

**THE ESHOWE BURGHERS CAMP DURING
THE ANGLO-BOER WAR**

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Cover photograph: Group in Eshowe Camp - 1902. F. Pretorius, *The Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902*, p.61.

Prologue

The birth of this research monograph goes back to a field trip undertaken with History students to Zululand. During this trip, Roger Gaisford, of the Eshowe Environmental Education Centre and keen historian, mentioned the Eshowe Concentration Camp. At the time Annette Wohlberg and I, both of the History Department of the Durban College of Education, were busy researching the concentration camps in the greater Durban area during the Anglo-Boer War. Annette was researching Merebank while I concentrated on Jacobs, Wentworth and Pinetown. We soon discovered that a substantial number of people were transferred from Eshowe to Merebank and Wentworth. While doing my research at the archives in Pretoria, I found the documents on the Eshowe Camp grouped with those of the Wentworth Concentration Camp in the Director of Burgher Camps collection. Out of curiosity I started reading and then copying them. From Pretoria the archival trail lead to Durban and Pietermaritzburg and slowly but surely a controversial and gripping history of a different kind of “concentration camp” was revealed. From here I spoke to and visited the Zululand Historical Museum and Jenny Hawke and Brian Pennefather which provided further impetus in the birth process of this yet untold history suitable only to the rich historical tapestry of Zululand, and fully appropriate for the Anglo-Boer War centenary commemorations in this region.

In writing this book, an attempt was made to find common ground between academic and readable history without making compromises or taking historical liberty. To achieve this a thematic approach was employed. It was also decided to steer clear from unnecessary divisions which would only distract from the readability. As far as the spelling of names is concerned I tried to stick to the spelling in the documents consulted, except where blatant misspellings occurred where I then went back to the original spelling.

During my research the staff of all the archive repositories, but specifically those of Pietermaritzburg, were very friendly and of great assistance. My thanks to you all. My thanks also go to my colleague and wife, Annette Wohlberg, who spent hours proofreading the manuscript and assisted me greatly in deciphering the frail and

crumbling magisterial letter books. Many thanks also go to the Zululand Historical Museum who will. Blacks and Africans

be marketing this book to defray my costs and to earn some sorely needed money for Fort Nongqayi, and in so doing keep us alive through our memories.

Happy reading. Comment on the historiography since the war on CC and why this camp is an anomaly. Changes in museums, emphasis on Heritage

Why change topic; different kind of camp; cannot view camps in reductionist manner; housed numerous constituencies – place of shelter up to concentration camp; memorial to surrendered burghers ironically at Vrouemonument in Bloemfontein. Need a History of each camp to be able to make an overall judgement. Depended a lot on the location and administration; include all names as it is a genealogical History of war participation as well.

Johan Wassermann

Durban

June 2007

CHAPTER 1

THE ANGLO-BOER WAR IN ZULULAND¹ AND THE VRYHEID DISTRICT

To understand the Eshowe Concentration Camp an overview of the Anglo-Boer War in Zululand and the Vryheid District of the Transvaal (or South African Republic) is necessary, since it greatly contributed to the creation of this camp. Although this borderland area, which stretched from the Tugela River in the south to the Pongola River in the north and from the Indian Ocean in the east and the Buffalo, Blood and Lynspruit Rivers in the west, was not one of the main theatres of the Anglo-Boer War, its inhabitants, Zulu, Boer and British alike, suffered greatly.

MAP OF ZULULAND AND THE VRYHEID DISTRICT OF THE TRANSVAAL

A popular historical falsehood exists that the Boers and the British had some agreement that the Anglo-Boer War would be a “white man’s war”. This was never the case. Despite some warnings to Africans to stay out of the war both armies quickly transgressed this informal agreement by involving people of colour in a variety of capacities in their respective war efforts. As far as Zululand was concerned, it was

1. Zululand was incorporated into the Colony of Natal on 30 December 1898.

important for the Boers to remain on a good footing with the Zulus so as not to fight on an additional front. To achieve this General Coenraad Meyer of Vryheid sent a personal message to Dinizulu, who as the son of King Cetshwayo the last king of the Zulus, was viewed as their de facto leader. Meyer, in his message, called on Dinizulu to take no part in the coming white man's war.² The British on the other hand conveyed a similar message from Queen Victoria to the Zulu people.

This was not the status quo for long. The war disrupted the flow of migrant labourers from Zululand to the Witwatersrand gold mines, thus depriving the area of an important source of income needed to survive in the changing economic world of the time. At the same time lack of good neighbourliness, because of the constant struggle over land and cattle with the Transvaal, meant little sympathy for the Republican cause from Zululand. The mentioned situation suited the British Army, who by employing Zulus as porters, transport drivers, construction workers and especially as scouts and intelligence gatherers, gradually pushed them into the white man's war.³

With the commencement of the war the magistrates of each of the 11 Zululand Districts instructed the inhabitants to remain within the borders of their reserves, and to refrain from becoming involved in military operations. The Zulus were allowed to defend, with the support of the Zululand Native Police or Nongqayi, their property against Boer attacks. In the areas bordering the Transvaal Zulu cattle were moved inland to safeguard against possible Boer cattle raids.⁴

These instructions were underpinned by the following broad defensive plan for Zululand. Firstly, the numbers of the existing members of the Zululand Native Police were strengthened by 500. The unenviable task of these men was to patrol the border between the Vryheid District and Zululand. This they did for the duration of the war. What made the difficult task of this small force of men even harder was that the headquarters at Eshowe was not in heliograph communication with Nkandla, Nqutu, Ubombo, Nongoma and Melmoth.⁵ Secondly it was decided that both Melmoth and Nkandla would be difficult to defend against a Boer attack. The police at these posts were instructed to, at the first signs of danger, retire to Nqutu and Eshowe respectively.

2. Maphalala S.J., *The participation of Zulus in the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902*, p.35.

3. Warwick P., *Black people and the South African War 1899-1902*, pp.6-15.

4. Pietermaritzburg Archive Repository (hereafter PAR), Secretary for Native Affairs (hereafter SNA) 1/4/7: Confidential papers and magisterial reports, 1899-1902.

5. Spies S.B., *Methods of barbarism? Roberts and Kitchener and civilians in the Boer Republics, January 1900-May 1902*, p.155.

Those at Mahlabatini were to go to the magistracy of Nongoma which would, if necessary, be reinforced from Hlabisa.⁶ This arrangement did not fully satisfy the Mahlabatini magistrate, C.A. Wheelwright, who requested that if no regular police could be spared for his district then at least arms and ammunition should be supplied to the magistracy so as to allow him to enlist and arm trustworthy Zulus from the district.⁷ In the northern part of Zululand the detachment of Zululand Police at Gwaliweni was to congregate at Ingwavuma. At Eshowe, apart from the garrison, they also kept a strong detachment of the Zululand Native Police who in case of a Boer attack would be ready to be deployed in any direction, but especially via Melmoth.

The British Army expected a Boer invasion of Zululand. On the other hand, the Chief Commissioner and Resident Magistrate (hereafter CM and CC) of Zululand, Sir C.R. (Charles) Saunders, considered such an invasion unlikely. Despite his point of view the possibility of Boers crossing into Zululand from the Vryheid District with the intention of reaching Durban or Pietermaritzburg could not be ignored. Fears of such an attack grew from October 1899 onwards as the momentum of the war started to swing the way of the Republics, and especially as Boers raided the homes of Zulus in the Transvaal District of Vryheid commandeering cattle, horses and labour to assist with tasks on commando.⁸ This created the impression of the coming of a major offensive. The raiding of a trading store at Mhlatuze in the Nkandla District by Boers did little to alleviate these fears.

The first major incursion into Zululand by the commandoes was by Commandant Joachim Ferreira and 250 men who on 28 October 1899 cut the telegraph line from Ingavuma before they looted and burned the magistracy and the trading store belonging to E. Finetti. The commando also took ownership of 500 cattle belonging to Henwood, a local businessman. On 3 November 1899, Ferreira took formal possession of Ingavuma. In the wake of this attack the local magistrate, B. Colenbrander and his staff of ten white policemen and 25 Zululand Native Policemen hastily fled and with the assistance of Chief Sambane reached the Ubombo Magistracy.⁹ The action of Ferreira and his commando led Chief Zibhebhu to fear an attack. In a pro-active step he had his cattle sent to Chief Mavuso at St. Lucia for safekeeping. This feared attack never took place but intimidation by the Boers, and specifically by Hendrik Potgieter and his

6. Amery L.S., *The Times history of the war in South Africa 1899-1902 Volume II*, pp.138-139.

7. Maphalala, p.21.

8. PAR, SNA 1/4/7: Confidential papers and magisterial reports CR 163/1899, 19.10.1899.

9. PAR, SNA 1/4/7: Confidential papers and magisterial reports CR 196/1899, 2.11.1899.

commando, continued along the border during the remainder of 1899. Potgieter, realising the importance of Zulu scouts to the British war effort, warned them to stop scouting for the British or face the risk of being shot. In response to these threats Thomas Maxwell, the magistrate of Lower Umfolozi, suggested that the scouts should be armed so as to be able to protect themselves. This was refused, citing fear of further retaliation by the Boers, as the reason.¹⁰

Rumours that the anticipated major invasion of Zululand by the Boers was still to take place remained strong, especially in the Nqutu and Nkandla Districts. As a result, the Zulu started to worry whether the British would be able to defend and protect them in case of such an invasion. Experiencing and observing the lack of British soldiers in Zululand the chiefs of Nqutu District informed Magistrate C.F. Hignett that they would defend the area in case of a Boer attack. Putting this plan into action was Chief Mehlokazulu and 250 men who guarded the Nqutu Magistracy against possible attack. Mehlokazulu was, however, unable to stop the Boers from looting the trading stores at Vant's and Rorke's Drift. On a second raid another chief, Tlokoa, was able to successfully pursue the Boers from the area.¹¹

The constant cross border raids by Boers into Zululand forced the British Army to review their position in the area. From January 1900 onwards, the British presence in Zululand was strengthened by the Melmoth Field Force, consisting of two squadrons of Colonial Scouts, 50 soldiers of the 60th rifles and a troop of Natal Police under Colonel Morris. This force helped the Zululand Native Police in guarding the troublesome border with the Transvaal. The British position was further enhanced by Colonel Addison's 300 Colonial Scouts who were ordered to, in support of General Redvers Buller's attack on the Boers in Northern Natal, cut the Boer communications between Helpmekaar and Wasbank. This did not happen due to weak communications and out of fear for a large Boer force. On returning to Eshowe the Colonial Scouts were absorbed by the Melmoth Field Force which was further strengthened by two guns of the Natal Field Artillery and 150 soldiers of the Natal Royal Rifles.¹²

Not all Zululand residents were happy with the increased military force and activity. Sir Charles Saunders feared that it would be viewed as provocative and therefore increase Boer raids that could lead to the possible occupation of Zululand. On the Transvaal side

10. PAR, SNA 1/4/7: Confidential papers and magisterial reports CR 198/1899, 9.11.1899.

11. PAR, SNA 1/4/7: Confidential papers and magisterial reports CR 198/1899, 9.11/1899.

12. Amery, *Volume II*, p.100. and pp.329-330.

of the border Commandant Joachim Ferreira's commando was placed at Helpmekaar to protect the rear of the Republican Army, while a commando under General Coenraad Meyer, with its headquarters at Vryheid, patrolled the border up to the Pongola River. During January 1900 the two Boer commanders met to plan an invasion of Zululand.

On the last day of January 1900, the long-expected Boer invasion of Zululand started when Ferreira and 600 burghers attacked the Nqutu Magistracy capturing 50 Zululand Native Policemen, Magistrate Hignett and his family, as well as 20 horses, 295 rifles and 65 boxes of ammunition. This attack, and especially the capturing of the Zululand Native Policemen, did not satisfy President Paul Kruger of the Transvaal who in all probability feared greater Zulu involvement in the war on the side of Britain. He promptly had the policemen sent back. The Boers, however, remained in Nqutu since it was useful for the protection of Vryheid and shortened their lines of communications considerably. In the wake of the above-mentioned invasion the British, again fearing a full-scale Boer invasion of Zululand, withdrew their forces stationed at Nongoma and Nkandla to Melmoth. This invasion, however, did not take place as the Boers only took and held Nkandla for five days before withdrawing to Nqutu.¹³

The occupied magistracies were placed under the control of Field-Cornets Potgieter and Van den Berg who tried to, after widespread looting had taken place, restore order. Winning the trust of the local Zulu population so as to prevent any resistance was of the utmost importance. To achieve this the following measures were announced: the Chiefs were to exercise the same authority as before; Zululand Native Policemen were to assume their duties as usual; compensation claims should be presented to the field-cornets and a hut tax of seven shillings, 50% less than normal, was to be collected during March 1900. The occupying force also allowed the Zulu to share in the spoils of looting and to buy meat and mealies brought in from the Transvaal. Food was also handed to those in need.¹⁴ In both the Nqutu and Nkandla Districts the message was clear that this territory was now occupied by the Republics and as such the locals were expected to be passive and neutral.¹⁵

Not all the Zulu were taken in by the Boer public relations strategy. Chief Nongamulana fled because he had previously arrested a Boer spy, while Chief Mehlokazulu fled

13. DAR, Magistrate of Melmoth (hereafter 1/MEL) 5/1/3: Correspondence and other papers, 2.2.1900.

14. Warwick, p.85.

15. PAR, SNA 1/4/7: Confidential papers and magisterial reports CR 126/1900 and CR 140/1900, 19.2.1900.

because he was suspected of arming his men to resist the Boer invasion. Chief Sitshitshili, in turn, fled because he had notified Magistrate J.L. Knight of Nkandla of the Boer invasion, which gave the latter time to escape.¹⁶

The British Army reacted swiftly to the invasion of Zululand by looting the house of a field-cornet in the Vryheid area and his horses, goats and sheep were taken. To General Louis Botha this was unacceptable and he was angry that the burghers had allowed small bands of the enemy to cross the border to loot. Botha received no support for his point of view from General Lucas Meyer who was under the impression that the field-cornet was targeted because of an earlier cross border raid he had conducted.¹⁷ These opposing points of view by leading Boer generals on cross border raids were problematic and did not argue well for the future of the Boer defence of the Vryheid-Zululand border.

After the invasion of Zululand by the Boers the system of espionage by the Zulu for the British Army increased and expanded. From the valleys of the Pongola and Mkuze Rivers Zulu spies gathered information on the Republican Army. The Zulu inhabitants of the Transvaal actively supported these spies by providing them with information, food and shelter.¹⁸ Once the Boer invasion of Zululand had ended, Dinizulu provided the British Army with increasing numbers of spies, scouts and guides who continued to work inside and outside of Zululand.¹⁹ The movements and strengths of the Boers were thus better known to the British than before. On their part, the Boers also actively employed Zulu spies to gain information on British Military activity in Zululand.²⁰

By April 1900 the tide of the war on the Natal front was turning against the Boers and their crumbling defences were also starting to impact on the Vryheid and Utrecht Districts. The retreating Boer leaders differed on what should happen to the civilians in these areas. President Kruger wanted the burghers to flee the Vryheid District. This was hampered by a lack of wagons and other modes of transport. Most burghers were also not keen to flee since grazing was scarce on the Highveld. Burghers from Swaziland, and the Piet Retief and Vryheid Districts decided to move to Vryheid for protection,

16. Warwick, p.85.

17. Ploeger J., *Die lotgevalle van die burgerlike bevolking gedurende die Anglo-Boereoorlog, 1899-1902. Deel IV*, p.27:15.

18. PAR, SNA 1/4/7: Confidential papers and magisterial reports CR 10/1900, 1.1.1900.

19. Warwick, p.87.

20. National Archive Repository (hereafter NAR), Staff Officer Prisoners of War, Natal (hereafter SOP): Volume 7: Letter Major T.A.B. Forster to Commandant Durban, 9.3.1901.

rather than to flee. These men tried to assist their families to get to Vryheid before they were cut off by the advancing British Army. This seemed counter productive to both Generals Meyer and Botha who, supported by President MT Steyn of the Orange Free State (hereafter OFS), urged Kruger to allow the families to stay on their property as they had done in the OFS. Kruger was eventually convinced of this point of view and on 18 May 1900 a circular was sent to all Boers informing them that the women and children must return to the farms and that the burghers should return to their commandos. Not all families adhered to this and some, rather than remaining in a district occupied by the enemy, still fled. This policy, as embodied in the circular, placed enormous strains on the ordinary commando members of specifically the Vryheid and Utrecht Districts, as they were not sure what would happen to their families and property.²¹ Initially there was no need to worry as women, children and property were left untouched by the advancing British. This changed as the war dragged on, and the scorched earth policy was introduced.

With the defeat of the Boers on the Natal front and their consequent retreat from both Zululand and Natal during May and June 1900 the war in Zululand increasingly entered a guerrilla phase of cross border cattle raiding and property destruction. A good example of this ongoing low-keyed warfare was the large number of Boer stock driven, by order of General-Major H.J.T. Hildyard, from Fort Cambridge, via Nqutu and Vant's Drift to Dundee.²²

The Boers, on their part, continued with cross border raids into Zululand, focussing on the property of the Natal Colonial Government, the Zulu and English residents. This caused rumours to circulate that Melmoth, the only part of Zululand where white farmers who with the odd exception were Afrikaners, could be attacked. The authorities of Zululand suspected these Afrikaners, despite them being British subjects, of collaborating with the Transvaal by supplying information and provisions and therefore wanted them removed from their farms.²³ Despite the misgivings of Chief Magistrate Saunders the Boers of Melmoth did report commandos in their neighbourhood. D.J. Pretorius reported on two occasions, on 4 February and again on 19 February 1901 per

21. Ploeger, *Deel III*, pp.20:6-20:12.

22. PAR, Zululand Administration (hereafter ZA) Volume 33: Telegram officer commanding (hereafter OC) Natal Gen-Major H.J.T. Hildyard to magistrate Nqutu, 9.10.1900.

23. PAR, ZA Volume 33: Secret letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Prime Minister A.H. Hime, 11.2.1901. Some Natal Afrikaners from Melmoth joined the Republican forces as rebels. The most well known were the Kritzingers. See PAR, ZA Volumes 66 and 109.

letter to the Melmoth magistrate that Boer patrols had visited him on his farm.³¹ A.L. Pretorius of the same farm reported the same two incidences per letter.³² Despite these acts of co-operation and loyalty to the British cause D.J. Pretorius was accused of being an undesirable, and that he lent towards the Boer cause. After spending some time in the Eshowe Camp, he was sent to Pietermaritzburg. This suspicion was also extended to Smit Loffler, the store owner at Bulwana. Loffler was suspected of harbouring cattle for burghers of the Transvaal. These accusations were thoroughly investigated and proved to be false as the cattle belonged to Loffler's wife, Martha, who was the daughter of Henry Corbett, a Transvaal citizen and one of the first burghers from the Vryheid District to surrender in Zululand.³³

The cross-border raids by the Boer and their defeat on the Natal front, prompted the Zulu, to participate in various cattle raids on Boer farms in the Vryheid District. These raids in turn prompted Sir Charles Saunders, who was trying to keep the war away from Zululand, to issue instructions that no Zulu raiding parties were to be allowed to cross the border into the Transvaal.²⁴ All trade between Zululand and the Vryheid District was also suspended, and no one was allowed to bring any cattle into Zululand. If cattle were brought in they were confiscated and the people bringing them in, punished.²⁵ This seemed to last and restored relative peace until March 1901 when British Commander-in-Chief Lord Kitchener, authorized Colonel H. Bottomley of the Imperial Light Horse, to raise a body of men to assist the Zulu in blockading the Zululand-Transvaal border. This was considered necessary to prevent Boers from fleeing the scorched earth drives of General French in the south-eastern part of the Transvaal and from driving their cattle, which were used for slaughter and draught purposes and as such the logistical base of the Boer army, into Zululand. On top of this Bottomley was ordered to command the Zulu to drive Boer cattle into Zululand. What made these orders disputatious was that Bottomley was granted *carte blanche* since he operated independently from both the local magistrates and the general officer commanding (hereafter GOC) Natal, General Hildyard.²⁶ What was even more controversial was the self enrichment clause which

24. DAR, 1/MEL: Letters D.J. Pretorius to Magistrate A. Hulley, Melmoth, 4.2.1902 and 19.2.1902.

25. DAR, 1/MEL: Letters A.L. Pretorius to Magistrate A. Hulley, Melmoth, 5.2.1901 and 19.2.1901.

26. PAR, ZA Volume 33: Documents pertaining to the investigation of the cattle belonging to S. Loffler, 1.1900.

27. Warwick, p.87.

28. Durban Archives Repository (hereafter DAR), Magistrate of Eshowe (hereafter 1/ESH) 3/2/4: Telegram CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 3.12.1900.

29. PAR, SNA 1/6/25: Papers relating to the actions of Colonel Bottomley, 1901-1902; DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: Circular from CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 6.6.1901.

allowed Bottomley and his men to keep 65% of the confiscated cattle, while the Zulu collaborators received 10% and the British Army 25% of the haul. These orders, which side stepped the Zululand administration, infuriated both Saunders and the Natal Government because the Zulu could now be armed and be sent without white supervision into the Transvaal to loot Boer stock. Furthermore, these orders took the authority from Saunders and handed it to Bottomley.²⁷

When Bottomley arrived in Zululand on 26 March 1901 he immediately took steps to implement his peculiar orders. His first move was to appoint a Captain Wickham as the military agent at Nkandla with instructions that he was to guard the border and raid the stock of the Boers in the Utrecht, Vryheid and Wakkerstroom Districts. At Melmoth B. Cressey was to be Bottomley's agent. Bottomley visited both Dinizulu and Zibhebhu and ordered them to arm themselves so as to protect Zululand. The situation as it had now developed was interpreted as having free for all and by 4 April Chief Ngodi of Nkandla crossed the border and after a skirmish with some Boers raided 600 sheep and 500 cattle. Such actions became common place as chiefs such as Kamba, Zibhebhu, Nongamulana, Sitshitshili and Mehlokazulu raided the Republic of livestock. Dinizulu himself organised an impi of 1500 for raiding purposes.²⁸

This new dimension to the war, during which Bottomley's agents greatly did as they pleased, alarmed the magistrates who tried to obstruct it by forbidding Zulu Impis to cross into the Transvaal. These instructions had little success and Saunders feared that especially the parties under Dinizulu could grow too strong and he therefore threatened to withdraw all magistrates from Zululand. Saunders was furthermore also concerned that the raided Boer stock could infect Zululand with lungsickness.²⁹

Bottomley and his gangs became a law unto themselves with raiding to enrich themselves as their sole purpose. These raids served to agitate the Boers and as a result, military activities on the Zululand-Transvaal greatly increased, as the Boers set out to regain cattle and to exact revenge. When it became more difficult to obtain Boer cattle, the scrupulous Bottomley agents started to raid Zulu cattle both in Zululand and the Vryheid District under the pretext that the cattle were Boer cattle which were being hidden by the Zulu. To complete these raids the agents abused the volatile Zulu internal politics by inciting tribes against each other. These actions greatly undermined the

30. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/2: Circular from CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 6.6.1901.

31. Maphalala, pp.57-59.

32. PAR, SNA 1/6/25: Papers relating to the actions of Colonel H. Bottomley, p.15, 1901-1902.

authority of the Zululand magistrates and greatly outweighed any military gain. The net effect of the activities of Bottomley and his men was that a very quiet front had become an active one and a great numbers of Boers from the Vryheid area crossed into Zululand with their stock and families to surrender in order to escape the looting.

The pressure exerted by the civil authorities in Zululand on the Bottomley operations grew with Chief Magistrate Saunders sending daily telegrams of complaint to both Prime Minister A.H. Hime and the Governor H.E. McCallum. On some days, such as 9 May 1901, he sent five telegrams outlining the activities of Bottomley and his agents.³⁰

As a result, pressure mounted to such an extent that the Bottomley operations were formally ended during early June 1901 and then subjected to a commission of enquiry. The result of that being the disbandment of the Zulu forces along the border. Only Dinizulu and Zibhebhu were allowed to keep small bodies of armed men for defensive purposes. During the short time of Bottomley's campaign an estimated 10 000 head of Boer cattle and several thousand head of sheep were raided.³¹ Apart from crippling some Boer commandos logistically, these raids served to cause bad blood between the Zulu and the Boers, uprooted Boer families from the Vryheid area and Zulu families from the border area, and caused increased military activities in Zululand. Colonel Bottomley then disappeared from the Zululand scene, but not without being awarded a CMG (Companion St Michael and St George) for the work he had done in Zululand.

Retaliation by the Boers to the Bottomley raids came soon. On 4 April 1901 a small commando raided, looted and burned the store of F.S. Mann in the Mahlabatini District.³² Several other Boer parties pushed south by General French also became active along the troublesome border. The largest of these, 500 men under Commandant Scholtz, invaded the Mahlabatini District capturing livestock in the process. A section of this commando also attacked the magistracy at Mahlabatini which were manned by 20 members of the Melmoth Field Force, 20 members of the Zululand Native Police and Magistrate Wheelwright and his court officials. The Boers were eventually driven back by the spirited defenders who lost four men in the process.³³ Various other Boer commandos under Grove, Grobbelaar and Dannhauser likewise

33. PAR, Colonial Secretaries Office (hereafter CSO) Volume 2592: Telegrams exchanged between CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders and the Prime Minister and Governor of Natal, 23.4.1901, 4.5.1901, 5.5.1901, 6.5.1901, 7.5.1901, 9.5.1901 and 10.5.1901.

34. PAR, SNA 1/6/25: Report of evidence given by CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders p.32.

35. Maphalala, p.71.

36. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: Correspondence from Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, 28.4.1901.

became active in Zululand during the time of the Bottomley raids. For them it was easy to infiltrate across the porous border to cut telephone lines, loot stores and raid cattle to replenish the stocks they lost to Bottomley's agents.³⁴

The small-scale Boer invasions were soon to be expanded upon. General Louis Botha, in an effort to divert the war from the Transvaal, commenced during September 1901 with a second invasion of Natal. His commando's victory at Blood River Poort on 17 September immediately forced the British into action, who blocked the drifts leading into Northern Natal. The three British columns pursuing Botha were strengthened by Natal Volunteer Forces and Zulu Impis. In Zululand the officer commanding troops stationed in Eshowe, Major H.A. Vowell, ordered an officer and 48 soldiers from Melmoth to Fort Prospect and two officers and 60 soldiers of the 5th Division Mounted Infantry from Fort Prospect to Itala.³⁵

General Botha's invasion plans were thwarted by the swollen Buffalo River and the British occupation of the De Jager's, Stael's, Vant's and Rorke's Drifts. He was therefore forced to enter Zululand north of Nqutu.³⁶ The first contact between the British defenders and the invading Boer force took place on 22 September 1901 when the Volunteer Composite Regiment and the Boers exchanged fire. During the course of action two Boers were wounded and a Zulu border guard killed. In the process the Boers rounded up 1000 head of cattle from Telezeni and Nkandla. These cattle Botha, in an act of diplomacy and goodwill, returned to the chiefs apologizing for the attacks by the commandos and stated that he had no dispute with them. He also requested them to remain calm and peaceful in their homes.³⁷

From Nqutu Botha, hoping that he had secured the neutrality of the locals, moved to Babanango where he established his headquarters on the farm Gelykwater. Acting on information from, the local commander, Commandant Dannhauser about the poor fortifications of the military posts at Itala and Nkandla, Botha decided to attack these strategic positions simultaneously.

Contrary to Botha's hopes the Zulu did not remain neutral and the 300 Mounted

37. PAR, CSO Volume 2592: Telegrams exchanged between CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders and the Prime Minister and Governor of Natal, April and May 1901.

38. Moore D.M., *General Louis Botha's second expedition to Natal during the Anglo-Boer War, September-October 1901*, pp. 37-40.

39. Moore, pp.36-43.

40. Moore, pp.37-39.

Fusiliers under Major A.J. Chapman at Itala were warned of the Boer's presence. This warning allowed Chapman the opportunity to try and strengthen his weak position of a circle of trenches at the foot of the mountain. This he did by sending out an advance party of men to the mountain top to surprise the Boers. In the ensuing battle the British, according to Botha, had 34 men killed and 54 were captured while a few escaped down to the camp to raise the alarm. Although annihilated the advance party did buy those in the camp valuable time which they used to entrench themselves. Itala was attacked by the commando under full moon on 26 September 1901. Despite some determined efforts by the Boers the British neutralised the Boers by using two guns and a maxim. With daybreak the British gunners lost their cover and had to retreat, however, the daylight also served to expose the Boer advance and thus hampered them. For the rest of the day the Boers kept up their fire. That evening when the Boers withdrew Itala was close to collapse. The British had manned their defences for 18 hours and lost 26 men while a further 59 wounded were wounded. Fearing a second Boer attack the British left the wounded behind and withdrew to Nkandla. The Boers had also suffered, a number of men were killed and at least a hundred were wounded, while precious ammunition was lost, forcing them to withdraw. The following day a relieving column under Major-General Bruce Hamilton arrived from Dundee.³⁸

In contrast to Itala, the British position at Fort Prospect was well chosen and fortified and defended by 30 men of the Fifth Division, Mounted Infantry Battalion, 50 men of the Durham Company of Militia Artillery, a party of Zululand Native Police and a machine gun. The Officer Commanding was Captain C.A. Rowley of the Dorsetshire Regiment. On the Boer side the assault was headed by the Carolina and Ermelo Commandos under General J.C. Emmett and Commandant J.N.H. Grobler. On reaching the fort, Emmett was surprised to find it on a bare hill with little cover for any attack. In thick mist and with the cover of darkness it was decided to launch an attack from the northwest. The Boers came within 20 metres of the fortifications but were driven back. When the mist lifted the Boers withdrew from their exposed positions as they and their horses came under heavy fire from the maxim. A second Boer attack was launched against the open trench from the southwest. While this attack was being nullified, Sergeant Gumbi of the Zululand Native Police led his 13 men from his advanced post into the British position in order to assist with its defence.³⁹ The Boers having surrounded the fort and realising how precarious their position was kept up their fire all day without mounting any charges. At sunset the commando withdrew. The British lost one man and had nine

41. Moore, pp.40-45.

42. Amery, *Volume V*, pp.348-349

wounded while the Boers reported two wounded.⁴⁰

With the Boer attacks at Itala and Fort Prospect foiled the threat moved south to the drifts of the lower Tugela River. Immediate precautions were taken to meet this threat. Troops from Glencoe, Ladysmith and Pietermaritzburg were sent to Eshowe, while more troops were ordered from Harrismith. The Natal Volunteers from Greytown were ordered to secure the drifts of the lower Tugela River.⁴¹

The next clash between the warring armies took place nine kilometres from Fort Prospect when a convoy of 31 wagons from Melmoth, bound for the relief force at Itala, was overrun by a force under General Chris Botha. Of the eight Zululand Native Police escorting the convoy six were killed while the white officer in charge, Sub-Inspector F.R. Mansel of the Natal Police, was captured. This was a real windfall for the hard-pressed Boers as it contained supplies of sugar, flour, clothing, oats and shoes.

The capture of the wagon train led the British to fear that the towns of Eshowe, Melmoth and Nkandla were in danger and therefore more troops were deployed in Zululand. On the local level Major H.A. Vowell ordered the outlying detachment from Mthonjaneni to Melmoth to strengthen the town. General Louis Botha, with his supplies replenished, decided to withdraw from Zululand before his line of retreat was cut off and by the end of September he began moving north. The invasion of Zululand was thus over, with only splinter groups of the Boer Army still operating in Zululand.⁴²

Before the capture of the wagon train, Boers from Vryheid employed Zulu to purchase groceries or foodstuffs from stores in Zululand as a means to obtain food. To counter this the military issued a notice under Martial Law directing storekeepers not to sell or supply unusual quantities of foodstuffs or groceries to Zulus.⁴³ Not long after this notice was issued two Swazis, posing as Zulus, were caught buying goods and immediately arrested on suspicion of being Boer collaborators.⁴⁴

43. Moore, pp.70-71. The number of dead, on both sides vary greatly according to different sources. For a full account of both these battles see: Carter, C.M., Itala - monument to valor. *Military History Journal*, Volume 2. Number 1. June, 1971.

44. Moore, p.76.

45. Moore, pp.77-80.

46. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Notice under martial law, Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 11.10.1901.

47. PAR, Magistrate of Mahlabatini (hereafter 1/ MBT) 3/2/2: Letter Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 26.11.1901.

Boer commandos in Zululand were also supplied with provisions by British subjects residing in Zululand who seized on such economic opportunities, regardless of the military or personal consequences. Bond and Brodie who resided in the Nongoma area, for example provided the Boers with provisions in exchange for a horse. Despite efforts by the military, they failed to locate the witness to the incident, one Hendrik de Lange of Lower Tugela.⁴⁵

During February 1902, Louis Botha returned to the Vryheid District and this immediately led to renewed fears that Zululand as far as Eshowe could be invaded.⁴⁶ In an effort to apprehend him General Bruce Hamilton arrived on 5 March in Vryheid with a large force. He immediately called on Dinizulu to supply him with 250 men to assist in the rounding up of Boer livestock. With Sir Charles Saunders granting permission an impi led by Ndabuko, Madubeko and Madakavana, accompanied by a squadron with two pom pom's, was taken to the camp to meet the British officers. This impi, now swollen beyond 250, armed with rifles of all sorts and assegais, was instructed to march alongside the British and to take prisoner any Boer commando they intercepted, as well as to round up all Boer livestock. The Dinizulu impi was joined during these operations by an impi of the Baqulusi under Chief Sikobobo, who resided not in Zululand but in the Vryheid District.⁴⁷

This operation was generally successful. On the completion of it Dinizulu's men marched via Vryheid back to Zululand. Sikobobo's participation in these operations placed him in a very difficult position, because as a resident of the Vryheid area he could not return to Zululand. Instead he and his men stayed in the railway station buildings in Vryheid protected by General Hamilton's men and acquiring the nickname of "Mr Shepstone's Commando" among the other Zulu, because of the relationship between them and the local British appointed magistrate, A.J. Shepstone.

The operations and the involvement of Sikobobo infuriated Louis Botha. At a meeting with burghers from the Vryheid District Botha ordered the Vryheid and Utrecht Commandos to burn down Sikobobo's homesteads as punishment for their involvement in the mentioned operations. This the commandoes did and in the process, they captured 3 800 head of cattle and 1 000 sheep and goats. During this operation the

48. PAR, Magistrate of Nongoma (hereafter 1/NGA) 3/2/7: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate A. Boast Eshowe, 14.4.1902.

49. PAR, ZA Volume 33: Message to the OC troops in Zululand, Maj H.A. Vowell, 1.3.1902.

50. PAR, SNA 1/6/25: Miscellaneous papers regarding Bottomley's actions, 1901-1902.

Boers allowed all women and children to take food for three to four days, left the huts and property of the elderly and the infirm untouched and the widows were left four cows to provide them with food. The people whose houses were destroyed were escorted to the British garrison at Vryheid.⁴⁸

In reaction to this Magistrate Shepstone sent a certain Hermanus Dreyer to spy on the laager of Field-Cornet Jan (Mes) Potgieter at Holkrantz (Mthashana). That same evening, after Dreyer had done his work and after Sikobobo had spoken to magistrate Shepstone, he left with a party of 300 men, guided by Dreyer and one Philip Fourie, under the guise of trying to get some of his cattle back. His real aim was to attack the laager of Potgieter at Holkrantz north of Vryheid.⁴⁹

After Fourie and Dreyer had left, a council of war was held and the traditional Zulu attacking formation was formed. The Boers did not anticipate an attack as an armistice was already in force. The attack which started at 4:00 in the morning was given away by a premature shot. Nevertheless, the Zulu attacked under the cover of darkness and killed 56 Boers and took three prisoners, while all the cattle in the camp were driven off. The Boers managed to kill 52 Zulu and wound 48.⁵⁰

The events at Holkrantz was investigated by a British Commission of enquiry who concluded the Boers were murdered by the Zulus because they had mistreated them and had thus brought this onto themselves.⁵¹

According to S.J. Maphalala⁵² this verdict, painted by the British sentiments of the time, ignored the following crucial facts: 1. The British troops should have prevented the Zulu from leaving for Holkrantz. 2. Magistrate Shepstone allowed Chief Sikobobo to leave for Holkrantz. 3. The Zulu would not have taken the three Boers prisoner had it not been for the instructions of Shepstone. 4. The relationship between the Boers and the Zulu were good before the arming of the Zulu by the British. Proof of this is that no Boer

51. PAR, CSO 2953: Lt-Col G.A. Mills - a report on the causes which led to the ill-feeling between the Boers and the Zulus under Sikobobo at Holkrantz on the 6th May, 1902.

52. PAR, Government House (hereafter GH) Volume 1304: Natal copies of annexure to confidential dispatches to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 5-16.10 1902.

53. War museum for the Boer Republics (hereafter WM), Accessions 2057/5 and 5123/1.

54. PAR, CSO 2953: Lt-Col G.A. Mills - a report on the causes which led to the ill-feeling between the Boers and the Zulu under Sikobobo at Holkrantz on the 6th May, 1902.

55. Maphalala S.J., The murder at Holkrantz (Mthashana) 6th May, 1902. *Historia*, Volume 22, Number 1. May 1977.

women or child, who remained alone on the farms while their men were on commando, were at any stage molested or attacked by Zulu. The owners of the farms on which they lived and the property of the owners was treated with respect. The scorched policy of looting, robbing and burning changed all this. Maphalala concludes by saying “this shows that in spite of the burning of kraals, the Zulu were merely carrying out orders at Holkrantz.”

With this episode the active part of the Anglo-Boer War in Zululand and the Vryheid District ended. In a telegram sent to all the magistrates in Zululand, to be put across the respective borders and delivered to Boer commandos in the area by loyal Zulu, Lord Kitchener instructed that the Utrecht and Vryheid commando's were to be immune from attack, pending further orders, so long as these commandos refrained from aggressive action.⁵³ Peace came about on 31 May 1902 and the people of these areas could start to calculate the impact the war had on their lives. The Vryheid, Utrecht and part of the Wakkerstroom District were incorporated into Natal in 1903 and the geographical barrier with Zululand thus disappeared. After the years of battles, skirmishes, livestock raids and looting which this chapter briefly illuminated the Zulus, Boers and the British had to start afresh in learning how to coexist peacefully.

56. PAR, ZA Volume 33: Telegram Capt C.M. Maynard Staff Officer troops in Zululand to Zululand magistrates, 19.5.1902.

CHAPTER 2

ESTABLISHING THE ESHOWE CONCENTRATION CAMP

As can be deduced from Chapter 1 the Anglo-Boer War in the borderlands of Zululand and the Vryheid District of the Transvaal had an effect on all inhabitants and forces of this region. The involved parties all acted in different ways, guided by different principles and motivations. These actions, in turn, led to the creation of the Eshowe Concentration Camp.

Before attention can be paid to the reasons for the establishment of the Eshowe Camp, with its two distinct but integrated entities of a concentration camp and a surrendered burghers camp, the concepts of concentration and refugee camp needs clarification.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*¹ defines concentration camps as follows: “In times of hostility, civilian populations sometimes have been concentrated in camps to prevent them from engaging in guerrilla warfare or providing aid to enemy forces, or simply as means of terrorizing the population into submission.” This description seems appropriate as during the Anglo-Boer War in excess of 120 000 Boer non-combatants, mostly women, children and old people, were forcibly cleared off the land into more than 40 concentration camps, including the one at Eshowe. This was a military decision to prevent them from aiding the Republican forces with information and food, and also an attempt to force the Boers into submission.² Black non-combatants, especially those who showed sympathy with the Boer cause, experienced the same fate.³

Refugees on the other hand are defined by the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as any person “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country: or who, is not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence, is unable to return to it.” This definition is supported by an additional broad category namely: “any person who has been the victim of a war or a disaster which has seriously disadvantaged his condition of living.”⁴

1. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Volume 6, pp.251-252.

2. For detailed accounts of the concentration camps during the Anglo-Boer war see amongst others: Spies S.B., *Methods of Barbarism? Roberts and Kitchener and civilians in the Boer Republics January 1900-May 1902* and Hobhouse E., *The brunt of the war and where it fell*.

3. Mongalo B.E., *The myth of the White Man's War: An Historical perspective on the concentration camps for Blacks during the South African War of 1899 to 1902*.

4. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Volume 15, pp. 568-570.

This definition and the accompanying proviso seems to encapsulate the majority of the inhabitants of the Eshowe Camp as they made their way, out of choice, from the Transvaal to Zululand to surrender and in so doing escaped both the wrath of the remaining Republican forces, the so-called bittereinders, and the disasters of the Anglo-Boer War. The British then took care of their living conditions, either by allowing them to stay in Eshowe or other parts of Zululand, or with family and friends in other parts of Natal. Some surrendered burghers were later sent to the concentration camps at Merebank and Wentworth.

For the purpose of this research monograph the above-mentioned criteria will be applied, with the proviso that the collective term “Eshowe Camp” would be used when referring to the camp in its totality, meaning both those who arrived out of free will and those who were brought in by force.⁵

2.1 A CAMP FOR SURRENDERED BURGHERS CAMP

The primary reason for the creation of the Eshowe Camp was for surrendered Boer refugees from the Transvaal Districts of Utrecht (five families), Wakkerstroom (four families), Piet Retief (six families), Swaziland (three families) and Vryheid (118 families). The reasons why citizens of the Transvaal decided to leave these districts are varied and differ from person to person and family to family and were not as one dimensional as described in the Eshowe Camp records as merely being “land”. Meaning The reasons and motivations to surrender, as well as the composition of the surrendered burgher population, will be investigated in this section.

Boer refugees already entered Zululand as early as 18 October 1900 when unnamed burghers were surrendering to magistrates at Mahlabatini and Nongoma. These burghers were allowed to keep the little cattle they had left but had to surrender their arms and take an oath of neutrality.¹⁵ The mentioned burghers were part of an influx of European, Indian and African refugees from the Transvaal and the OFS. The first surrendered burgher who arrived in Eshowe, the seat of both the garrison and the administration of Zululand, was a certain Klopper on 12 October 1900 from Piet Retief. The details about him are very sketchy and he was deported to Durban on an unknown date.¹³

5. *De Kerkbode*, 1.08.1901.

15. PAR, Magistrate of Mahlabatini (hereafter 1/MBT 3/2/2): Telegram to Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, 18.10.1900.

13. See for example PAR, CSO Volumes 1628 and 1632.

The Eshowe Camp itself came into being on 9 December 1900 with the arrival of the poverty stricken 70-year-old Charles Chilcott from Ngomi Bush in the Vryheid District. On the same day same day Henry Corbett, his wife and seven children arrived from Hanley, also in the Vryheid District. Corbett brought with him two wagons and 135 head of cattle. The very next day Leonard Botha and his wife and 8 children arrived with a wagon and 10 oxen.¹⁴ On 12 December 1900, L.J. Botha who had been in the Stanger area since the war began, was given permission to join his brother, a surrendered burgher, and his family who were living at the house of C. Schwab, the local blacksmith at Eshowe. Botha had been driving wagons for a local business man, Henwood, when the war broke out.¹⁶ With these refugees being allowed to stay the message spread and burghers, with and without property, arrived at a steady trickle each with their own traumas, tragedies and motivations. For some it was a conscious decision to surrender and sign the oath of neutrality or allegiance to Britain, while for others it was forced onto them by circumstances as described in Chapter 1.

The foremost motivational reason for moving to Eshowe and its surroundings was the protection it provided against the raids of the British Army and their Zulu cohorts.¹⁷ The most significant of these raids were the operations under Colonel Bottomley which lasted from late March 1901 to early June 1901. During this time 101 families consisting of 309 people arrived from the Transvaal. Of these families 93 or 92% were from the Vryheid District, the focus area of the Bottomley raids. Fifty eight percent of surrendered families who arrived during this period had no property at all. The estimate 10 000 cattle pillaged by Bottomley could greatly have come from these families.¹⁹ Previously rich Boers that could provide for their own needs were now, due to the Bottomley raids, as poor as church mice. All their needs had now to be catered for by the British in a surrendered burghers camp. The Bottomley raids did not only displaced families with no property, but also forced burghers with property to flee to the safety of Eshowe. Of the families that surrendered from early March to late June 1901, 42% managed to bring livestock and wagons along and in so doing escaped financial ruin.

The Bottomley raids, apart from securing 10 000 head of cattle, also knocked the fight out of many Boers. Of the males that arrived during the period of the raids, 99 were

14. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

18. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter CM and CC C.R Saunders to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 12.12.1900.

17. *De Kerkbode*, 1.08.1901.

19. PAR, SNA 1/6/25: Report of evidence given by CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, p.32.

between the ages of 15 and 60 years, the fighting age of the Republican forces. Fear for their own lives and those of their families, as well as the prospect of saving their economic base, cattle, out weighed loyalty to the Boer cause. These people had to ironically seek protection in Zululand and in Eshowe specifically, from the British Army. The magnitude of the impact of the Bottomley raids hits home when the total number of families that passed through the Eshowe Camp as surrendered burghers, 143 families consisting of 443 people, as compared to the 101 families consisting of 309 people that arrived from late March to early June 1901. This means that roughly 70% of the total number of people that passed through the Eshowe Camp as surrendered burghers arrived because of the Bottomley raids.

Despite the hardships that these Boers had suffered their decision to surrender tagged them as “hendsoppers” for life. The fairness of this is questioned by a “bittereinder” and Natal rebel, A.L. Pretorius, who states the case of Cornelius Muller who arrived in the Eshowe Camp on 11 May 1901 as an example. According to Pretorius people such as Muller had no choice as he was attacked during one of the raids by Bottomley’s gangs which endangered his family and his property. After he fought off the attack, he had to flee to Zululand for the survival of his family.²⁰

The Eshowe Camp was also a safe haven from persecution from the bittereinders in the Vryheid District who despised and persecuted hendsoppers regardless of the circumstances of their surrender. To the hendsoppers life with no glory was of greater importance than death or poverty with glory. To the credit of these surrendered burghers only one became a “joiner” or active collaborator with the British. The 17-year-old Christian van Tonder was captured by the Boers while accompanying a British convoy near Melmoth. What happened to him is not known but in general the Boers had very little sympathy with joiners.²¹

Another equally important reason for surrendering was to avoid economic ruin that could, and sometimes did, happen overnight. Personal economic gain was of paramount importance to a great number of surrendering Boers. Proof of this is the 4 842 head of cattle that the Boer refugees brought with them. In doing so they foiled possible confiscation by the Boers and British alike. The cattle were complimented by one donkey, 53 wagons, 19 horses and some sheep and goats. Boers such as Paul Nel of Wit Folosi brought in 450 head of cattle, Frederick Smit of Ngomi Bush 327 head and

20. War Museum of the Boer Republics, Accession 2056: Memoirs of A.L. Pretorius, 30.6.1941.

21. Grundlingh A.M., *Die “Hendsoppers” en “Joiners” Die rasional en verskynsel van verraad.*

John Liversage of Paul Pietersburg 330.²² Affluent farmers such as these could return after the war with their personal wealth intact. This was a far cry from those whose loyalty only brought financial ruin. Since the British only sent surrendered Boers with no property to the concentration camps at Merebank and later Wentworth the ownership of cattle safeguarded them against that trauma. Zululand also had ample grazing as it was crown land not yet divided into farms. At the same time, it was greatly devoid of Zulu cattle as the rinderpest had killed off great numbers. The British military also served to enhance this process of migration by allowing surrendered burghers from the Vryheid District to trek to Zululand with their cattle for winter grazing. This process started on 14 June 1901, the approximate time that the Bottomley raids ended.²³

It could also be argued that not all citizens of the Vryheid area were that nationalistically inclined towards the Transvaal. Up to 20 July 1888 the inhabitants of Vryheid and the surrounding area lived in their own country, the New Republic, founded on the basis of a reward from Dinizulu to burghers who supported him in his war against other Zulu tribes. The New Republic had all the trappings of a state such as its own flag, Volksraad, Judiciary and president in the person of Lucas Meyer.²⁴ The 11 years that had elapsed since its amalgamation with the Transvaal were in all probability in some instances not long enough to create loyalty and nationalistic enthusiasm for the Anglo-Boer War, especially among those who were adventurers and opportunists as far as the original deal with Dinizulu goes. The Vryheid area was furthermore geographically isolated from the heartland of the Transvaal, a reason in itself that did contribute to inhabitants of the area not becoming “real” Transvaalers.

The geographical location of the Vryheid District was a factor in itself for surrendered Boers fleeing to Eshowe and its surrounds. In reality this was the only direction they could head for. They could not head east as General Bruce Hamilton would halt them at the Buffalo River, the Natal -Transvaal border. At the same time, they could not rely on assistance from the Natal Afrikaners around Dundee and Newcastle as they would, as British subjects, be charged with treason if caught supporting the enemy in no matter how trivial a manner. The treason trials taking place in these areas was a stark reminder of this.²⁵ Towards the north the Wakkerstroom and Piet Retief Districts were

22. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp. According to the British the Boers only had 4 000 cattle in Zululand. This is a very conservative estimate when compared with the data provided by the camp register.

23. NAR, SOP Volume 7: Letter APM Natal district to OC Ladysmith SD, 14.6.1902.

24. *South African Standard Encyclopedia*, p.185.

25. *De Natal Afrikaner*, 1899-1902.

cut off by the drives off General John French. The only option therefore left to those who wanted to flee and surrender was Zululand, as it was in close proximity to Vryheid and connected to it by a wagon road.

Other Transvaalers fled because of divided loyalties. English burgers such as Charles Chilcott, James Green, James Harper, Charles Milner, John Pringle, Samuel Smith and Henry Thring were probably in a dilemma whether to support the country of their citizenship or their country of origin. Caught within this dilemma fleeing and surrendering seemed the logical option. The same could be said of the German families such as Knoop, Volker, Von Berg Stallbom, Schultze, Kassier, Kunzman and Butz who resided in the Vryheid area. Although citizens of the Transvaal, as an ethnic minority, they did not share cultural and blood ties with the Afrikaners and thus remained removed from mainstream Afrikaner nationalism. Carl Butz and Reverend Stallbom even went so far as to claim German citizenship, despite them voting in the Transvaal elections. Others such as Hendrich and Peter Knoop, Lodewyk Kassier and Frederich Volker participated actively in the war on the side of their country, and were on parole when they arrived in Eshowe. These latter mentioned burghers lost all they had.²⁷ Other German Transvaalers, such as Carl Butz and Peter and Rudolph Schultze were more fortunate and managed to rescue some cattle. Both those Germans who participated actively on the Boer side and those who remained neutral suffered greatly as their churches and property in the Luneburg area were destroyed by the British.²⁸

The fleeing of burghers into Zululand was not an uncommon phenomenon. Numerous Boers crossed the border of the Transvaal into Rhodesia, Bechuanaland and Mozambique.²⁹ The best comparison to what happened on the TRANSVAAL and Zululand border is the fleeing of Free Staters to Basutoland. In total 2 043 Boer men, women and children crossed this border taking with them 138127 head of livestock.³⁰ The motivations of these Free Staters were greatly the same as those of the Transvaalers from the fleeing to Zululand. What was happening was thus not an isolated incident but part of a regional translocation of civilians, and in this instance Boer civilians and commando members, caused by the Anglo-Boer War.

27. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

28. Ploeger, *Deel IV*, p.34:19.

29. Ploeger, *Deel III*, pp.21:1-22:67.

30. Eloff C.C., Vrystaatse Vluchtelingen in Basoetoland tydens die Anglo-Boereoorlog. *Military History Journal*, Volume 6. Number 5. June 1985.

The various reasons stated for surrendering was underpinned and made even more tempting by the proclamation issued by Commander-in-Chief Lord Kitchener on 20 December 1900. The proclamation stated that:

It is hereby notified to all Burghers that if, after this date, they voluntarily surrender they will be allowed to live with their families in Government Laagers until such time as the Guerilla Warfare now being carried on will admit of their returning safely to their homes. All stock and property brought in at the time of surrender by such Burghers will be respected, and paid for if requisitioned by Military Authorities.³¹

This meant that burghers who surrendered could reside in the Eshowe Camp with their property intact, a good proposition at the time. At least one Boer officer of the Vryheid District, Field-Cornet E. Rabe, seized on the proclamation and negotiated the surrender and crossing into Zululand of a large group of Boers with their stock, with British commissioner Captain K. Smith in Vryheid. Rabe himself ended up in the Volksrust Concentration Camp.³²

In total 436 Boers arrived as surrendered burghers in Eshowe. These people were all, except for Benjamin Maree and Johannes Nel of the OFS, burghers of the Transvaal, and as stated previously predominantly from the Vryheid District. The surrendered burgher status of the Eshowe Camp is emphasised by the gender breakdown of the camp population with 276 being male and 251 being female. What is particularly striking is that men between the ages of 21 and 50 outnumber women of the similar age group. (See Table 1). Men who thus should have been the backbone of the Boer commandos opted to relocate to Zululand to surrender

**TABLE 1:
GENDER AND AGE BREAKDOWN OF SURRENDERED BURGHERS
IN THE ESHOWE CAMP**

AGE IN YEARS	NUMBER OF MALES	NUMBER OF FEMALES
0-10	92	86

31. PAR, 1/MBT 3/2/2: Proclamation by Commander-in-Chief Kitchener, 20.12.1900.

32. PAR, PM Volume 22: Letter C.J. van Rooyen to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 28.5.1901.

AGE IN YEARS	NUMBER OF MALES	NUMBER OF FEMALES
11- 20	62	66
21 - 30	46	44
31 - 40	35	21
41 - 50	21	22
51 - 60	11	8
60+	9	4
TOTAL	276	251

Substantial numbers of the burghers of the Transvaal were becoming war weary and could not see a positive end to a war that seemed to carry on forever. It all started to look futile as the war moved from the conventional to the guerrilla phase, which made the British proclamations seem believable. Thus, the town of Eshowe with its infrastructure and military protection and the fertile land of Zululand provided a safe resort. Within this area surrendered Boers gathered, each with his or her own personal reasons and motivations, as outlined, for giving up the struggle. For the majority with property it became a safe haven till the end of the war, while for the others, mostly those without property it was merely a brief stop before being translocated, alongside the captured women and children, to the Merebank and later Wentworth Concentration Camps.

2.2 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ESHOWE CONCENTRATION CAMP

The original purpose of the Eshowe Camp was to accommodate surrendered burghers. Despite this the Eshowe Camp became a “real” concentration camp on 10 October 1901 with the arrival of the 22-year old Catharina Delport and her 3-year old daughter. The reasons for and place of their capture are unknown. Delport was joined, on the day before Christmas, by Agina Boshoff with her two children and Gesje de Jager with her 10-year old twin son and daughter and her 5-year-old son of the farm Gelykwater, Louis Botha’s headquarters during the second invasion of Natal. The De Jager family were accompanied by Gesina and Johanna Potgieter.⁶

6. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp. Although this is the Eshowe Concentration Camp register it was labeled Wentworth presumably because when the camp at Eshowe closed down the remaining inhabitants were sent to Wentworth.

Up to this stage the majority of non-combatants in the Vryheid area were either left on their farms, or captured and sent to the concentration camps at Volksrust or Merebank. For four days, from 30 December 1901 up to 2 January 1902, this policy changed dramatically. During this time the British Army captured 21 families consisting of 80 people. These families were all apprehended in either Vryheid ward iii (three families, 16 individuals), Vryheid ward iv (11 families, 37 individuals) or Swaziland (six families, 26 individuals). The sole exception was the 44-year-old Hester van Rooyen captured on the farm Spitzkop in the Utrecht District. After 2 January 1902, the capturing of Boer women and children in these areas suddenly ceased,⁷ because Major H.A. Vowell had all the magistrates informed that he “considers it undesirable to have any more Boer women and children into our lives.”⁸ This was followed by a message on 11 January 1902, informing all troops in Zululand that any Boer women and children who came in to surrender had to be directed back to their farms.⁹ It is thus clear that the arrested woman was considered a burden to the camp at Eshowe who had not dealt with captured inmates before, and also did not have the facilities to take care of them since the military had already cleared the Eshowe Camp of surrendered burghers with no property. These women would thus represent the same burden as the surrendered burghers they had got rid of.

The orders of Vowell must also be considered against the background that arresting Boer women and children at this stage was contrary to the concentration camp policy of Kitchener who had by mid-December 1901 changed his mind, greatly because of the high mortality rate in these camps and the public outcries in Britain. The new orders stated that columns were not to bring in women and children after the farms had been destroyed. The women and children had to be left with the Boer forces which would serve to place an additional burden on them.

A possible reason why the orders from Kitchener were ignored was that the British Forces anticipated that General Louis Botha would return to this area and thus cleared the land of women and children who could supply information, shelter or food to his commando. If this was the case they were correct as Botha did return during February 1902. These arrests and removals could also be viewed as part of the tougher measures taken to force the Vryheid Boers that were still on commando into submission

7. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

8. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 7.1.1902.

9. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 11.1.1902.

because the majority of women detained had had male family members who were still on commando. Further proof that these arrests were an attempt to get the Boers in the area to surrender is the fact that it coincided with the order issued on 24 December 1901, and retracted on 15 January 1902, that all Boers who came in to surrender were to be treated as prisoners of war (hereafter POWs).

The husbands and fathers of the captured families all served the war effort of the Boer Republics without fail. The highest possible price, death, was paid by three, while four were serving time POWs. Two women did not know the whereabouts of their husbands, while 15 spouses were on commando as bittereinders. For these families the price of the war in terms of loyalty to the Republican cause was extremely high, since they brought no property with them into the Eshowe Camp. It could rightfully be assumed that they lost it all in the struggle to maintain their independence. The sight of those who had forsaken the war effort and opted to surrender as refugees with property intact must have been a bitter one to these families. The option to abandon the struggle and surrender or “handsop” was in general not taken by families who had a father or a husband on active duty. Only two women in the Eshowe Camp were exceptions to this rule. The 20-year old Johanna de Lange opted to become a refugee to give birth to her baby. Surrendered status was also the option of Adriana van der Merwe of Mount Sophia in the Vryheid District who lost contact with her husband and who assumed that he had died. Both these women had no family members or friends to support them or to share their plight.¹⁰

The oldest people to be captured were the 78-year-old Gesje Viljoen of Gelykwater and the 68-year-old Susana Koster of Boshoek. The experience of being captured by soldiers and the property, which took a lifetime of toil to assemble, being looted and destroyed, must have been traumatic to old people such as these. The youngest capture victim was the four-day-old Maria, daughter of Susana and Willem Delport who was born in the camp.

Gender wise the captured inhabitants consisted of 54 females and 37 males, with none of the males older than 15 years. All men who were older than this were on probably on commando, a clear illustration of the mind set of these families. The women had a more even distribution amongst the different age groups with 12 younger than 10 years, 14 between 11 and 20 years of age, 11 between 21 and 30 years, only 3 between 31 and 40, 8 between 41 and 50 years, 3 between 51 and 60 years of age and 2 older than 60

10. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

years.

The Eshowe Camp as a concentration camp in total housed 24 families consisting of 91 individuals.¹¹ The concentration camp facet therefore comprised only 17% of the total number of people, 534, that passed through the Eshowe Camp. The captured people, apart from Catharina Delport and her 3-year old daughter, spent at the most 50 days in Eshowe before they were despatched to the Merebank Concentration Camp in Durban. The transfers to Merebank took place on 27 January 1902 when 64 were despatched, and on 12 February 1902 when 26 left.

With these transfers the concentration camp facet of the Eshowe Camp ceased to exist, and the camp returned to its sole original function namely that of an administrative centre for surrendered burghers. It would therefore, for the reasons mentioned, be a misconception to classify the Eshowe Camp, as it was done in the past, as only a concentration camp, since a limited number of captured non-combatants resided there for 50 days only. The complete list of all the Eshowe Concentration Camp inhabitants, as well as their original residence, date of capture and date of removal to Merebank Concentration Camp appear in Table 2.

TABLE 2
LIST OF INHABITANTS OF THE ESHOWE CONCENTRATION CAMP

SURNAME	NAMES	A G E	G E N D E R	DATE OF CAPTURE	RESIDENCE	DATE SEND TO MEREBAK
Boshoff	Agina. M.F. Christina Jacobus	29 5 6	F F M	24.12.01	Welverdiend, Vryheid	12.02.02
Buys	Salomina. A.	24	F	30.12.01	Bondlyst, Vryheid	12.02.02
Buys	Isabella. M. Isabella. M. Christoffel. F. Hendrik. J.	48 19 12 11	F F M M	30.12.01	Bondlyst, Vryheid	12.02.02

11. NAR, DBC, Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp. A list of the Eshowe Camp inhabitants appears in Table 7, at the end of the monograph. This list is, however, incomplete and does not include the names of the 16 Africans who resided in this camp as no record of their names exists. It also does not contain the names of surrendered burghers who were allowed to live on private property in Zululand, or surrendered burghers such as a certain Degenaar who received permission to reside in the Eshowe Camp.

SURNAME	NAMES	AGE	GENDER	DATE OF CAPTURE	RESIDENCE	DATE SEND TO MEREBANK
	Susana. M.	10	F			
Combrink	Maria. M. Anna. J. Johanna. S. Maria. M. Hester. W. Susana Cornelius. J. Frantz. A. John. H. Stephanus. L.	40 19 17 9 2 1 11 7 5 5	F F F F F F M M M M	30.12.01	Uitzicht, Vryheid	27.01.02
Dannhauser	Louisa George. F. Dedrich. J. Maria. E.	34 11 9 1	F M M F	30.12.01	Mooihoek, Vryheid	12.02.02
De Jager De Jager De Jager De Jager Potgieter Potgieter	Gesje. M. Haley Peter Gert Gesina. M. Johanna. M.	43 10 10 5 23 15	F F M M F F	24.12.01	Gelykwater, Vryheid	12.02.02
Delpont	Catrina. A.	22 3	F F	10.10.01		27.01.02
Delpont	Susana. M. Andries. C. Johannes. A. Susana. D. Maria	26 5 3 2 4d	F M M F F	30.12.01	Boshoek, Vryheid.	27.01.02
De Waal De Waal Fourie	Johanna. C. Louis. E. Elizabeth. C.	45 11 16	F M F	30.12.01	Lang Kloof, Vryheid	27.01.02
Du Preez	Elizabeth. J. Lena. S. Isabella. J. Pieter. M. Johannes. J.	58 27 12 10 3	F F F M M	30.12.01	Onvergenoeg, Vryheid	27.01.02
Kleinhans	Maria. S Susanna Evert Jan	31 7 9 5	F F M M	30.12.01	Boshoek, Vryheid	27.01.02
Koster	Susana. M.	68	F	30.12.01	Boshoek, Vryheid	27.01.02
Koster	Susanna. J. Elias Philip Johannes Petrus Conrad Jacobus	31 14 11 5 6 8 1	F M M M M M M	02.01.02	Umguvuma, Swaziland	27.01.02

SURNAME	NAMES	A G E	G E N D E R	DATE OF CAPTURE	RESIDENCE	DATE SEND TO MEREBANK
Koster	Francina. E. Gideon. J Jan. P. Ceceila. J. Frank. W. Maria. H.	36 14 10 9 7 3	F M M F M F	02.01.02	Umguvuma, Swaziland	27.01.02
Potgieter	Anna. M.S. Maria. F.C. Wessel. J.H. Anna. M.S. Gerhardus. S.J.	44 15 12 10 7	F F M F M	02.01.02	Umguvuma, Swaziland	27.01.02
Potgieter	Susana. J.C. Petrus. H.	20 1	F M	02.01.02	Umguvuma, Swaziland	27.01.02
Van der Schyf	Johannah. W. Martha. J. Lotta. S. Andrey. C. Jan. A. Johannes. J.	47 20 10 12 9 3	F F F M M M	30.12.01	Hartz Kamp, Vryheid	12.02.02
Van Rooyen	Hester. G.	44	F	30.12.01	Spitzkop, Utrecht	12.02.02
Van Rooyen	Elizabeth. I. Lorenz. P.B.	58 11	F M	30.12.01	Bontlyst, Vryheid	27.01.02
Van Rooyen	Annie. H. Christian. S. Elizabeth. L. Ignaz. M.	25 5 2 11	F M F M	30.12.01	Lang Kloof, Vryheid	27.01.02
Van Rooyen	Catharina. E. Johannah. M.	27 7	F F	30.12.01	Lang Kloof, Vryheid	27.01.02
Van Vuren	Maria. F. Hendrick. L.	56 12	F M	02.01.02	Umguvuma, Swaziland	27.01.02
Viljoen	Gesje. M.	79	F		Gelykwater, Vryheid	27.01.02
Visagie	Isabella. E. Letta. M. Cecilia. J. Isabella. E.	42 21 19 16	F F F F	02.01.02	Hluke, Swaziland	27.01.02 ¹²

12. NAR, DBC Volumes: 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

CHAPTER 3

GETTING TO THE ESHOWE SURRENDERED BURGHERS CAMP – THE PROCESS OF SURRENDERING

The type of journey by burghers to the Eshowe Camp depended on whether you were a refugee or captured by the British Army. If captured, the British military controlled your life, property and destination and they provided the transport by ox wagon. The route generally was via Melmoth to the office of the Officer Commanding Troops in Zululand in Eshowe.

The process of surrendering was more complicated. The first step when wanting to surrender was to secure a safe point of entry from the Vryheid District into Zululand. The second step after entering Zululand was to report to the closest magistrate or member of the British military. The next step was the surrendering of all weapons and the signing an oath of neutrality or allegiance. The names of the surrendered Boers and their families, their addresses and the amount and description of stock, as well as any requests by the burghers, or recommendations by the magistrates would then be forwarded to the Officer Commanding Troops in Zululand, Major H.A. Vowell. On the reception of his answer the surrendered Boers could, after signing an agreement stating that they proceeded at their own risk and that the Imperial and Natal Governments could not be held responsible if anything happened to them or their stock, proceed along the hilly road by wagon to Eshowe. Here they would have to report to the various administrators and take care of matters such as grazing for their cattle.²¹

The rules for surrendering to the Eshowe Camp administration only changed once, namely on 24 December 1901 when it was decreed that: "All Boers now coming in are to be considered prisoners of war; such horses, cattle, saddles, arms or equipment as they bring in is to be at once taken from them and forwarded to me."⁶⁰ The British must have realized very quickly how counter productive this step was as Boers would simply not surrender. On 15 January 1902 these orders were changed and once again Boers who surrendered by arrangement would not be considered POWs and would be allowed to keep their cattle and other possessions. The exceptions were Boer officers who had to bring in substantial numbers of burghers so as to escape banishment.⁶¹

18. NAR, SOP Volume 7: Letter APM Natal district to OC Ladysmith SD, 14.6.1902. These routes were altered from 14 June 1901 onwards to counter lung sickness. See p.18.

57. DAR, Magistrate of Umlalazi (hereafter 1/MTU) 3/3/2: Telegram CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 24.12.1901.

58. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter OC troops in Zululand, Major P.A. Vowell to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 15.1.1902.

Generally, the administrative procedure as outlined was followed by the vast majority of surrendered Boers and their families with very little or no problems. This commenced as early as 18 October 1900, when unnamed burghers were, in order to save their remaining cattle, surrendering to the magistrates at Mahlabatini and Nongoma.²² Such surrenders remained a trickle and escalated only during the cattle raiding by Bottomley when an avalanche of surrenders took place. Some examples of such surrenders are J. Schoon and J.A. Liversage to the magistrate at Nongoma²³ and E.F. Potgieter to the magistrate at Melmoth.²⁴ In most of the cases the procedure of surrender was simple administrative matters, but exceptions did however occur.

J.P. Engelbucht of Umguvuma, Swaziland and H. Thring of Oumkaquene, Swaziland surrendered to the magistrate at Hlabisa. The magistrate sent them, escorted by a constable of the Zululand Native Police, to Eshowe.²⁵ On their arrival in Eshowe they were accused of being Natal rebels since they had brought their weapons into Zululand. Both men were promptly jailed pending the investigation.²⁶ Fortunately for them the investigation scuttled the accusations and they were transferred to the Eshowe Camp within 10 days.²⁷

A Transvaal burgher that was less fortunate when suspected of being a Natal rebel was 22-year-old C.P. van der Merwe who surrendered voluntarily with his arms, ammunition and horse on 14 July 1901, to Magistrate Wheelwright at Mahlabatini. To Van der Merwe's surprise he was immediately arrested as a Natal rebel who had apparently joined the Babanango Commando and he was therefore sent to Eshowe for trial. During the trial it came to light that Van der Merwe was in fact a surrendered burgher and he was therefore acquitted. The problems for Van der Merwe did not end there as he was deported to Durban as a POW despite him surrendering voluntarily.²⁸ The result of this

19. PAR, 1/MBT 3/2/2: Telegram to Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, 18.10.1900.

20. DAR, 1/ESH 3/3/2: Letter Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 4.11.1901.

21. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Statement by E.F. Potgieter, 7.6.1901.

22. DAR, 1/ESH 3/3/2: Letter Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 10.10.1901.

23. DAR, 1/ESH 3/3/2: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate W.E. Peachley, Hlabisa, 16.10.1901.

24. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

25. NAR, SOP Volume 30: Letter Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 21.3.1902. C.P. van der Merwe does not appear in the register of the Eshowe Camp possibly because he was taken straight to prison.

was that 9 months later Van der Merwe found himself on board the *SS Columbia* in Durban harbour ready to be deported overseas. From the ship he appealed to Magistrate Wheelwright for a certificate proving that he had surrendered voluntarily.²⁹ The authorities promptly enquired about the background to Van der Merwe's arrest and his status as a prisoner of war.³⁰ The Van der Merwe version of his trial and tribulations was confirmed by Wheelwright, who could not resist to adding that Van der Merwe proved troublesome while on commando in Zululand.³¹ With this ordeal behind him Van der Merwe was taken off the ship and sent to reside in the Jacobs Concentration Camp.³²

One of the biggest groups of burghers to surrender was the collection of 22 under P.M. Bester who surrendered by handing over a letter from Field-Cornet E. Rabe to Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright at Mahlabatini on 24/25 March 1901. According to this letter Rabe had brokered a deal for these burghers with the Vryheid District commissioner, Kincaid Smith, along the lines of Kitchener's proclamation, which would allow them to remain in the Melmoth District. These burghers, seemingly well organised in their family groupings, brought with them 17 rifles, 370 rounds of ammunition and cattle, horses and wagons as listed in Table 3.³³

The envisaged destination of these surrendered burghers was the winter grazing farm belonging to C.M. Bester near Melmoth. To be allowed to proceed they requested permission from the governor of the Colony of Natal. In anticipation of the response Chief Magistrate Saunders, after consulting Major Vowell, allowed them to progress with their families and stock under escort from Mahlabatini to Melmoth. They were met halfway by an escort from Melmoth.

26. NAR, SOP Volume 30: Letter C.P. van der Merwe to Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, 1.4.1902.

27. NAR, SOP Volume 30: Letter Lt-Col H.T.W. Allatt, SOP Natal, to Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, 13.3.1902.

28. NAR, SOP Volume 30: Letter Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 21.3.1902.

29. NAR, SOP Volume 30: Letter L.F. Drake, Camp Superintendent Jacobs Concentration Camp, to Lt-Col H.T.W. Allatt, SOP Natal, 10.4.1902.

30. PAR, 1/ MBT 3/2/2: List of burghers who surrendered to Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright at Mahlabatini 24 and 25.3.1901. P.M. Bester was no newcomer to negotiations and changing allegiances. On 15.2.1888 Bester had discussions with Dinizulu regarding the growing Usuthu anger at the evictions from Zibhebhu's location. On 1.8.1888 Bester had discussions with Magistrate Addison promising him to prevent the Usuthu from crossing into the Vryheid District. See Laband J., *Rope of Sand. The rise and fall of the Zulu Kingdom in the nineteenth century*, p.396 and 421.

TABLE 3.
BURGHERS WHO SURRENDERED UNDER FIELD-CORNET P.M. BESTER AT
MAHLABATINI - 24-25.3.1901.³⁴

INITIALS & SURNAME	CATTLE	HORSES	WAGONS	RESIDENCE AS STATED IN THE ESHOWE CAMP REGISTER
P.M. Bester	270	5	1	No information stated.
C.M. Bester				No information stated.
S.B. Buys	20	1		No information stated.
J.L. Coetzee	39	2		No information stated.
M.A.J. Coetzee		1		Arrived in Eshowe on 13.5.1901, with no horse and sent to Pietermaritzburg on 4.6.1901.
N. Herbst				No information stated.
C.G. Herbst	8	1	1	Arrived in Eshowe 29.04.1901 with his family of 10, 12 cattle and no horse. This was presumably traded for 4 cattle. Sent to Merebank Camp on 6.10.1901.
P.R. Nel	78	8		No information stated.
G.L. Nel			1	No information stated.
P. R. Nel				No information stated.
N.J. Nel				No information stated.
P.R. Nel	170	1	1	No information stated.
I.G. Nel	12	1	1	No information stated.
L.J. Nel	80	1	2	No information stated.
J. Slavers				Arrived in Eshowe 29.4.1901, sent to Wentworth Camp on 15.4.1902.
G. Theunissen	37	2	1	Arrived in Eshowe on 29.4.1901 with his family of 5, 19 cattle and 1 wagon. Sent to Wentworth Camp on 15.4.1902.
J. van der Westhuizen	87	2		No information stated.
S.J. van der Westhuizen	100	1	1	No information stated.
C.G. van Rooyen	19	2		No information stated.
C. P. Van Rooyen	34	3		No information stated.

31. PAR, 1/MBT 3/2/2: List of burghers who surrendered to magistrate C.A. Wheelwright at Mahlabatini, 24 and 25.3.1901.

When the anticipated response from the governor had not arrived by the end of October 1901, almost seven months later, the magistrate at Melmoth started to worry and enquired about this from his Mahlabatini colleague. Magistrate Wheelwright answered by referring to the telegram received from Saunders, which according to him indicated an expected response by the time Bester and his group reached Melmoth. Such a response must have proved correct otherwise, according to him, they would not have been allowed to stay. He also thought a response must have been sent to Melmoth.³⁵

The position as interpreted by Wheelwright must have been correct as the majority of these surrendered burghers continued to live in their small utopian colony on C.M. Besters farm, totally removed from the war and from the administration other surrendered burghers in Zululand had to adhere to.

Not all of those who arrived in this group were happy at this establishment. J. Slavers and M.J. Herbst, who had no property, arrived in the Eshowe Camp on 29 April 1901. These men were accompanied by M.A.J. Coetzee, without his horse, which was commandeered by the military, and C.G. Herbst who arrived with his family of 10 and 12 cattle, four more than he had at the time of his surrender. This was most probably obtained by trading his horse, a very powerful trading item at the time. J.G. Theunissen with his family of five also arrived in Eshowe on 29 April 1901. His economic position had declined during this period and he had only 19 cattle left from the herd of 37 he had arrived with. These burghers all eventually moved on to the Merebank Concentration Camp.³⁶

When these burghers arrived in Eshowe P.M. Bester wrote to the magistrate at Melmoth submitting another list of names of burghers whose surrender he had negotiated with the commissioner of Vryheid Captain K. Smith. According to Bester, J.L. and F. Volker, P. Knoop, L. and K. Kassier, C. Lilje, A. Dannhauser, J.P. Zietsman, L. and G. Schultze, H. de Lange, E. Potgieter, F. Stallbom, F.J.A. and N.M. Dekker, C. and G.M. Gunther, D. van Rooyen, M., J. and C. Craig, G. Vermaak, E.E. Dalton, P.N. Nel and G. Muller and their families were supposed to surrender with him and his group, but they could only get across the border in dribs and drabs while trying to avoid Boers and Zulu alike. The appeal of Bester was therefore that since these burghers were part

32. PAR, 1/MBT 3/2/3: Letter Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, to Magistrate A. Hulley, Melmoth, 19.10.1901.

33. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

of the original deal they should also be allowed to stay in the Melmoth District and not be sent to the Eshowe Camp. According to Bester the local Natal Boers resident in the district could be approached to accommodate these surrendered burghers.³⁷ This request of Bester failed and all the surrendered burghers listed above, with the exception of the Craigs, were sent to the Eshowe Camp.

The Bester group was not the biggest group of Boers to surrender. During the last couple of days of March 1901 35 Boers with 3 500 head of cattle surrendered to Magistrate A.W. Leslie at Nongoma. According to Leslie almost all the cattle had lung sickness and he therefore suggested that they be isolated under the management of the surrendered Boers, but under the supervision of a responsible white man and two Zulu. The cost involved would be 30 shillings per day which Leslie wanted the surrendered Boers to pay.³⁸ Unfortunately no further information could be found on this, the largest group of burghers to surrender in Zululand, as it would certainly have helped paint an even more complete picture of the arrival in Zululand and the Eshowe Camp of surrendered burghers during the Anglo-Boer War.

During this time, Melmoth, the main town of Proviso B, the block of land with its large Natal Boer population sacrificed by the New Republic during negotiations with Natal in exchange for its recognition of independence, became a cross road for surrendered burghers. I.C. and J.C. Meyer and their families and A.M. and I.C. Muller and their families were allowed to proceed to Melmoth with 194 cattle, three horses, one mule and four wagons. The arrangement was that they had to report to the magistrate once a week. Unfortunately for these families two horses and the mule died.³⁹ The Muller's must have been unhappy with the arrangement as they later proceeded to Eshowe Camp and then onto Umlalazi with 106 cattle and three wagons.⁴⁰

The Meyer's on the other hand became part of the party of surrendered burghers who functioned totally separately from the Eshowe Camp administration. Although difficult to determine how many surrendered Boers, other than the Bester group, resided in Zululand outside the jurisdiction of the Eshowe Camp, the number must have been fairly substantial. A list of names of surrendered burghers in Zululand, found with the

34. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: Letter P.M. Bester to Magistrate A. Hulley, Melmoth, 27.4.1901.

35. PAR, 1/NGA 3/2/7: Telegram Magistrate A.W. Leslie, Nongoma, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 1.4.1901.

36. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: Pass issued by Magistrate A.W. Leslie, Nongoma, 2.4.1901.

37. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

documents of the magistrate of Melmoth, contains, amongst others, names such as S., W., S., and J. Terblanche, S.B. and P. Buys and L. Badenhorst from the Vryheid District that were residing in Zululand. None of these names appear in the Eshowe Camp register.⁴¹

Boer officers sometimes interpreted the Kitchener proclamation differently than originally intended by the British so as to assist unfit burghers to surrender. Daniel Louw and his wife Maria of Luaffer Drift were sent into Zululand by Field-Cornet Scholtz and Commandant Pienaar under the proclamation because Louw was unfit for military duty and they had no means to assist him. Louw also expressed the wish to cross into Zululand to surrender.⁴² The Louw's surrendered to Magistrate Leslie before they were sent to Eshowe Camp and ultimately Merebank.⁴³ General J.C. Emmett similarly wrote to Magistrate Wheelwright asking him to meet Mrs F.J.A. Dekker on the border as she wished to join her husband who had surrendered in Zululand 9 months earlier, leaving her to fend for herself.⁴⁴ Magistrate Wheelwright, after consulting the Officer Commanding Troops in Zululand, undertook to have Mrs Dekker met on 20 January 1902 under a flag of truce so as to get her to join her husband who was residing in the Umlalazi District.⁴⁵ The real problem during this interaction was that Wheelwright had the three Boers who brought the letter arrested, because he suspected two of them, Potgieter and Liversage, to be Natal rebels from the Melmoth District.⁴⁶ The matter was referred to the Prime Minister of Natal, Sir A. Hime. What happened to these burghers is unknown.

Although surrendering in itself must have been an unpleasant experience for the burghers, it would be fair to say that life for the women and children which they left behind must have been even more traumatic. J.L. Coetzee, who had surrendered with the Bester party, asked Major H.A. Vowell for compensation because the British military took 100 sheep from his farm in the Vryheid District on which his family was still

38. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: List of surrendered burghers of Vryheid in Zululand. no date.

39. PAR, 1/NGA 3/2/7: Letter Field-Cornet Scholtz and Commandant Pienaar to Magistrate A.W. Leslie, Nongoma, 7.11.1901.

40. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

41. PAR, PM Volume 26: Letter General J.C. Emmett to Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, 13.1.1902.

42. PAR, PM Volume 26: Letter Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, to General J.C. Emmett, 15.1.1902.

43. PAR, PM Volume 26: Telegram Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 17.1.1902.

residing. Coetzee strangely enough expressed no fears for the safety of his family.⁴⁷ The same egoistic concern for their own safety and that of their property rather than that of their family were exhibited by surrendered burghers such as Johan Doyer, William Ellerston, Gert Gregory and Marinus Knight who crossed into Zululand well before their loved ones. Even worse than this was the behaviour of burghers such as Carl Butz and Franz Dekker who surrendered with property but left their families in the Vryheid District to deal with the war.⁴⁸

Not all burghers who tried to surrender experienced the good economic fortune to hang on to their livestock. On 2 March 1901 Dederich Schultze and his family from Hochberg, Vryheid crossed the Zululand border to surrender at Mahlabatini. About 6 miles (9.6 km) from the magistracy he was overtaken by some of his country men who looted all his cattle. Some of the Zululand Native Police stationed at the magistracy tried to oppose the looting in a half-hearted manner by returning the Boer fire from long range. Following the civil war type skirmish, Magistrate Wheelwright had the family brought in, after which Schultze surrendered his Mauser and some ammunition. Schultze was now stranded and the magistrate uncertain about what to do with him.⁴⁹ The chief magistrate immediately consulted Major Vowell,⁵⁰ who decided that Schultze and his family should be sent to Eshowe at the first available opportunity. In the meantime, the magistrate of Mahlabatini had to feed Schultze and forward the charges for that to the Officer Commanding Troops in Zululand. The Mauser and ammunition of Schultze were also to be sent to Eshowe as soon as it could be arranged.⁵¹

The Schultze's were not the only surrendered Boers who suffered at the hands of their countrymen. On 1 April 1901, F.J. de Jager and his family of six of Doornhoek, D. Coetzer also of Doornhoek, J.L. Vermaak of Beverson and D.P.J Ferreira and his 10-year-old daughter and M.J.T. Ferreira and his family of three, both from Uitkomst all farms in the Vryheid District surrendered at the Mahlabatini magistracy. After familiarizing themselves with the terms of surrender this group was placed by the magistrate, at what appeared a safe distance from the magistracy, before they would be

44. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: Letter J.L. Coetzee to OC troops in Zululand, Major H.A. Vowell, 28.5.1901.

45. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

46. PAR, 1/MBT 3/2/2: Telegram Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 4.2.1901.

47. PAR, 1/MBT 3/2/2: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to OC troops in Zululand, Major H. A. Vowell, 4.3.1901.

48. PAR, 1/MBT 3/2/2: Letter OC troops in Zululand, Major H. A. Vowell to Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, 7.3.1901.

allowed to proceed to Eshowe. This did not stop a Boer Commando from attacking the group on 25 April 1901 and raiding their cattle. Against this attack the magistrate found himself hopeless and the Boers got away with 826 head of cattle of which 51 belonged to Vermaak, 86 to the Ferreira's, 384 to Coetzee and 308 to de Jager, 50 of which he was herding on behalf of a certain Scheepers.

These surrendered burghers only left for Eshowe on 14 May 1901 with the orders to immediately report to Major Vowell. To get them mobile Wheelwright had to lend D.P.J. Ferreira 18 oxen from the stock of cattle he had confiscated for military activities.⁵² When this motley crew left Mahlabatini De Jager had 20 cattle left, Coetzee 22, the Ferreira's 10 and Vermaak nothing.⁵³

The trip via Melmoth to Eshowe, although not great in distance, must have been tough on man, beast and wagon as this group of surrendered Boers only arrived in Eshowe on 5 June 1901. Shortly after their arrival on 24 June 1901, Jacobus Vermaak died. According to the Eshowe Camp register F.J. de Jager brought in 38 cattle, 18 more than he left Mahlabatini with, while D. Coetzee brought in 65, 43 more than he left Mahlabatini with. The Ferreira's were not so creative or resilient and arrived at Eshowe without any of their cattle.⁵⁴

Other burghers were even worse off than the Ferreira's. Seven surrendered burghers - P. von Berg, H.J. Coetzee, J.J. Uys, S.J. Smith, J.W. Kunzman and H. and B. Volker, all unmarried except for Smith and Kunzman - were sent under escort to report to the authorities in Eshowe. These surrendered Boers were so destitute that Chief Magistrate Saunders ordered the magistrates to feed them during their journey. With this a new problem arose as the magistrates had no authority to feed surrendered Boers but only Natal rebels. This left the question: were these men were to be treated as criminals? To solve this problem a list of the food given to the surrendered men was forwarded to the relevant magistrates who then fed them accordingly.⁵⁵

A burgher of the Transvaal who called upon the British to protect him against his

49. PAR, 1/MBT 3/1/2: Letter Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, to OC troops in Zululand, Major H.A. Vowell, 15.5.1901.

50. PAR, 1/MBT 3/1/2: Letter Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 13.5.1901.

51. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

52. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: Correspondence relating to the feeding of surrendered burghers in transit, 6-7.4.1901.

countrymen and against the British was the Reverend Frederick Stallbom of the Hanoverian mission at Bethel. In a letter Stallbom called on Magistrate Leslie for protection against the Boers who prevented him from surrendering and also for protection of his and the mission stations property against the British. The missionary furthermore wanted permission to cross the Transvaal-Zululand border at will to continue with his missionary work.⁵⁶ The outlandish request of Stallbom could not have received a favourable reply as he surrendered to the magistrate at Nongoma during April 1901. The claims of Stallbom that he was a German subject did not impress the magistrate who pointed out to him that he had voted in the Transvaal elections. What counted in favour of Stallbom was that he had taken no active part in the war, and he was allowed to proceed via Eshowe and to Durban.⁵⁷

While it may seem strange for Boers to act against or raid the cattle of their own countrymen it must be remembered that Boers who surrendered and therefore deserted the Republican cause became handsoppers and were viewed with little sympathy by those who were still fighting. At the same time these Boer raids took place while the Bottomley raids were in full swing. Boers were trying to replace the cattle they lost due to these raids and the stock of surrendered burghers, who were unarmed and disloyal was an easy target.

Surrendering Boers were not only an easy target for their countrymen but also for the Bottomley agents and their Zulu assistants. C.J. (Cornelius) van Rooyen and his family of the farm Holkrantz in the Vryheid District tried to surrender under the deal brokered by Field-Cornet E. Rabe with Commissioner Smith in Vryheid. Van Rooyen found it difficult to cross the border into Zululand as the stock of surrendering Boers were looted by fellow Boers who at times even threatened to shoot the handsoppers. During the night of 31 March-1 April 1901 Zulus armed with assegais, Martini Henry, Schneider and Mauser rifles, under the command of Dinizulu, raided 83 head of cattle and six horses from Van Rooyen where he camped just inside the Transvaal. The following morning when Van Rooyen crossed into the Nongoma District of Zululand his remaining 74 cattle were looted by armed Zulu again under the supervision of Dinizulu. When Van Rooyen confronted Dinizulu on why he was looting his stock, he was informed that he was doing so by orders of Colonel Bottomley who threatened him with a prison sentence if he did not comply.

53. PAR, 1/NGA 3/2/6: Letter Reverend F. Stallbom to Magistrate A.W. Leslie, Nongoma, 5.1900.

54. PAR, 1/NGA 3/2/7: Telegram Magistrate A.W. Leslie, Nongoma, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 4. 1901.

On arriving in Nongoma C.J. van Rooyen made a full statement and appealed for protection to Magistrate A.W. Leslie. Leslie took immediate action by sending a written message to Dinizulu ordering him to return all stock looted from Van Rooyen, and by providing the latter with a letter entitling him to search for his cattle in Zululand. The reaction of Dinizulu to the magistrate's note was to return all stock, but he was prevented from doing this by Struben, a Bottomley agent, and Van Rooyen therefore only received 71 of the 74 head of cattle looted from him in Zululand. Van Rooyen confronted Struben with the magistrate's orders but this was to no avail as Struben drove Van Rooyen's remaining three cattle away.⁵⁸ The appeal by Van Rooyen for the recovery of his cattle when it came to the attention of the Prime Minister Hime and Governor McCallum, provided them with a valid argument why the Bottomley raids should be terminated.⁵⁹

55. PAR, PM Volume 22: Statement by C.J. van Rooyen to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 28.5.1901.

56. PAR, PM Volume 22: Letter Governor H.E. McCallum to Lord Kitchener, 4.6.1901.

CHAPTER 4.

THE ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE ESHOWE CONCENTRATION CAMP

The location that both the captured and surrendered burghers had to proceed to was the Eshowe Concentration Camp. The camp was located at Fort Curtis on the road to Melmoth, several kilometres from the town, on land ceded by the Natal Government to the military.¹ The remains of the Fort Curtis site are to be found on a ridge a few hundred metres to the west of the Eshowe-Melmoth road as one leaves Eshowe. South of this position is the position of the garrison camp used by the military forces that occupied Zululand from 1880 to 1899.²

MAP OF FORT CURTIS AND ESHOWE

Very few of the surrendered burghers resided in the Eshowe Camp as they and their cattle were scattered all over Zululand. This meant great freedom as they only had to report to the police in the magisterial district they were residing in on Mondays.³ The only people who resided from time to time in the Eshowe Camp were the captured women and children, the surrendered burghers with no property, or those burghers grazing their cattle around Eshowe. The Eshowe Camp was therefore more of an administrative centre for surrendered burghers, and the term “concentration camp” should be viewed in its widest possible geographical, political and military context.

Eshowe Camp was initially controlled by the military, assisted by the magistrate of Eshowe, A. Boast, the civil commissioner and chief magistrate of Zululand, Sir. C.R. Saunders, and the local police. The camp had a very small permanent staff consisting of the camp superintendent and one nurse.⁴ These staff members were supported in the handing out of rations and the completion of other tasks by two surrendered

1. *De Kerkbode*, 1.8.1901.

2. Lugg H.G., *Historic Natal and Zululand*, p.130.

3. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, to district police officer, 17.3.1902.

4. PAR, GH Volume 554: Report March 1902 on Natal Concentration Camps, T.K. Murray, 19.4.1902. The name of the superintendent of the Eshowe camp could not be determined from any official documents.

burghers, D.J. Pretorius and C.H. Milne.⁵ The Eshowe Camp, because of its limited number of inhabitants and the temporary nature of their stay, had no need for matrons, foremen, overseers, storemen, clerks or burgher police as outlined by the General Superintendent of Burgher Camps in Natal, Sir. T.K. Murray, for camps under his jurisdiction.⁶

The inhabitants who resided in the Eshowe Camp were housed in bell tents which could accommodate five people. The living conditions in Eshowe were according to Ds. W.P. Rousseau of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk or Dutch Reformed Church (hereafter DRC) in Pietermaritzburg far superior to those of other camps in Natal.⁷ The surrendered burghers who resided under the administration of the Eshowe Camp with their cattle and other property in the various Zululand Districts generally lived in their own tents and in wagons.

On the medical front the camp was attended to regularly by the medical officer of the army, or the district surgeon, Dr. W. Case, assisted by the camp's nurse. Eshowe was the only camp in Natal which provided no dispensaries.⁸ The newly constructed Queen Victoria hospital in Eshowe could accommodate the seriously ill.⁹ Facilities were otherwise rudimentary but adequate to serve the needs of the ill amongst the small number of surrendered and captured burghers. For toilets the dry earth pale system was adopted, and cleaned on a daily basis, while rubbish and slops were removed frequently.¹⁰ Clean drinking water and washing and bathing facilities were available in pools created by the military in the streams around Fort Curtis. The Burgher Camps Department provided the inhabitants with soap.¹¹ This, along with the absence of overcrowding, made for a healthy camp with very few surrendered or captured Boers reporting sick.

The food rations handed to the inhabitants encamped at the Eshowe Camp were the same as for other Natal Concentration Camps. For adults it consisted of the following

5. PAR, CSO Volume 1691: Minute papers G 882-10197, 1901.

6. PAR, GH Volume 553: Rules and regulations for Natal Concentration Camps, October 1901.

7. *Die Kerkbode*, 1.8.1901.

8. PAR, GH Volume 554: Report November 1901 on Natal Concentration Camps, T.K. Murray, 10.12.1901.

9. Lugg, p.130.

10. PAR, GH Volume 554: Report January 1902 on Natal Concentration Camps, T.K. Murray, 12.2.1902.

11. Field excursion conducted by Mr. Pennefather of Eshowe, January 1999.

per week: meat 4 lbs, bread 7 lbs, sugar 14 oz, coffee 7 oz, potatoes 3 2 lbs, salt 3 2 oz. For children over 5 years old it was: meat 3 lbs, bread 3 2 lbs, sugar 14 oz, coffee 7 oz, potatoes 3 2 lbs and salt 3 2 oz, while for children under 5 years it was milk 4 tins and meat 3 2 lbs. The wood necessary to prepare the food rations was 7 lbs per person. This could be supplemented by wood the inhabitants collected from around the camp. For lighting the Boer inmates were provided with candles.¹²

The cost of the food rations, varied according to season and availability, but were generally 3/3d, 2/6d, 2/3d, per person for each individual group. The food to the Eshowe Camp was supplied by the Officer Commanding Army Service Corps stationed in Eshowe, who received all payments directly. He then had to pay those in Eshowe town who provided the food rations, such as the local baker who provided the bread. Since the Eshowe Camp was geographically removed from the major centres in Natal, and not linked to them by rail, the town greatly provided in the needs of the camp. This in turn benefited Eshowe economically.¹³ The concentration camps in Natal, including the Eshowe Camp, were transferred from military to civil administration during October 1901. Military staff was replaced by civilian staff. The funding for the camps was in future to be provided by the Burgher Camps Department in Pretoria. This step led to a general saving of expenses in all camps, including Eshowe.

The records on recreation in the Eshowe Camp are very limited. The various hotels in Eshowe must have been a visited regularly as Ds. Rousseau complained that their close proximity to the camp served as a great temptation. Dancing was also high on the entertainment agenda as the camp inhabitants were busy erecting a tent for this purpose when Rousseau arrived.¹⁴ Of the surrendered burghers residing outside the Eshowe Camp at least Sam Liversage and Johan Schoon requested permission to go to the sea for a two-week holiday.¹⁵ The envisaged holiday had the blessing of Saunders,¹⁶ and must have provided a pleasant interlude from the problems related to the war.

12. PAR, GH Volume 554: Report November 1901 on Natal Concentration Camps, T.K. Murray, 10.12.1901.

13. PAR, CSO Volume 1691: Minute paper 9882-10197, 1901.

12. *De Kerkbode*, 1.8.1901.

13. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 29.10.1901.

14. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 31.10.1901.

In total the cost of the organization and administration of the Eshowe Camp under civilian rule was £1307.3.2. The nature of this expenditure is outlined in Table 4. The low costs could be attributed to the small number of inhabitants the camp had to deal with. The vast number of surrendered burghers who were residing under the camp administration in other Zululand Districts had to carry their own expenses and provide their own provisions.¹⁷

TABLE 4.
FINANCIAL EXPENDITURE AT ESHOWE CONCENTRATION AND
SURRENDERED BURGHERS CAMP

ITEMS	FINANCIAL EXPENDITURE
Stores	£588. 12. 11
All Pay	£504. 9. 6
Housing	£4. 0. 6
Fuel and Water	£5. 12. 0
Maintenance	£25. 6 .0
Medical comforts	£27. 0 .11
Sanitation and Transport	£44. 5. 6
Supplies and Sundries	£137. 13. 10
Clothing	-
Equipment	-
TOTAL	£1307. 3. 2

The greatest amount of money went to stores to feed the inhabitants resident at the Fort Curtis premises. This is followed by salaries, which is very high if taken into consideration the small number of staff members the camp had. This amount could be contributed to the fact that a camp superintendent could earn up to £40, a week. Lesser amounts, as outlined, were allocated to the general day to day functioning of the camp as. As most inhabitants were surrendered burghers no clothing or equipment was

14. PAR, GH Volume 554: Correspondence General Superintendent Natal Concentration Camps to Controller, 31.3.1903. The cost of maintaining the Eshowe Camp while under military administration is not known.

needed as they probably provided their own.

The rules drawn up to solve the administrative and organizational problems in the other Natal Concentration Camps had little or no relevance to the unique situation of the Eshowe Camp. The same could be said of the monthly reports submitted by Sir T.K. Murray to the Governor of Natal. Eshowe Camp was rarely mentioned, and if referred to it was mostly a brief reference to the number of inhabitants. This backwater camp without a school, hospital, matron and almost all the requirements stipulated for concentration camps was never visited by Murray or by the Fawcett commission appointed to investigate concentration camps during late 1901.¹⁸

The number of people that passed through the Eshowe Camp totals 527. Of these 91 were captured by the British and were thus concentration camp inmates, while 436 arrived as surrendered burghers, or refugees.¹⁹ Although the Eshowe Surrendered Burghers Camp started in December 1900, record submissions to the authorities only originated during October 1901 when the camp reverted to civilian rule. Because numerous surrendered burghers and their families were allowed to reside outside of the Eshowe Camp, and the continuous transfers of inmates to other parts of Natal and to the Merebank and Wentworth Concentration Camps the population of the Eshowe Camp fluctuated greatly. This fluctuation in the monthly population breakdown is reflected for the period between September 1901 until the camp closed during April 1902, when the remaining surrendered burghers administered by the camp were again placed under military administration. According to J.C. Otto,²⁰ who quotes the British Blue Books, the Eshowe Camp's monthly population were as follows: **Oct-1901:215, Nov-1901:194, Dec-1901:263, Jan-1902:253, Feb-1902:231, March-1902:232, April-1902:28**. This population analysis does not include the 16 black people who resided in the camp with their employers as the camp records treated them as non-people.

To administer the burghers after they had surrendered, especially when large numbers were allowed to live in a scattered manner outside of the Eshowe Camp, proved very difficult. The administration was made even more difficult since the military, police, magistrates and the camp superintendent were involved in this process. To make this extensive administration from a geographical viewpoint financially viable Sir Charles

15. PAR, GH Volume 554: For the low status of the Eshowe Camp see the monthly reports for Natal Concentration Camps from November 1901 to January 1903.

16. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

17. Otto J.C., *Die Konsentrasiekampe*, p.173.

Saunders instructed all magistrates to keep expenses in connection with surrendered Boers to the bare needs only.⁶²

Another administrative problem that arose due to the extended location in which the surrendered Boers resided was with mail. Surrendered burghers residing outside of the Eshowe Camp were mailing letters without submitting them for censorship to the superintendent of Eshowe Camp. Since this could lead to serious breaches in security in times of war the superintendent instructed the postmaster at Eshowe to hand to him all incoming letters meant for surrendered burghers, so that they could be censored. The result of this was that the superintendent partially opened a letter addressed to Carl Butz from the acting German consul in Durban. This caused a diplomatic row that simmered for a while,⁶³ and in a small way this brought the German sympathy for the Boer cause into the Eshowe Camp.

The position of a young Piet Maree also caused an administrative predicament. Maree, an invalid, joined the families of Johan Schoon and Sam Liversage, after they had surrendered during June 1901. This meant that he had not surrendered with them, or on his own. When this was discovered Maree received a letter instructing him to speak to the superintendent of the Eshowe Camp on the possibility of staying with his host families in the Umlalazi District.⁶⁴ In the register of the Eshowe Camp there is no record for a young Piet Maree, but only for a 32 year old Piet Maree with an extended family and 100 cattle- obviously a different person⁶⁵ The discussion between the young Piet Maree and the camp superintendent must have satisfied the latter, as Maree was allowed to return to his host families.

These were not the only administrative bungles by the camp authorities. During June 1901 when J. Volker and his family from Ehlangeni, Vryheid, H. Volker of Vlakfontein, Vryheid and G. Schultze of Nauwpoort, Vryheid reported with their cattle to the magistrate of Umlalazi they had no documents to endorse their position and status. According to these burghers they were under the impression that the documents would be sent to Umlalazi. Magistrate Robinson was concerned as the surrendered burghers needed documentation to prove that they had reported to him every Monday. To solve

59. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to magistrates, 13.1.1902.

60. PAR, GH Volume 867: Documents referring to the opening of a letter addressed to C.F. Butz, September 1901.

61. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 4.11.1901.

62. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

the problem Robinson contacted Saunders.⁶⁶ In his response the chief magistrate insisted that the military had informed Robinson. As proof he even quoted reference numbers for the documents. To solve the problem Saunders suggested to Robinson that he should provide these surrendered burghers with a certificate to prove that they had reported themselves.⁶⁷ Other burghers thought they were camping in the Eshowe District when they were actually in the Umlalazi District.⁶⁸

These bungalows are proof of the difficulties experienced in administering this unique camp with many of its inhabitants spread over Zululand. At other times the camp administration excelled at trivial matters. An example of this is the killing of a cow with a broken leg. The cow belonged to a certain Van Tonder and had been left in the care of a Zulu named Malivia, by a certain de Jager after the latter found the animal helplessly "bogged and in extremis." The result of this was an extensive investigation trying to determine whether the cow was cruelly treated or if Van Tonder had granted permission for the killing and what should happen to the calf.⁶⁹

Generally, the organization and administration must have been easy as the Fort Curtis site had few inhabitants all of a temporary nature, while those surrendered burghers residing under camp administration in other parts of Zululand were under the control of the local magistrates. The administration of the Eshowe Camp was terminated when the last inhabitants was removed to Merebank and Wentworth on 15 April 1902. The remaining surrendered burghers who remained with their cattle were again administered by the military.

63. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 17.6.1901.

64. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 19.6.1901.

65. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter J.J. van Reenen and A.J. Liversage to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 19.5.1901.

66. PAR, 1/MBT 3/2/2: Correspondence relating to the death of a cow belonging to a surrendered burgher Van Tonder, 16 and 19.8.1901.

CHAPTER 5.

LIFE IN THE ESHOWE CONCENTRATION CAMP

A typical day in the life of an Eshowe Concentration or Surrendered Burghers Camp inhabitant differed vastly from those experienced in other concentration camps. With great freedom to roam around in the Eshowe Camp or to live in the traditional manner of Boers outside of the camp, while merely being administrated by the camp, life must have, despite the war, been fairly pleasant.

Proof of the good life is that during the existence of the Eshowe Camp only 4 people died. The first to die was the 46-year-old Herman van der Westhuizen of Ngomi Bush, Vryheid on 21 May 1901. The cause of his death is not mentioned and he left two male relatives aged 26 and 12. Margeretha Kunzman, aged 32, of Tweefontein, Vryheid passed away on 8 June 1901. Once again, the cause of death is not given. Margeretha left her husband Adolph, a female relative of 32 and three children aged 1, 5 and 7 years. The third casualty was Jacobus. S. Vermaak, aged 24 of Beverson in the Vryheid District who passed away on 24 June 1901. The cause of his death is not mentioned either and according to the records he had no relatives.¹ The fourth person to die in the Eshowe Camp was the 6-months-old Petrus Jacobus Groenewald who died of acute dysentery on 13 February 1902. He was the son of Petrus and Louisa Groenewald of Jachalsdraai in the Wakkerstroom District. Groenewald is the only death listed as having occurred in the Eshowe Camp.² The reason for this is that official record keeping of the Eshowe Camp only started during September 1901, after the first three deaths had already occurred. All the deaths that occurred in the Eshowe Camp were of surrendered burghers. None of the captured or concentration camp inmates died in Eshowe.

According to a list of surrendered burghers of the Vryheid District found amongst the papers of the Melmoth magistrate, H. Havemann and L. Fourie also died in Zululand. This is difficult to verify as the only H. Havemann in the Eshowe Camp register left for Merebank alive and well on 20 October 1901, where he survived the camp unscathed. Neither is there any record of an L. Fourie in the Eshowe Camp records.³

1. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp. The grave of J.S. Vermaak is the only one that could be located in the Eshowe Cemetery. The age on his tombstone is stated as 34 and not 24.

2. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

3. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: List of surrendered burghers of the Vryheid district in Zululand. No date.

Three inhabitants, who passed through the Eshowe Camp, died in concentration camps in Durban. Susara Combrink aged 7 months died on 14 March 1902 of pneumonia in Merebank. She was the daughter of Maria and Stephanus Combrink of Uitzicht, Vryheid. Susara, her mother and eight brothers and sisters were captured by the British while her father was still on commando at the time of her death.⁴ Hendrina Cecilia Smit aged eight months died of meningitis in the Wentworth Camp on 13 May 1902, 1 month after her arrival from Eshowe. She was the daughter of Rachel and Frederick Smit of Ngomi Bush, Vryheid.⁵ The third former Eshowe inhabitant that passed away in a Durban Camp was Maria Delpont, daughter of Susana. M. and Willem. J. Delpont of Boshoeck, Vryheid. She passed away in Merebank on 13 June 1902 of diarrhoea.⁶ Maria, along with her mother, two brothers and sister were captured by the British Army while her father was still on commando.

During the existence of the Eshowe Camp three children were born. The first to be born was Johanna de Lange on 16 July 1901, to her 20-year-old mother of the same name. The father, Wessels de Lange, was on commando at the time, and the young mother surrendered two months before the birth. The second to be born was Maria Delpont, who was born shortly after her heavily pregnant mother was captured by the British Army on 30 December 1901.⁷ Maria later died in the Merebank Concentration Camp. The third child to be born in the Eshowe Camp was Marthinus, born on 13 March 1902, to the surrendered burghers Lodewyk and Elizabeth de Jager of Lisborne in the Vryheid District.⁸

On the religious front the inhabitants of both the Eshowe Camp and the outlying areas had to rely on “huisgodsdien” for their spiritual guidance as no Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk existed in the town. The only visit by a dominee was by Ds. W.H. Rousseau of Pietermaritzburg on 9 July 1901. During his visit Rousseau found no formally organized church organization. In an attempt to address this, he promptly organized a commission consisting of Andries Laas, an elder of the Nederduits Gereformeerde Kerk in Vryheid, as well as all other men who were interested. This commission immediately negotiated with the camp superintendent for a large tent that could serve as both a church and a school. During these negotiations Rousseau

4. NAR, DBC Volume 91.

5. NAR, DBC Volume 113.

6. NAR, DBC Volume 91.

7. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

8. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

stressed the importance of a full-time dominee. Both these requests had the support of the superintendent who promised a tent and officers rations and an allowance to any dominee appointed to the camp. He also undertook to raise all the other matters with the Officer Commanding Troops in Zululand.

The presence of Rousseau galvanized the men of the camp into action and they started to pull tarpaulin across a wooden frame which provided the setting in which a service could be held. The service was concluded by a prayer session and was also attended by the Ortlepp and Koekemoer of Melmoth, who had to travel to Eshowe for the service as the restrictions placed on travel during the war prevented Ds. Rousseau from visiting them. Due to all his various commitments Rousseau could not visit Eshowe again. His wishes for a spiritual leader to come to Eshowe fell on deaf ears.

By July 1901 the Eshowe Camp had no formal school, and as a result the camp inhabitants had to make their own provisions. This they did by starting several small schools in the tents they lived in. These arrangements did not please Ds. Rousseau who pleaded with the camp superintendent for a school tent. Rousseau also requested desks and tables as well as support for the teachers involved in home schooling.¹⁰ His requests must have been ignored as the education situation had deteriorated to such an extent that by 12 March 1902 no more home schooling occurred.¹¹

The political life the Eshowe Camp inhabitants were leading could be described as complex but Transvaal orientated. As political neighbours they had 70 Natal Afrikaners from Proviso B, Klip River County and Weenen County who were imprisoned as rebels for fighting on the side of the Boer Republics.¹² While these Natalians were in jail for supporting the cause of the Republics or were being removed from their farms in Proviso B under martial law the surrendered burghers were keeping cattle under British control, protected by various garrisoned forts.¹⁴

Not all surrendered burghers remained neutral or passive. C.L. van Tonder actively joined the British war effort. Other surrendered burghers stopped short of actively joining the British but they tried to prove their loyalty to their new masters by supplying them

10. *De Kerkbode*, 1.8.1901.

11. PAR, Colonial office (hereafter CO) CO 417/350 Volume 1: Medical report Dr. T.W. Hime, Feb 1902.

15. *De Kerkbode*, 1.8.1901.

17. PAR, GH Volume 554: Report November 1901 on Natal Concentration Camps, T.K. Murray, 10.12.1901.

with information on possible Boer spies.

The first to be accused as a Boer spy was a Zulu by the name of Mkaseni. E.F. Potgieter of the farm Susan in the Vryheid District claimed he knew Mkaseni who lived on P.W. Labuschagne's farm Bethel. After his surrender to the magistrate at Mahlabatini Potgieter saw Mkaseni on the premises and asked him to convey a message to the Zulus he had left in charge of his property. Mkaseni did this. To his surprise Potgieter met Mkaseni again, this time at the camp in Eshowe where he was told that all is well on his farm Mkaseni then enquired on the whereabouts of Labuschagne as the latter's sheep were dying. In an effort to assist Mkaseni, Potgieter directed him to Labuschagne's wife as he was still making his way towards the Eshowe Camp. Anna Labuschagne's reaction on seeing Mkaseni was to inform Potgieter that he was a bad apple and that she was afraid of him. She advised Potgieter to report him to the authorities. This Potgieter immediately did. Mkaseni was subsequently arrested by the military. The attitude of Potgieter now changed completely and forgotten was the favour Mkaseni had done him under trying circumstances. Potgieter now declared that the Boer's attacked Mahlabatini magistracy a few days after he met Mkaseni, and therefore he regarded him as a Boer spy.¹⁶

The statement of Potgieter was backed up by J.P. Zietsman of Christinasdal, Vryheid who also claimed that he knew Mkaseni. According to Zietsman he saw the accused six to eight days before the Boer attack on Mahlabatini at their refugee camp at Mahlabatini. Zietsman did not think of him as a spy then, but when he heard afterwards that he had counted the dead and wounded after the Boer attack he became suspicious. This notion was enhanced when Mkaseni questioned Zietsman on the whereabouts of his cattle. Like Anna Labuschagne, Zietsman viewed Mkaseni as a bad character.¹⁷

These statements made the magistrate of Eshowe start his own investigation. In response to his queries he was informed by C.A. Wheelwright, the magistrate at Mahlabatini, that Mkaseni was of great support to him in aiding surrendered Boers in crossing into Zululand, specifically in delivering a message from Wheelwright to the Reverend Schultze in the Transvaal.¹⁸

19. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Statement by E.F. Potgieter before Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 7.6.1901.

20. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Statement by J.P. Zietsman before Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 7.6.1901.

21. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Telegram Magistrate C.A. Wheelwright, Mahlabatini, to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 10.7.1901.

Anna Schultze and her family of Nauwpoort, Vryheid, the wife of Peter Schultze who had arrived in Eshowe on 27 March 1901 were aided by Mkaseni in the process. According to Anna Schultze, Mkaseni was the only Zulu prepared to take a letter addressed to her husband in the Eshowe Camp to the magistrate at Mahlabatini. On completing this he picked up a letter at Mahlabatini from her husband, and delivered it to her on the farm. After this he assisted her in crossing the border at Ripleys store at Ceza. From there Mkaseni again went to Mahlabatini on 28 May 1901 to ask Magistrate Wheelwright to send the wagons he had promised to pick up Mrs Schultze and her family. Mkaseni then returned before the wagons arrived, only to accompany the Schultze's by wagon to Mahlabatini. From Mahlabatini he went ahead to Eshowe. The next time she saw Mkaseni he gave her a verbal message from her husband. On her arrival at the Eshowe Camp she heard that he had been arrested as a Boer spy. She rejected this idea, stating that if it had not been for his help she would still have been in the TRANSVAAL.¹⁹

Mrs A. M. Z. Schultze's statement was supported by Solomon a Zulu employed by R.H. Schultze of Tabankulu farm who had arrived in Eshowe on 2 May 1901. Solomon stated that he knew Mkaseni who lived on a mission station run by the Schultze's. Solomon was sent by his employer, during June 1901, to fetch goats from the mission station. On his arrival Reverend. Schultze asked him if he had seen Mkaseni whom he had sent to Eshowe Camp to find out how his children were. Solomon left with the goats and returned via the magistracies of Mahlabatini and Melmoth. On his arrival he heard that Mkaseni had been arrested as a Boer spy.²⁰ Another employee of R.H. Schultze, Roselina who accompanied Solomon to the Eshowe Camp, backed up his version. She likewise swore that Mkaseni was not a Boer spy.²¹

It is uncertain what happened to Mkaseni, but what seems clear is that he had very close interaction and relationships with burghers from the Transvaal. In reality he was more of a loyal servant than a spy who conveyed military secrets. The motivation to portray such a person as a British spy by Anna Labuschagne and supported by Potgieter and Zietsman, is either a case of mistaken identity or an effort by newly surrendered burghers to get into the good books of the British authorities.

22. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Statement by A.M.Z. Schultze before Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 28.6.1901.

23. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Statement by Solomon before magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 1.7.1901.

24. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Statement by Roselina before Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 1.7.1901.

This was by no means the only spy accusation. J.C. van Tonder of Mooiplaats, Vryheid reported Ukosana and Ukakazi as Boer spies. On investigation it turned out that these men were merely cattle raiders who crossed from the Transvaal into Zululand “with the cattle they won.”²²

Under the proclamation of surrender issued by Kitchener when stock belonging to the surrendered burghers could be requisitioned and paid for by the military. The military did just that when they commandeered a black stallion, a brown mare and a chestnut mare from Sam Liversage at Nongoma for a receipt to the value of £35 during 1901. Liversage handed the receipts over to A.W. Leslie, the local magistrate, to pursue the matter of payment. This Leslie did. The problem for Liversage was that by early 1903, long after the war ended, he was still to be paid. To get his money Liversage had to enlist the help of James Anderson, a solicitor practising in Vryheid. The payment was finally made to Liversage on 3 April 1903, more than a year after his horses were commandeered. The unhappiness of Liversage with the military was increased by the fact that extensive further correspondence was necessary before he could secure his original receipts.²³

Other surrendered burghers were more content with the commandeering of their horses, simply because they were paid sooner. Colonel Bottomley commandeered a horse each from surrendered burghers Coetzee, Van der Westhuizen and Moolman to ironically enough raid other Boers. They received receipts to the value of £15, £12 and £12 respectively.²⁴ The assistant commissioner of police at Melmoth, Sergeant G. Mansell joined in the act by commandeering 14 horses from surrendered burghers for the military at Eshowe. T. Nel, P. Nel, M.A.S. Coetzee, C. van Rooyen, S.J. van der Westhuizen, L.J.D. Nel and J. Theunissen each supplied one horse while P. van Rooyen and P. Bester each supplied two horses. P.R. Nel supplied three horses.²⁵ Since horses were scarce because of the demands of the war the surrendered burghers received a fair price but lost a valuable transport commodity.

Relations between the British authorities and surrendered Boers living outside the

25. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, to Magistrate A. Hulley, Melmoth, 4.11.1901.

26. PAR, PM Volume 36: Correspondence relating to the commandeering of horses belonging to S. Liversage by the military, 21.5.1903.

27. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: Letter C.N. Lewis to Magistrate A. Hulley, Melmoth, 29.3.1901.

28. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: List and description of horses commandeered from surrendered burghers by G. Mansel, 6.4.1901.

jurisdiction of the Eshowe Camp had strains of its own. L.G. Botha, a surrendered burgher who with his family was allowed to reside with his brother, A. Botha at C. Schwab, the local blacksmith, ran foul of the authorities. Botha apparently interfered, despite warnings by the magistrate, with the family of Schwab and caused general trouble in the neighbourhood. As a result both Botha's brother and Schwab requested his removal to the Eshowe Camp.²⁶ This request had the support of Chief Magistrate Saunders who instructed Major H.A. Vowell to remove L.G. Botha and his family to the camp.²⁷ Bureaucracy now set in as Vowell instructed the magistrate of Eshowe to pass this task on to the district police officer.²⁸ Sergeant Ashby who investigated the matter indicated that it was more a personal feud between L.G. Botha on the one hand and Schwab and Botha's brother on the other hand. According to Ashby, it was definitely not a political offence.

The solution however, remained the same, namely to move L.G. Botha and his family to the Eshowe Camp. This was not an easy task to fulfil as Botha could not be notified for he was away riding transport to the Tugela River.²⁹ The thought of sacrificing their freedom for life in the Eshowe Camp was too much for the offending Botha's and they begged the police not to move them there. Instead of moving them the police notified the magistrate of their pleas.³⁰ The pleas of the Botha's must have been successful and they must have solved the problems with their hosts amicably as no record exist of them being moved to the Eshowe Camp.

Relations between the British and the Natal Afrikaners, who as British subjects resided in Zululand, were at times strained. Chief Magistrate C. R. Saunders suspected the Afrikaners farming in the Melmoth area of actively aiding the Vryheid commandos with information and provisions. Despite the misgivings of Saunders, the Boers of Melmoth did report commandos in their neighbourhood. D.J. Pretorius reported on two occasions, on 4 February and again on 19 February 1901 per letter to the Melmoth magistrate that Boer patrols had visited him on his farm.³¹ A.L. Pretorius of the same

29. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to OC troops in Zululand, Major H.A. Vowell, 1.9.1901.

30. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to OC troops in Zululand, Major H.A. Vowell, 3.9.1901.

31. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, to District Police Officer, Eshowe, 6.9.1901.

32. DAR, 1/ESH3/2/4: Letter Sergeant Ashby to OC troops in Zululand, Major H.A. Vowell, 11.9.1902.

33. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter Sub Inspector Police F. Evans to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 11.9.1901.

34. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: Letters D.J. Pretorius to Magistrate A. Hulley, Melmoth, 4.2.1902 and 19.2.1902.

farm reported the same two incidences per letter.³² Despite these acts of co-operation and loyalty to the British cause D.J. Pretorius was accused of being an undesirable, and that he lent towards the Boer cause. After spending some time in the Eshowe Camp, he was sent to Pietermaritzburg. This suspicion was also extended to Smit Loffler, the store owner at Bulwana. Loffler was suspected of harbouring cattle for burghers of the Transvaal. These accusations were thoroughly investigated and proved to be false as the cattle belonged to Loffler's wife, Martha, who was the daughter of Henry Corbett, a Transvaal citizen and one of the first burghers from the Vryheid District to surrender in Zululand.³³ This investigation did not clear Loffler of suspicion and he was later moved to the Eshowe Camp as an undesirable.³⁴ This treatment of Natal Boers by the military did not serve to endear them, and probably only served to cause disloyalty. The military on the other hand were justified in their suspicions as Natal Afrikaners from the Melmoth area such as the Kritzinger's actively fought on the Boer side from as early as the outbreak of the war. The solution to the military was therefore the removal of all Natal Afrikaners from the Melmoth and Nkandla Districts.³⁵

The stay of the majority of people in the Eshowe concentration and surrendered burghers camp was temporary. With frequent intervals inhabitants journeyed onwards from Eshowe. The women and children captured between 24 December 1901 and 2 January 1902 were all sent to Merebank in two batches on 27 January 1902 and 12 February 1902 respectively. This trip, firstly by post car then by train, took half a day to reach Durban.³⁶ The captured families were joined or preceded to the Merebank Concentration Camp by a variety of surrendered Boer refugees. The criteria for the transfer of refugees seemed to be greatly economic in nature. Those with very little or no property were generally all directed to the Merebank and Wentworth Concentration Camps. Some exceptions seem to have occurred e.g. Hendrik Havemann who had 45 head of cattle. These were taken care of by his three brothers who all went to the Nkandla District. Similar agreements must have been made for people such as Gert Muller of Twyfelhoek, Vryheid who had 130 head of cattle.³⁷ The authorities in Eshowe deemed it an unnecessary expense to maintain a camp for surrendered burghers who

35. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: Letters A.L. Pretorius to Magistrate A. Hulley, Melmoth, 5.2.1901 and 19.2.1901.

36. PAR, ZA, Volume 33: Documents pertaining to the investigation of the cattle belonging to S. Loffler, 1.1900.

37. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

38. PAR, PM Volume 90: Telegram General J.G. Dartnell to Prime Minister A.H. Hime, 3.10.1901.

39. *De Kerkbode*, 1.8.1901.

40. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

could not maintain themselves, especially since the concentration camps that were opening up in Durban were in close proximity.

The refugees with no property were treated the same way as the captured women and children. The main difference was the stigma the surrendered burghers had to endure as they were labelled as joiners on their arrival in Merebank, and therefore also housed in the joiner section of the camp.³⁸

The transfers of surrendered Boer refugees from Eshowe to the concentration camps in Durban are listed in Table 5. This list excludes the captured women and children.

TABLE 5.
TRANSFERS OF SURRENDERED BURGHERS FROM ESHOWE CAMP TO
MEREBANK AND WENTWORTH CONCENTRATION CAMPS

DATE OF TRANSFER	CAMP TRANSFERRED TO	NUMBER TRANSFERRED	COMMENTS
20.10. 1901	Merebank	73	This transfer occurred shortly after the Merebank Camp had opened and conditions were particularly bad.
26.10. 1901	Merebank	40	As above.
6.11. 1901	Merebank	23	As above
27.1.1902	Merebank	8	These refugees were transferred with the captured women and children.
10.4. 1902	Merebank	16	
15.4.1902	Merebank	10	Transferred on the closure of the Eshowe Camp.
15.4.1902	Wentworth	29	Transferred on the closure of the Eshowe Camp.

In total 199, or 28% of the total number of people that passed through the Eshowe Camp as surrendered burghers were transferred during 7 trips to the Merebank and Wentworth Concentration Camps. All of these except for 29 were sent to Merebank. The first two transfers, shortly after the construction of the Merebank Concentration Camp, dealt with the majority of property-less surrendered burghers. When the Eshowe Camp was closed down on 15 April 1902 the last two groups of Boer refugees were

41. NAR, DBC Volumes 126-133.

sent to Merebank and Wentworth respectively.

Surrendered burghers, regardless of property, but who had friends or family residing in Natal were generally allowed to join them. For this to happen the camp inmates had to approach the General Officer Commanding Natal for permission. This ruling put an end to the request by A.J. Bruyns of Harburg that D.J. van Rooyen and his son, also D.J., be allowed to reside with him while he took care of their requirements.⁴⁰ D.J. van Rooyen must have applied for this transfer again later as he was later allowed to join Bruyns. His son was not as fortunate and ended up in Merebank. Other surrendered burghers were sent away for being undesirable or for humanitarian reasons. Table 6 contains an analysis of these transfers.⁴¹

TABLE 6
TRANSFERS OF SURRENDERED BURGHERS FROM ESHOWE TO OTHER
AREAS, MOSTLY IN NATAL

DESTINATION OF SURRENDERED BURGHERS	NUMBER	COMMENTS
UMVOTI	5	The Craig family of three with their property on 15.10.1901. E. Davel to join family or friends on 18.10.1901.
PIETERMARITZBURG	2	D.J. Pretorius of Waterfall, Melmoth sent as an undesirable. M.A.J. Coetzee of Vryheid sent to Pietermaritzburg.
NKANDLA	3	The 3 brothers Havemann of Langfontein, Vryheid were allowed to take their livestock and that of their father and 2 brothers, who were sent to Merebank, to Nkandla.
DURBAN	3	C. Kloppe by OC, Zululand. No reason given. C.J. Moll of Potchefstroom by Governor, Zululand. No reason given. Rev. F. Stallbom on 27.4.1901.
GREYTOWN	20	H. and P. Knoop and their families on 5.6.1901. F. Volker with his family on 5.6.1901. C. Lilje on 5.6.1901.
HERMANNSBURG	5	K. Kassier of Nooitgedacht, and L. Kassier of Ekuhlangene, Vryheid on 2.9.1901.
MELMOTH	4	H.B. Liversage and family by Governor, Zululand on 3.3.1902.
DAVELSMTA (?)	3	The Milner family of Luideni, Zululand allowed by the Governor of Zululand to reside at Davelsmata (?).

43. PAR, CSO 1678: Letter A.J. Bruyns to Colonial Secretary J.C. Smythe, 14.6.1901.

44. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

DESTINATION OF SURRENDERED BURGHERS	NUMBER	COMMENTS
HOWICK	1	F.J. Potgieter of Vaalbank, Vryheid to Howick Concentration Camp on 28.3.1902.
VOLKSRUST	1	L. Page to the Volksrust Concentration Camp.
NOODSBERG	1	D.J. van Rooyen joined family at Noodsberg.
STANGER	3	D. Schultze of Hochberg, Vryheid and his family.
DUNDEE	1	B. Volker joined fellow Germans at Dundee.
UMSINGA	3	Three Volkers aged 18, 15 and 13 to Umsinga.

In general, the surrendered burghers joined family or friends. This humanitarian policy was encouraged by Sir T.K. Murray. An example of this was the request by the Reverend H. Röttcher, O. and K. Röttcher and W.M. Lilje that their surrendered relations, F. And J. Volker and their families, P. and H. Knoop and families and C. Lilje be allowed to join them at their agricultural settlement in Umvoti County (Greytown). The requesting families, with the support of the Weenen magistrate, undertook to enter into bond for the faithful observance of any conditions imposed by the authorities. The hosts furthermore undertook to provide the families with means of farming until the war ended or until they could return to their farms. What the host families were very clear about was that their relatives wanted to free themselves from the Boers as they feared bad treatment because they had surrendered.⁴² This request was not subjected to the red tape the Bruyns family met earlier and the families, with the exception of J. Volker who wanted to go to Umlalazi, were allowed to proceed to Seven Oaks and Greytown on 5 June 1901.⁴³ On their arrival in Greytown the surrendered burghers enquired what amount of surety was required by the Eshowe magistrate to guarantee their adhering to their parole so that they could obtain the £400 they had deposited with him.⁴⁴

Other German families were allowed to join the German communities at Hermannsburg, Umsinga, and Dundee. An exception was D. Schultze and his family who left for the Stanger area. Surrendered burghers such as F.J. Potgieter and L. Page were relocated to the Howick and Volksrust Concentration Camps respectively. Others were transferred to Durban without reasons being provided. These transfers, generally humanitarian in

45. PAR, Magistrate Weenen (hereafter 1/WEN) 3/2/4: Letter H., O. and K. Röttcher and W. Lilje to Magistrate M. Matthews, Weenen, 25.5.1901.

46. PAR, 1/WEN 3/2/4: Letter OC troops in Zululand, Maj H.A. Vowell, to Magistrate M. Matthews, Weenen, 2.6.1901.

47. DAR, 1/ESH 3/3/2: Telegram Magistrate (?), Umvoti, to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 8.7.1901.

nature, served to keep the population of the Eshowe Camp low and saved the military money as surrendered burghers generally now had to rely on friends and family for support. At the same time this meant that the Eshowe Camp did not have to erect elaborate facilities. Surrendered burghers must have appreciated these transfers as it saved them from life in the crowded Merebank and Wentworth Concentration Camps.

Some surrendered burghers were allowed to reside in and around Eshowe, even after the camp was closed. C.F. Butz with his 100 cattle, H.J. Corbett with his family of eight and 135 cattle, C.J. A.M. and A.M. Laas with their families and 125 cattle as well as J.L. Zietsman with his family of 3 and 20 cattle continued with their farming activities under the protection of the military in the Eshowe District. The 71-year-old Sannie Fourie was allowed to reside in Eshowe itself, while Smit Loffler, a Natalian and the storekeeper at Bulwana, was viewed as an undesirable and also had to live in Eshowe.⁴⁵

The remainder of the surrendered burghers, made up of 144 men, women and children, or 27 % of the number of people that passed through the Eshowe Camp, were allowed to graze their livestock on crown land in the Umlalazi District. This was the only Zululand District that could accommodate the surrendered Boers as it was fever free and not that hot and therefore healthier. Once the Umlalazi District was identified as the area most suitable for the surrendered Boers they had to move from all over Zululand, where they were camped, to the area. Here they had to report to V.G. Robinson, the local magistrate, who had the task of appointing them their grazing. Robinson was supported in this task by Stock Inspector G. Gielink.⁴⁷ As in the Eshowe District these surrendered burghers were under the protection of the military.

To accommodate these burghers was no easy task, as the Zululand authorities were under pressure by the military to graze 18 000 cattle in Zululand. At the same time the authorities had to protect the few head of cattle of the Zulu which had survived the rinderpest. This envisaged influx of surrendered Boers into Umlalazi did not please Magistrate V.G. Robinson who was worried about the impact of the surrendered Boer cattle on the Zulu in his district. Chief Magistrate Charles Saunders reaction was to inform Robinson in no uncertain terms that all districts had to contribute to the war effort, whether they liked it or not.

48. NAR, DBC Volumes 151 and 152: Registers for inhabitants of the Wentworth Concentration Camp.

50. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 1.10.1901.

Example of such surrendered burghers and their families who were notified by the police that they had to move to Umlalazi were the following: J.C. van Tonder with 250 cattle from north of the Mlalazi River; J.T. Potgieter with 47 cattle and C.J. Laas with 100 cattle from 4 miles (6.4 km) north of Mlalazi River on the road to Lower Umfolozi; J.J. van Reenen and the two Landsberg brothers with 200 cattle from north of the Mlalazi River on the Lower Umfolozi road; J.A. Liversage with 330 cattle from Mhlatuze Thorns near John Louws; P.W. Labuschagne with 250 cattle also from Mhlatuze Thorns near John Louws; I. Vermaak with 100 cattle from north of Mlalazi River and H.J. Corbett with 135 cattle from north of Mhlatuze Thorns near John Louws.⁴⁸

To put the notification of the above-mentioned surrendered burghers into action was not that simple. J.J. van Reenen and J.A. Liversage who wanted to move from their positions because of fever and heat,⁴⁹ had the blessing of Chief Magistrate Saunders.⁵⁰ The only problem was finding suitable grazing not already taken up by fellow surrendered Boers. Magistrate Robinson thought he had solved this problem by allocating the area south of the Emntshebani store on the border of the Eshowe District to these families.⁵¹ This site did not meet the approval of Stock Inspector Gielink as it was already occupied by Boers. Gielink's alternative site was south of the Nyenzane Mission Station at the mouth of the Hohls River close to the border with the Eshowe District.⁵²

Unfortunately for Van Reenen and Liversage they could not take up their allocated positions as their cattle came down with lung sickness and were quarantined for six weeks.⁵³ For these families it must have been a major setback as it was the second time that their cattle came down with lung sickness. When they surrendered in Zululand during May 1901 a stock inspector had declared their 530 head of cattle clean as they had been inoculated three and six months before.⁵⁴ This proved to be an incorrect

51. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, to District Police Officer, no date.

52. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter J.J. van Reenen and J.A. Liversage to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 9.9.1901.

53. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 16.9.1901.

54. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 23.9.1901.

55. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 29.9.1901.

56. DAR, 1/ MTU 3/3/2: Letter Stock Inspector G. Gielink to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 8.10.1901.

57. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter J.J. van Reenen and A.J. Liversage to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 19.5.1901.

diagnosis as Sergeant Wilson of the Natal Police and the same stock inspector quarantined the cattle for six weeks shortly afterwards when they broke out with lung sickness.⁵⁵

The cattle of the above-mentioned surrendered burghers were not the only ones to encounter lung sickness. The 300 cattle of Sam Liversage and Johan Schoon were, after inspection, quarantined for six weeks at Hlabisa. When the quarantine period had expired Liversage and Schoon and their families were instructed by the military to leave for the Umlalazi District. However, their cattle were still infected with lungsickness and immediate steps had to be taken to stop them from proceeding beyond the Umfolozi River. With their trek cut short Liversage and Schoon were instructed to graze their cattle under quarantine between Fayles store and the Umfolozi River well west of the wagon road.⁵⁶

An additional problem arose when these families contracted fever at Mpukunyoni and Magistrate Robinson was requested to settle them in a healthy spot.⁵⁷ Robinson thus placed S. Liversage, J. Schoon and their respective families and cattle at a location identified for J.J. van Reenen and A.J. Liversage whose cattle were still under quarantine.⁵⁸ This placement is a clear indication of the lack of suitable grazing experienced in the Umlalazi District due to the great influx of surrendered burghers and their cattle. The sickness contracted by both man and livestock serves to illustrate the impact of trekking from altitudes of between 900 - 1400 metres to levels of 0 – 400 metres.

The problems associated with lungsickness⁵⁹ had the makings of a serious environmental problem for all the cattle in Zululand. When the surrendered burghers entered Zululand with their cattle the whole area became infected. This problem was escalated by the infected cattle brought into Zululand from the Vryheid District during the Bottomley raids. In an attempt to control both the disease and the surrendered

58. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter Sergeant Wilson to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, No date.

59. DAR, Magistrate Lower Umfolozi (hereafter 1/EPI, 3/2/6): Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate A.R.R. Turnbull, Lower Umfolozi, 23.8.1901.

60. DAR, 1/ MTU 3/3/2: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 4.10.1901.

61. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter Stock Inspector G. Gielink to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 8.10.1901.

62. Lung sickness (bovine pleuro-pneumonia) is a highly infectious septicemia with a principal localization in the lungs, caused by mycoplasma mycoides. It occurs only in cattle. The cardinal signs are cough, fever, dyspnoea, pleuritic friction sounds and gurgling breath sounds. The fatality rate is high. Blood D.C. and Studdert P., *Bailliere's Comprehensive Veterinary Dictionary*, p.153.

burghers whose cattle were spreading it, it was decided that from mid-June onwards surrendered burghers would only be allowed to enter Zululand via Umtangene Drift at the confluence of the Tugela and Buffalo Rivers. From here the surrendered burghers had to proceed due east, without halting for undue reasons, through Yolland and Eshowe Districts to the lower Umfolozi District near the banks of the Mhlatuzi River. This area was apparently safe from lung sickness.⁶⁰ This strict entrance control hampered Boers from the Vryheid District who wanted to surrender as it would not enhance the proclamation as outlined by Kitchener. To assist the Boers who wanted to surrender the Natal Minister of Agriculture, A.W. Winter, declared that there were no restrictions on bringing cattle into Zululand, but once cattle were in Zululand they could only be removed to Klip River County.⁶¹ The exit measures from Zululand were backed up by an extended inoculation program for surrendered Boer cattle, like the 450 cattle belonging to Paul Nel, and the quarantine of all cattle belonging to surrendered Boers in and around Eshowe.⁶² These measures seemed futile as the military spread lung sickness by bringing 825 infected cattle from Nkandla to Eshowe to exchange for horses. The reaction of the Eshowe magistrate was to place the cattle under quarantine 5 miles (8 km) from Eshowe.⁶³

These steps seem to have had the containing effect hoped for. It did not, however, solve the problem in its entirety. Surrendered Boers J. and H. Volker and G. Schultze's 800 cattle were allocated grazing between Port Durnford and the Mhlatuzi River. A problem arose when at night time their cattle destroyed the crops of the Zulu residing nearby. Magistrate Robinson's solution was simple: the Boer cattle had to be kraaled or watched at night. This problem was increased when these surrendered burghers drove off a cow belonging to the local Zulu with their own herd and refused to hand it back. The cow could also not be removed from the herd by the magistrate as the herd was under quarantine for lung sickness and a permit from the stock inspector was needed before the cow could be removed. The Zulu therefore had to wait until after the herd was inoculated before they could reclaim their beast.⁶⁴

63. NAR, SOP Volume 7: Letter APM Natal district to OC Ladysmith SD, 14.6.1901.

64. PAR, PM Volume 22: Letter Minister of Agriculture A.W. Winter to Prime Minister A.H. Hime, 6.6.1901.

65. DAR, 1/ESH 3/3/2: Report Stock Inspector G. Gielink and deposition by Nomanagaza to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 19.6.1901.

66. PAR, Principal Veterinary Surgeon, (PVS) Volume 9: Letter Stock Inspector G. Gielink to PVS, 4.7.1901.

67. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 4.10.1901.

Generally, the inhabitants of Zululand and specifically Zulu cattle farmers suffered greatly with the influx of thousands of head of surrendered Boer cattle and cattle belonging to the military taking up their grazing and spreading lung sickness to their small herds already decimated by rinderpest. The British by placing the surrendered Boers between the Zulu in areas suitable for grazing served to disempower the politically shattered Zulu Kingdom even more. The ability of the Zulu to live in scattered homesteads and to keep cattle was greatly challenged by this deed and were about to be altered for good.

At least one inhabitant, C.E. Symmonds, spoke up against allowing the surrendered enemy being to bring their cattle, of which many were infected with lungsickness, into Zululand. Symmonds also posed the meaningful question: If the Boer cattle should spread disease to cattle belonging to British subjects, who should they look to for compensation?⁶⁵

With the great number of Boer cattle in the Eshowe and Umlalazi Districts other problems were bound to arise. A local storekeeper and supplier of fresh meat to the military in Zululand, Thos Allison, had problems in finding suitable grazing for his 200 slaughter cattle. Magistrate Robinson of Umlalazi refused to grant him permission to graze in his district because Stock Inspector Gielink, informed him that no grazing was available because of the large number of surrendered Boer cattle which had taken up all the grazing. Gielink also envisaged more surrendered Boer cattle coming into the district.

The situation forced a desperate Allison to bring the 200 oxen into the Umlalazi District without permission. This did not endear him to Robinson as Allison had done this before. To solve the problem the magistrate suggested to Allison that he could graze his oxen at Umhlatuzane on the Eshowe border at the normal fee. The only problem was that this area was also already occupied by surrendered Boers. This suggestion by Magistrate Robinson did therefore not solve Allison's problem and he desperately requested permission to graze his cattle in the leper colony. This request was also denied as the Zulu residing there had crops left on the field which would be damaged by grazing cattle.⁶⁶

68. DAR, 1/MEL 3/2/8: Letter C.E. Symmonds to Magistrate A. Hulley, Melmoth, 4.4.1901.

69. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 1.10.1901.

Chief Magistrate Saunders fully supported the Umlalazi magistrate's handling of the matter. To Saunders the solution was that as the military had taken a large number of Allison's cattle for consumption he could therefore graze the 200 oxen with what was left of his 500 strong herd in the Eshowe area.⁶⁷ This suggestion by Saunders did not solve Allison's problem. His 500 cattle near Eshowe had ample grazing but he could not find more suitable pastures there as surrendered Boers had also there claimed the best areas.⁶⁸

As it was of vital importance, for the sake of the war effort, to find grazing for Allison's cattle he was allocated the area beyond the racecourse in Eshowe for a period of four months. Allison also ran into problems here, and he complained to the Eshowe magistrate that Paul Nel's herd of 450 cattle had taken possession of this grazing area beyond the racecourse which had been allocated to him to graze his 200 slaughter oxen.⁶⁹ The magistrate solved the problem by allocating the area between Eshowe and the Eutumeni hills for the rest of the summer to Nel on the provision that his 450 and the 465 cattle of the Van Tonder's did not encroach and interfere with the cattle of the local Zulus. This satisfied Nel who found ample grazing in this area.⁷⁰ It is clear that the influx of the cattle of the surrendered burghers created new strains on grazing and water, while it also created environmental effects such as overgrazing and lung sickness.

These problems were of minor consequences to the surrendered burghers in the Umlalazi and Eshowe Districts initially under the administration of the Eshowe Camp and on the closure of the latter the military. The military allowed them to sell cattle and cattle products,⁷¹ as the war provided a market for such products. This provided them with economic independence and the means to buy food, clothes and other necessities. Various surrendered burghers of the Umlalazi District provided employment for fellow surrendered burghers without cattle. P.W. Labuschagne for example employed L.E. Dalton while J.J. van Reenen employed the Landsberg brothers.⁷² Other surrendered burghers filled the niche in the transport market, which was the domain of Boers before

70. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 7.10.1901.

71. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter T. Allison to CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders, 28.9.1901.

72. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter T. Allison to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 16.1.1902.

73. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, to T. Allison, 20.1.1901.

74. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 8.6.1901.

75. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, to District Police Officer, 17.3.1901.

the war. L.G. Botha rode transport in the Tugela River area,⁷³ while J. Schoon and S. Liversage were given permission to ride transport between Lower Tugela and Eshowe and Umlalazi. The only condition attached to this was that they had to obtain a pass from the magistrate at Umlalazi, and report to him on their return to their camp.⁷⁴

The life for the surrendered burghers with property who were allowed to reside in the Eshowe and Umlalazi Districts was a far cry from the life in the concentration camps. With property intact, they carried on with a very normal lifestyle. For them the idea to surrender was definitely worth it. This was not the case for those who surrendered without property as they ended up in the concentration camps alongside the captured women and children.

76. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter Sergeant Ashby to OC troops in Zululand, Major H.A. Vowell, 11.9.1901.

77. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, to CM and Sir CC C.R. Saunders, 7.1.1902.

CHAPTER 6.

PEACE AND THE DISCONTINUATION OF THE ESHOWE CAMP

Peace between the Boer Republics of the Free State and Transvaal and the British Empire came, after lengthy negotiations and almost 3 years of war, on 31 May 1902.

With the coming of peace serious attempts were made to get life to return to normal in Zululand. The secretary of native affairs instructed the various magistrates in Zululand to inform the chiefs and headmen in their magistracies that peace had come about. The former Boer Republics were now part of the British Empire and the Boers were now fellow British subjects.¹

Four days after peace was declared residents of Melmoth and other districts bordering the Vryheid area, who were removed by the military from their homes, were allowed to go home with their livestock and belongings. Store keepers near the border were informed that they could open their stores and order fresh supplies.² This order by Saunders was promptly overturned by the military,³ since all Boer forces had not yet turned themselves in. By 21 June 1902 store owners could restock and reopen their stores in Zululand under the supervision of the magistrates as the surrender of the Boer forces were now completed.⁴

Movement in Zululand also no longer required military passes. The exceptions to this were ex-burghers or persons who had been removed from their homes on suspicion of supporting the commandoes.⁵ The surrendered Boers in Zululand also no longer needed to report to the local police and magistrate on every Monday.⁶ As fully-fledged British subjects the surrendered burghers resident in Zululand could now move around freely with their families.

The result of this was that the ex-burghers who could support themselves started to return home to Vryheid and other districts. Before this could happen, it was required of

1. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Circular 19-1902, Secretary Native Affairs F.R. Moor to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 14.6.1902.

2. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 4.6.1902.

3. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 9.6.1902.

4. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 21.6.1902.

5. DAR, 1/ESH 3/2/4: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 21.6.1902.

6. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to all magistrates, 16.6.1902.

them to sign three copies of either an oath of allegiance or declaration of loyalty.⁷ The magistrates were also encouraged to assist the speedy return of the Boers to their homes once they had signed the oaths.⁸

Not all of the surrendered burghers were keen to return to the Vryheid District. A Mr. Liversage and three others asked for, and were granted permission by the Officer Commanding Troops in Zululand, Major Vowell, to take their cattle to the Lower Umfolozi. This decision was vetoed by Chief Magistrate Saunders, who thought it undesirable. The magistrate of Umlalazi had the task of informing these Boers at that the letter by Major Vowell was written under a misapprehension and that they could no longer graze their cattle in crown lands in Zululand but had to return "to their own homes in the Transvaal."⁹

The rational behind the willingness by Boers such as Liversage for remaining in Zululand was not only the fear of the fate that awaited handsoppers and the painful return to a ruined farm but also the possibility of acquiring land in Zululand. On 1 August 1902 the five years in which the Zulu were not be disturbed in their ancient land occupancy, as conceded at the time of the territory's incorporation into Natal, expired. Under the Zululand Lands Delamination Commission sufficient land were to be demarcated for Zulu locations and the rest to be set aside for whites.¹⁰

At least the burghers who surrendered with cattle could return home with their property but not their dignity, in place. Some who persevered up to the bitter end lost everything, property, life and their country - as the districts of Vryheid and Utrecht became part of Natal.¹¹

For the residents of the Vryheid and Utrecht Districts in the Natal Concentration Camps, including those who reached Merebank and Wentworth via Eshowe, repatriation came sooner than for most since they were now to become residents of Natal and also had the support of General Louis Botha in this process. This repatriation happened by train via the transit camp at the Nqutu Road Station. This in itself was a mammoth task,

7. DAR, 1/ESH 3/3/2: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to Magistrate A. Boast, Eshowe, 2.7.1902.

8. DAR, 1/MTU 3/3/2: Letter CM and CC Sir C.R. Saunders to all magistrates, 23.6.1902.

9. DAR, 1/ESH 3/3/2: Letter OC troops in Zululand, Major H.A. Vowell, to Magistrate V.G. Robinson, Umlalazi, 23.6.1902.

10. Laband, p.439.

11. Brookes E.H. and Webb C.de B., *A History of Natal*, pp.211-212.

including the use of 986 mules, three horses, 300 oxen, 79 mule wagons, 40 ox wagons, two cape carts and three water carts. Co-operating with the Vryheid and Utrecht Repatriation Committee's ex-burghers were transported home and supplied with household equipment and food.¹²

The Eshowe Concentration Camp's final chapter was written when the Sir T.K. Murray ordered the sale of all the camp equipment during a public auction.¹³ Unfortunately this sale was not very successful as most of the camp equipment was not in a very good condition and worth very little. The Fort Curtis terrain that housed the Eshowe Camp was abandoned by the military towards the end of 1902 when they sold their buildings and withdrew the garrison from Eshowe. Under paragraph 10 of the deed by which Fort Curtis was granted for use to the military it reverted back to the Natal Government.¹⁴ With this the Eshowe Concentration Camp disappeared and today the only physical trace that can be found of the camp that served for 50 days as a concentration camp for captured women and children and for 17 months as a refugee camp for surrendered burghers is the markers of the War Department.

12. PAR, Public Works Department (hereafter PWD): Report of Chief Engineer, Natal 1901-1904, pp.12-17.

13. PAR, GH Volume 554: Report for August 1902 on Natal Concentration Camps, T.K. Murray, 1.9.1902.

14. PAR, PM Volume 35: Copies of correspondence relative to the reversion of land at Fort Curtis to the Colonial Government under condition of the deed of grant.

MEMORIAL IN BLOEMFONTEIN AT VROUEMONUMENT

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PIETERMARITZBURG ARCHIVE REPOSITORY (PAR)

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