

## H. HEMMING

According to "War Establishments 1898", regimental company transport - men and horses in the field - was in the charge of regimental transport officers and consisted of *inter alia* forty-nine mule wagons, a Scotch cart and water wagon. Initially, mules were imported from North and South America, Spain and Italy. However, the best were those bred in the Cape and the Punjab.

Supply columns and parks were in the charge of Army Service Corps Officers and were constituted of companies of 100 ox wagons hired locally. These were managed by black Africans who were "unrivalled ..... and extraordinary proficient in the use of the long whip".

In his first despatch from South Africa dated 6<sup>th</sup> February 1900, Lord Roberts addressed the subject of troop transport. He appointed a Director of Transport, Major-General Sir W G Nicholson, a man expert in logistics. In his article written 25<sup>th</sup> March 1901 and published in The London Gazette, Roberts reflects on the excellence of his re-organisation of the transport system - its "elasticity and adaptability to the changing conditions of field service on a large scale .....".

One gets a sense of the magnitude of the logistical operation from the figures quoted : 475 wagons, 11,362 mules, oxen 9,788 and 34,000 men moving from Modder River to Bloemfontein between 11<sup>th</sup> February and 13<sup>th</sup> March 1900. The number of men grew a further 48,000 on the march to Pretoria. The delicate nature of oxen subjected to long marches, poor silage and cold is reflected somewhat in the monthly casualties - some 4,500 per month, some 4% greater than mules.

Lord Roberts commented in detail on the use and possibilities of steam traction-engines in the Anglo-Boer War. These were under the control of Lieutenant-Colonel Templer, 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps. Steam Road Transport was attached to the Royal Engineers. The vehicles were an adjunct to animal transport, but could only be used in centres where coal and water were readily available.



Photo. Steam Traction during Anglo-Boer War  
<http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/pages/boer.html>

During the Anglo-Boer War, heavy war stores, guns and ammunitions were transported from the steam ship in the Cape Town docks to the railway station by means of *McKenzie Traction Engines*. These powerful machines were able to draw from 10 to 15 heavily laden trucks.

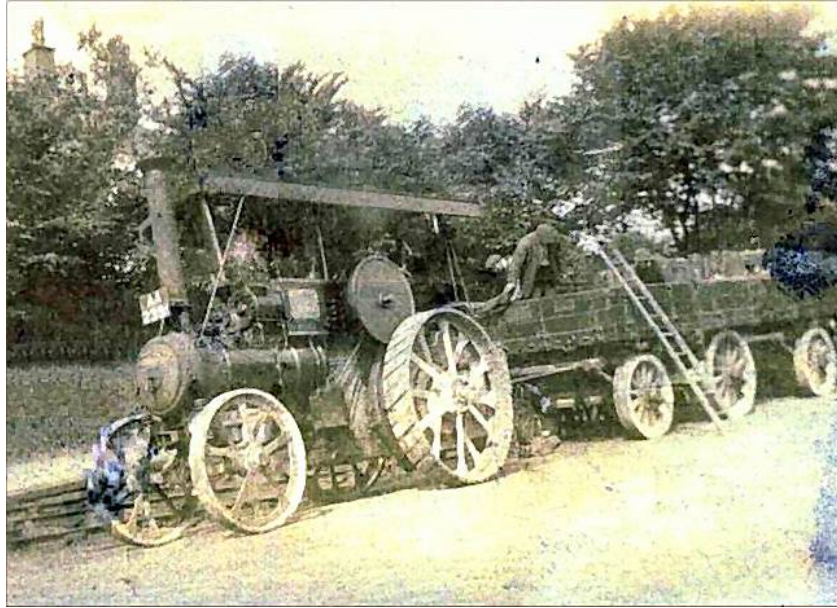


Photo. The General Buller <http://www.webtech.co.uk/traction/wanted.html>

The traction engine (above) was called General Buller and shipped out to South Africa during the Anglo-Boer War (1898-1902). Later, it having no further use, it was returned to the United Kingdom. The engine, registration number AA2391, was subsequently bought by Sammy Ward of "Netherpens", Nafferton, East Yorks and used for road haulage.

H Hemming was awarded the Queens South Africa Medal (state bars Cape Colony, Orange Free State, Transvaal) (inscribed H.HEMMING. STM. RD. TRNST.)



BIBLIOGRAPHY :

1. Report on the Field Transport in South Africa. Lord F M Roberts. London Gazette of 16 April 1901 : 2613-2617
2. <http://www.national-army-museum.ac.uk/pages/boer.html>
3. <http://www.webtech.co.uk/traction/wanted.html>