

## Grandfather's Boer War Notebook by Alan Ball

### A brief rundown of what is in my Grandfather's Boer War Notebook

(With the 10th – POW -Hussars.)

#### Boer Wars

Two wars fought by the British and the Boers for the mastery of S Africa. The British had made several attempts to re-incorporate the Boers, who had left the Cape Colony in the Great Trek, within a South African confederation. The first Boer War (1880-1) ended with the defeat of the British at Majuba Hill, and the signing of the Pretoria and London Conventions of 1881 and 1884. In 1896 the Jameson Raid was a clumsy private effort to achieve the same objective.

The second Boer War (1899-1902) can be divided into three phases: (1) (Oct 1899-Jan 1900) a series of Boer successes, including the sieges of Ladysmith, Kimberley, and Mafeking, as well as victories at Stormberg, Modder River, Magersfontein, Colenso, and Moderspruit; (2) (Feb-Aug 1900) counter-offensives by Lord Roberts, including the raising of the sieges, the victory at Paardeberg, and the capture of Pretoria; (3) (Sep 1900-May 1902) a period of guerrilla warfare when Kitchener attempted to prevent Boer commandos raiding isolated British units and lines of communication.

The Boers effectively won the peace. They maintained control of 'native affairs', won back representative government in 1907, and federated South Africa on their terms in 1910. On the other hand, British interests in South Africa were protected and, despite internal strains, the Union of South Africa entered both World Wars 1 and 2 on the British side.

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**5th November 1899:** They left Liverpool, his home town, on the SS Columbian (Transport No 39).

**3rd December:** arrived at Capetown.

They marched 4 miles to Maitland camp, where they awaited orders.

**7th December:** He made a brief note to say that, While at Camp, he saved Wm Govey from Drowning (!) - No other comment on this.

**10th December:** Entrained for the front, and had a "Fair send off".

**13th December:** "Dismounted" at Arundel, „A miserable spot".

**14th December:** they had a brief Skirmish at Val Kop, where one man was killed and two were wounded. From then until Christmas day. They were at Arundel where reinforcements arrived each day. The camp was plagued by continuous sniping, each side at the other.

**Christmas day:** Saw him on outpost duty. Heavy rain, and a sand storm in the afternoon.

Back to Arundel, until the **31st December 1899**, when the Brigade, including the 1st and 2nd Lifeguards, 6th Dragoon Guards, 6th Dragoons, 10th Hussars and the New South Wales Lancers (Australians), advanced towards Rensburg. "Marched till 10 pm, rested till 12.50. Advanced again on Colesburg and came in contact with Boers at 2.30 am at Colesburg." There was heavy fighting until 7.am, when they rested at Ryan's farm.

**3rd January:** he was in a patrol reconnoitering for 16 miles around.

(The fighting at Colesburg continued until the 7th January, (a Major Harvey of the 10th was killed on the 4th January and gets a mention) when the Brigade was rested at Ryans farm again (until the 25th Jan)).

**15th January:** Mentioned in despatchers by General French (See Below).

**26th January:** they leave Colesburg for Rensburg again.

**27th January:** Arundel. On the 28<sup>th</sup> to Raauwpoort (?).

**On the 29<sup>th</sup>:** they entrain for the Moder River, which they reach on The 31st January. "A sandy desert and a muddy river in sight of Maggersfontein".

**Until the 10th February 1900:** Involved in skirmishing around Maggersfontein .

**11th February:** they march to Ram Dam, on the relief of Kimberly.

After a sharp skirmish in a defile in "Barren country", they stop, and have to bore for water.

**13th February:** heavy fighting around Klip Drift, they captured a Laager, and he offered 10shillings for a drink of water.

**14th February:** rested, Boer doctors refuse to go back to the Boer army when offered the chance.

**15th February:** Kimberly relieved, „A sight never to be forgotten, the natives mad with starvation."

## **Kimberley, Siege of**

(1899-1900) One of the three sieges of the second Boer War, in which Boer forces attempted to open up their British opponents and secure control of vital lines of communication. The siege lasted from the middle of October 1899 until February 1900, when General French relieved the town.

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**17th February:** March to Paaderburg at 12.30 am, " A severe fight, I have my horse shot under me"

**18th February:** "I become a scout of the General Staff"

**19th February:** "Cronje cornered, but still hard fighting"

**20th Feb. to the 23rd February:** " Grand bombardment of Cronje's Laager, 136 guns playing on him"

**24th February:** "Stoodersrand (?) Drift to check De-Wet relieving Cronje. Hard Fighting"

**25th, 26th February:** as above.

**27th February:** "Surrender of Cronje and 4000 men, I viewed Laager, a horrible sight "

**28th February 1900:** I am out carrying a despatch for Lord Roberts..... END

That is the end of the Diary, apparently, there used to be another notebook, but it has been missing for decades. Below is a cutting from the local paper re the mention in despatches noted on the January 15<sup>th</sup>.

### "WAR ITEMS AND INCIDENTS"

"Our Gallant Hussars rewarded."

"A Liverpool man's Heroism"

"Four of the 10th Hussars who have been recommended by General French for Gallantry, distinguished conduct bravery on the battlefield are Corporal Bruce, Privates W. Hayden, Ball, and Connor. For holding a Kopje, between Rensburg and Norvels Pont against 400 Boers for one hour, until relieved by two squadrons of the 10th Hussars and one of the Inniskilling Dragoons. The first Private mentioned, Hayden, doing some daring work and being praised highly by General French for so doing.

It was an adventurous bit of work, which deserves recognition.

(The M. Ball, Mentioned above, is a Liverpool Man, His father residing at 23, Gwladys street Walton.)"

The Gwladys street (Pronounced Gladys) is still there, just outside one of Liverpool's Major Football Clubs (Everton), which has a Gwaldys Street end stand.

## 10<sup>th</sup> - Prince of Wales's Own – Hussars



At the time of the First Jacobite Rebellion in 1715, Brigadier Humphrey Gore raised the 10th Regiment of Dragoons in Hertfordshire. The Regiment distinguished itself in the second Jacobite Rebellion in 1745 at Falkirk and Culloden and also in the principle actions after 1758 in the Seven Years War in Europe. The Regiment campaigned in the Peninsula War and fought at Waterloo. The 10th were in the Crimea and were awarded two VC's in the South African War.

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In 1784 HM King George III appointed his son then Prince of Wales, as Colonel of the Regiment which has since borne the title of "Prince of Wales' Own" with the coronet and feathers, together with the rising sun and Red Dragon (the ancient badges of Wales) and the motto "Ich Dien" (I Serve).

In 1806 the Prince of Wales obtained Permission to clothe and equip the Regiment, as Hussars and it thus became the First Hussar Regiment in the British Army. When appointed Regent, the Prince of Wales made the 10th a Royal Regiment and directed that it should be known as "The Tenth, The Prince of Wales' Own Royal Regiment of Hussars". The 10<sup>th</sup> Royal Hussars were originally known as the "Chainy Tenth" because of their elaborate cross belts, this gradually changed to the "Shiny Tenth".

The character of the Regiment remained unchanged until 1936 when mechanisation took place, although the Regiment still performed its role of Divisional Cavalry.

The 10<sup>th</sup> Hussars has taken part in most of the campaigns of the British Army from the Seven Years War in 1758 to the War of 1939-1945 and has seen service in most parts of the world.

On the 25<sup>th</sup> of October 1969 the 10th Royal Hussars (P.W.O) amalgamated with the 11th Hussars (P.A.O) to form The Royal Hussars (P.W.O). On the 4<sup>th</sup> December 1992 the Royal Hussars (P.W.O) amalgamated with the 14<sup>th</sup> | 20<sup>th</sup> King's Hussars to become The King's Royal Hussars.