

After the Siege: The Continuing Story of the Mafeking “Blues”

WESTPEX 2022

April 22, 2022

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Gilbert, Arizona

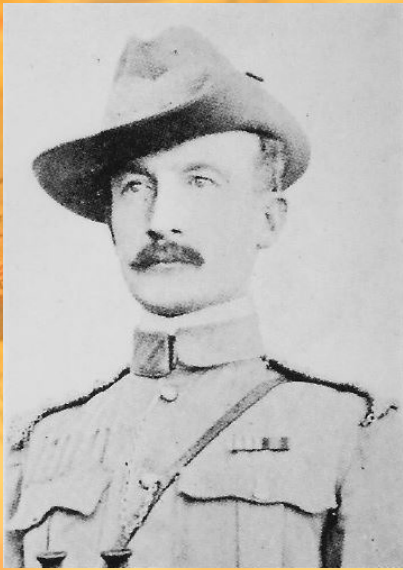


Overview

- Background of the “Blues”
- Siege stamps on the day of the relief
 - 2 covers, 1 with “Blues”
- British military mail during the war
- Requests for “Blues” after the relief
 - A response from Mafeking
 - A response from Rustenburg
- Souvenir with “Blues”
 - “By favor” from Bloemfontein
 - “Civil Commissioner Mafeking” certification
- Wrap Up



Background of the “Blues”



- 2nd Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902)
- Mafeking besieged by Boers at start of conflict
 - On strategic rail line, with repair facility
 - October 1899-May 1900
- Commander: Colonel RSS Baden-Powell
 - Founder of World Scouting Movement
- Military took over postal operations
 - Teenage boys delivered mail on bicycles
 - Bought, surcharged all stamps in PO
 - When exhausted, produced local stamps
 - 3 stamps, in 2 designs
 - Ferro-prussiate, “blueprint” process
 - Stamps called the Mafeking “Blues”

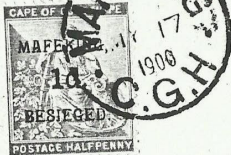


Siege Stamps on the Day of the Relief “Mafeking Besieged” Overprints

THIS LETTER MUST BE GIVEN TO AN OFFICER
TO BE REGISTERED AND A RECEIPT

REGISTERED.

OF THE POST OFFICE
OBTAINED FOR IT.



*Mrs. B. B. Weil
Caresbrook
Seapoint
Cape Town*



John P. Ineson, Bures, Suffolk, UK Mafeking Collector (at Praga 2018)



Siege Stamps on the Day of the Relief Cyclist "Blues"



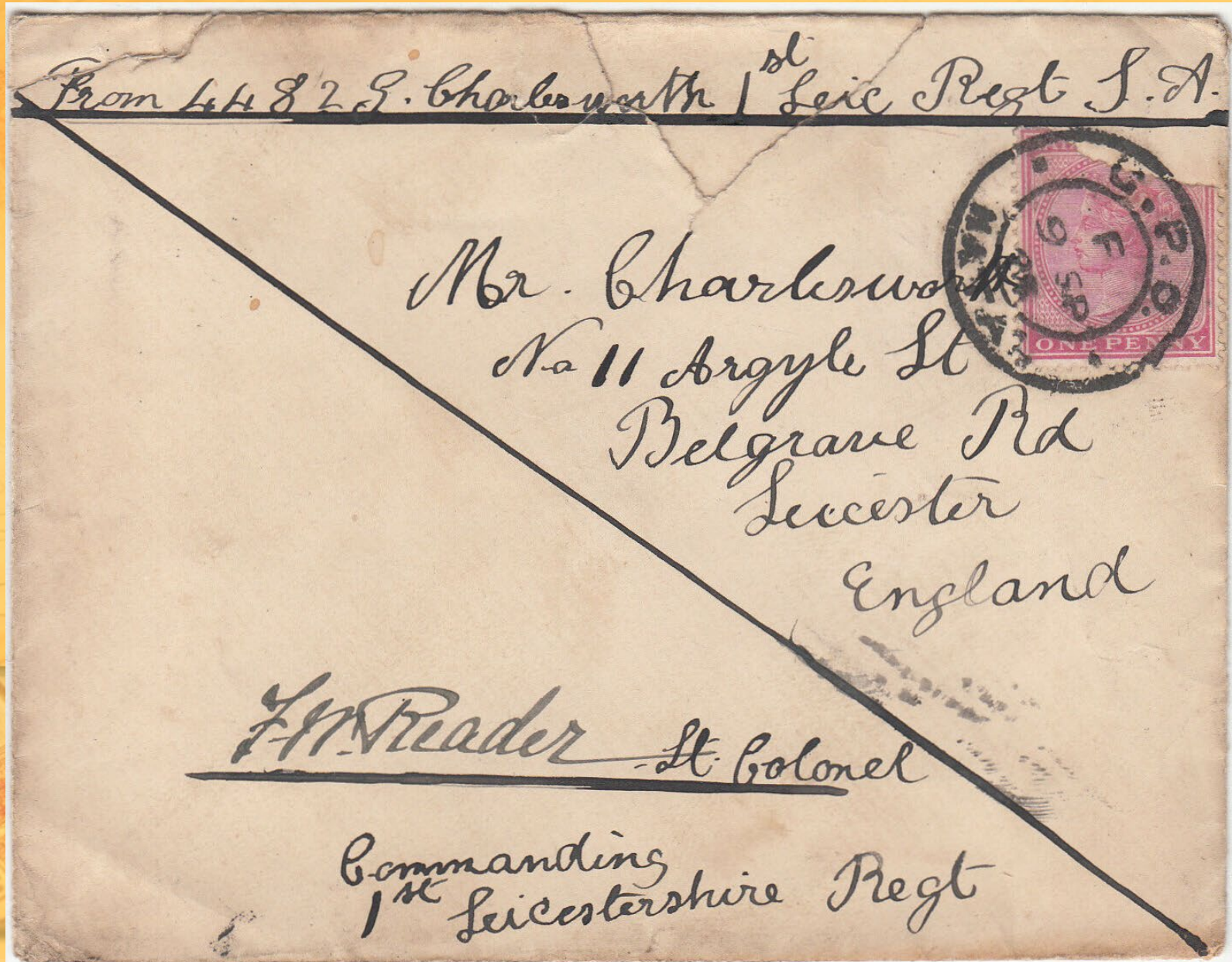
Camp. March 21,

Trigo Location
Grafing

British Military Mail during the 2nd Anglo-Boer War

- Concessionary rate for letters home, per half ounce
 - 6d for officers
 - 1d for enlisted
 - To the UK, but not necessarily to the British Colonies
- Marked “Active Service”
- Posted at a military Field Post Office (FPO) or PO in British-controlled area
- Posted without franking if stamps were not available
 - “No stamps”
 - “Stamps not available”
 - “Stamps not procurable”
 - “Stamps unobtainable”
 - ...
- All military mail was censored
 - Self-censored, if written by an officer
 - Censored by an officer, if written by an enlisted person
 - Endorsed in lower left corner of envelope (name, rank, unit)
- Official mail carried “free” without franking
 - OHMS (On Her Majesty’s Service)

Soldier's Mail with Stamps



Soldier's Mail without Stamps



Official Mail (OHMS)

D. H. M. S.

Mr. Grubb

Presd. Soldier, Families Association

Stone Cesth

Free
Admiral Parry Col

W. Greenhithe

Kent England



B-P promoted to rank of Major General in June 1900 by order of Queen Victoria.

Requests for “Blues” after the Relief

A Response from Mafeking

- Baden F.S. Baden-Powell (1860-1937)
- Lord R.S.S. Baden-Powell’s younger brother
- Major in the Scots Guard
- Attached by the War Office to Colonel Bryan T. Mahon’s Flying Column from Barkly West which relieved Mafeking
 - Part of the British Government’s campaign to raise public support for the 2nd Anglo-Boer war
- Remained in Mafeking after the relief
 - At his brother’s request
 - Assigned to respond to correspondence to his brother from well wishers



Officers of the Mafeking Relief Column

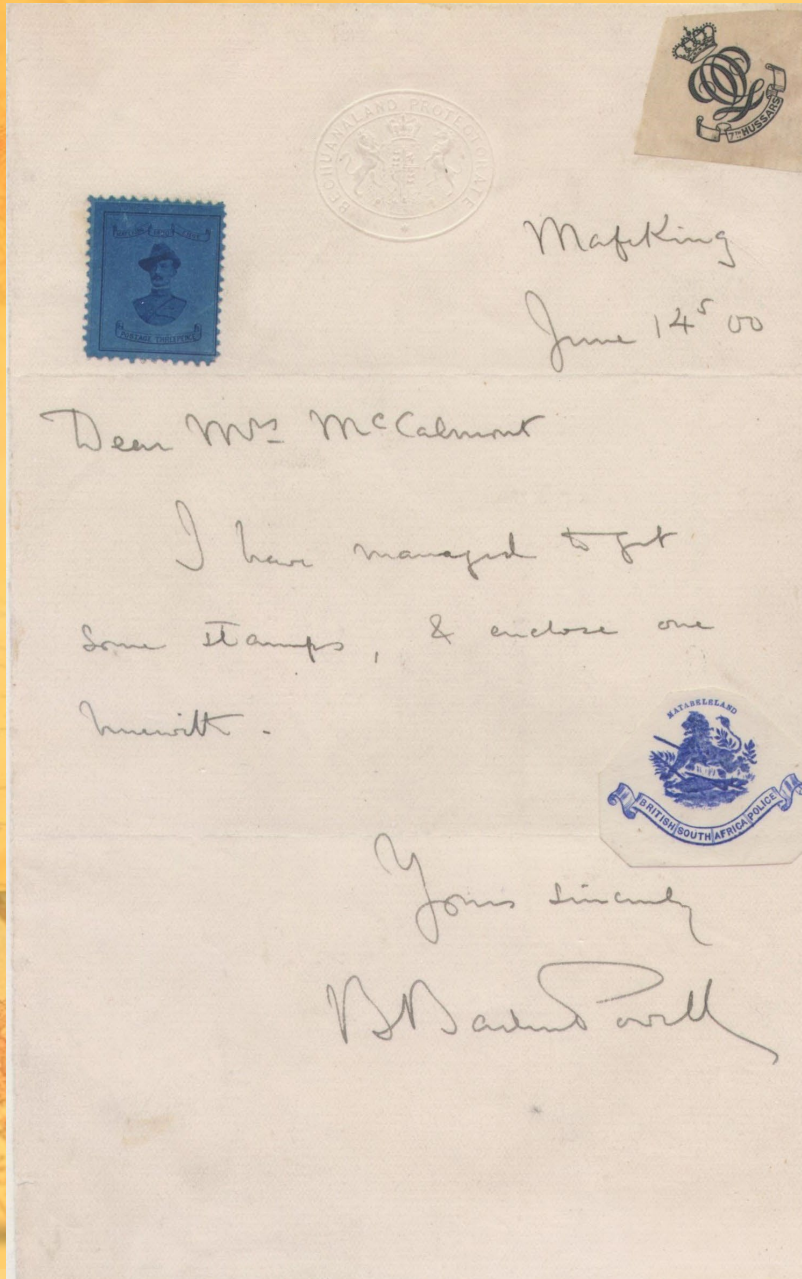


[Photo by Taylor, Mafeking.]

OFFICERS OF THE MAFEKING RELIEF COLUMN.

Top row (left to right): Major Karri Davis (Imperial Light Horse), Major Baden-Powell (Intelligence Department), Captain Robinson, R.A., Major Weil (Transport), Captain Peakman (Kimberley Corps), Prince Alexander of Teck, A.D.C., Captain Cobb, A.S.C.
Second row: Captain Donaldson (Imperial Light Horse), Captain Maxwell (Kimberley Corps), Colonel King (commanding Kimberley Corps), Colonel Mahon, Colonel Edwards (Imperial Light Horse), Captain Bell-Smyth (Brigade-Major), Captain Barnes (Adjutant, Imperial Light Horse).
Bottom row: Captain Ker (commanding Infantry detachment), Sir John Willoughby (D.A.A.G.B.), Colonel F. Rhodes, D.S.O. (Chief of Intelligence Department), Captain Smyth (Galloper), Captain Du Plat Taylor (R.H.A.).

Baden B-P Letter to a Well Wisher



Mafeking
June 14 00

Dear Mrs McCalmont

I have managed to get some
stamps, & enclose one herewith.

Yours sincerely
B BadenPowell

Kenneth Griffith (1921-2006)

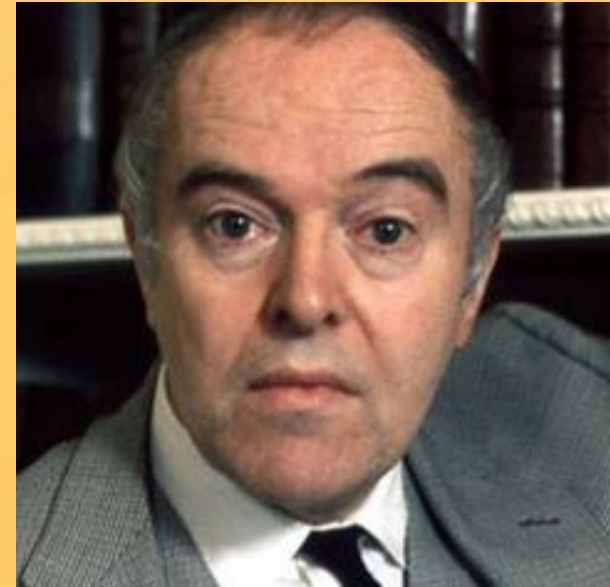
Welsh Actor and Documentary Filmmaker



Wireless operator John 'Jack'
Phillips in movie
A Night to Remember (1958)



With Patrick McGoohan
in TV program *The
Prisoner* (1967)

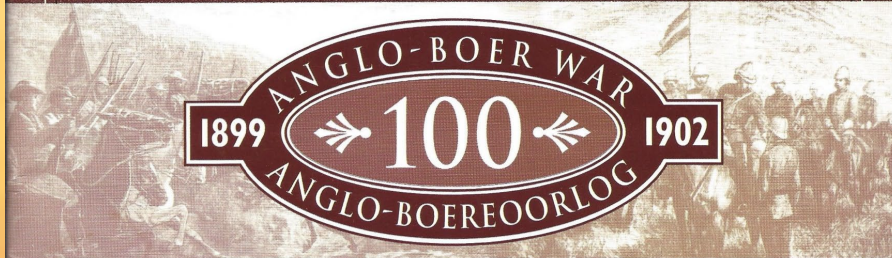


In BBC production *Give
Me Liberty or Give Me
Death* (1976)

ABOPhil 1999

1999 ABOPhil

Filatelie-uitstalling • Philatelic Exhibition



Uitstal-katalogus • Exhibition Catalogue

Pretoria 22 - 26 September
Bloemfontein 11 - 16 October
1999

R10

Kenneth Griffith's 10 Frames at ABOPhil 1999

Raam/Frame 48

From Beginning to End

Kenneth Griffith, London, UK

Dear Boers or Afrikaners-of-Today

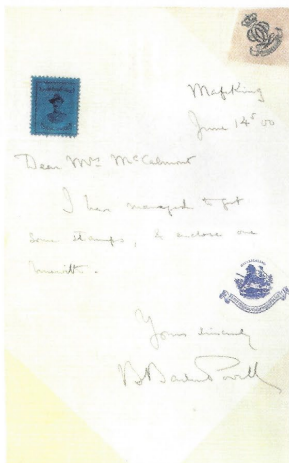
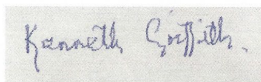
I wish that this was a better exhibit for you; that I had been able to select a more apt presentation for such a memorable occasion as this Centenary of your Second War for Freedom, but I have been very ill and am currently overstretched with my professional obligations.

These "covers" are from my already-assembled collection; I have "pulled-out" a very general selection and my good friend, Peter Prime, has generously agreed to carry them to Bloemfontein.

Though I feel that my offering is inadequate for such an epic memory, I want to emphasise my deep feelings on this subject. Perhaps I can communicate these feelings by informing you that I have made three films (financed by the BBC) on the subject of our war; I have focused on three points: 1. The evil of imperialism; 2. The nobility of Boer resistance; and 3. Thank God we British managed to produce one true hero: Emily Hobhouse.

This collection is displayed in the above spirit; that's all!

My Love to the Boer-Afrikaner people



The "VR Special Post" 1d stamp on cover, postmarked at Vryburg on 16 May 1900. After Brigadier General Mahon's Column reached Vryburg on 8 - 9 May 1900 on it's way to relieve Mafeking, a number of Transvaal 1/2d and 1d stamps found at the Vryburg post office, were overprinted thus.

2003 Argyll Etkin Ltd. Auctions of the Kenneth Griffith Collection

Argyll Etkin Limited

The Kenneth Griffith Collection of
the Stamps and Postal History
of
The Anglo-Boer War
1899-1902



626

To be sold by Auction on
Thursday 6th March 2003 at 1.30pm precisely
at The Regus Conference Centre, 12 St James's Square,
London S.W.1

Argyll Etkin Limited

The Murray Graham Collection
of Aden Postal History
and India, Middle East and African Countries
and

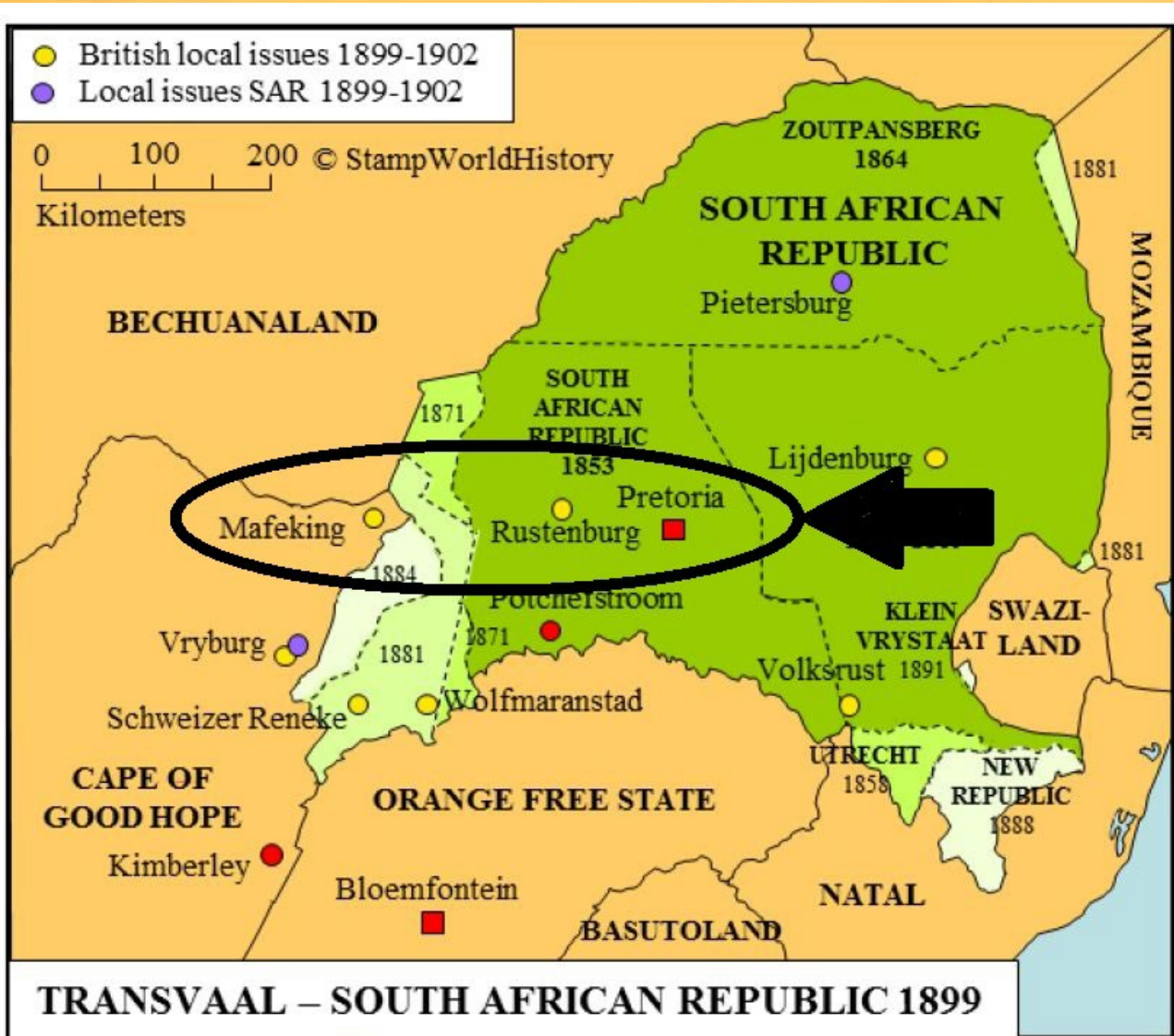
The Stamps and Postal History
of the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902
from the Collection of Kenneth Griffith



195

To be sold by Auction on
Tuesday 23rd September 2003 at 11am and 2pm
at The Regus Conference Centre, 12 St James's Square,
London S.W.1

Requests for “Blues” after the Relief A Response from Rustenburg

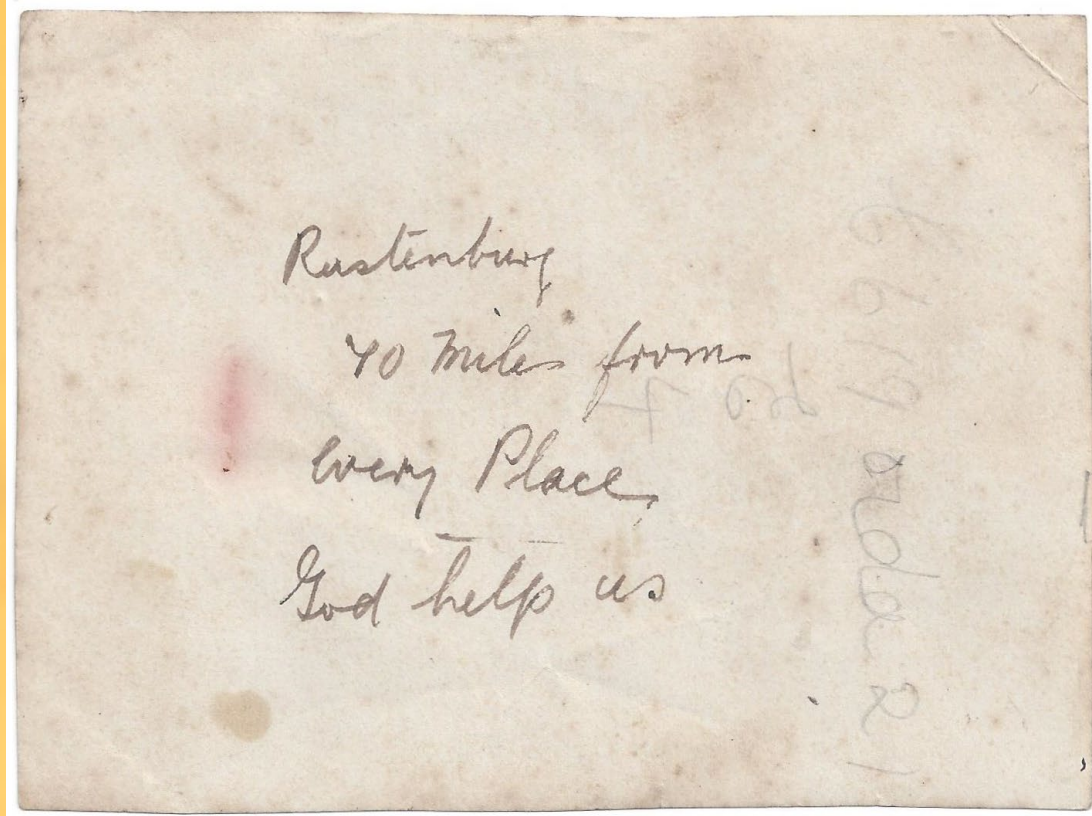


Rustenburg (circa 1900)



Rustenburg (circa 1900)

- B-P's field force occupied town for 52 days (June 14 – August 7, 1900)
- B-P described it as “the Mecca of the most old-fashioned and bitter of the Boers”
- Town is 70 miles east of Zeerust, and 70 miles west of Pretoria



Back of George F Roberts' photo



Boer War Block House near Rustenburg

BLOCK HOUSE
erected during Boer War near Rustenburg.

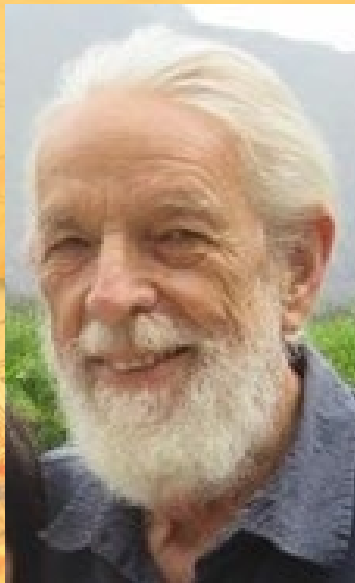
OU FORT
gebou gedurende die Boere Oorlog naby Rustenburg.



“The Riddle of Rustenburg”



Harry Birkhead (1931-2013)



Joh Groenewald (1939-2020)



Harry Birkhead · Joh Groenewald

“Strange” Management of Stamps in Rustenburg



- 90,000 V.R.I. overprinted stamps arrived in Rustenburg on June 28, 1900
- 45,000 forwarded to Zeerust on July 14
- None of remaining 45,000 was used while B-P's field force occupied town
- All disappeared by end of the war
- ~3,000 V.R. handstamp-overprinted stamps were produced while B-P's field force occupied town
- First appeared on June 22, 1900
- “Most forged of all stamp issues of war”
 - “2/3 inspected by us are fraudulent”

Baden B-P Letter to Cousin John Clark Powell

Rustenburg
Transvaal
July 23 00

Rustenburg
Transvaal

July 23 00

My dear Cousin

My brother, who is very busy just at present, asks me to answer your kind letter of congratulation.

He regrets to say that Mafeking Siege stamps have now become so rare as to be practically unprocurable. I believe some kinds are fetching as much as £12!

We have now been practically shut up here for the last month, and having run out of all ordinary supplies, have been seriously considering issuing special stamps here! But we hope it will not continue much longer.

Yours sincerely
B Baden Powell
(Major Scots G.)

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Yours sincerely
B Baden Powell
(Major Scots Guards)

“some kinds are now fetching as much as £12”



Small format B-P head
reversed design error

Stamps Wanted.

Imperial, brown on salmon, or brick-dust red, surcharged British Bechuanaland and Mafeking, 1/-.

—
3d. Blue, local, head to right.

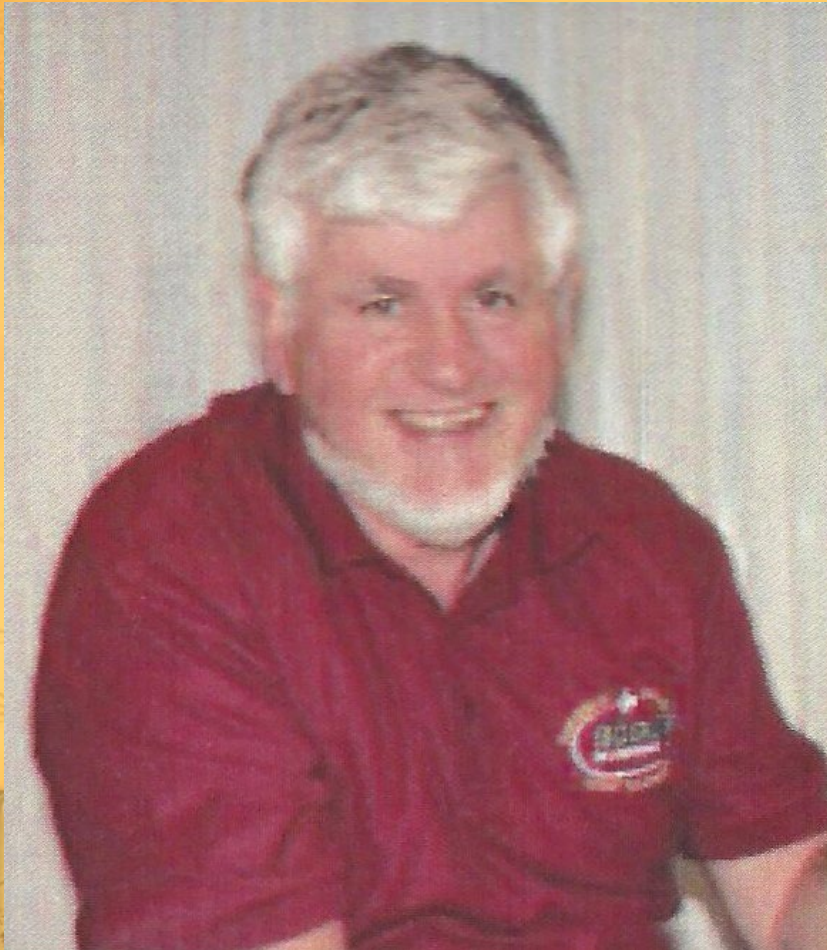
—
State price, or will exchange any other.—F.Y.

Ad in Mafeking Mail
May 11, 1900

- £12 Sterling in 1900 = about GBP1,572 (US\$2,060) in 2022
- 2021 Scott Catalogue values:
 - US\$100,000 mint
 - US\$55,000 used



“Mafeking Siege Register”



Colin Walker
Scouting Historian

MAFEKING SIEGE REGISTER

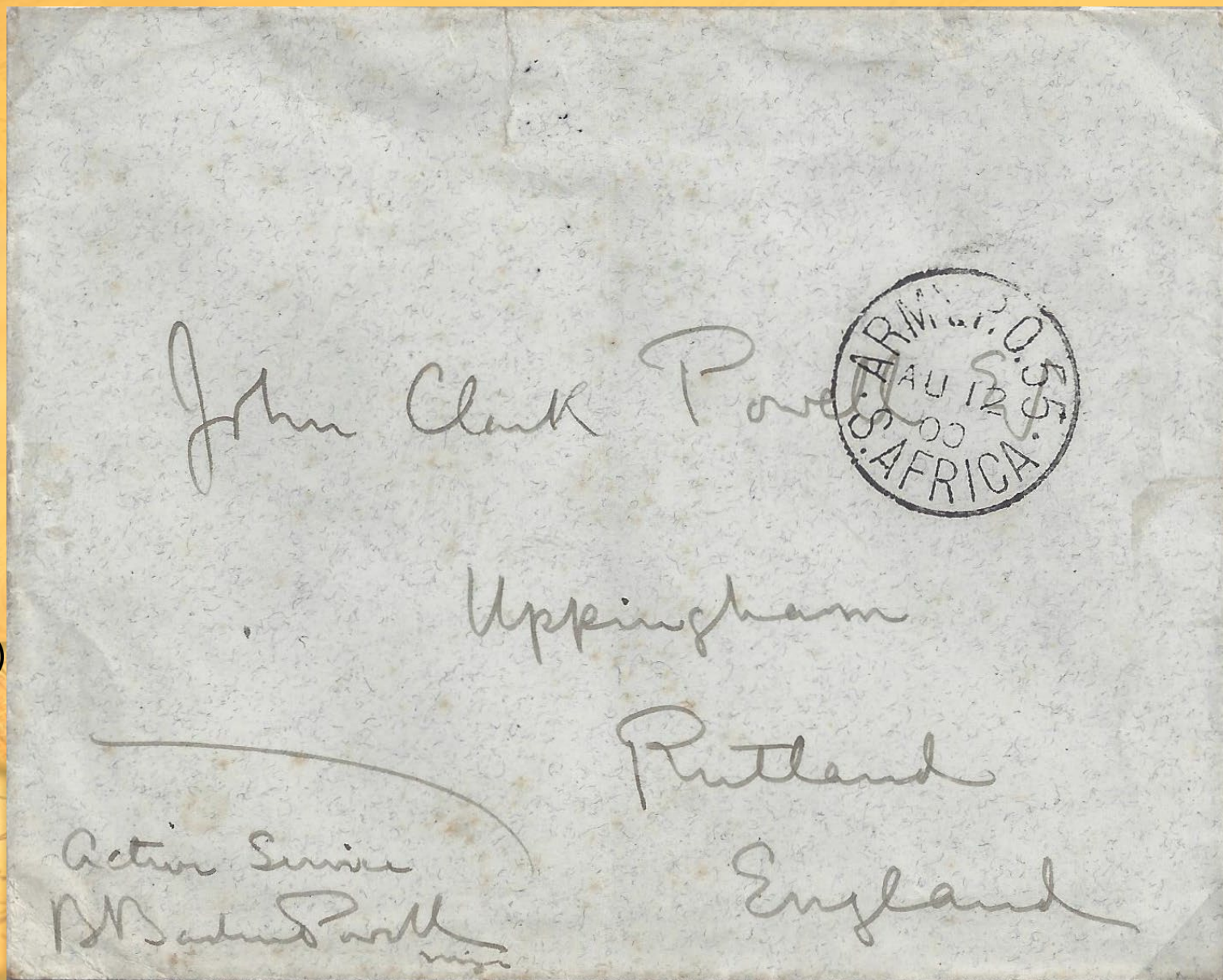


Colin Walker

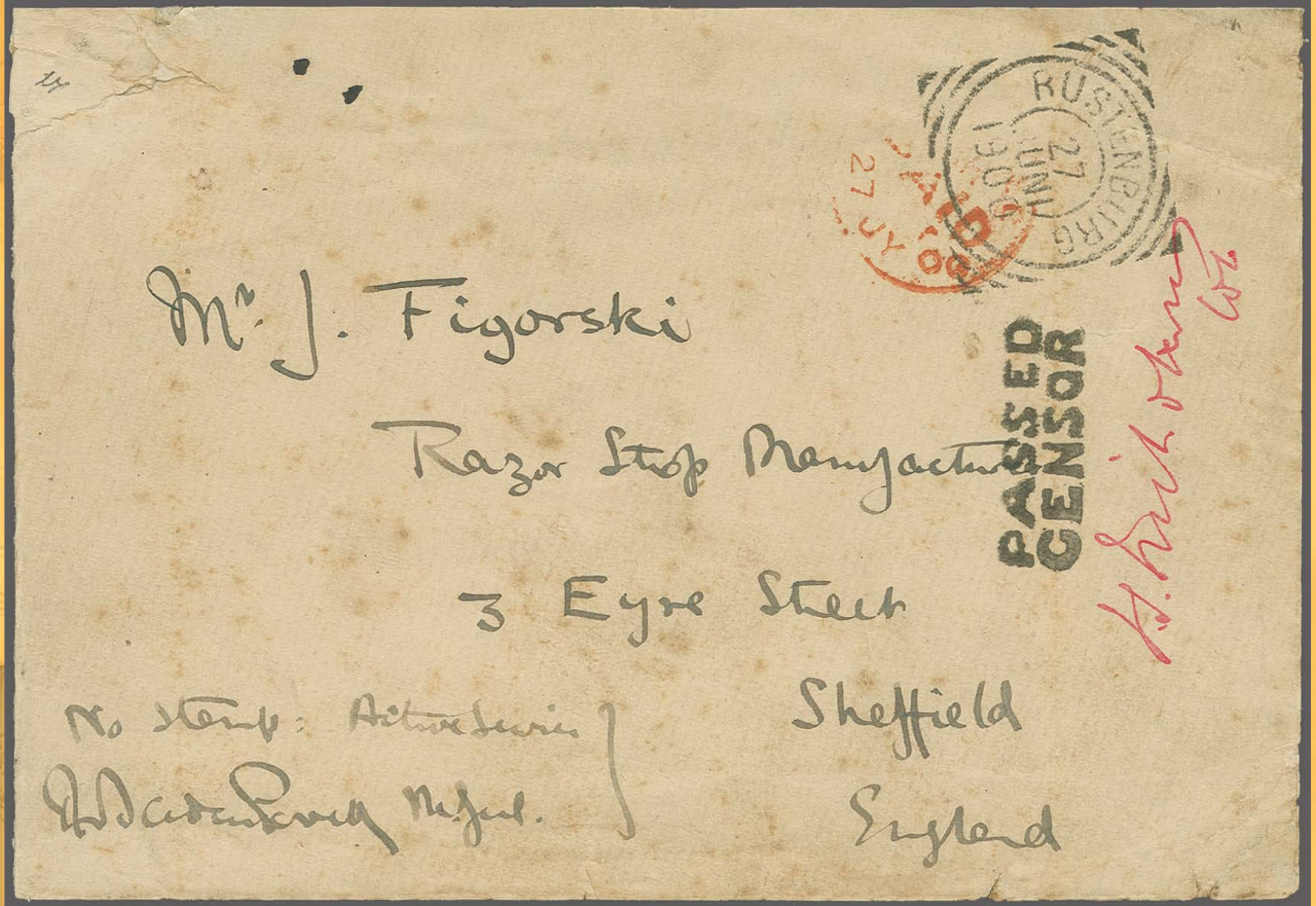
'A unique compilation of information about the besieged.'

B B-P's Envelope to Cousin John Clark Powell

- Conveyed on evacuation convoy from Rustenburg (August 7)
- Posted at Army Field Post Office 55 in Pretoria (August 12)
- Backstamped Leicester and Uppingham (September 8)
- No franking, despite availability of V.R. & V.R.I. overprinted stamps



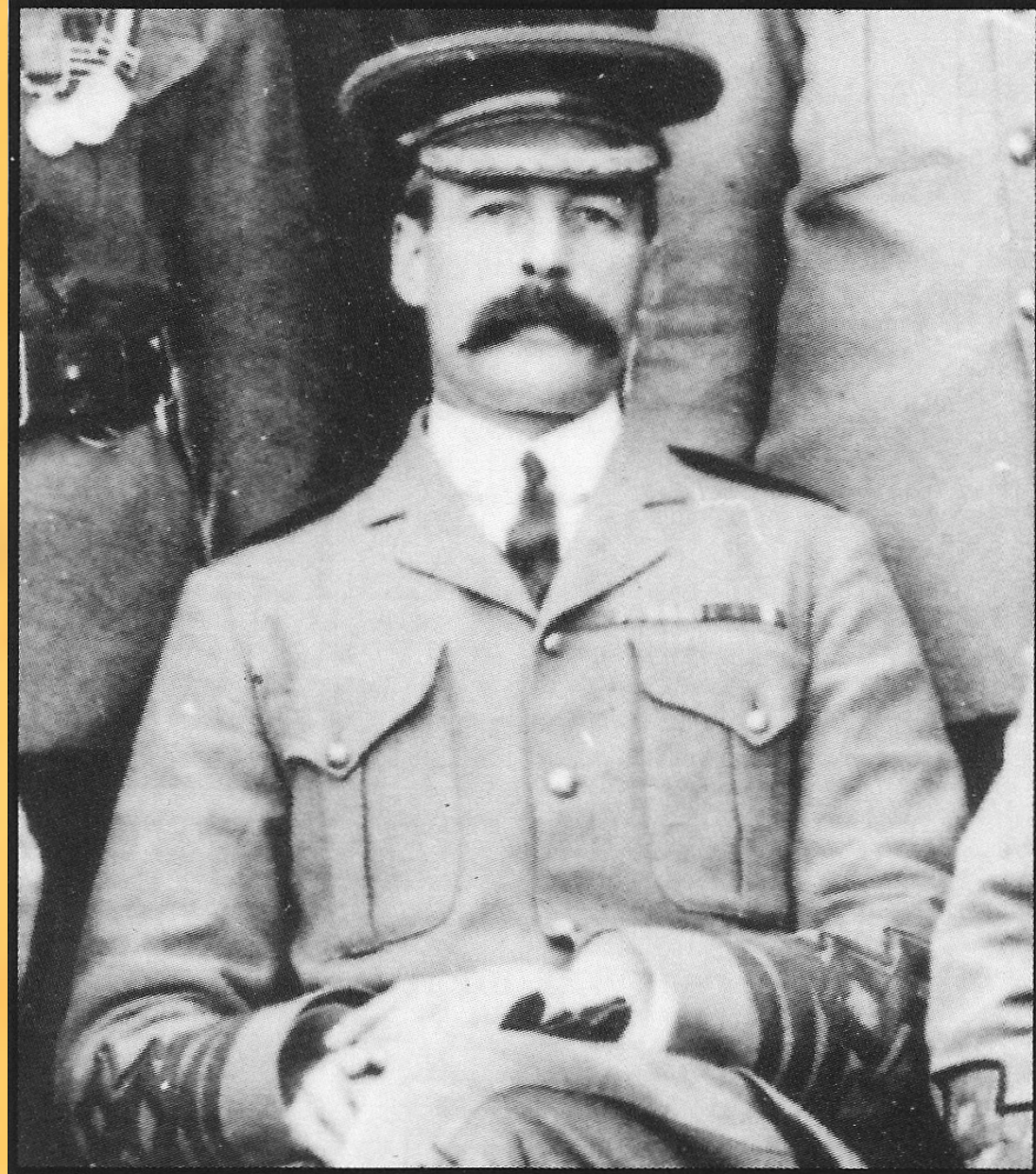
B-P Stampless Envelope from Rustenburg



Rustenburg "squared circle" cancel disappeared after temporary evacuation on July 4.

Colonel J S Nicholson (1893-1924)

- Senior officer in B-Ps field force at Rustenburg
 - Served as press censor
- In early July, Political Secretary, Pretoria, asked District Commandant, Zeerust, "... what postal arrangements have you made and what are you doing for stamps?"
 - Zeerust asked Rustenburg about VRI overprints
 - Without bothering to ask Rustenburg magistrate, Nicholson relied by telegram, "No stamps here"
- Retired as brigadier general after WWI and served as an MP
- After B-P retired from army and founded Scouting movement, he often traveled under pseudonym "Colonel J S Nicholson"



B-P Stampless Folded Letter from Rustenburg



Folded Letter (continued)

accounts of how the news
of our Relief was received
at home and the great
interest that appears to
have been taken in our
doings, have been quite
a revelation to us.

With very many thanks,

Yours very truly

Robt Adams Powell



B-P Postage Due Envelope from Rustenburg

- Sent by B-P to mother of his God-daughter in Cape Town (June 28 [dated by contents])
- On first mail-carrying convey to Zeerust (June 28 - July 2)
- Not free to Cape of Good Hope Colony
- Taxed 2d postage due = 2 x 1d for local delivery by "Charge Clerk" (July 7)



A Souvenir from Bloemfontein



Map data ©2019 AfriGIS (Pty) Ltd

- Mafeking, then Mafikeng, today Mahikeng
- Mahikeng – Bloemfontein: 270 miles (435 kilometers)



Canceled "By Favor"

On Her Majesty's Service



Officer Commanding
87th Field (Howitzer) Battery
R.F.A.

Officers of 87th Field (Howitzer) Battery Royal Field Artillery



“Civil Commissioner Mafeking” Certification



14 September 1900

- Charles G.H. Bell: Civil Commissioner & Civilian Resident Magistrate in Mafeking during siege
- Large format B-P head stamp is “cracked plate” (position 9)

Epilogue

2014 Spink Auction of Harry Birkhead Collection

THE ANGLO-BOER WAR, 1899-1902
FEATURING OCCUPATION AND SIEGE ISSUES
THE HARRY BIRKHEAD COLLECTION



SPINK

12 MARCH 2014
LONDON

APS Stamp Chat

November 3, 2020



APS STAMP CHAT

"RARITIES OF THE 1900 MAFEKING
SIEGE 'BLUEPRINT' STAMPS"



PRESENTED BY:
DR. FREDERICK LAWRENCE



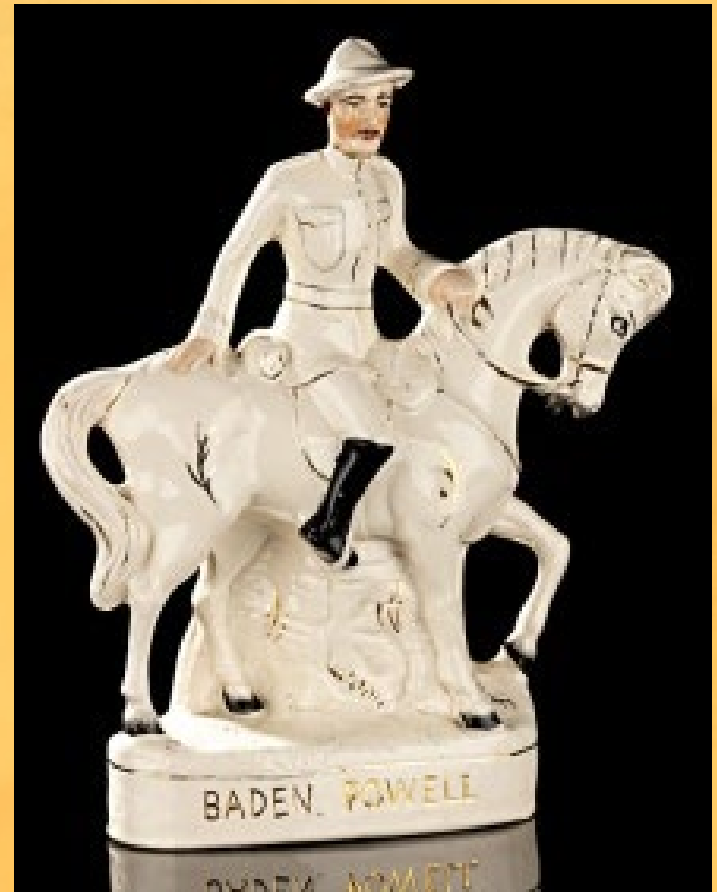
SOSSI

58:11

Wrap Up

- Contact me: ieconsulting@cox.net
 - Follow-up comments and questions
 - New information about Mafeking “Blues” after the siege

- “Baden Powell on Horse”
- by Staffordshire Pottery
- <https://paradeantiques.co.uk/china-ceramics-glass/western/british/1899-staffordshire-pottery-large-flat-back-baden-powell-on-horse>
- GBP750 or “Make an Offer” (+ shipping)



Comments/Questions?

