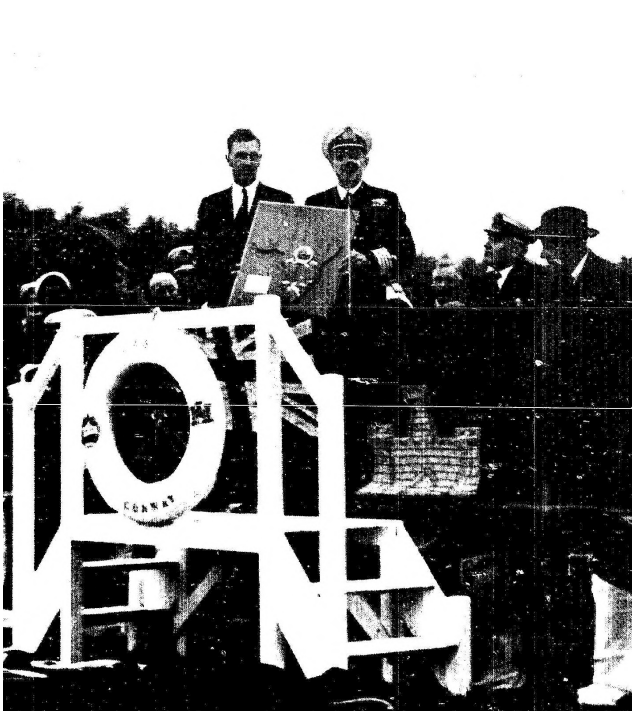




OLD CONWAYS & THE BOER WAR v21

The Conway Chapel at Birkenhead Priory contains the Memorial Boards and Honour Boards for WWI and WWII. It has been known for some time that OCs participated in the Boer War and that at least one lost his life. Members of the Old South African branch of the Conway Club agreed that the South African Conway Centenary Shield presented by them in 1959 should be re-purposed as the Boer War Memorial Shield. This summary of OCs who lost their lives in, or who participated in that war acts as a form of Boer War Honours Board as it was not possible authoritatively to list all those honoured in that war with either gallantry or service medals.

The photo below left shows Guy Brooke-Smith (44-46) presenting the shield to Captain Hewitt on Sports Day 1959. The photo below right shows him presenting it as the Boer War Memorial to the Chapel in June 2017.



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1 OCS WHO DIED ON SERVICE

Edmund Evan K. Davies (1897-99)

Died on Service in the Boer War on 4th May 1900.

"Lost overboard" from Elder Dempster & Co's liner SS Montrose on his first voyage at the age of 16 years and 9 months."

The ship was carrying troops to the Boer War from Liverpool to Cape Town. No other details have been discovered.



SS Montrose

DEATHS.

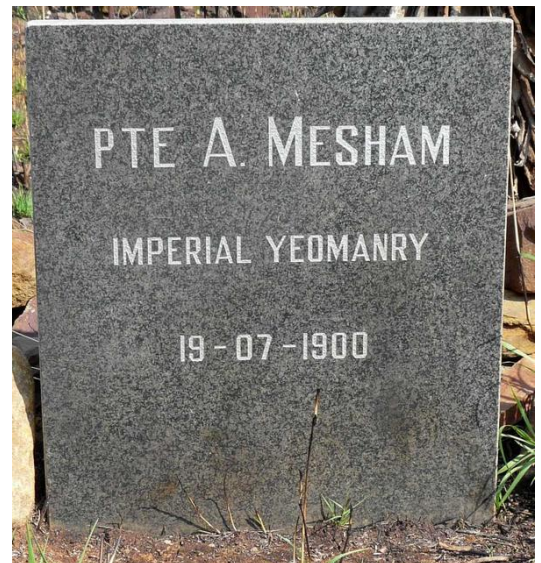
DAVIES.—On May 4th, lost overboard from S.S. "Montrose," E. E. Keith Davies, ex-"Conway" Cadet, dearly-loved son of Emma Davies, and of the late Thomas Davies, of Somerset House and Epsom, aged 16 years and 9 months.

Arthur Mesham (1891-93)

Member 47th Co., 13th Bn Imperial Yeomanry (IY), the Duke of Cambridge's Own along with OC "SW". Pte Mesham should not be confused with Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Mesham, IY, the Denbighshire Hussars.

- 21st – 26th May 1900 part of force of 480 men including OC "SW" see below who entrained at Bloemfontein for Kroonstad for route march to Lindley to join General Colville.
- 27th - 31st May 1900 arrived at the town of Lindley, SA to find it occupied by Boers. Retreating to a hilltop to await relief they were involved in heavy fighting over three days. Facing growing losses, overwhelming numbers of Boers and no sign of relief he was one of the remaining 400 men which surrendered to the Boers. He became a prisoner of war (PoW) and was marched into captivity, a long trek to Pretoria.

He was held at the Staats Model School PoW Camp or the Birdcage at Daspoort. He was released early in June when Pretoria was liberated but died of typhoid there on 19th July 1900. He was buried at Airlie Farm Cemetery, Mpumalanga, Waterval Boven, Elandshoek 339 with six other soldiers.



Mesham's Grave

DEATH.

MESHAM.—On the 19th July, at Waterval Onder, of typhoid, Arthur Mesham, ex-"Conway" Cadet, Trooper in the 47th Company Imperial Yeomanry (Duke of Cambridge's Own), in his 24th year.

James Menzies (1896-98)

- 19th Nov 1899 the crew of HMS *Doris*, including Midshipman James Menzies RN was landed with a number of mounted guns to join the Naval Brigade in Lord Methuen's column in an attempt to relieve the besieged town of Kimberley. En route, at De Aar they met up with the South African Light Horse, see **Jobling**, although it unlikely they would have met.
- 22nd - 23rd Nov 1899 at the battle of Belmont the Brigade successfully overcame Boers blocking the route forward.
- 25th Nov 1899 now fighting as infantry the Brigade fought the battle of Graspen/Enslin where, approaching over open level ground, they came under "*murderous cross-fire*" from the well entrenched Boers. The Brigade eventually prevailed after fierce hand to hand fighting, The Times correspondence reporting "*the hill-top was almost dripping with blood, not a boulder escaped its splash of crimson*".
- 27th Nov 1899 at Klofontein using a naval searchlight (from *Terrible*) mounted on an armoured train, projecting its heavy beam into the sky towards Kimberley, he sent the signal "*MD MD MD*" to let the besieged know that relief was on hand - their first contact with the outside world since the start of the siege. Kimberley acknowledged with the signal "*KB KB KB*".
- 28th - 29th Nov 1899 participated in heavy fighting on the Modder River where their advance was stalled.
- 15th Feb 1900 Kimberley was eventually relieved on after which *Doris*'s crew returned to the ship. The CinC said it was "*one of the hardest and most trying fights in the annals of the British army*"
- Feb 1900 was landed again under Cdr Grant in charge of one of two 4.7 guns (Grant's Guns), **Lang GH** was in charge of the other gun, and proceeded to the front. "*The sailors were tremendous campaigners, capable of prodigious feats of endurance (they) marched over 1,000 miles including a 17 day chase of de Witt in which they covered 250 miles in 15 days, an average of 16.7 miles per day. They made two forced marches of 37 miles, one completed in 13 hours the other in 25. They were in action 25 times including the battle of Paardeberg, which lasted eight days, and the capture of Gen., Cronje (see **Benwell**), and the capture of Bloemfontein.*" He and many others suffered very severely from enteric fever.
- 18th May 1900 died of enteric fever, aged 17 at Bloemfontein. Cdr Grant, in his despatch of October 30th 1900, reported Menzies's death with deep regret, as he was "*a young officer of great promise*". It is believed that he was the youngest officer who lost his life in the war.



The actual searchlight used by Menzies

DEATHS.

MENZIES.—On the 18th May, at Bloemfontein, South Africa, Midshipman James Menzies, R.N., H.M.S. "Doris," ex-"Conway" Cadet, dearly-beloved and only son of Hugh James and Isabella R. Menzies, of 67, King Henry's Road, N.W., in the 18th year of his age. Died for his country.

IN MEMORIAM.

To the dear memory of our only son James Menzies, R.N., Midshipman, H.M.S. "Doris," who died at Bloemfontein, South Africa, May 18th, 1900, in his 18th year (Ex-"Conway" Cadet).

"Think not, beloved, tears are dried."

DEAR CAPTAIN MILLER,

I received a copy of last month's *CADER* to-day, in which you mention the fact that Lang and myself have been landed for the front. We both thank you for the compliment you have paid us. I must say I am extremely lucky as I only joined the "*Doris*" in November, and was landed with Lang in January. We are attached to a battery of 4.7 guns, and have been with the main advance column under Lord Roberts.

We have had a very exciting time all along, especially at the capture of Cronje and his four thousand men. We saw our first fight at the taking of Jacobsdaal; from there we did a long forced march to Cronje's position out of which we ultimately bombarded him. In one march we covered thirty miles in twenty-four hours, which is wonderful work for heavy guns like ours on extemporised mountings.

Please give my best wishes to Messrs. Chipp, Hunt, and Tozer, and with best wishes to Mrs. Miller and yourself,

Believe me, yours truly,

J. MENZIES,

Mid. R.N., Ex-"Conway" Cadet.

Naval Brigade Camp, Bloemfontein,
March 22nd, 1900.

2 OCS WHO SERVED IN THE ARMED SERVICES

All those named below should have been awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal (QSAM) with clasps for major campaigns or battles as appropriate.

John Carnegy de Balinhard (1888-90)

In an article in *The Cadet* of August 1939 he said he had served in "the South African War" without explaining how or where. Previously he had served in the Bengal Pilot Service. Later he served in WWI in the Canadian Expeditionary Force before returning to his native Canada. In 1898 he participated in the Klondike Gold Rush crossing the Chilkoot pass on foot from Dawson.

Robert William Bankes (1897-99)

The editorial of *The Cadet* for February 1900 reported that he had "joined the Yeomanry" to serve in the war.

Ernest George Benwell (1892-95)

- 4th Jan 1900 volunteered in London and joined the 1st Middlesex (Victoria and St. George's) Volunteer Rifle Corps in Davies St, Berkeley Sq.
- 12th Jan 1900 marched in column to collect kit from the Guildhall (where he literally received the Queen's Shilling), on to the Tower to be issued with his rifle and finally to St Paul's for a farewell service.
- 13th Jan 1900 marched from barracks through large supportive crowds to Nine Elms station where they entrained for Southampton. They boarded SS *Briton* and sailed for SA.
- 29th Jan 1900 disembarked Cape Town and camped at Green Point.
- 15th Feb 1900 part of Roberts's column that engaged the Boers at Jacobsdall.
- Date not known promoted Lance Corporal, City Imperial Volunteers (CIV) Mounted Infantry.
- 18th Feb 1900 fought at battle of Paardeburg, known as Bloody Sunday, (see **Lang G**) and involved in capture of Gen., Cronje. Handed Cronje over at Modder River Camp.
- 7th Mar 1900 - fought at Ostfontein and Poplar Grove then to Bloemfontein.
- Trekged through Kroonstad (suffering from dysentery), Johannesburg, Pretoria, Balmoral and the Godwan River.
- Date not known returned to UK in SS *Aurania* (see **Rostron**) to London and demobbed.
- 29th May 1901 back at sea in the Merchant Navy in SS *Australasian*.



General Cronje Surrenders At Paardeburg

John Cecil Berry (1881-83)

- Mar 1896 emigrated to SA and joined 9 Troop, C Sqn (Col Plummer's column) as a Trooper and fought in the Matabele Campaign under General Carrington. Awarded the British South Africa Company medal for that campaign.
- 1st Oct and 8th Dec 1898 making a new career, based at Pretoria, as a surveyor with SA Railways on the line from Pretoria to Rustenburg.
- 14th Nov 1899 joined up as a Trooper in Col Thorneycroft's Mounted Infantry, part of the Imperial Cavalry. Fought at Spion Cop.
- 22nd Nov 1899 moved from Maritzburg to Estcourt and saw action with the Dragoon Guards in the relief of Estcourt "*Snakes and scorpions positively abound out here*".

- 11th Dec 1900 served with the Army Service Corps (ASC) stationed in Maritzburg then Pretoria.
- 22nd Jan 1901 fought in engagement that repelled 400 of Commandant Kritzinger's Boers and Scheeper's commandos at Willowmere (Cape Colony).
- Invalided out following an injury - see next page.
- May 1903 advised Conway he had just received his war medal.



*Below Left: Queen's South Africa Medal
Bottom Left: Queen's South Africa Medal*



DEAR MRS. MILLER,

I am at last able to write and thank you for the two cases of clothing and comforts, which you and your daughter so kindly collected for the men of my

regiment. There has been considerable delay in distributing the articles, as it has been difficult to get goods up country to the front, in consequence of the large amount of provisions which it has been necessary to forward to Lord Roberts and General Buller, but now that the things have arrived the men are delighted with them, and I can assure you that they fully appreciate your kindness in thinking of their welfare. The articles were so well chosen, and are all most useful.

I am sorry to say that Cecil Berry is not with me now. He had a bad fall from his horse, and I granted him his discharge. He afterwards got a post on the railway at Ladysmith, but is now doing business on his own account, and is living at the Railway Hotel, Ladysmith, as he is unfit for further active service.

With many thanks to yourself, your daughter, and friends who so kindly assisted you,

Believe me,

Yours sincerely,

ALEX. W. THORNEYCROFT,
Commanding Thorneycroft's Horse,
South Africa.

Standerton,
September 3rd, 1900.

SOUTH AFRICAN EXPERIENCES.

By CECIL BERRY, Ex-"Conway" Cadet.

MY DEAR CAPTAIN MILLER,

I am afraid I have been very remiss in writing to you, but I must claim the War as my excuse. I will, however, give you a summary of my doings since October last, now nearly a year ago.

I left the Transvaal on October the 4th. I was in the Carolina district at the time, where General French was operating recently with his cavalry brigade. I had a thirty miles drive in a post coach to Machadodorp, my nearest railway station, on the Delagoa Bay Line, and things were getting a bit warm for us at that time. The day before I left Carolina the Sheriff of the place came to me, and informed me that he had put my name on his list to be *commandeered* for money. I told him I would not pay the sum demanded (£3), and then I conferred with the bank manager (there were only about half-a-dozen of us English there). The bank manager advised me to pay, but I went over to interview the Landroost, who was the head man of the place, and I told him I objected, on three points, to pay anything. He asked me what they were. I told him, firstly, I was a British subject; secondly, war was *not* declared; and, thirdly, as martial law was not proclaimed, I refused to pay. He was, however, civil to me, and I told him I would wire to Pretoria on the matter, but he informed me no private wire would be allowed to be sent, and, further, that if I refused to pay, he would be compelled to arrest me. Once arrested, and in their gaol, I knew I should have no chance to communicate with the outside world, so I was compelled, being absolutely powerless, to comply with the Sheriff's demand, which I did with a very bad grace.

The coach journey was uneventful, except for a few insulting remarks hurled at us by the Boers as we passed them on the road.

On arriving at Machadodorp we found a commando, about 700 strong, with several field pieces, drawn up in the small market square. We were unmolested here, owing probably to the strict orders issued by the Commandant, David Schoeman (whom I knew slightly), in consequence of his men having disgracefully ill-treated some of the passengers by the morning train. He put the station "out of bounds" for his men.

About eight o'clock p.m. the train came in; it was very crowded, but we secured seats (I had a friend with me) in a first class compartment, as we had taken tickets for that class, and in a few minutes we were off on our way to Lorenzo Marquez. We were congratulating ourselves on being fortunate enough to be in a carriage,

as most of the people were being sent away in open trucks. However, we were rather previous in our happiness, for, after reaching the second station, Waterval Onder, our train was shunted, and all hands turned out, baggage and all, and we were transferred to dirty open coal trucks. The ladies would have shared our fate, but we protested against this indignity, and succeeded in getting a couple of horse boxes put on, and the ladies had these, so that they might, anyhow, have some protection from the rain over their heads, and have a little privacy. It makes ones blood boil to think of it. The heat was terrific going through the Portuguese territory, and we suffered a good bit from it in the open trucks. At one p.m. we reached Lorenzo Marquez, which was crowded to an uncomfortable degree, and hotel keepers took advantage of our luckless plight to put the prices up. £1 a day (payable strictly in advance) was the order of the day, and then sleeping on

the stairs and verandahs, and scramble for meals. In one hotel no less than 80 individuals were sleeping on the verandah and stairs, lying in rows like so many bundles of blankets.

After four days of this luxurious comfort I secured a cabin passage (minus the cabin) in one of Rennie's boats, the "Inanda"; we were crowded here like sheep in a pen, but that did not trouble me much, as I can always make myself comfortable at sea. Our trip was of short duration, as twenty-four hours saw us landing once more on British soil in Durban, and I heaved a four-horse power sigh as I thought, thank heaven I can breathe now. I remained in Durban one day, leaving by the night mail for Maritzburg.

On arriving at Maritzburg I tried to join the Imperial Light Horse, but I found that regiment already overcrowded, and shortly afterwards found myself enrolled in Thorneycroft's Mounted. We took something under a month to drill and equip, and then marched by road to Mooi River, a trying march, as it poured with rain the whole time, the march occupying some two days and a half. We arrived on a Friday, and, being the only mounted corps up there, the work of patrolling the surrounding country fell to our lot, and we had a fairly hard time. On the Sunday following our arrival we fought our first engagement, and it is saying a good deal for Colonel Thorneycroft that he enlisted, equipped, and drilled some 500 men from raw material, and had them in action in less than a month. We met the Boers about seven miles from Mooi River, and the engagement lasted about four hours. We succeeded in stopping the enemy, and retired at night (they peppered us properly when we retired) to a stony ridge about two miles from Mooi River, which we held all night in the pouring rain.

On the Wednesday following, the Boers appeared and shelled Mooi River, having camped the previous night at the head of a small, narrow valley, their position being, as usual, a good one, their guns being placed on a high hill, which gave them an excellent command of Mooi River. They did but little damage, however, the large majority of their shells failing to explode, and their guns were quickly silenced by our artillery, consisting of a battery of 15 pounders, all of which were not, however, brought into action. Rifle fire was kept up heavily on both sides, and the volleys that our men poured into them must have tickled them up a bit; and so the fight went on, gradually dwindling down to an occasional shot here and there, as the night came on, and the mist and rain enveloped the hills and valley, covering the Boers' retreat.

I trust that you and Mrs. Miller are both well, and you will forgive my long silence. I am now attached to

the Army Service Corps, and employed at Fort Napier. I have put my private address on this letter, as I am living in the town. I will write again to you soon, and will endeavour to be more regular in my letters than I have been lately.

With kindest regards to you and Mrs. Miller,
I am, yours very sincerely,

CECIL BERRY,
Ex-"Conway" Cadet.

114, Pietermaritz Street, Maritzburg,
Natal, September 15th, 1890.

Arthur Devereux Bowley (1885-86)

- Oct 1894 appointed Sub Lt RNR.
- Approx Dec 1899 commissioned Lt into the IY.
- Feb-Apr 1900 the first wave of IY troops arrived in SA.
- Apr-May 1900 after "*creditable service at the front*" was promoted Sub Lt in the army.

EXTRACT FROM THE LETTER OF AN OFFICER AT THE FRONT.

"We have suffered our own share from want of food, being so far away from any thoroughfare, and no fires to cook what little we have. Our rations have been 1 lb. flour every second day, 1 lb. raw beef, and a couple of biscuits. The flour we make into paste with cold water. Just to let you see what the regiment is made of, we marched to F—, 28 miles, on two biscuits per officer and man, and that after fighting the previous day from seven in the morning until six p.m. But it is a fine healthy life, and we are all very fit, but worn, ragged, and dirty, often our clothes not off for three weeks."

Louis Brooke Smith RNR (1893-95)

Known to have served in the Boer War

Alfred James Chamberlain (1894-96)

- Feb 1900 joined the Hampshire Yeomanry as a Trooper and departed Southampton for SA in the same ship as **Stewart-Muirhead** as part of the first wave of yeomanry troops. On arrival they moved five miles inland to Maitland Camp and became 41st Coy., 12th Bn., IY.
- 9th - 25th Apr 1900 involved in the relief of Wepener.
- 1900 - 1901 participated in all the hard fighting in the Orange Free State.
- 7th Jun 1903 his address was Thom's Brewery, Braamfontein so it is assumed he settled in SA. Holder of the QSAM and three bars.

Graham Crozier (1890-91)

The Cadet of October 1915 reported that he served as a trooper in the South African Constabulary (as the police force in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony) throughout the war. From the time the Force was raised until the end of the War it was not able to undertake Police duties, but was employed as a Military Force under the Commander-in Chief, and was constantly engaged in field operations and on Blockhouse lines. He later served through WWI.

Brig Gen Robert Herbert W Hughes CMG DSO (1885-87) (previously Cdr RNR)

- Robert was in the Klondike when war was declared and he left for South Africa. The Cadet reports only that "*he gained a commission under Colonel Bethune and went through the campaign*".
- Bethune's Mounted Infantry was an irregular unit raised privately by Maj., Bethune at Durban in October 1899. It was present at General Hildyard's action at Willow Grange on the night of 22nd November 1899, and did good service. At Colenso, 15th December 1899, the regiment was detailed to the baggage-guard. On the approach to Ladysmith (see **Hunt** and **Leland**) they were constantly employed on reconnaissance duties. They fought at Spion Kop seizing the Twin Peaks. During the Vaal Krantz operations the corps continued to do patrol work, chiefly on General Buller's right and rear. On 11th February 1900 Bethune was ordered to take his men to Greytown, as a detached force, in order to watch the Boers near the Zululand border and hold the line at Greytown and along the Tugela. during the remainder of 1900, mainly employed on patrol work in the south of the Transvaal and in the Utrecht district, with the view of protecting our posts and the railway line, and frequently they had some skirmishing and much very dangerous work. Throughout 1901 they were engaged in heavy fighting across the Orange Free State and Cape Colony.

Lt William Henry C Hughes RN (1892-94)

- 24th Oct 1900 to 31st May 1902 served as Lt in HMS *Barracouta* (3rd Class Cruiser) based at Simon's Bay.
- He was awarded the QSAM with extended service clasps for Cape Colony 1901 and South Africa 1902.
- Later served at Jutland.



H.M.S. Barracouta

Capt George Percy Edward Hunt RN DSO (1876-78)

A report in *The Cadet* magazine says he served in Ladysmith as a naval officer after which he was promoted to Commander and awarded the DSO "for services rendered in the defence of Ladysmith".

Capt. Charles Ernest Jobling (1886-1888)

- He was working as a mining engineer in SA at the outbreak of war and joined the South African Light Horse (later joined by Lt Winston Churchill). It was a British Army unit raised in SA but manned only by "uitlanders" i.e. foreigners not born in SA.
- His exact service details are not known but they fought at Colenso (15th Dec 1899), Spion Kop (20th – 24th Jan 1900), Vaal Kranz (5th – 7th Feb 1900), Tugela Heights (16th/17th Feb 1900) and then in the Orange Free State.

Arthur Evans Johnson (1892-93)

The editorial of *The Cadet* for February 1900 reported that he had "joined the Yeomanry".

James C Lang (1889-91)

- In Feb 1901 the *Inverness Courier* reported that "Lance Sgt J C Lang of the Lovat Scouts has been gazetted into the King's Own Scottish Borders on the recommendation of CinC SA".
- He previously rose from Pte to Lance Sgt in the Lovat Scouts serving in many important engagements. Lord Lovat had been "a warm follower of his career".
- Before SA he was a solicitor with Messrs Mactavish & Gibson of Inverness where he was also a prominent cricket and football player.

George Holbrow Lang DSO RN (1896-97)

- On 27th Jan 1900 George was a Midshipman in *Doris* at Port Elizabeth, waiting to join the RN Brigade ashore.
- On 3rd Feb 1900 wrote to his father that he had landed and after a two and a half day forced march from Port Elizabeth had arrived at Modder River Camp *"I have not had my clothes off for three days and not had a wash since then (3rd)"*. Food was not good, breakfast was a *"fried slice of raw ham, dry bread and some coffee, no milk. At tea we had stale bread, or biscuits, tea, no milk"*.
- He was placed under the command of Cdr Grant in charge of one of two 4.7-guns in a small force known as Grant's Guns. Midshipman **Menzies** was in charge of the other gun. and they marched off to the front at Enslin. He wrote to his parents several times and his parents sent potted versions to The cadet, see right and on the next page:
- 12th Feb: *"struck camp at Enslin and moved across the railway, bivouacking on the east side at the foot of a hill for the night"*.
- 13th Feb: *"reveille sounded at 3.30 and we started at 4.00 to march to Ramdam about 8 or 10 miles off .. arrived about 9 o'clock"*.
- 14th Feb: *Marched 15 miles to Waterfall Drift "under dreadful sun ... here we had the luxury of a bath in the river"*.
- 15th Feb: *"arrived at Weydrooi Drift, 14 miles, after various alarms along the way"*.
- 16th Feb: *"arrived Wagdani Drift, Jacobsdal but expect to move northwards or eastwards shortly"*.
- 17th Feb: *"bombarded Jacobsdal and saw the Boers run as fast as their ponies could carry them"*.
- 18th Feb: *As well as his gun he was in charges of the column's stores and transport: "I have over half a mile of waggons and guns .. 13 waggons each drawn by 16 oxen, two water carts each drawn by six oxen, two 4.7" guns, each drawn by 32 oxen ... eight horses. Each member of the column received 1¾lbs bread or 1lb biscuit, 1lb fresh meat or 1lb pressed meat, ½ozs coffee, ½oz tea, 3oz sugar, 3oiz salt and 6 candles"*.
- A reporter from the front said of Grant's Guns *"The sailors were tremendous campaigners, capable of prodigious feats of endurance (they) marched over 1,000 miles including a 17 day chase of de Witt in which they covered over 250 miles in 15 days, an average of 16.7 miles per*



Above: Grant's Guns En Route to Bloemfontein
Below: Letter from Lang's Parents to The Cadet

DEAR CAPTAIN MILLER,

We have just had a letter from George, written on the eve of his leaving Simonstown for East London. It is dated 27th January, 1900. He begins:—
"We, that is Commander Grant ('Doris'), Lieutenant Ferguson ('Barrosa'), Dr. Jeans ('Monarch'), Gunner Connor ('Monarch'), Midshipman Menzies ('Doris'), and myself, along with 25 men from 'Doris,' and 25 men from 'Barrosa,' with two 4.7 and one 12 pounder 12 cwt. gun, are detailed to land to join General Gatacre's force, near Stormberg. We were inspected by Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, along with the Admiral, this afternoon. Lord Roberts saw the guns tested, and seemed to be very satisfied throughout."

If you have leisure would you send us a line telling us when Menzies left the "Conway," and where he has been in the Navy since joining. We cannot make out whether he is George's senior or junior in the service. You will be able to make the point plain, because you know when he joined the Navy.

I should also be glad to have a Prospectus of the "Conway" up to date, as I am often interviewed about her. Just this morning I have had a letter on the subject from an Edinburgh friend.

Many thanks for the CADET, which came this morning. With kind regards to Mrs. and Miss Miller,

I remain, yours sincerely,

JAMES P. LANG.

The Manse, Stirling,
17th February, 1900.

day. They made two forced marches of 37 miles, one completed in 13 hours the other in 25. They were in action 25 times including the battle of Paardeberg which lasted eight days, the capture of Gen., Cronje (see **Benwell**), and the capture of Bloemfontein." He then assisted in the capture of Johannesburg and of Pretoria. "The sailors were tremendous campaigners, capable of prodigious feats of endurance (they) marched over 1,000 miles including a 17 day chase of de Witt in which they covered 250 miles in 15 days, an average of 16.7 miles per day. They made two forced marches of 37 miles, one completed in 13 hours the other in 25. They were in action 25 times including the battle of Paardeberg which lasted eight days, and the capture of Bloemfontein."

- 7th October 1900 arrived back on board *Doris*. Recommended for early promotion by Admiral Harris for his services.
- Jul 1902 *Conway* was advised by a visiting Admiral that Lang was still serving "abroad" so he may have had further engagement with the Boer War.

LETTERS FROM A STIRLING MIDDY AT THE MODDER RIVER.



MIDSHIPMAN George H. Lang, R.N., Ex-"Conway" Cadet, of the Flagship "Doris," now at the Cape station, is at present on active service with one of the Naval Brigades. He writes to his father (Rev. J. P. Lang, Stirling) from the Modder River Camp, under 3rd of February, as follows:—"After two-and-a-half days' solid travelling from Port Elizabeth, we arrived here this morning. We have had a fairly rough time en route, having to be on the look-out in case of attack, and never knowing when the train might go off the rails. The 91st Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders are here, and left camp this morning on a four days' march. I have not had my clothes off for three days, and have not had a wash since then. We were to have gone to General French's column, but he had been to Capetown on Sunday, so evidently there is some scheme on to relieve Kimberley. We shall be very pleased to leave this column (Lord Methuen's) as there is a Naval Brigade here already. We are evidently intended for another somewhere else, as we have a separate commander and a doctor. We are also going to the other side of the river from the present camp (south side). There is nothing going on here at present except making ready for a big move there soon; so before you get this Kimberley will very probably be relieved. You would have laughed to have seen us this morning. I fried a slice of raw ham and had some dry bread and some coffee, no milk—such was breakfast. For tea we have stale bread or biscuit and tea, no milk. As far as I can make out, Lieutenant Walter King is buried here, but I will make sure later on."

He also writes to his parents at the Manse, Stirling, on 17th February, from Jacobsdal. "We arrived here from a place called Wagdrai Drift yesterday morning. Since writing from Enslin, the following has been our programme:—Monday evening, (12th inst.) we struck camp at Enslin, and moved across the railway, bivouacking on the east side at the foot of the hill for the night. On Tuesday morning, 13th, reveille sounded at 3-30, and we started at 4 to march to Ramdam, about 8 or 10 miles off. After frequent stops we arrived about 9 o'clock. We stayed there all day, and left next day for Waterfall Drift, a distance of 15 miles, marching under a fearful sun. Here we had the luxury of a bathe in the river. On Thursday morning we arrived at Weydrooi Drift, 14 miles, after various alarms on the way. On Friday, (yesterday) we arrived here (Jacobsdal), but expect to move northwards or eastwards shortly. On Thursday afternoon, I watched the bombardment of this place, and saw the Boers run as fast as their ponies could carry them. To-day, a pony was allotted to me, as I have charge of all commissary stores and the transport. Of the transport I have over half-a-mile of waggons and guns on the march. There are 18 waggons, each drawn by 16 oxen, that is one span, 2 water carts, each drawn by six oxen, two 4.7 guns, each drawn by 2 spans. With some spare ones, there are in all about 300 oxen. Eight horses also are in the train. I have to provide for 7 officers, 64 men, 4 white conductors, and 42 Kaffir boys, a pretty big order. Each of these officers and men draws from me as daily allowance, the following:—1½ lb. fresh bread or 1 lb. biscuit, 1 lb. fresh meat or 1 lb. pressed meat, ½ oz. coffee, ½ oz. tea, ½ oz. pepper, 3 oz. sugar, 3 oz. salt, 6 candles, and various smaller items are also given out. I met Major Urmston, A. & S. Highlanders, on the march to Ramdam.

I have also seen Quartermaster and Lieutenant Williamson, who was stationed at one time in our Castle. You should have seen us meeting; he looked at me for a long time, not knowing I was here.

THE WAR.

LETTERS FROM MIDSHIPMAN LANG.

The following interesting letters have been received by the Rev. Mr. Lang from his son:—

Royal Naval Brigade,
Paardeberg Drift.

February 25th, 1900.

We have the Boers hemmed in on all sides, but they are in the river, and in a very nasty place to get at. We shell them daily, but cannot say with what result. They do not reply to us, as they are short of ammunition.

The day we arrived here I was sent to the main camp, about five miles away, over the Modder River. I crossed the river about three miles from here after dark. The country is a sort of veldt, so in the darkness, without a guide, it is very difficult to find any way. Luckily I caught sight of some Royal Artillery horses down watering—their camp was near ours. I waited for them, and straddling one we went gaily on. After wandering here and there for about one and a half hours, we saw, about 500 yards off, a large camp fire and people sitting round it. We smelled an awful animal smell of dead oxen and sheep, which put us at once on the alert. We found that we were calmly walking into the Boer camp, so we "abouted" and away, and eventually found the Royal Artillery camp. So, rather than risk missing my way again, I stayed where I was for the night, and at daybreak joined our camp again. We are all well and wish to get on to Bloemfontein.

If you can get any jerseys or sweaters, Capt. Grant's Naval Brigade will be only too pleased to get them, as it is growing very cold here now. We all want some. Capt. Grant has under him 65 or 70 men of the Naval Brigade. Any warm things will be most useful.

March 2nd, 1900.

By this time you will know that Cronje has surrendered with 4,000 men. He surrendered the day before yesterday, 27th ult., Majuba Hill day. There was a night attack about 2 a.m. on the 27th, which we went to see (sounds like going to see a circus). We were not in it,

although the bullets were singing and falling round us. In the morning we were at breakfast when we heard the news that they had surrendered. We did not believe it, but about half an hour later there was heard great cheering. So we went to see what it was, and learned that they all had given up. We (that is Capt. Grant's Brigade) had to cross the river that day to be ready to move on to the capital. As the regular drift or ford was swollen, we crossed by the drift at the Boer laager, about two hours after they gave in. I did not get down then,

but later. I got a Martini-Henry carbine, a Mauser, and another foreign rifle, belts, and various little things from the laager. I have them with me. That night I had to sleep in the laager, as my provision waggon (I am Commissariat officer) stuck in the river and tilted, and it was too dark to go on. So seven men, ten natives, and myself formed there a camp for the night. I had to get a volunteer party from the Gordons to help us to unload the waggon, as it threatened to upset. I decided that it was better to unload than to run any further risk of losing all the provisions by a capsizing, when another effort to move the waggon should be made. As it was, some provisions was lost by the tilting, as the waggon was heavily laden. The experience of that night was fearful, as the place was strewn with animals, about 500, which had died weeks before. In the morning we, that is, the seven white men, buried the only dead Boer we saw. We gave him as good a resting place as possible. The German doctor, who came over after, and to whom I told what we had done, thanked me very much, and said that it was the best burial any of our enemies probably ever had. Whom do you think I met in the Boers' laager? The Rev. Wm. S. Jaffray, Captain Denholm's brother-in-law. He is Chaplain to the Gordons, and ranks as a Captain. On the day we crossed the river, the body of Colonel Hannay of the A. & S. Highlanders, attached to the Mounted Infantry, was found on the veldt. He was buried by the Gordons. I met here an old "Conway" boy named Morley. He is in the Canadians.

Please send the sweaters, &c., if practicable, and as possible, for our people are all feeling the cold.

* * * *

Thomas Arthur Leland (1893-94)

The Cadet magazine puts him in Ladysmith on 23rd Oct 1898 serving in E Company, 1st Royal Irish Rangers (RIR). He was actually serving in the Royal Irish Fusiliers as the RIR were not formed until 1st July 1968. His service the Boer War discovered to date was:

- 13th Oct 1899 arrived at Ladysmith as part of E Company, 1st Royal Irish Fusiliers (RIF).
- 15th Oct 1899 entrained for Dundee, SA to attack Boer forces.
- 21st - 22nd Oct 1899 participated in the successful but hard fought battle of Talana Hill followed by a forced march back to Ladysmith "*The last twenty-five miles had been done under fearful conditions; rain had fallen very heavily, and the road, so called, was a sea of mud, often knee-deep*".
- 23rd Oct All day units in Ladysmith Camp paraded and were inspected by the Governor of Natal, the RIR were picked out for praise. **Hunt** was serving in Ladysmith at the same time but it is not known if their paths crossed. At the very least they would have been on this parade together.
- 30th Oct 1899 participated in the battle of Nicholson's Nek (North of Ladysmith) in which a large number of British troops were captured. The RIFF museum states "*Approximately half the battalion had been captured only the officers and men who were wounded were allowed to go back to Ladysmith and thus were involved in its defence*". As there is no record of him being captured he must have been in the walking wounded and so in the siege.
- 2nd Nov 1899 to 28th Feb 1900 the siege lasted 118 days and the RIF held Red Hill and Range Post in the western defences.

Cecil John Lewis (1894-97) Cecil volunteered for the 9th Bn Imperial Yeomanry aged 20 with Rait and they departed the UK for Cape Town in *Montrose*. These letters describe his experiences.

Extract from letter of Imperial Yeoman in Maitland Camp, Cape Town, March 11th. Fr-“Conway” Cadet Cecil J. Lewis writes under above date:—

“It blew hard here all day, and the sand is something awful. In the evening we dug trenches around our tents to take the rain off them, as it looked likely to rain. Afterwards I went for a walk round the camp. I turned in about 9 o'clock. Slept fairly well. There are fourteen of us in a tent same size as the one at home, as well as all our rifles, etc. The floor is sand. It is not so comfortable as might be.

9th.—Worked hard all day, stacking bags of oats and bales of hay. At 5.30 all 'ours' started to Cape Town docks to unload and bring up 1,000 horses. Each man had to lead four, but as I was the last, having been put on board to send them off, only had three, quite enough, too. After we got clear of the trains, I got on one, and rode it all the way, leading the others, which made it easier. When we got into camp we started to tether them, head and heel. Then the fun began, having only just come ashore they were rather frisky. We did have a time. Was turned out at 11.30 to take guard over the horses at 1 a.m. Very sleepy. We lost two or three during the night.

11th.—I am writing this letter in The Soldier's Home just before church service began, in which I took part.

Monday, 12th.—Exercised horses about eight miles. The roads are very different to ours, no kerbs or hedges, just a sandy track. The horse I was on is a bay mare, about four years, fifteen hands. Hope I can keep her. She shies a bit.

You will remember the Rev. Alan Williams, who coached the “Conway” crew for the Boat Race; well, he is in Cape Town, and will be up to see me to-morrow. Only four of us are allowed off for leave at a time. We went for a bathe in some swimming baths. It was grand I can tell you. Afterwards we went to the Observatory Club to dinner, which was also all right.”

DEAR CAPTAIN MILLER,

Herewith a few extracts from our boy's last letter. On the whole, he seems all right. I hope he may escape the sickness which has played such havoc with so many poor fellows.

The trouble does not seem much nearer an end. I sent on the CADET and your letter, feeling certain your kind words would be gratifying to the volunteer, who by this time, probably, sees with different eyes to those he used when under your jurisdiction.

With kind regards to Mrs. and Miss Miller,

I remain,

Yours most sincerely,
EMILY GWYNNE LEWIS.

The Hermitage, Litherland Park, Seaforth,
Liverpool, April 29th, 1900.

Extract from letter of ex-“Conway” Cadet C. J. Lewis, 3,678 Imperial Yeomanry, 9th Battalion, Maitland Camp, 23rd March, 1900.

I think I must describe what we do on parades, as we have had them every day for the last four days. We start saddling up about 9.15, parade at 10. Then we march off about a quarter mile to a clear space to be drilled in wheeling, subsectioning, etc. We then march towards an imaginary enemy, dismount for duty on foot. Every third man in each subsection of four remains behind to look after the horses, he being mounted makes it a difficult job. When we have fired a few rounds we rush forward about 50 yards and take up another position, and so on, until the bayonet charge is sounded, when we rush forward with fixed bayonets at top speed, yelling and shouting as loud as we can. The ground on which all this is done is like the sand hills at Hightown, only more rough, and there are small bushes in the way. When we have charged far enough we lie down under cover to await the bringing up of the horses, or we may, perhaps, retire to meet them; then we scramble up as well as we can, and fall into our sections. After we have done this two or three times we have got about four miles out, and are rather tired, so the dismount is sounded and we have a rest, then by way of practice for the kind of country we have to go through, we are sent home straight across country in column of sections, and as the ground is one mass of small bushes, big boulders, water courses, and sometimes a river to cross you can imagine the time we have, still I like it, and if it wasn't for the fooling and waiting about we are subjected to when there is no need for it, it would be quite enjoyable. To-morrow will be Sunday. Thank goodness we may get a bit of peace, but I am not very certain about it.

Sunday, 25th March.—Went to church this morning. It came on to rain, and as it was in the open, it was not very comfortable. We have at last got our marching orders. Don't know where we are going. Think it is to Stettinbosch. I wonder if you are in the Church for the Blind. How glad I shall be to get back and go there again. Will finish this after to-morrow.

Monday, 26th March.—Up at 5 a.m., packed saddles, and struck tents. Started for Durban road en route to Stettinbosch about 30 miles. Arrived 7 o'clock, and lay down and slept where we were in the open.

27th.—Up at 6 o'clock, off at 9 a.m., arrived at Stettinbosch 3 p.m. No time for more now.

Stettinbosch Camp, April 1st.—We have a very good camping ground here. There is one drawback, we have to take the horses one mile to water bare back, and leading another. When we first came we were the only yeomanry. Yesterday about 450 of the Scotch Brigade came up, so we are pretty crowded. I have to go on stable guard now, so will start the diary to-morrow.

28th.—Went on fatigue this morning for rations and forage. It started to rain towards evening, came down hard. Lord Loch's Light Horse came into camp to-day.

29th.—We had a sham attack on a kopje at the back of the camp this afternoon, very hot and dusty. Stettinbosch Camp is much nicer than Maitland.

30th.—Another soldier and I walked into Stettinbosch in the evening. It is an awfully nice place, but I only saw it in the dark. All theveldt is on fire, luckily the wind is blowing away from us.

31st.—Out early for mounted drill before breakfast, right away amongst the hills.

April 1st, 1900.—Went to church without any breakfast, riding bare back, with a feed of oats over our

shoulders. Owing to our having stood in the sun for nearly two hours I almost fainted before service was over, but was able to ride back.
3rd.—Must finish this letter now. We have to pack and be off to Victoria West Road, about 500 miles from Cape Town. We shall strain to-morrow, some time in the evening, arriving about two days afterwards.

Gerald Hanship Long OBE (1898-99)

- Late 1901 emigrated from the UK for Australia in SS *Runic* intending to become a sheep farmer.
- Dec 1901 decided to disembark at Cape Town and joined A Squadron of Kitchener's Horse before obtaining a commission in an associated local unit, the Cape Town Highlanders (CTH). Unknown to him, the British High Command had decided not to send the CTH to the front but to keep them on garrison duties (administrators) on the railways or about their own towns. He wrote to The Cadet magazine: *“I have not seen much fighting being mainly in the lines of communication but have seen a great deal of the Cape Colony”*.
- 15th Apr 1902 - the CTH were based in Cape Town Drill Hall.



Long 1899 Gig Crew

Charles Mendlesohn Mandel (1892-93)

The editorial of The Cadet for February 1900 reported that he had “joined the Yeomanry”.

George Charles Oldham (1891-93)

- Jan 1900 arrived SA having joined the ranks in the Royal Sussex Regiment.
- 20th Mar 1900 Regt joined Ian Hamilton's force and fought at Hout's Neck, Zand River, Johannesburg, Diamond Hill and Withenbergen.
- May 1901 fought at the Battle of Doornkop (Florida)

- Feb 1901 commissioned into the mounted infantry and operated South of the Orange River.
- Aug 1901 gazetted 2nd Lt, shireon Regt, SA Field Force and joined their HQ at Nylestroom, North of Pretoria.
- Sep 1901 OIC Middelfontein railway outpost in charge of 40 men.
- Mar 1902 at Nylestroom.

Harry Rait (1888-90)

- Served with **Lewis** C J in the 9th Bn., IY travelling to Cape Town in the *Montrose*.
- 16th Feb 1901 while serving with the 31st Coy., 9th Bn., IY he was engaged in an action at Hartebeestfontein, There was no sign of the Boers as they advanced then, "*suddenly without a word of warning, a hundred Mauser rifles cracked, and a shower of bullets whistled past us. We were subjected to a hot crossfire*". He was shot, moved into the captured town of Klerksdorp.
- Eventually invalided back to the UK having been wounded in action.

Ex-"Conway" Cadet Harry Rait visited the ship on February 23rd. He has joined the Imperial Yeomanry, and was a trooper in the gun section, Montgomeryshire Battalion. He sailed for South Africa in the transport S.S. "Montrose," 13th March. He wore the regulation khaki, which is a very smart uniform. He had been in South Africa before, which knowledge will be of great value. We wish him good luck and a safe return.

Reginald J Sheldrick (1897-98)

He was a Midshipman RNR but enlisted as a Private in Herts Company (42nd Co.,) 12th Bn., IY, the Hampshire Yeomanry.

- In the January 1900 The Cadet he reported that he was about to leave for SA in the *Cornwall*. He added "*If I come through alright I shall send home some descriptive reading.*"
- Early 1901 he wrote to The Cadet "*Made a light-hearted report on sentry duty at the front*" - see right. No mention where or when!
- 28th March 1901 back in the UK having been invalided out after having a leg and foot crushed under his falling horse.

His letters to The Cadet are below.

All communications to be addressed to the EDITOR OF CADET, School Ship "Conway," Liverpool.

DEAR CAPTAIN MILLER,

I thought perhaps you would like to hear that I have returned from South Africa, and am at present not one whit the worse for my "rough and tumble," although in the first place I was invalided with a crushed foot and leg, through my horse falling on to me. I have enclosed a short anecdote, which was one of the many adventures through which I passed, but not all ended so humourously. I met Greenhill just a few hours before I left for England, and recognised him directly; he doesn't seem to care for the sea over much, but is doing very well.

And now, hoping to come up and see the old ship before long,

I remain, yours very sincerely,

REGINALD J. SHELDRIK,
Ex-"Conway" Cadet.

HALT, WHO COMES HERE?

AN ACTUAL EXPERIENCE OF THE WRITER'S DURING THE SOUTH AFRICAN CAMPAIGN.

We were on the outlying picket (twelve of us) facing the Boer position, which I judge was about three miles distant. I went on guard from 9 until 10, and again from 3 to 4. Everything went well in my first watch. The officer went his rounds, and gave us strict injunctions that we were to challenge only once, and if that did not elicit a reply fire. At 3 o'clock I was awakened by the corporal and marched to my post, had my orders repeated to me, and was then left. For half-an-hour I paced up and down (there was a bitterly cold wind blowing, and we could scarcely see anything because of the dense bush). Suddenly I heard a most peculiar noise, for which I found it impossible to account. I immediately laid down and watched. After a few seconds I distinctly saw three or four dark objects crawling from bush to bush. I began to feel uncomfortable, and wondered what was my best plan—to wait, or fire—so with a rather tremulous voice I cried, "Halt, who comes here?" All the answer I received was something in the form of a low indistinct murmur (I was one mile and a half from the division, and about 200 yards from the rest of the picket). I now began to get what a "Conway" boy would call the "funks," and could almost feel my hair rising straight and bristly all over my head. At last I roused myself, fixed my bayonet, and waited until the nearest object was within ten yards, then sprang up, rushed and plunged my bayonet with all my force through bush and flesh right into the ground! For half a second a terrible feeling came over me at the thought that I had pinned a fellow-man to the earth. At the end of that time I heard unmistakable squeals. Well, I need not continue, but only tell you that when we had our scanty dinner that day it was not off bully-beef that we dined but "pork."

R. J. S.

DEAR CAPTAIN MILLER,

I have long been waiting to drop you a line, but opportunity has never until the time of writing occurred. I see by the CADET that you are aware that I was bound for South Africa. I joined the 42nd Company of Imperial Yeomanry, the county being Hertfordshire, and left England about February 20th. We arrived at the Cape after a very pleasant voyage, landed, and marched to Maitland Camp (about four miles from the town), at which place we were stationed for a fortnight. We then entrained to Bloemfontein, which had just been entered by Roberts, and arrived there the day before he continued his march up country. Our Colonel had orders to rest two days, then form the last part of the victorious army's rear guard. While we were at Bloemfontein the mortality was terrible to see, as deaths were occurring at the average of 35 per day, and from the cemetery right out into the road one could see the dismal sight of stretchers with Union Jacks over them. Our first fight was at Rhenoster River, and a stiff one it was, although we had the satisfaction of seeing our friend Mr. J. Boer, running in all directions. Our Company has fought in all twenty-eight engagements, eight of these being general engagements. The following are a few:—Rhenoster River, Kopjes, Elands Kopje, Hilbron, Lindley, Bethlehem, Rutz, Oliphant's Nek, Elands River, and a number more that have escaped my memory. Our Company has sadly diminished in number, as out of 125 men we can only now show a strength of 40, so you can see what shot, shell, and fever can work in a regiment. I was very sorry to hear that you lost the boat race, but never mind, we've still got the lead, and next year on our own river I'm sure you will find the winning crew. I hope Mr. Broadbent, Mr. Chipp, also Mr. Hunt and Mr. Tozer are well. Please remember me kindly to Mrs. and Miss Miller, hoping that you are still well in health.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

REGINALD J. SHELDRIK, R.N.R., MID.,
Ex-Captain Port Fore.

Pretoria Yeomanry Hospital,
September 1st, 1900.

DEAR CAPTAIN MILLER

Robert Scott Skirving (1875)

1900 to 02 served as a Major Dr consulting surgeon in the Australian army's New South Wales Medical Team.

Raoul E Stewart-Muirhead (1894-96)

- Feb 1900 joined the Sussex Yeomanry (38th Bn IY) as a Lieutenant and departed Southampton for SA in the same ship as **Chamberlain**.
- 22nd – 27th Apr 1900 involved in the relief of Wepener, a village about 68 miles from Bloemfontein, on the border of Basutoland, which had been besieged for 17 days by up to 8,000 Boers. He was badly wounded in the shoulder and, it is assumed, repatriated to the UK.



Scott Skirving
circa 1884

“SW” is a non-de-plume used by an OC reporting his exploits in the war. Candidates are: **Sydney Buxton Warren (1897-99), Solomon William Wilding (1893-95) and Stephen Lindaw Winderbank (1896-97)**

SW was a member Bn IY, the Duke of Cambridge's Own along with **Mesham**

- 21st - 26th May 1900 part of force of 480 men, who entrained at Bloemfontein for Kroonstad for route march to Lindley to join General Colville.
- 27th - 31st May 1900 arrived at the town of Lindley to find it occupied by Boers. Retreating to a hilltop to await relief they were involved in heavy fighting over three days. Facing growing losses, overwhelming numbers of Boers and no sign of relief he was one of the remaining 400 men which surrendered to the Boers. He became a prisoner of war (PoW) and was marched into captivity, a long trek to Pretoria.
- He was held at the Staats Model School PoW Camp or the Birdcage at Daspoort. He was released early in June when Pretoria was liberated. Unlike **Mesham** who died in SA, SW was repatriated to the UK.

THE LINDLEY DISASTER.
MAY 27TH TO 31ST, 1900.



OUR journey, on which my first taste of active service took place, began at Bloemfontein, which pretty little town we left about mid-day on May 21st. On the way down from the camp, which was about a mile to a mile-and-a-half outside the town on rising ground, we passed the House of Assembly, now turned into a Hospital, with the Union Jack flying over it; and very strange did this fine lofty brick and white stone building look, with sheets out to air on the grass, and instead of legislators, Kaffirs carrying pots, &c., in and out. After stopping to water the horses at the town trough, we went on to the station where we entrained, under orders for Kroonstad. About noon on the second day out we arrived at the Zand River, where we found that the big iron bridge, by which the railway crosses the river at a height of about thirty feet, had been destroyed by the enemy when retreating, and one end was lying in the bed of the stream, while the low level crossing that the Royal Engineers were laying on the rock bottom of the river, zigzagging lines down the banks to meet it, was not yet ready, though so nearly so that by the time we had detrained another train came up and got over. We watered the horses there in a pool where there were the bodies of two dead animals floating, much to the alarm of my nag, and then got all the wagons across the drift. By the time this had been accomplished it was so late, and the darkness falling so rapidly, that we only went about three or four miles before camping for the night; getting up next morning about four o'clock, and being on the road again by about half-past five. We marched most of that day, but towards evening some of the wagons got separated, and lost their way. I formed one of their escort, and was uncommonly glad to see the cook's camp-fire, when our guide had at last found out where he was and had put us right again, as it was pretty late before we got in. Next day we were off again about the same time as before, and arrived at Kroonstad about noon. We had just settled down to dinner when orders came for us to be off at once to Lindley, where we were to join General Colville, and we were not to be there later than the 26th. This was on May 25th, with over forty miles to go in thirty-six hours, while our horses and oxen were in very soft condition. We were delayed at Kroonstad, waiting for forage, until close on five o'clock, but finally got off and had an uneventful journey to Lindley. Owing to the very slow pace at which the oxen could move, namely about two-and-a-half miles an hour, with long stoppages at every drift and stream we came to, it was noon on Sunday, the 27th, before we sighted the town, or as we should say in England, the hamlet of Lindley, comprising, as I should judge, a population well under a thousand.

The advance guard of our little force, which only totalled about 480 men, with two galloping Colt guns, entered the town about two or three o'clock, while the main body remained for the moment at a drift where the River Valsch runs by the town. We shortly heard several shots, and finally quite heavy firing, which, as Colville was supposed to be in possession of the town, rather surprised us. However, the guard soon came galloping back with the news that the town had been evacuated the previous day by Colville, and was in the possession of the enemy, who had given our men a warm welcome, firing on them from the shelter of the houses, causing two or three casualties.

Not knowing the numbers of our opponents, and our animals being too tired to make any great progress, even had we known in which direction we should follow Colville, the colonel in command of the battalion decided to retire the force on to a kopje about a mile-and-a-half outside the town in the Kroonstad direction. The position was the best obtainable, but was by no means an easy one to hold as a smaller eminence about half-a-mile nearer the town had also to be held, otherwise it would have commanded the main position, while the natural formation of the smaller hill rendered defence difficult. Our wagons were, of course, left at the foot of the main kopje under a guard, but the two Colts had to be taken to the top, and heavy work we found it, pulling them over the boulders while the slippery grass gave very poor foothold. We got them up at last, when such of us as were not chosen for guard slept the sleep of the weary and the just under about six degrees of frost.

Early in the morning, some time before daybreak, I was awakened by a shot being fired quite close to me, when a man started yelling, "Oh, I'm shot, I'm shot!" which upon investigation proved correct. One of his comrades standing close to him, while messing about with the breech of his rifle, had emptied a bullet into the fleshy part of his thigh, inflicting a painful but not dangerous wound.

On Monday morning, shortly after daybreak, we trundled one of the Colts out to the end of the main kopje, away from the town, and though we had no actual casualties getting the gun into position, we had plenty of bullets making the curious singing noise they do as they pass overhead, or the "phut" as they strike the ground close at hand. We placed the gun in a sort of sheep-pen, made of rough stones built up to about three feet high without any mortar, and lay there with it all day, firing whenever we saw anything to fire at, and sometimes when we didn't, just to show we were there; and after dark we trundled it back to the main position, this time unmolested. On joining the main body we were very sorry to learn that they had not been as fortunate as ourselves regarding casualties, as one of the captains and several troopers had been killed, and a number wounded.

Tuesday passed in very much the same style as Monday, except that the enemy's fire was not so heavy as on the previous day, though sufficiently so to increase the list of killed and wounded up to about twenty-five. On this day a corporal was despatched with instructions to try and get through the enemy's lines and ask for help from the nearest British force, stating that we were in a tight place. This was done as nothing had been heard of the two scouts who had been sent out on the Sunday night. After tremendous exertions the corporal got through, and delivered his message to Lord Methuen, who, although over forty miles away, at once started to our relief.

Wednesday passed without any great incident. On this day we expended a good deal of energy on a house just within range of our rifles, which was flying the white flag, but which was apparently used as a refreshment tent by the Boers, so that, without actually firing on the house itself, we paid what attention was possible to the armed men as they rode to and fro.

All this time food had been, if not choice, certainly rare. We had luckily captured a score or so of sheep when we first occupied the kopje, so we were not absolutely destitute, still our average breakfast for the time we were fighting was two small tea-spoonfuls of marmalade, no bread or biscuit to accompany it, just plain marmalade; while dinner consisted of a minute portion of the aforesaid muttons, which, being killed only about five minutes before

being put into the pot, made a rather tough meal; whilst tea and supper were conspicuous by their absence. The weather, too, while good of its kind, was trying, as though it was boiling hot during the day, at night the cold was so severe that the water in our bottles invariably froze, and we had to wait for the sun to get up and thaw it before a drink was possible. Needless to say we had not slept in tents since we left Bloemfontein.

Day-break on Thursday brought a great change in the position of affairs, as the firing at once showed that the enemy had been largely reinforced during the night. About ten o'clock they started planting shells on our main position, which, combined with the heavy rifle fire, sent up the casualty list alarmingly. About three o'clock word was sent down from the small kopje that they were being heavily pressed, asking for help, which was at once accorded them; but in spite of this the attack proved too strong for them, and about four o'clock the position was rushed and the white flag raised. Although the sign of surrender was put up by an unauthorised person, it still had to be respected, and thus an end was put to the resistance on the main kopje as well as on the small one. Our total casualties amounted to about twenty-five killed, and over sixty wounded; a good proportion of four hundred and eighty combatants.

The same afternoon we were marched off under escort, after having been deprived of everything, except what we stood up in; in some cases even money, field glasses, and pocket knives being taken. The next afternoon, that is just about twenty-four hours too late, Lord Methuen arrived at Lindley and took possession of the town, where the wounded of both sides were being tended. By that time, however, the un wounded were well on their way to the Transvaal, *viz* Reitz, Trede, &c.

Five weary weeks elapsed before I was again a free man, after which I was sent down country to Cape Town, where my experience of active service ended. Thence I took passage home, and soon after ceased to be

S. W., A TROOPER IN THE IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.

Stephen G Talman (1890-92)

The Cadet Magazine (1928 Dec page 260) reported that in 1899 he had “resigned from Bracknell Bros to go to South African War”. Full details of his service are not known but in 1902 he was discharged from Brabant's Horse as a Trooper (number 5055). He obviously served throughout the war but without knowing which battalion of the horse he served in no more can be determined. He was awarded the Queen's Medal with four bars. He remained in SA after the war, moving to Canada in 1913.

Commodore Edward Unwin VC CB CMG (1878 - 80)

Edward was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal (1899-1902) for his RN service in the Boer War. No other details of his service are known.



*Right: Commodore Edward Unwin VC CB CMG (1878 - 80)
Below: South African Transport Medal*



3 OCS WHO SERVED IN THE MN

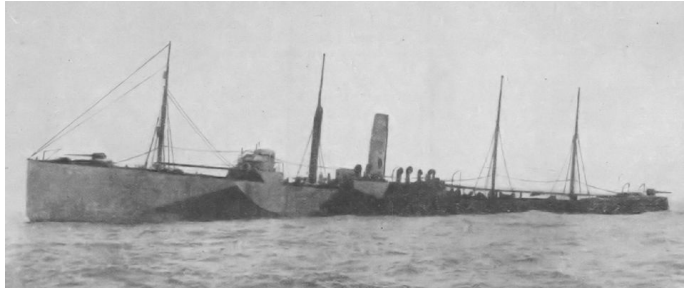
These individuals should have been eligible for the South African Transport Medal

Louis Wood Bayldon (1878-80)

Reported in September 1889 that was to take command the hospital ship *Spartan* then being converted. His run was to be between Natal and Cape Town.

Edward A B Bruce (1898-00)

He was sailing with **Bernard Herbert Symms** (1897-98) in the *Mechanician* and was in New Orleans during May 1901. She was then less than a year old but she was torpedoed in WWI and lost off the loW. loading horses for the Cape. There was also mention of OC Linton with them but no trace of him can be found.



Thomas Charles Edwin Dayas (1888-90)

Thomas was a Master of troopships in the war and received the Transport Medal with South Africa clasp.

Edward Henry Freeth (1867-69)

He was awarded the South Africa Transport Medal having carried troops in his ship the *British Empire* for all two years of the war. It was presented in Antwerp by the British Consul-General by special instruction of HM The King.



Robert Henry Griffin (1889-91)

Served in P&O transports Simla and Plassy (as 3rd Officer) and then hospital ships during the war. Received the Transport Medal with South Africa clasp.

William Roche Jeffcott (1892-94)

The records are slightly ambiguous but it seems he was 3rd officer in RMS *Orissa*, Transport no 18.

Edward Harrison Johnston (1898-1900)

30th Nov 1900 - Died of peritonitis at Cape Town hospital. He joined *Clan MacRae* from *Conway* but it is not clear if he was ashore from her, a civilian ashore, or involved with the military.

Arthur Glynne Lewis (1895-97)

He was a Master Mariner involved in the Boer War of 1899-1902. IN WWI he joined the Indian Army Reserve and was died of malaria in Mesopotamia.



Above: Glynne Lewis 1897 Gig Crew

Haus Oppen (Sep 94 – Jul 96)

26th Nov 1900 carrying materiel from UK to SA as 3rd Officer in SS *Madura* (accidentally sunk!) and other vessels.

Arthur Henry Rostron CBE KBE RD RNR (1885-6)

- May 1900 First Officer in the troopship *Aurania* at Southampton, returning in July with injured troops. He made further trips each carrying circa 1800 troops and a few horse. See **Benwell**. He observed later "*We took out the fit to fight and brought back the invalids*". He was awarded the South African Transport Medal.
- Dec 1901 left *Aurania* for a new command.



Above: Rostron 1912
"Hero of the Titanic"

Lawrence Lovell Scott RNR (1892-94)

7th May 1900 reported from BISS *Upada* at Calcutta that he had been trooping since Oct 99 ferrying troops from India to SA.

Harold Selby RNR (07-10)

In June 1900 was serving in *Clan McPhee* of the Union Transport Company at Cape Town

Bernard Herbert Symms (1897-98).

Reported as in *Mechanician* at New Orleans during May 1901, loading horses for the Cape. He was sailing with **Edward A B Bruce (1898-00)**. There was also mention of OC **Linton** with them but no trace of him can be found.

Cecil John Gore Wray RNR (1875-77)

- Feb 1902 serving in SS *Politician*, New Orleans, embarked ship-load of horses for SA troops.
- 28th Mar 1902 arrived Cape Town and was unloading horses.

Reginald Woods (1887-89)

Reported in The Cadet Magazine (1960 Feb page 26) that he had served in the Boer War. No other details are known.

4 "COMFORTS" FOR THE TROOPS

The cadets in the ship were doing their part, under the Captain Superintendent's wife, they were making up small parcels for the troops – see below. These were handed over to various shipping companies who carried them free of charge to South Africa and passed them on to the local commissary for forwarding to the troops.

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THE (

in this office by the 6th of March, it shall go forward to Durban by our "Clan Macdonald" freight free.

Yours faithfully,

CAYZER, IRVINE & CO.

10, Water Street, Liverpool,
February 28th, 1900.

DEAR CAPTAIN MILLER,

We have your letter of yesterday's date, and have received the box addressed "Commanding Officer, R.N. Brigade, Gen. Gatacre's Force, Cape Colony," sent forward by you to our address. We are putting the package on board the "Tintagel Castle," leaving London on the 9th instant, and, as directed by Sir Donald Currie, are instructing our agents at Cape Town to hand it over to the military authorities as addressed.

Yours truly,

For DONALD CURRIE & CO.,

A. G. BONTEN.

3 & 4, Fenchurch Street,
London, March 6th, 1900.

DEAR MRS. MILLER,

I am only too pleased to be of some little service to you, and if you will send the package to this office any time before next Tuesday, I will see that it goes forward to Durban in the "Clan Matheson," sailing about the middle of that week.

With kind regards to Captain Miller,

Yours sincerely,

C. W. CAYZER.

10, Water Street, Liverpool,
March 21st, 1900.

The following "Comforts for the Troops" have been sent from the "Conway" :-

372 pairs of socks.
231 helmets and Tam-o'-Shanters.
114 mufflers.
28 pairs mittens.
46 cholera belts.
102 pocket handkerchiefs.
2 small knitted pillows.
28 packets note paper and envelopes.
Pencils, pipes, and soap.
Some suits pyjamas.

Shed 4, South Arm,
Cape Town Docks,
May 2nd, 1900.

Mrs. MILLER,
Rock Ferry, Cheshire,
England.

MADAM,

I am directed by the War Office Agent for the Distribution of Parcels to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of March 23rd, and in reply to state that the case so kindly forwarded by yourself has duly arrived, and has been forwarded to the Front in terms of your instructions.

I am, yours faithfully,

FRANCIS BISHOP,

Pro HAMILTON GATLIFF.

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