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THE ANGLO - BOER WAR 1899 -1902

A DISPLAY OF ANGLO - BOER WAR PHILATELY

by the members of the

ANGLO-BOER WAR PHILATELIC SOCIETY

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## THE ANGLO BOER WAR 1899-1902

The war had its origin in the grievances of the Outlander population, who were mostly British subjects, who were refused their share of political rights, and had to bear most of the taxation. For five years an agitation had been going on with a view to securing equal rights for all white races in the Transvaal: with Rhodes and Milner supported by the British Government intent on increasing Imperialist expansion, but the Volksraad, guided by President Kruger, resisted all proposals for reform. Ultimately the British subjects petitioned the Imperial government to redress their wrongs. Whilst these tedious negotiations were going on the Transvaal demanded that all the troops on their way to S Africa should be withdrawn. The Orange Free State cast its fortunes with the Transvaal and after an ultimatum sent to the British government declared war on 11<sup>th</sup> October 1899.

The first battle occurred at Talana Hill where Gen. Penn Symons was mortally wounded. The defeat here led to the withdrawal to Ladysmith, which was eventually besieged. Sir George White with 12000 men was trapped in Ladysmith and the Boers also besieged Mafeking and Kimberley. The first months of the war resulted in many battles to relieve these towns. The disasters at Belmont, Graspan and Modder River in the Cape and Colenso in Natal led to Buller being replaced as C in C by Lord Roberts. Lord Roberts made mounted troops his means of assailing the Boer defences and he defeated Cronje at Paardeberg on his advance to Kimberley. Buller finally broke through in Natal and relieved Ladysmith on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1900. Roberts pushed on to Bloemfontein and Johannesburg, Pretoria was entered on June 5<sup>th</sup> 1900. Buller meanwhile slowly made his way up through Natal and the two forces met at Belfast, Transvaal.

With the capture of Pretoria it was thought that the war would soon be over however a guerrilla war was fought by many fine Boer generals and would continue for two more years. During this time Kitchener, who had replaced Lord Roberts introduced a scorched earth policy and imprisoned thousands of Boer women and children in concentration camps where many would die of disease.

The war saw the largest army ever transported overseas from the U K supported by troops from the Commonwealth

The following display gives an insight into the mail used during the war

NAME	FRAMES	
Kenneth Griffith	1-12	BOER FORCES LADYSMITH
John Ineson	13-16	MAFEKING
Derek Hepworth	17-21	COMMANDO and CONTINGENT MAIL
John Wannerton	22-27	CANADA
Bob Allison	28-29	'VRI' OFS
Alan Drysdall	30-31	'VRI' TRANSVAAL
Bob Deakin	32-34	ST HELENA
Rodney Frost	35-38	CEYLON
Derek Hepworth	39-42	BERMUDA, INDIA, GUERILLA WAR, BOER RETREAT, REFUGEE CAMPS.
Peter Prime	43-47	MEDICAL, HOSPITAL and RED CROSS MAIL.
Leo Crandel	48-50	THE DELAGOA BAY STORY
Stuart Duggan	51	ILLUSTRATED COVERS OF CPL PAYNE
	52	PEACE

### Frames 1-12

The outbreak of war with covers showing the Boer invasion of Natal and Ladysmith Siege.

The Boer invasion of the Cape.

Hoofdlager Mail and Commando Briefs.

Siege mail.

Vryburg, Lydenburg, Pietersburg, Rustenburg and Schweizer Renecke Issues.

#### Frames 13-16.

Communications from Mafeking (which was besieged from October 13<sup>th</sup> until 17<sup>th</sup> May 1900), was virtually impossible until late March when many of the Boers moved south allowing native runners to creep through the Boer lines at night. All the stamps at the Mafeking Post Office were overprinted with an increased value to pay the native runners.

The collection shows the overprinted stamps with covers sent internally and abroad, together with many of the known inverted and double overprint varieties. Some of the largest known blocks are also included in the collection.

The blue print stamps were produced photographically in Mafeking. The 1d stamp shows Warner Goodyear, the Sgt Major of the local Cadet Corp, and the small and large head 3d stamps depict Col Baden-Powell. In the collection are examples of imperforate, as well as cracked plate stamps, covers and the only recorded sheet of the small head B P. The watermark "Oceana Fine" which only appears on approximately 8% of the stamps is also complete.

#### Frames 17-21.

The Boer invasion of Cape Colony and Natal caused London to raise the "City imperial Volunteers". Lack of heavier artillery led to 4.7 inch guns being used ashore by a Naval Brigade particularly for the Defence and relief of Ladysmith

Other volunteers from India and Burma joined Rhodesian and Natal Field Forces, and examples of their mail are displayed.

A strong response to the Call of the Empire came from Australia and New Zealand and illustrations of their Contingent mail are exhibited

#### Frames 22-27.

The Canadian Contingent Cachet and its variations tabulated with dates of style and colour change. The Royal Canadian Regiment Infantry sailed for South Africa on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1899, the covers that follow show their progress to Rimouski, the ocean transfer, the Cape Town and up the line to Belmont, thereafter Paardeberg on the way to Bloemfontein.

R C R I, "Invalided out" mail from Shorncliffe Camp and Liverpool, Foreign rate to France, cover with 2½ d added to U S A. YMCA covers to Canada with Cachet, England without. S O. /Lt Canadians signed by Lt Lyons Biggar.

Last R C I R. SS Idaho at St Vincente on way home. SS Laurentian "En Route" 31 Jan 1900 (one of two known), at sea off the Cape 15 Feb 1900 (one known). 1<sup>st</sup> CMR at Stellenbosch, RCD Returned Dead Letter envelope with enclosure. 2<sup>nd</sup> CMR Laurentian, possible supplementary mail. First report Army YMCA cover.

CMR Budrick's Patriotic, RCFA "C" Battery, "E" Battery "Wreck of Mexican" covers one with additional "En Route" Cachet of 30 Jan 1900. Strathcona's Horse 11 April 1900 arrival, Cape times wrapper. Around trip cover to England-S Africa-Canada. Army YMCA cover first recorded. 2<sup>nd</sup> CMR Halifax to France.

10<sup>th</sup> CFH Italy to S Africa, 4<sup>th</sup> regiment CMR from Cape Town, cachet used as canceller. Canadian 2 cent on cover to Ireland. Army PO Corps notice sent to Halifax on 10 Oct 1900. Boer PoW cover from Rouxville to Ceylon with cachet thereon. 24 Sept on cover from Basutoland. 27 Dec 1900 cachet from French's Scouts, last known date of use. Canada to WPMR at Malmesbury and return. Last day cover; Stock and Farm Guards Pretoria, May 31 1900.

### Frames 28 and 29.

Representative panes of the five OVS Postage 'VRI' Settings, illustrating the constant varieties and their positions on the panes. These are followed by three sheets of printing errors and varieties and some forgeries.

Illustrating three of the eight revenue settings, examples of the telegraph issue, the Army Telegraph issues and the six provisional issues. The final three sheets show the VRI overprints on stationery (18 items).

### Frames 30 and 31.

Covers from and to Major Nugent, who was held prisoner from the time the Boers captured Dundee until the British took Pretoria.

The unoverprinted Transvaal stamps purchased by Major Nugent while he was a prisoner.

The stamps purchased by Major Nugent after his release (the 'VRI' overprints to £5).

An unadopted essay for the 'VRI' overprint.

The overprinted stamps that were in De La Rue's archives.

Overprinted stamps distributed through the UPU and overprinted 'ULTRAMAR' in Portugal.

The 'VRI' varieties. The dropped 'I' and large stop after 'I' varieties.

'No stop' varieties (4 sheets).

Overprint inverted.

Multiple overprints; overprinted on the reverse; etc.

Overprint wholly or partly omitted.

The overprinted stamps used at FPO 6 and Lydenburg (Natal POA canceller coded '43').

Overprinted 'ERI' (2 sheets).

Overprinted 'ERI' on cover with 1d revenue stamp overprinted 'VRI'.

Machadodorp card addressed to Secretary of State Reitz.

Essays for the Pietersburg issue.

The Pietersburg issue (imperforate) on cover.

### Frames 32-34.

After the defeat of General Piet Cronje and his army of over 4000 at Paardeburg in February 1900, the large number of prisoners assembled at the Cape necessitated the use of transport ships to hold the prisoners. With the many risks to security, it was decided to send many thousands to camps in St Helena, Ceylon, Bermuda and India. The first shipment of prisoners was to St Helena in April 1900.

Arrival of POW's and mail to a POW on a transport ship.

Earliest recorded censored cover from St Helena.

General Cronje's residence and camps of St Helena.

Examples of censored mail – the green censor seal is one of only a few known.

Boer Hospital, Jamestown.

Cover to Women's Camp, Johannesburg.

Extraordinary cover and letter from an Irish prisoner!

Mail between camps in other countries. Sheet 17 is the only recorded erasure by censor from St Helena

The Scandinavian Corps. Note especially sheet 22 cover from Finland.

Erich Mayer, POW, who became one of S Africa's most famous artists. After the repatriation of prisoners by October 1902, Erich Mayer was one of 90 volunteers who stayed behind until January 1903 to clear up the camps.

Going home!

### Frames 35-38

Ceylon had prepared facilities in 1901 to receive prisoners and these were extended to accommodate up to a total of 5,000. The first arrivals by steamship in August 1901 were placed at the main camp at Diyatalawa. British troops from India were used as Guards under the Camp Commandant, Col Vincent. Col Jesser Coope acted as a Paymaster-General for the prisoners taking care of their money and allowing a number of small businesses to be licensed on the camp.

Further camps were set up at Ragama, for the troublemakers; Hambantota used for parole prisoners; Uragasmanhandiya for a small number who wished to volunteer to serve with the British in India. Mount Lavinia was used as a convalescent camp for those recovering from illness; as well as small numbers on parole at various villages including Nuwara Eliya.

Some of the activities of camp life are illustrated with Col Coope acting for the prisoners in dealing with local businesses for supplies, as well as systems for allowing prisoners to travel.

Finally the prisoners were happy to send pictures of camp life home some of which were produced on the camp. At the end of the war all prisoners were required to sign The Oath of Allegiance to King Edward VII before being allowed home to South Africa.

#### Frames 39-42.

The Boer retreat led to GUERRILLA WARFARE, especially Boer attacks on railways. Apart from Imperial Military Railway stationery and letters to and from De Wet, examples are shown of LOOTED and RECOVERED mail

GUERRILLA WARFARE led to local sieges and Blockhouse Lines across the veldt to counter commando movements. A letter from the Siege of Ladybrand and examples of Blockhouse mail are exhibited. A misguided scorched earth policy to deny farm support for any Boer commando led to many Refugee Camps. Several camp cachets are depicted.

Boer refugees interned in Portuguese East Africa were transferred to Portugal, and relevant camp mail is illustrated.

Items from the Boer retreat appear including a local registered Pietersburg cover and a British POW cover from Machadodorp. Before they were transferred abroad, Boer POW's held in S Africa and examples of their mail are shown.

After St Helena and Ceylon, Boer POW camps were set up in Bermuda and India where the cachets illustrated were employed

#### Frames 43-47.

Covers showing the medical system set up by the RAMC and used for the first time in the Anglo-Boer war by the British Army in S Africa and the UK.

Transport used during the war including the use of ambulances, hospital ships and trains.

Covers to and from personnel who worked in the hospitals.

The private hospitals used during the war. The card to Imperial Yeomanry Field Hospital with use of 1d overprint of Rustenburg.

Ladysmith covers relating to use of church as hospital and troops who were killed or sick at battle prior to siege and those who suffered in its relief.

Covers showing difficulty in tracing the wounded.

Hospitals in Pretoria used when it became one of the main centres for receiving wounded.

Covers showing Boer POW's were treated in British hospitals.

Cover from a nurse working in a Refugee Camp hospital, and telegram from Superintendent of Brandfort Refugee camp with details of sick and deaths there for July 1901.

Cover from Major Nugent whilst in the Bourke Hospital, Pretoria as a POW.

Certificate of member of Transvaal Red Cross, cards and covers from various ambulances on the Boer side, including Russian Red Cross letter with request to move wounded Boers.

Red Cross involvement with The Good Hope Society in S Africa.

#### Frames 48-50.

The story of the mail service between the Boer republics (Zuid Afrikaansche Republiek/ Transvaal and the Orange Free State) and Europe, v.v. before, during and after the Second Anglo Boer War (1899-1902).

#### Frame 51-52.

Illustrated covers attributed to Cpl Payne, Army Post Office Corps.

Postcards, commemorating the Treaty of Vereeniging, 31<sup>st</sup> May 1902.