

Colonial Officers in the Anglo-Zulu War 1879

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Introduction

If you were to read contemporary accounts from the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879, you would read the occasional words of praise for colonials and sometimes the writer would conjure up an image of Colonial Officers being wild ruffians, deserters from the Royal Navy, broken gentleman and generally undisciplined civilians at odds with the British class structure. The reality is that both comments are factual; there were Colonial Officers that were ruffians and drifted to the wrong side of the law; there were deserters from the Royal Navy, many broken gentlemen and many who with no prior military experience were converted into officers overnight. Many however became excellent leaders and obtained good results in the field and a few gained distinctions that would make their names in South Africa.

There were approximately 672 Colonial Officers who served at different periods throughout the war in contrast to some 1,222 Imperial Officers; thus 35.4% of officers serving under Lieutenant General Chelmsford, were colonials.¹ These Colonial Officers were an undeniable necessity in winning the war against the amaZulu. However, in contrast to their regular counterpart, the recruiting of Colonial Officers was exceedingly complex and costly. Chelmsford and his staff found themselves dealing with some officers serving on six month contracts, Natal Volunteers Officers reluctant to abandon their businesses, Natal Native Contingent (NNC) Officers and Levy Leaders lacking previous military service and again were being drawn away from their businesses and thus creating a skills vacuum among communities, commerce and the civil service.

Despite these challenges, the value many brought to Chelmsford's army was an intimate understanding of the local natives they would lead; they understood the languages, knew how to deal with the South African terrain and could maintain horses and oxen in good condition. Many of the officers recruited from the Cape, Transvaal and Griqualand West had recent operational experience.²

At the conclusion of the Anglo-Zulu War, Colonial Officers would have fought in all actions and battles and endured the many campaign hardships, gained distinctions and in some cases built or lost personal reputations. Many of these men until the present day have had a shroud of mystery cast over them and are actively being researched by historians some 137 years later.

Roles within the Order of Battle

From the period when Chelmsford was mobilizing an army in November, 1878 until the disbandment of the South African Field Force in September 1879, Colonial Officers were employed in all phases of the war in the following military forces and formations:³

1. Natal Volunteers: (*Pre-established Natal Volunteer Defence Force*),
2. Natal Mounted Police: (*Pre-established Police Force of Natal*),
3. Transvaal Volunteers: (*Pre-established Transvaal Volunteer Defence Force*),
4. Imperial raised Mounted Regiments: (*Specially raised formations for military operations in Zululand*),
5. Imperial raised Natal Native Contingents: (*Specially raised formations for military operations in Zululand*),
6. Native Levies, Border Guards and Police: (*Specially raised formations for defence of the Natal Border during a state of emergency*),
7. Burgher Volunteers: (*Specially raised Burgher force from the Utrecht region of the Transvaal*),
8. Town (Laager) Guards and Local Defence Forces: (*Specially raised for defensive military operations within Natal during a state of emergency*),
9. Commissariat and Transport Department: (*Specially appointed to supplement the Imperial Commissariat Department*), and,
10. Medical Service: (*Civil Surgeons appointed locally to supplement the Army Medical Department*).

Chelmsford personally classed all Colonial Officers as 'civilians'⁴, which is not a derogatory classification, but simply a factual term he used to differentiate them from the professional regular officers of the British Army. The pre-established regiments of the Natal Volunteers, Natal Mounted Police (NMP) and Transvaal Volunteers were officered by men who were mostly elected officials and thus trusted and respected community men. These volunteers were exposed to British Army training and thus adapted easily to working with imperial officers albeit friction was present at times. The Frontier Light Horse (FLH) being an imperial-raised mounted regiment was already established whilst its sister regiment, Baker's Horse, was re-raised having only been disbanded for several weeks.⁵ The officers of the FLH were experienced campaigners and had already served under Chelmsford during the Ninth Eastern Cape Frontier War (1877-78) and under Lieutenant Colonel Hugh Rowlands VC, CB ⁶ against the Bapedi in the Eastern Transvaal (1878).

In the Natal Native Contingents, Native Levies, Border Guards and even the Commissariat, Chelmsford and his subordinate commanders would struggle to find a balance of officers who knew the local native language, knew the people they commanded and intimately understood the challenges faced by the terrain. The recruitment of civilians in commissioned officer roles usually meant that they had no military experience and could not be expected to lead without suitable training. An Imperial Officer unable to speak Zulu and knowing nothing of the people he commanded was also found to be unsuitable and likely to fail.⁷ Whilst Chelmsford had a number of Imperial Special Service Officers known locally as 'aasvogels' and 'boomvogels'⁸ available to fill critical positions within the colonial formations, a balance was mostly achieved although some regiments were more successfully commanded than others. During this balancing process the Natal Volunteers had expected that Major John George Dartnell,⁹ Officer Commanding the Natal Mounted Police would command them. However, Chelmsford appointed Lieutenant Colonel John Cecil Russell ¹⁰ of the 12th (*The Prince of Wales's Royal*) Lancers ¹¹ as Officer Commanding, Mounted Troops. This decision was exceedingly unpopular with the volunteers of whom the historian of the NMP wrote: '*Major Dartnell's men expressed their disinclination to cross the border excepting under their own officer's command, and they offered to resign in a body. It was only upon Major Dartnell's strong remonstrance that they agreed to serve under Major Russell, and the former officer was placed on the General's Staff as the only way out of the difficulty. Inspector Mansel took charge of the police*'.¹²

Of the 672 Colonial Officers who served during the Anglo-Zulu War, 108 were already appointed in pre-established volunteer formations in Natal and the Transvaal whilst a staggering 564 were required to be appointed in order to staff the command structure of the newly raised local regiments. By the close of the war some 484 individual Colonial Officers had served with the NNC, Border Guards, Native Levies and Wood's Irregulars. Where was Chelmsford to obtain these officers from?

Selection of Officers

Chelmsford's recruiting net was cast throughout Natal, the Transvaal, Griqualand West and the Cape Colony in search of a suitable haul of officer candidates. However, Natal at the very seat of the war became a great disappointment to Chelmsford who wrote to Colonel Henry Evelyn Wood VC CB: ¹³ '*I endeavored to obtain European officers in Natal, in order that the natives should have those with them who knew and understood them, but they were not to be found, and I was consequently forced to apply to the old Colony for those who had served under me before*' ¹⁴. Wood himself, in December 1878, was having difficulties in recruiting for his No 4 Column among the local burghers of the Utrecht district of which Sir Theophilus Shepstone KCMG, ¹⁵ Administrator of the Transvaal suggested putting into effect the Transvaal Commando Law (No 2 of 1876). Wood replied that he didn't think that his force would be increased with '*any pressed Dutch men*'.¹⁶

By December 1878, Chelmsford had identified and recruited the Colonial Officer class for the first invasion of Zululand. After the disaster at Isandlwana he needed to replace casualties, re-build an army for a second invasion as well as recruit for the Levies and Border Guards that provided a

protective screen spread along the Natal / Zululand border. Town Guards were also hastily thrown together with Leaders and Sub-Leaders being elected under a paramilitary styled rank structure.

In the net of Chelmsford's catch was a group of Colonial Officers that were drawn from different classes, different degrees of wealth and South African experience. There were sons of nobility,¹⁷ former army and navy officers,¹⁸ cashiered officers,¹⁹ deserters,²⁰ drifters,²¹ professional men,²² adventurers, financially broken men, colonial born gentry and men of the working class and former army and navy rankers. Several officers had served previously in the Crimean War,²³ Baltic Sea,²⁴ Indian Mutiny,²⁵ Franco-Prussian War,²⁶ in New Zealand against the Maoris ²⁷ and many in the Ninth Eastern Cape Frontier War 1877-78, Griqualand West against the Griquas or against the Bapedi chief Sekhukhune.²⁸ One man, thirty-two years old, Captain John Rutherford Hickson Lumley²⁹ of Lonsdale's Mounted Rifles, even held the German Iron Cross that was awarded to him when serving as a Captain in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-71). Lieutenant Henry Charles Harford, ³⁰ 77th (*The Duke of Cambridge's*) Regiment and Special Service Officer recorded as the 3rd NNC was being formed, the Colonial Officer types: *'The European officers and N.C.O. had all arrived, and Lonsdale had already told them off to their Battalions... Commandant Hamilton-Browne, "Maori" Browne, as he was called, had the 1st Battalion and Commandant Cooper 'the 2nd...All were adventurers, and all the very best of fellows, ready to do anything and go anywhere'*.³¹

One of the drawbacks in appointing Colonial Officers was that all volunteers unless being unemployed had personal responsibilities to their families, businesses, employers or were in the government service; many men were self employed. It is probable that the difficulties Chelmsford was having in Natal was not through lack of spirit, but men holding full time jobs just could not join at a whim or were already enrolled in volunteer regiments. As the Natal Hussars were being mobilized the Corps Surgeon, Doctor Daniel Birtwell ³², was unable to proceed to the front as he was required to remain in Greytown as the District Surgeon.³³ Trooper Claude Manning ³⁴ of the Victoria Mounted Rifles had his commission with the NNC cancelled because he was a serving volunteer and was required to mobilize with his enrolled regiment was later discharged and commissioned in the 3rd NNC. ³⁵

Employed in the Natal Civil Service was Brooke Southwell Greville,³⁶ An energetic Magistrates' Clerk of Newcastle who was offered a commission in the NNC but struggled to be released from Civil Service unless he could identify a substitute. Greville was a perfect officer candidate. Born in India, he was both a former Lieutenant in the Westmeath Artillery Militia, a Natal Mounted Policeman, and possessed an understanding of the Zulu language. Eventually he found a substitute and was appointed to the 2/1st Battalion, NNC. ³⁷ A Zulu linguist, Philip Doyle³⁸, had met with Lieutenant Colonel Anthony William Durnford RE about a commission in the 1st NNC but could not accept it as he could not afford to equip himself. After Isandlwana, Doyle wrote to the Colonial Secretary stating that he could now serve and was appointed the Interpreter to the 17th (*The Duke of Cambridge's Own*) Lancers.³⁹

When the Border Guards and Native Levies were being raised in January / February, 1879 to secure the border against possible Zulu incursions, the officer class of this formation was drawn from local residents who knew the people they commanded, and like the case of Greville, many men were drawn from the Civil Service. On 11 January, 1879 the Magistrate of Umsinga, Henry Francis Fynn, expressed to the Colonial Secretary his concerns that his office was being too stretched: *'in consequence of the difficulty of procuring European Leaders for the Native Reserve defence, I have as a temporary measure given Mr J.L Knight ⁴⁰ my Clerk up for that purpose, but I find that I cannot get through the business without him, or a clerk in his stead'*.⁴¹

There was initial tension between Chelmsford and the Lieutenant Governor of Natal, Sir Henry Ernest Gascoyne Bulwer KCMG over the appointments of NNC Officers as Bulwer wished to retain control of them whilst Chelmsford needed to command and make them efficient.⁴² Ultimately all NNC Officers were appointed through a process that required Bulwer and the High Commissioner for South Africa, Sir Henry Bartle Frere GCB GCSI, to approve their appointments whilst Chelmsford had direct command over them. In the Cape, Commandants Rupert Latrobe Lonsdale,⁴³ William John Nettleton ⁴⁴ and Wilhelm Carl Ferdinand Von Linsingen ⁴⁵ selected potential NNC officers for service in Natal and Zululand.⁴⁶ In the case of the 2nd NNC, Major Shapland Graves, ⁴⁷ 3rd Foot (*The Buffs*) took over command of Von Linsingen's men in Natal and

reviewed their suitability before finally submitting their names for approval on 16 December, 1878.
48.

Operational experiences

Colonial Officers were actively employed in military operations with many gaining notoriety and distinctions whilst several attracted controversy and made or broke a unit's reputation. Whilst the events that culminated in the partial destruction of Number 3 Column are well known, it was during this period (11 – 22 January) that Colonial Officers of the column were plunged into the fray from the outset. Captain Daniel Joseph Hayes⁴⁹ of the 1/3rd NNC became one of the first officer's of the war to be *Mentioned-in-Despatches* for saving the life of a private of the Mounted Infantry when crossing the Buffalo River on 11 January, 1879.

It was the men of the 3rd NNC under Commandant George Hamilton 'Maori' Browne⁵⁰ that lead the assault at Sirayo's Homestead on 12 January with several of Browne's officers gaining instant notoriety in the press. Captains Robert Duncombe⁵¹ and Orlando Edward Murray,⁵² both of No 8 Company, 1/3rd NNC were in the initial rush whilst Captain's D.J. Hayes and George Massey-Hicks⁵³ were recorded as having greatly distinguished themselves in the final moments of the fight.⁵⁴ It was Duncombe, a Ninth Eastern Cape Frontier War veteran and fluent in Zulu, who during the fight answered the Zulu challenge of why they had come to Zululand, with the now famous but inaccurate response '*By order of the Great White Queen*'.⁵⁵ Lieutenant H.C. Harford was reported to have been the most prominent officer in the action for bluffing four Zulus to surrender.⁵⁶ Along with those mentioned, Captain's Stephen Smith Harber⁵⁷ and Samuel Isaac Hulley⁵⁸ 1/3rd NNC were recorded in the press for their work on the flanks whilst Scottish born, Lieutenant Thomas Purvis⁵⁹ was wounded and evacuated to Rorke's Drift for medical treatment.

During the days that followed, Harford was to record that the transport work was difficult and two Colonial Officers of the NNC, Captain Robert Henry Krohn⁶⁰ and Lieutenant Thomas Vaines⁶¹ 1/3rd NNC, were instrumental in both supervising and sometimes personally driving the contingents oxen-wagons themselves; very few imperial officers would have possessed these skill-sets at the time.⁶²

By the close of January, many of No 3 Columns' Colonial Officers had become battle casualties or had witnessed the events leading up to the Zulu victory at Isandlwana and soon after the British victory at Rorke's Drift. The Colonial Officers' participation in these battles is too lengthy and complicated to cover in this paper but there were no fewer than 25 Colonial Officers killed and several miracle escapes.⁶³ These officer casualties were keenly felt in Natal, the Cape and even on the Kimberley Diamond Fields of Griqualand West.

Whilst at Utrecht, a colonial Transport Officer, Hendrik Wilhelm 'Harry' Struben⁶⁴ attending to transport matters recalled that Sir T. Shepstone was also in Utrecht when he learnt the news of Isandlwana and the death of his son, Captain George John Palmer Shepstone⁶⁵ of the NNC. Some natives looked at Shepstone and he replied with express signs of grief '*Umtwan ami u fele, George ugwazili*' (*My child is dead, George is killed*); how that must have haunted Shepstone as he was one of Frere's imperial supporters in the war against the Zulu.⁶⁶

The 3rd NNC was disbanded on 24th January as it was believed by their commander, Commandant R.L. Lonsdale, that they were not prepared to fight any longer.⁶⁷ Several officers of the 3rd NNC had also allegedly deserted and their personal conduct during the action at Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift remained in serious question in some quarters, even until the present day.⁶⁸ Captain Henry Hallam-Parr,⁶⁹ 13th (*Prince Albert's Light Infantry*) Regiment, a Staff Officer of No3 Column recorded in a memo dated 15 February, 1879 that the NNC recruits and officers did not have enough time to bond together in training and both Natives and Officers were still recruits when in action on 22 January; it '*was an impossibility*' he recorded for them to be effective. Parr in conclusion recommended that only Imperial Officers were required and no Colonial Officers or NCO's should be appointed; Parr obviously had very entrenched views of Colonial Officers' abilities to command.⁷⁰ Interestingly and despite the 3rd NNC being disbanded, many former 3rd NNC officers were instrumental in recovering the missing Queens Colour of the 1/24th (*2nd Warwickshire Regiment*) from the Buffalo River on 4 February.

Moving away from the well-known events of No 3 Column, No1 Column under Colonel Charles Knight Pearson,⁷¹ 3rd (*The Buffs*) Foot was engaged at Nyezane on 22 January of which the Durban

Mounted Rifles (DMR), Victoria Mounted Rifles (VMR), Stanger Mounted Rifles and the 2nd NCC participated in the action. It was, however, the inability of the Cape-recruited NNC officers to speak Zulu that resulted in them failing to understand the warnings from their men that they were being drawn into a deadly trap; this resulted in two of the officers being killed and one wounded.⁷² Pearson subsequently became besieged at the Eshowe Mission Station where Captain Charles Robert St Leger Shervinton⁷³ of the 2/2nd NNC commanded a troop of Mounted Infantry and was prominent in scouting missions. On 11 March he saved the life of Private William Brooks, 99th (*Duke of Edinburgh's, Lanarkshire*) Regiment attached to the Mounted Infantry when a vedette post was attacked by the Zulus. Shervinton was recommended for the Victoria Cross by Pearson and Brooks ⁷⁴ later wrote in support of the recommendation: '*I feel confident that my life that day was saved by Captain Shervinton's (sic) gallant conduct and for which I shall feel forever indebted to him*'. ⁷⁵

In Colonel Wood's No 4 (Left) Column, the Colonial Officers were engaged in arduous mounted patrolling operations and fought at Hlobane (28th March) and Khambula (29th March) where they sustained considerable casualties.⁷⁶ At Hlobane, there were many acts of gallantry performed by Colonial Officers however none was awarded the VC. In No 4 Column there were a significantly high proportion of mounted Colonial Officers compared with imperial officers, yet of the numerous recorded incidents of gallantry, three VC's were awarded to imperial officers for the action. They were not completely without mention as Lieutenant Colonel Redvers Henry Buller,⁷⁷ 60th (*Kings Royal Rifle Corps*) commanding Wood's Mounted Troops had communicated to Chelmsford that Wood's Irregulars fought well as did a Colonial Officer of that regiment, ⁷⁸ Captain Charles James Hook.⁷⁹ Buller also mentioned in his despatches of 29 March other Colonial Officers for their gallantry on Hlobane mountain; Commandant Pieter Johannes Raaff ⁸⁰ of the Transvaal Rangers, Captain's Henry Cecil Dudgeon D'Arcy, ⁸¹ Alfred Edmund Bousfield Blaine,⁸² Lieutenant Archibald Metcalfe Smith ⁸³, all of the FLH, along with Captain William Dunsterville Wilson, ⁸⁴ Bakers Horse, Captain Thomas Lorraine White ⁸⁵ and Lieutenant Barnabas Gerhard Brecher ⁸⁶ of Wood's Irregulars.⁸⁷

Following the failed first invasion of Zululand there was a perceived threat of the Zulus exploiting their success and invading Natal. This resulted in towns forming Town Guards and the formation of Native Levies that would provide a protective screen along the border. The Colonial Officers appointed to these formations were primarily recruited from the local communities and unlike the failed 2nd NNC, these officers for the most part understood the language and customs of the men they commanded. They provided a vital service at a critical time and were known as Levy Leaders apposed to a military rank that implied that they were simply a militia or a type of Bugher Force. In essence they were at the bottom of the military social order and many were in fact compelled to serve in order to protect their farms and towns that lay in close proximity to Zululand. At least two of these officers, now colonists, had previously held imperial commissions; Commandant Gould Arthur Lucas,⁸⁸ late 73rd (*Black Watch*) Foot and Levy Leader, Robert Andrew Woolley ⁸⁹ late 20th (*Lancashire Fusiliers*). Foot had been a Justice of the Peace for Alfred County since 1875.

In April, the men of the Natal Volunteers had become restless about being in the field for a protracted period and felt they had been away from their families, employment, farms and businesses too long and in most cases had suffered financial loss. On 16 April, Captain William Edward Shepstone ⁹⁰ of the DMR wrote from Potts Spruit ⁹¹ stating his men's grievances whilst four days later, Captain Charles Taylor Saner ⁹² of the VMR ⁹³ led a petition requesting to be released from active service whilst a Lieutenant William Emery Robarts ⁹⁴ also of the VMR ⁹⁵ personally applied for permission to resign. Both Chelmsford and Bulwer recorded that they understood the volunteers being dissatisfied and knew they had given up their valuable time but the manner in which Captain Saner communicated the request was not well received. The Natal Colonial Military Secretary of Natal, Lieutenant Colonel Charles Bullen Hugh Mitchell ⁹⁶, considered Saner's actions as being reprehensible and recommended that he should be sacked. Bulwer knew the second invasion was coming and supported Chelmsford who ultimately wrote that regulars could not replace them and they were also efficient.

Colonial Officers took an active part in the second invasion in the reformed NNC, Natal Guides and with Woods Flying Column including the actions at Gingindlovu (2 April), Zungeni (5 June),

White Mfolozi (3 July), Ulundi (4 July) and during the subsequent pacification operations until September. When military operations were concluded, the Natal Volunteers were released as were the specially raised local regiments. However, several officers were required to remain on strength in order to wind up the financial affairs of each unit. One of these officers, Captain Ewan John Christian ⁹⁷ of the FLH, remained on strength of the regiment until March, 1880 in order to close the regiment's affairs and received an excellent testimonial for his diligent efforts. At least one man, Lieutenant Ernest Augustus Birch ⁹⁸ of the NNC, was glad to be leaving the military and recorded his thoughts when applying to join the Cape Civil Service in January, 1880: *'I left for Natal and served as Lieutenant under Comm'd't Nettelton and was present at two engagements viz those of Nneyzene, (sic) Jan'y 22nd and Gingiglovo, (sic) April 1st 1879 having had this experience of military life I have come to the conclusion that it is an unsettled one'*. ⁹⁹.

Discipline

Imperial Officers, both Army and Naval were accustomed to seeing officers forfeit their commissions when cashiered for disciplinary reasons and the Colonial Officers were no different. There were several recordable cases of breaches in the good order of military discipline by Colonial Officers during the Anglo Zulu War. As early as January, 1879 during Major J.G. Dartnell's reconnaissance from Isandlwana camp towards Mangeni, Lieutenants Samuel Avery ¹⁰⁰ and Francis James Holcroft ¹⁰¹ both of the 1/3rd NNC became dissatisfied about having to sleep in a bivouac without blankets and food and deserted their men and returned to the camp at Isandlwana.¹⁰² As fate would have it both men were killed the very next day when the Zulus attacked the camp. Had they survived, they undoubtedly would have faced severe disciplinary action.

Immediately following the disaster at Isandlwana, Captain William Stevenson ¹⁰³ 2/3rd NNC along with his entire company deserted the Rorke's Drift garrison that was frantically throwing up defences as the Zulu Impis were rapidly approaching. Stevenson was later arrested and his services dispensed with. ¹⁰⁴.

Among the Native Levies serving on the border, was a Levy Leader by the name of Phillip John Stevens ¹⁰⁵ who was arrested by Special Border Agent, John Eustace Fannin ¹⁰⁶ and Commandant William Douglas Wheelwright ¹⁰⁷ for attempting to murder a Native Headman whilst under the influence at Ngubane Drift.¹⁰⁸ Lieutenant and Adjutant, Thomas 'Tom' Sharp ¹⁰⁹ 1st NNC, a former Sergeant Major of 1/1st NNC and survivor of Isandlwana was arrested and charged with the theft of twelve Oxen from the Commissariat at Krantzkop on 4 September. Sharp was found not-guilty by a jury but still had to endure the indignity of an arrest and a trial. ¹¹⁰. Another colonial, Lieutenant John J. Moran ¹¹¹ 2/1st NNC was in March 1879 relieved of his commission as he had been continuously before a magistrate; he would meet many more magistrates in the coming years.¹¹².

Commandant P.J. Raaff and Captain Louis George Jullien ¹¹³ of the Transvaal Rangers were both denied the South African General Service medal (SAGS) as the unit's financial accounts were found to be unsatisfactory of which Jullien being the last commander of the unit was primarily at fault for abandoning the unit's records.¹¹⁴ Raaff although officially denied a SAGS was appointed a *Companion of St Michael and St George* (CMG) for his leadership and services during the war. Lieutenant Harry Stuart Webb ¹¹⁵ of the 1/2nd NNC was also denied a SAGS medal that was recorded in the attestation book of the Natal Mounted Police in 1883; *'Served as Lt in Native Contingent during Zulu War. Was refused a medal upon application on the grounds of misconduct'*.¹¹⁴. Webb, although having been wounded at Nyezane on 22 January, had been arrested at Lower Tugela and dismissed for misconduct in March, 1879.

Honours, awards and kudos

Undoubtedly at times there was a nexus between the colonial and imperial officers in relation to their personal perceptions of soldiering, leadership and the ability to recognize good work performed by each other including operational effectiveness and even bravery. By the end of the war, these beliefs had somewhat been cast aside as, for the most part, a mutual respect had developed between both classes of officers. Regimental Sergeant Major Frederick William Cheffins

117 of the Transvaal Rangers recalled in his diary that in May, 1879 when Lieutenant Colonel Buller was away on duty, Commandant P.J. Raaff was temporarily appointed as commander of the mounted troops which demonstrated that Raaff was now regarded as a competent leader; an opinion that may not have been formed months earlier.¹¹⁸ According to Cheffins, Raaff was recorded to have stated in reference to imperial officers his views: *“class-conscious, snobbish, usually badly trained, often inexperienced and inefficient, yet always incredibly brave, often stupidly so”*.¹¹⁹

Housed in the South African Archives is a plethora of employment applications from Colonial Officers for civil service and military positions. These are accompanied by testimonials from imperial officers that makes reference to their opinions of individuals that served under them during the Zulu War; one example being; Captain, Johannes Jacobus De Beer NNC: 120 *‘I am of the opinion that he is one of the very best officers I have met either in the regular army or out of it.....He possesses the great advantage of a perfect temper, a quality which has given him a superior power in the managing of men and others’*.¹²¹ Major Harcourt Mortimer Bengough,¹²² 77th (The Duke of Cambridge’s) Regiment, Commanding Officer, 2nd NNC recorded in his memoirs his appreciation of Captain Claude Arthur Bettington:¹²³ *‘a natural soldier: smart, active in person, firm in action, sound in counsel.....later in the war raised a mounted regiment that did good service in the field as Bettington’s Horse’*.¹²⁴

Captain Robert Francis Vetch,¹²⁵ Shepstone’s Native Horse who had been dismissed from the British Army in 1875, had by the close of the Anglo Zulu War received a glowing testimonial from Major General Edward Newdigate: *‘Has proved himself to be a thoroughly gallant soldier on active service. He has been brought specially to my notice by Captain J. Shepstone his commanding officer’*. *‘As a Captain and distinguishing himself by his bravery and coolness under fire’*.¹²⁶

Two Colonial Officers received the Victoria Cross for valor during the campaign; Acting Commissariat Officer James Langley Dalton¹²⁷ for his gallantry and leadership during the defence of Rorke’s Drift on the 22/23 January and Captain H.C.D. D’Arcy of the FLH for his cool actions on 3 July at the White Mfolozi. He had previously performed deeds at Hlobane that some believed were worthy of the VC. Many others received mentions-in-despatches whilst CMG’s were conferred upon Captain’s, C.A. Bettington, Theophilus *‘Offy’* Shepstone¹²⁸ and, as previously mentioned, Commandant P.J. Raaff.¹²⁹

Padre George Smith¹³⁰ late of the Weenen Yeomanry who was prominent at Rorke’s Drift was permanently appointed to the British Army as was J.L. Dalton of the Commissariat Department. Several officers received commissions in the Cape Mounted Rifles (CMR) as a result of their Anglo-Zulu War service, namely C.R. St.L Shervinton, the VC nomination for Eshowe, Henry Timson Lukin¹³¹ of the NNC and Captain’s H.C.D. D’Arcy VC and E.A.B. Blaine, both late of the FLH.

For one imperial officer serving among the colonials in the NNC, Captain H.C. Harford recorded the scene of his departure from the regiment with the greatest of sentiments that are testimony to the bond they forged together: *‘The day of my departure was another memorable occasion in my existence, for just before starting I was presented by the assembled officers and N.C.O’s of the contingent with an illuminated Address, which I shall always consider the most precious of all my belongings. After the ceremony I was escorted by all who had mounts for eighteen miles to Sand Spruit store where, of course, I stood them all a good breakfast’*.¹³²

Conclusion

By the conclusion of military operations in September, 1879 some 672 Colonial Officers had served in Chelmsford’s army. This number bore testimony to the need for such men to be appointed and ultimately brought invaluable local knowledge and experience to the field force. The British Commanders and Staff Officers also gained experience in the recruiting, appointing and leading of South African Colonial Officers that would provide them with a blueprint for future African campaigns.

In the immediate years that followed, the Cape Colonial Government fought the Basotho (Gun) War (1880-81) and recruited men with previous experience in the Anglo-Zulu War. In Willoughby’s Horse, of the 15 Officers that were appointed, no fewer than 11 had served in the Anglo-Zulu War; 8 as commissioned officers and 3 as other ranks.¹³² Many others served with

Baker's Horse, Leach's Rifles, Transvaal Horse and in the various Native Levies during that campaign.

Apart from the Basotho (Gun) War many former Colonial Officers would continue service with the Natal Volunteers. Many joined the ranks of the Natal Mounted Police, Cape Police, Cape Mounted Rifles or the Griqualand West Constabulary whilst several found their way into the British Army including, Lieutenant Cecil Poulett Mountjoy Weatherley¹³⁴ of the Border Horse initially served as a Militia Officer and later as a Sergeant in the (*Duke of Cambridge's Own*) Middlesex Regiment before finally receiving a regular commission.

Of the quartette that joined the CMR, Captain C.H.D. D'Arcy VC left the regiment in April 1881 to become a farmer and was in June reported missing with his body being discovered some 6 months later. D'Arcy had become a military celebrity and over the years there's been much speculation that he faked his own death and had turned to hard-drinking to mask the trauma of close combat; it was during one of these drinking sessions that he killed himself.¹³⁵ Interestingly Captain, C.R. St.L. Shevington shot himself during a period of temporary insanity in 1898.

In what is now classed as post-traumatic stress disorder, clearly many Colonial Officers would have suffered psychologically in one way or another. At least four other such men are known to have encountered difficult times that may have been contributed to by their Zulu War service. Lieutenant Heydon Charles Young¹³⁶ 2/3rd NNC who had falsely reported his presence at Isandlwana later died in a Durban asylum;¹³⁷ Lieutenant Count Franz Von Hirschberg¹³⁸ 1/2nd NNC also finished his days in an asylum in Bavaria.¹³⁹ Lieutenant Wallace Buchan Erskine¹⁴⁰ 1/1st NNC was reported to have died in the Durban Central Gaol in 1901¹⁴¹ whilst Captain Charles George Dennison,¹⁴² the seasoned colonial campaigner had been barred from command in the Second Anglo-Boer War due to intemperance issues.¹⁴³

As a group, the Colonial Officers who survived the campaign would scatter across the empire to make their mark; to Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Hong Kong, Egypt and India. At least six men ventured into the African interior¹⁴⁴ whilst others served again in the First Anglo-Boer War 1880-81; Warren's Bechuanaland Expedition 1884-85; Ndebele War 1893, Ndebele and Mashona Rebellions 1896/97, Second Anglo-Boer War and the Bambatha Rebellion 1906. Incredibly, Lieutenant's, Richard Earle Welby,¹⁴⁵ Frederick Hector Henry Munro Arden,¹⁴⁶ B.S. Greville, H.T. Lukin and the C.P.M. Weatherley all served in the Great War. Lastly there was Alfred Lester Thring,¹⁴⁷ the Quarter Master of the Pietermaritzburg Rifles who was to be awarded the *Dekoratie voor Trouwe Dienst* (DTD) for services as a Commando Leader in the Second Anglo-Boer War and also the Distinguished Service Order for service in German South West Africa in 1914-15; an exceedingly interesting career following his service during those troubled times of 1879 when all able bodied colonials were called upon to serve in Zululand.

The story of the Colonial Officers in the Anglo-Zulu War is yet to be told in its entirety and although some individuals are illuminated from time-to-time, as a whole the subject remains one of the most enduring unknown elements of the Anglo-Zulu War.