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THE TRANSVAAL WAR.—DUTCH SOLDIERS CASUALTY AT THE BATTLE OF BULLS MOUNTAIN, JUST BEFORE DE WAG KILLER. FROM SOUTH AFRICA BY OFFICERS TAKING TO OUR STATES ARMS.

The repulse of Sir George Colley at Laing's Nek, on the Transvaal Frontier, the inevitable loss of life which occurred there and the possible danger to which the small force, although intended and aided by artillery, is exposed, have raised in this country some questions of deep interest, to which, at the beginning of the week, Mr. Childers, the War Secretary, gave, on the part of the Government, an unsatisfactory reply as can be judged for at present. Before, however, venturing to the political problems arising out of the contest, it is certainly due to the Administration at the War Office to recognise with every approval, the promptitude with which they have taken steps to give ample efficiency to the British military forces in that part of South Africa. The struggle between the Transvaal Boers and the Queen's Government is, at best, a wretched business. The transaction which has proved the weakness of the Boer force found to have been brought about by means which reflect no credit upon our South African policy. Sir Theophilus Shepstone, carrying out the intentions of Lord Carnarvon in a pre-emptive and imperious spirit, fell into a blunder which he should vigilantly have guarded against, and that blunder has now been perpetually upheld. It is quite clear now that the Dutch population of the Transvaal never did consent to the transfer of their allegiance from the Republic under which they lived to

the Government of her Majesty. It is equally clear that they are passionately attached to their national independence, and that they have with them the sympathy of almost all Dutch-speaking people in the Colony, as well as out of it. Their strength has been underrated; their obstinacy has been taken no account of. Their declarations of sentiment and of determination have been met by corresponding incredulity, and now we are reaping the harvest of folly which sows these seeds, we sowed for ourselves. We cannot decently retreat from our false position, and we cannot go forward without further jeopardising the fair name and fame of the United Kingdom. Under such circumstances, it became a very important question whether, in the course of re-establishing the position we had lost, we were bound to treat the Boers as rebels, or as belligerents entitled to the courtesies and usages of war. We are glad to find that the Cabinet have, in substance, adopted the latter alternative. Sir George Colley, from the beginning of his advance, has followed the example of the Boers, who have released most of the prisoners taken by them, and have acted with candour and humanity in the matter of our wounded. What we are to do with the Transvaal when we have again gained it (as there is no doubt we shall shortly do) under the conditions of capitulation, may be left for consideration when the time shall have arrived that conciliatory

will be the object of our own free choice. This country, we believe, takes no interest in the perpetration of a connection between a small and what was formerly the "South African Republic." There are no ties of national honour needing to be severed, in order to the practical renunciation of a mistaken method for the pacification of our Colonies. Donations. It is quite possible to make arrangements with the Boers which will guarantee the proper treatment of the Native populations, and the quiet enjoyment of a native independence, without requiring the constitution of national independence to the Boers. Indeed, it has been intimated, upon what seems to be sufficient authority, that they are quite ready, on the assumption that their independence will be restored, to agree to any reasonable trading terms we propose to them for the purpose of assisting the practical advantages we sought to gain, whether for ourselves or for others, for ourselves or for the production of natives by trusting the authority of the Republic in that of her Most Excellent Majesty. The time has not arrived, although we must it is not very remote, when the settlement of the South African problem upon an equitable and durable basis can be effected. Meanwhile, however, public opinion at home is but little inclined to sanction unbridled proceedings in the conduct of a dispute which, even if it was not ultimately successful for, had been, unscrupulously commenced.

**TOESPRAAK DEUR SY EDELE W.A. CRUYWAGEN,  
ADMINISTRATEUR VAN TRANSVAAL,**

**BY DIE ONTHULLING VAN DIE HERSTELDE GRAFTE TE ROOIBULT  
VOLKSRUST, 27 FEBRUARIE 1981**

Ons staan vanmôre by die laaste rusplek van hulle wat getuies was van die gebeure wat op 28 Januarie 1881 by Laingsnek en presies honderd jaar gelede, op 27 Februarie, by Amajuba afgespeel het. Hulle wie se nagedagtenis ons hier huldig was deelhebers aan die gebeure, hulle was direk betrokke en nie aanskouers wat op 'n afstand gestaan het nie. Die geskiedenis meld selde of ooit die name van toeskouers. Deur hulle betrokkenheid het hulle alles gegee, daarom word hulle eervol vermeld en daarom is ons by hierdie huldigungsgeleentheid teenwoordig.

Soos Amajubaberg uittoon bo die landskap rondom, so is Amajuba ook die klimaks, die triomfantelike afronding van die gebeure rondom die eerste Transvaalse Vryheidsoorlog van 1880 - 81. Die aanloop tot Amajuba, die gebeure vooraf, mag ons egter nie uit die oog verloor of vergeet nie. Die vryheidstryd het aan twee fronte plaasgevind. Daar was die stryd binne Transvaal wat gespruit het uit, of gevolg het op botsings met of die beleëring van die Britse garnisoene wat in Transvaal gestasioneer was. Verder was daar die aanmars van genl. George Colley se taakmag uit Natal wat die beleërde garnisoene moes aan ontset maar wat hom reeds teen die boeremag van kommandant-generaal Piet Joubert by Laingsnek en later by Skuinshoogte vasgeloop het.

Ek verwys hierna want benewens die sestien name wat hier uitgebeitel is, is daar nog die name van twee en dertig ander burgers wat by Potchefstroom, Bronkhorstspruit, Lydenburg, Pretoria en Rustenburg gesneuwel het of later aan hulle wonde oorlede is. Ons roep hulle ook vandag in herringing, ons bring ook aan hulle hulde want hulle is deel van Amajuba; die oorwinning behoort ook aan hulle.

Hierdie dag van die feesviering, dié dag van herringinge moet niemand krenk of met wrewel vervul nie. Die Engelse digter, Rudyard Kipling, het by die dood van genl. Piet Joubert in 'n vaarwelgedig die gesindheid wat in ons moet lewe, so uitgespel:

*“Later shall rise a people sane and great,  
Telling old battles without hate”.*

Hierby sluit mooi aan die woorde uit Emile Hobhouse se huldigungsrede, wat in Bloemfontein by die Vrouemonument op Gelofte dag 1913, voorgelees is:

*“Ons sal aan hulle dink, nie om ou verdriet weer wakker te maak nie, maar as 'n heroïese inspirasie. Want wat nooit sterf nie, en nooit mag sterf nie, is die groot voorbleed”.*

Daarom is dit dan nodig dat ons op die volgende let: In die jare voor die Vryheidsoorlog en verder terug is daar nie 'n emosionele gevoel van gemeenskaplik-

heid deur die Afrikaners — versprei oor Suid-Afrika — ervaar nie. Hulle was nog nie daarvan bewus dat hulle één vaderland het of tot dieselfde volk behoort nie. 'n Werklike nasionale bewussyn het nog by die Afrikaner ontbreek.

Die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog het die nasionale besef tot volle ontwaking gestimuleer. Die eenheidsgevoel het meegebring dat daar nie net gevra is na die verlede van die één volk nie, daar is ook gevra na sy toekoms en sy bestemming in Suid-Afrika. Die gevoel van eenheid, dié geestelike vereniging, het daartoe gelei dat daar 'n nuwe toewyding aan die nasie en 'n diep liefde vir die vaderland gegroei het. Die een se prestasie was die ander en almal se trots en daar was 'n besondere lojaliteit teenoor die eie groep. Die Vryheidsoorlog het die één vaderland as vaderland vir almal ontdek.

Vandag, honderd jaar later, spreek Amajuba hierdie taal nie net vir die Afrikaner nie. Amajuba van die Transvalers, Amajuba van die Afrikaner het Amajuba van gans Suid-Afrika geword. Nasate van eertydse vyande sien Amajuba lankal nie meer as strydperk, as verdelingslyn nie, Amajuba het geword 'n simbool van eenheid en nasionale inspirasie waaromheen gepraat word oor Suid-Afrika se toekoms en bestemming. Oor Suid-Afrika se toekoms, maar 'n toekoms wat sonder bemoeisieke tussenkoms en inmenging van buite, deur Suid-Afrika se mense op hierdie bodem uitgewerk en bepaal sal word. Die wat dit anders wil, sal ontdek dat in Suid-Afrikaners nog steeds Amajuba-oortuige en -moed lewe.

Die behoud en positiewe nastrewe van die eie geestelike erfenis, die vereenselwiging met die eie kultuur is lank nie meer 'n struikelblok in die soeke na nasionale eenheid nie en dit vervang nie die liefde en patriotisme wat daar vir die vaderland in die harte van mense lewe nie.

As Amajuba as historiese erfenis so inspirerend tot ons spreek, is dit goed dat ons vra hoe ons oor ons erfgoed voel en daarvoor waak. (Ek praat van alles wat aan 'n mens identifiseerbare eie stempel gee: historiese herkoms en verlede, godsdiens, taal en ander kultuurgoed, tradisies en lewensbeskouing.) Pragtig hoe die burgers wat in Desember 1880 by Paardekraal byeen is hulle as't ware proklameer as die bewaarders van erfgoed wat ongeskonde aan die geslagte wat volg oorgedra moet word:

*“God wil dat die eerbied wat ons vir ons vaders het en die liefde wat ons teenoor ons kinders koester ons daartoe dwing om die erfenis van ons vaders ongeskonde aan ons kinders oor te dra”.*

Dieselfde taak rus op ons want daar is baie wat instand gehou moet word, dis nie alleengoed waarop net hierdie geslag beskikkingsreg het nie. Ons moet daaraan toegevoegde waarde gee sodat ons aan ons erfopvolgers selfs waardevoller sal nalaat as wat ons ontvang het. Mag ons glo wat ons vra as ons biddend sing:

*“Skenk ook ons die krag, o Here! om te handhaaf en te hou—  
Dat die erwe van ons vaad're vir ons kinders erwe bly”.*

Die grondslag bly steeds respek en liefde vir die eie en agting en waardering vir andermansgoed. Bodem en kultuur, volk en vaderland is altyd ten nouste met mekaar verbonde.

Daarom dat ons in die verdediging van ons landsbodem nooit die hande slap kan laat hang nie. Geen volk van karakter sal die bodem van sy nasionale bestaan wat hy van God ontvang het, prysgee nie. Die Christen-patriot beskou dit as lafhartig, eerloos en honend vir die nagedagtenis van sy voorgeslagte as hy die erwe van sy vadere sonder slag of stoot aan enige oorweldigter afstaan. Die vaderlandsbodem spreek soos min dinge die volksgewete aan en roep soos min ander dinge tot verantwoordelike taakvervulling en totale toewyding. Almal van Amajuba wie se name ons opnuut in ere hou het die voorbeeld gestel — die voorbeeld, wat Emily Hobhouse gesê het, nooit sterwe nie!

Ek sluit af met 'n verwysing na wat ek in die jongste publikasie oor die gebeure “Amajuba Gedenkboek” deur doktore J.H. Breytenbach en Jan Ploeger lees. Dit gaan oor die bestorming van die berg toe daar sowat 40 tot 50 man in een van die klowe by veldkornet Stephanus Roos (een van die groot helde van Amajuba) byeën was. Ek haal aan wat Roos sou gesê het: “Ek voel in my hart dat ons die kop *moet* neem, want anders is ons verlore. . . . Maar hier moet ons met mekaar 'n verbond maak om die kop te neem of almal te val.” (Die antwoord was: “Dis goed, ons sal u volg en saamdie kop neem of almal val.”) En Roos se antwoord: “Ons God sal ons help en ons sal die kop neem, want ons kan nie anders nie”.

Amajuba plek van lotsgebondenheid: Ons sal saam die kop neem of almal val! Mag Amajuba ons in lotsgebondenheid en pligvervulling so saamsnoer dat ons nie anders kan as om te oorwin nie.

Amajuba plek van Godsvertroue en geloofsversekerdheid: Ons God sal ons help . . . want ons kan nie anders nie.

Mag ons ook nooit in eie krag handel of stry nie, want in nederlaag of oorwinning is Hy 'n veilige skuilplek.

Ek kom terug by wat ek aan die begin gesê het: Ons vereer manne wat aan die stryd deel gehad het. Vir die draadsitter, die meeloper en die toeskouer het die geskiedenis min simpatie, indien nie minagting nie. Dié mense wat by die sleutel-punte van die lewe, waar keuses gemaak word en beslissinge val, teenwoordig is, het aandeel aan die maak van geskiedenis en kan selfs tot die heldedom verhef word.

Laat ons vandag ons aandeel en gesindheid spieël teen dit wat hulle vermag het. In ons plaaslike gemeenskap, op die kerklike, kultuur- en volksakker — hoe lyk ons aandeel? Soms maar flou maar ons sing die volkslied bereid om ook die hoogste tol te betaal:

*Ons sal lewe, ons sal sterwe,  
ons vir jou, Suid-Afrika.*

En dan lê ons klem soms so verkeerd — ons wil helde wees en sterwe voordat ons behoorlik vir Suid-Afrika gelewe het. Hulle het gesterwe om ander 'n kans te gee om met hulle diensbare arbeid en vrugbare lewe 'n bydrae te maak — op die wyse deelhebbers te wees. Ek vertrou dat die geskiedenis nie in ons teleurgestel sal wees nie.

Caroline Mason het van Abraham Lincoln geskrywe:

*“His grave a nations heart shall be,  
His monument a nation free.”*

Watter pragtige toepassing ook op die manne wat ons op Rooibult vereer. Hulle sal nie vergeet word nie want hulle name is in ons harte; hulle het gebou aan 'n pragmonument, Die Republiek van Suid-Afrika.

(Doen ook op geskikte tydstip die aankondiging dat die Uitvoerende Komitee goedkeuring verleen het dat die Volksrustse Hospitaal voortaan die Amajuba-gedenkhospitaal, in Engels Majuba Memorial Hospital, genoem word.)

## EERSTE VRYHEIDSOORLOG 1880—1881 NAME VAN DIE 48 BURGERS WAT OMGEKOM HET

<b>Amajuba Veldslag</b>	26.02.1881	A J Bekker	
	27.02.1881	*J J Groenewald (aan wonde)	
<b>Bronkhorstspuit</b>			
Onderskepping van Britse Troepemag op pad na Pretoria	20.12.1880	C J Coetzee	A W Kieser
<b>Laingsnek Veldslag</b>	28.01.1881	*W Bezuidenhout	*G Potgieter
		*J Botha	*J A C Potgieter
		*J Bothma	*J O H Potgieter
		*L Bouwer	*I J Retief
		*J Coetzee	*A Swanepoel
		*W du Toit	†D C Uys
		W I Grobler	*H van Vuuren
		— Vorster?	
<b>Lydenburg</b>	Jan 1881	J De Klerck (aan wonde)	
Los gevegte tussen Burgers en Britse garnisoen		Jan Farrel	
		Barend de Beer	
		S J Lewis (aan wonde)	

<b>Potchefstroom</b>	17.12.1880	P Janse van Vuuren
Sporadiese gevegte tussen	1.01.1881	J Grundlingh
Burgerbesettingsmag en	4.01.1881	J Joubert
Britse Kamp	27.01.1881	H Combrink
	1.02.1881	M J Le Grange
	27.03.1881	F B Muller (aan wonde)
<b>Pretoria</b>	28.12.1880	H Neethling
Los gevegte tussen Britse	6.01.1881	J Mostert
besettingsmag en Burger-	11.01.1881	H Pretorius
kommandos by Swartkopje,		– J Botha
Elandsfontein en Rooihuis-		– De Beer
kraal		– Steenkamp
		Vermoedelik aan wonde
<b>Rustenburg</b>	8.01.1881	B J De Lange
Sporadiese gevegte tussen	12.01.1881	G Pretorius (aan wonde)
Burgers en Britse Kamp		
<b>Skuinshoogte Veldslag</b>	8.02.1881	P Carelsen
		H Davel
		J Hamman
		J Greyling (aan wonde)
		G Jordaan
		J Kruger
		J Mouton
		S Oosthuizen
		H Pretorius

† In afsonderlike graf op Rooibult begrawe

\* Op Rooibult begrawe

By besprekings oor die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog wat vanaf 19 Desember 1880 tot 27 Februarie 1881 geduur het, word daar dikwels van die veldslae by Amajuba, Laingsnek en Skuinshoogte in Natal gepraat en nie veel oor die ander minder ernstige botsings in die Transvaal by Bronkhorstspuit, Lydenburg, Marabastad, Potchefstroom, Pretoria (Swartkopje, Elandsfontein en Rooihuiskraal), Standerton en Wakkerstroom gesê nie.

Gedurende die oorlog was die verliese aan Boerekant 48 dood, 88 gewond en 16 krygsgevangene geneem. Die Britse verliese was 363 dood, oor die 500 gewond

en minstens 130 krygsgevangene geneem.

'n Tragedie is dat in die slag van Amajuba ongeval aan Boerekant, A J Bekker, waarskynlik per ongeluk deur sy eie mense doodgeskiet is. 'n Broer van wyle burger A J Bekker wat ook aan die slag van Amajuba deelgeneem het, mnr J C Bekker, het 40 jaar gelede oa die volgende in 'n brief aan die Transvaler geskryf:

“Net toe veldk. Ferreira en sy manne die eerste sarsie los op die Engelse het die Engelse die vestings verlaat en gevlug in die rigting van die graspannetjie bo-op die kruin. Ek was langs veldk. Roos en my broer Hans langs my. Op die teken het ons in die Engelse vestings gespring en aanhoudend op hulle geskiet. Tussen ons waar die meeste Engelse toe was, het dit 'n effens knoppie gemaak wat die gesig op die Engelse – toe in die graspannetjie – ietwat belemmer het

Ons het regop gestaan in die vestings van die Engelse en aanhoudend geskiet. Weer, miskien toevallig, het ek langs veldk. Roos gestaan en my broer langs my. Ons was van die môre sonop heeldag sy aan sy.

Veldk. Roos het met sy een voet op 'n klip getrap. “Kêrels, storm tot op daardie knoppie!” klink veldk. Roos se welluidende stem vandag nog helder in my ore.

Ons spring uit die skans en hardloop na die knoppie – omtrent 40–50 tree vooruit. Helaas net vier van ons, ek, my broer Hans, Willem Steenkamp en nog 'n persoon wat ek nie geken het nie.

Van die knoppie brand ons weer los op die Engelse omtrent 30 tree voor ons. Ek skiet ietwat links weg, Hans en die ander twee skiet vlak voor hulle in die pan, waar die meeste Engelse was. In hierdie tydstip het daar byna nie meer enige teenstand van die vyand gekom nie.

Net toe Hans sy arms lig om sy tweede skoot te skiet tref 'n koeël hom onder sy arms deur. Ek gooi daarop my geweer neer en gryp hom in my arms en kniel met hom op die grond, terwyl hy sy laaste paar snikke gee – dit was 'n doodskoot gewees.

Die stormloop van ons vier alleen was die noodlottige fout van die slag van Majuba en dit is 'n bestiering van God dat ons nie al vier daar dood geskiet is nie, want op daardie tydstip het die Boere woese gevuur van agter ons.”

Mnr Bekker het vertel dat hy daar bly sit met sy broer in sy arms totdat die slag afgeloop was. Hy meen dit was skaars tien minute nadat Hans geskiet was, omtrent 14h00.

Wyle burger A J Bekker is dieselfde middag net bokant wyle genl Piet Joubert se laer begrawe. Wat 'n jammerte dat niemand nog daarin kon slaag om die graf op te spoor en dat die Suid-Afrikaanse Raad vir Oorlogsgrafte deur behoorlike opknapping reg aan sy nagedagtenis kon laat geskied nie! Kan iemand moontlik help?

Hierdie begraafplaas en die graf van DC Uys onderkant die dorpsdam is deur die Stadsraad van Volksrus en die Suid-Afrikaanse Raad vir Oorlogsgrafte herstel.

#### **Raadslede**

Dr A Kieser (Voorsitter)

Mr GA Chadwick (Chairman BFC)

Mnr P J Clase LV

Mnr W H Delport LV

Col G R Duxbury

Lt-col A J Kenyon MC

Brig J B Kriegler CBE

Mr A C Long

Brig W Otto

Mev J M Raath DVD

Mnr J H Stander

Mr A H Wade

Mnr SCJ Joubert (Sekretaris)

## **MOUNT PROSPECT MILITARY CEMETRY HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Soon after the British annexation of the South African Republic (Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek, or Transvaal) in the year 1877, there was growing dissatisfaction among the Boers, who wished to regain their political independence. Several protest meetings were held, and petitions presented to the British Government, without avail. Eventually a mass meeting was held at Paardekraal from 6 to 16 December 1880, at which between 8 000 and 10 000 armed burghers were present. At this meeting it was decided to reinstate the Government of the South African Republic as from 13 December. The burghers also resolved that if necessary they would take up arms to regain their freedom. A triumvirate comprising Paul Kruger, Piet Joubert (as Commandant-General) and W.M. Pretorius was appointed to manage the affairs of state.

Next a commando was sent to Potchefstroom where the first shots of the War were fired on 16 December 1880, while the main commando under General Piet Joubert moved to the town of Heidelberg where the Vierkleur was raised on the afternoon of the same day. Shortly afterwards British garrisons were besieged at Pretoria, Potchefstroom, Standerton, Wakkerstroom, Lydenburg and Marabastad. On 20 December 1880, a British column led by Colonel P. Anstruther was attacked by a Boer force under General Frans Joubert at Bronkhorstspuit and suffered very heavy losses.

### **THE BOERS MOVE TO THE NATAL BORDER**

In order to reinstate their position, the British would have to call in reinforcements, and the only route they could follow was through Natal from Durban



via Pietermaritzburg, Ladysmith and Newcastle, and thence through the pass at Laing's Nek to the border, near the Transvaal village of Volksrust. In order to counter such a move, General Joubert moved about 2 000 men near to the Natal border at Coldstream, just south of Volksrust. However, this was an unsatisfactory defensive position, and on 1 January 1881 General Joubert crossed the border into Natal and occupied the slopes of the Drakensberg on both sides of Laing's Nek.

### **BRITISH MOVEMENTS**

As soon as it became obvious that hostilities were about to break out, Major-General Sir George Pomeroy Colley, who was in command of the British forces, and also Governor of Natal, commenced to concentrate his troops at Newcastle. In order to facilitate the movement and provisioning of personnel, a series of transit camps and protective forts which also doubled as heliograph stations were established. The best-known were the so-called Fort Mistake, and its twin, Fort Eagle's Nest, guarding the Mpuki Pass through the Biggarsberg; Fort Lucas, overlooking the drift over the Ngagone River; and Fort Terror, which was much nearer to Newcastle. At Newcastle itself, Fort Amiel, which had been occupied in 1866 but strengthened in 1878 and again in 1880, was the main base. The nearby Signal Hill, which later provided heliograph communication with Mount Prospect, was also occupied.

By the middle of January 1881, General Colley had concentrated about 1200 British troops, comprising men of the 58th (Northamptonshire) Regiment, the 3/60th (King's Royal) Rifles, the 21st Foot, a Naval Brigade, six artillery pieces, three rocket tubes, and 150 Mounted Infantry, in and around Fort Amiel and Signal Hill. On 23 January he sent an ultimatum to General Joubert ordering him to disperse his forces, but Joubert replied by consolidating his position at Laing's Nek.

General Colley's camp at Mount Prospect was set up on 26 January 1881, two days before his defeat at Laing's Nek, which lies some 8 km to the north. After that action, in which his force suffered severe losses, he moved the camp a few hundred metres up the slope, to ensure the health of the troops and to improve the fortifications. The Gordons, Afghan War veterans, had arrived as reinforcements to General Colley's command following the Laing's Nek defeat, and with them came General Sir Evelyn Wood, V.C., who out-ranked the Governor, but offered to serve under him.

Communications between Mount Prospect and Newcastle were now precarious, because Boer horsemen were patrolling the route. In an attempt to clear the road and secure his supply route back to Fort Amiel, General Colley led out a strong force on the morning of 8 February, 1881. This resulted in the battle of Skuins-hoogte or Ingogo, in which the British suffered another serious defeat. On

Sunday, 27 February 1881, in an effort to gain a strong strategic position and so control the surrounding country-side, General Colley occupied the high flat-topped hill of Amajuba, from which he was dislodged by the Boers on the same day, the British troops being completely routed.

### **THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD**

Within a month the British had therefore lost three decisive battles with a severe loss of life. The Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek had won the war outright and secured their independence. The Boers had lost a total of 26 men in the three actions, including those who died of wounds. The British, on the other hand, had lost twenty officers, including General Colley himself, and 231 other ranks.

In the British Army it was usual to bury officers in individual graves where possible, and other ranks in mass graves near the place where they had fallen. There were exceptions; for example, if a man had been brought back to the camp to die of wounds or illness, he would be buried in the cemetery. The 76 other ranks who fell at Laing's Nek were buried in four mass graves on the battlefield. At Skuinshoogte (Ingogo) all the dead were initially interred together on the site, but four days later the remains of the officers were exhumed, and reburied at Mount Prospect. At Amajuba, those who died on the summit were buried there, including one officer, Lieutenant Cornwallis Maude; the other officers, with General Colley, were buried in Mount Prospect.

We only find three exceptions to the general rule that all officers were buried in Mount Prospect Cemetery – Lieutenant Maude on Amajuba, Captain McGregor at Ingogo and Lieutenant Haworth at Fort Amiel (Cornwallis Maude's rank is given as Captain in some accounts; probably his promotion had come through before his death. He was actually on leave, but had volunteered to return and help in the campaign). General Colley's body was brought down to the Boer camp, but after identification it was handed over for burial at Mount Prospect. The monument that distinguishes his grave was carved in Pietermaritzburg by Messrs. Jesse Smith & Sons, who remain a leading firm of masons in Natal's capital today. They completed it to the orders of Lady Colley, "in the shape of a plain cross on a pedestal and steps" with an inscription stating that it was placed here by his wife. It was at his own wish that if he fell in battle, he was to be interred nearby, and not taken to his home.

### **THE CEMETERY YESTERDAY AND TO-DAY**

The Mount Prospect cemetery was consecrated by the Bishop of Pietermaritzburg in April, 1881, less than two months after the fighting had ended. The wall round the graveyard was erected by men of the 60th Rifles. It seems obvious that they dismantled one of the circular forts on the knoll just to the east of it, and re-used the stone. At each corner of the wall, a dressed block of sandstone has been built in. These blocks bear the inscription "W.D". with the broad arrow

and are numbered 1 to 4. The letters W.D. indicate "War Department" and the broad arrow denotes Government property. As far as is known, this is unique in a military cemetery layout.

The photographs well show the passage of time. The view showing the two crosses, taken in the early 1900's, reveals the invasion of the undergrowth and the ravages of twenty years' weathering. It will be clear that little, if any, maintenance work was being carried out at the turn of the century. Between the two World Wars, some upkeep was sporadically attempted, but the quality of the work varied a good deal. After the Second World War, the area was in the care of the Natal Provincial Administration, but access at that time was very difficult. Since 1958 the Cemetery has come under the jurisdiction of the South African War Graves Board, which has maintained it with the co-operation of the Natal Provincial Administration. Recently the Board has negotiated greatly improved access to the site, by kind favour of Messrs G.F. Prinsloo and J.C.T. Coetsee, the owners of the two farms involved, to whom we are very grateful for their assistance and co-operation.

The two later photographs were taken shortly before the recent restoration was started. They may well be contrasted with the state of the graves to-day, when the extent of the work involved will be readily imagined. Many of the crosses had to be replaced by cast concrete reproductions, for the original sandstone had reached the end of its natural life. In front of each cross or headstone a tablet of black granite now bears the original wording.

Considerable research has been undertaken to ascertain the names of those buried here, and to assign places for the individual headstones, most of which are certainly in their correct positions, though there is a little doubt in a very few cases.

### **SOME PERSONALITIES**

Brief biographies of notable persons buried here may well be of interest.

Major-General Sir George Pomeroy Colley was born in Dublin in 1835. He entered the Army as an Ensign of Foot in the 2nd (The Queen's Royal) Regiment in 1852, attaining the rank of Brigadier-General in 1879. In that year he arrived in Natal on Sir Garnet Wolseley's staff, having previously been Acting Colonial Treasurer here in 1875. In 1880 he succeeded Sir Garnet Wolseley as Governor and High Commissioner, and was made Chief of Staff. General Colley had seen active service in several frontier wars, but his career had mainly been in the sphere of administration, and while he had a likeable personality, it has been pointed out that he had little experience commanding troops in the field. His bravery was unquestioned; at Amajuba, when the line broke, he stood alone, trying to rally those men who remained, when he fell with a bullet through the head.

When a party had been sent with a message from the officer in command to the Boer camp, the body was brought into the camp at Mount Prospect on the morning of March 1st. After official identification, the burial took place, with full military honours. All the officers present, with detachments representing each regiment, followed the gun-carriage, there were eight pall-bearers, three colonels, two majors, two captains, and a lieutenant. General Colley had been a popular officer, and there had been great sorrow at his death, not only in the Army, but throughout Natal itself. Several Boer leaders also paid tribute to his courage and integrity.

Colonel Bonar Millett Deane, Deputy Adjutant and Quartermaster General at the Cape, was in command of the advance column of Sir George Colley's force, comprising a detachment of the 3/60 Rifles and two companies of the 58th Foot. He had joined the 22nd Foot in 1853 and after service in India had transferred, first to the 18th (Royal Irish) Regiment and finally to the 19th Regiment (the famous Green Howards) in 1865. He eventually became Colonel in command of their First Battalion. In 1879 he became Extra Inspector of the Local Government Board in Ireland, but resigned in the following year to take over his Staff duties at the Cape. At Laing's Nek, while gallantly leading the charge of the 58th Regiment, he was killed instantly. His body was found on the hill ten metres in front of the foremost man of those he led.

Major William Henry Hingeston, of the 58th (Northamptonshire) Regiment, died in the same action, in which he took over the command after the death of Colonel Deane. Born at Lyme Regis, Dorset, in 1838, he became a company commander before the age of 22, being one of the youngest Captains in the British Army. In the Zulu War, as a Major, he had been present at the Battle of Ulundi.

Initially, General Colley's attacking force had included a Naval Detachment of 120 all ranks, with two Gatling guns and three rocket tubes. At the Battle of Amajuba, another Naval Detachment consisting of 64 all ranks was being led by Commander Romilly, a brave and determined naval officer and a personal friend of General Colley. While the two of them were discussing fortifications on the summit of the mountain, a Boer marksman shot the Commander at long range. The wound proved fatal, and though ambulance men managed to return him to Mount Prospect alive, he died the next day. His grave is No. 1 in the Cemetery. Had General Colley been victorious at Amajuba, he had intended to leave him in full command of all the troops there. Commander Romilly had already been in battle at Laing's Nek; previously, on the West Coast, he had contracted smallpox while caring for sick African seamen, without regard to his own safety, and had narrowly escaped death on that occasion. He had been highly respected in the Royal Navy, and his passing was deeply mourned by all ranks.

Note that another naval officer, Lieutenant C.J. Trower, and a Kroomann, or African naval seaman, L.T. Dow, are also buried in the Cemetery. Both belonged to Commander Romilly's ship, H.M.S. *Boadicea*. Their graves are 7 and 72 respectively. Three more of her sailors lie in 29–31.

Next to Lieutenant Trower lies Lieutenant E.M.L. Inman of the 60th Regiment (King's Royal Rifle Corps). He had been commissioned from the ranks, a rare promotion in those days. Born in 1852, he first entered a cavalry regiment as a trooper, but had to leave when found to be under age. He tried again, and while still quite young he was made Troop Sergeant Major. Six years later he was commissioned as a Subaltern in the 10th Hussars. From there he exchanged into the Grenadier Guards, then finally into the King's Royal Rifle Corps. He was Orderly Officer, and still under thirty, when he met his death with Colonel Deane's force at Laing's Nek.

Three officers who were among those who died at Ingogo are buried at the Cemetery. Capt. Carlisle Greer joined the Royal Artillery as a Lieutenant in 1862, aged 21. He served in the New Zealand War against the Maoris, later in the Zulu War. In General Colley's report on the Ingogo battle, he stated:

“In Captain Greer, the Artillery has lost a gallant and valuable officer. Having volunteered and obtained leave from Sir George Strahan, late Administrator of the Cape Colony, he organised and equipped a division of Field Artillery from guns in store at Durban, horses purchased at Newcastle, and a detachment of a Garrison Battery sent up from Cape Town; and rendered good service in command of the Artillery of the column. He was killed early in the engagement while directing the fire of his guns”. Lieutenants Garrett and O'Connell, of the 3/60 Regiment were also killed while leading their men. Lieutenant O'Connell was in Durban on his way to his home in Ireland when the war began; he at once volunteered to go back to his regiment, and died in action at the age of 22.

These three Ingogo casualties are buried side by side, in Graves Nos. 35–37. Next to them rests Lieut. E.O.H. Wilkinson, who had a particularly tragic and unnecessary end. While Adjutant of the King's Royal Rifle Corps, he was swept away while crossing a flooded river, in an attempt to bring assistance to the wounded after the battle of Ingogo.

Major Loftus Singleton of the 92nd (Gordon Highlanders) came, not from Scotland, but from County Meath in Ireland. He had served in Afghanistan with some distinction. When on the point of returning home, the Gordons were sent to reinforce General Colley's troops and so were in the thick of the battle at Amajuba. Major Singleton was four times wounded during action, each wound being serious: yet he lingered on in the camp for two months, and, to quote from his obituary, was “almost the last victim of this miserable conflict”.

Much more could be written about this quiet, secluded cemetery. We may pause at the grave of Lieutenant Robert Hamond Elwes, another officer killed with Colonel Deane at the Nek. He was 24 years of age and belonged to an old Norfolk family. He was an Old Etonian, and died shouting "Floreat Etona", the motto of that famous school. Behind his grave are buried Surgeon A.J. Landon and Surgeon Major H. Cornish, who lost their lives while trying to save others, during the chaos on Amajuba. Nor must we forget the bravery of Colour-Sergeant Nicol, of the Gordon Highlanders, buried in Grave 4, No. 41.

With so much past courage about us, it becomes invidious to single out further individuals. Enough has been said to show our visitors that the Mount Prospect Military Cemetery of the British forces is the resting place of many proud traditions.

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The Monument to the Naval Brigade and the Monument to the Gordon Highlanders, are both worthy of close inspection.

The Naval Brigade monument is well preserved. Unfortunately it was damaged by vandals in 1968, but the damage was made good at the time and it is still in a satisfactory state.

The Gordon Highlanders Monument is in sandstone, badly weathered. It is approximately two metres in height and bore the names of those lost in the Amajuba battle. These have been duplicated on a black granite plinth. Forty-five names are mentioned.

#### RENOVATION

Many of the graves, mainly those of other ranks, were marked by iron crosses. Some had inscriptions, while others were blank. Over the years the re-painting of inscriptions has led to many errors; e.g. "Plastine" became "Johnstone" and "R.N." became "R.A." The crosses have been replaced by correctly inscribed small black granite headstones, but in order to keep the historical material on the site, the original crosses have been grouped along the back wall.

## THE BATTLE OF AMAJUBA

### Introduction

After the British annexation of the South African Republic (Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek) in 1877 there was growing dissatisfaction amongst the Boers which culminated in a meeting being held at Paardekraal from 8 to 15 December 1880 where it was decided to reinstate the South African Republic and if necessary to take up arms. A triumvirate comprising Paul Kruger, P.J. Joubert (as Commandant-General) and W.M. Pretorius was appointed. War broke out and on 20 December 1880 the first major action took place at Bronkhorstspuit where Comdt. Frans Joubert opposed the advance of Lt.-Col. Philip Anstruther and almost the entire British force was wiped out. British garrisons were besieged in Pretoria, Potchefstroom, Standerton, Wakkerstroom, Lydenburg and Marabastad.

The obvious source of British reinforcements was through Natal along the Durban-Pietermaritzburg-Newcastle road and thence through Laing's Nek to the Transvaal border at Volksrust. To counter such a move General Joubert concentrated some 2 000 men near Volksrust. On 1 January 1881 he moved most of his forces over the Natal border and took up defensive positions near Laing's Nek. When it became obvious that the Boers were determined to gain their freedom by force of arms if necessary Maj.-Gen. Sir George Pomeroy Colley who was officer commanding British troops as well as Governor of Natal began to concentrate his forces at Newcastle. By the middle of January about 1 200 British troops comprising the 58th (Northamptonshire) Regiment, the 60th Rifles (King's Royal Rifles), elements of the 21st Foot, a Naval Brigade, 6 Artillery pieces, 3 rocket tubes and 150 Mounted Infantry were encamped near Newcastle at Fort Amiel and Signal Hill.

On 23 January 1881 Gen. Colley issued an ultimatum to Gen. Joubert to disperse, but his only reaction was to strengthen his positions. Receiving no reply Colley left Newcastle on 24 January and advanced to a camp site at Mount Prospect which he reached on 26 January.

## LAING'S NEK

### 28 January 1881

Two days after arriving at Mount Prospect, Colley was determined to dislodge the Boers from Laing's Nek and open the road to the Transvaal. Leaving the camp at 07h00 he advanced some 8 km to an assembly area at the foot of the pass. His plan of attack was to send the mounted men to drive back the Boer left flank and at the same time attack a high feature, Deane's Hill (Tafelkop to the Boers) to the east of the nek with the 58th Regiment. The mounted attack failed while the infantry came under heavy fire from well placed Boer sangars and shallow trenches. The British artillery and rocket fire had little effect. The 58th Regiment were forced to withdraw and by noon the action was broken off. Colley obtained a truce to care for the wounded and bury the dead. The British losses were 7 officers and 76 other ranks killed, 2 taken prisoners of war and 111 wounded. According to custom the men were buried in mass graves near where they fell, but the officers' bodies were carried back to camp for burial.

The Boers lost 14 killed and possibly as many as 70 wounded. The latter were cared for by Dr. Merensky at Meek's farmhouse near Volksrust which had been converted into a hospital. The dead were buried nearby at Rooibult.

## SKUINSHOOGTE

### 8 February 1881

Colley's communications with Newcastle were continually disrupted by mounted Boer patrols and as a result he decided to clear the Newcastle-Mount Prospect road thus safeguarding his supply line. At about 09h00 he left Mount Prospect camp with a fairly strong force. A company of the 60th Rifles and two mountain guns were left at a ridge overlooking the Ingogo River while a few mounted men and infantry covered the drift. As Colley advanced up the slope of Skuinshoogte he received report of the presence of a Boer force under Gen. N.J. Smit and Comdt. J.D. Weilbach. The British formed a circular defensive position on the crest of the ridge with some 240 infantry, 38 mounted men and 2 guns while the Boers numbering some 300 almost completely surrounded them. From noon until about 17h00 a fierce close range action was fought and the British suffered heavily from the accurate Boer fire. After this heavy rain began to fall and the action was broken off. Colley left the dead and wounded on the battlefield and withdrew to Mount Prospect while the Boers moved off to the south. When the British returned with a burial party on the next day, they found the Boers in occupation. No action ensued. The 8 Boer dead were buried on the farm Geelhoutboom some 5 km to the west. The British lost 7 officers and 69 other ranks killed and 68 wounded. The men were buried on the battlefield while the officers' bodies were exhumed 4 days later and taken to Fort Amiel for reburial.

## AMAJUBA

### Introduction

After the reverse at Skuinshoogte, Gen. Colley was in a difficult position and despite the fact that reinforcements were about to arrive, it was known that peace negotiations were under way. Gen. Joubert on the other hand was in a relatively strong position. His patrols were ranging far and wide while the longer he maintained his position, the more he strengthened President Kruger's hands in negotiating with the British. While Colley never recorded his motives for occupying Amajuba it is probable that he wished to strike a telling blow before peace was concluded. He has been condemned for his action but there is no doubt that had he been able to maintain his position he would have forced the Boers to evacuate the nearby camps and positions at Laing's Nek.

### The British Advance

Without divulging his plans Colley assembled a composite force consisting of 3 companies of the 92nd Regiment (Gordon Highlanders) which had recently arrived as reinforcements; 2 companies of the 60th Regiment; 2 companies of the 58th Regiment; a contingent of the Naval Brigade and sundry headquarters staff. The total leaving camp was approximately 603 and all were ordered to take greatcoats, waterproof sheets, a blanket, 3 days rations. Each company had 6 picks and 4 shovels. Each man had his Martini-Henry rifle, a single shot breech-loading firearm with an effective range of about 600 meters, bayonet, waterbottle and 70 rounds of ammunition. The weight carried per man was about 25 kg. It is interesting to note that in the ensuing action the Boers referred to the Gordon Highlanders as the "Bergskotte", the 58th Regiment wearing red tunics as "Rooibaadjies" and the Naval Brigade in blue as "Bloubaadjies".

Leaving camp at 20h00 on 26 February 1881 the British followed a route up the slopes of the Inkwelo mountain, but below the horizon as seen by Boer pickets at Laing's Nek, left the 2 companies of the 60th Rifles on the shoulder of the mountain and reached the col (nek) between Inkwelo and Amajuba. Here one company of the 92nd Regiment was stationed. At both positions defensive works were constructed. After considerable delay the British reached the summit at about 03h00 on 27 February 1881. The troops were distributed as shown on the accompanying map but no defensive positions were constructed nor were they warned to keep quiet and out of sight. In the hollow on the summit a well was dug, headquarters and a hospital established and some 110 men kept in reserve. The British on the summit probably totalled 395 of whom 354 were riflemen.

### The Boer attack

There is no doubt that many of the Boers were extremely disconcerted when they saw the British on the skyline and heard shots fired at about 05h45. Some may well have thought the day was lost. Gen. Joubert remarked "Daar zijn de Engelschen op den kop, julle gaat hulle nou daar afhale" (The English are on the kop, you are going to get them down). Unfortunately we have very scanty records of the orders given, but a composite force was used. Approximately 150 men from the commandos of N.J. Smit, A. Pretorius and G. Meijer under command of Comdt. D.J.K. Malan Field Cornet Stephanus Roos and Comdt. Joachem Ferreira formed the first attack advancing up the gully on the northern face of the mountain. A few Boers were armed with Martini-Henry's but a very popular rifle was the Westley-Richards (usually referred to as a 'Wessel Rykaard') similar to the Martini-Henry but more accurate. Some Boers were still using muzzle-loaders.

At about 07h00 when the Boers arrived at the first terrace about 400 m from the summit, the older men took cover and fired at the British on the skyline forcing them to duck down. The younger men ran across the exposed area to gain the cover of the next terrace. This use of dead ground and covering fire was referred to by the Boers as "skiet mekaar los". Under the main terrace the forces divided with Roos attacking the north face, Ferreira moving to the west under the cliff and Malan and Trichardt to the east. By climbing up a gully Ferreira's group managed to drive the British from Gordon's Knoll, thus enabling Roos to advance without British enfilade fire from the flank. At this stage the adversaries were very near each other but the Boer accurate shooting and the fact that many of the British had not adjusted their sights gave the former the advantage. The British were forced to abandon the north west crest and retreat to a low rocky ridge to form a second line.

In the meantime a second attack developed from under the terrace on the north east face where





'n Skets van die Slag by Amajuba soos dit vanaf Mt. Prospect gesien is.  
Section plan of the Battle of Amajuba Hill as viewed from Mt. Prospect

Malan was joined by other groups which included Field Cornet C. de Wet. At the same time other groups joined elements of Ferreira's force to pass below MacDonald's Kop and up the gorge on the western face to bring enfilade fire to bear on the second British position. This is often referred to as the third attack. The second attack forced the British back from Hay's Kop and the Boers in this position were able to fire at the backs of those holding the rocky ridge. The British were now in a hopeless position and fled across the summit under telling fire. Some fell to their death over the southern cliffs while many were picked off by the Boers who advanced to the edge. All was over by about 13h00.

A mounted commando led by Comdts. J. Uijis, A. Vorster and Field Cornet C. Engelbrecht passed west of the mountain and engaged the entrenched company of the 92nd Regiment which had been reinforced by the Hussars. After a short action the British withdrew but delayed the Boers long enough to give the stragglers the opportunity to reach safety.

## Losses

The British lost 6 officers and 86 other ranks killed (92), 134 wounded and 59 prisoners of war, 285 in all. Colley fell shot in the forehead while apparently trying to rally his men. The dead were buried in a mass grave on the summit while some who fell on the slopes were carried down to O'Neill's Cottage. All the officers except one were buried at Mount Prospect. The Boers lost 2. Hans Bekker was apparently caught in the cross fire of his own men on the summit while J. Groenewald was wounded and died two days later. He was buried on the family farm "Koorplaas" on the Vrede road but his remains have recently been moved to Rooibult. Bekker's grave has not yet been discovered.

## Aftermath

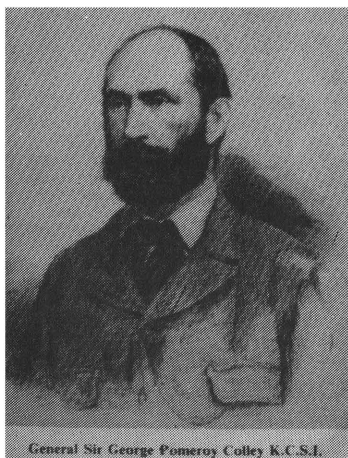
Peace terms were negotiated at O'Neill's Cottage on 21 and 23 March 1881. The Royal Commission to decide the future of the Transvaal met at Hilldrop House Newcastle, during April 1881 and later in Pretoria where the Pretoria Convention was signed on 25 October 1881. Although little more than a skirmish in military terms the Battle of Amajuba has had a very significant influence on the history of South Africa.

## MOUNT PROSPECT MILITARY CEMETERY ROLL OF HONOUR

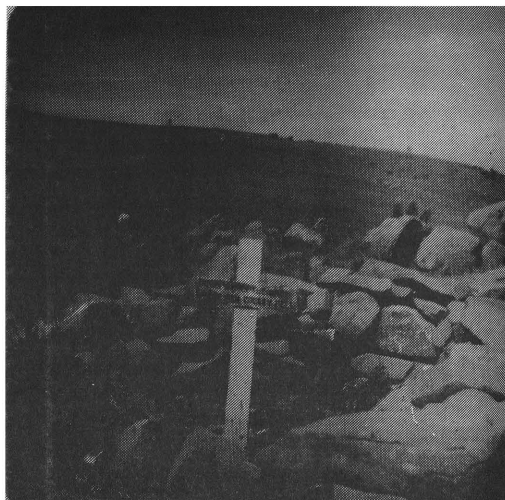
<i>Number</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Unit</i>
X	Monument to the Naval Brigade	Naval Brigade
1	Commander Francis Romilly, R.N.	HMS Boadicea
2	Unknown	—
3	Brevet Major Loftus Singleton	92nd Regiment
44	Surgeon E.A. Landon	Army Medical Dept
5	Surgeon Major H. Cornish	" " "
6	Pte. D.T. Tilbury	60th Royal Rifles
7a	Krooman L.T. Dow, 28/2/1881	HMS Boadicea
7	Lieut. Cornwallis J. Trower, R.N.	" "
8	Lieut. E.M.L. Inman	3/60th Royal Rifles
9	2nd Lieut. L. Baillie	58th Regiment
10	Lieut. H. Dolphin	" "
11	Major W.H. Hingeston	" "
12	Lieut. Robert H. Elwes	Grenadier Guards
13	Major Joseph B. Poole	Royal Artillery
14	Colonel Bonar M. Deane	19th Regiment
15	Major General Sir George P. Colley	Chief of Staff
<i>(Many of the following died of wounds on the date given)</i>		
16	No. 1078 Pte. Pole G.	29/1/1881 58th Regiment
17	No. 2091 Pte Murphy J.	" " "
18	No. 1883 Pte. Cocling D	" " "
19	No. 1903 Pte. Mills W.	" " "
20	No. 1176 Pte. Warner T.	31/1/1881 " "
21	No. 32 Pte. McCracken W.	" " "
22	No. 1399 Pte. Fitzharris T.	5/2/1881 " "
23	No. 1835 L/Cpl. Baker W.	8/2/1881 " "
24	No. 873 Pte. Lyons P.	" " "
25	No. 1055 Pte. Taylor F.	18/2/1881 " "
26	No. 1873 Pte. Galer J	21/2/1881 " "
27	No. 867 Pte. Mayne G	" " "
27a	Pte. Campbell T.S.	15th King's Hussars
28	Pte. Hurley P	28/8/1881 60th Regiment
29	A.B. Loveless J.	28/2/1881 HMS Boadicea
30	L/S Plastine W.T.	11/3/1881 " "
31	A.B. Croft H.	6/3/1881 " "
32	Pte. Watson A	92nd Regiment
33	O.S. Still E.	28/2/1881 HMS Boadicea

34	Lieut. E.O.H. Wilkonson	8/2/1881	3/60th Regt.
35	Lieut. Maurice O'Connell	"	" "
36	Lieut. John R. Garrett	"	" "
37	Capt. Carling Greer	"	" "
38	Martinus Stuart	"	Royal Artillery
39	No. 532 Pte. Barber W	28/2/1881	58th Regiment
40	Pte. Hendry		92nd Regiment
41	Colour-Sergt. Nicol T		" "
42	Pte. Graham J		" "
43	Piper Hutcheon D		" "
44	Pte. Hutcheon J		" "
45	Pte. McKenzie K.		" "
46	Pte. Campbell W		" "
47	Pte. Abbot J.		" "
48	Pte. Adamson A.		" "
49	Pte. Stewart J.F.		" "
50	No. 1121 Pte. McIver G	2/3/1881	58th Regiment
51	No. 938 Pte. Osborne H.	6/3/1881	" "
Y	The Gordon Highlanders' Monument		92nd Regiment

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General Sir George Pomeroy Colley K.C.S.I.



*Genl. Colley se sterfplek op Majuba  
Afgeneem op 27.2.1881 (N.A.C.)*

# VERKLARING VAN ROOIHUISKRAAL AS NASIONALE GEDENKWAARDIGHEID

12 FEBRUARIE 1881 – 12 FEBRUARIE 1981

Op 12 Februarie 1881 tydens die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog vind die slag van Rooihuiskraal plaas, waartydens 'n boeremag onder kmdt. J. Erasmus die Britse magte onder luit.-kol. Gildea verslaan.

Op 12 Februarie 1981 word Rooihuiskraal verklaar tot Nasionale Gedenkwaardigheid.

## PROGRAM

- 06h00:    1.       Skriflesing en gebed – ds. H. du Plessis  
          2.       Vlaghysing deur Voortrekkers  
                  Girl Guides  
                  Boy Scouts
- 16h00    1.       Aankoms van Sy Edele die Minister van Verdediging, gnl. M. Malan.  
  
          Let wel: Alle toeskouers word versoek om op te staan wanneer die Minister en geselskap aankom en om te bly staan tot na die Generale Saluut.
2.       Generale Saluut  
          3.       Opening en verwelkoming deur Sy Edelagbare, die Burge-meester, Raadslid D.G. van der Byl.  
          4.       Inspeksie van die parade deur Sy Edele, die Minister.  
          5.       Voorstelling van kleredrag en wapens van soldate uit die tydperk 1880–1881 deur mnr. Dawie van Heerden.  
          6.       Voordragprogram deur Carel Trichardt  
          7.       Toespraak deur Sy Edele die Minister en onthulling van die gedenkplaat.  
          8.       Irene Kommando defileer. Sy Edele, die Minister erken die Saluut.  
          9.       Gemengde koor onder leiding van Prof. Albert Troskie.  
          10.      Erewag en vlagstryking  
          11.      Verbyvlug deur S.A. Lugmag.  
          12.      Let wel: Alle toeskouers word versoek om te bly sit tot tyd en wyl die Minister en sy geselskap die verhoog verlaat het.

## STEPHANUS JOHANNES ROOS

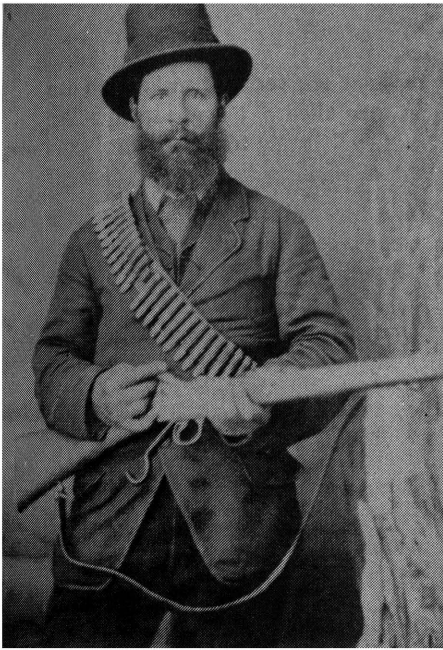
Stephanus Johannes Roos (geb. 1844) word op die plaas Rooikoppies by Krookdijlpoort, Brits, groot. Hy word in 1874 assistent-veldkornet. Reeds in 1876 lewer hy bewys van besondere onverskrokkenheid: Gedurende die veldtog teen Sekhukhune bring hy en ses vrywilligers onder 'n stortvloed van vyandelike vuur, die lyk van 'n medeburger ongeskonde terug. By die Slag van Amajuba (27 Febr. 1881) neem hy die inisiatief om die Britte, wat die kop die vorige nag beset het, daar te gaan afhaal. Volgens familie-oorlewering was hy die man wat die Britse bevelvoerder, sir George Colley, dodelik verwond het sonder om te weet wie hy was. Aangesien Transvaal nog in Engelse hande was, wou die familie uit vrees vir vergelding dié feit nooit rugbaar maak nie.

Op 28 Februarie 1883 is Roos in die oorlog teen Mampuru en Nyabéla bokant die regterooi deur 'n vyandelike koeël getref, en is hy die volgende dag begrawe. 'n Gedenknaald is op 16 Desember 1923 deur senator A.D.W. Wolmarans by Roosenekal, vernoem na hom en kommandant Senekal, onthul.

In Pretoria word Roos se dapperheid en kragdadige optrede gehuldig deur die Laerskool Stephanus Roos in Sinoville, wat sy naam dra.

Stephanus Roos het in sy eie woorde vertel wat dié dag by Majuba gebeur het:

“Toen wij dien Zondagmorgen vroeg gewaar werden, dat de Engelschen boven op den kop waren, was daar 'n groote opschudding in het lager. Alles en allen waren in rep en roer. Ik gevoel in mijn hart: als wij die Engelschen niet dadelik afhaken van den kop, en ze eerst tijd geven om zich daar te verschansen en kanonnen daar te brengen, dan zijn wij verloren. Daar was geen tijd of kans om eerst 'n krijgsraad te roepen. Ik grijp zoo maar mijn pèrd en jaag storm tegen den voet van den berg uit. Hier en daar zien ik enkele personen, van verschillende Veldkornetschappen, ook te pèrd jagen. Ik schreeuw en wenk met mijn hoed. Toen jagen wij tot onder de eerste “afzet” (dat is een enigszins uitstaande kliprand, op de noordelijke helling van Majuba — Schrijver) de berg maakt verschillende “afzetten” — en wij laten onze pèrden zoo maar onder in de kloof staan (dat doen de Boeren steeds in den krijg — Schrijver). Daar onder den eersten krans of rand gaan wij toen zitten, wij waren slechts 12 man toen wij daar kwamen. Maar wij zien toen nog gedurig de mannen bij paren en drietallen aangejaagd komen van verschillende kante. Ik schreeuw en wenk maar gedurig met mijn hoed, dat zij allen daar onder den rand bij malkander moeten komen. Toen wij omtrent 40 of 50 man waren, kijken wij hoeveel krijgsofficieren daar waren. Toen waren er net Kommandant Joachim Ferreira, van Nieuw Schotland en ik; en ik was maar assistent-Veldkornet. Ik zeg toen aan hen: “Ik gevoel aan mijn hart, dat wij den kop moeten nemen; want anders zijn wij verloren.” Zij zeggen dat zij ook zoo denken.



*Stephanus Johannes Roos, 1881*



*Die skoolhoof, mnr G.F. Prinsloo en mnr P.W. Botha by die skildery wat aan die Laerskool Stephanus Roos behoort.*

Toen zeg ik: “Maar hier moeten wij met malkaâr een verbond maken om den kop te nemen of allen te vallen.” Zij zeggen toen allen: “’t Is goed; wij zullen u volgen en samen den kop nemen of allen vallen.” Ik zeg toen aan hen: “Onse God zal ons helpen, en wij zullen den kop nemen, want wij kunnen niet anders.”

Ik zeg toen: “Daar is maar één plan om den kop te nemen. Wij moeten ons in twee klompen verdeelen. Eén klomp moet recht tegen den kop opklimmen, van de eene “afzet” naar de andere; en de andere klomp moet ’n kopje innemen, die een kant van den grooten kop uitsteekt. Dan kunnen wij probeeren over en wéér, schuins malkaâr los te schieten en zoo al hooger op te klimmen. Ik vraag toen aan Ferreira welke van de twee partijen hij wil aanvoeren en hij zeg hij zal het kopje nemen.

Wij deelen toen de manschappen, zooveel mogelijk vrijwillig, tusschen ons, zij waren toen al tot tusschen 70 en 80 man aangegroeid, volgens mijne schatting. Ik zeg toen aan mijn manschappen: “Partij moeten met mij samen opkruipen tot achter de volgende “afzet” of rand, en partij moeten hier bij de eerste afzet achter blijven om de Engelschen terug te schieten, als zij te ver uitkomen om ons te beletten den volgenden rand te nemen; want de Engelschen schoten toen al “pijlschoten” op ons boven van den kop af. Daar komen toen ook gedurig nog enkele personen achterna, die óf achter Ferreira óf achter mij aangaan. Maar van nu aan had ik bijna geen tijd meer om om te kijken (David Joubert, thans Eerste Raadslid voor Carolina, en de assistent-Veldkornetten D.J.R. Malan en Stephanus Trichard waren ook onder de bestormers van Majuba. Schrijver). Ek was maar altijd bezig mijn mannen aan te moedigen en voort te helpen, zoodat zij geen tijd krijgen om den moed te verliezen.

De tweede rand of afzet bereiken wij dan ook in tamelijk korten tijd en zonder enig verlies- later werd echter een van onze mannen, Johannes Bekker, gedood.

Toen wij achter de tweede afzet waren, gaan wij ’n weinig rusten achter de krans, zoodat ons achterste mannen kunnen bijkomen. Wij zien toen dat Ferreira en zijn mannen al aan’t vechten waren, want er waren al Engelschen op die kopje dat hij moest nemen. Gelukkig konden wij de Engelschen, die op het kopje waren, schuin van achteren beschieten, terwijl hij hen van vóór beschiet. Zij vluchtten dan ook gauw, toen zij het vuur van twee kanten kregen, want daar was niet veel “schuiling” op het kopje.

Terwijl wij dus Ferreira helpen om het kopje te nemen, komen mijne achterste manschappen bij en zij lasschen nog maar altijd van achteren aan, daar er gedurig menschen bijkomen.

Ik geef toen weer dezelfde order, dat partij achter den middelsten rand moesten blijven om de Engelschen terug te schieten achter den bovensten rand van Majuba, dien ik nu moest trachten te nemen. En ik had gezien, dat wij daar hard zouden moeten vechten, want daar zouden wij borst aan borst met de Engelschen komen, en daar moesten wij winnen of verliezen.



*Gedenknaald vir Stephanus Roos, Roosenekal*



*Grafskrif by Gedenknaald*



Zoo was het ook. Toen wij achter den middelsten rand uitkwamen, schoten de Engelschen net hard op ons. Maar gelukkig kwamen Ferreira en zijne manschappen toen net uit op het kopje en zoo konden zij weer ons losschieten, net zoo als wij ze losgeschoten hadden. Zoo schoten wij schuin over en weer malkaâr los! Ik zag toen dat onze God ons hielp en zei dit aan mijn manschappen en wij vatten nieuwen moed.

Maar g'loof mij, van toen af ging het hard. Wij moesten op onzen buik den berg op kruipen achter de hooge graspollen en de ééne klip en kliprand naar de andere. maar wij kruipen al nader en nader en het gevecht wordt al harder, hoe nader wij komen.

Ons achterste kerels van den middelsten rand af en Ferreira met zijn manschappen op het kopje maken het den Engelschen zoo warm, dat zij niet durven uitkomen om behoorlijk op ons korrel te vatten.

Eindelijk bereiken wij den bovenrand; want de kop is boven plat, met een rand van klippers rondom. Toen vechten wij bijna borst aan borst met de Engelschen, maar zonder malkaâr, zoo te zeggen, te zien! Soms zijn zij aan één kant van 'n klip en van onze menschen ander kant; partij keer kunnen wij de trompen van elkanders geweren zien; en ik weet niet hoe het is, dat daar niet van onze menschen gevallen zijn. Ons lieve Heer moet ons bewaard hebben.

Naderhand wijken de Engelschen terug en hun schieten houdt op, maar ik hoor aan de schoten, dat Ferreira den kop aan den anderen kant bestormt en net hard vecht. Ik dacht: nu is mijn tijd. Ik tilde mijn hoofd op om over 'n klipkopje boven op den kop te kijken, maar ik schrok toen ik de macht van Engelschen boven op den kop zag. Ik buk dadelijk weer en kijk om. Toen zie ik eerst hoe min manschappen bij mij zijn en hoe uit malkaâr zij aankomen.

Ja, onze liever Heere weet het, toen zink mijn moed voor 'n oogenblik weg. Ik dacht: Ach, de Engelschen kunnen komen en ons klompje hier vangen met de hand en ons allen vast maken. Ook wist ik dat, als het tot het uiterste kwam, zouden de Engelschen ons met bajonetten bestormen. En ik wil ook niet ontkennen dat ik toen van 'n leugen gebruik gemaakt heb. Ik hoop de lieve Heere heeft dit mij vergeven! Ek wenk toen met mijn hoed en ik roep uit: "Kerels, kom nou; Kom gauw! de Engelschen vluchten!" A ja, toen borrelen mijne kerels achter de klippen uit en de achtersten komen aan dat het dreunt. Wij stormen toen zoo maar boven op den rand, ik denk wij waren daar omtrent 'n 40 of 50 man en de Engelschen omtrent 'n 30 of 40 treden van ons af.

Wij vuren toen op de Engelschen zo hard wij kunnen, want zij stonden toen open en bloot en wij hebben toch 'n beetje schuiling. Zij willen ons toen stormen met de bajonetten, maar wij schieten ze tot tweemaal terug. Net toen de Engelschen ons bestormen, krijgt Ferreira weer kans en hij komt ook uit met zijne mannen en kogelt ze vuurwarm van den anderen kant af. En net op dit kritieke oogenblik hoor ik van 'n derden kant ook schieten; daar komen toen Stefanus Trichard