

CHAPTER SIX

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE AND MILITARY DEVELOPMENT

There was no separate organised system of defence and administration of justice in the Gatsrand. White inhabitants in the area were not part of the ZAR prior to 1900. Initially, Potchefstroom Judicial issues were also dealt with there. It was, however, especially after the Anglo-Boer War and Union that the legal and military setup in the Gatsrand underwent developments and changes – as was indeed also the case at provincial and national level.

6.1 Administration of Justice (Law and Order)

After the trekkers had settled north of the Vaal River in approximately 1839, Potgieter initially ruled with a Council of his own.¹ In 1839, J de Klerk was appointed by the Natal *Volksraad* as Magistrate of the area and he started to exercise authority aided by *heemrade*.² Law and order was thus attended to in an ambiguous way by the two new systems. In October 1840, Potgieter and his followers reached an agreement with the *Volksraad* of Natal by which it was decided that the Trekkers would form a united company under the authority of the Natal *Volksraad*.³ During the session of the Natal *Volksraad* in February 1841, it was decided to institute a deputy council of twelve at Potchefstroom with FG Wolmarans as chairperson.⁴ When Natal was annexed by Britain in 1843, the vice-council declared its autonomy.

In the following year, a *Volksraad* was instituted for the Oorvaal area and on 9 April the so-called Thirty-three Articles in terms of which the land was to be governed were drawn up. The *Volksraad* mainly made use of magistrates, commandants and field cornets for law enforcement.⁵ The magistrate at Potchefstroom also served the wards in the district and was responsible for both the administration of justice and the administration of the

¹ P.L.A. Goldman, *Beredeneerde inventarissen van die oudste archiefgroepen der Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek*, p.138.

² J.H. Breytenbach (red.), *Notule van die Natalse Volksraad: Natal nr. 1, 1838-1845*, p.115.

³ F.A.F. Wichmann, "Die wordingsgeskiedenis van die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek, 1838-1860", *Argiefjaarboek vir suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* 4 (2), 1941, p.120.

⁴ N. Dreyer, *Die rol van die Wolmarans-familie in kerk en staat...*, p.7. Kyk ook F.A.F. Wichmann, "Die wordingsgeskiedenis van die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek, 1838-1860", *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* 4(2), 1941, p.120. Die eerste landdroos van Potchefstroom (J.H. Grobler) is in 1841 aangestel. Kyk *Inventarislys, Potchefstroom (TAB)*, p.137.

⁵ F.A.F. Wichmann, "Die wordingsgeskiedenis van die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek, 1838-1860", *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* 4(2), 1941, p.120. Vergelyk ook P.L.A. Goldman, *Beredeneerde inventarissen van die oudste archiefgroepen der Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek*, p.143.

district.⁶ In all legal issues, the magistrate was assisted by six *heemrade* selected by the Court of Magistrates and *Heemrade*.⁷

The establishment of an independent Supreme Court and the introduction of a jury system in 1828 in the Cape found such favour with the public that the Trekkers subsequently instituted it in their own ZAR Republic too. The Supreme Court consisted of three magistrates as well as 12 persons (probably burghers) who were sworn in as members of the jury.⁸

Up to and including the termination of the ZAR era, the Gatsrand burghers had to travel to Potchefstroom for criminal and civil matters.⁹ There was no circuit court in the area at the time. The role of the inhabitants of Gatsrand in the above-mentioned offices was but minor. In 1867, PTT Pienaar of Elandsfontein number 289 was a member of the *heemraad* of Potchefstroom,¹⁰ while FGA Wolmarans of Welverdiend was petitioned as member of the jury of the Supreme Court in 1874.¹¹

Although the office of field cornet had more of a military character, the field cornet also had to fulfil an important function in the course of justice – especially with regard to the resolution of minor civil proceedings between burghers. Apart from the execution of their minor judicial tasks, field cornets also had an administrative responsibility.¹²

In the event of a ward's having an increase in population or where burghers lived far apart in the area, the field cornet could lodge an application to divide the ward or to appoint an assistant field cornet. The assistant field cornet was a standing military officer who served under the field cornet.¹³ An assistant field cornet was appointed for the Gatsrand as far back

⁶ F.A.F. Wichmann, "Die wordingsgeskiedenis van die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek, 1838-1860", *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* 4(2), 1941, p.121. F.A. van Jaarsveld, "Die veldkornet en sy aandeel in die opbou van die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek tot 1870", *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* 13(2), 1950, p.207.

⁷ M.J. Hugo, "Die stemreg-vraagstuk in die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek", *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* 10(1), 1947, p.8. Vergelyk ook J. Malan, *Die werksaamhede van die amptenare belas met die administrasie van naturellesake in die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek tot 1877* (MA-verhandeling, 1985), p.44.

⁸ M.A.S. Grundlingh, "Vyftig jaar Britse bestuur, 1806-1854" in D.W. Krüger (red.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, pp.167-168. Kyk ook D.J.P. Haasbroek, *Die geskiedenis van Potchefstroom, 1838-1881*, p.71.

⁹ D.J.P. Haasbroek, *Die geskiedenis van Potchefstroom, 1838-1881*, p.71.

¹⁰ Potchefstroom Landdros (TAB), verw. 3: P.T.T. Pienaar/Landdros, 14.5.1867.

¹¹ N. Dreyer, *Die rol van die Wolmarans-familie in kerk en staat...*, p.194.

¹² F.A. van Jaarsveld, "Die veldkornet en sy aandeel in die opbou van die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek tot 1870", *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* 13(2), 1950, pp.209, 243, 306. In hoofstuk 7 word die veldkornet se rol as administratiewe amptenaar bespreek.

¹³ *Staats Courant der ZAR* nr. 3, 16.10.1857, p.3. Vergelyk ook F.A. van Jaarsveld, "Die veldkornet en sy aandeel in die opbou van die Zuid-Afrikaanse Republiek tot 1870", *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* 13(2), 1950, pp.219-220.

as 1855.¹⁴ The sparseness of the burghers' farms in the area was probably the reason for the appointment.

The appointment of a field cornet occurred by way of an instruction by the magistrate in terms of which a retiring field cornet was ordered to hold an election for his replacement in his ward. Initially, a list of nominations was taken around in the ward to determine the choice of the eligible voters. Subsequently, two or three meetings were convened where voting occurred by means of ballots.¹⁵

During the election of a field cornet in Gatsrand in 1881, there was bungling during the election process, which caused assistant field cornet WJJ Kok to lodge a complaint with General P Joubert. The magistrate of Potchefstroom received General Joubert's findings in this regard in February 1882. It was found that the names of some of the burghers appeared twice on the list of candidates and that some of the names on the list were those of people that were not even resident in the ward. As a consequence, JT Martins did not get 133 votes against those of J Geldenhuys, but only 111.¹⁶

The retiring field cornet, AJG Oosthuizen, was requested to hold another election. On 3 May 1882, J Geldenhuys was elected as field cornet when he received 135 votes as against Martins's 114.¹⁷ Even though the appointment of field cornets probably dates back to 1839,¹⁸ documents in this connection with regard to Gatsrand cover events only from 1849.¹⁹ The list below of field cornets and assistant field cornets (also in acting capacity) was composed mainly from documents in the Potchefstroom magistrates' archive:

¹⁴ Staatsekretaris (TAB), verw. R879/55: Staatsekretaris/T. Cronje, 4.3.1855. Die veldkornette is vir hulle dienste deur die regering vergoed, en wel op 'n maandelikse basis. Dit is interessant dat C. Dreyer se 200 riksdalders (40 pond) wat hy gedurende 1860 verdien het, teen 1897 verhoog is na 300 pond. Kyk Staatsekretaris (TAB), verw. R3883/60: Staatsekretaris/C. Dreyer, 8.8.1860. Vergelyk ook *Staats Courant der ZAR* nr. 884, 17.3.1897, p.11.

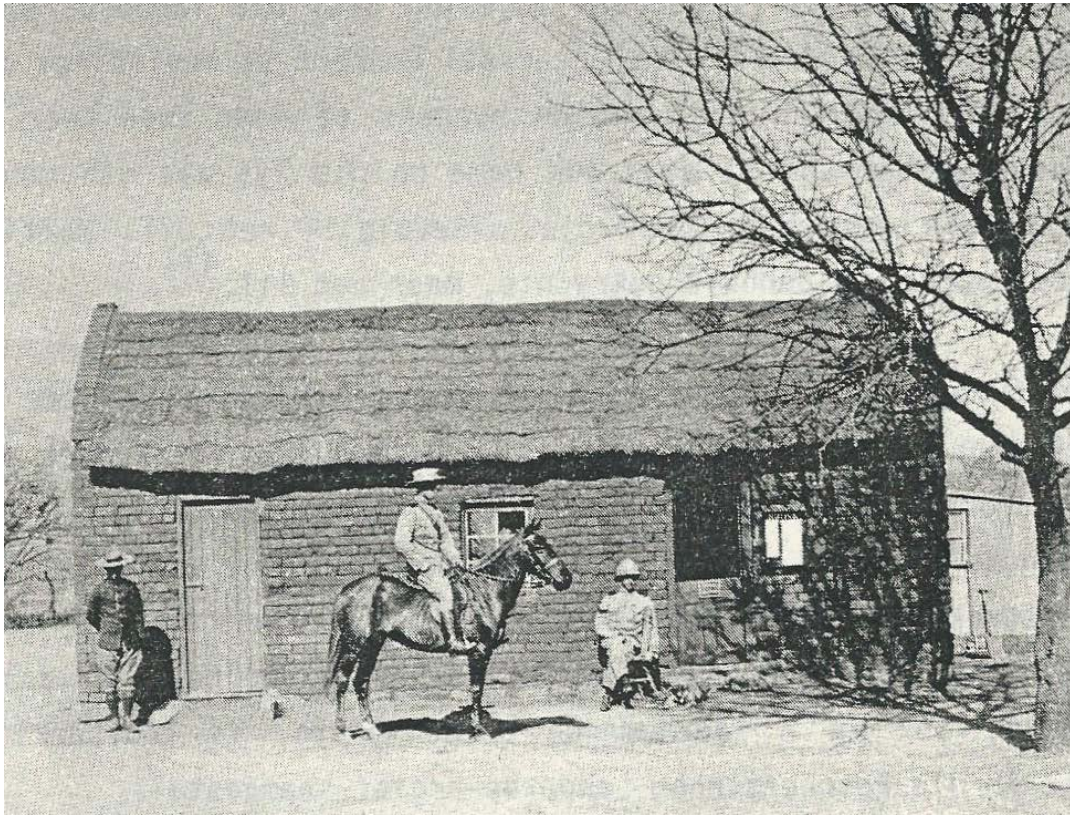
¹⁵ F.A. van Jaarsveld, "Die veldkornet en sy aandeel in die opbou van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek tot 1870", *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* 13(2), 1950, p.222.

¹⁶ Potchefstroom Landdros (TAB), verw. 9: P. Joubert/Landdros, 19.2.1882.

¹⁷ Potchefstroom Landdros (TAB), verw. 9: P.J. Geldenhuys/Landdros, 3.5.1882.

¹⁸ F.A. van Jaarsveld, "Die veldkornet en sy aandeel in die opbou van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek tot 1870", *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis* 13(2), 1950, p.209.

¹⁹ F.G.A. Wolmarans en J.H.G. van der Schyff van Welverdiend was onderskeidelik in 1850 en 1861 veldkornet van wyk Boven Mooirivier. Kyk J.H. Breytenbach en H.S. Pretorius, *Notule van die Volksraad van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek: Transvaal nr. 1, 1845-1850, 22.11.1850*, p.347, en Staatsekretaris (TAB), verw. R4404/61: J.H.G. van der Schyff/ Waarnemende president S. Schoeman, 17.5.1861.



THE SAC POST AT LOSBERG
 Photo: BJJ Vermaas (Jr) (Fochville)

Table 8: Field cornets and assistant field cornets (also in acting capacity)* in the Gatsrand ward, 1849-1910

FIELD CORNET	YEAR OF APPOINTMENT	ASSISTANT FIELD CORNET	YEAR OF APPOINTMENT	ACTING FIELD CORNET	YEAR OF APPOINTMENT
TP Pretorius	1849	T Cronjé	1855		
C Dreyer	1858				
G Engelbrecht	1861			C Dreyer	1863
AL Pretorius	1873	MA Muller	1872	WJJ Kok	1865
CAJ Burgers	1878	A Van Wyk	1878	J Greyling	1873
AH de Vries	1880				
AJG Oosthuizen	1881	PH Martins	1881		
J Geldenhuis	1882	WJJ Kok	1882		
JT Martins	1884	JF van der Merwe	1894	JF van der Merwe	1897
TFJ Dreyer	1901	JP Kleyn	1899 (acting)*	- Cronje	1898
AM Redelinghuys	1902	BJJ Vermaas	1900 (acting)*	FG Breytenbach	1899
JF van der Merwe	1910			MA Muller	1900
				JF van der Merwe**	1902

*The appointment of an acting field cornet and acting assistant field cornet was temporary and did not imply that persons already appointed and who may have been involved in a war against a black tribe or elsewhere were to be discharged.** JF van der Merwe was acting field cornet from 1902 until 1910 when he was officially appointed as field cornet and filled the post until approximately 1912.*

After the Anglo-Boer War, the British administration altered the system of administration of justice of the former Boer Republic. The wards in the district of Potchefstroom were also closely affected by this. In the Gatsrand, police posts of the South African Constabulary (SAC) were established at Welverdiend, Bank and Kraalkop. The one at Welverdiend seemed to be temporary only and was closed soon after 1906 since there already was a police post at Frederikstad (outside the western boundary of Gatsrand).²⁰

The post at Kraalkop was located more centrally than the others. On 11 April 1903, HM du Preez of Elandsfontein number 289 signed a contract with Captain H Chamney of the SAC in which he surrendered his section of the farm Kraalkop for use as a police post.²¹ The major part of the SAC force, which had already been present in the Republic during the Anglo-Boer War, was recruited in England and Canada for the purpose of reinforcing the British element in the former Boer republic. After the war, their main task was to go on police patrols in the conquered areas.²²

On 25 October 1904, Lieutenant NH Barton of the SAC was appointed as justice of the peace for the Gatsrand and Vaal River wards. He was stationed at Kraalkop. It was his duty to assist the Potchefstroom magistrate with maintaining law and order in the area – a duty that, prior to 1900, had still been that of the field cornet.²³ In this regard, Barton was assisted by about 13 policemen of the SAC camp at Losberg.²⁴

The judicial authority of the justice of the peace was limited to preliminary investigations, summons of transgressors and the issuing of passes to blacks. There were, however, no facilities for the detention of transgressors, neither at the Kraalkop police post, nor at the SAC camp at Losberg.²⁵

In October 1904, this caused Barton to request that a prison be built at Losberg – one with separate amenities (facilities) for whites and blacks. The request was granted and the British administration decided to erect a temporary prison at that location. The temporary prison

²⁰ Hoofinsektekundige (SAB), verw. 45 nr. EE2801: South African Constabulary Welverdiend, 14.4.1906. Kyk ook Justisie (SAB), verw. 395, nr. 3/251/25: Commissioner, Transvaal Police/Secretary for Justice, 25.6.1910. Die drie SAC-lede wat op Bank diens gedoen het, het op Wonderfontein gewoon. Kyk Ongekatalogiseer (TAB): Kieserslys van wyk nr. 5 Gatsrand, 1905.

²¹ Departement van Openbare Werke (TAB), verw. 263 nr. 5892/04: Oprigting van geboe, 11.4.1903.

²² L.E. van Onselen, *A rhapsody in blue (South African Police)*, pp.27-28.

²³ Justisie (SAB), verw. 519 nr. 6216/29(1): Law Department/SAC 21.10.1904. Kyk ook Departement van Openbare Werke (TAB), verw. 263 nr. 5892/04: Oprigting van geboe, Oktober 1904.

²⁴ Ongekatalogiseer (TAB): Kieserslys van wyk nr. 5, Gatsrand, 1905.

²⁵ Justisie (SAB), verw. 519 nr. 6216/29(2): Law Department/SAC, 30.10.1904.

was moved to Kraalkop in that very year so that it could be close to the police post. Up to ten detainees could be accommodated in the same cell for a maximum of 14 days. Prisoners were used as labourers for road construction and for the upkeep of the premises of the police station.²⁶ By 1906, the institution of a periodic court, presided by the magistrate of Potchefstroom, had not yet been considered since only a negligible number of serious cases occurred in the area. Such court cases were referred to Potchefstroom.²⁷ Cases of a less serious nature could be dealt with locally by the justice of the peace. To assist JGE Freislich, the newly appointed justice of the peace in the hearing of cases, Corporals JM Chadwallader and GC Meredith were appointed in 1906 as clerk and public prosecutor respectively in the court at Kraalkop.²⁸ GP Brits, subsequently a member of the *Volksraad*, succeeded Freislich as justice of the peace in 1910.²⁹

In 1910, the magistrate of Potchefstroom, requested the Department of Justice to pay urgent attention to the re-establishment of a police post at Welverdiend, since illegal transactions about which nothing could be done apparently occurred at the Welverdiend station.³⁰

The commissioner of the Transvaal police³¹ in Pretoria recommended that the temporary police building at Bank should be inspected and then relocated to Welverdiend.³² This solution, however, did not meet the approval of the district commandant of police at Potchefstroom, since it would imply that the police at Frederikstad would have to patrol the whole area as far as Bank until such time as the police post would have been established at Welverdiend.³³ This problem and the start of World War I in 1914 were probably the reasons why it was only in 1919 that attention was again paid to the envisaged police post at Welverdiend.³⁴ Shopkeeper S Rosenthal initially offered to have a police office for two policeman and one black constable built, as well as stables for the accommodation of two horses. The licensing authority at Potchefstroom, however, forced him to effect

²⁶ Departement van Openbare Werke (TAB), verw. 263, nr. 710/531: Oprigting van geboue, 8.7.1906. Kyk ook Justisie (SAB), verw. 484 nr. 1900/29: Inspection of police lockups and cells: Kraalkop, 1919-1945, en verw. 116 nr. 5/663/1: Kraalkop lockup, 7.5.1912.

²⁷ Justisie (SAB), verw. 519 nr. 6216/29(2): Law Department/SAC, 30.10.1904 en 8.7.1906.

²⁸ Justisie (SAB), verw. 267 nr. 3/801/18: Law Department/Chief staff officer, SAC, 24.3.1906 en Attorney-general/Law Department, 25.4.1906. Kyk ook Departement van Openbare Werke (TAB), verw. 263 nr. 710/531: Oprigting van geboue, 8.7.1906.

²⁹ *Dagbreek en Sondagnuus*, 19.7.1937, p.3. (Berig oor G.P. Brits).

³⁰ Justisie (SAB), verw. 395 nr. 3/251/25: Proposed establishment of a police post Welverdiend, 19.5.1910.

³¹ Na die 1907-verkiesing het generaal Botha besluit om die SAC tot 'n normale polisiekorps terug te bring. Kyk J.A. Wiid, "Weeropbou, 1902-1908" in D.W. Krüger (red.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, p.458.

³² Justisie (SAB), verw. 395, nr. 3/251/25: Commissioner Transvaal police/Secretary for Justice, 12.8.1910.

³³ Justisie (SAB), verw. 395 nr. 3/251/25: District Commandant Potchefstroom/Secretary Transvaal police. 13.8.1910.

³⁴ Justisie (SAB), verw. 395 nr. 3/251/25: Secretary for Justice/Commissioner SAP, 2.10.1919.

improvements to the hotel at Welverdiend and, as a result of a lack of money, he had to withdraw his offer.³⁵ The Department of Justice also had to give up plans for the establishment of said post owing to financial considerations.³⁶ By 1924, M du Toit, a representative of the Commissioner of Police of the Transvaal, recommended that Welverdiend should still be patrolled by the police since the number of cases originating from Welverdiend were too few to justify a separate police post.³⁷

In 1916, GS Bosman was appointed Justice of the Peace for the wards of Gatsrand and Vaal River.³⁸ In 1918, he was succeeded by PJ Davidtz.³⁹ In 1921, persons from the young town of Fochville (proclaimed in 1920), namely TG Truter, Commandant TFJ Dreyer, FRP Schutte, JP Kleyn, FD Pienaar and A Horvitch asked the Commissioner of the South African Police to relocate the police post as well as the court of the justice of the peace at Kraalkop to the town since the development of the town justified it. However, the commissioner would not comply with their request since Kraalkop was still regarded as the central point in the area. Should the court and police post be relocated, the police would also be farther from Bank Station from where the necessary supplies were usually collected.⁴⁰

In 1923, Commandant Dreyer asked the Minister of Justice to initiate a periodic court at Fochville that would have a session every fortnight because it was such a long distance to get to Potchefstroom and back for court sessions.⁴¹ The request was granted and a periodic court was instituted at Kraalkop in 1925 and the Potchefstroom magistrate presided. The court would be in session every third Wednesday in February, May, August and November and it would deal with cases from the Gatsrand area and with some from a small portion of the Vaal River ward.⁴² Following the putting into commission of the railway line between Fochville and Potchefstroom in 1927, the periodic court as well as the police post was relocated thence from Kraalkop.⁴³

From 1934, the magistrate made representations to the Department of Justice to allow the court at Fochville two sessions per month, since there had been only 24 court sessions since

³⁵ Justisie (SAB), verw. 395 nr. 3/251/25: Commissioner SAP/Secretary for Justice, 26.9.1919 en 3.3.1920.

³⁶ Justisie (SAB), verw. 395 nr. 3/251/25: Commissioner SAP/Secretary for Justice, 27.6.1921.

³⁷ Justisie (SAB), verw. 395 nr. 3/251/25: M. du Toit/Secretary SAP, 4/11/1924.

³⁸ Uitvoerende Raad van die Unie (SAB), verw. 300 nr. 3091: Appointing of Justice of the peace, 15.2.1916.

³⁹ Uitvoerende Raad van die Unie (SAB), verw. 300 nr. 3091: Appointing of Justice of the peace, 13.3.1918.

⁴⁰ Justisie (SAB), verw. 519 nr. 6216/29(2): Kommissaris SAP/Landdroos Potchefstroom, 25.2.1921 en Hugo, Henning and Kempen/Secretary for Justice, 10.10.1921.

⁴¹ Justisie (SAB), verw. 519 nr. 6216/29(2): T.F.J. Dreyer/Departement Justisie, 20.3.1923.

⁴² Justisie (SAB), verw. 519 nr. 6216/29(2): Landdroos Potchefstroom/Sekretaris Justisie, 26.2.1925 en 31.8.1925.

⁴³ Justisie (SAB), verw. 519 nr. 6216/29(2): Kommissaris van Polisie/Sekretaris Justisie, 6.6.1927.

1928. The adverse financial position owing to the after-effects of the 1929-1933 drought and the depression resulted in the denial of the request.⁴⁴ In the same way, the request in 1932 of the Health Committee at Fochville had to be turned down. They had asked for the town and farms to be proclaimed as a separate magisterial district.⁴⁵ The activities of the periodic court involved mainly criminal cases. Between July 1934 and July 1936, 238 criminal cases were brought before the court, as against a single civil case.⁴⁶

In order to make a compromise with the inhabitants of Fochville, a fulltime justice of the peace was appointed in 1937. This justice of the peace still functioned under the authority of the magistrate at Potchefstroom. At that stage, there apparently was not yet enough work to justify the appointment of a magistrate.⁴⁷

The start and escalation of goldmine activities in the Gatsrand from 1937 soon served to justify the establishment of another police post. In 1945, an internal police post was instituted at Blyvooruitzicht – probably a security measure – one that was manned by mining officials. The police were temporarily accommodated in the MOTH* building (*Memorable Order of Tin Hats).⁴⁸

By 1948, the magistrate at Potchefstroom was still responsible for legal issues of the Gatsrand. He was assisted by a justice of the peace as judicial and administrative official.

6.2 Military development (Defence)

6.2.1 Military setup prior to 1899

Able-bodied white men among the Trekkers between the ages of 16 and 60 were involved in wars against black tribes in the *Oorvaal* area as early as in 1837. In that year there were two expeditions against the Ndebele of Mzilikazi in which persons who settled in the Gatsrand after 1839 probably also participated.⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Justisie (SAB), verw. 519 nr. 6216/29(2): Landdroos Potchefstroom/Sekretaris van Justisie, 17.1.1935.

⁴⁵ Justisie (SAB), verw. 519 nr. 6216/29(2): Sekretaris Justisie/Sekretaris Gesondheid; Fochville, 6.6.1932. Fochville het tot in die sewentigerjare steeds gepoog am as 'n selfstandige landdroosdistrik verklaar te ward. Kyk Anon., *Fochville 50, 1920-1970: Gedenkuitgawe*, p.28.

⁴⁶ Justisie (SAB), verw. 519 nr. 6216/29(2): Landdroos Potchefstroom/Sekretaris van Justisie, 17.1.1935-12.9.1936.

⁴⁷ *Potchefstroom Herald and Western Gazette*, 23.7.1937, p.5.

⁴⁸ W. Hagan-Watson, "Down memory lane..." p.52.

⁴⁹ J.A. Vogel, *Konstitusionele eksperimente van die Boere, 1836-1877*, p.53.

In terms of the Thirty-three Articles of April 1844, appointed commandants and field cornets had to see to it that patrols went out whenever it was deemed necessary.⁵⁰ According to the minutes of the *Volksraad*, there were 249 able-bodied men in the Gatsrand ward that could accompany patrols.⁵¹

It would appear that the burghers did not often respond to calls by the respective commandants and field cornets, but would rather continue with their farming activities. Commandant PJW Schutte of Buffelsdoorn, for instance, informed Commandant-general AWJ Pretorius in 1852 that the burghers of Field Cornet FGA Wolmarans of the Boven (Upper) Mooi River ward refused to go out on patrols.⁵²

In his term of service, Schutte, as commandant (1850-1855), commanded the burghers of Gatsrand during the war against the Bakwena tribe.⁵³ They had also taken part in the wars against Sekwati and Segeli (1852), Molappo (1868) and Sekhukuhne (1876).⁵⁴ In 1861, the burghers in the ward of field cornet JHG van der Schyff (Boven-Mooi River) were also helped by ward Gatsrand when a patrol was sent out to the "Bossiemans" (Bushmen) to retrieve stolen cattle.⁵⁵

It was the involvement of the ZAR in the Sekhukuhne war that gave Britain the opportunity to annex the Republic in 1877.⁵⁶ In the years following, the burghers applied their minds and energy to regaining their independence. When it seemed that the numerous negotiations with the British government were a lost cause and there was tension about the issue of taxes, a *Volksvergadering* (large public meeting) at Paardekraal decided on 8 December 1880 to restore the lost independence of the ZAR.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern history*, pp.60, -61.

⁵¹ J.H. Breytenbach en H.S. Pretorius, Notule van die Volksraad van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek: Transvaal nr. 1, 1845-1850, 15.4.1850 en 22.11.1850, pp.312, 347.

⁵² D.W. Krüger en H.S. Pretorius, *Voortrekker Argiefstukke, 1850-1853*, Oktober 1852, p.225.

⁵³ W.P. du Plessis, *Phillipus Jacobus Wilhelms Schutte as kerkman*, p.17.

⁵⁴ F.A.F. Wichmann, "Die wordingsgeskiedenis van die Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek, 1838-1860", *Argiefjaarboek vir Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*, 4(2), 1941, p.124. Kyk ook Potchefstroom Landdros (TAB), verw. 196: Staatsekretaris/Landdros, 9.11.1868 en T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern history*, p.70.

⁵⁵ Staatsekretaris (TAB), verw. R4404/61: J.H.G. van der Schyff/Waarnemende president S. Schoeman; 17.5.1861 en R4432/61: J.H.G. van der Schyff/Waarnemende president S. Schoeman, 8.8.1861. Die term "Bossiemans" is die Hollandse weergawe vir die Boesman (San). Kyk I. Schapera, *The Khoisan peoples of South Africa: Bushmen and Hottentots*, p.18

⁵⁶ S.P. Engelbrecht. D.D. en I.D. Bosman, "Federasie en anneksasie, 1872-1881" in D.W. Kruger (red.), *Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, p.291.

⁵⁷ M.C. van Zyl, *Die protesbeweging van die Transvaalse Afrikaners, 1877- 1880*, p.150. Vergelyk ook O.J.P. Haasbroek, "Potchefstroom en die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog, 1880/81", *Contree* 7, Januarie 1980, p.22.

Assistant Commandant-general P Cronje got orders from General P Joubert to depart from Paardekraal to Potchefstroom with a group of 400 men to have the freedom proclamation printed by JP Borrius. The printers had, at the same time, to be protected against a possible attack by the British. Cronje approached Potchefstroom from the Gatsrand along the stage coach route.

Some of the men of Gatsrand headed by Assistant Field Cornet P Martins joined the patrol, as did the Field Cornet of Gatsrand, AJG Oosthuizen who, as commandant, represented the wards Gatsrand and Vaal River.⁵⁸

Rumours that the soldiers in the British fort had fired shots immediately evoked action from Cronje, who summarily ordered the patrol to divide into four sections. The printer's was guarded, the British fort on the western side of town was surrounded and two sections went to the magistrate's office in order to keep a watchful eye on the movements of Major Clarke and his troops. The skirmish was sparked off when a section of the Boer patrol headed by Commandant J Wolmarans moved across the market square to the magistrate's office and Major Clarke's men started to fire at them. In the early morning hours of 18 December 1880, Clarke raised the white flag and the magistrate's office was taken over.⁵⁹

The last battle of the First War of Independence occurred on 27 February 1881 on Majuba in Natal about two months after the start of the Potchefstroom siege. Boer forces commanded by General Joubert conquered the forces of Sir GP Colley there.⁶⁰ According to tradition, a few burghers of the Gatsrand were also involved in that battle.⁶¹

⁵⁸ D.F. le Roux, *Die beleg van Potchefstroom gedurende die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog, 1880-1881*, pp.30, 46, 164. Kyk ook H.M. van Coller, *Die burgerlike lewe in Potchefstroom ten tye van die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog*, pp.86, 90.

⁵⁹ D.F. le Roux, *Die beleg van Potchefstroom...*, pp.164, 215.

⁶⁰ F.A. van Jaarsveld (red.), *Die Eerste Vryheidsoorlog, 1880-1881*, p.194.

⁶¹ Carletonville (PU vir CHO), verw. 1: Herinneringe M.M. van der Westhuizen, p.5. Die oud-bewoner van Gatsrand maak melding van P.S. en J.M.C. Nortje van Rooipoort wat deel= geneem het aan die slag van Majuba. Seide is presies 19 jaar later, tydens die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog, op Magersfontein gevange geneem na generaal Cronje se oorgawe.



SOME OF THE CONSCRIPTED GATSRAND MEN, 1899

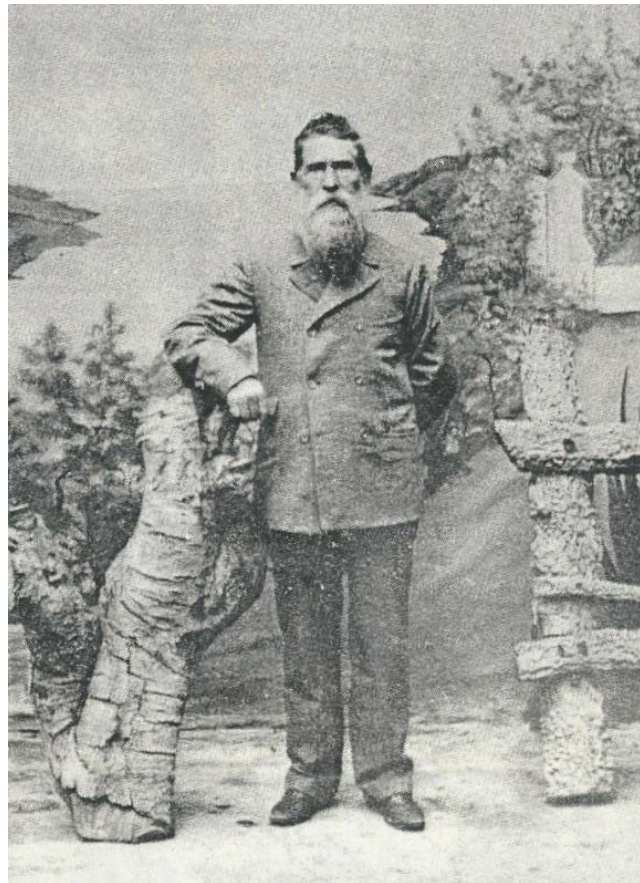
First photo: C Rautenbach (Carletonville)

Second photo: K du Preez (Fochville)

After the First War of Independence, commandos saw action on several more occasions by participating in the wars against black tribes. Some of the more important wars were those against Mapoch and Mampuru (1882), Malaboch (1894 and 1897) and Mphephu (1895-

1898).⁶² Field Cornet J Geldenhuys, who led the Gatsrand burghers in the battle against Mapoch and Mampuru between 1882 and 1883, fined 14 whites and five blacks because they were unwilling to go on commando. The conscripted burghers of each ward were responsible for their own food, and for this reason Geldenhuys regularly asked for donations in the form of livestock, meal and cash from the burghers of the Gatsrand ward. Ammunition was issued at Potchefstroom by Commandant PA Cronje.⁶³

In the nineties, the ZAR struggled not only with wars against the black tribes, but also with the issue of the *Uitlanders* (foreigners). Some of the British subjects that were conscripted/ called up for the war against Malaboch, reacted vehemently and appealed to their mouthpiece, the national Union, while those who were positively inclined towards the Volksraad participated in the wars and even helped against the Jameson Raid (a resistance movement by *Uitlanders*) from December 1895 to January 1896.⁶⁴



FIELD CORNET JT MARTINS

Photo: AMC Pretorius
(Potchefstroom)

⁶² T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern history*, pp.106, 109. Kyk ook J.S. du Plessis, "Die Suid-Afrikaanse Republiek", in C.F.J. Muller (red.), *500 jaar suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis*, pp.244, 254, 261.

⁶³ Potchefstroom Landdros (TAB), ver. 10: J. Geldenhuys/Landdros, 21.9.1833. Die Blankes is met vier pond en die Swartes met drie pond beboet. Kyk ook Kommandant-Generaal (TAB), verw. KG274 nr. 601: Kommandolyste en verslae, 1882-1884, 3.11. Even though 1882-21.4.1883. Van die Swartes wat op die plaas gewerk het moes normaalweg saam op kommando gaan om onder meer die perde te versorg en kos te maak. Kyk *Die Vaderland*, 10.9.1959, p.9. (Berig oar G.P. Brits).

⁶⁴ J.H. Breytenbach, *Die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog: Voorspel tot die stryd*, I, pp.2, 54.

For burghers wishing to celebrate New Year's Eve on 31 December 1895, news of LS Jameson's plan to march to Johannesburg probably was unwelcome news. According to tradition, the inhabitants of the northern farms in the Gatsrand, namely Elandsheuwel number 494, Rooipoort, Welverdiend, Twyfelvlakte, Wonderfontein and Driefontein number 591 had everything in place for *boeresport* (country sports) and horse racing at Welverdiend when a horseman arriving from Potchefstroom brought every activity to an abrupt halt by asking that all able-bodied mounted burghers were to go to Krugersdorp in order to prevent Jameson and his men from reaching Johannesburg.⁶⁵

There is no separate list of names of the burghers of Gatsrand who partook in the attempt to thwart the Jameson Raid. They probably joined the burghers under command of other field cornets in their respective wards owing to the involvement of Field Cornet JT Martins in the war against Mphedu.⁶⁶ The names of Gatsrand burghers can, however, be found in the name lists of the Vaal River, of Krugersdorp and of Potchefstroom.⁶⁷ Commandant Cronje led the burghers and on 2 January 1896, Jameson was forced to surrender at Doornkop.⁶⁸

6.2.2 Second Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902

The discovery of gold on the Reef in 1886 and the subsequent *Uitlander* issue ultimately gave rise to a tense relationship between Britain and the ZAR. On 11 October 1899, the Second Anglo-Boer War (also known as the South African War) broke out.⁶⁹

The approximately 550 able-bodied burghers⁷⁰ of the Gatsrand were told to meet at the farm Kleinfontein. The Potchefstroom Commando, consisting of burghers of the various field cornet wards of the district of Potchefstroom, defended the western front of the Transvaal under command of General Cronje, with Mafeking as the centre.⁷¹

⁶⁵ Carletonville (PU vir CHO), verw. 1: Herinneringe M.M. van der Westhuizen, pp.21-22. Kyk ook J.H. Breytenbach, *Die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog...*, p.29.

⁶⁶ I. van Wyk, "Landskoonmaker", *Die Boerevrou*, Julie 1950, p.21.

⁶⁷ Kommandant-Generaal (TAB), verw. KG327 nr, 702: Naamlys van kommando, Jameson-inval, 1895-1896.

⁶⁸ N.J. Hofmeyer, *Die Afrikaner-Boer en die Jameson-inval*, pp.208-209. Kyk ook W.J. du Plooy, *Die militêre voorbereidings en verloop van die Jameson-inval, 1895-1896* (MA-verhandeling, 1958, p.102).

⁶⁹ T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern history*, pp.135-139.

⁷⁰ Kommandant-Generaal (TAB),verw. KG327 nr. CR892/96: Aantal dienspligtige burgers, distrik Potchefstroom. Vergelyk ook Potchefstroom landdros (TAB), verw. 28: Lys van burgers op kommando, 1899.

⁷¹ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. GP1: Skriftelike verklaring, J.A. van der Walt, 12.1.1973. J.A. van der Walt het as 16-jarige seun deel gehad aan die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog. Kyk ook J.H. Breytenbach, *Die geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog in Suid-Afrika, 1899-1902: Die eerste Britse offensief, Nov.-Des. 1899 II*, p.56.



SOME OF THE GATSRAND BURGERS IN THE PRISONER-OF-WAR CAMP ON ST. HELENA,
1900

Standing, from left to right: HC van der Merwe, JC Greyling, S Botha,
JH van der Bergh, L Nel, J Viljoen,
J Kruger, J Greyling, B Greyling
Middle from left to right: JF van der Merwe, A van der Merwe,
JF Greyling, HJ van der Merwe, J Marnewick,
JM van der Merwe, K Marnewick, J Steyn
Front (from left to right): JF Roos, JJJ Steyn, J Roos, L Buys,
J Marnewick

Photo: C Uys (Potchefstroom)

That the Gatsrand burghers would have no shortage of weapons for the war, was clear from Assistant Field Cornet JF van der Merwe's order for 20 000 Mausers and 10 000 Martini Henry rifles on 24 June 1899.⁷² It was already clear at that stage that preparations were under way for a war.

Each of the mounted burghers in the Mafeking area was issued/equipped with a Mauser and 100 rounds of ammunition, but each individual was responsible for his own food supplies. Field Cornet Martins assisted General Cronje as commandant.⁷³ After a lapse of two months, the general received orders from government to move his troops to the south in order to help the Free State troops that were still at Belmont to stop the British advance.⁷⁴

⁷² Potchefstroom Landdros (TAB), verw. 26: J.F. van der Merwe/Landdros, 24.6.1899.

⁷³ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. GP1: Skriftelike verklaring, J.A. van der Walt, 12.1.1973. In C. Rautenbach se koerantrubriek, "Rondom die Gatsrand", word veldkornet J.T. Martins sowel as verskeie historiese momente tydens die oorlog en daarna breedvoerig bespreek. Kyk in uitqawes van die *Potchefstroom Herald and Western Gazette*, 7.10.1983-15.8.1986.

⁷⁴ J.H. Breytenbach, *Die geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog...*, II, p.56.

General Cronje had hardly joined the Free State troops when government commanded him to join up with Generals De la Rey and Prinsloo. The Potchefstroom commando (of which the men of Gatsrand formed part) with, inter alia, Commandant MJ Wolmarans, JT Martins and TFJ Dreyer took up position at Magersfontein near Kimberley early in December 1899.⁷⁵ On 11 December 1899, the Boer forces defeated the British troops. General Cronje's forces excelled during the attack and, for that, they received a telegram of congratulations from President Paul Kruger.⁷⁶

After the battle of Magersfontein, Cronje's troops remained in the Kimberley area for the purpose of forcing the British garrison that was in the town to surrender.⁷⁷ For these forces that took up position near the Modder River, these tactics actually amounted to a long time of rest. In a letter to Assistant Field Cornet JF van der Merwe, Commandant JT Martins mentioned, inter alia, that little was actually happening at Modderfontein,⁷⁸ except that the enemy would fire a number of bombs at them every day. These, however, passed overhead and caused nothing but clouds of dust.⁷⁹

A burgher of the Gatsrand, Field (Combat) General LLM Breytenbach, was ordered by General Cronje to take up position farther down the Modder River with 300 men to prevent their being surrounded by the British.⁸⁰ Lord Roberts, however, trapped Cronje's 4 000 men at Paardeberg. Commandant Martins suggested that they have a prayer meeting to ask of the Almighty for guidance for the officers and Cronje accepted this. Commandant MJ Wolmarans resisted a subsequent suggestion that they should breach the British lines and Cronje removed him from the Council of War. This disagreement gave rise to indecision and Cronje's men were eventually forced to surrender on 27 February.⁸¹

To the Gatsrand burghers, this surrender was a setback, since the majority of the mounted burghers of the area were taken prisoner along with Commandants JT Martins and MJ Wolmarans to be banned to, amongst others, St Helena.⁸²

⁷⁵ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. GP1: Skriftelike verklaring, J.A. van der Walt, 12.1.1973. Kyk ook J.H. Breytenbach, *Die geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog...*, II, pp.56, 77.

⁷⁶ W.J. Leyds (TAB). verw. 712 nr. 71: S.J.P. Kruger, P. Cronje, 11.12.1899.

⁷⁷ J.H. Breytenbach, *Die geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog...*, II, p.462.

⁷⁸ Dit is onseker waarom Martins sowel as oud-stryder J.A. van der Walt in hulle skrywe die woord *Modderfontein* in plaas van *Modderrivier* gebruik.

⁷⁹ Potchefstroom Landdros (TAB), ver. 27: J.T. Martins/J.F. van der Merwe, 2.2.1900.

⁸⁰ J.H. Breytenbach, *Die geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog...*, IV, p.13. Vergelyk ook Carletonvi Ile (PU vir CHO), verw. 1: Herinneringe A.P. Nel, p.7.

⁸¹ J.H. Breytenbach, *Die geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog...*, IV, pp.395-406.

⁸² J.H. Breytenbach, *Die geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog...*, IV, p.426.



CAPTAIN DANIE THERON

Photo: Potchefstroom Museum

A number of burghers (amongst whom Commandant TFJ Dreyer) apparently succeeded to escape from the lager prior to Cronje's surrender. Field General (or Combat General) JJM Breytenbach and his 300 men also escaped intact, joined Dreyer's troops and retreated as far as *Veertien Strome* (Fourteen Streams).⁸³ After Cronje's surrender, JC Smuts accompanied General De la Rey with a view to let burghers who managed to escape – such as

those at *Veertien Strome* – move in the direction of Pretoria and Johannesburg.⁸⁴

After Roberts had occupied Pretoria on 6 June 1900, the British began to remove women and children from farms to send them to concentration camps on large scale. Furthermore, a network of blockhouse lines was established from close to Lamberts Bay in the Western Cape to Pietersburg in the Northern Transvaal for the purpose of defending the railway lines. Blockhouses were built at Modderfontein, Bank Station and Vlakfontein number 364 in the Gatsrand.⁸⁵

The Boer generals then decided to start with guerrilla warfare and thus to keep the British military activities in check by sabotaging railway lines and other communication networks in an attempt to prevent the enemy from taking over the western districts.⁸⁶ Thus, for instance, PJ Liebenberg of Potchefstroom and his men, who were in the area of Bank and

⁸³ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. GP1: Skriftelike verklaring J.A. van der Walt, 12.1.1973. Vergelyk ook Carletonville (PU vir CHO), verw. 1: Herinneringe A.P. Nel, p.7.

⁸⁴ P.A. Pyper, *Generaal J.C. Smuts en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog, 1899-1902*, pp.34-35.

⁸⁵ O.J.O. Ferreira (red.), *Memoirs of general Ben Bouwer*, pp.165-166.

⁸⁶ J. Oosthuizen (TAB), verw. A1449: Boereoorlogsdagboek van De la Rey, 1899-1902, p.80. Kyk ook J.H. Breytenbach, *Die geskiedenis van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog...*,

Welverdiend after August 1900, regularly damaged the railway line.⁸⁷ On the British side, General AF Hart had to guard the railway line between Krugersdorp and Welverdiend.⁸⁸

The railway line from Pretoria via Krugersdorp and Klerksdorp to Kimberley was a major connection route to the south.⁸⁹ In the light of rumours that British columns were moving from the direction of Johannesburg towards Potchefstroom, Liebenberg asked General CR de Wet for reinforcements from the Free State. Captain Danie Theron departed for the Gatsrand with his reconnaissance corps in order to assist General Liebenberg.⁹⁰ While his scouts were sheltering in the ravines of the Gatsrand on 5 September 1900, Theron and one of his scouts, WAS Nel, explored the terrain and enquired from the Wolvaardts at Elandsfontein number 289 about a message that General Liebenberg was supposed to have left for him at the farm. However, it was only after Theron's departure that Liebenberg arrived on the farm with the message.⁹¹ In the meantime, three British columns had moved in a western direction along the northern and southern hills as well as along roads in the valleys of the Gatsrand.⁹²

During Theron's second visit to the Wolvaardts, he received General Liebenberg's message. Theron left Nel at the foot of a hill (known among the British troops as Yeomanry⁹³ Hill) near the farmhouse and went up the hill to scan the area.⁹⁴ According to General Hart, Theron came up against about four British scouts.⁹⁵ However, Theron, an excellent marksman, defended himself well.⁹⁶ The British columns in the southern part of the Gatsrand were, however, already close to the hill and fired at it with their ship's cannon, apparently under the

⁸⁷ Bul (pseud.), "Die Tweede Anglo-Boereoorlog", *Kommando* 16(10), Oktober 1965, p.35.

⁸⁸ L.S. Amery (red.), *The Times history of the war in South Africa, 1899-1902*, V, p.47. Vergelyk ook J.H.

Breytenbach, *Gedenkalbum van die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog*, p.175

⁸⁹ Anon., *In memoriam: N.Z.A.S.M.*, p.173.

⁹⁰ J.H. Breytenbach, *Kommandant Danie Theron*, p.214.

⁹¹ D.G.C. van Wyk, "Danie Theron monument", *Die Hervormer* 14, September 1976, p.20. Dr. Van Wyk maak melding van Danie Theron se aankoms by die Pienaars op Elandsfontein, terwyl dit volgens ooggetuies die Wolvaardts was waar Theron die boodskap gekry het. Kyk Potchefstroomse Museum, verw. THE 968.20481: Ooggetuies se verslag oor Danie Theron se dood, p.2. Die ligging van die heuwel waar Theron deur die Engelse soldate verras is, is nader aan die Wolvaardts se huis. Die ooggetuies se weergawe word dus aanvaar.

⁹² Potchefstroomse Museum, verw. THE 968.20481: Extract from the official diary of the Potchefstroom Column, 5.9.1900. Vergelyk ook J.H. Breytenbach, *Kommandant Danie Theron*, p.216.

⁹³ "Yeomanry" beteken burgermag. Dit is 'n term wat redelik algemeen deur die Britse troepe gebruik is.

⁹⁴ D.G.C. van Wyk, "Danie Theron monument", *Die Hervormer* 14, September 1976, p.20.

⁹⁵ Potchefstroomse Museum, verw. THE 968.20481: Extract from the official diary of the Potchefstroom Column, 5.9.1900.

⁹⁶ Carletonville (PU vir CHO), verw. 3: Onderhoud A.P. Nel, 11.3.1987.

impression that there were several Boers on the hill.⁹⁷ Bomb splinters apparently killed Theron, and Nel returned to the reconnaissance corps with the news.⁹⁸

After this setback, General De Wet – in response to Liebenberg's appeal – advanced upon the Frederikstad area. General G Barton received orders directly from Pretoria to march his troops from Krugersdorp past Bank and Welverdiend in order to cut De Wet off. On 15 October, Liebenberg engaged Barton's British columns at Buffelsdoorn, yet without success. De Wet nevertheless succeeded on 20 October in reaching Frederikstad regardless of Barton's presence in the area.⁹⁹

The two Boer generals joined forces and attacked General Barton at Frederikstad. At General De Wet's command, a number of Boers, having been ordered to drive out the British troops, went to Frederikstad station in the night of 24 October.¹⁰⁰ PA Vermaas of Losberg (member of the reconnaissance corps) helped Froneman with a squad of 20 men to attack the station. However, the superior numbers of the British caused them to fail in their mission and many of the Boers were caught. Only a few of them, one of which was Vermaas, managed to escape.¹⁰¹

After this failed attack at Frederikstad, General De Wet and his troops returned to the Free State. During November, the majority of the burghers were afforded a chance to go to their farms to harvest their corn and to get things in order on the farms. The situation in the western Transvaal caused General De la Rey concern and he gave instructions to Smuts to go thither in order to organise the commandos properly.¹⁰²

By the middle of January 1901, General Smuts moved from the Ventersdorp area in the direction of the Gatsrand. At that stage, the burghers of Gatsrand had already been summoned to meet again at the farm Kleinfontein. These burghers once again joined the rest of the Potchefstroom Commando under the command of Generals Liebenberg and JJM Breytenbach (the latter a burgher of the farm Kleinfontein in the Gatsrand). Liebenberg

⁹⁷ Potchefstroomse Museum, verw. THE 968.20481: Extract from the official diary of the Potchefstroom Column, 5.9.1900. Volgens die verslag was daar 150 Boere op die heuwel maar volgens ooggetuies was dit slegs Theron, terwyl W.A.S. Nel aan die voet van die heuwel gewag het. Kyk Potchefstroomse Museum, verw. THE 968.20481: Ooggetuies se verslag oor Danie Theron se dood, p.3.

⁹⁸ Carletonville (PU vir CHO), verw. 3: Bandopname B. Wolvaardt, 20.11.1986.

⁹⁹ . Amery (red.), *The Times history of the war...*, V, pp.9-10.

¹⁰⁰ Amery (red.), *The Times history of the war...*, V, p.12. Vergelyk ook A.J. Pienaar, *Christiaan Rudolf De Wet in die Anglo-Boereoorlog* (MA-verhandeling, 1974), pp.164-166

¹⁰¹ P.H.S. van Zyl, *Waar en trou*, p.129.

¹⁰² J. Oosthuizen, *Jacobus Hercules De la Rey en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog* (D.Phil-proefskrif, 1949), pp.358-386.

joined Smuts, while Breytenbach and a small group of burghers that originated mainly from the Losberg area in the Gatsrand went ahead to the British blockhouse at Modderfontein. Casson had only 109 men under his command at the blockhouse and he was fully aware of the presence of Boer forces in the Gatsrand.¹⁰³

In the meantime, Captain Magniac left from Krugersdorp for Modderfontein on 29 January 1901 in charge of a convoy with one month's supplies. He was protected by 108 soldiers and was unaware of the presence of Boer forces in the area that could possibly seize the convoy. Casson had to do without a few men under Lieutenant Crawley in order to help protect the approaching convoy so that it could safely reach the blockhouse.

In spite of repeated attacks by General Breytenbach, the convoy could actually succeed in reaching its destination.¹⁰⁴

Generals Liebenberg and Smuts were close to Modderfontein on 29 January after minor skirmishes with British troops at Ventersdorp and Frederikstad. They decided to attack the blockhouse at Modderfontein (which was now manned by 200 men) with a combined Boer force of 1 500 men on 30 January.¹⁰⁵ After a fight of 43 hours, Smuts on 31 January managed to take over the blockhouse with but a few losses on the Boers' side. Only General Breytenbach was killed and Commandant FGA Wolmarans suffered a minor wound.¹⁰⁶ General Cunningham, who reached Modderfontein on 1 February, attacked the Boer forces on 1 February with 800 men. General Smuts's men, however, drove Cunningham's forces back and this served as encouragement to Smuts and the Boer forces to go elsewhere to continue fighting the enemy.¹⁰⁷

Shortly after the attack on Modderfontein, Smuts called General Ben Boucher of Kafferskraal to Gatsrand to help the Boer forces to blow up the bridge at Bank Station with explosives. Even though the strength of the British forces at Bank was unknown, it was decided to go ahead with their plans in which Commandants TFJ Dreyer and FGA Wolmarans of Gatsrand also took part. Boucher and his 50 men were experienced in the use of explosives and had to

¹⁰³ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. GP1: Skriftelike verklaring J.A. van der Walt, 12.1.1973. Vergelyk ook L.A. Amery (red.), *The Times history of the war...*, V, pp.113-114, en P.A. Pyper, *Generaal J.C. Smuts en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog, 1899-1902*, p.46

¹⁰⁴ L.S. Amery (red.), *The Times history of the war...*, V, p.114.

¹⁰⁵ L.A. Amery (red.), *The Times history of the war...*, V, p.115. Kyk ook J. Oosthuizen (TAB), verw. A1449: Generaal J.C. Smuts/ Generaal J.H. De la Rey, 22.1.1901.

¹⁰⁶ P.A. Pyper, *Generaal J.C. Smuts en die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog, 1899-1902*, p.46. Vergelyk ook Carletonville (PU vir CHO), verw. 1: Herinneringe A.P. Nel, p.12.

¹⁰⁷ L.S. Amery (red.) *The Times history of the war...*, V, p.115.

blow up the bridge while being offered protection against possible attack by the enemy. Wolmarans and his 50 men had to attack the British camp.¹⁰⁸



CONCENTRATION CAMP
CHILDREN IN THE
KRUGERSDORP
CAMP

Back, from left to right: JP Nortjé,
LJ Nortjé
Front (from left to right): PS Nortjé,
RB Nortjé
Photo: M van der Westhuizen
(Carletonville)

The barking of a dog in the British camp, however, unnerved Commandant Dreyer's men and some started to shoot without being ordered to do so. However, despite this incident, the operation was executed successfully and Wolmarans succeeded in charging the camp and looting a considerable amount of provisions.¹⁰⁹ The costly mistake of some of Dreyer's men led to the loss of four of his own men who were mistaken for British soldiers.¹¹⁰

After his defeat at Modderfontein, Lord Kitchener ordered him to join the columns of GE Benson (Potchefstroom) and C Shekleton (Elandsfontein) in order to defeat Smuts in the Gatsrand. However, the columns failed to corner Smuts and his men. In July 1901, Smuts decided to invade the Cape Colony and for this purpose the burghers had to assemble at Kaalplaats in the Gatsrand. Three hundred and forty men arrived there and they were

¹⁰⁸ O.J.O. Ferreira (red.), *Memoirs of General Ben Bower*, pp.106, 110-111.

¹⁰⁹ C.J.S. Strydom, *Ruitervuur*, p.165.

¹¹⁰ O.J.O. Ferreira (red.), *Memoirs of general Ben Bower*, p.111. Kyk ook C.J.S. Strydom, *Ruitervuur*, p.165.

divided into three divisions under command of Commandants Dreyer, Bouwer, Van der Venter [sic] and Kirster [sic].¹¹¹

While the others departed for the south immediately, General Smuts and Commandant Dreyer remained behind with 100 men to leave for Losberg one day later. The British forces were, however, aware of Smuts's plan and British troops were summarily dispatched to Hoopstad, while Garratt's men moved towards Losberg. The Boer forces managed to evade Garratt, but Dreyer¹¹² and nine others were caught by the British troops before they could reach Zastron.¹¹³

The guerrilla technique of Smuts, De la Rey and others was nearing its end. In the Transvaal and Free State, the countryside had already been laid to waste. Thousands of women and children –also those of the Gatsrand – had already been removed to concentration camps where many of them would die.¹¹⁴ Owing to fear of this, some women and children were fleeing regularly before the British troops. Among the women of the Gatsrand who were on the run, there was B Pretorius of Kalbasfontein, who fled for 17 days on end and went to live with her sister-in-law.¹¹⁵ MSE Brits of Jachtfontein kept roaming with her children for months on end¹¹⁶ and MC Dreyer, who also roamed around in the Gatsrand, escaped from the British several times in miraculous ways.¹¹⁷ Mrs DJC Dreyer (Commandant TFJ Dreyer's wife) evaded the British troops by swimming across the Mooi River with her children one night and finding a home elsewhere.¹¹⁸

The general condition (especially with regard to the burnt-down houses on the farms, the loss of human life and that of livestock) in which the former ZAR found itself, gave rise to the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging on 31 May 1902.¹¹⁹ A large contingent of British troops remained in the former ZAR to see to it that peace and order would be maintained. Some of these troops were also stationed for a considerable length of time in the Losberg,

¹¹¹ L.S. Amery (red.), *The Times history of the war...*, V, pp.219-220, 302. Kyk ook Defence Council (SAWA), verw. GP1: Skriftelike verklaring J.A. van der Walt, 12.1.1973.

¹¹² Kyk Carletonville (PU vir CHO): Onderhoud T.F. Dreyer, 6.5.1987. Kommandant Dreyer is na die krygsgevangenekamp in Indië gestuur.

¹¹³ O.J.O. Ferreira (red.), *Memoirs of general Ben Bouwer*, p.114.

¹¹⁴ L.S. Amery (red.), *The Times history of the war...*, V, p.604. Vergelyk ook Carletonville (PU vir CHO) verw. 1: Herinneringe A.M. Schutte, 24.9.1950.

¹¹⁵ Konsentrasiekampherinneringe (TAB), verw. WHA 1221: Vertelling B. Pretorius, 1901.

¹¹⁶ Konsentrasiekampherinneringe (TAB), verw., WHA 1221: Vertelling M.S.E. Brits, 1901.

¹¹⁷ J. Dreyer, *Bittereinders onder die vroue*, pp.9, 21.

¹¹⁸ Carletonville (PU vir CHO) verw. 3: Onderhoud T.F. Dreyer, 6.5.1897.

¹¹⁹ L.S. Amery (red.), *The Times history of the war...*, V, p.604. Kyk ook F.A. van Jaarsveld, *Honderd basiese dokumente by die studie van Suid-Afrikaanse geskiedenis, 1648-1961*, p.172.

Welverdiend, Taaiboschspruit and Bank areas.¹²⁰ British soldiers even assisted the returning farmers with loose jobs such as, inter alia, Dreyer who was helped to rebuild the stone kraals that had been destroyed on his farm.¹²¹

In 1920, the Defence Headquarters decided to acknowledge outstanding achievements during the Second Anglo-Boer War. In 1922, the medal, the *Dekoratie voor Trouwe Dienst* (Decoration for Faithful Service) was awarded to eleven officers of the Gatsrand, namely: JT Martins (commandant), TFJ Dreyer (commandant), MJ Wolmarans (commandant), FGA Wolmarans (commandant), JJM Breytenbach (combat general), FG Breytenbach (field cornet), WP Grey (assistant field cornet), PJW du Plessis (field cornet), PA Vermaas (field cornet), JF van der Merwe (field cornet) and J Geldenhuys (field cornet).¹²²

6.2.3 Development, 1903-1948

When the war ended on 31 May 1902, the Boer commandos had to lay down their arms and they were disbanded. Occupying British forces were henceforth responsible for the defence of the former Boer republics. After the coming into existence of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910, attention was paid to the creation of a national defence organisation. The Defence Act (Number 13 of 1912) made provision for personal military service and for an Active Citizen Force consisting of white burghers between ages 17 and 25 who would be given basic training on a voluntary basis. Burghers between the ages of 17 and 60 who did not undergo the training, were required to be members of rifle clubs for a minimum of four years.¹²³ In the Gatsrand, eight rifle clubs were grouped together as the Gatsrand Commando under the command of Commandant TFJ Dreyer. Field cornets and assistant field cornets were appointed for every rifle club:

¹²⁰ Justisie (SAB), verw. 519 nr. 6216/29(2): Law Department SAC, 30.10.1904. Vergelyk ook Carletonville (PU vir CHO), verw. 1: Herinneringe dr. J.A. Schutte, 3.11.1986.

¹²¹ Carletonville (PU vir CHO), verw. 3: Onderhoud T.F. Dreyer, 6.5.1987.

¹²² *De Westelike Stem* 8.11.1922, p.6. Vergelyk ook D.R. Forsyth, "Dekoratie voor Trouwe Dienst", *Krygshistoriese tydskrif*, 1(1), 11 Desember 1967, pp.14-18, en P.H.S. van Zyl, *Waar en trou*, p.129. Die SAWA besit lyste van aanbevelings van persone wat aansoek gedoen het, of namens wie aansoek gedoen is, vir die "Dekoratie voor Trouwe Dienst".

¹²³ Anon., "Die geskiedenis van ons", *Paratus*, Oktober 1973, p.9. Vergelyk ook D.J. Potgieter, *Standard Encyclopaedia of Southern Africa III*.

Table 9

RIFLE CLUBS IN THE GATSRAND COMMANDO AFTER 1913¹²⁴

RIFLE CLUB	NUMBER OF MEMBERS	FIELD CORNET	ASSISTANT FIELD CORNETS
Boven (Upper) Gatsrand North, number 114	88	JML Steyn	CJH Minnie
			GB Lindeque
			AJG Oosthuizen
			JW van der Westhuizen
Wonderfontein-Rooipoort number 145	83	JJ Marnewick	JF van der Merwe
			PH Roux
			JP Nortjé
			JS Roos
Losberg-Botha number. 146	82	HJ Strauss	JG Pretorius
			GD van der Berg
			JJ Oberholzer
			JP Oosthuizen
Losberg number 188	104	JB Wolmarans	CGP Pretorius
			G Rossouw
			PJ van den Heever
			LH Delpport
Elandsfontein number 218	52	PJ Davidtz	HS Wolvaardt
			JP Kleyn
			MC Hoffmann
			FD Pienaar
Upper Ward Gatsrand number 147	101	TP Pretorius	PC Crafford
			JJ Martins
			JJF Rautenbach
			CJJ van Vuuren
The Flying Rifle Club number 193	81	JN du Toit	TF Cronje
			JP Badenhorst
			JP Cronje
			FJ Cronje
Gatsrand number 192	113	FRP Schutte	DJ du Plessis
			GF Redelinghuys
			WP.Grey
			FLM Schutte

¹²⁴ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. GP2 nr. 1403/7: Staff Officer Citizen force/Secretary for defence, 28.4.1914. Defence Council (SAWA), verw. GP2 nr. 14/14: Staf Offisier Burgerman Pretoria/Majoor, nr. 7 militêre distrik, 12.5.1914.



MEMBERS OF THE LOSBERG RIFLE CLUB, 1920
Photo: BJJ Vermaas (Jr) (Fochville)

Wage disputes between white and black labourers gave rise to a strike at the Rand gold mines in 1913. Units of the new defence force, inter alia, the Gatsrand Commando, were called up for service.¹²⁵ They had to protect mines, municipal buildings, railway stations, power stations and specific private property against unrest and disorder.¹²⁶

The dust had hardly settled after the strike when international tensions caused the outbreak of World War I in August 1914 and the Union decided to support Britain. The War came at an inopportune stage for the Union, since the country was still wrestling with internal problems and the Second Anglo-Boer War was still fresh in the minds of people.¹²⁷ General Louis Botha was of the opinion that the Union should at least defend its borders and that British garrisons could be withdrawn. It was decided to call up volunteers for this purpose. Rumours increasingly did the rounds, namely that the Union was going to call up all its burghers for military service. This did not have General De la Rey's approval. An unfortunate

¹²⁵ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. GP2 nr. 1403/7: Kommandant, Militêre distrik nr. 7/DSA Burgermag Pretoria, 4.8.1914.

¹²⁶ S.J. Pietersen, *Stakings aan die Witwatersrand, 1913-1914*, p.47.

¹²⁷ F.V. Engelenburg, *Generaal Louis Botha*, p.310.

shooting incident resulted in De la Rey's death on 15 September and this served as a trigger for disorderly meetings and open rebellion.¹²⁸

On 12 October, General Botha called up burghers to suppress the Rebellion. As was the case in many other parts of the country, there was also a large degree of disagreement in the Gatsrand after the call. There were those who supported Botha and reacted positively, while field cornets and assistant field cornets (such as JJ Marnewick, PH Roux, DJ. du Plessis, ML Steyn, JB Lindeque), as well as ordinary burghers resigned from the rifle clubs in order to show their dissatisfaction.¹²⁹ After the rebellion had been suppressed, volunteers from the Gatsrand Commando went to Potchefstroom where they joined the commando under Commandant Hall. The commando joined the rest of the Union Defence Force that went to German South-West Africa and ultimately were involved in a successful campaign.¹³⁰

In 1921, the Gatsrand Commando consisted of nine rifle clubs after the Klipdrift Rifle Club was added and CM du Plessis was appointed as acting Assistant Field Cornet.¹³¹

When the strike started on the Rand in 1922, Field Cornet WP Grey was acting Commandant of Gatsrand and he was asked to take the commando to the Rand. He was ordered to suppress the strike which, at that stage, had already taken on the form of an armed protest.¹³² Grey asked members of the rifle clubs and their field cornets to assemble at Bank Station so that they could leave together from there. This request, however, was not to the liking of Field Cornet JB Wolmarans of Losberg. Although he accompanied members of the Losberg Rifle Club, he was unwilling to go any farther after his mother had apparently informed him that two of his brothers were involved in the strike and that one was playing a leading role in the events. Because he was so well-known in the area and especially so because of his activities as member of the National Party, his refusal caused several others

¹²⁸ T.R.H. Davenport, *South Africa: A modern history*, p.185.

¹²⁹ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. GP2 nr. 11207/4: Staf Offisier militêre distrik nr. 7/Hoof Unieverdedigingsmag, 23.9.1919. Nuwe veldkornette en assistent-veldkornette wat in 1919 aangestel is in die plek vandiewat bedank het v i s J.H. Muller, W.P. Grey, F.T.I. Grobler en J.C. van der Westhuizen. Kyk Defence Council

(SAWA) verw. GP1nr. 2/11207/4: Kolonel A.J. Brink/DSO Militêre distrik nr. 7, 17.9.1919.

¹³⁰ Carletonville (PU vir CHO), verw. 3: Onderhoud K. Greyling, 13.1.1987. Ten tyde van die data-insameling was mnr. Greyling die enigste oorlewende in die omgewing wat die Suidwes-Afrika veldtog meegemaak het. Hoewel hy bevestig het dat daar nog vrywilligers uit die Gatsrand was wat vir diens aangemeld het, kon hy nie onthou wie hulle was nie.

¹³¹ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. GP2 nr. 21/11253: Sersant E. Christiaan/DSO militêre distrik nr. 7, 12.6.1921.

¹³² Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC196 nr. 11207/4: Adjudant Grey/ Staf Offisier militêre distrik nr. 7, 31.3.1922.

to refuse to go as well, with some actually resigning as members of the rifle club. The rest, however, left for the Rand.¹³³

After the strike had been suppressed in March 1922, a dissatisfied Grey asked Colonel Nussey, commander of Potchefstroom, to relieve JB Wolmarans of all his duties as field cornet. Grey received a petition from the Losberg Rifle club Society in which he was requested that Wolmarans should resign.¹³⁴

On 5 May 1922, Wolmarans did resign, but he was reappointed in 1924 on the recommendation of Captain MJ Wolmarans of Potchefstroom.¹³⁵ When, in 1923, Dreyer resigned as commandant of the Gatsrand Commando, WP Grey, who for a long time served as acting commandant while Dreyer had seen to his parliamentary duties, was appointed.¹³⁶

JH Muller succeeded Grey in 1925.¹³⁷ Up to and including Commandant Muller's resignation in 1934, the Gatsrand Commando was still a class B commando, which implied that the unit had to have at least one commandant, one adjutant, one quartermaster, 12 lieutenants and 600 members.¹³⁸ The depression in the early thirties had caused such financial need in the Department of Defence by 1935 that the Gatsrand Commando was also asked to reduce its staff by dismissing all inactive members. AL Oosthuizen, who had accepted the position of commandant in 1935, was responsible for performing this task.¹³⁹

With the outbreak of World War Two in 1939, the Union cabinet once again decided – as it did in 1914 – to make use of volunteers to take part in the war. That there was no lack of volunteers is clear from the establishment of a military unit in 1940 at the Blyvooruitzicht mine, known as the Mines Engineering Brigade. The unit was mobilised and held parades on the land of the mine while awaiting permission to participate in the War.¹⁴⁰

¹³³ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC196 nr. 11207/4: Luitenant Kolonel Meyer/kolonel A.H. Nussey, 24.4.1922. Vergelyk ook DC196 nr. 11207/4: J.B. Wolmarans/W.P. Grey, 26.3.1922 en Carletonville (PU vir CHO), verw. 3: Bandopname J.M.F. Terburg, 30.9.1987.

¹³⁴ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC196 nr. 11207/4: Waarnemende kommandant W.P. Grey/Kolonel Nussey, 1.5.1922.

¹³⁵ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC196 nr. 11207/4: Kaptein M.J. Wolmarans, DSO militêre distrik nr. 7/Hoof van die Generale Staf Pretoria 8.4.1924.

¹³⁶ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC196 nr. 11207/4: Erkentenisvorm W.P. Grey, Desember 1923.

¹³⁷ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC366 nr. 7/40252: Brigadier-generaal Pretoria/Offisier in bevel, militêre distrik nr. 5; 6.12.1926.

¹³⁸ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC59 nr. 87312: Kommando organisasie, 31.1.1935.

¹³⁹ Defence Council (SAWA), ver. GP2 nr. 17041/1: Hoofkommandant Burger= kommando's/A.L. Oosthuizen, 3.1.1935.

¹⁴⁰ W. Hagan-Watson, "Down memory lane...", p.23.

People of Gatsrand who performed voluntary duty in North Africa and Italy, included, inter alia, D Wilkensen, Dr RA Caldwell, DO Waterman, RJS Fourie, B Cockroft, S Coetzee, GCA Dein, G Peverett, DCA Reynolds, CA Cotts, G Pringle, C Hiles, RH Hobson, G McKednie, C Rautenbach, L Kruger, K Greyling, FJ Putter, R Vey, DN Cloete, W Fletcher, GH van Onselen, JMI Luyt, GF Marais, Z White and G Cox.¹⁴¹

At the time of Major PP Oosthuizen's election as commander of the Gatsrand Commando on 19 July 1940,¹⁴² a new phase was introduced in the defence system when the National Reserve Volunteers (NRV) was established in October 1940 for the purpose of manning the sparsely populated areas of the Union with volunteers. The Gatsrand Commando was consequently dissolved and from March 1941 those between age 17 and 60 who were interested could join the unit that was then known as the Gatsrand Commando Section of the NRV. NRV members had to take an oath that they would serve anywhere in Africa should the need arise. They were also required to spend a minimum of four hours on parade every month. Members were issued with weapons and uniforms.¹⁴³

Major Oosthuizen saw to the administration of the NRV section of Gatsrand. After October 1941, Captain HJ Badenhorst, Lieutenant JP Oosthuizen, Second Lieutenant PG Malherbe and Second Lieutenant WJA Vermaas were appointed as officers.¹⁴⁴ The number of persons who initially joined as members of the NRV could not be determined. If one should, however, judge by the 92 persons that were entitled to an Africa Duty Medal since 13 May 1943 after having met the requirements of a minimum number of 18 hours' training, it would seem rather unlikely that the number of NRV members in the Gatsrand could have exceeded 100 in 1941.¹⁴⁵

After his resignation, Major PP Oosthuizen was succeeded in May 1948 by Major JP Oosthuizen.¹⁴⁶ However, the latter's term was short-lived, because the Minister of Defence ordered the reorganisation of the defence forces on 15 December.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴¹ Carletonville (PU vir CHO), verw. 2: C. Rautenbach/E.S. van Eeden, 7.5.1987.

¹⁴² Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC196 nr. 17041/1: Majoor hoofkommandant Burgerkommando's/Majoor P.P. Oosthuizen, 27.3.1941. Vergelyk ook DC196 nr. 17041/1: Hoof kommandant Burgerkommando's/Majoor P.P. Oosthuizen, 19.6.1940.

¹⁴³ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC59 nr. VSV2911: Commando detachments of the National Reserve Volunteers. 1946.

¹⁴⁴ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. OC196 nr. 22253/1: Majoor generaal Sondagh/ Hoofkommandant Burgerkommando's, 8.8.1945. Vergelyk ook verw. DC196, nr. 2861 en 6626: Hoofkommandant Burgerkommando's/ Majoor P.P. Oosthuizen, 1.10.1941.

¹⁴⁵ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC59 nr. VSV73/7/49: Gatsrand Nasionale Reserwe Vrywilligers, 14.5.1945. Vergelyk ook kaptein H.J. Badenhorst/Hoofkommandant Verdedigingsmag, 1.5.1946.

¹⁴⁶ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC59 nr. VSV2/12/231: Waarnemende adjudant-generaal F. du Toit/Bevelvoerende Offisier Voortrekkerhoogte, 13.7.1948.

¹⁴⁷ Defence Council (SAWA), verw. DC59 nr. OCM163. Inligtingstuk aan Kommandement, 15.12.1948.