

Harry Renton

Boer War Trooper, Illustrator

(1871-1931)

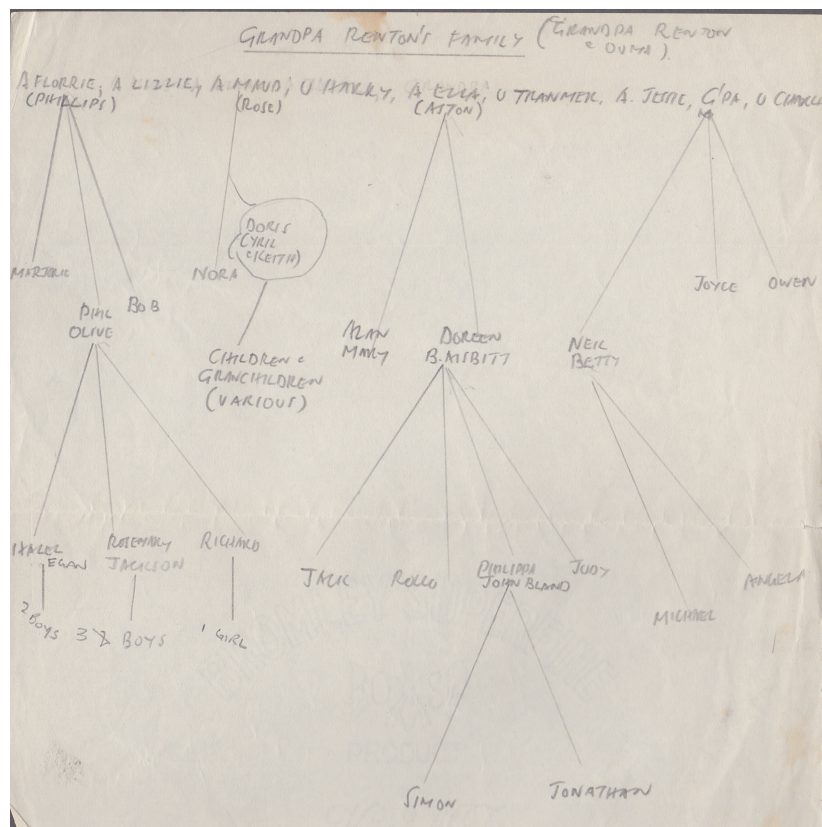
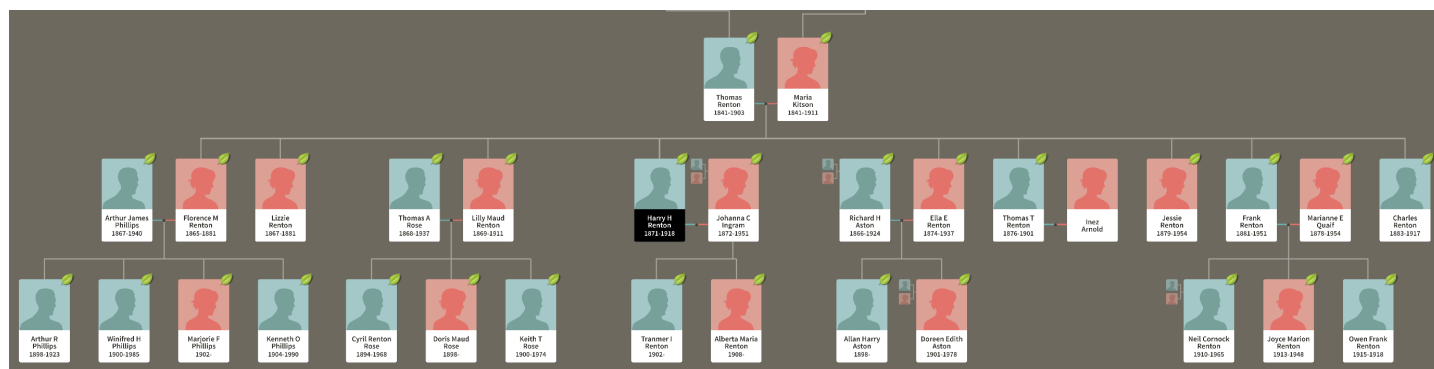


Renton Family ~ 1910



There are surviving photographs of Harry's mother, 5 sisters and 3 brothers, but none of Harry presently. This may be because he spent so much time in South Africa after the Boer War. Harry's sister Ella was the author's great-grandmother. Much is known of beloved Charlie, killed at Ennemain in 1917, whose remarkable letters are in the Imperial War Museum collection today - he is the subject of another biography. The originals were bequeathed to the author by Aunt Judith Pavne and cousin Mike Renton.

Family tree:

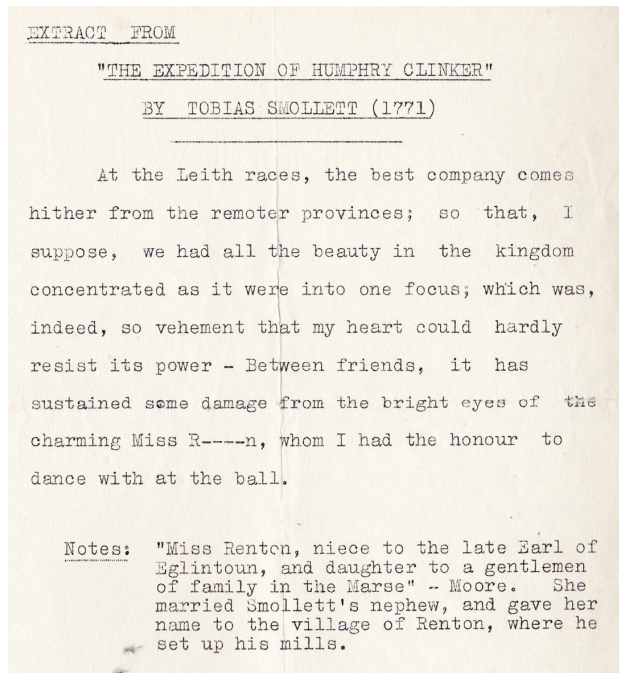


This family tree sketch from 1960 was supplied to the author by Mike Renton from Bath, UK in March 2017. I am "Jonathan" (although usually addressed as "Joss") shown at the bottom of the figure; three other siblings are not shown here. Note that "U. Harry" is shown but without any details. In fact, he married and had children as we discuss below. Various family trees under Ancestry.co.uk get Harry's details mixed up with Charles' details, corrected below.

The hand-drawn tree resolves a few mysteries, in particular, the connection of Mike & Hazel Egan to the family, Marjorie & Bob Phillips, and so forth.

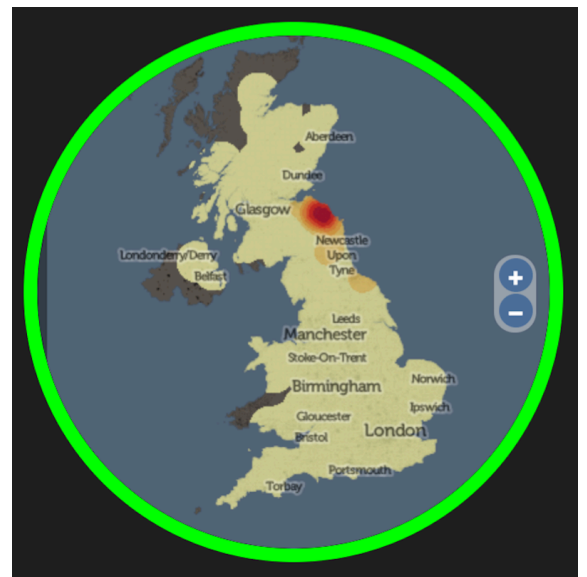
Renton name:

The family name is either from the 12th C. town in Berwickshire or from the Scottish village in Dumbarton south of Loch Lomond near Glasgow. As FindMap shows, most Rentons live near the Berwickshire location today. The letter below (from Mike Renton's father Neil) indicates the town was named in the 17th C. after a local personality maybe. The letter refers to the "Maerse", Old English for "border," as this area sits at the English-Scottish border, having once been part of Scotland, but absorbed by England in 1482.



According to this link:

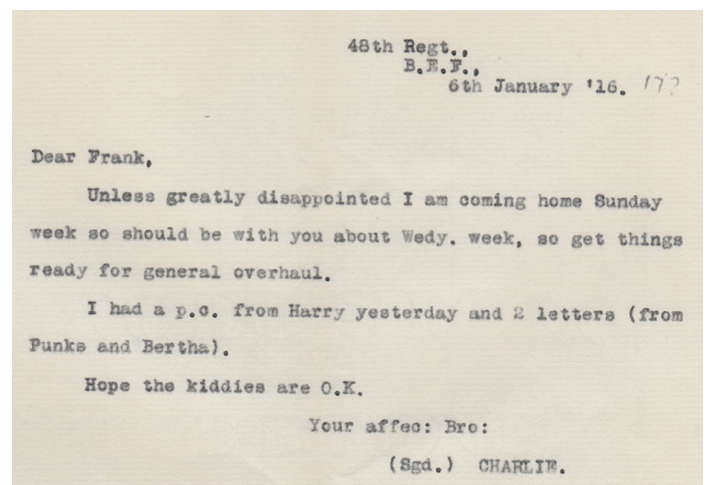
<http://www.stravaiging.com/history/castle/renton-peel>
only Renton House and Farm, Coldingham, Berwicks (right on the A1) survive today. There are a number of historic Rentons with genealogies dating from this period who were from the area. It's difficult to see how the story from the above letter fits into this timeline if "Rentoun" is the historic naming in a map drawn in 1654 (above link).



The mystery of Harry Renton:

In the Renton family, Harry is something of a mystery. There are no surviving photographs and few references to him in letters. Few Rentons today have any knowledge of him. One of those is Aunt Judith Payne (died Sept 2017) indicated as "Judy" in the hand-drawn tree above. She remembered his sketches and impressively illustrated diaries. It was this memory alone that pushed me to find them in 2017 - see below.

A rare reference to Harry comes from one of Charlie's letters from the trenches on 6th Jan, 1916 or 1917. He sent a postcard and two letters to Charlie (see below), presumably from South Africa since he emigrated there in 1912.



Harry Renton's details from genealogy websites:

Harry's parents Thomas Renton and Maria ("Ouma") Kitson were married at Bradford Cathedral on 16th May, 1863. Harry was the oldest son born in 1871 after a succession of daughters, shown in the photograph on the first page. Curiously, he was baptised at the same cathedral in 1876, five years on, along with three siblings (right).

In 1881, at the age of 9, he was living with the family at 6 Upper Park Gate, Bradford. Thomas is a Law stationer and a billiard room keeper; sister Florrie is a Law Stationer's assistant and sister Lizzie is a student. In 1891, at the age of 19, he was living with the family in London. His employment is given as an auctioneer's clerk; Florrie has been promoted to Law writer; Ella is a typewriter; Lily is a post office

telegraph clerk; Tranmer is a joiner's apprentice. In the 1901 census, all family members are listed as law writers, (along with niece Emily H. Parker) except for Frank the bookkeeper. Harry no longer appears. As far as later immigration record shows, Harry trained is sometimes referred to as a clerk ("klerk"), but later a draughtsman consistent with his excellent illustrations below, I guess.

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Baptisms solemnized in the Parish Church of Bradford, in the County of York, In the Year One Thousand Eight Hundred and Seventy six								
No.	When and where Born.	When Baptized.	Christian Name.	Name and Surname of Father.	Name and Maiden Surname of Mother.	Rank or Profession of Father.	Present Abode.	Signature of Officiating Clergyman.
826	Twentieth March 1869 Coledale Hill, near Coledale Hill	Twenty seventh October 1876	Lily	Thomas Renton	Maria Renton formerly Kitson	Solicitor's Clerk	10 Westfield Terrace Bradford	Thos. Longman B.A. Curate
827	Twenty first September 1871 Coledale Hill, near Coledale Hill	Twenty seventh October 1876	Henry	Thomas Renton	Maria Renton formerly Kitson	Solicitor's Clerk	10 Westfield Terrace Bradford	Thos. Longman B.A. Curate
828	Twentieth January 1874 10 Westfield Terrace Bradford	Twenty seventh October 1876	Ella	Thomas Renton	Maria Renton formerly Kitson	Solicitor's Clerk	10 Westfield Terrace Bradford	Thos. Longman B.A. Curate
829	Sixteenth April 1876 10 Westfield Terrace Bradford	Twenty seventh October 1876	Thomas	Thomas Renton	Maria Renton formerly Kitson	Solicitor's Clerk	10 Westfield Terrace Bradford	Thos. Longman B.A. Curate
830	Thirtieth January 1870 11 North Wing Bradford	Twenty ninth October 1876	Eloja	John Marshall	Nancy Marshall formerly Belton	Blacksmith	11 North Wing Bradford	Henry H. Wood B.A. Curate

Cape Town do Renton Harry Draughtsman (41) do (1)

1900: There is an army tradition in the Renton family (uncle Joe in the Black Watch), and this may have led to Harry enlisting for the Boer War. He entered as Trooper 22939 of the Imperial Yeoman's (IY) guard, 11th Company, 3rd Battalion (Yorks). The 11th Company was raised in 1900 and sponsored by the Queen's Own Yorkshire Dragoons. The use of "yeoman" derives I think from "young men." The IY was a volunteer mounted cavalry force (35,000 men drawn mostly from the middle to upper classes) of the British Army that saw action in the Second Boer War, with a massive reduction of men in 1901 due to dissatisfaction. Harry's IY was officially disbanded in 1908, consistent with a record of Harry looking for work then in the Transvaal. Some IY lived on. General Allenby was initially sneering of the IY calling them "useless" but came to find them more useful after extensive filtering and training. Interestingly, Harry's sketches below appear to confirm some widely held views of the army regulars and generals.

I have searched on the Boer War and other sites for more details of Harry's service there. Fortunately, one of the very best accounts is of Trooper Thomas Wood who *must* have known Harry. They served in the same company (80-120 souls), same battalion (300-800 souls), same time period. They may even have enlisted together. I have included Thomas' diary as an Appendix.

Marriage:

Harry married Johanna Catharina Ingram on 17th Jan, 1901. The Ancestry record (right) is the only proof I have at the moment. Johanna was born to a large proud family of Ingrams that date their origins back to the 1820 Settlers to South Africa. There is a good website 1820settlers.com where her tree is given. The Ingrams left England for South Africa due to the severe shortage of work and money brought on by the Napoleonic Wars.



Whether they stayed married beyond the birth of their two children Tranmer (1902) and Albertha (1908) is not clear. There is a fair amount of movement between Natal or Durban and the UK, both travelling separately, at times they are referred to as "single" but this may simply indicate they were not travelling as a married couple.



[Add Alternative Information](#)

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Name:	Harry Renton
Gender:	Male
Record Type:	Marriage
Place of Origin:	Johannesburg Brandfort
Marriage Date:	17 Jan 1901
Marriage Place:	Free State, South Africa
Church:	Bloemfontein
Spouse:	Johanna Catharina Ingram
Occupation:	Klerk
Religion:	Presbyterian
Collection:	Free State: Marriages, 1838-1940

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Below, I show the ship's manifest for 1910 when Johanna and children travel to England. They are recorded in the Renton census for 1911. Here, Johanna is shown to be married with her two children, a British subject with a home address in South Africa. As the oldest male, the document is written and signed by Charles; he was soon to be drafted into the War – see the separate major document on his life.

Port of Embarkation.	NAMES OF PASSENGERS (Passengers holding Contract Tickets as Steerage Passengers should be entered first, and a space left between them and the other Passengers.)	CLASS (Whether 1st, 2nd or 3rd.)	Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers. (In the case of First Class Passengers this column need not be filled up.)	ENGLISH.			WELSH.			SCOTCH.			IRISH.			BRITISH COLONIAL.			Port at which Passengers have been landed.
				Adults of 12 yrs. and upward.			Adults of 12 yrs. and upward.			Adults of 12 yrs. and upward.			Adults of 12 yrs. and upward.			Adults of 12 yrs. and upward.			
				Accompanied by husband or wife.	Single or unaccompanied between 1 and 12.	Children between 1 and 12.	Accompanied by husband or wife.	Single or unaccompanied between 1 and 12.	Children between 1 and 12.	Accompanied by husband or wife.	Single or unaccompanied between 1 and 12.	Children between 1 and 12.	Accompanied by husband or wife.	Single or unaccompanied between 1 and 12.	Children between 1 and 12.	Accompanied by husband or wife.	Single or unaccompanied between 1 and 12.	Children between 1 and 12.	
				Males.	Females.	Infants.	Males.	Females.	Infants.	Males.	Females.	Infants.	Males.	Females.	Infants.	Males.	Females.	Infants.	
At Town	Llewellyn	3 rd	Forward Erector	12	12	30	30	10	10	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Slymouth	
"	"	"	Wife							47	35							"	
"	"	"	Son															"	
"	Müller	"	confectioner															"	
"	Morgan	"	Sanitary Inspector															"	
"	"	"	Wife															"	
"	"	"	Daughter															"	
"	Mitchell	"	Married Joiner															London	
"	Sentall	"	Joiner															Slymouth	
"	Lucik	"	Carpenter															"	
"	"	"	Wife															"	
"	Renton	"	Married Son															London	
"	"	"	Daughter															"	

Johanna also returns with the children in 1911/12 (see below), travelling 2nd Class, as shown below.

Port of Embarkation.	Contract Ticket Number	NAMES OF PASSENGERS (Passengers holding Contract Tickets as Steerage Passengers should be entered first, and a space left between them and the other Passengers.)	CLASS (Whether 1st, 2nd, or 3rd.)	Profession, Occupation, or Calling of Passengers. (In the case of First Class Passengers this column need not be filled up.)	ENGLISH.			WELSH.			SCOTCH.			IRISH.			BRITISH COLONIAL.			Port at which Passengers have been contracted to land.
					Adults of 12 yrs. and upward.			Adults of 12 yrs. and upward.			Adults of 12 yrs. and upward.			Adults of 12 yrs. and upward.			Adults of 12 yrs. and upward.			
					Accompanied by husband or wife.	Single or unaccompanied between 1 and 12.	Children between 1 and 12.	Accompanied by husband or wife.	Single or unaccompanied between 1 and 12.	Children between 1 and 12.	Accompanied by husband or wife.	Single or unaccompanied between 1 and 12.	Children between 1 and 12.	Accompanied by husband or wife.	Single or unaccompanied between 1 and 12.	Children between 1 and 12.	Accompanied by husband or wife.	Single or unaccompanied between 1 and 12.	Children between 1 and 12.	
					Males.	Females.	Infants.	Males.	Females.	Infants.	Males.	Females.	Infants.	Males.	Females.	Infants.	Males.	Females.	Infants.	
London	1	Johanna Catharine Renton	2 nd															Durban		
"	"	Tranmer Ingram Renton	"															"		
"	"	Albertha Maria Renton	"															"		

Is it possible that Harry was keeping a low profile to avoid being drafted, i.e. hedging his bets with his South African residency? He does return in 1911, but appears to emigrate for good in 1912.

Death:

There is a death certificate for Harry (d. 1931), and a death notice for Johanna (d. 1957). At the time of their deaths, Harry's wife is recorded as "Annie" Renton – is this Johanna's nickname? Johanna's husband (see below) is recorded as Harry Renton. Brother Frank was the stationer attorney or executor of the will.

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Number of Schedule 249
(To be filled up by the Enumerator after collection.)

Before writing on this Schedule please read the Examples and the Instructions given on the other side of the paper, as well as the headings of the Columns. The entries should be written in Ink.

The contents of the Schedule will be treated as confidential. Strict care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are not to be used for proof of age, as in connection with Old Age Pensions, or for any other purpose than the preparation of Statistical Tables.

NAME AND SURNAME	RELATIONSHIP to Head of Family.	AGE last Birthday and SEX.	PARTICULARS as to MARRIAGE.				PROFESSION or OCCUPATION of Persons aged ten years and upwards.				BIRTHPLACE of every person.	NATIONALITY of every Person born in a Foreign Country.	INFIRMITY.		
			Write "Single," "Married," "Widower," or "Widow," opposite the names of all persons aged 15 years and upwards.	State, for each Married Woman entered on this Schedule, the number of— Children born alive to present Marriage. (If no children born alive write "None" in Column 7.)	Completed years the present Marriage has lasted. If less than one year write "under one year."	Total Children Ever Alive.	Children still Living.	Children who have Died.	Personal Occupation.	Industry or Service, with which worker is connected.				Whether Employer, or Working on Own Account.	Whether Working at Home.
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.	12.	13.	14.	15.	16.
Marcus Renton	Head	70	Married	28	28	28	2						York, - Bradford	233	-
Lizzie Renton	Daughter	144	Single						Lithographic Writer 5 2 5	Law Clerk and Reviewer	Employer		" Bradford	1	-
Jessie Renton		32							Lithographic Writer 0 5 0		clerk		" Bradford	230	-
Charles Renton	Son	28							Lithographic Writer 1		clerk		London, - Bromley		-
Johnanna Catherine Renton	Daughter-in-law	39	Married		2	2							Bilston, - Wolverhampton		-
Thomas Ingram Renton	Daughter-in-law	9											" "		-
Albina Maria Renton	Daughter-in-law	3											" "		-

(To be filled up by the Enumerator.)

I certify that—
 (1) All the ages on this Schedule are entered in the proper sex column.
 (2) I have entered in the names and surnames in Column 1 and 2 separately, and have compared their sum with the total number of persons.
 (3) After making the necessary enquiries I have completed all entries on the Schedule which appeared to be defective, and have corrected such as appeared to be erroneous.
 Initials of Enumerator: LR

Total	
Males	Females
2	5
7	

(To be filled up by, or on behalf of, the Head of Family or other person in occupation, or in charge, of this dwelling.)

Write below the Number of Rooms in this Dwelling (House, Tenement, or Apartment). Count the Kitchen as a room but do not count scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom; nor warehouse, office, shop.

I declare that this Schedule is correctly filled up to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature: Chas Renton
 Postal Address: 23 Downey Road, Forest Hill, S.E.

England & Wales, National Probate Calendar (Index of Wills and Administrations), 1858-1966, 1973-1995
 CONVICT, CRIMINAL, LAND & WILLS

NAME: Harry Renton
 DEATH: 4 Sep 1931 - South Africa
 CIVIL: 4 Sep 1932 - London, England

[View Image](#)

RENTON Harry of 69 Reitz-street Bloemfontein **South Africa** died 4 September 1931 Administration (limited) **London** 20 December to Frank Renton stationer attorney of Annie Renton widow. Effects £385 5s. 9d. in England.

DEATH NOTICE.

Pursuant to the Provisions contained in "The Administration of Estates Act, 1913."

1. Name of deceased Johanna Catherine Kenton
(Born Ingman)

2. Birthplace and Nationality of the deceased Winnburg S. Africa.

3. Names and Addresses of the Parents of the deceased
Father John Ingman deceased
Winnburg.
Mother Albertha Ingman
Beaufort.

4. Age of the deceased 79 years 51 months

5. Occupation in life of the deceased, or, if a woman, of her husband Housewife.

6. Ordinary place of residence of the deceased, or, if a woman, of her husband 32 B. Avenue, Beaufort.

7. Married, or unmarried, widower or widow Widow.

(a) Name of surviving spouse (if any) and whether married in community of property or not _____

(b) Name or names and approximate date of death of predeceased spouse or spouses Harry Kenton
14th Sept 1931 - or 1932

(c) Place of last marriage Beaufort.

8. The day of the decease: on Wednesday 17/10/1957

9. Where the person died
House _____
Town or Place National Hospital
District Beaufort.

10. Names of children of deceased, and whether major or minor
Tranmer Ingman Kenton
Born 1/12/1901
Albertha Maria Mitchell
Kenton
All majors.

11. Has the deceased left any movable property? yes

12. Has the deceased left any immovable property? no

13. Is it estimated that the estate exceeds £300 in value? no.

14. Has the deceased left a will? No. No l/w.

Dated at Beaufort the 19th day of October 1957 (Signature) J. Kenton
Son of deceased
sent body

State separately the children born of different marriages and give the date of birth of each minor. Names must be written out in full. If there are no children, and either or both parents be dead, then give the names and addresses of the brothers and sisters of the deceased.

(State in what capacity and whether of the line or near the place of death.)

filled up and signed by the nearest relative or connexion of the deceased who shall at the time be, or, in the absence of such near relative or connexion, by the person who at or immediately after the decease was in the charge of the deceased, or, if the deceased was in the charge of the chief charge of the house in which the deceased died, and must be a resident of the Province of Natal at the time of death.

APPENDIX: Harry Renton's illustrations from the Boer War

I spent a little time trying to interpret these sketches. Humorous and cynical sketches were all the rage around the turn of the Century. The style was typified by Punch magazine that kept up the satire for a few centuries.

Sketch 1: CIV = I don't know what this is?

Sketch 2: IY = Imperial Yeomanry, Harry's unit.

Sketch 3: IMR = I don't know what this is?

Sketch 4: RR = Rough Riders, or City of London Yeomanry, were formed in 1901 and were raised for the Boer War like the IY, disbanded in 1961. See here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_of_London_Yeomanry_\(Rough_Riders\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/City_of_London_Yeomanry_(Rough_Riders))

These clasps intended for the cavalry man's boots were also placed in caps, as shown in the sketches. I think Harry's reference to "Rather Rough" was likely to be a comment on their abilities, rather than their physicality.



Sketch 5: "Private Tucker" occurs in a few Boer War stories. E.g. from the Anglo Boer War forum:

PRIVATE TUCKER'S BOER WAR DIARY, the Transvaal War of 1899, 1900, 1901 & 1902 with the Natal Field Forces (1980) Todd & Fordham

"Pte Tucker gives a day by day account from joining his old rifle regiment and being posted to SA. The book has lots of illustration but I am sure you'll have already seen them in other publications. And like a good Englishman, weather features large in his diary entries - I wasn't aware it was so wet and cold during Oct to Jan in SA. However, what I found sad when reading this book was mistakes made during the ABW seem to have repeated themselves during the Great War! Pte Tucker's service records are viewable on the ancestry website his service number is 802 and was in the rifle brigade."

Interestingly, the structure and feel of the sketch is reminiscent of Rudyard Kipling's "Folly Bridge" on the state of the Boer War (<http://www.kiplingsociety.co.uk/follybridge.htm>), considered by him to be a bit of a romp. He was initially jingoistic until he lost his son in the trenches of WWI, a remarkable but tragic story in its own right told movingly in "My Boy Jack."

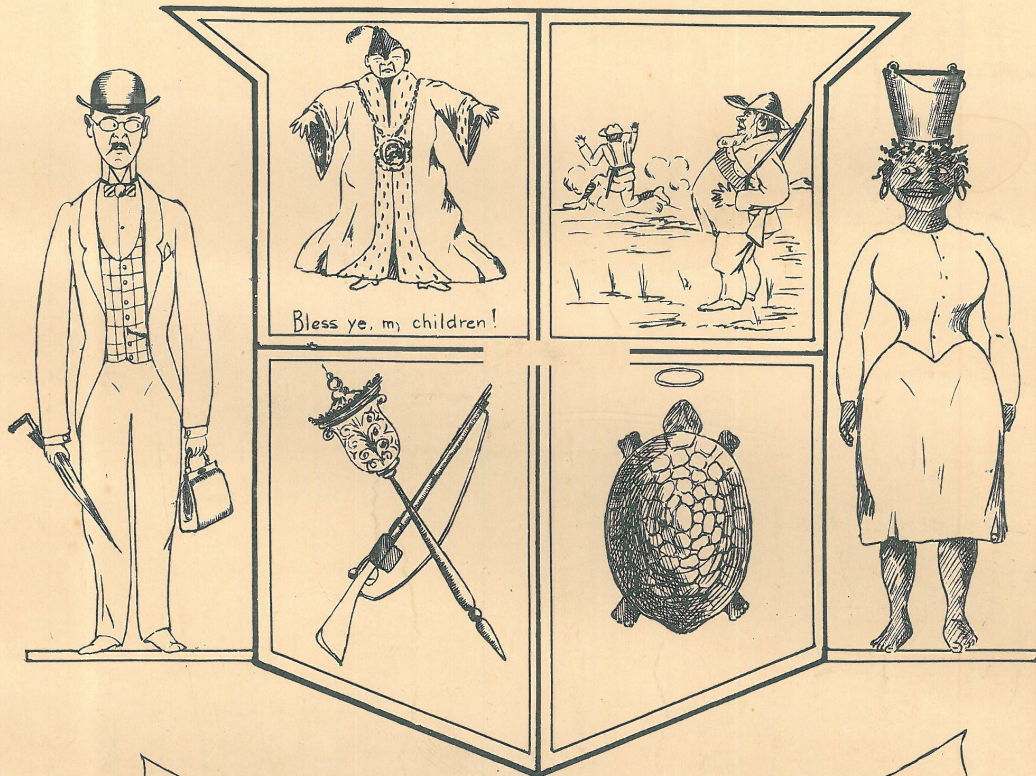
I was therefore delighted to realize a connection here. "Norval's Point," mentioned in the sketch and in Folly's Bridge, is a tiny inland village with a bridge across the Orange River described by Kipling. R.S.O. is the railway station officer.



The bridge over the Orange River at Norval's Point

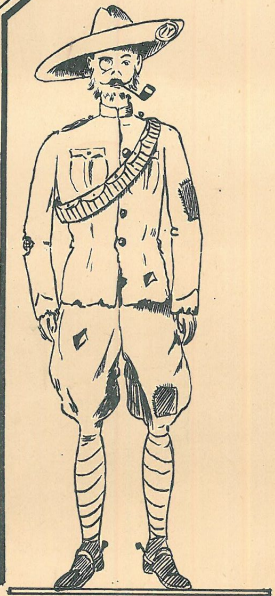
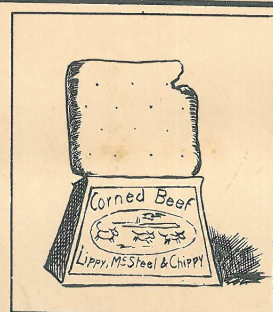
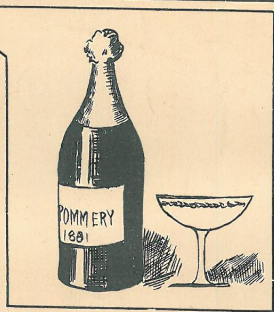
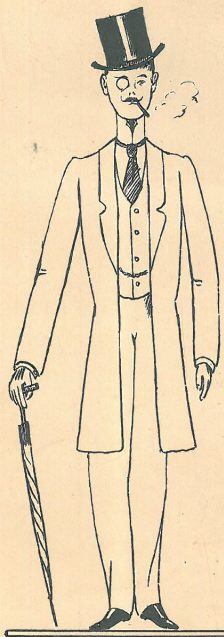
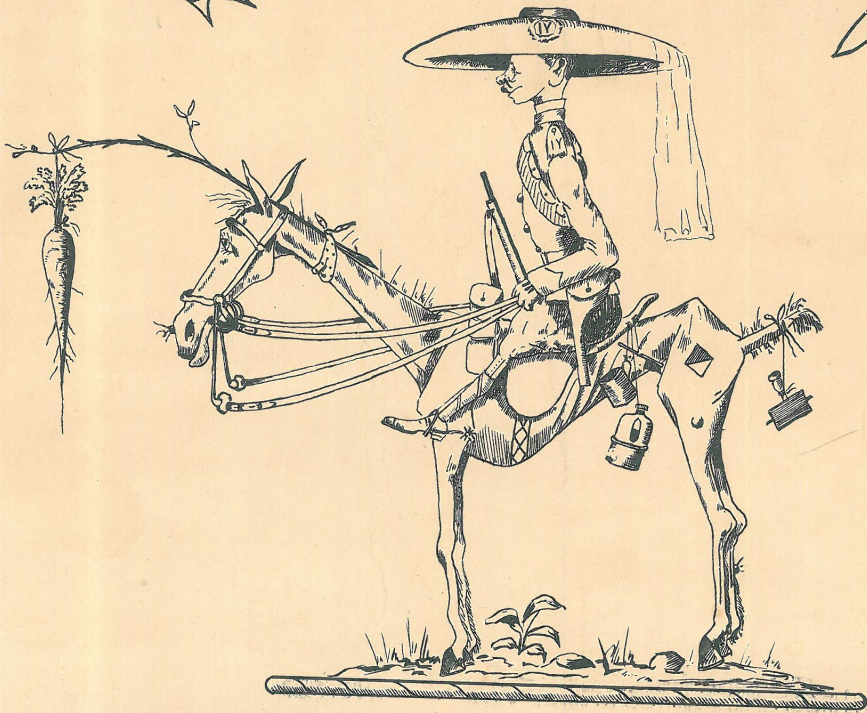
Sketch 6: A repeat of Sketch 2 with Harry's signature.

Veni - Vidi - Vici

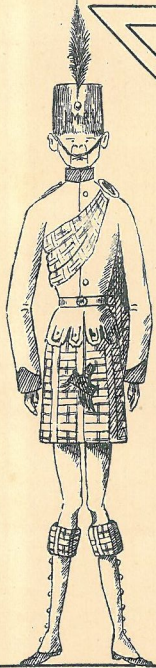
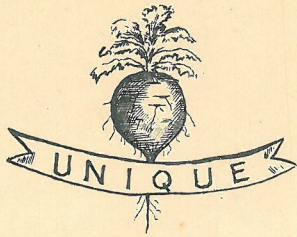


CAN I VENTURE

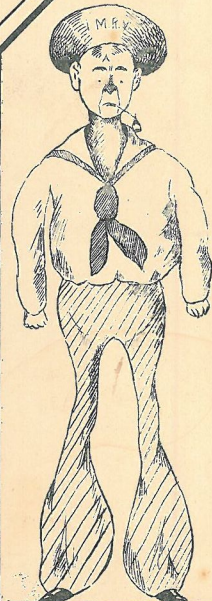
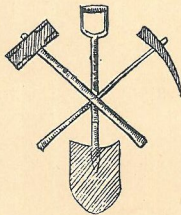
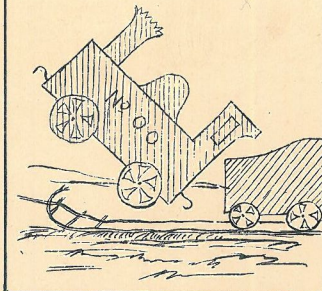
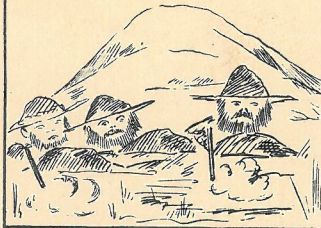
NIL DESPERADO



Full Yield



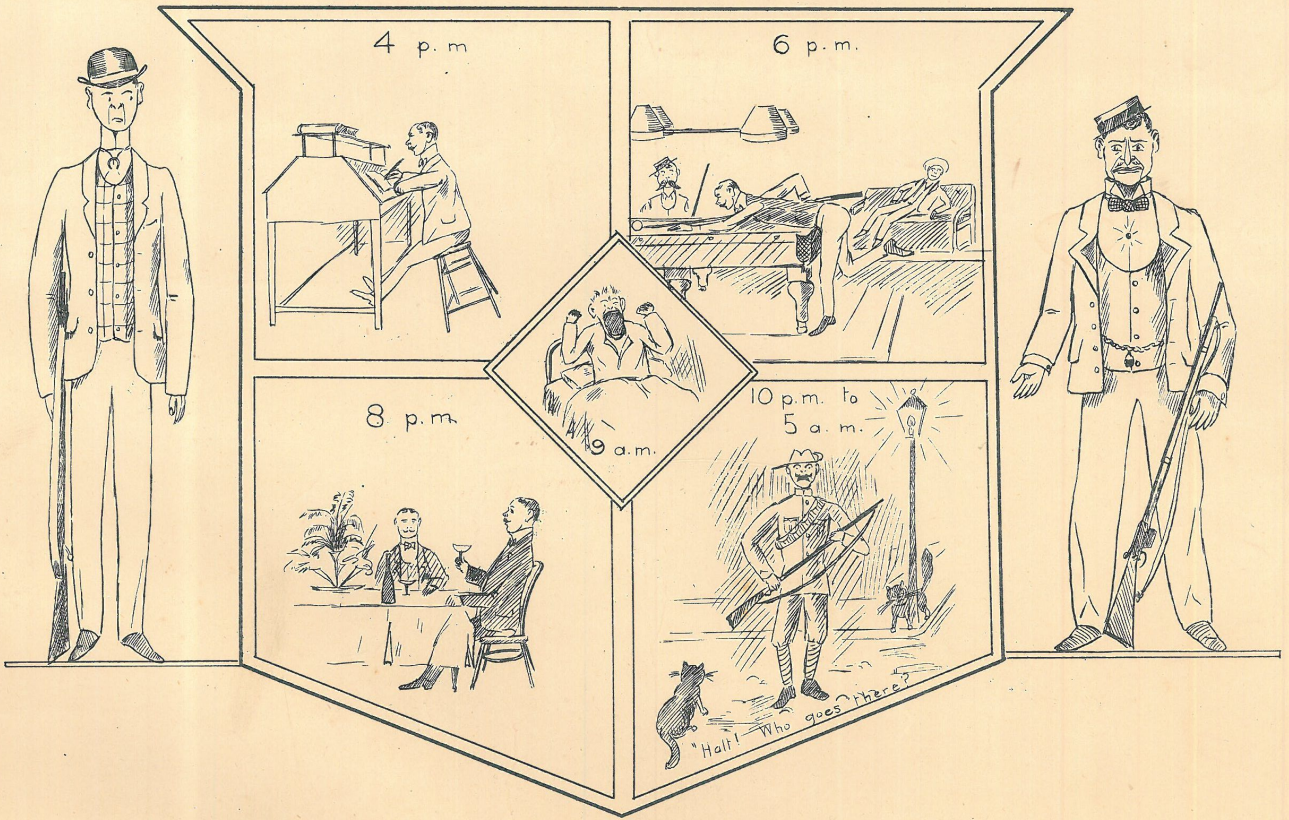
I. M. R. Highlanders



I. M. R. Naval Brigade

I MADE RAILWAYS

ICH DIEN
(NO OPTION)



Rather Rough

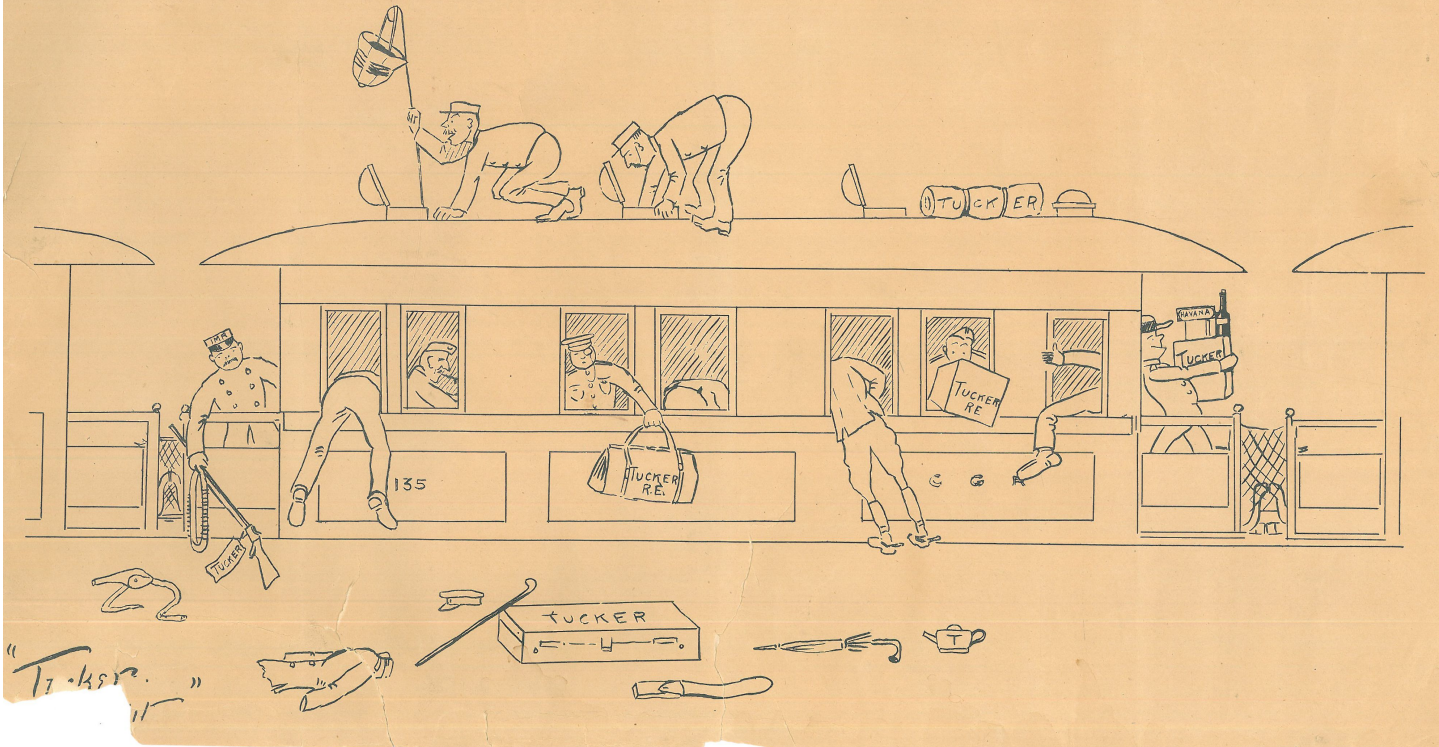
— Cause & Effect! —

O. R. C. Telegraphs.

From Tucker Nivale Post

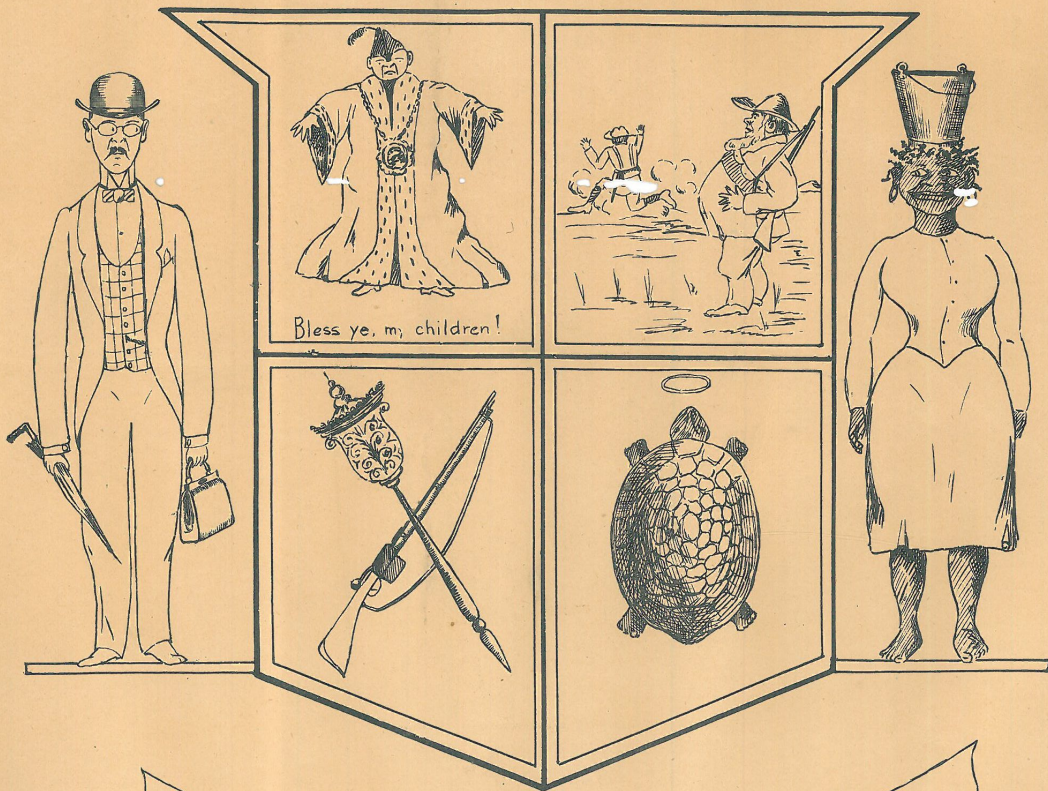
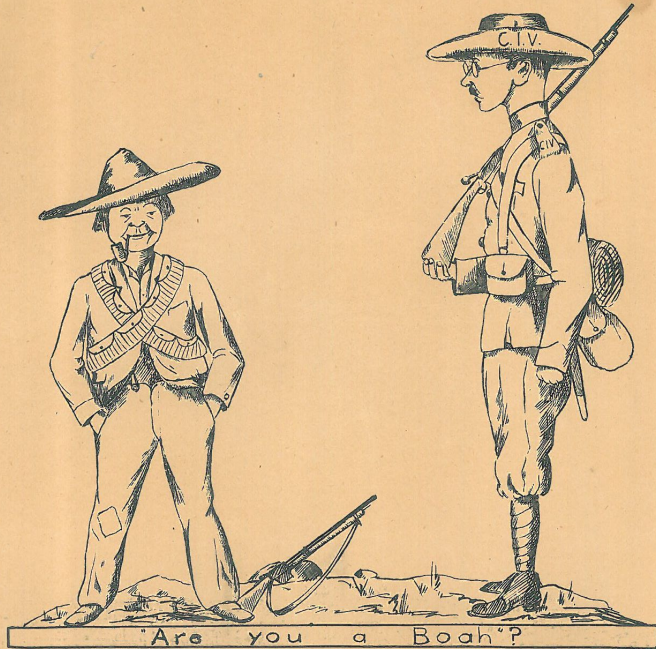
To R. S. O. Bloemfontein

Please take over from Conductor all the things in first class compartment of train for Pretoria—the front coach including two parcels from luggage compartment. Please look all over the compartment & under seats as things are all scattered.



"Tucker."

Veni - Vidi - Vici



CAN I VENTURE

with H. Rayton's Compliments

APPENDIX: the Boer campaign

Thomas Cook was an exact contemporary of Harry Renton, same Company of 100 men, same Battalion, same time frame. Here is his diary:

Thomas Cook- 11th Company Imperial Yeomanry

Thomas Cook enlisted for the Imperial Yeomanry on the 15th of February 1901 at Doncaster. On enlistment he was described as a 20 year old, born in Osgodby near Selby, Yorkshire and a postman by trade – at the time he was serving with the Yorkshire Hussars. After receiving his notice from a man by the name of Latham Huckle and having been sworn in by Captain W.G. Eley he is given a medical which finds him to be 5ft 9in tall, 11 stone 2lbs, 34 inch chest, fresh complexion, blue eyes and brown hair – his religious denomination was Church of England. The surgeon finds him fit for service and his service is approved on the 19th of February, at which point he is numbered as No.27941 and sent to Aldershot for training. He embarked for South Africa on the 14th of March 1901 as a member of the 11th Company, 3rd Battalion Imperial Yeomanry (Yorkshire Dragoons) and returned to England on the 24th of August 1902, a period of 1 year and 163 days overseas service. For service in the Boer War he is granted the Queen's South Africa Medal with clasps for Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Transvaal, South Africa 1901 & South Africa 1902. He is discharged at Aldershot on the 30th of August 1902 at the termination of his engagement, giving his place of residence as his father's house (18 Providence Terrace, Harrogate). Thomas Cook wrote an account of his period in South Africa, and this was kindly sent to me by Natalie Cook, a descendent of his. His picture and account of his period in the war is given below.



With The 11th Imperial Yeomanry in South Africa 1901-1902
By Thomas Cook

On the 15th February 1901 I enlisted in the 2nd contingent of Imperial Yeomanry for South Africa at Doncaster, from there a batch of about 100 of us were sent down to Aldershot for a short military training prior to joining a draft for the front. On 14th March 1,500 of us irregulars embarked on board the SS Avondale Castle forming the 5th draft of troops for active service. When the ship's bell signalled the weighing of the anchor almost every man on board was above deck to get the last glimpse of 'Old England'. We passed the 'Needles' at dusk and were then started in earnest for a foreign shore.

Our daily routine on board was not at all hard, commencing with reveille at 6.00 am, breakfast at 7.30 am, and drilling from 9.00 am to 12 o'clock. Hammocks were drawn at 7.00 pm and lights out went at 9.00 pm. A 24 hour guard was mounted at sunset every evening, the sentries doing duty mainly on the officers' deck and main gangways.

We made Tenerife on the 19th, only staying an hour or so. Next day we called at Las Palmas to take on coal; this business taking up half a day, we had plenty of time to trade with the foreigners who were swarming round the ship before the anchor was down. Little boys from 6 years of age thought nothing of diving from the boat deck for pence thrown into the water. One man with his whole family on board upset the boat and they held on underneath for four or five minutes before righting it, then rowed round asking for their reward to be thrown into the water. We passed quite close to St Helena on the 2nd April but were not much struck by its appearance, nothing but cliffs and rocks being visible.

We then had some very rough weather and a good half of the men were ill. Apart from one night when I succumbed, seasickness did not trouble me very much, but I was not sorry when, on the 6th April, we steamed into Table Bay after being 24 days on the water. We did not get a look at Capetown as by midday on the 7th we were all disembarked and busy preparing for our journey up country. We entrained the same night and started off on our journey, crossing into the Orange River Colony on the 11th. The Orange River forms the border between Cape Colony and Orange River Colony and is spanned by a bridge 500 years long supported by eleven pillars, part of which had been blown up earlier in the war. Bloemfontein and Kroonstad were the largest towns we passed. I had a look round both of these and they were a long way beyond my expectations of South African towns. On the 13th we arrived at Germiston, 1,013 miles up country. Leaving the train we marched to Elandsfontein Camp, then the base of military operations.

Two days were occupied here joining the different battalions, then the forty of us who belonged to the 11th Yeomanry were sent down to De Aar where they were based. After training here for seven days the whole squadron, 147 strong, entrained for Graaf Reinett which was to be our Regimental Depot during our stay in South Africa, to complete our training. Graaf is a fine little town with a population of about 3,000 native residents and 5,000 whites, and we saw a good deal of it, going in whenever we needed remouts or clothing.

May was spent in training and patrolling, and all of us being sick of camp and training, we were delighted when on 2nd June we received orders for trekking the next day. All tents and spare kit were left behind, while two blankets and a waterproof sheet each, which was to serve as a bed, were rolled up and put on the wagon with the whole squadron's kit. Generals French and Stephenson were in charge of operations in the Colony having their headquarters in Middelburg. The column we joined was a flying column commanded by Colonel Doran and very small; it comprised: 100 cyclists, three squadrons Warren's Mounted Infantry, two guns Royal Horse Artillery, 40 Scouts and the 11th Yeomanry. Our convoy wagons numbered 50, two to each squadron or company, and were driven by native boys who are as a rule a lot of thieves and not much good - of course, there are good and bad but the latter are decidedly in the majority; some of their habits are barely civilised.

On the 15th a patrol 200 strong was told off and, accompanied by the artillery, we marched at 5.00 am, and about 15 miles from camp, at Hellimus Kraal, we found the enemy. My troop and a troop of Warrens Mounted Infantry took a ridge and hut but were soon recalled as the Boers were surrounding us and cutting off our retreat. The 11th troop drew off, but Warrens stayed, their officer thinking there was no danger and he could move later. Shortly after, he and his sergeant were killed and the whole troop captured. Eventually the whole patrol retired; the enemy having over 500 men were too strong for us, especially as we were unable to get our guns in a position to shell them. We rejoined the column and, with reinforcements (two companies of Yeomanry and 150 Cape Mounted Rifles) coming out to us, we scoured the Candeboos district for a month, covering about 25-40 miles a day. The horses were soon worn out and they got very little to eat. Just 10lbs of corn per day was their ration, but they hardly ever got even this. The men's rations were four biscuits, 1lb of bully or fresh meat and a quarter pound of jam per day. We had wagons for 14 days' full rations, but very often they lasted 20. We trekked through Rierston, an ugly place with scarcely an Englishman in it. There is no garrison there, and most of the population are Dutch rebels. Pietersburg further among the kopjes is as bad. We followed the Boers through this town and up a kopje that took four hours to ascend, moving as sharp as possible.

On 11th July we had a brush with the enemy, capturing a party of seven prisoners who were sent under escort to Aberdeen garrison, which is in the charge of British troops. Most of the towns have a garrison of some sort, generally British Infantry. A few have Colonials or a Town Guard, formed of loyal Dutchmen and black boy residents who, during the war, did duty in blockhouses and forts erected for the defence of the towns. Smuts and his Commandos were just now very troublesome but would not engage; having transport he was able to trek much faster than we could, but we followed him very close through Murraysburg, one of the towns where no garrison was stationed. Here several rebel residents joined his Commandos. One storekeeper, a Scotchman, had his home and store burnt down for refusing to fight against the British. Pursuing closely we trekked through Richmond and Hanover. Both these towns being garrisoned; the Boers made a detour, regaining the road some distance beyond them. Our rations running short, we lost a little time obtaining more. Arriving at Hanover Road we found the Boers had been repulsed in an attempt to cross the line and had taken another route.

On the night of 31st July we did some extra marching in the hopes of surprising a 'Laager', the whereabouts of which we had learnt. You must guess what a grumbling went on when, after being laid for two hours nearly frozen (the African winter being then at it's worst) round the supposed laager, we found the scouts had made a mistake and we were surrounding the wrong farm, the real laager being two miles further on! We arrived there just at daylight, and the Boers' outposts had aroused them and they seemed in a great hurry to be off, their Commandant running up a kopje in his shirt. Myself and several others with the Major galloped to a kopje on the right intending to work round on the Boers' flank, but at the top we found ourselves in a ticklish position, the 24th Yeomanry in the rear and the Boers in front, both firing on us. After dodging this lot we were only able to attack the rear

of the flying Boers. Altogether we accounted for 37 Boers, 7 captured, the column having only about 8 casualties. We left Rybuckfontein and made for Graaf Reinett, and leaving our prisoners there we marched to Blawater where we found evidence of the enemy's recent presence. Taking up their spoor we stuck it to the Willows Farm, where we shelled them heavily, but could not get to close quarters. The Willows is an ostrich farm where about 500 birds were kept, 64 were either shot or strayed during six months of the war, each bird being valued at £80. We then trekked for Carlton sidings where Negroes fired on us. Shortly after this we camped at Middelburg where General French had his headquarters, and were inspected by the General and supplied with remounts.

During August we worked in conjunction with a number of other columns, all being under Generals French and Stephenson, who being in charge of the colony had arranged a drive whereby we were to force the Boers to a given point where block columns were lying in readiness. The route to which we were appointed ran through Cradock and Garsland Kloof where we skirmished with Lotter's Flankers. The same night Colonel Scobell, who was in charge of a column working with us, made a skilful movement and captured the whole Commando unit 170 strong.

After this we had some easy marches for a day or two along Fish River, for which we were thankful, having been trekking and skirmishing night and day for almost three weeks. The rainy season was now just commencing and we were sometimes three or four days wet to the skin without shelter or dry fuel to cook food, so we had to be content with bare biscuit and bully.

Trekking further north we encountered Smuts' Commandos on the 15th September and drove him towards the Kei River which, having no transport to bother with, he succeeded in crossing about half an hour before we reached it on the 16th. The heavy rains had changed a dry bed into a rushing torrent in a short time so it was impossible for us to cross as the mules could not move against the current. We had to stay there two days, nursing our impatience, half-starved and unable to find any dry wood to cook our food. We eventually crossed on the 18th, leaving several wagons overturned in the drift.

Meanwhile Smuts had wasted no time and on the 18th he was attacking the 17th Lancers. On approaching their camp he was challenged by the outpost to whom he replied in English that his was a British Column. The majority of the Boers being dressed in khaki, the outpost were misled but could not have done anything even if they had realised they were the enemy, for they were almost on top of them before they were seen. Smuts riding right into their camp, they had very little chance against him, but he did not get off scot free, and he left with two wagon loads of dead.

Six hour's trek after crossing the Kei we were at Tarkastad and had just drawn our remounts when a galloper came in from the Lancers calling for reinforcements. The 11th were at once ordered to mount, a difficult job, the remount being all youngsters. Two chums and myself saddled the one I had drawn in 15 minutes. When I mounted he protested in real earnest. However, we all got started and after galloping 13 miles arrived just too late at the scene of the disaster. The camp was in a dreadful state, but we stayed the night finding pickets for the camp, and on the 19th we rejoined our column and trekked to Maltens district. This was the only place where we had coal, mines being very thick about there. The RHQ Guns left us at Martinmas Siding and the 38th Battery RFA joined us – they had with them one of the guns captured at Colenso, afterwards recaptured. Routing snipers we trekked through Bedford and Adelaide to Cookhouse, from where we entrained for Mount Stewart to take part in a big drive. We stayed for a few hours at Port Elizabeth where the Ladies Loyal Guild invited us to a splendid breakfast at the Feather Market. This was one of the towns where martial law did not exist, and several of our men were soon in the prisoners' truck – tight! Cape smoked was too much for them. We moved on the same afternoon, and next morning found us at our destination – Mount Stewart.

By that evening we were in readiness to trek at the shortest notice. Communication was kept up between all columns connected with these drives by means of the heliograph in the daytime, and lanterns worked on the same system at night. Flags were used to signal short distances. This move, which lasted until the end of October, took us through Jansenville to Buffles Hook over a pass that took us a whole day to ascend. The mules were unable to drag some of the wagons up and oxen had to be commandeered. The Boers would not engage us so we had to keep driving them on. One of our scouts, a very clever fellow, was captured here and at Dawn Bosch, half a day further on, 150 District Mounted Troops surrendered without firing a shot. This corps is composed of loyal Dutchmen and colonials.

We trekked the whole of the drive from 37-50 miles every day, and the hard going soon knocked men and horses up. We were reduced to 40 duty men, often having to go on picquet duty three nights in succession. From 3 to 12 men and one NCO form a picquet, according to the number of sentries mounted. The camp is surrounded by a chain of picquets, each sentry in touch with another; dismounted picquets are posted about 1000 yards out, and if the camp is in a mountainous part, mounted men are posted about 3 miles out. If a sentry sleeps at his post he is at once made prisoner to await a Court Martial, when he invariably gets sentenced to 68 days field imprisonment No. 1.

During this time he does all camp fatigues, and on the march he is not allowed the use of his horse but has to walk whatever distance is trekked, unless the doctor passes him as unfit for duty. On arriving in camp at night he is tied to a stationary object for one hour, before being allowed to get something to eat.

At Cradock our part in this drive ended. This is one of the biggest rebel districts in the Colony, men leaving the town every day to join Commandos. If caught, these rebels got the voyage but they were a slippery lot. We spent a day or two routing these chaps who are very fond of sniping but will not stand. Then we made our way to Bethesda Road where we arrived on 21st October. After a week's rest we trekked again, but owing to drifts being swollen and impassable, the drive ended, and on 30th October we camped at Lets Kraal, a small railway siding, entraining on the 1st November for Willowmore. Entraining is a lengthy business, each Squadron or Company having a separate train. The 11th in this instance was the first to move off. The train is made up by two officers' carriages in front followed by ration trucks, two open trucks of men ('Tommy's Pullmans'), 8 covered vans for horses and mules, the guardsvan and a truck of men as rear guard. We started on our journey about 10.30 am on 1st November.

At about 5 o'clock the following morning just as we were entering Graaf Reinett, those of us occupying the first two trucks were awakened by a severe jolting, and were horrified on looking behind us to see the trucks containing the horses had broken away and left the line and were lying in a heap on the banking. One of them had rolled into a river bed – crossing the bridge spanning this had caused the coupling to break. Entering Graaf there is an incline about three miles long, at the bottom of which is a bridge 150 yards long, spanning the Sunday River. Coming down the incline the brakes refused to respond to the driver and those in the rear guardsvan were not strong enough to check the train, so we came on to the bridge at the rate of 60 miles an hour, the swaying of the trucks causing the coupling to break. The guard and the men in the rear had a miraculous escape; the van in running off the line caught in the sandbag fort, one of which is erected at each end of all bridges out there. The truck was thrown on end and the men severely shaken, but no-one was seriously injured. Those of us in the first portion of the train were not pulled up till two miles past where the disaster occurred. We at once ran back and set to work to save what horses we could from the wreck. The ironwork of the smashed trucks kept the animals imprisoned and the struggling and screaming of the injured animals was too dreadful for description. Out of a total of 120 horses and 30 mules, only 20 horses and 23 mules were fit for use, the remainder were either killed outright or so badly injured that they had to be taken to the remount depot to be patched up and rested. We retrucked the horses fit for use, and after a day's work that none of us are likely to forget we continued our journey and arrived at Willowmore on Sunday, 3rd November. No time was lost in supplying us with remounts – they came up to us on the 4th and the following day the Column moved off in search of Malan's Commandos.

On 6th November we engaged Malan's Commandos, and our Chief Officer Colonel B Doran got badly wounded in the thigh and was also crushed by his horse falling on him. He went into hospital and we lost him for good as on his recovery he was given the command of another column. Colonel W Doran took command of our column about the end of November. Meanwhile, under the temporary command of Major Edwards, we followed the Boers, skirmishing with them daily, finally abandoning the chase at Setjesbosch for want of provisions, having existed for several days on mealy flour (ground Indian corn) which we had commandeered. Our cooking utensils were very primitive, anything in the way of old tin pans or bits of slate coming in handy. Of the flour we either made porridge or cakes; these cakes were warranted to kill at a thousand yards.

At Setjesbosch our new Colonel joined us and we took up the chase of Malan again. At Sutherland he doubled, and hearing of another command we left him to the care of other columns. In Sutherland we were unable to buy even matches; the inhabitants were in a half-starved state, the children would hang round our camps all day for scraps. When we left we took 50 of the garrison with us on trek to guard the convoy and any prisoners that might be taken.

On 9th December we engaged Lotter's Commandos and relieved Loubelbosch-Kock in the Calvinia District where rebels were very thick and causing a lot of trouble. We returned through Sutherland and leaving our prisoners in the gaol there we trekked for Magersfontein taking in charge there a convoy of provisions which we escorted safely back to Sutherland. Two days before Christmas we were existing on beltong and short biscuit rations, so you may guess how delighted we were when, on Christmas Day, we were met by wagons containing rations and a few early Christmas parcels. Being on the Karroo Desert where extras of any kind were unobtainable, these were not left whole long, everyone wanting to sample the Christmas cheer from home. At night camp fires were made up and we enjoyed ourselves in earnest.

On 30th December we camped at Ceres, one of the prettiest towns I ever saw. Nestling in amongst great kopjes, you had no idea of its existence until right into it. Fruit growing was the principal trade and we lived on dainties the two days we stayed there. We then trekked for the Karroo; this desert covers 11,000 miles of the Colony and, excepting a few farms dotted here and there, is a barren wilderness, nothing but sand meeting the eye for miles. Water is very scarce, being found only on farms which are from 12 to 40 miles apart, and is very brackish. It reminded me of the old Sulphur Well at home in Harrogate. The water is said to be good for rheumatism but the smell is repulsive.

On 11th January we had a hard day's fighting near Bickerfontein. The Cape Police who had joined us at Ceres did some good work. On 24th January we camped at Elandslaagte. Water here was fairly plentiful, being stored in great dams for fruit growing, and we had not been offsaddled long before we learnt that. The grapes attracted most of us and, just being ready for eating, we soon lightened the vines. After resting here two days a good half of the column left us and returned to Ceres. The remainder, about 270 strong, consisting of three Squadrons of Yeomanry, one of the Cape Mounted Rifles and the 38th Battery RFA, trekked in search of Johnny Boer.

We reached Actor Kop on 4th February and, learning that the Boers were in the vicinity, a patrol composed of 100 men was at once picked out to follow and engage them. On these patrols our cloak and one blanket were strapped on the saddle and rations for three or four days taken in the wallets. We always carried 200 rounds of ammunition, 150 in bandoliers and 50 rounds in wallets. Leaving the Kop at midnight we found Johnny Boer about dawn and commenced a race from ridge to ridge till the middle of the afternoon when, our horses being done up, we had to camp.

Meanwhile, those left behind with the convoy trekked after us camping at noon at Middlepost Farm, Dchoop District, some 20 miles distance from us. At about 1 o'clock clouds of dust were reported on their right flank, but expecting it was the patrol returning not much notice was taken until the quantity of dust convinced the officer in charge that it was some larger party. The scouts were sent out but soon returned reporting from 500-800 Boers rapidly approaching. Preparations were at once made for the attack but our position as well as numbers were alike inferior to the Boers who were the joined Commandos of Smuts, Van de Venter, Fouchee and, I think, Malan. Fighting went on till late at night, then the Boers seized the wagons and set fire to them. Our party were again

at a disadvantage, the blaze giving away their position completely. They therefore shifted some small distance and took the kraals and some ridges as their position. A successful attempt was made to send a despatch rider to the patrol whose picquets he surprised about 4 in the morning. We saddled at once and arrived at Middlepost just before noon. We acted in reserve until 5 o' clock when a retirement was made. The guns with only three rounds left came first then the men, who after fighting 27 hours were faded out, filed through our line. We closed in and the march to Ceres commenced.

That the Boers had had enough was proved by their not attempting to follow us. Their casualties numbered over 100 and an armistice for the purpose of removing the dead and wounded was arranged early in the morning and 42 Boers were removed from one ridge, our ambulance wagon being used. About 45 of our chaps fell. Our kits containing what few curios we had collected were burnt along with all the rations. A wagon with some shells packed on it was also among the captured lot and blew up while we were there, bursting the wagon and scattering the rest which kept going off as long as the fire lasted. We left our wounded in charge of a doctor and orderlies, who also buried our dead. None of those left behind, except the doctors and orderlies, ever joined us again but were invalided home, most of them from Wynberg Hospital.

We trekked on that night to the farm where the patrol had been camped. Next morning we were served out with a cup of porridge made of mealy flour and water, prepared for us by the wife of the farmer. For seven days after this we existed on a small cup of flour per day and fresh meat when we could get it. The flour we commandeered from the few farms we passed on our way, but as they were so far out we could not take much, they having much difficulty getting it for themselves. At Waggon Drift we had the run of some goats that were half wild, and these appeased our hunger a little.

Two days from Ceres we met wagons bringing food out to us. You can imagine they were heartily welcomed – I shall not easily forget. One night on that trek it had been raining nearly all day, we were wet through and hungry, so had two evils to choose from: either sleep on the wet ground or walk about feeling an awful sort of emptiness under our belts. I slept, with the consequence that I should have liked crutches to get about with for days after. We arrived in Ceres on 14th February. The townspeople were expecting us and turned out en masse to greet us. The ladies invited us to a tea and concert the same night, and almost every night we stayed there. Bedding and clothes were served out to us here; no horses being kept we entrained for Matjiesfontein, a big Remount Dept where we were all supplied with new mounts.

We trekked north again, keeping near the line for about 400 miles. Every thousand yards a blockhouse is erected, these are garrisoned by regulars and militia and in the flat districts a few are trusted to armed black boys. On either side of the line are high rails with barbed wire so arranged on them that it is a hard task to climb over them or knock them down. In the centre of the barbed wire runs a wire rope, the whole length of the route, and this is attached to a spring gun at each blockhouse, so that touching or cutting the rope fires the gun and warns the sentry that something is wrong. One night we had been in our blankets some time when we were aroused and marched off to the assistance of a blockhouse from which proceeded the sounds of heavy firing. On arrival there we found the native boys in charge firing wildly at the supposed foe, which, on our reconnoitring turned out to be an ostrich that had got entangled in the fence and had fired the alarm gun! The blacks were glad when we left them and I think they would turn no other column out without due cause!

Eventually we left the railway and trekked amongst the Britstown Hills in pursuit of Conroy's Commandos, a party that were wrecking the farms and homes of people loyal to the British. On 22nd March we entered Britstown and here took charge of a donkey convoy proceeding to Preisha. 1,100 Infantry (Liverpool and Middlesex) were already attached to this convoy as guard, so our duty was to scour the country in the direction the wagons were moving, travelling about 50 miles a day to the convoy's 20. Conroy did not give us much chance of getting very near him, but on the 27th at Amdensplay we caught him napping and peppered him hotly with shell and rifle fire before he got away from us. You must remember we were only a small column, 250-odd were all the men we could muster, quite unequal to surrounding and forcing a Commando of upwards of 500 men to engage us, and these rebels were having far too good a time to fight, unless forced. Consequently our attack had to be either in mass or by manoeuvres on flanks or rear. Eventually we got the convoy safely to Preisha, frustrating all Conroy's attempts to capture it. We returned to Britstown and from there trekked to Deelfontein where one of the biggest hospitals in the Colony is situated. We rested here, and during our stay played football against the RAMC. Biscuits proved unequal to the strain, for the bread men licked us to the tune of 3 to 1. After three days' rest we moved off and about the 20th April were engaging Malan near Lafleberg. We then trekked into Graaf Reinett as remounts were needed. After being fit up with all needfuls we made for the Candeboos, a favourite district of the Boers in winter.

On 28th April 100 men were detached from the column and, accompanied by the Artillery, were ordered to thoroughly scout Platt Drift, a dangerous valley often occupied by the Boers. The guns were marching with their escort in the centre of the party. My troop was in the rear, five of which, myself included, were 1,000 yards behind, acting as point. The valley was flaked by great kopjes on the right and several ridges on the left. The space between them was covered by prickly pear bushes which overlapped the road, so as to only allow us to pass along in files. Halfway down the valley a road branched off to the left. This was the only outlet the artillery could take advantage of, as a mere goat track was the only means of getting over the kopjes at the further end of the valley which was impossible for the guns. The main body were just crossing a drift about 20 yards past the road on the left when a heavy fire from the kopje on the right took them completely by surprise. They could not return the fire for the Boers were completely hidden by the bushes, so they took cover in the drift and waited in the hopes that the rear would get a position and cover their retreat. When the firing commenced the officer in charge of the rear troop gave the order to "Close up", but the leading files must have misunderstood for they passed the word back to retire. The rear files immediately wheeled about and galloped down the road, meeting us as we were closing up. We joined in the retreat which turned out to be the best thing that could have happened for our

party, and galloped about 500 yards down the road. We then turned off towards the ridges on the left. Taking these we poured a heavy fire on the enemy's position, thereby drawing their fire and enabling the artillery to unlimber and turn about, then with a rattle and rush the guns galloped into safety taking advantage of the road halfway down the valley. The other troops also got into position and peppered the Boers hotly for two or three hours before returning to camp. Horses proved to be our greatest loss here; only four men were killed, one of whom, a heliographer, belonged to my company, and his instrument was missing, the Boers having commandeered it. The Boer casualties were heavy, their numbers I forget.

We that took the ridge were like a lot of porcupines, the valley being thick with prickly pears growing something like a cactus reaching the height of 8 to 10 feet, the leaves being covered with spines. Our gallop through these bushes resulted in our being studded with their spines, so we spent the next day pulling them out of each other. One man who had the misfortune to be thrown in them was covered from head to foot.

Soon after this engagement the artillery left us about worn out. The column moved into Graaf Reinett and was reinforced there by the 17th Lancers, Bethune's Mounted Infantry, two Maxims and a pom-pom. Trekking again we were soon driving Malan and Fouchee amongst the Candeboos. On the 10th May we got to close quarters, but they would only make a short stand. However, we got the pom-pom working on them finely; on some kopjes we took, pools of blood gave evidence of heavy casualties. Following the spoor of the enemy we trekked through Rierston and Somerset East into the Cradock district, camping on 15th May at Larka Bridge; most of us were fast asleep when the news of peace came into camp, but the few that had not turned in soon had us all awake by their cheering and shouting. A rough and ready concert was on the go at once and kept up well into the morning.

On 2nd June patrols were sent out as peace envoys to farms and Commandos in the district. The one picked from the 23rd had bad luck; about 8 miles from camp they came up with the rear guard of Fouchee's Commandos. The officer in charge, losing his presence of mind, ordered his men to retire, and the Boers not knowing of peace and seeing an armed party galloping away from them fired, killing the officer and two men, and wounding two. It was hard luck to have been trekking just a year and then to be killed after the proclamation of peace. Only one of the patrol escaped capture, and when he arrived back at camp while we were having dinner, we were ordered to saddle up at once and galloped off to give what help we could. We arrived too late to be any good. From a fine position, under orders not to fire until fired upon, we watched the Boers pass below us in mass. The Boer commandant sent a galloper in to our colonel inquiring as to the terms of peace. On receiving these he marched his forces into Cradock and surrendered.

We patrolled about the district in search of rebels until 10th June. We then pitched camp at Cradock and were catered for by the Solders' Home, which was a fine thing, though these extras had to come out of our own pockets. The column disbanded and the Lancers, Cape Mounted Rifles and Bethune's Mounted Infantry trekked to their different headquarters. The three companies of Yeomanry stayed six days at Cradock and, discipline having relaxed a little, we had a rare old time. Marching on the 16th we passed through Middleburg where our Colonel left us, giving us a grand testimonial as to our serve with him. We trekked on through Richmond to reach Victoria West Road on 24th, where the 11th with the rest of the 3rd Regiment was mobilising. Our horses were taken from us and we were in the hopes that we were for home at once – but no such luck. We had Infantry drill until 1st August and then entrained for Cape Town taking up our quarters in Greenpoint Camp on the 3rd. On the 5th we embarked on board the SS Kinfauns Castle. Duty was very light coming home – we had practically nothing to do but sleep and get fat. On 18th we called at Madeira for coal, and on the 23rd we steamed into Southampton docks, the decks crowded with men all eager to recognise some relative or friend welcoming them to Englandfontein. On the 30th August 1902 at Aldershot we were paid what money they owed us, and our military career was over.

Music	RAM	Company Rolls	Model Rolls	Medical Rolls	Other Names	Shipping Lists	Cold-Store Receipts	Maps
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