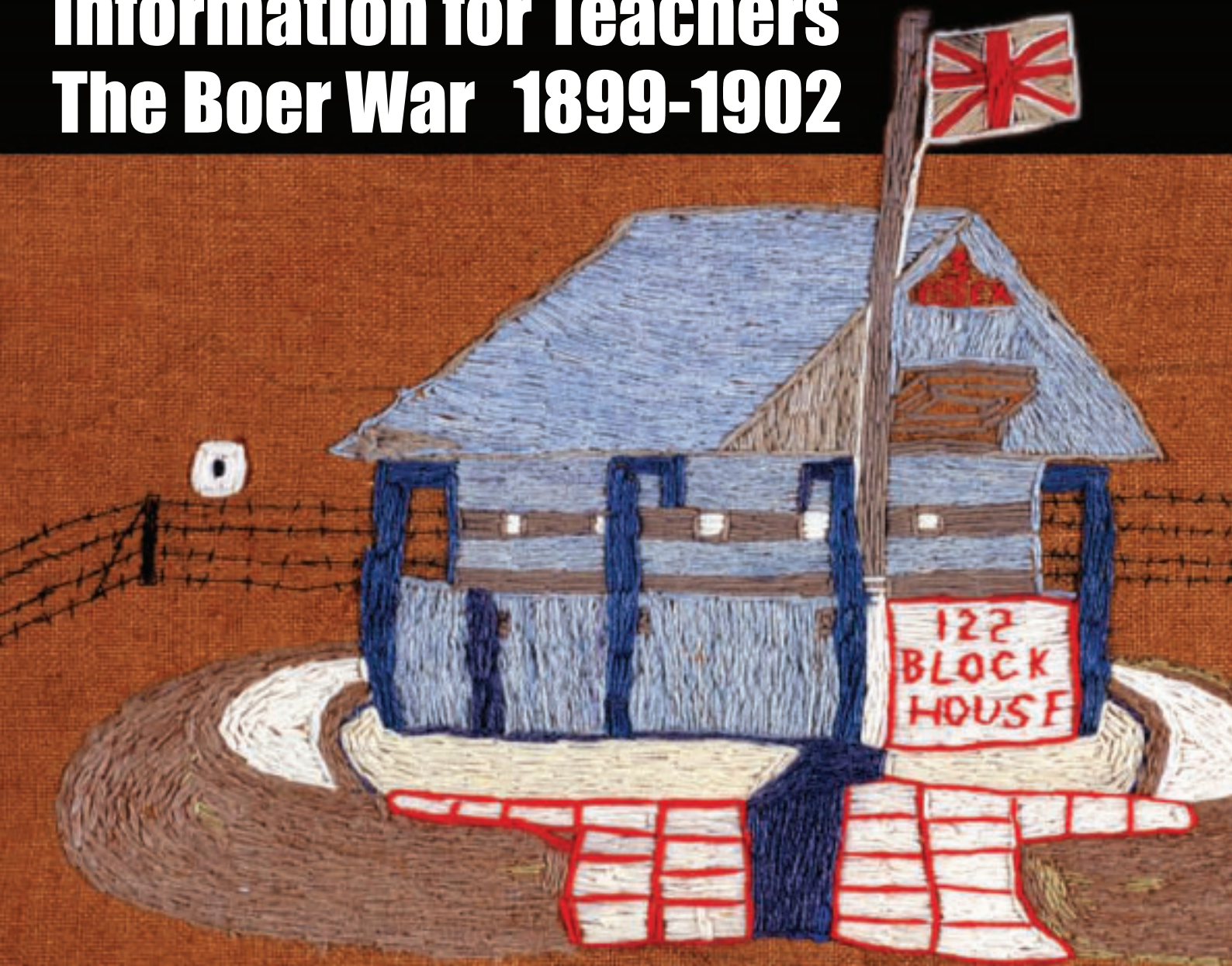




# Information for Teachers

## The Boer War 1899-1902



# Visiting the exhibition



Visit the National Army Museum and find out how Britain's past has helped to shape our present and future. Discover the impact our Army has had on the story of Britain, Europe and the world, and see how the actions of a few can affect the futures of many.

## Planning your visit

The Museum is free to enter, and it's worth making a pre-visit to familiarise yourself with the space. Gallery trails and risk assessment information are available from the web site.

## Making your booking

Call 020 7730 0717 ext 2459 (secondary and groups and Video Conferencing) or email [education@national-army-museum.ac.uk](mailto:education@national-army-museum.ac.uk). Please make us aware of any special requirements your group may have. A lunchroom and coach parking may be booked if available.

## A Typical Visit

For groups studying the Experience of Warfare 1854-1929

- 10:30 Illustrated Talk/Workshop or Archive
- 11:30 Gallery visit
- 12:30 Lunch
- 13:30 Handling - weapons and uniform
- 14:30 Depart

## Choose a Free workshop from:

- Medicine 1854-1929
- Weapons Development
- WW I Tactics and Technology

## Choose an Illustrated talk from:

- Women at War 1845-1929
- Media and Propaganda

Archive sessions are available on request, subject to an archivist's availability. Session spaces are limited and must be booked in advance.

# Background information for teachers



The new Boer War exhibition gives a general overview to the conflict highlighting the following significant areas.

## A Modern War

The Boer War was Britain's introduction to modern warfare. It can be seen in part as a rehearsal for the First World War (1914-18), played on the small stage.

## Boer Success

In the first phase the British were forced onto the defensive. Boer armies attacked from two fronts: into Natal from the Transvaal and into the northern Cape from the Orange Free State.

## Britain fights back

In the second phase more troops were sent to South Africa to overwhelm the Boer forces. It took the British Empire three years of fighting, three huge sieges and many costly battles to achieve victory.

## Reporting on the War

Over seventy war correspondents, more than ever before, went to South Africa on the outbreak of war.

## Product Placement

Consumer advertising flourished in the 1890s and 'the soldier' featured regularly in marketing campaigns.

## Remembering the Dead

The Boer War was the first time when war memorials became widespread. They commemorated officers and ordinary soldiers who had been killed.

### Resources

Teachers' resource pack for Key Stages 4 and 5 to support your visit: Downloadable PDF worksheet.

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# A Soldier's Image

## – Teachers' PowerPoint notes

Many of these images originate from one of the world's largest producers of stereoscopic images, Underwood and Underwood. The American company sold stereoscope slides to the general public. The original titles of these images such as 'Brave Boers Surrender' can be used to discuss bias and the meanings associated with such terms.

Unlike other European nations Britain did not have conscription. To encourage volunteers the length of service was decreased from 11 to 7 years but there was a constant need at times like the Boer War to raise more recruits. Despite criticism of the way the war was being conducted, realistic images of soldiers were increasingly used to sell everything from paint to cigarettes. The media industry had been growing since the tax on advertising was lifted in 1855. Soldiers were more popular as a result of the war and were depicted as strong, clean and disciplined.

The overriding image of the Boers is as individualistic and brave but this does not acknowledge weaknesses. Soldiers were difficult to command, because they had legally to train, own a rifle, ammunition and horse but had no obligation to fight and would if necessary return home to help on the farm.





NAM. 117621

### **Pte Josiah Egerton Hill, South Nottinghamshire Hussars Yeomanry**

Britain's increasing prosperity during the nineteenth century meant that recruitment for a low paid volunteer army was always difficult. At the outbreak of the Boer War the compulsory length of service was reduced from 11 to 7 years. Poverty and malnutrition, especially in cities, meant that a large proportion of men looking to join the army failed their medicals. During the Boer War required levels of fitness were reduced so that men who had not passed the medical, but were considered to be able to serve as soldiers, were accepted. By the end of the Boer War 32% of the regular force was made up of such exemptions.



NAM. 113969

### **Kaffir Scouts, photograph by Lt Charles Tristram Melville Hare, Boer War (1899-1902)**

In 1900 Kodak developed the Box Brownie. This affordable mass-produced camera was simple to use and contributed to the Boer War being the most photographed conflict of any time. Soldiers took thousands of unofficial photos of everyday life in South Africa. While most unofficial photos remained out of the public domain, the images later supported the stories that friends and family were hearing about from soldiers' letters. Soldiers were encouraged not to include information in letters that may have been of use to the Boers or that was critical of events in South Africa. But there was no censorship of personal mail.



NAM. 93564

### **Taken by Nurse M S Barwell, Army Nursing Service, South Africa**

In addition to photos taken by soldiers there was an increasing number of nurses from Britain and Australia with cameras in South Africa. The Army Nursing Service sent 1 Superintendent, 19 Superintendent Sisters and 68 Sisters to South Africa at the beginning of the war. This level increased to 1,400 British women based at the 21 general hospitals - those with 500 or more beds.



NAM. 92771

### **History Recorders and History Makers - Correspondents' Carts waiting Lord Roberts' entry to Kroonstadt - S.A**

On 22nd September 1899 two London newspapers printed a routine dispatch in full detailing the British garrison at Dundee, down to the last man! Lord Landsdowne ordered press and telegraph censorship, but as no part of South Africa was under martial law this was illegal. Additionally, no written regulations existed for censorship of correspondents at the beginning of the war, so censors did not know what to allow. Rules controlling military personal communicating with the press were tightened.



NAM. 8088

**War correspondents returning by ship from the Boer War, including illustrator and painter W B Wollen and W S Churchill, seated second from the left 1901 (c)**

British press accreditation was introduced by the army in 1889. Journalists could access the army's telegraph network if they submitted work to the army censor. Accredited journalists could draw rations, fodder and were entitled to POW status if captured. British press censorship failed as there were too few censors. Including foreign reporters and staff between 2-300 people were involved with reporting the news from South Africa. Telegraph censorship banned coded messages, but journalists like Churchill were known to have agreed codes with their newspapers to avoid censorship rules. During the Boer War 15 correspondents were killed, 37 injured and 7 taken prisoner. A plaque commemorating gentlemen of the press can be seen in the crypt at St Paul's Cathedral.



NAM. 86604

**The Ladysmith Lyre, 27 Nov 1899.**

The *Ladysmith Lyre* and the *Ladysmith Bombshell* were limited edition papers produced during the siege of Ladysmith, December 1899. Communications with Ladysmith were restricted after the Boers cut the telegraph and telephone cables, so reporters within Ladysmith produced newspapers containing mostly fabricated stories to relieve the monotony of the 118 day siege. Other besieged towns also produced papers: Baden-Powell was responsible for the *Mafeking Mail*.



NAM. 85345

**News of the relief of Ladysmith reached the London public on Thursday 1st March 1900**

The announcement was made at the War Office shortly before 10am and then proclaimed by the Lord Mayor from a window of the Mansion House shortly afterwards. Spontaneous celebrations were witnessed in London and Manchester.



NAM. 86812

**Evening News, Relief of Mafeking 17 May 1900 and Taking of Pretoria 5 Jun 1900**

Colonel Baden-Powell returned to Britain in 1903 a hero. The siege of Mafeking lasted 217 days and when news of its relief broke on 18 May tens of thousands of people celebrated for about four days. The scale of the parties far exceeded the significance of the relief, resulting in 'mafficking' being used as a term meaning to celebrate excessively. Despite criticism of the war in penny papers, such as the *Manchester Guardian* and anti-war, Quaker confectioner George Cadbury's *Daily News*, Harmsworth's *Evening News* and other 1/2 penny papers turned support for the war into jingoistic patriotism.



NAM. 85388

**“Major-General John French, the intrepid cavalry leader, just after visiting the released prisoners, Pretoria, S.A.”**

The public bought and collected professional images and stereoscopic cards like this one published by Underwood and Underwood. Leaders of the military during the Boer War were well recognised figures around the world. Underwood and Underwood translated slide titles into French, Russian, German and Spanish.



NAM. 115889

**Christmas card sent to Capt L G A Eales from the Sergeants’ Mess, 1st Bn the Buffs Regiment, 1900 (c)**

The British army had more battle experience than most European nations, although this was predominantly against ill-equipped colonial natives. At the outbreak of the Boer War the British regular army saw themselves as an experienced, well-trained body.



NAM. 116868

**Three Generations in the War, 1900**

Photograph depicting P J Lemmer, aged 65, S J Pretorius, aged 43 and J D L Botha, aged 15. Collected by Lt Charles Stirling, Royal Horse Artillery.

Each citizen between 16-60 had a legal responsibility to contribute to defense. Women were also trained to use guns from a young age, although few of them fought in the war. The image of natives with guns which they knew how to use was found shocking by the British public in 1899.



NAM. 35292

**Anti-British propaganda postcards. Published in Belgium, 1902 (c)**

This postcard depicts the capture of a British armored train, probably on 15 November 1899 where Lt Churchill, Capt Halelane and others were taken prisoner. The event was well reported especially after Churchill’s escape from a POW camp.

Handwritten message reads: ‘So much for the Belgian version of our position in South Africa. The British can be killed, they will die, but they cannot be conquered, Long Live His Majesty the King’



NAM. 86338

**Gen Joubert and staff, Newcastle, Natal, 17 Oct 1899**

Commercial photographs collected by Capt (later Brig Gen) F R Patch, Royal Artillery, 1899-1900.



NAM. 87055

**Sieg der Boeren bei Stormberg uber General Gatacre. [Victory of the Boers over General Gatacre at the Battle of Stormberg]**

The Battle of Stormberg 10 December 1899 was the first of three defeats suffered by the British Army in Black Week. Sir William Gatacre led his troops on a night march to Stormberg junction. Gatacre's scouts were disorientated by the dark and directed troops into a Boer ambush, resulting in 28 soldiers being killed and 61 wounded and 634 men being taken prisoner. Britain's policy in South Africa was not internationally supported: French, American, Dutch, German, Russian, Irish and Scandinavian nationals fought with the Boers. This type of chromolithograph would have been popular in homes across much of the world.



NAM. 116866

**Christiaan de Wet, Potchefstroom, 27 Aug 1900**

Collected by Lt Charles Stirling, Royal Horse Artillery.

Professional photographs of the Boers and their leaders were also published and collected.



NAM. 86961

**Les Campes De Reconcentration, Published in France, 1901 (c)**

French anti-British caricatures relating to the concentration camps. It was not just foreign newspapers that were against the clearance policy adopted by the army in 1900. Articles in the *Manchester Guardian* supported a fair war not 'total war.' P.C. Scott editor of the paper also made anti-war speeches in the House of Commons as a Lancashire politician. Scott accused the Conservative party of using the war for their 'khaki election' of 1900, two years before it was necessary to be called 'when tens of thousands of electors are absent in south Africa, and on an old register...it is an attempt to turn patriotic feeling into party purposes'



NAM. 92816

**Christmas Presents from home, to the troops with Methuen at Modder River, S. Africa**

Expectations at the beginning of the Boer War were that it would last 3-4 months, require around 75,000 troops sustaining around 300 casualties and cost no more than 10 million pounds. The reality was that war lasted 32 months, required 450,000 men of which 22,000 died and cost £230 million. As the war ran on the British public suffered fatigue and interest in the war declined. However support for regular soldiers remained strong. Friends and family sent comforts to soldiers and Queen Victoria sent a tin of chocolates bearing her portrait to every serving soldier in South Africa for Christmas 1899.



NAM. 87357

**Major E J Phipps-Hornby V.C. Awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantly saving guns at Korn Spruit. March 31. 1900, whilst in command of Q Battery, Royal Horse Artillery.'**  
From a series called 125, 'VC Heroes - Boer War', 1898-1900. Published by Taddy and Company, 1902.

Actually 78 Victoria Crosses were awarded during the Second Boer War. Advertising in newspapers allows an insight, albeit a stereotypical one, into public opinion, as other forms of media such as film were still in their infancy. Literacy amongst the general population was increasing, Lloyds weekly paper had a circulation of 1 million. Advertising had been increasing since the advertising duty was stopped in 1853 and an additional stamp duty was lifted in 1855. Imagery was now being used for everyday products like cigarettes or whisky. In the popular imagination soldiers lived as physically strong and capable men, a good image. It was not just working class papers who profited from adverts. The *Daily Telegraph* had an annual revenue of £200,000 generated by printing adverts by 1902.



NAM. 87320

**Cigarette card from Composite Tabs Series with 'Labour' Clause: L. Leading Generals at the War, 1902**

Oscar Wilde's trial in 1895 led to a crisis of masculinity in Britain. Cigarettes were seen as a masculine product, it being vulgar for women to smoke, resulting in an increasing number of brands and advertising. Odgen's spent £100,000 advertising Guinea Gold 3d packs of 10 in 1898. Cigarette advertising in 1899 was used by the War Office to aid recruitment. *The News of the World* ran an advert depicting 2 soldiers: a regular soldier giving an Imperial Yeoman an Ogden's cigarette saying 'a welcome comrade'. This was an attempt to raise 20,000 volunteers to fight in South Africa. The Yeomanry were often considered a weekend hunting and shooting club, but a good source of manly, volunteer soldiers.



NAM. 87051

**Chromolithograph music cover, 1900 (c)**  
Published by Orsborn and Company, London, 1900 (c).

Sheet music for families to sing around the piano was very popular. Songs such as 'Goodbye Dolly Gray' were first published for the Spanish-American war of 1898 and hurriedly reprinted with characters wearing British uniforms on the cover. Army songs were sung amongst Empire nations too, 'Goodbye Dolly Gray' was produced in a gramophone version in Canada and 20 patriotic songs were published in New Zealand during the war with titles such as 'The Boers Have got my Daddy'.



NAM. 86961

**Printed programme for a presentation: The Fight for the Flag in South Africa illustrated by Walker & Company's Cinematograph and electrodrama**

Held at St Andrew's Hall Banff, 5 April 1900. Cinematograph shows were popular events during the late Victorian period, but the footage was usually faked. Cinematograph was patented in 1890 and worked as a camera and projector in one.