and telegraph departments, and 100 in the police.

At the beginning of September Mahon took his troops to join the main advance eastwards, which swept the Boer armies towards the Portuguese border. On 12 September, at Nyl Berg, it fell to New Zealand troops to discover that the Boers had, for once, abandoned a strong position without defending it. On the 13th General French took a flying column to Barberton, on the right flank of the advance; Colonel Robin and seventy-five New Zealanders joined in this cross-country march from Nyl Berg through mountainous country deemed impassable by the surprised Boers. Barberton,

Capture of Barberton

full of Boer rolling stock and stores, was captured after 'some wonderful marching and hill-climbing and no

little stiff fighting';[23] it was to be the base for most of the men of the three contingents for the next month. For the first time since they had landed in South Africa the troops had a real rest, their leisure extending to a series of cricket matches with other units. They arrived in Pretoria by rail on 17 October.

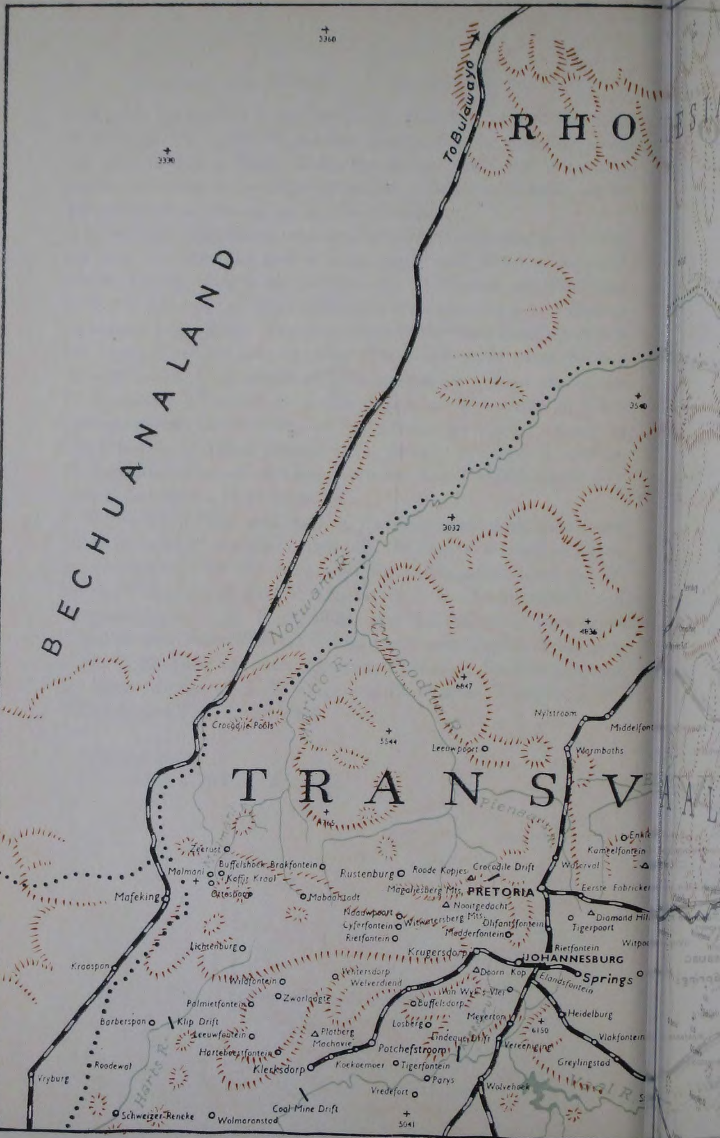
It had been intended to repatriate the First Contingent as a body, but this was later changed to those who could advance personal reasons for returning home at once. On 23 October an officer and forty-two men left for home under this arrangement, to be followed by several later drafts. The remainder of the First Contingent left the Pretoria neighbourhood, where they had made some further arduous journeys in search of the increasingly elusive enemy, on 21 November. They spent a short time at Worcester, in Cape Colony, during the meetings of the Afrikander Bond, a party in which people of Dutch descent were strongly represented, and on 13 December embarked at Cape Town for New Zealand, where they were disbanded on 21 January 1901.

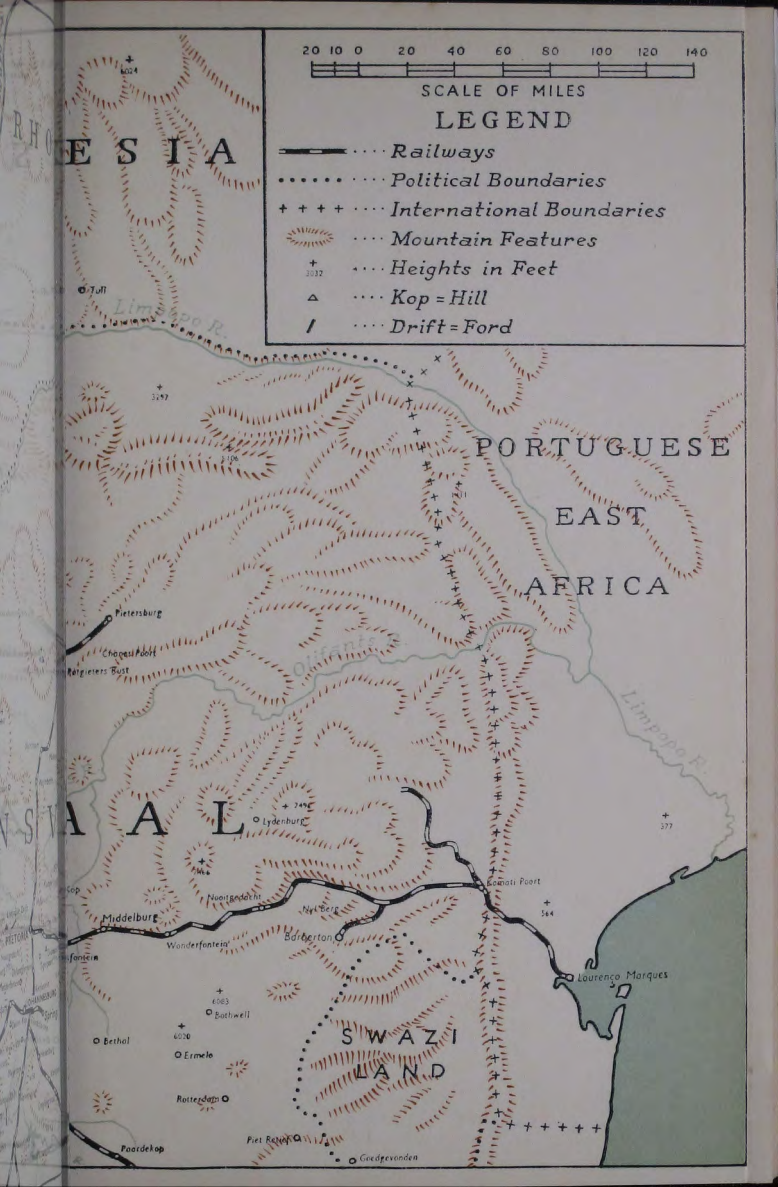
Of the 214 officers and men of the first contingent, four were killed in action,[24] one died of wounds, ten died of disease, and four were wounded. Awards were won by Lieutenant-Colonel A. W. Robin, who received the CB, Lieutenant J. G. Hughes, DSO, and Sergeant-Major W. T. Burr, DCM, and the following were mentioned in despatches: Colonel Robin, Lieutenant Hughes, Sergeants-Major S. H. Tuck and Burr, Sergeant E. Haslett, Saddler-Sergeant W. Harris, Corporals J. M. Hogg and H. Haselar, Troopers J. W. Callaway and T. C. L. Holroyd.

[23] Stirling, p. 348.

[24] Five, when Lt Neave is included.

Map of the Transvaal


3360
3390
To Bulawayo
RHO
BECHUANALAND
3540
3032
4836
6647
Notwani R.
Crocodile R.
Marico R.
Crocodile Pools
5544
Nylstroom
Middelfont
Leeuwpoort
Warmbaths
TRANSVAAL
Pienaars R.
4765
Zeerust
Enkle
Kameelfontein
Buffelshoek
Brakfontein
Malmani
Kaffir Kraal
Rustenburg
Roode Kopjes
Crocodile Drift
Waterval
Ottoshoop
Mabaalstadt
Magaliesberg Mts.
PRETORIA
Eerste Fabrieken
Mafeking
Nooitgedacht
Cyferfontein
Witwatersberg Mts.
Olifantsfontein
Diamond Hill
Tigerpoort
Rietfontein
Modderfontein
Lichtenburg
Witpoort
Krugersdorp
Rietfontein
JOHANNESBURG
Kraaipan
Doorn Kop
Elandsfontein
Springs
Wildfontein
Welverdiend
Zwartlaagte
Van Wyk's Vlei
Palmietfontein
Buffelsdorp
Meyerton
Heidelburg
Barberspan
Klip Drift
Losberg
6150
Leeuwfontein
Platberg
Lindeque Drift
Vlakfontein
Machavie
Hartebeestfontein
Potchefstroom
Vereeniging
Greylingstad
Roodewal
Klerksdorp
Kockoemoer
Tigerfontein
Vryburg
Harts R.
Parys
Wolvehoek
Vaal R.
Vredefort
Coal Mine Drift
Schweizer-Reneke
Wolmaranstad
5041


20 10 0 20 40 60 80 100 120 140
SCALE OF MILES
LEGEND
Railways
Political Boundaries
International Boundaries
Mountain Features
Heights in Feet
Kop = Hill
Drift = Ford
PORTUGUESE
EAST
AFRICA
Pietersburg
Potgietersrust
Lydenburg
Middelburg
Nooitgedacht
Wonderfontein
Belfast
Barberton
Komati Poort
Lourenco Marques
Bethal
Ermelo
Bothwell
Rotterdam
Piet Retief
Paardekop
Groedgevonden
SWAZILAND
Limpopo R.

CHAPTER 5

THE SECOND CONTINGENT

THE Second Contingent was formed, like the First, largely from men already trained in the Volunteers. At first its conditions of membership were stringent, including a clause that restricted entry to men born in New Zealand, but this was later rescinded. A very few men who were not so trained were accepted after a prolonged test of their horsemanship and marksmanship under the eye of the commanding officer of the contingent, Major Montagu Cradock,[1] an English officer with some sixteen years' service in the 6th Dragoon Guards who had fought in the Kabul Field Force in Afghanistan. The contingent's strength was approximately the same as that of the First Contingent, with the addition of a Hotchkiss gun detachment of thirty-nine. They sailed in the *Waiwera* on 20 January 1900 and on 27 February disembarked at Cape Town.

The contingent was sent up to Victoria Road in northern Cape Colony and joined a column commanded by Colonel Sir Charles Parsons which operated in the western districts of the Colony. On the way up by rail to their starting point the New Zealanders had caught their first glimpse of Boers, the prisoners taken when Cronje surrendered at Paardeberg. 'All the men were of one stamp—raw-boned, heavy-featured men, with a half-sullen, half-fierce and wholly uncultivated expression of countenance.'[2] No Boers were seen in the field in the course of a month-long trek which extended as far as Kenhardt; even though the results of their long march (according to Shand approximately 600 miles were covered) were disappointing, the men of the Second Contingent were introduced by it to the conditions of African trekking. On their return they entrained for the Orange Free State, reaching Bloemfontein towards

[1] Lt-Col M. Cradock, CB, m.i.d.; took an Imperial commission in South Africa (1 Sep 1900) and commanded a corps of mounted infantry.

[2] *With the New Zealanders at the Front*, F. Twisleton (Whitcombe and Tombs), p. 12. Twisleton served in the First World War as a captain in the Otago Mounted Rifles and as a major in the New Zealand Rifle Brigade, winning the MC and receiving mention in despatches. He died of wounds on 15 Nov 1917 in Palestine.

the end of April, when they were ordered to join General Hutton's mounted infantry.

On 1 May the advance from Bloemfontein was resumed. The men of the Second Contingent were first in action on 3 May when, refusing to be intimidated by the flanking fire of a well-placed Boer unit, they pressed on and were the first troops to enter Brandfort. They were in action again several times during the succeeding days. On 4 May they helped dislodge the Boers from Constantia Hill, their rifle fire discomfiting the enemy gunners. Next day the Boers contested the passage of the Vet River, where a New Zealand detachment led by Lieutenant C. L. Somerville[3] brought timely help to the Western Australians. Here the main body of New Zealanders trailed a coat before the Boers' position and successfully induced them to open fire and disclose their dispositions to the British artillery. When, at nightfall, the Boers fell back, the advancing New Zealanders captured one of their Maxims. The contingent was again in action on 10 May at the crossing of the Zand River before entering Kroonstadt two days later. Here, as has been mentioned, the three contingents were amalgamated.

The New Zealanders crossed the Vaal River on 25 May and next day had a sharp engagement at Rietspruit, while feeling the left of the Boer position, being fired on by the British guns before dismounting to take a kopje strongly held by the enemy. (Although during this period of amalgamation of the three contingents it is not possible to distinguish the rôle of the men of each in every action, the different encounters with the enemy are related in the section dealing with the contingent which was most deeply embroiled.) On 28 May the New Zealanders were sent to hold a hill considerably ahead of the British forces and were under fire all day; next day the battle was rejoined. This action is known as Van Wyk's Vlei.[4] It had been in the nature of a feint covering the outflanking of Johannesburg by other troops. On the 30th General Hutton's mounted infantry marched thirty miles to intercept an enemy convoy, some of which was captured.

[3] Major, Wellington Mounted Rifles, in First World War; died of wounds, Palestine, 2 Apr 1918.

[4] Another place of the same name in western Cape Colony was visited by the Second Contingent with Parsons' column. This engagement is also known as Van Wyk's Rust.

After the fall successively of Johannesburg and Pretoria, Lord Roberts found it necessary on 11 June to disperse Botha's army from a position at Diamond Hill threatening Pretoria. Hutton's mounted infantry, including the New Zealanders, were on the British left and 'had very heavy fighting in most difficult country.'[5] On the first day of the battle the New Zealanders had a brush with a Boer force seeking to occupy the main kopje at Kameelfontein, the key to the whole position in that part of the extended line. Each side thought the hilltop already in the hands of their friends, and each retired to a distance to let their artillerymen bring the matter to a decision. After a wait in the rear under the enemy's shellfire some New Zealanders took the disputed hill. A detachment of the Third Contingent all day held a ford and ridge, by which the New Zealanders had gained their objective, against Boer attempts to dislodge them. On the second day the Boers opened fire from a neighbouring hilltop with a gun they had brought up. This and other Boer field pieces kept the New Zealanders in a state of uneasy tension all day. The sangars our troops defended were later found to be pocked and speckled with blue marks of bullets and shell fragments. During their second night in this position of uncomfortable eminence the men manhandled a pom-pom to the top of the kopje, but were chagrined to find next morning (13 June) that the whole Boer force had decamped in the night and that an opportunity of capturing guns only a few hundred yards ahead of the British positions had been missed.

Diamond Hill

In the operations round Pretoria following the Diamond Hill engagement, the Second Contingent detachment under Lieutenant G. Crawshaw had an arduous day's action on 16 July in the Reit Vlei area against mostly superior enemy forces. Later in the month the three contingents received some much-needed remounts and joined in General Mahon's movement to Rustenburg. The pursuit of an outnumbered enemy brought it home to one officer 'that the Boers on the trek, even with lean and exhausted animals, are as good men as we are.'[6]

[5] Stirling, p. 345.

[6] *Diary of the Second New Zealand Mounted Rifles*, Montagu Cradock (*Evening Star*, Dunedin), p. 27.

On 1 September, Major Cradock, commanding the Second Contingent, was promoted lieutenant-colonel and given command of a mounted infantry corps which included the three amalgamated New Zealand contingents.

On 9 September, after another night of bitter weather in which the cold killed a number of horses, the Second Contingent was in action at Rooiwachte. As was so often the case with them during the fighting in South Africa, the men of these detachments were in a holding position all day under fire while other troops worked around the enemy's flanks.

After their rest at Barberton the three contingents returned to Pretoria at the end of October. The Second and Third Contingents were now engaged in various convoy and scouting operations to the west, including the burning of a Boer mill at Kopperfontein, perhaps the first occasion when the New Zealanders were employed on the work of devastating Boer resources.

The New Zealanders marched to Eerste Fabricken on 22 November to join Major-General A. H. Paget's column. They were soon in contact with aggressive enemy forces. On the 26th the New Zealanders acting as flank guards were shelled by Boer guns, and on each of the three succeeding days action was joined with the enemy, who fell back before the British column. On 29 November at Rhenoster Kop, in the northern Transvaal, the Boers under General Ben Viljoen withstood a British attack in what proved to be the last pitched battle of the war. It began in the early morning when the British advanced guards found the Boers strongly placed in a 'natural fortification' of rocky kopjes. The British troops came up and assailed the Boers all day along a four-mile front. While the enemy was concealed by good cover, the British were in the open below a ridge from which they had descended to reach the enemy across the intervening dip. 'The Colonials . . . fought with admirable steadiness, but, like the infantry, they could make no progress.'[7] At dusk the Boers made a 'vicious counter-attack' on the New Zealanders, who had advanced nearer to the enemy than any other troops. 'All distinguished themselves, and no troops could have done better, and the stand they made for so many hours under a galling fire was

Rhenoster Kop

[7] *Times History*, Vol. V, p. 63.

worthy to rank amongst the most conspicuous acts of bravery that have been performed during the whole of the campaign.'[8] The New Zealanders suffered six killed and twenty wounded. Next day it was found that the Boers had, as usual, used the cover of night to retire and disperse. General Paget's column remained in the Rhenoster Kop neighbourhood for the next month.

This column on 28 December set out on a long trek by Pienaar's River to Rustenburg to intercept de la Rey. Although on this march the New Zealanders were several times in action, the general results of the movement were disappointing. De la Rey escaped, and on 14 January 1901 the column was ordered back to Pretoria just when Paget had shepherded a number of Boers and their cattle into the Scherweberg and was looking forward to making them captive.

On 19 January, the New Zealanders, forming part of a composite colonial brigade commanded by Colonel Cradock, marched south-east from Pretoria to the Vlakfontein district to break up a nest of Boers. There was a brush with the enemy on the 23rd in which the New Zealanders suffered casualties.

At the end of the month the Second and Third Contingents were sent by train to Naauwpoort in northern Cape Colony to join a force under Brigadier-General H. C. O. Plumer opposing de Wet. The column moved up through Colesberg. On 12 February contact was made with the enemy at Hamelfontein. At Wolvekuil on the 14th the column came up with de Wet, who held tenaciously to every ridge and kopje, hoping to cover the withdrawal of his convoy. He held off a British regiment successfully, 'but Cradock's New Zealanders and Australians, in a very dashing assault in which they lost twenty-three men, turned the Boer right and forced de Wet to continue the retreat.'[9] The New Zealand casualties in this action were nine wounded. Next day Plumer pushed on ahead of his transport waggons and reaped the fruit of the Wolvekuil engagement by capturing the whole of de Wet's convoy. The burghers themselves escaped.

The pursuit continued, the New Zealanders several times distinguishing themselves, most of all perhaps on 23 February when

[8] Cradock, p. 35.
[9] *Times History*, Vol. V, p. 138.

they caught the Boers crossing the Orange River by the Kameel Poort drift and, attacking vigorously, began a chase in which seventy prisoners and the Boers' remaining two guns fell into our hands. Further prisoners were taken before the column entrained on 27 February for Springfontein in the Orange Free State. At Philippolis on 3 March contact was renewed with de Wet's commando. De Wet was still moving fast but was brought to action on the 4th, when the Boer rearguard opposed the British entry into Fauresmith. Plumer's column reached Winburg on 15 March, and the pursuit of de Wet was relinquished to other troops.

On 19 March the New Zealanders were thanked and farewelled by General Plumer. Next day the rest of the column entrained for Pretoria, Colonel Cradock going with them. The Second and Third Contingents, whose service was at an end on being relieved by the recently-arrived Sixth Contingent, left for Cape Town. They sailed for New Zealand in the *Tongariro* on 1 April 1901 and, landing at Port Chalmers on 8 May, were next day disbanded.

The Second Contingent had seven men killed in action; three died of wounds, twelve died of disease, and twenty-two were wounded. Lieutenant-Colonel M. Cradock was awarded the CB and was twice mentioned in despatches, Lieutenant T. J. M. Todd won the DSO, and Sergeant W. Cassidy and Trooper H. B. Wade the DCM. Captain G. Crawshaw, Lieutenants C. L. Somerville and Todd, Sergeant Cassidy, Troopers E. Hille, J. Stevens, and Wade also received mention in despatches.

CHAPTER 6

THE THIRD CONTINGENT

THE Third Contingent was raised and equipped to a great extent from public subscription by the people of Canterbury. The first of the two companies of which it consisted was recruited almost wholly in Canterbury, though the second company was made up of men from Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, and Manawatu. It was the policy of the Government to maintain a fairly even balance between the two islands in recruiting troops for service in South Africa. The members of this Third Contingent were popularly known as the 'rough riders', men selected without Volunteer experience but who were good horsemen and marksmen.

The contingent sailed on 17 February 1900 in the *Knight Templar* under the command of Major T. J. Jowsey.[1] It arrived at East London on 26 March and entrained for Aliwal North on the south-eastern border of the Orange Free State. On 14 April it joined the Colonial Division commanded by Major-General E. Y. Brabant and began a rapid movement to relieve the British garrison at Wepener. In this town, on the Basutoland border, 1700 British troops, nearly all colonials, were defending an eight-mile perimeter against the formidable onslaughts of de Wet. The defence was spirited, the defenders being well supplied with food, water, and ammunition and enjoying the protection of well-sited artillery. It has been suggested that the concentration of considerable Boer forces outside Wepener from 9 to 25 April was something Lord Roberts had deliberately planned with the intention of trapping the Boer army. Certainly, it was largely due to bad weather after 21 April that this great opportunity was missed when three British columns failed to enclose the mobile and elusive Boers.

The New Zealanders were with Brabant advancing from the south through Rouxville, which was reached on 14 April. At Boesman's Kop, some twenty miles from Wepener, on 22 April they first met

[1] Maj T. J. Jowsey, CMG, m.i.d.; born Middlesborough, Yorkshire, 1853, died 1934; served for seven years in India in British Army; Major, Timaru Rifles, 1899.

some of the 8000 Boers operating against the town. They were several times under fire while carrying out the flanking movements which dislodged the Boers from their positions. On the 24th another engagement was fought, and on the 25th the column entered the town, the Boers departing without further action.

The Third Contingent was now transferred to the command of Major-General A. F. Hart and marched with him on Smithfield to the south-west. The New Zealanders surrounded the town during the night and entered it with little opposition at daybreak. From Smithfield they marched south to Bethulie and there entrained for Bloemfontein. On 11 May they left for Kroonstadt, where they were amalgamated with the First and Second Contingents and shared with them the rest of their South African service. The Third Contingent's commanding officer, Major Jowsey, was transferred to a staff appointment and rejoined the New Zealanders several months later. Major R. H. Davies[2] assumed command, but just before the capture of Johannesburg he was accidentally injured when his horse fell, and he spent some time in hospital.

The contingent took part in the advance to Johannesburg and Pretoria and was in action with the rest of the amalgamated New Zealand regiment. At Diamond Hill Lieutenants J. Cameron and W. T. Walker led a party which took and held the ford, by which the New Zealanders had advanced on to the main kopje at Kameelfontein, and a ridge which covered the ford. The Boers made strenuous attempts to induce them to give up this key position but they resisted determinedly. The Third Contingent, like the Second, was frequently called on to hold difficult ground against strong enemy pressure.

While serving under General Hutton in the neighbourhood of Pretoria in July, the New Zealanders had several brushes with the enemy. On 16 July the Boers attacked the Witpoort-Tigerpoort ridge at Koffiepoort, which, being too weakly held, they occupied.

[2] Maj-Gen R. H. Davies, CB, m.i.d.; Regular soldier; born London 1862, died London, 11 May 1918; commanded a company in 1st Contingent and at various periods commanded 3rd, 4th and 8th Contingents; Inspector-General Defence Forces of New Zealand 1906-10; appointed to command 6th Infantry Brigade at Aldershot, 16 Oct 1910; promoted Major-General 18 Feb 1915 and transferred permanently to the British Army; commanded 20th Division at Ypres.

Following up this initial advantage, the Boer general, Viljoen, pressed on and his men 'swarmed along the ridge towards Witpoort.'[3] A party of New Zealanders was sent out to hold an isolated kopje (Funk Kopje) in an attempt to stem this advance. The Boers, quickly recognising the vulnerable position of the New Zealanders, opened a very hot fire from the west, while with their characteristic feinting tactics they infiltrated the north side of the kopje until 500 men were in the dead ground below the crest. When these appeared on the summit among the New Zealanders the surprise was complete, two officers and eighteen men being captured at once. Lieutenant F. G. Tucker shouted to the rest to rush for their horses and bolt, and they made good their escape in spite of a furious fusillade from the Boers. Lieutenant-Colonel Cradock blamed an English officer's bad dispositions for this disaster: he 'put mounted men to hold a kopje which he avowedly could not hold himself with his infantry, whilst he retired these latter into an entrenched position on another kopje.'[4]

Funk Kopje

In August, with Major Jowsey once more in command of the Third Contingent, the New Zealanders marched with General Mahon to Rustenburg. Several skirmishes with Boer forces, which withdrew before the strong British column, involved Third Contingent men. On 19 August two patrols of New Zealanders crossed the Carlisle Drift in the Crocodile River to reconnoitre the Roode Kopjes. Here a party of Boers, concealed in good cover, opened a fierce, close-range fire that inflicted several casualties.

One of the fruits of the advance to Komati Poort and the capture of Barberton was that the Third Contingent prisoners whom the Boers had captured at Koffiepoort were released. They rejoined their unit on 13 September at Barberton.

At Rhenoster Kop, at the end of November, the Third Contingent fought doggedly in what was, for both Second and Third Contingents, their most memorable and important engagement, suffering casualties as well as earning distinctions.

On 13 December Lieutenant-Colonel Robin took over from Major Jowsey the command of the Second and Third Contingents, and on the 28th the New Zealanders left Rhenoster Kop on a 140-mile

[3] Cradock, p. 23.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 24. This action is also known as Reit Vlei.

march with General Paget by Pienaar's River to Rustenburg. On the 29th a Third Contingent patrol surprised and routed with loss a party of about sixty Boers: this action was fought at 3 a.m., the Boers having for once been caught asleep. On 2 January 1901 another patrol dispersed a party of Boers and took from them 650 head of cattle.

Pursuit of de Wet

In the strenuous pursuit of de Wet based on Naauwpoort under General Plumer in February 1901, the Third Contingent served with distinction: it fought at Wolvekuil and in the many skirmishing actions of these operations. The hunger of man and beast on this rapid journey was probably greater than at any other time in their African service. It has been said that 'De Wet was a valuable instructor to the British troops. His practice of carrying nothing on the men but their arms and ammunition, his superb night marches, his ruses, his doublings, twistings, his bold use of ground, and, to a certain extent, his skill in handling a convoy became eventually the methods of his foes.'[5] The only way to keep up with de Wet, who unlike the British mounteds was well supplied with led horses, was to push far ahead of the transport and maintain contact at all costs, certainly at the cost of living on a couple of biscuits a day and eating no cooked meal for days together.

On 19 February the 250 best horses in the column were sent out to 'harass the enemy's rear and live on the country',[6] a somewhat ironic instruction as the fastest part of the column had been engaged in doing just that for some time. This advanced guard succeeded in heading off de Wet from fording the Brak River. It was not until the column reached Abraham's Kraal on 8 March and turned aside from the chase after de Wet that the pressure was relaxed. The New Zealand 'rough riders' were involved in the last action the column fought, when on 15 March, a few miles from Winburg, they were sent back to assist an Australian foraging party which was being attacked.

At the end of the month the Third Contingent embarked with the Second at Cape Town in the *Tongariro*. It, too, was disbanded on 9 May 1901.

[5] *Times History*, Vol. V, p. 42.
[6] Cradock, p. 43.

Three members of the contingent were killed in action, one died of wounds, twenty-two of disease, and fourteen were wounded. Major T. J. Jowsey was awarded the CMG and the following were mentioned in despatches: Major Jowsey, Captain E. W. C. Chaytor,[7] Surgeon-Captain S. C. Godfray, Lieutenant H. Bradburne, Quartermaster-Sergeant R. Stevenson, Sergeant-Major E. Harper, Sergeant P. L. Tudor, Troopers H. Harper and H. E. Vergette.

[7] Maj-Gen Sir Edward Chaytor, KCMG, KCVO, CB, m.i.d.; Regular soldier; born Motueka 21 Jun 1868, died London 15 Jun 1939; commanded South Island Regiment, 8th Contingent; Director of Military Training and Education, 1910; Adjutant-General, 1914; in First World War served as Assistant Adjutant-General, 1st NZEF, 1914, commanded New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade, 1915-17, Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division, 1917-19, and was GOC, NZEF in Egypt; Commandant, New Zealand Military Forces, 10 Dec 1919-31 Mar 1924.

CHAPTER 7

THE FOURTH CONTINGENT

THE despatch of the Third Contingent of 'rough riders' had set a precedent by sending men to Africa who had not had previous experience in the Volunteers. Throughout New Zealand, and especially in Otago, there was now a strong clamour for a new contingent. This desire to serve could hardly be resisted, and the Government accepted applications for service in a fourth contingent of double the size of each of the first three, and at the same time formed a reserve of men which sailed as the Fifth Contingent.

The Fourth Contingent sailed in two divisions: two companies,[1] under the command of Major F. W. Francis,[2] in the *Monowai*, which left Port Chalmers on 24 March 1900; two companies in the *Gymeric*, which sailed from Lyttelton on 31 March, under the command of Major J. R. Sommerville,[3] a veteran of the Maori Wars, who had commanded the Second Contingent's mobilisation camp at Newtown Park, Wellington. These two ships reached Beira in Portuguese East Africa respectively on 26 April and 11 May. After a brief stay near Beira in unhealthy conditions, the contingent entrained for Marandellas in Rhodesia, where it arrived in two divisions towards the end of May.

The Fourth Contingent 'rough riders' joined the Rhodesian Field Force, which operated from bases in British territory north of the Transvaal under the command of Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Carrington. Two of the four squadrons (A and B) in the contingent, under the command of Major Francis, left on 7 June for Bulawayo, which was reached on 2 July; the other two squadrons (C and D), under Lieutenant-Colonel Sommerville, beginning their march later,

[1] In Rhodesia the companies were re-named squadrons.

[2] Lt-Col F. W. Francis; born Essex 1856, died 31 Mar 1901; commanded 1st Canterbury Battalion; invalided from South Africa with fever and died shortly after returning to New Zealand.

[3] Col J. R. Sommerville; born County Armagh, Ireland, 1843, died 23 Dec 1910; commanded Wellington Mounted Rifles 1895-9; commanded 4th Contingent Mar-Jul 1900, when appointed to staff of 2nd Brigade, Rhodesian Field Force; President of the New Zealand Rifle Association 1885–1903 and commanded New Zealand teams at Bisley in 1897 and 1902.

did not reach Bulawayo until 11 July. Major Francis's squadrons pushed on to Tuli, just north of the Transvaal border, a sixteen-day trek,[4] but they were recalled at once to Bulawayo and entrained on 8 August for Mafeking, which Colonel Sommerville's portion of the contingent had reached by train a few days earlier. Here Lieutenant-Colonel R. Grey, commanding the 2nd Brigade of the Rhodesian Field Force, constituted the contingent as two distinct commands, two squadrons forming the right wing under Major Francis and two the left wing under Major R. H. Davies of the First Contingent, who had relieved Lieutenant-Colonel Sommerville so that the latter might take up a staff appointment.

The Fourth Contingent marched from Mafeking with a convoy of supplies for Lord Methuen on 14 August, and on the 16th, near Ottoshoop, found the enemy strongly posted on the Zeerust road.

Ottoshoop

The Boers were turned out of one line of kopjes by an outflanking movement. The New Zealanders chased them on to the next ridge and exposed themselves, without artillery support, to heavy fire from the Boers, who held their ridge and from good cover opposed our crossing of the open ground. The men of the New Zealand right-wing squadrons had to pause, and as soon as the left-wing squadrons were sent up to support them—they had got too close to the Boers for the guns to help them much—Captain J. A. Harvey of the hard-pressed right-wing squadrons ordered a bayonet charge. The Boers did not wait for the New Zealanders to come to grips with them, but they were able to inflict some galling casualties before they sought their horses and decamped. The New Zealanders had behaved with magnificent courage but with perhaps less caution than the occasion had required. Captain Harvey was one of those who fell in this action, which is sometimes known as Buffelshoek. The New Zealanders remained in possession of this dearly-won kopje for two cold days and nights, without blankets and with little food. Boer forces were still in the vicinity, but the conduct of the British force did not encourage them to renew the attack.

On 19 August the whole force fell back on Ottoshoop, but next day it was ordered to move in the direction of Lichtenburg to see

[4] Hot days and cold nights made the marches in Rhodesia particularly trying.

what enemy forces were in that quarter. Three miles out, Major Davies,[5] in command of the Fourth Contingent, made contact with a strongly posted Boer commando with which he skirmished before being ordered to withdraw. The New Zealanders fought well in these encounters, sustaining several casualties. Employed on patrol and outpost duty, or guarding convoys between Ottoshoop and Mafeking, the force remained at Ottoshoop until 9 September.

The contingent then left Ottoshoop as part of the column commanded by Major-General C. W. H. Douglas to go on trek in the western Transvaal. Another column, under the command of General Lord Methuen, marched ahead of Douglas. Two miles from its starting point on the first day Douglas's column met the Boers. Major Davies and the New Zealand contingent were given the task of crossing the Malmani River and turning the Boers' right flank. With the aid of a 15-pounder and a pom-pom Major Davies carried out this manoeuvre with good success, capturing several prisoners as well as waggons and ammunition. The column reached Lichtenburg on the 13th, went on to Rustenburg, and thence to Zeerust.

On 18 October, at Daenburg, to forestall early morning sniping into their camp, the New Zealanders sent out a party at 2.30 a.m. to occupy a kopje a mile away. Unfortunately the manoeuvre was made too late and the Boers were already in position. The New Zealand detachment was subjected to a hot fire until reinforcements came up and relieved the pressure.

During the march into Zeerust the enemy clung to the column, his sniping causing continuous annoyance until the snipers were dislodged by the column's Maxims, which were used to spray the trees where many of them were hidden. Major Davies stated: 'The principal work of the column has been attacking and dispersing small commandos of the enemy, capturing sheep, cattle, horses, waggons, forage and food stuffs, and searching all houses within reach for arms and ammunition, in all of which it has been eminently successful.'

The column then halted at Zeerust for a few days. On 24 October Methuen and Douglas attempted an ambitious plan to

[5] Lt-Col Francis had been sent to hospital in Mafeking and soon afterwards was reported unfit for active service. Major Davies succeeded him.

envelop de la Rey, whose commando was in a strong position at Kaffir Kraal to the north-east. Lieutenant-Colonel Lord Errol,[6] commanding Methuen's mounted troops, was to pass to the left of the enemy and Lieutenant-Colonel Grey to his right, and their forces were to join up behind the Boer position to cut off the retreat which it was confidently expected would result from the frontal attack by Lord Methuen's troops. The Boers very quickly sized up the danger to which they were exposed and abandoned their position in time to escape envelopment. But de la Rey suffered heavier casualties than the Boers ordinarily waited to receive—thirty-five dead or wounded and twenty-five prisoners—and lost many sheep and cattle and some waggons of his supply train. The Fourth Contingent played a leading part in the events of the day. On the 28th the mounted troops of the two columns left on a two-day reconnaissance towards Ball Kop. The well-informed enemy did not pause to meet them, but the British force captured 200 sheep and 900 cattle.

Kaffir Kraal

On 1 November the column resumed its criss-cross progress through the western Transvaal, marching by Kaffir Kraal to Mabaalstadt. At this time five columns were seeking to enclose de la Rey's forces by a southward movement, but the Boers proved hard to bring to action except on their own terms. On 9 November Douglas began a 38-mile march from Mabaalstadt to Ventersdorp with the intention of surprising that town at daybreak on 11 November; by dint of a weary forced march the column reached its objective in time, C and D Squadrons of the Fourth Contingent being posted behind the town to cut off the enemy's retreat. There was a brief brush with the Boers, who escaped, while, as usual, a large booty of sheep and cattle was taken. On the 12th the contingent, moving in the direction of the Klip Drift, by hard riding overtook and captured a party of Boers driving 720 head of cattle and 1500 sheep. Next day, by a similar gallop, the New Zealanders secured more cattle and sheep. The column moved on by Palmietfontein to Klerksdorp, which was reached on 16 November after an inconclusive action with Limberg's commando.

The column left Klerksdorp on 27 November to clear the country

[6] On this occasion his troops included C Squadron of the Fourth Contingent and a squadron of the Fifth.

between Klerksdorp, Potchefstroom, and the Vaal River of both population and stock. It marched by Koekoemoer and Tigerfontein to Lindeque Drift, near Vereeniging, which was reached on 2 December, then it turned back to Potchefstroom where, on 6 December, it shepherded in seventy burghers, 930 women and children, 5600 head of cattle, 14,300 sheep, about 380 horses and mules, besides a number of waggons. The policy of clearing the country and virtually devastating it (it involved the removal or destruction of both standing crops and stored forage, driving off all flocks and herds, and the imprisonment in central camps of the whole European population) need not be discussed here. The New Zealanders would have preferred operations directly against the enemy to this work of driving from their homes his unarmed dependants, but undoubtedly General Lord Kitchener had found the most effective means in the long run of weakening the fanatical and desperate resistance of the unsubdued commandos. Occasionally the troops had skirmishes with the enemy: when small groups of men visited isolated farmhouses there was always an element of uncertainty and danger. The column was back at Klerksdorp on 10 December, and it remained there for the next fortnight. Several times patrol duty brought the different squadrons of the contingent into contact with the enemy. On 19 December a promising engagement with some Boers, who had cut the railway line near Koekoemoer, degenerated into a harmless artillery duel at long range.

Clearing the south-western Transvaal

On 26 December General Douglas's column left Klerksdorp for Ventersdorp. Within a few hours of setting out, C Squadron came on Schalk Burgers' commando and was shelled by the Boers. The British artillery evicted them from this and from a new position to which they retired. That evening, at Platberg, General Douglas handed over his command to Colonel R. G. Kekewich, who had defended Kimberley. Ventersdorp was reached on 28 December and the column remained in that vicinity until 23 January 1901.

It took part, with three other columns, in two sweeps designed to clear the country and, if possible, make contact with the commandos of C. F. Beyers and de la Rey, who had at Nooitgedacht on 13 December inflicted a sharp defeat on a British column. On 5 January, at Cyferfontein, de la Rey ambushed an Imperial Light

Horse squadron, but was himself put to flight when Lieutenant-Colonel Grey led all his mounted troops against the opposite wing: de la Rey was 'hotly pursued for seven or eight miles by Grey.'[7] Some days later, at Zwarlaagte, the New Zealanders overtook a Boer convoy and captured an important booty of waggons and guns.[8]

The column was on trek again on 24 January, moving to Cyferfontein, where it remained until 6 March before returning to Ventersdorp. Patrols, outpost duty, foraging (with the double objective of finding food for the British horses and denying it to the Boers) occupied this time. On 15 March the column was again on the move. On the 24th, in the action at Wildfontein, the New Zealanders under Colonel Grey's command, now serving with Major-General J. M. Babington,[9] took part in the pursuit and capture of de la Rey's guns and convoy.

During the following six weeks the Fourth Contingent was engaged in operations to the north of Klerksdorp which differed little from the work previously undertaken. It was frequently in action against an enemy perpetually in retreat. In the middle of May the contingent moved to Worcester, in Cape Colony. After rest and recuperation, it left with the Fifth Contingent for Cape Town and embarked for New Zealand on 12 June 1901. Both contingents were disbanded on 21 July.

To the Fourth Contingent belonged the one New Zealander awarded the Victoria Cross for South African service, Farrier-Sergeant W. J. Hardham (later farrier-major, afterwards commissioned and a member of the Ninth Contingent).[10] Hardham won his decoration on 28 January 1901 near Naauwpoort.[11] He was with a section 'which was extended and hotly engaged with a party of

[7] *Times History*, Vol. V, p. 111.

[8] Stirling, p. 355.

[9] Commandant of the New Zealand Defence Forces 1901-6; later Lt-Gen Sir James Babington, KCB, KCMG; GOC 23rd Division in France, 1914-17; commanded British Forces in Italy, 1919.

[10] In the First World War he served as captain and major in Wellington Mounted Rifles in Egypt, Gallipoli, and Palestine; died 13 Apr 1928.

[11] This Transvaal Naauwpoort should not be confused with the place of the same name in Cape Colony. General Babington chose Naauwpoort as the key to the district west of Pretoria; it was 'an exceedingly strong position on the Witwatersberg, commanding the narrow valley which separates that range from the Magaliesberg': *Times History*, Vol. V, p. 113.

about twenty Boers. Just before the force commenced to retire Trooper M'Crae[12] was wounded and his horse killed; Farrier-Sergeant Hardham at once went, under a heavy fire, to his assistance, dismounted, and placed him on his own horse, and ran alongside until he had guided him to a place of safety.'[13]

Three members of the contingent were killed in action, one died of wounds, one was accidentally killed, fifteen died of disease, and twenty-three were wounded. Major R. H. Davies received the CB, Captain G. H. Walker the DSO, and Trooper J. Langham the DCM. The following were mentioned in despatches: Major Davies, Captains Walker and B. Arthur, Lieutenants A. Bauchop[14] (twice) and G. H. R. Rolleston, Farrier-Major W. J. Hardham, Sergeant J. Walker, Corporal W. J. O'Dowd, Troopers Langham, R. A. Drinnan, J. Rumble, A. E. Thurlow, and F. W. Wylie. Corporal O'Dowd was promoted sergeant by the Commander-in-Chief and Troopers Drinnan, Rumble, Thurlow, and Wylie corporals.

[12] Tpr J. McRae.

[13] Stirling, p. 369.

[14] Lt-Col A. Bauchop, CMG, m.i.d.; Regular soldier; served in 4th and 7th Contingents; commanded Canterbury Military District (1904-6), Wellington (1906-10), and Otago (1912-14); commanded Otago Mounted Rifle Regiment in Egypt and on Gallipoli; wounded on Gallipoli and died of wounds at sea, 10 Aug 1915.

CHAPTER 8

THE FIFTH CONTINGENT

THE reserves of men the Government had enlisted during the early months of 1900 when the desire to serve in South Africa was at its strongest were soon needed. The Fifth Contingent was embodied from these reserves at the request of the Imperial Government and was for that reason often referred to as the 'New Zealand Imperial Bushmen', as distinct from the Fourth Contingent which, recruited originally under the title of 'rough riders', which at that time meant simply a soldier without a background of peacetime service in the Volunteers, was often referred to as 'the New Zealand Bushmen'. The title 'Bushmen' was given to the New Zealanders in Rhodesia apparently to achieve uniformity with some Australian formations which bore this name. The Fifth and the five later contingents were all raised, equipped, and paid entirely at the expense of the Imperial Government.

The Fifth Contingent and seventy reserves sailed on 31 March 1900 in three ships. One company sailed with the Fourth Contingent in the *Gymeric*; two companies each sailed in the *Maori* and the *Waimate*. The *Maori* reached Beira on 27 April and the *Waimate* arrived shortly afterwards. Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart Newall,[1] an officer with considerable Maori War experience, commanded the contingent.

The experience of the Fifth Contingent, both after landing and in its later service, was very similar to that of the Fourth Contingent, with which it was constantly in close association. During their three weeks in camp near their port of disembarkation many of the men of the Fifth Contingent suffered from the tropical diseases—particularly malaria—commonly assailing Europeans on the low-lying plains of Portuguese East Africa. The transfer to Rhodesia was necessarily slow because of the deficiencies of the Portuguese railway system. A light, narrow-gauge railway took

[1] Col S. Newall, CB, m.i.d.; born Dumfriesshire, Scotland, 1843, died 3 Aug 1919; served in Militia and Armed Constabulary during Maori Wars; commanded Wanganui, Taranaki, and Wellington Districts.

the troops the first sixty miles to Bamboo Creek, where they transferred to a broader-gauge line. Both lines were short of rolling stock. The 200-mile journey across the swampy plains, occupying between two and three days, and the halt at Bamboo Creek, did nothing to improve the men's health; their destination, Marandellas, was higher and a good deal more healthy. The British camp there had been formed for the reception of the troops arriving through Portuguese territory and was surrounded by bush and by natives believed to be hostile. Rhodesia was at that time in the first stages of its development.

At Marandellas the contingent completed its equipment and arming. Like the Fourth Contingent, it joined the Rhodesian Field Force commanded by General Carrington.

While the contingent was at Marandellas, General Carrington called for volunteers to man a battery of six 15-pounder guns. Captain C. T. Major[2] offered the whole of his company (mostly Aucklanders). These men, and a few others from the other companies of the Fifth Contingent, together with Lieutenant G. F. Johnston[3] and about twenty men from the Fourth Contingent, formed the 1st New Zealand Battery in the Rhodesian Field Force Artillery under the command of Major E. W. M. Powell. The battery served as a separate unit.

Formation of 1st NZ Battery, Rhodesian Field Force Artillery

The rest of the Fifth Contingent was organised into four squadrons (A, B, C, and D). As they were ready, the squadrons moved from Marandellas on the long trek to Bulawayo, the first to start, A Squadron, leaving on 14 June. The different squadrons had begun the further trek to Tuli when they were recalled to Bulawayo and entrained for Mafeking. Almost immediately C Squadron was detached and served separately during the rest of its time in South Africa. It was sent first to Crocodile Pools, where, with a detachment of police and a battery of the Rhodesian Field Force Artillery, it remained on garrison duty for about two months, before marching to Tuli, where it did similar garrison duty until October. From

[2] Col C. T. Major, CBE, DSO, m.i.d.; born Auckland 1869, died 21 Nov 1938; commanded Auckland Military District during First World War; headmaster King's College, Auckland, 1905-26.

[3] Served in First World War as lieutenant in New Zealand Field Artillery.

Tuli the squadron returned to Bulawayo and then went south again to join the Kimberley Flying Column. It remained based on Kimberley until it rejoined the contingent on its return to New Zealand.

A, B, and D Squadrons, like the Fourth Contingent, on 14 August joined the 2nd Brigade, Rhodesian Field Force, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Grey. Before joining the brigade, A and D Squadrons with some of the Fourth Contingent, under Lieutenant-Colonel Newall's command, left Mafeking on 5 August to make a reconnaissance towards Kraaspan, from which they returned on the 10th. On 6 August the remainder of the New Zealanders formed part of the column with which General Carrington attempted to relieve the Eland's River position, Brakfontein, which Lieutenant-Colonel C. O. Hore, desperately outnumbered, was defending against de la Rey's powerful commando. Carrington failed to get through to Eland's River, though he was within seven miles of it, and Hore was relieved by Kitchener. This bungled enterprise may be in part attributed to defective intelligence, the relieving column believing that Hore had already surrendered. But the events of the next few days suggest that perhaps Carrington would not have been strong enough in any case to beat off de la Rey. On the journey back to Mafeking from Buffelshoek the Fifth Contingent formed the rearguard of the column.

On 14 August the 2nd Brigade, Rhodesian Field Force (in which at this time most of the Fourth and Fifth Contingents as well as the 1st New Zealand Battery were serving), left Mafeking for Zeerust. Although the Fifth Contingent was not directly involved at Ottoshoop on 16 August, it was in action at Malmani on the 17th and was then under heavy rifle fire. From Buffelshoek Carrington fell back on Ottoshoop on 18 August.

The Boers were present in such force that the troops had to be constantly on the alert. Several times in the next fortnight the Fifth Contingent was sent out on patrols which brought it into contact with the enemy. On 5 September Lieutenant-Colonel Newall, surprising a party of Boers, inflicted casualties and took prisoners.

Now commanded by General Douglas, the column left Ottoshoop on 9 September for Lichtenburg. A and D Squadrons of the Fifth Contingent, under Colonel Newall, marched with it, but B Squadron

On trek in the western Transvaal

was left in Ottoshoop as part of the command of Lord Errol, with whom it marched shortly afterwards to join General Lord Methuen's column. (Lord Methuen was operating in close collaboration with Douglas, so that the detached squadron was not very far away from the rest of the contingent.) On the 9th the Fifth Contingent, which supplied the right and advanced guards, soon made contact with the enemy, suffering some casualties, and two days later it was again in action. On the 12th the column reached Manana. The New Zealanders rode in pursuit of a Boer convoy but were not able to overtake it. Next day the British forces entered Lichtenburg after some skirmishing.

The column then moved on through Barberspan to Leeuwpan,[4] which was reached on the 19th. It remained there a week. The New Zealanders had some exhausting work bringing up supply convoys through country where the Boers were still active, and the convoys had therefore to be guarded night and day. On 26 September the column began doubling back on its tracks to proceed to Rustenburg.

On 30 September the column, with Lord Methuen's column on its right, reached the Magaliesberg where, among the rocky scarps of these hills, it was frequently exposed to Boer snipers. New Zealand patrols several times encountered de la Rey's outposts, on one occasion stumbling on a force of Boers which opened a vigorous fire at fifty yards range; in spite of this sudden exposure to a superior enemy, the New Zealanders were able to ride for the shelter of a neighbouring ridge and gain it without casualty. Douglas reached Rustenburg on 8 October by way of Olifant's Nek.

On the 10th the two columns left Rustenburg to attempt to come to grips with the enemy. They sought him in the Marico Valley, but could not bring him to any action more important than minor skirmishes. On the 18th they re-entered Zeerust. The attempt by the combined forces of Lord Methuen, Lord Errol, and Douglas to surround de la Rey at Kaffir Kraal on 24 October failed after some brisk fighting when the Boers withdrew before the trap closed on them.

[4] The New Zealanders soon had good reason to nickname this unpleasant locality 'Dustpan'.

Douglas's column next marched on 1 November by Kaffir Kraal and Brakfontein to Ventersdorp, which it reached on the 10th. The trek was resumed three days later and on the 16th the column arrived at Klerksdorp. Here, on 25 November, D Squadron of the Fifth Contingent was detached and sent to garrison Coal Mine Drift on the Vaal River. The task of patrolling the surrounding country brought the squadron several times into contact with the enemy, and it had a number of skirmishes before it was withdrawn at the end of February 1901, fortunately losing only one man killed during this three months' duty.

A Squadron, now the only unit attached to the Fifth Contingent headquarters, did not move out of Klerksdorp with General Douglas on 27 November. It remained as part of that town's garrison until the end of March 1901. Patrol and reconnaissance duties kept the squadron fully occupied and entailed treks as far afield as Buffelsdorp, Haartebeestfontein, Wolmaranstad, and the Vaal River. It had many small clashes with the enemy.

On 30 December 1900 Lieutenant-Colonel Newall left Klerksdorp to return to a command in New Zealand. He was replaced by Major J. Ponsonby (of the Coldstream Guards), an English officer who had for some time acted as adjutant to the Fifth Contingent.

Lord Methuen marched into Klerksdorp on 22 February 1901 after extensive operations in the Zeerust, Lichtenburg, and Mafeking districts, and in the Griqualand district of Cape Colony. With him came B Squadron, which had been under Lord Errol's command and had fought with distinction at Kaffir Kraal on 24 October. Soon afterwards B Squadron was joined with three Australian squadrons to form the Composite Bushmen's Regiment, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel S. B. von Donop, in Lord Methuen's column. After operations during November and December in the Zeerust, Mafeking, and Lichtenburg districts, in the course of which, on 14 December, the Composite Regiment captured a Boer convoy after a running fight,[5] von Donop entrained at Mafeking for Vryburg, from which his regiment marched to Schweizer Reneke to cover the withdrawal of its garrison to Taungs.

Formation of Composite Bushmen's Regiment

[5] *Times History*, Vol. V, p. 116.

In January the regiment was on trek with Lord Methuen in Griqualand, relieving the garrison at Danielskuil and passing a convoy of provisions to Kuruman. A commando of 800 Boers under de Villiers was driven out of Griqualand back into the Transvaal in the course of this operation. During February the column kept up the pursuit of de Villiers, who shelled Methuen at Wolmaranstad on the 12th and stood the counter-bombardment by the British artillery for longer than was the Boer custom, losing nine men before withdrawing. On the 13th the New Zealanders, riding in the van, chased a party of Boers many miles, securing prisoners. Five days later the column made a successful daybreak attack on the Boer laager, the New Zealanders taking twenty-two prisoners and also capturing a number of enemy waggons. The column was several times in action again before reaching Klerksdorp, where B Squadron rejoined the New Zealand contingent. Lord Methuen paraded the squadron and thanked its members for their good work with his column, explaining that they were returning to their own contingent because the New Zealand Government had asked Lord Kitchener as far as possible to keep the New Zealanders together. Both Lord Errol and von Donop complimented the squadron on its services.

On 23 February B Squadron relieved the Australians garrisoning Koekoemoer. D Squadron came up from the Vaal River to join A Squadron in operations under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel G. E. Benson, whose column was employed in clearing the north bank of the Vaal River towards Vereeniging and thence back by Doorn Kop to Krugersdorp. Here B. Squadron was reunited with the rest of the contingent, this time finally. Colonel Benson was replaced by Major-General H. G. Dixon, who added several new regiments to the column and marched to Naauwpoort in the Magaliesberg district.

During April the column had several skirmishes with parties of Boers. On the 29th a party of New Zealanders engaged in securing some Boer waggons was fired on by the enemy, until another group of New Zealanders, with prompt initiative, opened fire and drove off the Boer force. On 8 May, near Rietfontein, Dixon's column got into touch with General Babington's column, with which it co-operated successfully in a movement through the Ventersdorp

district to Welverdiend, where the New Zealand troops in the column entrained on 18 May for Worcester.

Here C Squadron and the 1st New Zealand Battery rejoined the contingent. The battery had seen varied service since its formation nearly a year before at Marandellas Camp in Rhodesia. It had accompanied Carrington on his abortive attempt to relieve Hore, and was first in action early in August 1900. Then the left section of the battery left Mafeking with Lord Methuen on 29 October; he left it at Lichtenburg, where it remained part of the garrison until it was sent to Worcester in May. When de la Rey attacked Lichtenburg early in March 1901 the New Zealanders fought their two 15-pounders well. The other two sections of the battery took part with the 2nd Brigade of the Rhodesian Field Force in the movement through Ottoshoop, Lichtenburg, and Rustenburg to Zeerust, where the right section was detached and remained as part of the garrison. The centre section remained with the brigade until it reached Klerksdorp and was afterwards stationed at Koekoemoer.

The Fifth Contingent embarked with the Fourth at Cape Town and sailed for New Zealand on 12 June; it was disbanded on 21 July 1901.

Its casualties were four men killed in action, one died of wounds, two accidentally killed, eighteen died of disease and nine wounded. The contingent's original commander, Lieutenant-Colonel S. Newall, received a CB, Captains C. T. Major and D. Polson the DSO, and Sergeant-Major W. H. Fletcher the DCM.[6] Lance-Corporal J. M. Turnbull was promoted corporal by the Commander-in-Chief. All five were mentioned in despatches.

[6] Lieutenant-Colonel, m.i.d., commanding 3rd Battalion, Wellington Regiment, in First World War; later Assistant-Commissioner of Stamp Duties.

CHAPTER 9

THE SIXTH CONTINGENT

THE New Zealanders sent to South Africa had all been enlisted for a set term of service—one year. Although the terms of enlistment did, in fact, contain a clause ' or for such longer period as their services might be required ', which would have given the authorities a legal right to keep them in the field as long as the war lasted, it was felt that such an interpretation of the bargain would be ungrateful, especially as all had volunteered from high motives of duty or patriotism. In February 1901 the officer commanding the Second Contingent received a deputation of sergeants to express the dissatisfaction of the men at the length of their service as compared with that of other colonial troops.[1] The motives of the men who complained need not be considered in any way derogatory to them. Their service had been hard and it had been continuous. Much less attention was paid to recreation and the general welfare of the troops then than would be the case today. Moreover, the tendency natural to Lord Kitchener's character to drive on to a finish was enhanced by the very general conception that the war, even though well into its second year, was to be a short one. Had reasonable provision been made for periods of rest and recuperation, had the arrangements for the welfare of the men when actually in the field been more generous and more imaginative, few of the colonial troops would have wished to leave Africa before the job was finished. As it was, the only chance the men had of a rest was to leave for home; and most needed a rest. Even so, a number of men from each of the earlier contingents remained to join later ones. Thirteen officers and four non-commissioned officers of the first three contingents joined the Sixth.

In December 1900 Lord Kitchener asked the New Zealand Government to leave in South Africa the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Contingents which were still in the field. Mr. Seddon agreed in principle, but preferred to maintain the strength of New

[1] Cradock, p. 44.

Zealand's contribution by sending fresh troops to relieve each contingent as its term of service expired. Early in January 1901 the men of the new contingent, the Sixth, began training. As it was intended as a replacement for the Second and Third Contingents, it contained approximately 600 men.

The contingent sailed in the *Cornwall* on 30 January. It was under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Banks,[2] an English officer who had been serving in the Permanent Militia. The contingent landed at East London on 13 March, went up by train to Pretoria, and was organised into four squadrons, A, B, C, and D. It was placed under General Plumer's command in Lieutenant-Colonel Cradock's corps.[3]

A large area in the northern Transvaal had not been entered by British troops. For some time the Boer Government had made its capital at Pietersburg, and had even run regular trains between this town and Warmbaths. Most of the country between the latter town and the northern Transvaal frontier was relatively wild and undeveloped. To clear this vast area of Boers, Kitchener was assembling a force at Pienaar's River during March 1901. The Sixth Contingent became part of the mobile column which left on 29 March on the trek to Pietersburg.

At Warmbaths on the 30th some of A Squadron had their first skirmish with the Boers, taking some prisoners. On 1 April an officer and nineteen men of the contingent were left as part of the garrison of Nylstroom. Before the column entered Piet Potgieters Rust on the 5th, two New Zealanders, Farrier-Sergeant W. G. Rouse and Trooper A. H. Free, distinguished themselves by capturing twelve armed Boers and their two waggons. On the 8th, almost without opposition, Pietersburg was occupied by Plumer's column.

Skirmish at Warmbaths

The next phase of the operations north of Pretoria was a drive through the Middelburg district. On 14 April Plumer left Pietersburg to move south-east to hold the north bank of the Olifant's River, while seven other British columns moved northwards to

[2] Lt-Col J. H. Banks; Regular soldier; commanded Auckland Military District 1896-1901; in South Africa commanded 6th Contingent and Cavalry, Artillery, and Overseas Depot at Capetown; died Colombo, Apr 1917.

[3] Lt-Col Cradock, the well-known commander of the Second Contingent, soon went into hospital and was replaced by Lt-Col R. B. Colvin.

drive the Boers against his positions. Plumer reached his station by the Chanes Poort with very little opposition. At the drifts the utmost vigilance was needed to prevent the Boers crossing the river. After twelve days of this duty the column began the return trek to Pretoria. The general operation had been a success, more than 1100 Boers being captured by the eight columns.

On 3 May, at Enkledoom, Major H. G. Vialls began the chase of a small Boer commando with a picked force which included sixty New Zealanders. After eighty miles of strenuous pursuit, thirty prisoners, twenty waggons, and 1500 head of cattle were captured. The column was back at Pretoria on the 6th.

On the 14th Plumer began a new trek into the south-east Transvaal in co-operation with two other columns, but the Boers broke up into small commandos and many thus eluded the new drive. At Zondagskraal, on the 18th, Plumer's men met considerable opposition from a force of Boers, who used the usual tactics of sniping at the column from every convenient kopje. A New Zealand officer whose horse was shot was made prisoner by the Boers, disarmed, and released. The enemy showed himself in aggressive mood on both the 19th and 20th; on the latter day the New Zealanders were pressing the Boers hard when the enemy fired the veldt and rode off under the screen of smoke. Bethal was entered on the 20th.

The march was continued through Rietpan and Klipfontein. On the 25th, Lieutenant-Colonel E. J. Gallwey (Somerset Light Infantry), escorting a convoy to Standerton, was attacked by 400 Boers. The escort put up a stiff resistance in a two-day running fight and drove off the attackers. Forty New Zealanders who had brought some captured stock to place under Gallwey's protection fought with this column. Surgeon-Captain J. S. Purdy, of the Sixth Contingent, attended the wounded under fire during this action, and afterwards at the Boer request passed through their lines to attend their wounded.

After a brief halt at Standerton the column on 1 June trekked on eastwards towards Piet Retief. There were several skirmishes in the course of which cattle, waggons, and occasionally prisoners fell into the hands of the British troops. From Goedgevonden a reconnaissance party of 100 New Zealanders rode out to Paardeplaats, where they came into collision with a

Paardeplaats

strong enemy force. Under Lieutenants R. McD. Williams and F. J. Ryan, a party of about fifteen New Zealanders was sent into the bush to try to locate the enemy. From a hilltop they saw the Boers, with their cattle and waggons, below them in a steep-sided ravine. Misled by a white flag on a waggon, the New Zealanders left their horses under cover and advanced along the ravine until they were met by a furious fire from the enemy hidden in the bush. Lieutenant Ryan was killed, and Lieutenant Williams ordered the men to get to their horses and escape individually. Many of the horses, however, were hit, and the men were forced to take shelter again among the trees. A New Zealand doctor then came in under the white flag, and the Boers, now moving about freely in the bottom of the ravine, saw the New Zealanders, who with no chance to escape had to surrender.

The column turned north. At Schiekhock, B Squadron, which was in the van, had a sharp encounter with the enemy when it rode out to capture some waggons seen in the distance. The owners of the waggons fled, and the New Zealanders occupied the ridge on the far side of the position. The Boers, realising that they had conceded their convoy without firing a shot to a numerically inferior enemy, returned in force, but the New Zealanders, well handled by Captain J. Findlay,[4] held them off during an hour's heavy fighting until the column came up and the Boers retired.

The column, marching by Klipspruit and Smithfield, reached Bothwell on 7 July. That evening a party of New Zealanders and Queenslanders (the Sixth and Seventh New Zealand Contingents served in close association with Queensland contingents) went out on patrol. Next day, on information that a Boer volunteered, a straggler from this patrol, Trooper G. Geddes, was brought in severely wounded. He had fought a solitary rifle duel with a Boer antagonist. On 10 July the column was at Lilifontein Drift; on the 11th it was at Klippen. Its horses had suffered severely in the many weeks of strenuous activity. So many were unfit for service that on 14 July the column began entraining at Wonderfontein for Bloemfontein, where, by the 18th, the whole force was in camp.

[4] Lt-Col J. Findlay, CB, DSO, m.i.d.; commanded Canterbury Mounted Rifles during the First World War; at one time in temporary command of the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade.

The troops had covered a good deal of ground, some of it difficult, and had had many brushes with the by no means acquiescent enemy.

At Bloemfontein remounts were received and the men issued with clothing. It had been a constant complaint of men in the first three contingents that they had to serve in rags and were in some instances reduced literally to a blanket. The British Army was evidently now better able to cope with the supply situation.

Lieutenant-Colonel Banks left the contingent to take command of a remount depot in Cape Colony. He was succeeded by Major A. W. Andrew,[5] of the Indian Army, who had been his second-in-command during the previous four months.

Operations in the Modder River area

On 23 July Plumer's column began a new trek, going first by train to the Modder River. It had reached Poplar Grove on the 26th when, in the late afternoon, Major Andrew attempted to cut off a party of Boers firing on the right flank-guard from the usual vantage point of a kopje, but the enemy, as usual sensitive as a wild creature to being surrounded, retired on the next ridge before the New Zealanders could reach him. On the 28th, near the old battleground of Paardeberg, the New Zealanders were attacked, and they retired before the Boers' superior numbers. On this same day a New Zealand trooper was relieved of his liberty, his arms, and his horse by the Boers, who then restored the first to him. The Boers at this time rarely held the few men they occasionally made prisoner. The capture seemed to them a sort of practical joke, and, their sense of humour satisfied, it did not worry them that the released prisoners immediately returned to their units.

Near Rondefontein, on 7 August, a New Zealand patrol captured 2000 sheep, 160 cattle, and five Boers. On the 11th the column had completed its circuit and reached the Modder River station again. This movement had been part of a concerted drive by seven columns ordered by Major-General E. L. Elliot; it had been very successful, bringing in over 300 Boer prisoners, besides 750 waggons and 23,000 cattle and horses.

The column moved off again from Jacobsdal in the latter part

[5] He also later commanded the 10th Contingent. Major Andrew attained the rank of Brigadier-General in the First World War and on retirement lived in Christchurch.

of August, working towards Springfield. A party of New Zealanders, led by Captain N. I. Markham, was detached to hold a position on the Orange River. On the report that a raiding force of Boers was in the vicinity, he immediately set out to make a night attack on their laager. Finding the Boers gone, Captain Markham camped in a farmhouse, posting a section to hold the high ridge behind the farm. At daybreak this small party retreated to the farmhouse before a strong enemy force, which immediately occupied the ridge. A brisk fire was opened. The New Zealanders were outnumbered and their horses were being steadily picked off, when Captain Markham ordered a bayonet charge. Only about half the party had bayonets, but all advanced across 200 yards of flat, exposed ground until the dead ground of the slope below the ridge protected them from the enemy's fire. This movement was almost simultaneous with the arrival of New Zealand reinforcements from the main camp. The Boers did not wait to receive them.

The column came up with the enemy again that day, taking prisoners. A few days later a New Zealand detachment of sixty men from the Sixth Contingent distinguished itself by capturing a party of Boers: the enemy, caught in laager, sought the shelter of the nearby caves and cliffs, from which the New Zealanders hunted them out.

The column left Smithfield on 10 September and moved through Zastron parallel to the Basuto border up to Wepener. On the 17th, near Elizabethfontein, a flank-guard of 100 members of A and B Squadrons had some sharp fighting with a Boer party. The Boers followed their tactics of holding successive ridges for long enough to annoy the advancing British troops without allowing the encounter to reach a conclusion. The New Zealanders tried to outflank them and turn them back against the main body of the column, but the Boers escaped, leaving a rearguard to fight it out. Later on this day a Boer doctor came in and asked for help as he had twelve wounded on his hands: this was not the full tally of Boer casualties in this engagement.

The column returned through Wepener and worked back into the southern Orange Free State. The next phase of the operation was to head off various small parties of Boers who had been

forced on the move by the general drive of Plumer's and other columns through the territory where they had been harbouring. The New Zealanders had several clashes with the enemy in the course of this duty, the most serious on 27 September at Mokari Drift, on the Caledon River, which the Boers were attempting to cross. The Boers were dispersed from the high ground covering the ford, but, desperate to cross the river and pierce the net closing round them, they determinedly attacked the New Zealanders and Australians holding the position. After several hours' fighting the enemy withdrew.

Skirmishes at Caledon River drifts

On 27 September nine Sixth Contingent men under Corporal F. Hemphill were sent to Bastard's Drift (another Caledon River ford) with a despatch for the British officer believed to be holding it. Instead of British troops the New Zealanders found Boers, who opened fire on them at point-blank range. Corporal Hemphill's horse was shot under him, leaving its rider in the river. Trooper I. E. Baigent[6] returned to him under heavy fire, took him up behind on his own horse and rode out to safety, an action for which he was recommended for the Victoria Cross but received instead the DCM.

When it had again reached Springfontein, the column on 8 October entrained for Volksrust. For the next three months it was engaged in patrolling the country north and east of Wakkerstroom, with the usual accompaniment of skirmishes with an elusive but still pugnacious enemy and the gathering in of cattle and waggons. Near Rotterdam, on 23 December, the mounted troops and guns surprised a commando of 500 Boers; the enemy would not stand, and he got away, losing eleven killed and sixteen prisoners, only by the superior endurance of his horses. Six days later, near Strydkraal, Captain R. Stevenson and C Squadron brought to a successful end a typical chase of Boer forces. They pressed the party of burghers so closely that they were driven within range of a gun in the line of blockhouses; when it opened fire on them the Boers surrendered.

On some few occasions the Boers turned the usual pattern upside down and, from being the hunted, became the hunters. On 3

[6] Second-Lieutenant, Wellington Mounted Rifles, in First World War; died of wounds, 14 Nov 1917.

January 1902 Plumer's column was engaged in what appeared to be just another operation of pursuit of burghers and cattle. At Zwartwater the Sixth Contingent, acting as scouts, sighted about a hundred Boers driving 600 cattle across high ground ahead. The whole contingent went in pursuit, C Squadron, on the left, securing the cattle. The advanced guards, flanking parties, and the main body of the column then halted on two parallel ridges. Hardly had the men dismounted when the New Zealand advanced guard found themselves being charged on their forward ridge by 300 Boers.[7] A short but gallant stand could not turn the tide. In addition to other casualties, twenty-eight New Zealanders were captured, and part of the Boer commando, mistaken for the advanced guard falling back, was able to inflict further casualties on the column.

On 9 January the column was once more at Wakkerstroom, where it rested ten days before taking part in operations clearing the country to the north-west. It reached Standerton on 8 March. A few days later the contingent left by train for Cape Town, but it did not finally sail until 10 April from Durban. It was disbanded on 11 May 1902.

The Sixth Contingent's casualties were three killed, one died of wounds, two accidentally killed, thirteen died of disease, and seventeen wounded. Captain R. Stevenson and Lieutenant P. L. Tudor received the DSO,[8] Sergeant-Major M. Pickett, Farrier-Sergeant W. G. Rouse, Troopers A. H. Free and I. E. Baigent the DCM, and Trooper Free was also promoted corporal by the Commander-in-Chief. The following were mentioned in despatches: Captain Stevenson, Surgeon-Captain E. J. O'Neill,[9] Lieutenant W. C. Morrison,[10] Sergeant-Major Pickett, Farrier-Sergeant Rouse, Sergeant D. Smythe, Lance-Corporal W. Thorp, Troopers J. Cassidy and Free.

[7] Opperman's commando.

[8] As sergeants in the Third Contingent both had previously received mention in despatches.

[9] Col E. J. O'Neill, CMG, DSO, m.i.d.; in First World War served in New Zealand Medical Corps in Egypt, Gallipoli, France, and England; commanded 1st Field Ambulance and 2nd General Hospital; in Second World War served as surgeon in Merchant Navy 1939-41.

[10] Regular soldier; Major, Auckland Mounted Rifles, and Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster-General, New Zealand Division, in First World War; died 31 Mar 1917, in New Zealand, from effects of gas poisoning.

CHAPTER 10

THE SEVENTH CONTINGENT

THIS contingent was raised to replace the Fourth Contingent at the end of its year's service. Approximately 600 strong, it was representative of all parts of New Zealand. It sailed in the *Gulf of Taranto* on 6 April 1901 and landed at Durban on 10 May. Because of the lack of space on board it took no horses with it; in this respect it was unique among the ten New Zealand contingents. Lieutenant-Colonel T. W. Porter,[1] who had fought with distinction in the Maori Wars, was in command. The contingent was joined in Africa by sixty-nine members of earlier contingents.

The Seventh Contingent went by train to the Mooi River and from there to Standerton in the eastern Transvaal. There it joined the force commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Grey,[2] under whom the Fourth Contingent had previously served. On 20 May the column marched north-west into the Ermelo district, where it was to co-operate with Lieutenant-Colonel G. M. Bullock's column in the general task of raiding Boer farms and in the particular one of trying to capture the Transvaal Government. On 22 May members of the contingent were first in action when Boers, as usual in concealment, opened fire on the advanced guard. A few days later a scouting party of New Zealanders near Ermelo was caught by 200 Boers and had to fight a strenuous rearguard action to rejoin the main column. A small party of New Zealanders on the right flank was cut off and made prisoner, and a group of five men at Goodegacht farm, after keeping up resistance for several hours, was obliged to surrender. This day's action was typical of the unexpectedness of the Boers' tactics and their ability to seize an opportunity provided them by a temporary British weakness or error.

[1] Col T. W. Porter, CB, m.i.d.; born India 1840, died 12 Nov 1920; served in Maori Wars 1863-71 and took part in arrest of Te Kooti 1889; commanded East Coast, Poverty Bay, and Wellington Militia and Volunteer Districts between 1 May 1877 and 6 Apr 1901; commanded 7th and 9th Contingents; acting Under-Secretary of Defence 1 Oct 1904-30 Jun 1905; Judge of the Native Land Court and President of the Maori Land Board.

[2] Lt-Col F. S. Garratt relieved Grey towards the end of June.

The column halted near Standerton on 2 June for several days of rest and refitting. It moved north toward Bethal on the 6th, and on the 12th the New Zealanders carried out a successful night attack on a farmhouse near Boshman's Kop, where they caught several members of the Transvaal Staats Artillery, the only professional unit in the Boer army. Next day the enemy tried to revenge this loss by a sharp attack on the rearguard, in which the New Zealanders suffered casualties. While most of the troops were drawn off to support the rearguard, the Boers very adroitly attacked the unprotected convoy and were with difficulty beaten off. On the 14th, at Rietfontein, the enemy again struck strongly at the column, attacking the advanced guard from the front and on both flanks. A general engagement ensued in which the Boers were worsted. This did not entirely quench their aggressive spirit, and later they made another vigorous attack on the convoy, which was defended by Lieutenant-Colonel Porter and a scanty screen of troops; Porter was hard-pressed until support appeared. On 17 June the column was once more at Standerton. While in camp here an unfortunate misunderstanding resulted in four New Zealanders being wounded: they were fired on by the outposts they had come to relieve in the early morning of 20 June.

Boshman's Kop

The column next day moved by way of Greylingstad to Springs, near Johannesburg, where it remained halted until 14 July, when Lieutenant-Colonel Garratt took his troops across the Vaal River into the Orange Free State.

The object of the new operation was to head off or intercept General Smuts who was expected to try to make his way from the western Transvaal into British territory with his 340 men. Smuts, in fact, succeeded in this enterprise, but he did not pass entirely scatheless, though he eluded all but one of the five columns sent against him. The column with which he skirmished was Colonel Garratt's and included the Seventh Contingent. Garratt had sought Smuts in the Losberg. Then, at Lindeque Drift on 21 July, Smuts with about a quarter of his eventual strength was engaged by Garratt. On the 22nd the Boers were strongly placed at Buffelhoek and were able to pass

Skirmishes with Smuts' commando

along the north bank of the Vaal after an inconclusive skirmish.[3] Garratt moved on into Vereeniging.

The column left Vereeniging again on 25 July and moved by Lindeque Drift to take part in another drive to intercept Smuts. General Elliot was in command of the whole operation. Garratt's column marched in the rear of the left flank of the drive to assail any parties of the enemy who might break back from the path of the other six columns. Garratt passed south through Kroonstadt to the Vet River, while the main drive ended at the Modder. Although it had swept through half the western side of the Orange Free State, few prisoners were taken and only one contact was made with Smuts, who proved as elusive as de Wet. There was, however, a large booty of stock—186,000 sheep and 21,000 cattle.[4]

Garratt's column now recrossed the Vaal in the Vredefort neighbourhood. On 20 August two separate parties of New Zealanders were engaged with the enemy in the Losberg area. At dawn a small laager of Boers was surprised by a squadron of New Zealanders, and in a sharp skirmish one Boer was killed and eight taken prisoner. (The technique of the night or early morning raid on Boer laagers, later used so effectively by General Bruce Hamilton, was being tried out; it depended for its success, of course, on good scouting and intelligence.) The second party was under the command of Major A. Bauchop, who set out at dawn with two squadrons to reconnoitre some kopjes some twelve miles distant from the camp. The Boer laager was found and the two squadrons deployed on either side to surround it. Unfortunately the Boers were sufficiently alert to detect the advancing New Zealanders, and the foremost troops of one squadron were subjected to heavy fire at close range. Reinforcements under Captain R. J. S. Seddon[5] came to their rescue and the Boers were set on the move. The New Zealanders pursued the enemy until checked by strongly placed forces, from whose superior strength they retired on the column. Their prudence was well-judged as they had come up against de la Rey's commando of 600 men. The column marched east until it

[3] *The Times* historian is critical of Garratt's inability to keep in touch with Smuts: *Times History*, Vol. V, p. 303.

[4] *Times History*, Vol. V, p. 307.

[5] The eldest son of the Prime Minister of New Zealand—killed in action, France, 21 Aug 1918.

reached the railway on 2 September at Meyerton, near Vereeniging. Here orders were received to entrain for Paardekop in the south-east Transvaal.

Pursuit of General Botha

General Botha, the commander of the Boer armies, was believed to be concentrating in the eastern Transvaal for an invasion of the British colony of Natal. With their own country denuded of supplies and perpetually harried by fresh British columns, the plan of carrying the war into undevastated British territory (as Smuts had already done on a small scale) was attractive to the weary and hunted Boers. Against Botha, Kitchener sent four columns, one of which was Garratt's, the total forces sent indicating a rather inadequate estimate of the Boer strength. On 9 September Garratt left Wakkerstroom, moving east. Although he was able to give the first news that Botha was on the move, Garratt did not clash with him. Shortly afterwards the column entrained for Newcastle, in north-western Natal. It was assigned the duty of turning back Botha, in co-operation with two other columns, from the hills to the east of Vryheid, which he would have to pass to return north; seven columns were now in the field against the Boer army.[6] Lack of mobility on the part of the British even now allowed the Boers to escape encirclement.

On 4 October a New Zealand outpost was stalked by some Boers before whom the New Zealanders fell back on a ridge overlooking Garratt's camp. Here they came into the view of Lieutenant-Colonel Walter Kitchener's column, whose artillery opened a vigorous fire. Before the mistake was realised, two members of the Seventh Contingent had been killed by the British guns.

On the night of 5-6 October Botha passed round Walter Kitchener's left flank and made off north-east. The movement was perceived, and all available men joined in the chase. Botha posted a strong rearguard across a three-mile-wide front near his own farm, Waterval. The New Zealanders in the van were surprised by the usual Boer tactics of withholding fire until their opponents were within very close range. They withdrew after suffering casualties, but returned to the task with artillery support and succeeded, in collaboration with their Queensland comrades-in-arms,

[6] Botha had about 1400 men: *Times History*, Vol. V, p. 354.

in evicting the enemy from his firmly held and naturally strong kopjes.

Botha retired into the heavy bush country parallel to the Zululand border. The column then took part in the operations in the Pongola district. On 6 November Garratt returned to Vryheid, where the column halted for ten days before beginning a new trek to Pondwana; its task was to clear the country of resisting Boers, and successful use was made of night operations against farms. The column then returned to Newcastle by way of Utrecht. On 11 December it crossed the Drakensberg Range once more into the Orange Free State, where it was employed until the beginning of February in covering the construction of the line of blockhouses from Frankfort to Vrede. The lines of blockhouses being built at this time were designed to constrict the movement of the Boer commandos which intermittently emerged from their hiding places and took the field at the moment that best suited themselves. The blockhouses distinctly hampered the mobility of the Boer forces; their disadvantage from the British point of view was that they tied up large bodies of troops which could not be used to seek out the enemy in the field.

During this sojourn in the Free State Garratt found plenty of employment for his men in renewed night operations against the Boers. In February de Wet was once more afoot. He ordered his subordinate, Mears, to rendezvous with him at Elandskop, bringing his guns and 200 burghers. To accomplish this, Mears had to pass the forces commanded by Colonel the Hon. J. H. G. Byng, of which Garratt's column now formed a part. Byng was aware of Mears's movement and had deployed his troops to meet it. On the morning of 3 February 1902, the Boers ran into the 200 New Zealanders and 100 Queenslanders who held, thinly enough, about three miles of country. 'Garratt, handling his force with dash and skill, charged the Boer rearguard at Roodekraal with 120 New Zealanders under Major Bauchop, and closed on the Boer left and front with the rest of his men.'[7] The Boers were routed and lost their two field guns and pom-pom, besides their ammunition; several of their number were made prisoner. When the Boers realised the weakness of the

[7] *Times History*, Vol. V, p. 475.

British forces that had scored this success against them, they made a strenuous attempt to recapture the guns, but were held off long enough for reinforcements to arrive and confirm the result of the engagement.

Kitchener's 'new-model' drives

On 6 February Garratt's force took part with a considerable body of British troops in the first 'new-model' drive against the Boers: its aim was to sweep the whole countryside with a continuous line of men, approximately ten yards apart, who camped at night in position. The military advantages were not as great as had been hoped, although it was a powerful new contribution to the war of attrition that was all the time wearing down the Boer resistance. Added to hunger and lack of supplies, the necessity of making a definite move either to break through the British line or to evade it helped to wear down Boer morale. The mounting of these drives was itself no small feat of organisation and discipline. 'The distances covered, the speed sustained, the symmetry realised in preserving the dressing of a line fifty or sixty miles long, night and day, over country which was often broken by intricate hills and seamed by rushing torrents—all this constituted a feat of discipline, endurance and skill which . . . is unparalleled in the history of war.'[8]

For four days the drive went on, sweeping inwards towards the angle made by the Kroonstadt-Wolvehoek and Wolvehoek-Heilbron railway and blockhouse lines. The column reached Heilbron on 8 February. Comparatively the drive had been a failure. De Wet had escaped the close-meshed net. About 280 Boers, however, had fallen dead or wounded or had been made prisoners.

The column left Heilbron on 13 February to take part in a new drive, this time over an even wider area of the north-east of the Free State. De Wet had joined the Free State Government and was within the area of this new cast of the British net, together with about 3000 other fighting burghers. Enclosed between the driving line of the British threatening him from the west and the south, the Drakensberg Mountains, and the lines of blockhouses to the north and to the south, de Wet rapidly concluded that his best chance of safety lay in piercing the line.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 471.

On the night of 23-24 February, Garratt, at the right of Byng's driving line, lay just across the Hol Spruit in front of Langverwacht farm, which gave its name to the ensuing action.[9] Because of the nature of the ground, the next British force, under Colonel M. F. Rimington, fell back in a curve, inducing the Boer scouts to believe that there was here an actual gap in the line. The extreme right of Garratt's line was held by Seventh Contingent men in entrenched posts of seven men each. Where the two commands met, on the crest of Langverwacht Hill, one of Rimington's pom-poms was placed.

Langverwacht

The first intimation the defenders had that the Boers were near was the noise of cattle and the shouts of the drivers of the Boers' heavy convoy. (The fighting burghers were encumbered by a host of non-combatant refugees, waggons, and a good deal of stock.) At midnight de Wet sent forward a band of picked men under three tried and courageous leaders, Ross, Manie Botha, and J. J. Alberts. Driving up cattle as a screen, they rode up the Hol Spruit and fought their way through the Seventh Contingent posts, annihilating each in turn. Once the line was pierced, they turned left, uphill, gained the crest of Langverwacht Hill and there silenced the pom-pom.[10] It was a desperate action to retrieve what was for the Boers a desperate situation. They were eventually driven off the hilltop, but they had already at least partially acomplished their object. They had breached the British line, and through the gap de Wet, Marthinus Steyn, the President of the Orange Free State, and about 600 of the most resolute burghers rode through to freedom; those who failed to pass the line retreated and most of them fell into British hands in the next few weeks.

The whole operation had been typical of Boer tactics: the overwhelming pressure applied at one point. It demonstrated one of the greatest weaknesses of Kitchener's 'new-model' drive: that there was no provision for reserves. The men in the parts of the line not under attack could not give much support to those who were assailed, because if they left their own stations, the denuded line would leave clear passage to the enemy.

[9] The action is also known as Bothasberg.

[10] The gun jammed after firing eight or nine rounds and some New Zealanders ran it to the rear.

The Seventh Contingent had fought with admirable obstinacy against heavy odds. 'The conduct of the New Zealanders upon this occasion reflects the greatest credit upon all ranks of the contingent, and upon the colony to which it belongs. Nothing could have been finer than the conduct of the men.'[11] In a cable to Mr. Seddon on 1 March, Lord Kitchener said that he had 'just seen the Seventh Contingent New Zealanders and congratulated them on the extremely gallant manner they held their position when attacked by de Wet. . . .' Fourteen Boers were killed and twenty wounded at the point of the break-through, and they left 160 horses dead as well as many cattle. The New Zealand casualties were twenty-four dead and forty-one wounded, a very high proportion of the eighty or so men involved. This was the most severe action fought by any of the contingents, and for the numbers engaged, one of the most severe ever fought by New Zealand troops. In view of the large numbers of Boers who failed to pass the gap created at the cost of so much blood, the action cannot be described as a defeat.

The drive went on. But there was a pause. During the next two nights new attacks were expected, especially as strong Boer forces were on both sides of the British driving line. On the night of 25-26 February the enemy searched up and down the line for a point of weakness but did not care to bring the matter to an issue. Similar attempts were made vainly on the night of 26-27 February, and on the 27th the fruits of the drive were gathered in when about 780 burghers surrendered near Harrismith. The drive had also collected 25,000 head of cattle, 60,000 sheep, 2000 horses, and over 200 waggons.

On 3 March a new drive began. In the interval Garratt succeeded Byng as commander of the group of columns to which his own had belonged, while Colonel the Hon. H. White assumed command of Garratt's column, including the Seventh Contingent. The rough strength of one of Lord Kitchener's driving columns was 2000 men. Eight columns were engaged in a drive westwards into the angle made by the Kroonstadt-Wolvehoek and Wolvehoek-Heilbron railway and blockhouse lines. Before the column left Harrismith the contingent was reinforced by about 100 men who

[11] Stirling, pp. 363-4.

had sailed from New Zealand in the *Surrey* with the Eighth Contingent, the only reinforcement draft that actually joined the contingent for which it had been intended, the others having all been absorbed into the contingents with which they travelled.

Garratt's group of three columns was the southern segment of the fan sweeping the Boers into the narrow triangle between the two blockhouse lines which, built along the railways, were becoming formidable obstacles, with continuous barbed wire between posts and armoured trains ready to steam down the line to any threatened point. It was hoped to catch de Wet's group of burghers. De Wet, however, passed the northern arm of the blockhouse line at night with 180 men and rode north to join de la Rey in the Transvaal. Another commando of 400 men under Mentz crossed the western line of blockhouses along the railway, trampling down the barbed wire and passing without even being fired on. Darkness was still a good friend to the Boers. When it was realised that they had once more eluded the most carefully prepared trap, they were pursued to the north-west, Garratt's columns going as far as Parys, on the Vaal River. White's column was back at Vredefort Road on 18 March.

Two days later another new drive was begun, sweeping eastwards across the northern part of the Orange Free State from Heilbron, on the northern blockhouse line, and from Doorn Kloof, on the southern line, to the Drakensberg Mountains. This time the driving line had, after the first few days, two advanced guards, of which Garratt's column was one. The smooth working of the drive was upset by several days' rain which made the river crossings difficult. Between the Wilge River and the Drakensberg, Manie Botha succeeded on 2 April in breaking back through 'White's New Zealanders';[12] other Boers were able to take advantage of the rugged terrain to evade the British cordon. Fewer than 100 Boers were killed or captured. The drive ended for the Seventh Contingent at Botha's Pass on the Natal border on 5 April.

The next drive in which the column took part was in the Transvaal. It marched from Botha's Pass to the Vaal Station and then took position in a driving line towards the angle made by the

[12] *Times History*, Vol. V, p. 556.

Heidelburg-Pretoria and Pretoria-Middelburg railway and blockhouse lines. The drive was then, after completion, repeated in reverse, the column reaching Greylingstad, at the end of the second part on 28 April. From 18 April various Boer leaders were moving fairly freely about the country with safe-conduct passes under the terms of a partial truce which led, after about a further six weeks, to the acceptance by the Boers of the British terms of peace.

The contingent's term of service was at an end. From Greylingstad it went by train to Elandsfontein and handed in all its horses and transport. On 9 May the men entrained for Newcastle, in Natal, where they remained until 20 May. During this time the Hon. Mr. Seddon, the Prime Minister of New Zealand who had been personally responsible for the promptness with which the Dominion had sent troops to South Africa, visited the contingent and addressed the men. Mr. Seddon was on his way to England to attend the coronation of King Edward VII. The contingent sailed from Durban in the *Manila* on 22 May and was disbanded on 30 June 1902.

The contingent suffered the following casualties: thirty-three killed in action, three died of wounds, two accidentally killed, ten died of disease, and seventy-six wounded. Lieutenant-Colonel T. W. Porter was awarded a CB, Major A. Bauchop a CMG, Major F. W. Abbott and Lieutenant D. A. Hickey[13] the DSO, Sergeants-Major E. B. Lockett and H. White, and Sergeant W. Kent the DCM. The following were mentioned in despatches: Colonel Porter, Majors Abbott and Bauchop, Captains G. R. Johnston and H. R. Potter, Lieutenants Hickey, E. Heckler, P. T. Emerson, [14] P. J. Overton,[15] and J. G. D. Shore, Sergeants-Major J. W. Callaway and White, Farrier-Sergeant J. Quinn, Sergeants J. Davidson and Kent, Corporals C. F. Burns, W. L. Cato, and J. G. M. Deck, Lance-Corporals A. Gregory, W. Rutherford, and H. R. Vercoe.[16]

[13] Maj D. A. Hickey, DSO, m.i.d.; Regular soldier; enlisted as private in 4th Contingent; held various appointments in Otago Military District 1903-21; served in First World War as major in Otago Regiment, 1916.

[14] In First World War a lieutenant in Wellington Mounted Rifles; killed in action, Gallipoli, 30 May 1915.

[15] Major, Canterbury Mounted Rifles, in First World War; killed in action, Gallipoli, 7 Aug 1915.

[16] In First World War served in Maori (Pioneer) Battalion and Auckland Regiment; was commissioned, reached rank of captain, won DSO, and was mentioned in despatches.

CHAPTER 11

THE EIGHTH CONTINGENT

AT the end of 1901 there seemed no immediate prospect of the war in South Africa being speedily ended. In December the New Zealand Government informed Great Britain that an Eighth Contingent, large enough to relieve both the Sixth and Seventh New Zealand Contingents then remaining in the field, would be sent. The Government asked, in sending the Eighth Contingent, that it might operate as a unit and not be split up among different commands.

The contingent was divided into two regiments, North Island and South Island, and was designated the 1st New Zealand Mounted Brigade. Four thousand men volunteered for service in the brigade, from which number approximately 1000 were selected. From the remaining 3000 it was proposed to select a further contingent, which sailed as the Ninth. Early in 1902 a further offer of men was made to Britain and this led to the enrolment of yet another contingent of brigade strength—the Tenth Contingent. In all three of these brigades men from earlier contingents were glad to serve. As more than half of the soldiers who left New Zealand to fight in South Africa belonged to these three final contingents, it is plain that the public enthusiasm for the war had been, as it were, rekindled. Possibly the cumulative effect of the return of the men from the first contingents and the high public regard in which they were held encouraged this renewal of volunteering.

The Eighth Contingent was commanded by Brevet Colonel R. H. Davies, who had served with distinction already in South Africa with the First and Fourth Contingents. The North Island Regiment was commanded by Major E. Bartlett (of the First Contingent), the South Island by Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel E. W. C. Chaytor (of the Third Contingent). A high proportion of the officers in the contingent had had previous war experience in South Africa. The North Island Regiment sailed in the *Surrey* on 1 February 1902, the South Island Regiment in the *Cornwall* a week later. The two contingents landed at Durban respectively on 15 and 19 March.

As they arrived, the regiments went by train to Newcastle, in northern Natal, where they were reunited on 21 March. From Newcastle they were sent to occupy various passes in the Drakensberg Range, towards which a drive through the north-eastern Orange Free State was in progress. Two squadrons of the South Island Regiment were sent to search the Klip River valley in the Orange Free State. During this period occasional Boers were seen but were not engaged. Some stock was brought in.

In early April the contingent marched by Charlestown to Volksrust, in the eastern Transvaal, where it entrained for Klerksdorp, in the western Transvaal. On 12 April, after passing through Potchefstroom, the second of the three trains carrying the South Island Regiment was run into by a goods train at Machavie. Sixteen members of the contingent were killed or afterwards die of injuries received in this unhappy accident, while eleven more were seriously injured.

Railway accident at Machavie

For the next few weeks the contingent remained based on Klerksdorp. Here it came under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Ingouville-Williams. Even at this late date this district could not be considered secure. De la Rey had been active against British columns and did not seem to be in the mood to negotiate, which had already begun to overtake some of the Boer leaders, thanks to their increasing difficulties in maintaining themselves in a country stripped of stock or crops. Altogether, in both the Boer republics, some 20,000 armed burghers were still more or less in the field; more or less because many had given up aggressive action and desired only to avoid the ignominy of capture. The long-drawn-out negotiations for the peace began on 12 April. This did not mean the complete cessation of hostilities, but it slowed down the tempo of operations.

Lieutenant-Colonel Ingouville-Williams's troops formed part of a column commanded by Colonel A. W. Thorneycroft in a new drive under the command of General Sir Ian Hamilton. The general direction of the drive was westwards from the Klerksdorp area to the Vryburg-Mafeking railway on a line from thirty to fifty miles long. The distance to be traversed was eighty miles, the time allowed five days. The railway blockhouse garrisons were specially strengthened and six armoured trains were ready to co-

operate. This did not altogether compensate for the fact that the flanks would be open at the beginning of the operation, providing a ready escape for any Boer quick enough to realise the general trend of events.

The New Zealanders had spent their time in the Klerksdorp neighbourhood in convoy and patrol duties with some clearing of farms, and they had taken a few prisoners. The drive began on 7 May. Thorneycroft's force covered a front varying between two and six miles. The advance was steady and deliberate, and stringent new precautions were taken to prevent the Boers breaking back through the line at night as de Wet had done at Langverwacht. Every night the troops dug themselves in in solid redoubts which could have withstood artillery fire. A redoubt holding twenty men was placed every 100 yards, the intervals being filled with waggons linked by barbed wire. The men remained fully dressed without bivouacking. When the long driving line reached the railway on 11 May a total of more than 360 prisoners had been taken, a few of them by the New Zealanders, who had also collected 280 head of cattle, about 200 sheep, and some horses.

On 12 May Colonel Davies succeeded Colonel H. de B. de Lisle in command of a column which formed part of Thorneycroft's force; this included the two regiments of the Eighth Contingent. On the 16th Davies' column began a march south-eastwards to the Transvaal border. This march was interrupted on 20 May by orders that the New Zealanders were to go to Klerksdorp to meet Mr. Seddon, who was then making a tour of South Africa while en route to England. The contingent paraded on 21 May and was addressed by the Prime Minister; it was still at Klerksdorp on 31 May 1902 when peace was signed.

To allow the Boers time to come in and surrender their arms, the columns remained stationary for the next fortnight. On 17 June Thorneycroft's force began marching north-eastwards through Potchefstroom and Krugersdorp to the Johannesburg neighbourhood. At Elandsfontein horses and equipment were handed in and the contingent entrained for Newcastle. After a few more days in camp here, the contingent boarded the *Brittanic* at Durban and sailed for home on 4 July. It was disbanded on 13 August.

Apart from those killed or injured in the Machavie railway

accident, the Eighth Contingent's casualties were twenty deaths from disease. Five of its members were mentioned in despatches: Brevet Colonel R. H. Davies, Major E. Bartlett, Captain C. L. Somerville, Regimental Sergeant-Major G. C. Black, and Regimental Quartermaster-Sergeant G. Mitchell.[1] Major Bartlett was awarded the DSO and RSM Black the DCM.

[1] Lt-Col G. Mitchell, DSO, m.i.d.; born Balclutha 1877, died 16 Mar 1939; in First World War served in Otago Regiment in Gallipoli and France; commanded NZ Base Depot, Etaples; Member of Parliament for Wellington South 1919-22.

CHAPTER 12

THE NINTH CONTINGENT

EARLY in 1902 the Ninth Contingent was recruited from the surplus applicants for the Eighth, a larger proportion of the volunteers being chosen from country districts than had been the practice previously. Two battalions were recruited, one from each island. The contingent was under the command of Colonel T. W. Porter, who had commanded the Seventh Contingent; the 1st, or South Island, Regiment was commanded by Major H. D. Jackson, and the 2nd, or North Island, Regiment by Major L. O'Brien.

The South Island Regiment sailed on 12 March 1902 in the *Kent*, and the North Island Regiment left on 20 March in the *Devon*. They disembarked at Durban respectively on 12 and 28 April.

The South Island Regiment travelled by rail to Newcastle, and on 29 April went on to Elandsfontein. There it was rejoined by the North Island portion of the contingent which had, immediately after landing, been sent to Volksrust in the south-eastern Transvaal. Both regiments marched on 10 May for Vereeniging, on the Orange Free State Border of the Transvaal, where the peace negotiations with the Boer leaders took place. The contingent remained encamped at Vereeniging until 21 June, when it returned to Elandsfontein to hand in horses and transport. On 28 June the contingent went by train to Newcastle, where it remained until it sailed from Durban on 13 July; it was disbanded on 21 August.

On 4 June, four days after peace had been made, two officers of the South Island Regiment, Lieutenants R. McKeich and H. Rayne, were involved in an unlucky encounter with some armed Boers. Accompanied by their orderlies, they had ridden about twelve miles from the Vereeniging camp for a day's shooting. Near Witvolgt the two officers were attacked by a party of Boers who ordered them to dismount and take off their clothes—the usual Boer procedure with prisoners. The officers, no doubt indignant at this breach of the recently established truce, exchanged shots with the Boers, Lieutenant Rayne shooting several of the Boer

party until one he had wounded, from the cover of an anthill, wounded him in turn and killed McKeich. Rayne returned to camp, and a force of New Zealanders rode out immediately and brought in McKeich's body. The Boer party was afterwards identified. Its members swore they had no knowledge that peace had been declared, and claimed ignorance even of negotiations having been in progress. In view of the general organisation of the Boer forces, small numbers of whom might remain in hiding for months together, this explanation was accepted as the truth. Thus it was the Ninth Contingent which fired the last shots of the war in South Africa.

In addition to these two casualties, the Ninth Contingent lost one man accidentally killed and three men died of disease.

CHAPTER 13

THE TENTH CONTINGENT

THE decision to send to South Africa a further contingent of brigade strength was made on 14 March 1902; it was only a month later, on 14 April, that the North Island Regiment sailed from New Zealand in the *Drayton Grange*. The South Island half sailed on 19 April in the *Norfolk*. The men landed from the two ships on 17 and 26 May respectively at Durban. Lieutenant-Colonel W. B. Messenger,[1] an officer with extensive Maori War experience, commanded the contingent while it was in transit. (He afterwards joined Mr. Seddon's staff during the Prime Minister's tour of South Africa.) Major A. W. Andrew, commanding officer of the North Island Regiment, afterwards commanded the whole brigade, while Major W. S. Pennycook[2] commanded the South Island Regiment.

Shortly after they landed the two regiments were sent up to Newcastle. The conclusion of peace at the end of the month prevented their serving in the field. The contingent remained at Newcastle until it embarked at Durban on 17 July for home. It was disbanded on 23 August 1902.

Even with this brief stay in South Africa ten members of the contingent died of disease and one was accidentally killed. Thirty-one members of the contingent had transferred to it from previous contingents.

[1] Col W. B. Messenger; Regular soldier; born Essex 1834, died New Plymouth, 8 Apr 1922; served as officer in New Zealand Militia 1860-77 and in Armed Constabulary (sub-inspector) 1872-85; Permanent Militia (Major 1885-99 and Lieutenant-Colonel 1899-1903); commanded New Zealand Royal Artillery 1902-03.

[2] Lt-Col W. S. Pennycook, m.i.d.; in First World War was Assistant Provost Marshal, NZEF, London, and commanded 2nd Battalion, Otago Regiment; killed in action, France, 24 Aug 1918.

CHAPTER 14

SERVICE CONDITIONS

THE conditions of service in the war in South Africa were hard. The plans of campaign called for constant effort by the mounted troops. They were always being required to take their station in the different types of drive which combed the whole territory, first by columns and latterly by extended lines, preserving a rough dressing as they marched many miles across country. At other times the troops were on the march as guards to convoys of guns or supply waggons. They were kept constantly on the move; to spend a few days in one place was, for the first contingents especially, a rare occurrence. It has been mentioned already that most men were content to return home at the end of their year's service. If they had had even a month's rest with good facilities for recreation, such as are made available today to men in the armed services as a matter of course, many would have preferred to remain in the field, and the British Army would not have suffered the inconvenience of losing troops just when they had acquired the sureness and confidence of experience.

In two respects—food and clothing—the New Zealanders fared less well than they were accustomed. The Boers travelled light. Like the British, they had their supply waggons, but they were quite prepared to leave them either to advance or to retreat; and, especially as the war went on, they were able to live for weeks on end without any special supplies whatever, existing on the country they were passing through. In order to fight on even terms the British troops had also to travel light, so that the mounted troops were constantly called upon to advance far beyond their supply train. Several times the New Zealanders were without any food at all for more than twenty-four hours.

The daily scale of rations for each man at the beginning of the war was:

Meat: 1 lb. fresh or preserved (1¼ lb. if plentiful).
Bread: 1¼ lb., *or* 1 lb. biscuit, flour, or meal.
⅔ oz. coffee, *or* ⅕ oz. tea (or half rations of both).

Sugar: 3 oz.
Salt: ½ oz.
Pepper: $\frac{1}{36}$ oz.
Potatoes: ½ lb., *or* other fresh vegetables, *or* 1 oz. compressed vegetables.
Jam: ¼ lb.
Lime juice: when ordered by the medical officers.
Spirits: ½ gill twice a week at the discretion of the Divisional Generals.

Cheese or bacon was sometimes issued in lieu of meat. The allowances of tea and coffee were later increased to ½ oz. and 1 oz.[1]

Forage for the horses was allocated according to the size of the horse: large beasts (15 hands and more) received 12 pounds of oats and 12 pounds of hay daily, smaller horses 10 pounds of each —when they were available. It was soon proved quite impossible to carry the forage required for this ration. On the march the horses had to live on only a few pounds of wheat a day.[2] Men became expert at finding forage for their horses, and those who did so were likely to keep their mounts longer than those who did not bother.

Just as constantly the men foraged for themselves. A Second Contingent trooper wrote, 'a cup of skilly and a drink of coffee, night and morning, were all we had' while marching to Kenhardt.[3] It was small wonder that the troops considered the Boer poultry and orchards fair game.[4] The frequent separation of the mounted men from the slow-moving supply waggons of their convoy made this 'self-help' a necessity.[5] When confiscated flocks and herds were being brought in, abundant fresh meat was available. This was the only ration food of which the New Zealanders ever had enough to satisfy them; in camp the British ration scale was too meagre for most colonials.

During 1900 and the early part of 1901 the mounted troops, for ever on the move, rarely came to rest at bases which had clothing stores. The men were very often reduced to rags, to the same con-

[1] *Times History*, Vol. VI, p. 382.
[2] Twisleton, p. 14 and pp. 154-5.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 17.
[4] In April 1900 compensation was paid out to bereaved owners for a pig and a peacock: Cradock, pp. 6-7.
[5] Twisleton, p. 38 and *passim*.

dition, that is, as their opponents a few months later, who relied on clothing captured on the persons of British troops and risked being shot because, through sheer necessity, they wore these enemy uniforms.[6] Soap was not issued; sometimes the troopers became lousy.[7] They had often to make do with the crudest bivouac shelter —tents made of sheets, blankets, or tarpaulins.[8]

When driving a sector of country, the usual practice was for one-third of the men to stand sentry duty at night. The first move was made nearly always before dawn, so that lack of sleep was another real and constant hardship. In the winter the rains drenched the troops to the skin, in bivouac as well as on the march. It should not be forgotten too that South Africa has very cold nights. Large portions of the Orange Free State and the Transvaal are more than 3000 feet above sea level, so that, however warm the days, the nights could be freezing; instances have already been cited of men and horses dying of cold on campaign. In Cape Colony a shortage of wood for fuel was a further inconvenience: here sheep dung was dried and burned for lack of anything else.

Comforts and welfare

The men were not left entirely without those services which would today be supplied to them by the National Patriotic Fund Board. They were allowed to buy from quartermasters' stores 1 lb. of tobacco a month at 1d an ounce. In July 1900, after they had been in the field only three months, the Second Contingent received from the New Zealand Agent-General in London (the Hon. W. P. Reeves) three cases of underclothing for distribution to the men.[9] On Christmas Day the same contingent had £10 worth of comforts sent down to them from Pretoria.[10] On the whole, though, they cannot be considered to have been pampered: if public enthusiasm had not been preoccupied with subscribing the cost of equipping the earlier contingents, it is probable that much more would have been spent on welfare.

[6] *Trekking On*, by Deneys Reitz (Faber and Faber), 1929 edition, pp. 209 and 236. The Boers also relied latterly on tracking British troops for their supplies of rifle ammunition; the soldiers never camped without dropping large numbers of cartridges, the Boers carefully gathering in these 'crumbs from the rich man's table': Reitz, p. 187.

[7] Twisleton, p. 113.

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 116.

[9] Cradock, p. 21.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 37.

Sport was engaged in whenever opportunities presented themselves. In July 1900, in the intervals of hard campaigning, the Second Contingent found time to defeat the Canadians soundly at football.[11] In the month spent at Barberton later in the same year many international and inter-unit games of cricket were played. On the march, whenever conditions permitted, the troops consoled themselves with impromptu sing-songs or musical evenings.

There were few breaches of discipline. A minor mutiny occurred in one contingent in December 1901, when the men released two soldiers sentenced to field punishment as the result of an argument with a British officer; the incident was settled in the men's favour. When the conditions of service are remembered, the occasional forays upon orchards[12] can hardly be considered a major delinquency. Like their descendants journeying to and from later wars, men occasionally missed their ships at ports of call.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[12] The *New Zealand Herald*, 9 Mar 1900, records this incident: a farmer had put two ostriches into his orchard to guard his peaches. Some soldiers made an attempt on the peaches but found the ostriches very effective watchdogs.

CHAPTER 15

MEDICAL SERVICES

EVERY contingent had its medical officers who looked after its health on the voyage and then accompanied it in the field. On many occasions they tended the wounded under fire while an action was still being fought. Several of them were made prisoners by the Boers but were immediately released in conformity with international law.

It is hardly possible to give here a complete or detailed medical history of the South African campaigns, but the high incidence of disease should be stressed. The men of the Fourth and Fifth Contingents who were unfortunate enough to spend some weeks in the fever-ridden swampy plains of Portuguese East Africa nearly all contracted malaria. In the Orange Free State and the Transvaal many of the troops suffered from enteric fever, which was responsible for a number of deaths.

In action, the commonest injuries were bullet wounds, the Boer artillery on the whole inflicting few casualties. Occasionally the Boers used dum-dum bullets. Towards the end of the war they were using an assortment of firearms: some of the New Zealanders wounded in the Boer break-through at Langverwacht, when the Boers were short of arms, had been shot at with fowling-pieces and elephant guns firing buckshot and pellets which spread at short range.

A proportion of the injuries received in battle was attributable to riding accidents of various types. Horses were shot almost as often as men, more often when the troops were skirmishing in open formation, and it several times happened that a horse fell and pinned down its rider. Wounded horses also threw their riders, and on trek, far from any enemy, riding accidents occasionally occurred.

The wounded in any action far from a base or in the course of a drive were likely to suffer the extremes of discomfort before they reached hospital. For instance, it took the wounded from Langverwacht three days' jolting in bullock-waggons to reach hospital at

Harrismith. The heat and the flies increased the likelihood of an open wound turning septic, and often there was the added discomfort of a shortage of water.

New Zealand contributed nurses as well as doctors to the South African medical services, but they did not work in association with our own forces as the doctors did. Early in the war seven nurses left New Zealand for South Africa; their fares and expenses were paid by various voluntary bodies such as the Order of St. John. Four others paid their own passages and were engaged there, and another New Zealand nurse was also engaged in Africa. These nurses were placed under the British Army medical department in South Africa, in whose hospitals they served.

At the end of May 1900 a nurse wrote home recounting what must have been the general experience.[1] She was at an Army hospital at Bloemfontein, one of whose wards was the local theatre while the others were tents in the adjoining cricket ground. All the larger buildings in Bloemfontein had been converted into hospitals, and the town held 5000 sick. Few of the patients were wounded; nearly all suffered from fever (enteric). Funerals were frequent. The nurses were more hard-worked than ever before in their lives; several of the nursing staff had themselves taken ill and died. The only mitigation of these trying conditions was that they were comfortably lodged in a requisitioned private house.

When the British Government had asked New Zealand for men, it had asked at the same time for horses. Every contingent had its veterinary staff, some ships taking on veterinary surgeons especially for the voyage. This careful policy resulted in very small losses of horses on the water during the four or five weeks of the voyage to Africa. Many men, in the early contingents especially, had shipped their own horses. This meant that the standard of care and attention on board was high, a good deal of the men's time being devoted to feeding and tending the animals. The horses had their shoes taken off for the voyage and were re-shod on arrival. Several British generals complimented the New Zealanders on the good condition in which their mounts arrived in Africa, a point of very great importance in a campaign where the mounted man was supreme.

Care of the horses

[1] *New Zealand Herald*, 7 Aug 1900.

It has already been mentioned that the mortality of horses during the campaign was high: those which were not well looked after by their riders died first. Short food and heavy work on the march, added to occasionally by sunstroke and shortage of water, were the chief causes of death or disablement. Rest camps for overworked horses were established but most reached them only to die. Two months to acclimatise after the voyage was considered desirable, but the exigencies of the service rarely gave the horses as much as two weeks. The English horses especially were too heavily laden, the cavalry saddle weighing 28 pounds. The best horses were about seven years old.[2] Horses were frequently poisoned[3] while grazing unsupervised, as happened occasionally when they were sent to the rear and tethered during an action. Many were lost, both on the Boer side and the British, by disease. Horses and mules were, however, successfully inoculated against glanders.[4]

A factor which induced the wise man to take care of his horse was that he was very unlikely to receive as a remount nearly as good an animal as he had landed with originally. A hardy polo pony type of animal was the best—or a Boer pony; the men were always glad to capture Boer horses running loose on the veldt or at Boer farms. The British Army never mastered one of the secrets of Boer mobility—travelling with a large reserve of led horses; and the Boer horses in any case had an endurance which was unlikely to be bettered by those of their opponents, although gathered from near and far, from South America, the United States, and Hungary, besides Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Great Britain. South Africa 'was essentially a country unsuited to foot soldiers; at the same time the scarcity of forage made it by no means an easy country for mounted troops. . . .'[5] A typical New Zealander remarked that 'John Bull's brand' in South Africa consisted in the rotting carcases of horses and piles of empty biscuit tins.[6]

[2] Twisleton, p. 24.
[3] Cradock, p. 28.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 40.
[5] *Times History*, Vol. VI, p. 440.
[6] Twisleton, p. 85.

CHAPTER 16

CONCLUSION

THE history of New Zealand's part in the war in South Africa has an importance even beyond the merits, considerable as these are, of the soldiers who fought in it. The war set the pattern for our participation in the two later, vastly larger conflicts, both of which we entered primarily as allies of Britain rather than as parties directly affected by the matters in dispute between the contending nations. We were so well aware of the indirect consequences of a weakening of British power and influence that it was simultaneously both self-interest and self-sacrifice to help Britain to the utmost extent of our men and resources, though in the South African War our material contribution was small. We went freely to South Africa, and, as in the two later wars, commanders recognised that men who had volunteered to fight far from their homes could preserve a certain independence. Generals, too, felt it was worth while to court the good opinion of our political leaders.

The South African War revived New Zealand's military traditions and made us infinitely better able to join in the 1914-18 War. The word 'revived' is used because, from the earliest days, every able-bodied male New Zealander has been legally liable to serve in the armed forces in an emergency; the Militia Ordinance, 1845, and the Militia Act, 1858, have imposed on this country the same obligation as in mediæval times was imposed by the *levée en masse*. Conscription, to defend New Zealand in New Zealand, has existed since 1845. The need for the settlers to defend their homes in the Maori Wars was the actual testing ground of this never very rigidly enforced system of defence by universal service. The South African War had links with the Maori Wars through the veterans who served in several of the contingents. In the 1914-18 War many officers had been trained in the hard school of South Africa. In the years between 1902 and 1914 our defence had been approached in a much more realistic spirit because of the actual battle experience that had been obtained there.

It is interesting to note in passing that from 1845 to 1948 New Zealanders have been firmly seated in the tradition of the amateur soldier. A small core of professionals, struggling manfully, usually in conditions of gross neglect, to maintain standards of training and efficiency, has devotedly made bricks without straw in the intervals between the great emergencies. The average New Zealander, quite unashamedly prepared to profit by the professional's experience and organising ability when trouble comes, has gone about his ordinary vocations, in town or country, without a care in the world, ready to pay by courage and blood for the years of neglect of training and preparedness. For, just as whole-heartedly as he has come forward once a war has broken out, equally firmly he has, with few exceptions, resisted the attempts to induce him to train in time of peace. Thus, in the South African War, only a fraction of the troops sent overseas were men who had previously trained in the Volunteers. This tradition of amateurism, which is here neither applauded nor derided, has at least coloured the national attitude towards war, making us opposed to militarism but not to the use of force to defend our interests. Perhaps it may be considered part of the old colonial tradition that a man should be able to turn his hand to anything. In an age of increasing specialisation this attempt to make the best of all possible worlds, this reliance on a feeling of inherent ability or versatility, may prove ill-judged.

No detailed survey is made here of public opinion towards the South African War. Patriotism during the war sometimes expressed itself in hysterical forms.[1] A psychologist might deduce some humiliating explanations for the fury of hostility evoked in some civilian quarters by enemies so distant and so weak as the Boers. The soldiers in the field had none of this unbalanced malice towards the men they were fighting. The war, after arousing intense public interest in its earlier months, was regarded with a measure of indifference towards the end of 1900; but in the closing months of 1901 it came into the public mind again when the new call for volunteers was received with such enthusiasm.

[1] It should be noted, however, that in England where this hysteria was more marked, public opinion had so far changed by August 1902 that Boer generals were cheered in the streets of London: *Times History*, Vol. VI, p. 74.

New Zealanders were brigaded with famous English Regular regiments and with other colonial contingents. They fought alongside Australians, Canadians, South African volunteers, countrymen from the English shires, men who had deserted the comforts and dignity of their life as traders, officials, or planters in India, Burma, or Ceylon to serve in Africa. They were frequently commanded by British officers. The contingents were often split up and their identity, temporarily at least, submerged in that of larger composite units. All these associations with their comrades-in-arms were socially as well as militarily fruitful.

Quality of New Zealand troops

The colonial troops were superior to the British yeomanry regiments; in some qualities, especially the ability to move rapidly and safely through rough country, they were superior to British Regulars. The *Times* historian wrote of the New Zealanders that 'it would be hardly an exaggeration to say that after they had a little experience they were, by general consent, regarded as on the average the best mounted troops in South Africa.'[2] One hopes that the enthusiasm of this statement was the writer's genuine feeling and the caution with which it was hedged about merely a sop to opinion in the other colonies which sent men to the war. The New Zealanders earned many compliments from generals in the field in their published despatches and telegrams. Here is a private message from General Sir Ian Hamilton, written in January 1901, to thank the contingents still in Africa for the season's greetings they had sent to him on leave in England: 'I have soldiered a long time now but I have never in my life met men I would sooner soldier with than the New Zealanders. I feel the greatest affection for them and I shall never forget the work they did in S. Africa.'

Forty-five years ago men, including generals, were apt to be a little more demonstrative than is usual today. (That is why so plain and ungarnished a statement as that of Sir Ian Hamilton quoted above strikes one with greater force than many set encomiums.) Their despatches, their speeches, even their letters, have certain touches of flamboyance, of rhetoric, which it would embarrass us to imitate today. We allow for this, looking back, but perhaps we are inclined to allow for it too much.

[2] *Times History*, Vol. III, pp. 37-8.

We find it harder and harder every year, with the two much more murderous wars which have since disfigured history closer to our minds, to visualise the actual conditions of service and warfare in the high veldt. The difference between then and now is the difference almost between sail and steam. The seamen of the old school, bred up in sail, where every gust of wind was an emergency if not a crisis, thought at a faster pace, rallied more quickly to an occasion, than do their prototypes today. In the same way in South Africa, a troop of mounted soldiers, riding quietly along in the dazing sunlight, could in a few seconds find themselves involved in a desperate struggle for their lives. Death waited in ambush for them in the shadow of a rock, in a small clump of trees, in a fold of the ground.

It is true that our planes and our ships and our tanks move a great deal faster than horses; but the men in them are correspondingly better informed about what lies ahead and around them than were the mounted troops of 1900. In the South African campaign a moment's neglect of scouting or of the most elementary precautions to protect a moving or a stationary body of troops might lead to disaster. We tell ourselves, perhaps with a certain complacency, that most of the actions in the South African War were small ones, that men shot at each other with rifles for hours without inflicting appreciable casualties. But the smallness and sketchiness of the skirmishes were often matched by their incessancy. The Boers, gradually worn out in this war of attrition, themselves waged against British columns a waspish guerrilla warfare, perpetually sniping at the soldier in camp or on the march, lying in ambush for the straggler or the careless patrol, waiting for the moment of advantage to strike their far stronger opponents where they were momentarily weak.

Perhaps the character of the actions in which our men distinguished themselves might be more clearly appreciated if we glance at a few random quotations from citations in despatches awarded them for their gallantry, their promptitude, or their self-sacrifice. This is how 1478 Private F. W. Wylie earned the commendation in July 1901 of General Babington and the Commander-in-Chief's promotion to the rank of corporal: 'Charged a gun by himself. It was defended by four of the enemy, two of whom he

killed, and then captured the gun.' In the same despatches 1070 Saddler A. E. Thurlow earned the same reward because he had been 'conspicuous for his energy in turning round wagons of convoy under fire and sending them to the rear.' Lance-Corporal J. M. Turnbull was promoted corporal for his exploit of 23 April 1901 when he accompanied an English officer 'into a dark cave and brought out six armed Boers'. These men received honours and deserved them, but many other New Zealanders performed actions almost as meritorious in the vicissitudes of the long campaign.

Montaigne, himself a soldier in his day, wrote in sixteenth-century France:

> A man is not alwaies upon the top of a breach, nor in the front of an army, in the sight of his generall, as upon a stage. A man may be surprised between a hedge and a ditch. . . . And if it be well noted (in mine advice) it will be found, and experience doth teach it, that the least blazoned occasions are the most dangerous, and that in our late home-warres, more good men have perished in slight and little importing occasions, and in contention about a small cottage, than in worthy achievements and honourable places. Whoso thinketh his death ill emploied, except it be in some glorious exploit and famous attempt, in lieu of dignifying his death, he happily obscureth his life. . . .[3]

The men who fought at Rhenoster Kop gallantly distinguished themselves upon a great occasion 'as upon a stage'. In the dark at Langverwacht, the sharpest action fought by the New Zealanders in the war, the record of the battle was written fiercely in blood. Whether the stage was large or little, the witnesses many or few, the New Zealanders in South Africa added honour as much to the obscure occasion, the skirmish between a ditch and a hedge, between two kopjes, in the bottom of a narrow spruit, as to the great occasion when army broke against army; by their courage, their activity, and their steadfastness they many times turned the 'little importing' action into 'some glorious exploit and famous attempt'. Their motive was not to glorify themselves, but by doing their duty, that is what they have done.

[3] Florio's *Montaigne*, Vol. II, No. 16, 'Of Glorie'.

ROLL OF HONOUR

KILLED IN ACTION OR DIED OF WOUNDS

FIRST CONTINGENT

44	Private G. R. Bradford	28 December 1899
104	Sergeant S. W. Gourley	15 January 1900
119	Private J. Connell	15 January 1900
116	Private H. J. Booth	25 January 1900
	Lieutenant A. C. Neave*	February 1900
203	Private W. J. Byrne	28 May 1900

* Lt Neave was killed at Paardeberg while serving with a British regiment.

SECOND CONTINGENT

385	Corporal J. H. Parker	1 May 1900
480	Private L. E. Smith	6 May 1900
435	Corporal R. Devereux	29 November 1900
394	Private W. A. Jennings	29 November 1900
306	Private H. E. Oppenheim	29 November 1900
418	Farrier-Sergeant R. E. Smith	2 December 1900
379	Private W. A. G. Earle	21 January 1901
486	Private W. Yewdall	23 January 1901
440	Private E. A. Wigmore	23 January 1901
358	Sergeant S. J. Henderson	27 January 1901

THIRD CONTINGENT

678	Private L. Perham	19 August 1900
	Lieutenant H. Bradburne	22 August 1900
734	Private G. Hyde	29 November 1900
717	Sergeant F. Russell	29 November 1900

FOURTH CONTINGENT

	Captain J. A. Harvey	16 August 1900
1305	Private S. MacDougall	16 August 1900
1057	Private J. Sorenson	18 October 1900
1371	Private O. Bottom	10 November 1900

FIFTH CONTINGENT

1617	Private D. Clarke	14 January 1901
2348	Private J. Beck	24 March 1901
2659	Private A. Wookey	27 March 1901
2635	Private T. H. Philpott	28 March 1901
2574	Private J. H. Atkinson	29 April 1901

SIXTH CONTINGENT

3498	Private I. S. Hurrey	14 May 1901
	Lieutenant F. J. Ryan	16 June 1901
3423	Private H. Strawbridge	27 September 1901
3331	Sergeant-Major S. Smith	3 January 1902

SEVENTH CONTINGENT

1478	Sergeant F. W. Wylie	26 May 1901
4244	Sergeant W. H. Pepper	1 June 1901
4281	Private W. Donkin	1 June 1901
4324	Private J. O'Dwyer	1 June 1901
4708	Sergeant J. T. Cotter	13 June 1901
4321	Private R. McLean	25 June 1901
	Lieutenant G. Leece	23 August 1901
4242	Sergeant-Major D. J. Love	23 August 1901
4365	Sergeant G. A. Dungan	4 October 1901
4443	Private W. Smith	4 October 1901
4266	Private F. C. Brown	31 January 1902
4714	Private T. S. Hichens	3 February 1902
4282	Private W. R. Davies	21 February 1902
	Lieutenant H. L. Dickenson	24 February 1902
	Lieutenant W. G. Forsythe	24 February 1902
4370	Sergeant A. R. Noonan	24 February 1902
4449	Farrier-Sergeant O. H. Turner	24 February 1902
4525	Corporal A. Firth	24 February 1902
4659	Corporal A. H. Russell	24 February 1902
4603	Lance-Corporal D. Anderson	24 February 1902
4637	Lance-Corporal P. Nation	24 February 1902
4439	Lance-Corporal W. Roddick	24 February 1902
4645	Farrier L. G. Retter	24 February 1902
5401	Private J. W. Ashmore	24 February 1902
4387	Private D. Bruce	24 February 1902
4400	Private J. Counihan	24 February 1902
4518	Private W. Dunlop	24 February 1902
4622	Private H. Finch	24 February 1902
4523	Private P. Fletcher	24 February 1902
4563	Private A. McLean	24 February 1902
4557	Private T. McLew	24 February 1902
4424	Private W. G. Monahan	24 February 1902
4570	Private A. Scott	24 February 1902
4442	Private W. Stevenson	24 February 1902
4368	Private H. E. Tims	24 February 1902
4459	Private A. J. Whitney	24 February 1902

NINTH CONTINGENT

	Lieutenant R. McKeich	4 June 1902

DIED OF DISEASE

FIRST CONTINGENT

31	Private J. M. Patterson	19 February 1900
114	Private H. Burroughs	6 March 1900
53	Private J. Jenks	21 March 1900
71	Private L. M. Tarrant	20 April 1900
91	Private J. Wyllie	18 May 1900
83	Sergeant J. H. A. Brock	25 May 1900
70	Private K. Gorrie	11 July 1900
89	Private C. H. Enderby	26 July 1900
171	Private E. H. Palmer	22 November 1900
32	Private D. J. Ryan	30 October 1900

SECOND CONTINGENT

430	Private T. A. Hempton	3 April 1900
522	Private T. G. Anderson	26 April 1900
308	Farrier-Sergeant M. McKinney	28 May 1900
501	Private F. Bourn	13 June 1900
314	Private F. Broome	23 June 1900
380	Private T. W. Poole	23 June 1900
363	Quartermaster J. I. Moeller	4 July 1900
348	Private W. J. Goodland	11 July 1900
386	Sergeant A. McG. Reid	8 August 1900
337	Private A. H. Harrison	22 February 1901
327	Private A. W. Dudley	28 February 1901
512	Private H. G. Williams	28 May 1901

THIRD CONTINGENT

668	Private R. W. Morris	11 April 1900
687	Private J. W. Sansom	6 June 1900
672	Private R. McIntyre	10 June 1900
686	Private T. L. Scott	10 June 1900
	Lieutenant W. J. Berry	10 June 1900
785	Farrier W. C. Colvin	12 June 1900
701	Lance-Corporal R. H. B. Upton	13 June 1900
666	Saddler W. N. Moffatt	15 June 1900
720	Private W. Anderson	21 June 1900
797	Private W. P. Walters	22 June 1900
697	Lance-Corporal E. B. Tosswill	11 July 1900
777	Private C. Wiggins	11 July 1900

695	Private C. E. Smith	7 September 1900
642	Private G. W. Franks	27 September 1900
853	Private W. Scott	19 October 1900
817	Private J. T. Anderson	20 November 1900
	Lieutenant A. D. Ross	10 January 1901
621	Private M. Boyce	13 January 1901
800	Private J. K. Allan	3 February 1901
679	Corporal C. Parkinson	6 February 1901
2734	Private J. P. Roberts*	25 February 1901
683	Private H. R. Rule	29 March 1901

* Joined Third Contingent in South Africa.

FOURTH CONTINGENT

1125	Private D. McIntosh	5 June 1900
1335	Private J. F. H. Saxon	19 June 1900
1501	Private H. M. York	30 November 1900
1709	Private T. O. Martin	4 January 1901
1054	Private C. K. Ward	29 January 1901
1062	Private D. M. Corson	25 February 1901
1077	Private J. R. Lamont	21 March 1901
1163	Private P. C. Best	26 March 1901
	Lt-Col F. W. Francis	31 March 1901
1380	Private T. P. Lines	28 April 1901
1280	Private S. L. Matthews	11 June 1901
1088	Private S. Kyle	26 June 1901
1480	Private H. Frankham	4 July 1901
1015	Private J. P. Heenan	8 August 1901
1344	Private F. H. Tayler	28 May 1903

FIFTH CONTINGENT

2483	Private R. V. James	20 November 1900
2689	Corporal H. King	22 November 1900
2226	Private W. Caldwell	13 December 1900
2345	Private J. Brown	18 December 1900
2589	Private E. G. Emmis	22 December 1900
2416	Private T. Withers	5 January 1901
2297	Private C. W. Smith	19 January 1901
2629	Private J. M. F. Murphy	22 January 1901
2716	Private J. Farrell	21 February 1901
2447	Private G. Ashby	27 April 1901
2576	Private E. R. Barrar	14 May 1901
2313	Private J. L. Young	11 June 1901
2378	Private A. W. Kendall	10 July 1901
2365	Private F. W. D. Forbes	12 July 1901
2624	Private D. McKay	20 July 1901

2692	Private L. J. McKechnie	23 July 1901
1673	Private W. A. Moffett	28 July 1901
1671	Private P. Nelson	1 October 1901

SIXTH CONTINGENT

3844	Private W. J. Moore	12 April 1901
3788	Private R. M. Robertson	11 May 1901
3795	Private W. H. Stock	9 January 1902
3635	Sergeant W. Moore	30 January 1902
3738	Private F. Goode	6 February 1902
3536	Private F. E. Pahl	6 February 1902
3430	Private L. Walsh	8 February 1902
3225	Private E. J. Dowson	9 February 1902
3732	Private H. C. Gillies	11 February 1902
3842	Private A. H. McKay	14 February 1902
3646	Private W. C. E. Partridge	14 February 1902
3665	Private B. E. St. J. Stephens	19 February 1902
3428	Private J. H. Treneary	5 June 1902

SEVENTH CONTINGENT

	Lieutenant T. G. H. Twisleton	26 August 1901
4713	Private N. L. Paterson	16 November 1901
4270	Private H. Collins	23 January 1902
4516	Private T. H. McD. Drennan	30 January 1902
4582	Private J. H. Wright	18 February 1902
4139	Private G. N. Borlase	19 February 1902
4531	Lance-Corporal P. George	24 February 1902
4616	Private A. H. Devine	10 March 1902
	Captain R. G. Tubman	11 April 1902
4290	Private H. McE. Greig	17 August 1902

EIGHTH CONTINGENT

5898	Private D. A. Cameron	27 May 1902
6115	Private W. H. Whetter	20 June 1902
5498	Corporal T. L. Delabrosse	17 July 1902
5726	Private W. Laurence	29 July 1902
6227	Private J. H. Thomas	4 August 1902
5365	Private W. J. J. Lorange	7 August 1902
5391	Private E. P. Smith	8 August 1902
5888	Shoeing-Smith D. B. Ferrar	8 August 1902
6319	Private H. W. Craig	10 August 1902
5091	Private L. H. Marcks	10 August 1902
5398	Private B. E. Turner	12 August 1902
6334	Private W. S. Fleetwood	12 August 1902

5523	Private H. O. Ryan	13 August 1902
5457	Private A. E. Brown	13 August 1902
5395	Private A. Tonks	14 August 1902
5484	Private F. Gomez	14 August 1902
5806	Private J. N. Lunn	17 August 1902
6317	Private J. Burke	18 August 1902
6379	Private J. Newsham	20 August 1902
5689	Private W. Nicholson	20 August 1902

NINTH CONTINGENT

7992	Private R. E. Anslow	3 May 1902
8043	Private R. Laing	17 June 1902
8025	Private G. C. D. Fowler	2 September 1902

TENTH CONTINGENT

9242	Corporal D. Fogarty	8 June 1902
9073	Private E. C. Monstedt	9 August 1902
9075	Private B. O'Neil	9 August 1902
8587	Private R. Manning	15 August 1902
9103	Farrier Quartermaster-Sergeant S. C. A'Court	15 August 1902
8923	Private A. H. Blyde	23 August 1902
8693	Private R. Graham	23 August 1902
9578	Private J. Hawksworth	2 September 1902
8523	Private B. Bennett	19 December 1902
7861	Private W. Lynch	18 April 1903

ACCIDENTALLY KILLED

FOURTH CONTINGENT

1081	Private J. Salter	29 December 1900

FIFTH CONTINGENT

2330	Corporal H. A. Edwards	13 January 1901
2389	Corporal J. Mays	17 April 1901

SIXTH CONTINGENT

3631	Private W. Mathews	27 September 1901
3277	Private W. F. Raynes	28 September 1901

SEVENTH CONTINGENT

4372	Corporal W. J. Byrne	23 October 1901
4540	Private J. Kirkwood	18 February 1902

EIGHTH CONTINGENT

6063	Private J. H. Jones	12 April 1902
6123	Private P. E. W. Lehrs	12 April 1902
6104	Private P. Rogers	12 April 1902
6034	Private V. Brown	12 April 1902
6084	Private A. H. Macdonald	12 April 1902
6071	Private F. D. Low	12 April 1902
6126	Private J. Harris	12 April 1902
6085	Private J. Maloney	12 April 1902
6042	Private C. S. Bourne	12 April 1902
6135	Private G. C. Simpson	12 April 1902
6048	Private M. Canty	12 April 1902
6035	Private J. Bruce	12 April 1902
6092	Private R. Osborn	12 April 1902
6122	Private A. E. Pearson	14 April 1902
6016	Corporal D. L. Whitehead	18 April 1902
6119	Private A. L. H. Way	7 May 1902

NINTH CONTINGENT

7263	Private L. H. Arden	28 June 1902

TENTH CONTINGENT

9635	Private H. E. Collison	16 June 1902

SUMMARY

	Killed in Action	*Died of Wounds*	*Accidentally Killed*	*Died of Disease*	*Wounded*
1st Contingent	5	1	—	10	4
2nd „	7	3	—	12	22
3rd „	3	1	—	22	14
4th „	3	1	1	15	23
5th „	4	1	2	18	9
6th „	3	1	2	13	17
7th „	33	3	2	10	76
8th „	—	—	16*	20	—
9th „	1	—	1	3	1
10th „	—	—	1	10	—
TOTAL:	59	11	25	133	166

* Killed or died of injuries received in railway accident at Machavie; eleven others were seriously injured in this accident.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS

These photographs are from a collection by J. A. Shand for which the blocks were made twenty years ago, as well as others lent more recently. Some of the blocks have suffered through age, but they had to be used because the original photographs were lost.

The First Contingent's Camp, Karori, Wellington

The Second Contingent on the Waiwera

Shipboard Group

Camp at Bloemfontein, 1900

Major-General Sir Alfred Robin, GOC New Zealand Military Forces (in New Zealand) 1914–19

New Zealanders in Cape Town en route *for the Front*

On the long march to Pretoria. British troops sleep on the veldt

Lord Roberts at Pretoria

Lord Roberts and staff on the veldt

A New Zealander guards President Paul Kruger's house at Pretoria

A burial on New Zealand Hill

General French thanks the First New Zealand Contingent for its part in the action on New Zealand Hill

The first three New Zealand Contingents meet at Kroonstadt

British Cavalry crossing the Vaal River

Boer's 'Long Tom' Position at Rhenoster Kop

Boer Position at Rhenoster Kop

Graves of New Zealanders killed at Rhenoster Kop

New Zealanders assist Royal Horse Artillery at Sinkop to drag a gun into position

Booty from a Boer Convoy

Crossing the Limpopo

Major W. J. Hardham, VC

A Field Surgeon attends a wounded New Zealander

Ambulance Waggons

Nurses from Canterbury

Ration Convoy

New Zealanders and Boer Prisoners of War

British Prisoners of War at Waterval

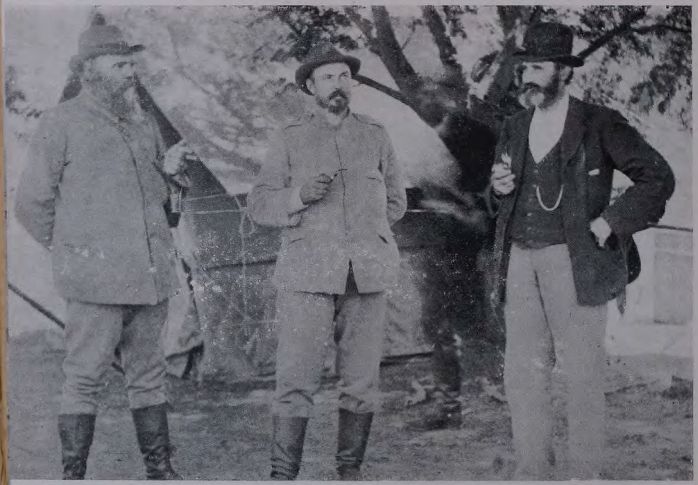
Orange Free State Artillery, near Kroonstadt

The Boer Pom-Pom

De Wet's Commando crosses the Orange River

General Christiaan De Wet and staff, Klerksdorp

General Louis Botha and part of a Commando



Boer Leaders: Commandant Lucas Meyer, General Louis Botha, and General Erasmus

Council of Boer Generals. Meyer and Botha are on the left

Boer Commando

Three generations of Boer soldiers

A wounded Boer officer

The New Zealanders in Sourth

Africa 1899-1902

HALL, D.O.W.

The New Zealanders in South
Africa 1899 -1902
HALL, D.O.W.