

2621 PRIVATE ARTHUR EDWARD CAMPBELL

2621 Private Arthur Edward Campbell, b. 1876, joined "A" Squadron, Cape Mounted Rifles, King Williams Town, at the age of 18 years on 10 August 1894. His Defaulter Sheet filled out in 1908 at the time of his requesting a fifth three-year tour of duty describes him as being 5ft.11½ inches in height, with blue eyes, light brown hair and a distinctive tattoo "A" on the left forearm. Whilst stationed in Kokstad, he had suffered a compound fracture of his left ankle which, for some while, put his application at risk.

He was stationed at Ventersburg Road in January 1901 and Knoppe in April 1902.

For his service in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902, he was awarded the Queen's South Africa Medal with battle clasps Wepener (20 April 1900) and Wittebergen (Brandwater Basin campaign : 6 till 31 July 1900); and state clasps Cape Colony and Transvaal.

CAPE MOUNTED RIFLES

The Cape Mounted Rifles (Colonial) was raised in 1855 as the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police (F.A.M.R.), became the Cape Mounted Riflemen (C.M.R.) in 1878, the 1st Regiment South African Mounted Rifles on 1st April 1913 and disbanded in 1926.

During the South African War 1899-1902, when serving with the Colonial Division, the Commanding Officer C.M.R. was commanding during the 17 days of the Wepener siege. In 1899 the usual strength of 750 men was boosted to 900 strong. From 1896 to 1902 Lt.-Col. Dalgety was the Commanding Officer.

The Cape Mounted Riflemen Artillery Troop was raised in 1874 by Lieut. Robinson as the Artillery Troop of the F.A.M.P. with a strength of 50 men. During the South African War 1899-1902 the troop had six 2.5 inch R.M.L. screw guns, two 15-prs. R.B.L., and at the siege of Wepener two Naval guns 12-prs. And a Hotchkiss 13-pr. Q.F.

Following the surrender of the entire British garrison at Reddesberg between 3rd and 4th April 1900, General Christian De Wet laid siege to 1900 men of Brabant's Horse in Wepener. The garrison dug themselves in, their backs to Basutoland, and resisted all attacks until rescued 16 days later by Lord Robert's infantry divisions. De Wet disappeared unscathed.

The Battle of Wittenbergen was a campaign conducted in the Brandwater Basin (an area surrounded by the Wittebergen and the Rooibergen) throughout the month of July 1900, during which thousands of Oranje Vrij Staat boers, including General Prinsloo, were captured, but from which Generals De Wet and Steyn escaped.