



National Boer War Memorial Association National

Patron:

Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC
Chief of the Defence Force

1899



1902

Monumentally Speaking - Queensland Edition

Qld.

Committee Newsletter - Volume 8, No. 1 - March 2016

MAJOR GENERAL Digger JAMES AC, AO (Mil), MBE, MC, O St John, (Ret'd)

14 May 1930 – 16 October 2015

Digger, as he was known all his life, including by the late Queen Mother, Colonel in Chief of the RAAMC, graduated from the RMC, Duntroon, into the Royal Australian Armoured Corps (RAAC) in December 1951. The Korean War was at its height and he was seconded to Infantry joining the First Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (1 RAR) in Korea in October 1952.

Leading his second night patrol, 7/8 November, he encountered a mine field with disastrous results. Although badly wounded himself he made sure that the KIA and other wounded were evacuated before he was.

He had lost his left leg below the knee, and his right foot and leg were badly mangled. He took the bootlace from that boot to apply a tourniquet to his left

leg. Thus began his rather tortuous medivac via a MASH, and other hospitals to Heidelberg in Victoria in time for Christmas to be with his family and fiancé Barbara at Shepparton

He was awarded the Military Cross, his citation ending:

"The example set by Lieutenant James and his leadership, devotion to duty, self sacrifice and extreme fortitude when in great personal distress was an inspiration to members of his battalion."

After many operations and being fitted with prostheses, he returned to the RAAC for the next few years, before resigning his commission to study medicine at Sydney University.

For one year he was the resident physician at the Ryde District Soldiers Memorial Hospital, and then rejoined the army as a medical officer. 1968/69 he commanded the 8th Field Hospital in Vietnam.

His stellar career saw him rise to become Major General, Director of Army Health Services, 1981-85.

Amongst the many highlights of his career, he spent 1971 with St John Ambulance in the Biafra War in Nigeria. For this he was awarded the Order of St John.

In 1976-7 he provided Field Hospital and medical support for



for Professor Fred Hollows Aboriginal Trachoma Programmes in Central Australia.

Along the way he gained many wide ranging medical qualifications, one being in tropical medicine, and he belonged to many professional bodies. He gave his time freely and held a number of leadership positions, e.g. National President of the RSL, and Chairman of the Australian War Memorial Council. He was patron of many other worthy organisations. He used to visit patients in the Paraplegic and Quadriplegic wards of many hospitals in Australia and, using his own disabilities, showed many that they need not always be confined to a wheelchair. He did the same whilst serving in Vietnam. Many a soldier, who had lost a limb on a mine, came to, finding Digger at their bedside showing his damaged leg and encouraging them.

Digger was a good friend of the

Sherwood Indooroopilly RSL Sub Branch. For many years, he attended the annual Boer War Service at the Sherwood Anglican Cemetery conducted by the Sub Branch. On these occasions, he presented the Onverwacht Medallion to a student of the Corinda State High School.

He represented the National President of the RSL on 31 May 2002 during the ceremony at the South African National Boer War Memorial in Johannesburg, commemorating the end of that war.

To support our campaign to have the Federal Government fund our National Memorial, Digger lent his name as The Principal Petitioner to the Petition, which gathered some 10,000 signatures and was presented to Federal Parliament in Canberra. Many readers will have signed that Petition. He also lobbied hard on our behalf with leaders such as Tony Abbott.

After a private family service on Thursday, 20th October, he was laid to rest in the Anzac section of the Pinnaroo Lawn Cemetery with full military honours. The Memorial Service held in the Albert Street Uniting Church on Friday 30th October saw the Church packed to the rafters, including the mezzanine galleries.

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Queensland Chairman's Report

Queensland News

National News

1st Horse This is now complete and remains with the sculptor in Melbourne.

2nd Horse The ½ scale model is complete and the clay model is now due for completion in Sept/ Oct 2015, and foundry finish in March 2016. Still on track.

3rd Horse The ½ scale and clay model starts in Nov 2015, to be complete by April 2016.

4th Horse The order is yet to be placed.

The move of all three sculptures is set to go direct to site about Oct. by the Army. The Foundry is responsible for the security and installation. The 4th horse will move under the contractor's control and is due in Canberra, and mounted in time for the official opening in May 2017.

Design Site Works

These are now 95% complete and are being examined by NCA. Once any changes are incorporated, working drawings/documents will be prepared ready for calling tenders.

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Background

Developed concept designs have been discussed and reviewed with the NCA.

Location of walls and Trooper sculptures have been reviewed on site and informally agreed.

Awaiting confirmation from NCA on wall heights and sculpture position. Next stage is to finalise the documentation to submit for NCA formal approval.

Target to lodge completed documents in next 3 months.

Survey

This was commenced and carried out by the Army in December 2015.

Financial Position

We received a grant of \$1.45m from the Army. This means we still need \$300k. to achieve our goal. The costing will be further evaluated when the contract for the civil works is evaluated.

Please keep the donations coming as we can see the end in sight.

Future Events

Our last gathering was on the **4th February 2016** when we commemorated the battle of Onverwacht Hills – the last major battle of the Boer War in which the 5th QIB played a significant part.

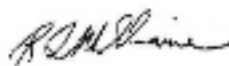
Our next big commemoration will be National Boer War Day, commencing at 10.00 a.m. in ANZAC Square on 31st May.

Conclusion

We are well on the way to achieving our goal, but we are still \$300k short. We still need your support. Donation Form is included in this newsletter.

Become a Queensland Supporter. Only \$15.00 per annum for 3 newsletters, invitations, a Boer War badge, a car sticker and a Certificate. Helps to ensure all donations go to the Memorial Fund. Contact Jennie at NBWMA Supporters, c/o P. O. Box 180, Corinda, Qld. 4075.

Hope to see you on the 31st May



Ron McElwaine OAM RFD ED
Chairman
Qld Committee of NBWMA



Onverwacht Hills Commemoration was held at Sherwood Cemetery on 4th February. This ceremony commemorates the last major battle of the conflict at Onverwacht Hills, and was conducted by Sherwood Indooroopilly RSL, with the support of the 2nd /14th Light Horse Regiment (QMI).

A welcoming morning tea prepared by the Women's Auxiliary was enjoyed at the Sherwood Indooroopilly RSL Sub-branch afterwards.



Lineage of 2nd/14th Regiment

Regt. 2/14 LHR (QMI) traces its lineage, as the oldest regiment in Queensland, to its predecessor unit raised in February 1860. The CO, Lt. Col. Percy Ricardo, commanded the 1st Queensland Mounted Infantry to the Boer War in 1899. The 2nd and 3rd QMI contingents were followed by the 4th, 5th and 6th QIB (Queensland Imperial Bushmen) contingents, who were paid by the Imperial Government.

See page 4 for extra information.

Digger James Cont. from Page 1

Chief of Army, Commander First Division, Former Surgeon Generals, Keith Payne VC, Korean Veterans, Medicos galore, Duntroon Classmates (one drove up from Canberra) and the list goes on. Rear Admiral Ken Doolan AO, RSL National President recited The Ode.

Digger had befriended the late Richard Pratt (Visy) as a young refugee from Poland who came to live in Shepparton. Digger was like an elder brother to the young Richard, beginning a friendship which lasted to Richard's death a few years ago.

The Pratt Foundation established the Park to the Australian Soldier in Beersheba, Israel. It comprises a beautiful playground designed for children with disabilities, no doubt Digger's influence. The centrepiece of the Park is the bronze sculpture of a mounted Light Horse soldier in full flight over one of the trenches guarding the wells of Beersheba. The face of that soldier is that of Digger - it had been a well kept secret, and a wonderful tribute by Richard and the Pratt family, who were well represented at the Service

REST IN PEACE DIGGER

LEST WE FORGET

Footnote: I was privileged to meet Digger in 1959 at a function at Lancer Barracks, Parramatta. Digger had been Adjutant of the 12th/16th Hunter River Lancers before leaving the Army to study medicine. At the time, I was Adjutant of the 1st/15th Royal New South Wales Lancers. It began a friendship that spanned the years ahead.

Miles W Farmer OAM
25 Feb 2016



Students from Corinda State High School attending the service - Lauren Hutchinson, Matilda Shaw and Rebecca Beazley



Sherwood Cemetery
4th Feb.
2016
with bugler
Ray Koenig



BEERSHEEBA DAY 2015 at WOOMBYE

by Diane MELLOY, grand-daughter of
Cpl Joseph LOCK, 5th Q.I.B.

The rural village of Woombye on the Sunshine Coast has a proud tradition associated with the 2nd Light Horse Regiment. They parade every Anzac Day, Remembrance Day and Beersheeba Day for Services at the War Memorial Park at Woombye.

On 31st October 2015, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, dedicated a new monument to commemorate the 98th anniversary of one of the last mounted charges in history, the Charge of the Light Horse at Beersheeba, under the command of General Harry Chauvel.

The monument is in the form of a Waler Horse. Two panels show details of the stories of Australia's Light Horse and the Battle of Beersheeba.

A street parade with the re-enactment Troop of the 2nd Light Horse Regiment, as well as a Scottish piper, former service men and women, light armoured vehicles from Gallipoli Barracks at Enoggera, a group of young ladies wearing nurses' uniforms of that early era, and a brass band took part in the pre-dedication march along Blackall Street, watched by hundreds of spectators.

Nearby the War Memorial Park is another park area alongside the hut of the Woombye Light Horse Troop. This quiet green space is the setting for the modernistic sculpture of a Waler. The design for the life-size stainless steel and glass Waler was the inspiration of local artist **Jeff Franklin** of the **Buderim Men's Shed**. Funding was provided by the Federal Government as part of the grant scheme for the Centenary of Anzac.



These photographs show the panels of the sculpture, admired by Valma Hunter (née Lock), daughter of Cpl Joseph Lock, 5th Q.I.B. The glowing citrus colour is evocative of our Sunshine State, set amid the green grass of the parkland (so different from the terrain known to our soldiers in South Africa and the Middle East).

The soft purple of the overhanging jacaranda blossoms implies the lingering mourning and grief for all the precious lives lost in war.

Lest We Forget.

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Lest We Forget.



Cont. from page 2 Lineage of 2nd/14th Regiment

ction took place on 4th January 1902. 110 officers and men of the 5th Q.I.B., under the command of Major Toll, were ambushed and overwhelmed by the Boers. When General Plumer's force arrived, the Boers broke contact and fled.

The 5th Q.I.B. suffered 11 killed and 17 wounded during the foray. Two men died of the wounds the following week.

Friends of Sgt Robert Berry and A/Cpl John MacFarlane erected the memorial in Sherwood Cemetery, and it was dedicated on 21st June 1902, just six months after the battle of Onverwacht Hills.

his memorial, built of sandstone, shows a broken column representing lives cut short; a tasselled funeral shroud signifying death and mourning; the carved crossed rifles, and on the plinth below, crossed swords surmounted by a slouch hat showing the distinctive puggaree or hat band that the 5th Q.I.B. used made of possum fur.

War memorials honour the people who fought in defence of their country.

Lest We Forget.

Boer Currency Notes

From **"Paper Currency of the Anglo-Boer War 1899 – 1902"**

Written by John Ineson (1999)

Précised by Jennie Jones, Editor, Boer War Researcher

The Anglo-Boer War of 1899 – 1902 produced a considerable amount of paper currency in South Africa. The account of currency notes covers what was known at the time of publication, after the discovery during the last thirty-five years of previously unrecorded notes.

During 1899, negotiations had taken place between President Kruger and Sir Alfred (later Lord) Milner, the High Commissioner, to improve relations between the Republic of South Africa and the British Government. By September, it appeared war was inevitable.

The Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR) Government in May 1900 was forced to issue emergency banknotes to pay salaries to Government employees, and for purchasing military supplies. Ten days before the British occupied Pretoria, Law No. 1 of the South African Republic proclaimed that banknotes to a total of £1,000,000 were to be issued, in denominations of £1 upwards.

Cont. page 5



Photos of the completed half-life scale model of the third Trooper in plasticine.
Louis Laumen, Sculptor



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The Standard Bank, Johannesburg  
at the time of the Boer War

#### Boer Currency Notes cont.

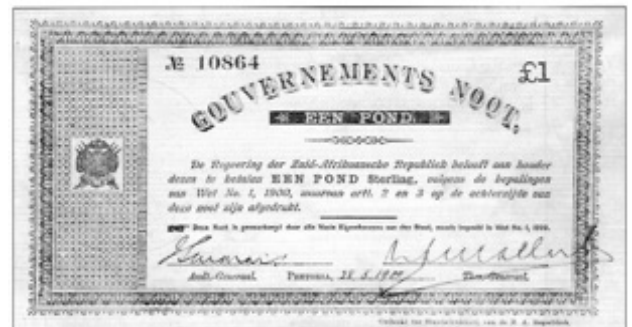
Notes of the first issue from Pretoria were all dated 28-5-1900, the date that Law No. 1 was proclaimed. They were issued in denominations of £1, £5, £10, £20, £50 and £100, and had to have the embossed seal of the South African Republic for validation. The notes were machine numbered, hand-dated (by at least four people) and **all** were hand-signed by both J. S. Marais, the Auditor-General, and N. S. Malherbe, the Treasurer-General. All notes were printed with grey/green ink on mostly good quality cream coloured paper approximately 210 x 115 cm (8 ¼ x 4 ½ inches).

The wording on the front reads: -

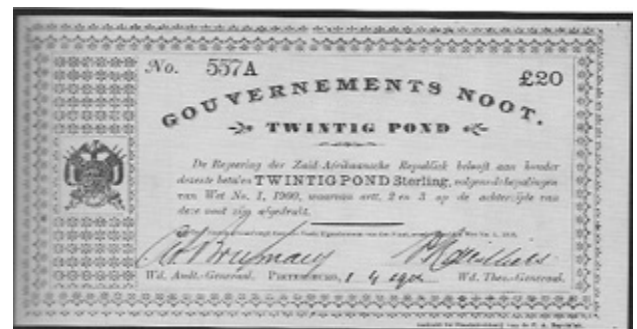
"Government Note  
\*\*\* Pound

The Government of South African Republic promises to pay the bearer of the note \*\*\* Pound Sterling, according to Law No. 1, 1900, of which Articles 2 and 3 are printed on the reverse of this note. This note is guaranteed by all fixed properties of the State as defined in Law No. 1."

Pietersburg issued notes of similar value but on inferior quality of paper, both thick and thin, bearing different water marks, and not embossed. They were hand signed by the Acting Auditor General A. P. Brugman and Acting Treasurer-General P. R. de Villiers. Most of the notes were dated 1-4-01, a week before the town surrendered to the British on 8<sup>th</sup> April 1901.



South African Republic £1 note (Type 1) issued at Pretoria



South African Republic £20 note issued at Pietersburg



A comic postcard of President Kruger leaving Pretoria  
produced by G. Budricks of Cape Town.

## Boer Women's Involvement and Contributions During the 2nd Boer War

by  
(Mike O'MALLON – Historical Officer –  
Old Boer War Memorial Committee Member).

### Introduction.

Whilst doing research on the introduction and use of Lyddite in Artillery Shells and the nasty yellowing side effects that had both sides coughing and sneezing during the implementation of a creeping artillery barrage during the 2nd Boer War, being an artillery tactic that would make it through into the 1st WW; I came upon a reference in an article where, after a bayonet charge carried out by the Brits on a Boer Position, they found one dead Boer Lady in the trenches, and another who died soon after.

This gave me cause to put aside my Artillery Article for another day, and set me off on another "tack" of Research, that became a revelation and discovery of what a heroic bunch of stoic, gutsy, ballsey Ladies, those Boer Women were. Their eventual collective pain, deaths and suffering was astronomical, as a result of, dare I say to all intensive purpose, a British Invasion for a Colonial Land Grab under another guise/ pretext.

### The revelation of Boer Ladies at the Front.

The Battle of Tugela (or Thukela) Heights consisted of a series of military actions lasting from 14 February through 27 February 1900, in which General Sir Redvers Buller's British army forced Louis Botha's Boer army to lift the Siege of Ladysmith during the 2nd Boer War. The final engagement occurred at a location known as Pieters Hill, after supporting fire from 50 guns proceeded the assault by Buller's troops who occupied sheltered trenches on a neck of land leading to the Hill.



British losses for this action included 7 Officers KIA, 25 WIA; with the total casualties numbering 170. The wounded officers included an Australian, Lieutenant H. B. McCartney of the Royal Lancaster's. After the fight

the British buried the bodies of 100 Boers, and captured about 100 prisoners.

Interestingly, it was later reported that a number of Boer Women had been fighting in the trenches until three hours before the final British charge was made. Two were afterwards found, one a woman of about 70 years, dead; and the other, aged 80, dying, however, in relation to the age of these two females I came across another reference from an author by the name of Linesman who, in "Words by an Eye-Witness" wrote:-

#### QUOTE:

*"Two girls were actually killed at Pieters Hill – one, poor thing, whispering just before she died that her husband had kept her beside him in the trench 'because she was a good shot'."* UNQUOTE.

Notwithstanding the possible age discrepancy in relation to the two females referred to in that incident, there was also a further reference where, on another part of the field, a 19 year old "poor young thing", died of wounds beside her husband who had been killed beside her.

Further evidence of women soldiers is found in the writings of the historian C M Bakkes, who relates witness accounts of the battle of Pietersshoogte on February 27 1900.

He describes wounded women and children in the trenches. Added to this are the letters of an unnamed British soldier to his wife, describing how he saw 16 armed, dead women on the front.

### Good DNA from Pioneering Stock

These ladies in 1899 were the daughters and grand daughters of good Pioneering Stock, or mayhap given the ages of the two elderly ladies at Pieters Hill; the Boer wives, daughters, sisters, who had undertaken the hard-ships and danger of the Great Trek of 1835-1846 to get away from the Brits on that occasion, and or who had fought beside their men at the likes of what became known as the Battle of Blood River some 61 years earlier on 16 December 1838;



where 470 Voortrekkers led by Andries Pretorius were confronted by an estimated 15,000 – 21,000 Zulu attackers on the bank of the Ncome River. Casualties among the Zulu amounted to 3000, which included two Zulu princes; as opposed to 3 Pioneer commando members lightly wounded, including Pretorius himself.

### OVERVIEW -

#### The War had three distinct Phases:

**First Phase:-** In the first phase, the Boer offensive (October – December 1899), the Boers mounted pre-emptive strikes into British-held territory in Natal and the Cape Colony, besieging the British garrisons of Ladysmith, Mafeking and Kimberley. The Boers then won a series of tactical victories at Colenso, Magersfontein and Spioenkop against a failed British counter offensive to relieve the sieges.

When danger loomed, all the burghers (citizens) in a district would form a military unit called a commando and would elect officers. A full-time official titled a Veldkornet maintained muster rolls, but had no disciplinary powers. Each man brought his own weapon, usually a hunting rifle, and his own horse. Those who could not afford a gun were given one by the authorities. The Presidents of the Transvaal and Orange Free State simply signed decrees to concentrate within a week and the Commandos could muster between 30,000–40,000 men.

**Second Phase:-** In the second phase, the British offensive of January to September 1900, after the introduction of greatly increased British troop numbers under the command of Lord Roberts; the British launched another offensive in 1900 to relieve the sieges, this time achieving success. After Natal and the Cape Colony were secure, the British were able to invade the Transvaal, and the republic's capital, Pretoria, was ultimately captured in June 1900.

Although eventually successful, what the British entirely failed to comprehend, however, was both the impact of destructive fire from trench positions and the mobility of cavalry raids. The British troops went to war with what would prove to be antiquated tactics, and in some cases antiquated weapons, against the mobile Boer forces with the destructive fire of their modern Mausers, the latest Krupp field guns, and their innovative tactics.

The middle of December was disastrous for the British army. In a period known as Black Week (10 – 15 December 1899), the British suffered a series of losses on each of the three major fronts. On 10 December, General Gatacre tried to recapture Stormberg railway junction about 50 miles (80 km) south of the Orange River.

Gatacre's attack was marked by administrative and tactical blunders, and the Battle of Stormberg ended in a British defeat, with 135 killed and wounded, and two guns and over 600 troops captured. The Boers had very limited ammunition

The Boers were then told to put his bar of soap at a distance that he was comfortable to achieve hits and only shoot once he saw a British uniform near his bar of soap.

**Third Phase:-** In the third and final phase, Guerrilla war (September 1900 – May 1902) and scorched earth policy, beginning in March 1900, the Boers launched a protracted hard-fought guerrilla war against the British forces, lasting a further two years, during which the Boers raided targets such as British troop columns, telegraph sites, railways and storage depots. In an effort to cut off supplies to the raiders, the British, now under the leadership of Lord Kitchener, responded with a scorched earth policy of destroying Boer farms, and moving civilians into concentration camps.

When Kitchener succeeded Roberts as commander-in-chief in South Africa on 29 November 1900, the British army introduced new tactics in an attempt to break the guerrilla campaign and the influx of civilians grew dramatically as a result. Kitchener initiated plans to flush out guerrillas in a series of systematic drives, organised like a sporting shoot, with success defined in a weekly 'bag' of killed, captured and wounded, and to sweep the country bare of everything that could give sustenance to the guerrillas, including women and children.... It was the clearance of civilians—uprooting a whole nation—that would come to dominate the last phase of the war.

#### **The devastation as a result of the "Scorched Earth" Policy.**

As Boer farms were destroyed by the British under their "Scorched Earth" policy—including the systematic destruction of crops and slaughtering of livestock, the burning down of homesteads and farms, and the poisoning of wells and salting of fields to prevent the Boers from resupplying from a home base, many tens of thousands of women and children were forcibly moved into the Concentration Camps.

A total of 116 000 women, children and Boer soldiers were confined to the Commonwealth Concentration Camps, of which at least 28 000, mainly women and children, would die.

The British saw their tactics of Scorched Earth and the Camps as ways of controlling the Boers by "eliminating the decay and deterioration of the national character", and as a way of reinforcing the values through subjugation of citizens and the destruction of the means for Boer soldiers to be able to continue fighting, and the implementation of a British society that the Boers were rejecting by engaging in a war against the Commonwealth.

The Boers saw it as a British ploy designed to coerce the Boer soldiers into surrender. With approximately ten per cent of their population confined, many of whom were women and children, the Boers suggested that the British were forcing the Afrikaners to return to their homes and protect their families who were in danger of internment. This scorched earth policy led to the destruction of about 30,000 Boer farmhouses and the partial and complete destruction of more than 40 towns.

#### **The Matriarchal Perception of Patriotic Duty.**

Even before the formal declaration of war was made, many of the Boer women prevailed upon their husbands, brothers, and sons to leave their homes and go to the borders of the Boer country to guard against any raids that might be attempted by the enemy, and in many instances women accompanied the men to prepare their meals and give them comfort.

These manifestations of warlike spirit were not caused by the women's love of war, for they were even more peace-loving than the men, but they were the natural result of a desire to serve their country at a time when they considered it to be in great peril. The women knew that war would mean much bloodshed and the death of many of those whom they loved, but all those selfish considerations were laid aside when they believed that the life of their country was at stake.

considerations were laid aside when they believed that the life of their country was at stake.

Many months before the first shot of the war was fired the patriotic Boer Women commenced to take an active interest in the discussion of the grave affairs of State, and it increased with such amazing rapidity and volume that they were prepared for hostilities long before the men. Women urged their husbands, fathers, and brothers to end the long period of political strife and uncertainty by shouldering arms and fighting for their independence.

For weeks preceding the commencement of hostilities, farmers' wives on the veldt busied themselves with making serviceable corduroy clothing, knapsacks, and bread-bags for their male relatives who were certain to go on commando; and when it became known that an ultimatum would be sent to Great Britain, the women prepared the burghers' outfits, so that there would be no delay in the men's departure for the front as soon as the declaration of war should be made.

No greater or harder work was done by the women during the entire war than that which fell to their lot immediately following the formal declaration of war by the authorities. In the excitement of the occasion the Government had neglected to make any satisfactory arrangements for supplying the burghers with food while on the journey to the front and afterward, and consequently there was much suffering from lack of provisions and supplies.

At this juncture the women came to the rescue, and in a trice they had remedied the great defect. Every farmhouse and every city residence became a bakery, and for almost two months all the bread consumed by the burgher army was prepared by the Boer women. Organisations were formed for this purpose in every city and town in the country, and by means of a well-planned division of labour this improvised commissariat department was as effective as that which was afterward organised by the Government.

Certain women baked the bread, prepared sandwiches, and boiled coffee; others procured the supplies, and others distributed the food at the various railway stations through which the commando-trains passed, or carried it directly to the laagers. One of the women who was tireless in her efforts to feed the burghers and make them comfortable as they passed through Pretoria on the railway was Mrs. F.W. Reitz, the wife of the Transvaal State Secretary, and never a commando-train passed through the capital that she was not there to distribute sandwiches, coffee, and milk.

When the first battles of the campaign had been fought and the wounded were being brought from the front the women again volunteered to relieve an embarrassed Government, and no nobler, more energetic efforts to relieve suffering were ever made than those of the patriotic daughters of the Transvaal and Orange Free State.

Women from the farms assisted in the hospitals, wives who directed the herding of cattle during the absence of their husbands, went to the towns and to the laager hospitals; young school girls deserted their books, and assisted in giving relief to the burghers who were bullet-maimed or in the delirium of fever.

When the tide of war changed, and the enemy drove the burghers to the soil of the Republics, the work of the women became even more laborious and diversified. The widely-separated farmhouses then became typical lunch stations for the burghers, and the women willingly were the proprietresses. Boers journeying from one commando to another, or scouts and patrols on active duty stopped at the farmhouses for food for themselves and their horses, and the women gladly prepared the finest feasts their larder afforded.

To be continued in the next issue... 7