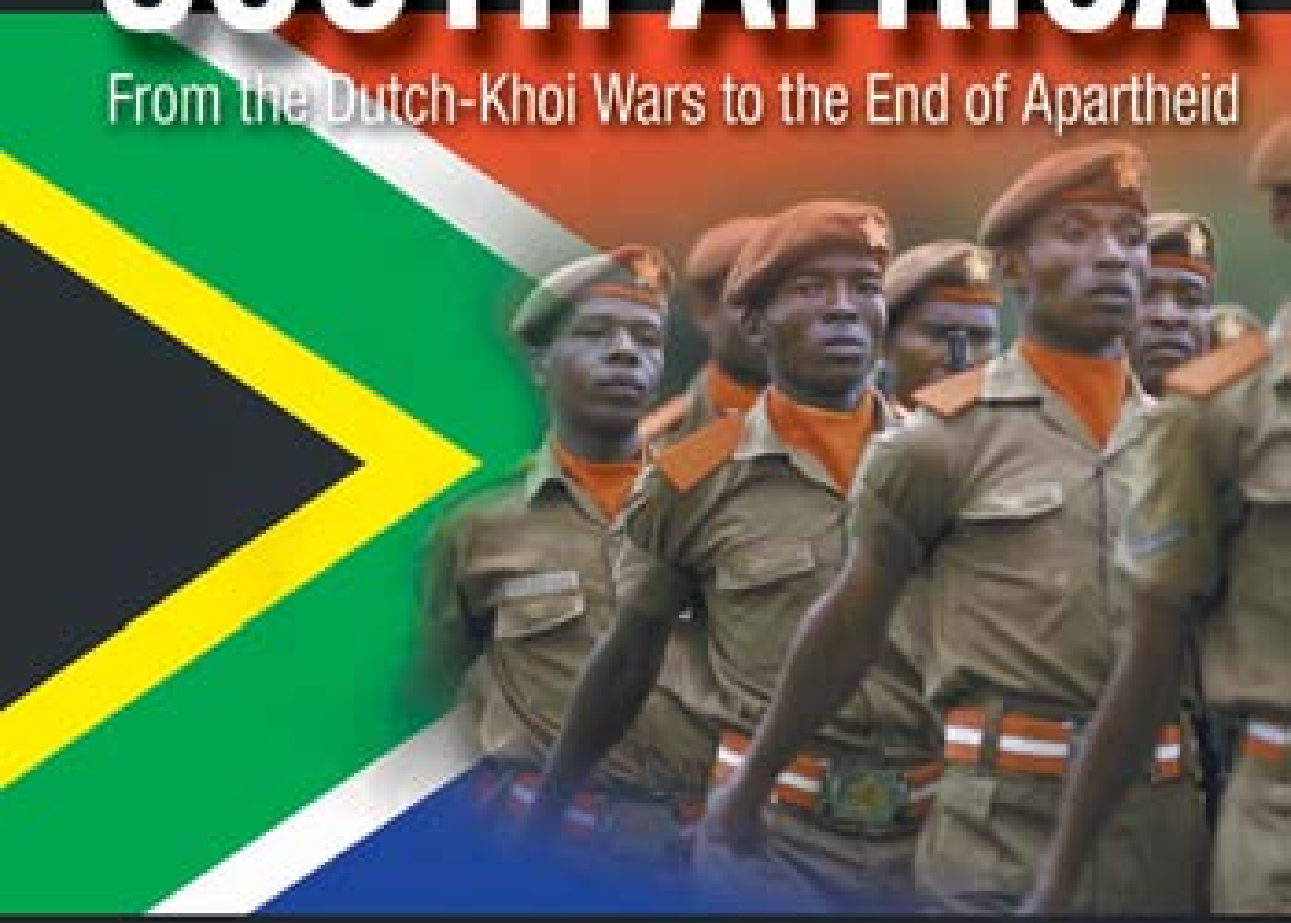
A Military History of SOUTH AFRICA

From the Dutch-Khoi Wars to the End of Apartheid



Timothy J. Stapleton

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Timothy J. Stapleton

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Introduction

By singing the controversial song "Bring My Machine Gun," South African President Jacob Zuma acknowledges not only the importance of armed struggle in ending apartheid but also the centrality of warfare and military structures to the last several centuries of South Africa's history. This fact is also illustrated by the prominence of the memory of armed conflict to various South African identities. African nationalists proudly remember earlier African leaders such as Maqoma, Sekhukhune, and Bambatha who resisted European conquest. Zulu patriots take inspiration from the warrior legend of Shaka. Afrikaner nationalists look back on victories such as Blood River or Majuba Hill and grievances such as British concentration camps during the South African War. For many English-speaking whites, names of world war battles such as Delville Wood and El Alamein evoke a sense of shared sacrifice with Britain and its other dominions in global struggles for freedom.

Much of South Africa's history involved a process of European colonial conquest and African resistance. During the late 1600s and 1700s the military advantage of horses and firearms enabled Dutch settlers to subjugate the Khoisan and establish the Cape Colony. Dutch eastward expansion was halted in the late 1700s by the more numerous and better organized Xhosa. The gradual dispossession of the Xhosa began in the early 1800s when the British, as new rulers of the strategically important Cape, tipped the local balance of power by introducing a standing army with artillery. In the interior and along the Indian Ocean coast, competition over growing international trade, including slaving, led to the growth of new African powers such as the Zulu, Ndebele, and Sotho kingdoms. Colonial expansion accelerated in the mid-nineteenth century as British scorched earth campaigns from the Cape forced Xhosa bush fighters to surrender. Around the same time the Boers moved inland where they used superior firepower and mobility to defeat African rivals and establish independent republics. Diamond discovery in the late 1860s invigorated British ambitions in the region leading to a period of intense warfare that began with the overthrow of remaining African states, in which new military technologies such as breech-loading rifles and extensive use of African allies were central, but ended with Boer and African

rebellions that limited imperial control. The advent of gold mining in the Transvaal in the late 1880s greatly improved the military capacity of the Boer republics. However, it resulted in the conventional and guerrilla fighting of the South African War (1899–1902) and the loss of independence to the British. The Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 as a dominion of the British Empire. South African participation in the world wars (1914–18 and 1939–45) would be important in shaping the country's internal politics and emergence as a regional power and was influenced by memories of Boer-British conflicts. As an international pariah, the apartheid regime of the second half of the twentieth century relied increasingly on military strength as antiapartheid movements launched armed insurgencies assisted by newly independent African-ruled neighbors and Eastern Bloc powers within a Cold War context. Military factors, particularly defeat in Angola in the late 1980s, were central in bringing about today's democratic South Africa.

This book presents a narrative of armed conflict and the development of military establishments in the making of South Africa. The text not only concentrates on events that took place within what is now South Africa but also follows South African military personnel to other parts of Africa and the world. Of course, telling such a broad story can be difficult. Given the combination of the great many wars in South Africa's history and the limited space of this book, some events and issues have been left out. With any chronological history of South Africa, there is the question of when to begin. Starting with European settlement at the Cape in the 1650s risks creating a false impression that history began with colonization, and it is obvious that Africans engaged in armed conflict before this time. Nevertheless, the limitations of primary sources and existing literature mean that for most of the country, it is difficult to discuss military history in detail before the late 1700s. While some background will be provided, the core of this book will deal with the period from circa 1800 to the end of apartheid in the early 1990s.

As this is a work of synthesis, another challenge is that existing historical writing is extremely uneven. There are excellent and numerous works on conflicts such as the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 and the South African War. These events are also well known through popular film, documentaries, and battlefield tours. However, other aspects of South African military history, for example, the nineteenth-century wars between the Transvaal Republic and African groups such as the Venda have not received similar attention. With some notable exceptions, there is surprisingly little written on the development of the South African military from 1910 onward. Until around 20 years

ago, historical writing on the South African War and South African involvement in the world wars underemphasized or even ignored the role of black people. Although the history of policing is beyond the scope of this book, South Africa has a long tradition of paramilitary police such as the Frontier Armed and Mounted Police of the nineteenth-century Cape Colony, South African Police infantry battalions in North Africa during the Second World War, and the police counterinsurgency unit Koevoet in Namibia during the 1980s. Writing on the regional conflicts of the apartheid period, specifically South African intervention in Angola, has become highly politicized. A host of publications seek to celebrate the former South African Defence Force (SADF), whereas others are more sympathetic to the liberation struggle. Specifically, there has been a debate over who won the Battle of Quito Cuanavale, where the SADF attacked Angolan and Cuban forces in 1987–88. Former SADF members stress the heavy casualties their side inflicted, whereas liberation movement veterans see the engagement as an historical turning point—Apartheid's Stalingrad—which caused South African withdrawal from Angola and Namibia and subsequent political change at home.[1]

Military history involves the study of armed conflict and military institutions and their relationship with society. It has been criticized for focusing too much on major Western powers such as the United States and Britain, large conventional battles, land over sea conflict, military technology, and state-to-state conflict.[2] South African military history contains all these elements including British involvement during the nineteenth century, South Africa's role in the world wars, and a long history of major land engagements from Isandlwana in 1879 to Cassino in 1944 to Cuito Cuanavale in 1988. However, it also involves issues such as precolonial African military systems, the adaptation of irregular warfare to counter colonial technology, the development of South African air and naval power in the twentieth century, and numerous rebellions against state authority. Indeed, nineteenth-century African and Boer states did not have formal military structures, leadership, and logistics separate from the rest of society. From 1910 to the present, there has been struggle over blending different traditions of armed service, British colonial, Boer republican, and later African liberationist, into a national military establishment. Within the context of ethnicity and race, links between military service and citizenship have also been important. In short, South African military history offers a combination of familiar and unfamiliar themes.

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CHAPTER 1

Warfare and Frontier (c.1650–1830)

It is difficult to reconstruct most aspects of South Africa's history, including military history, before the early nineteenth century because of the nature of available sources. Given the documentary evidence, the long process of European colonial conquest and African resistance in the Cape is well studied. Since African languages at that time did not have written scripts, much less evidence exists for events on the interior Highveld or Indian Ocean coast that were outside the colonial sphere. African oral traditions for this period can be narrow and selective, documents produced by literate visitors are rare and usually limited by the author's understanding of local language, and archaeological research is far from comprehensive. Before the arrival of Europeans, most African societies in what is now South Africa practiced Iron Age technology, were organized in centralized states of varying sizes, and survived through herding and agriculture. Environment determined settlement patterns. Shortage of reliable water sources on the dry grassland of the Highveld meant that Sotho and Tswana speakers concentrated in certain areas where they developed relatively large towns of several thousand inhabitants each. Enjoying access to many rivers and better rainfall, Nguni-speakers (ancestors of the Xhosa, Zulu, Ndebele, and Swazi) southeast of the Drakensberg Mountains lived in many small homesteads spread out fairly evenly along the Indian Ocean coast. In the arid Western and Northern Cape many Khoisan groups survived as pure pastoralists or from hunting and gathering. The Khoisan's lack of metallurgy and agriculture meant that along the frontiers of these areas they were often absorbed by larger Sotho and Nguni communities.[1]

Expansion of the Cape Colony

The Dutch East India Company established a permanent post at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 to secure this strategic point on the sea route between

Europe and Asia, and to create a reliable source of freshwater and food for their passing ships. Since the pastoral Khoisan around Table Bay were hesitant to trade a large number of cattle, the Dutch established settlers in 1657 to produce vegetables and meat. Consequent competition over grazing land between Europeans and Khoisan led to the First Dutch-Khoi War of 1659–60 in which the Khoisan groups united briefly and trapped the settlers within their fort. However, the Khoisan alliance broke down and they eventually negotiated with the Dutch. After the conflict, the Dutch erected a physical barrier—a series of fences and hedges—between themselves and the Khoisan who were pushed off their land. The Second Dutch-Khoi War of 1673–77 consisted of a series of cattle raids by Dutch settlers, assisted by impoverished Khoisan allies, which broke the power of the large Cochoqua group in the Saldanha Bay and Boland areas. European settlers expanded and many Khoisan, their cattle taken away and game hunted out, began to work for the Dutch alongside slaves imported from other parts of Africa and Asia.[2]

During this period frontier Dutch settlers, Trekboers, began to organize voluntary local militias called "commandos" that would mobilize for raids and defense, and then disband that would allow the Khoisan to renew their attacks. Organized between 1700 and 1715, the first commandos consisted mostly of the Company's employees with a few settler volunteers. While the first entirely civilian commando was formed in 1715, these groups remained dependent upon the Company for ammunition. In 1739 commando service became compulsory for all frontier settlers who often brought along Khoisan servants or sent them as substitutes. Khoisan commando members were armed and received a share of captured livestock. Commando leaders were not required to get permission before raising a force for an operation but simply had to submit a report upon return. According to historian Susan Newton-King, "the commando was an institution well suited to the guerrilla warfare favored by the Khoisan. Its loose command structure rendered it highly flexible and capable of almost immediate response to surprise attack or robbery."[3]

As Dutch settlement expanded north, there was a period of intense Khoisan guerrilla warfare beyond the Piketberg Mountains during the 1730s and violence in that area continued for the rest of the century. Eastward Dutch expansion across the arid Karoo and into the rich grazing land between the Gamtoos and Fish rivers led to another protracted period of conflict from the 1770s to 1790s that disrupted the settler meat industry. A major factor in these conflicts was that since the Trekboers lacked capital to employ wage labor, they captured Khoisan women and children for indentured service.[4] In the northeast, particularly in the Sneeuberg area, violence between "Bushmen" hunters (independent Khoisan) and Trekboer herders in the early 1770s caused many

of the latter to abandon their farms. In 1774 a "grand commando" of 100 Europeans and 150 Khoisan swept the area, killing 503 Bushmen and capturing 241. Between 1786 and 1795 there was an almost constant state of warfare in the northeast and commandos killed 2,480 Bushmen and captured 654, and the Bushmen killed 276 of the Boers' Khoisan herders.[5]

Khoisan military resistance failed because they did not produce iron weapons or tools (and the Dutch quickly banned trading iron with them), and the scale of their political organization was small making it easy for the Dutch to play groups off against one another. Additionally, imported smallpox sharply reduced the Khoisan population such as during the epidemic of 1713. The Dutch had the advantage of horses, giving them greater mobility, range, and speed, and firearms that had both a physical and a psychological impact. The Khoisan learned that they could counter Dutch firepower by adopting hit-and-run and ambush tactics and that the guns of that period did not work in the rain. Although Khoisan reliance on livestock represented a weakness as these could be easily stolen by mounted settlers, groups that had lost their cattle and resorted to hunting and gathering proved more adept at guerrilla tactics. By the 1670s the Khoisan had begun to acquire a limited number of guns through trade and capture, and this led to a series of Dutch prohibitions on trading firearms with the Khoisan that were often ignored.[6]

In the late 1700s both the eastward-moving Trekboers and the westward-moving Xhosa entered the rich grazing land between the Sundays and Fish rivers known as the Zuurveld, subjugating the original Khoisan inhabitants. Although the Trekboers still enjoyed the advantage of horses and guns, the Xhosa offered more effective military resistance. The mixed cattle-keeping and cultivating economy of the Xhosa supported a larger population than the Khoisan, and the Xhosa possessed iron weapons. In Xhosa society, boys developed martial skills by stick fighting, and upon ritual circumcision at around age 18, they were considered warriors. Wars were usually short and involved capturing cattle and occasionally burning huts. Prior to a campaign, royal messengers would gather men at the ruler's capital where they were told about the conflict and spiritualists administered charms such as parts of fierce animals or protective herbs. Men who ignored a call to arms could have cattle taken by the ruler. On the march, armies were accompanied by slaughter cattle and women who would handle logistics. In battle, rulers directed their armies from the rear where they were protected by a reserve of experienced warriors. Sons of rulers led the younger men from the front and often attempted to encircle an enemy. Military organization was loosely based on age, but there were no formal age regiments. Each Xhosa man, like others in the region, went to war with a long cowhide shield, a bundle of long throwing spears, and perhaps one shorter spear for close combat.[7]

Warfare between Boers and Xhosa began shortly after the Cape Governor Baron Van Plettenberg visited the eastern frontier in 1778 and made arrangements with several small Xhosa chiefdoms that they should remain east of the upper Fish River and Bushmans River and consider this line the colonial boundary. That same year, frontier Boers accused the Xhosa of stock theft and attacked in an effort to force them east of the Zuurveld. In 1780 Plettenberg claimed the entire Zuurveld by declaring that the eastern border of the Cape Colony would be the entire length of the Fish River. However, by this time many Xhosa groups, including the Gwali, Dange, Ntinde, Mbalu, and Gqunukhwebe, had moved west of the Fish. The governor ordered Adriaan van Jaarsveld, commandant of the eastern country, to form a large Boer commando and expel the Xhosa east of the new colonial border. In late May and early June 1781 Van Jaarsveld and his men rode around the area informing various Xhosa rulers that they should lead their people back to the east. When they did not comply, he launched a series of attacks on the Xhosa forcefully driving them across the Fish. At the beginning of this campaign Van Jaarsveld, while seeming to negotiate with the Gwali Xhosa, scattered tobacco on the ground and, when the Xhosa rushed to pick it up, he ordered his men to open fire on them killing around 200. When Van Jaarsveld dissolved the commando in mid-July, his men had seized 5,330 cattle and killed a large but unknown number of Xhosa. This demobilization of the commando represented the end of what has become known as the First Cape-Xhosa War.

Soon after the breaking up of Van Jaarveld's commando, many Xhosa returned to their lands west of the Fish as there was little to stop them. In May 1793 a party of Boers under Barend Lindeque, who wanted to push the Xhosa off the Zuurveld, allied with the Rharhabe Xhosa of Ndlambe who lived east of the Fish and wanted to bring the western Xhosa under his authority. The combined force raided Mbalu and Gqunukhwebe Xhosa communities, seizing about 2,000 cattle, but for reasons that are not clear the alliance broke down and Ndlambe's warriors returned to their home in the east. The Mbalu and Gqunukhwebe then retaliated by attacking Boer farms capturing 50,000 cattle, 11,000 sheep, and 200 horses. The Boers fled west off the Zuurveld. Christiaan David Maynier, the landdrost (local official or magistrate) of the new district of Graaff Reinet, organized a commando and in late August it drove the Gqunukhwebe and other Xhosa groups east of the Fish River and seized 8,000 cattle. Although Maynier's commando attempted to keep the Xhosa from returning to the Zuurveld, by November it was clear that this was impossible and the group was disbanded. This brief but intense conflict has been termed the Second Cape-Xhosa War.[8]

The British seized the Cape in 1795 in order to prevent the French from blocking the important sea route to India. In mid-July British soldiers were landed at Simonstown. When a detachment of 1,600 British soldiers and sailors landed at Muizenberg, in early August, 440 Company regular troops fled while just 350 settler, Khoisan, and mixed race volunteers repelled the attackers. Dutch colonial forces conducted hit-and-run attacks and ambushes on the British until early September when the Royal Navy landed 2,500 reinforcements and the advance on Cape Town continued. Facing overwhelming odds, the Dutch surrendered within two weeks.[9]

By the late 1790s most of the Zuurveld was controlled by the Gqunukhwebe and other Xhosa groups with the Boers occupying just the western portion near the Sundays River. More Xhosa had moved west onto the Zuurveld in the mid-1790s because of the power struggle among the Rharhabe Xhosa between rival leaders Ndlambe and Ngqika. In March 1799 a British military force under Brigadier General Thomas Vandeleur was sent by ship from Cape Town to Algoa Bay and then marched inland to suppress a Boer rebellion in Graaff Reinet. In April Vandeleur received instructions from the British acting governor Major General Francis Dundas that the Xhosa should be removed east of the Fish River. It is not clear if the subsequent fighting began when the Gqunukhwebe ambushed the British or Vandeleur ordered an attack on the Gqunukhwebe. What is certain is the Gqunukhwebe, under Chungwa, conducted several tenacious attacks against the British but were eventually driven back by concentrated musket and artillery fire. Disconcerted by determined Xhosa bush warfare, Vandeleur led his force back to Algoa Bay from where he shipped most of his men to Cape Town. Around the same time Khoisan and mixed race people staged a rebellion against the frontier Boers who held many of them as indentured labor. They eventually rallied around three leaders: Klaas Stuurman, Hans Trompetter, and Boesak. Historians have noted that this rebellion differed considerably from previous instances of Khoisan resistance as the rebels did not seek to prevent colonial expansion but were colonized people who aimed to overturn settler dominance from within. Although they initially sought protection from the British, the rebels saw Vandeleur was sending his soldiers away and therefore made an alliance with the Gqunukhwebe Xhosa. This alliance between rebel Khoisan servants and Zuurveld Xhosa was also a new development. During June and July 700 Khoisan rebels, about half mounted and 150 armed with guns, along with Chungwa's warriors attacked Boers along the Zuurveld and further west toward Swellendam. Vandeleur raised a commando of 300 Boers that was defeated by 150 Khoi and Xhosa near the Sundays River. In August Governor Dundas arrived on the frontier with 500 soldiers and

immediately negotiated a cease-fire with the Khoisan many of whom agreed to return to working for the Boers and the Gqunukhwebe who were permitted to live between the Sundays and Bushmans rivers.

In July 1801 Boers in the Graaff Reinet District briefly rebelled against British colonial authority because they objected to Khoisan servants attending Christian church and being taught to read and write by missionaries. Many Khoisan fled in the face of Boer attacks. This reignited the Khoisan rebellion and armed groups began to raid Boer farms. In January 1802 Tjaart van der Walt, the landdrost of Swellendam, led a commando of 88 Boers in an attack on a Khoisan rebel stronghold but on the return journey they were ambushed and forced to surrender all the captured livestock. In May Van der Walt returned with a force of 700 men and spent several months trying to sweep both the Khoisan and Xhosa east of the Zuurveld. In early August Van der Walt was killed in a predawn attack on a band of Khoisan and lacking leadership the Boer commando dispersed. In turn, during September and October 1802, the Khoisan and Zuurveld Xhosa launched a concerted westward offensive destroying Boer farms as far into the Cape Colony as Knysna and Plettenberg Bay. Defended by a few Boers, the only colonial outpost left on the eastern frontier was besieged Fort Frederick at Algoa Bay. In March 1803 the British pulled out of the Cape Colony and handed it back to the Dutch Batavian Republic. The new Batavian officials, lacking military strength, ended the conflict on the eastern frontier through negotiation. Khoisan rebels were placated with land grants for their leaders and promises of better treatment by the Boers who slowly returned to the Zuurveld. Although the Fish River was still considered the eastern border of the colony, it was not enforced and the Batavians held a conference with the Zuurveld Xhosa chiefs in which the latter were permitted to remain where they were for the time being. As such, this concluded the Third Cape-Xhosa War, which lasted for four years and involved a major rebellion of Khoisan colonial subjects.[10]

Although settlers were required to participate in regular military drills and could be called up in defense of the colony, Company officers of the eighteenth century considered them poorly trained, undisciplined, and rebellious. This led to investment in fortifications and experiments with military recruitment of blacks and mixed race people. In 1722 a militia was created consisting of free blacks, manumitted slaves, convicts whose sentences had expired and those who had been banished from the eastern territory. By the 1730s Khoisan and mixed race men had been incorporated into settler commandos and frontier policing was transferred to local burgher war councils. In the 1770s, the formation at Stellenbosch of a black and mixed race militia called

the "Free Corps" seemed to indicate the beginning of racially segregated military service. Fear of the Cape coming under attack because of Dutch involvement in European conflict led to the recruitment of 400 Khoisan and mixed race men as the "Corps Bastaard Hottentotten" in 1781 which was disbanded after 14 months when reinforcements arrived from Europe. In 1793, because France had declared war on the Netherlands, the Pandour Corps was formed from Khoisan and mixed race servants armed by their white masters as well as recruits from the Moravian mission at Baviaanskloof. During their first occupation of the Cape, the British recruited several hundred Khoisan and mixed race soldiers in order to cultivate loyalty among that community and discourage Boer rebellion. In 1801 the "Hottentot Corps," also known as the Cape Regiment, was expanded to over 700 men and became a regular unit of the British Army based at the Cape. Under Batavian rule, the unit was renamed the "Corps Vrijen Hottentotten" and became a light infantry battalion. Eventually called the Cape Corps in the 1810s and Cape Mounted Rifles in the 1820s, this would be the only permanent military unit formed by the Dutch and British in the Cape Colony.[11]

The Cape-Xhosa Wars (1811–19)

The second British occupation of the Cape in 1806 was prompted by the same strategic considerations as the first in 1795. In early January 1806 a British naval force arrived at the Cape and landed two infantry brigades of some 5,400 men north of Cape Town. A 2,000 strong Dutch colonial army, including French marines, German, and Hungarian mercenaries, Javanese artillerymen, and Khoisan soldiers and led by Governor Jan Willem Janssens, confronted the British on the slopes of Blaauwberg Mountain on January 8. After both sides exchanged cannon fire, desertion and a determined Highlander bayonet charge compelled the Dutch to withdraw inland. While both sides had sustained casualties—347 Dutch and 204 British were killed—it became obvious to Janssens that he was hopelessly outnumbered and anticipated French allies would not arrive. The British reached the outskirts of Cape Town the next day, and the Dutch eventually surrendered without further resistance.[12]

The British colonial administration of Governor Lord Caledon, lacking military resources and concerned mostly with securing the strategically important Western Cape, ignored the situation on the eastern frontier where Boers and Xhosa had been fighting over the Zuurveld. By mid-1810 most Boers had withdrawn west of the Zuurveld and the Xhosa had largely regained complete control. In September 1811 Sir John Cradock, newly

arrived governor of the Cape, instructed Colonel John Graham of the Cape Regiment to expel the Xhosa east of the Fish River that was to constitute the eastern border of the colony. By December Graham had assembled a force of around 900 regular troops—167 British dragoons, 221 British infantry, 431 Khoisan infantry, and a detachment of Royal Artillery—as well as 500 mounted Boer volunteers. This was the largest colonial army ever assembled in the Eastern Cape. Graham deployed his force in three divisions along the Sundays River and instructed them to advance east pushing the Xhosa over the Fish. The southern column under Landdrost Jacob Cuyler advanced east from the Sundays River mouth to the great place of Chungwa, elderly leader of the Gqunukhwebe. There he discovered that Rharhabe chief Ndlambe had assembled large numbers of warriors from various Xhosa groups in the nearby Addo Bush where they intended to make a stand. Cuyler's column was not strong enough to confront Ndlambe's men in such overgrown terrain. Graham, who was with the center column, decided that the center and northern columns would converge on Cuyler's position in order to drive Ndlambe from this stronghold. Anders Stockenstrom, the Graaff-Reinet landdrost commanding the northern column, felt that moving south would leave his community open to Xhosa attack. Stockenstrom, accompanied by 25 Boers, rode toward Graham to discuss his concerns, but he and most of his men were killed when they stopped to negotiate with a group of Xhosa who had just learned of colonial attacks elsewhere. Andries Stockenstrom, the landdrost's young son, then led a small patrol that drove off the Xhosa and the next day the northern column moved south to join Graham.

On New Year's Day 1812 Graham sent 500 men into the Addo Bush to root out Ndlambe's warriors. The Xhosa had chosen their ground well as it was difficult for colonial forces to concentrate their firepower, colonial horses were of little use, and when a small colonial unit was isolated, the Xhosa would break off their spear shafts to engage in close combat. However, during five days of intense bush fighting the colonial forces killed Xhosa men, women, and children, and Chungwa, too old and sick to move, was shot as he lay in bed. Quickly, the Xhosa lost confidence and fled east of the Fish River. Since the focus of Xhosa warfare was on the capture of productive resources such as women and livestock, they were profoundly shocked by this indiscriminate slaughter. Graham's men then seized cattle, destroyed crops and villages, and killed any Xhosa remaining in the area. By the end of February, 20,000 Xhosa had been expelled from the Zuurveld and the Boers began to return. Governor Cradock arranged for 22 military posts, manned by the Cape Regiment, to be built along the Fish River to prevent the Xhosa from reentering. The center of this defense system was a military camp

located around the center of the Zuurveld, and in August 1812 it was named Grahamstown.

The eviction of Ndlambe and his subjects east of the Fish River reignited conflict with Ngqika over the control of the Rharhabe Xhosa. In 1817 Ngqika gained the support of the Cape Colony by agreeing to the "Spoor Law" that sanctioned independent settler raids east of the Fish in search of allegedly stolen livestock. Not surprisingly, the main target of these attacks became Ndlambe's people. Simultaneously, the rival Rharhabe leaders each adopted a spiritual advisor who mirrored their broader positions. Ngqika patronized Ntsikana, the first Xhosa Christian convert who preached peaceful coexistence with Europeans, and Ndlambe harbored Nxele who, though influenced by Christianity, prophesized that the Xhosa would drive out the white man.

In October 1818, Ngqika sent an army of 2,000 men, led by his eldest son Maqoma, south from the Tyume River to attack the great place of Ndlambe on the Buffalo River. During the march Maqoma's force camped near the base of the mountain called Ntaba ka Ndoda. The next morning they continued their journey but observed a group of several hundred of Ndlambe's warriors camped on the open plain scarred by swallow depressions known as Amalinde. Maqoma's army charged but just as it seemed they would push their enemies back, several thousand warriors emerged from a nearby forest and rushed to join the fight. Many of these men were from the Gqunukhwebe and Gcaleka chiefdoms that had allied with Ndlambe. The clever ambush had been orchestrated by Mdushane, Ndlambe's eldest son. The fighting lasted all day until Maqoma's warriors eventually broke out of the encirclement and fled home. Maqoma was seriously wounded and narrowly escaped capture. Mdushane's men, some of whom had horses and guns, pursued Ngqika's defeated army and raided their communities, seizing around 6,000 cattle. At the Battle of Amalinde 300 of Ngqika's men were killed, and as a result of this devastating defeat, he withdrew his great place and cattle north to the Winterberg Mountains.[13]

Ngqika appealed for British support, and in early December 1818 a colonial expedition led by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Brereton, military commander of the Cape's eastern frontier, advanced into Ndlambe's territory. Ndlambe withdrew his people from their villages into nearby forests where they were bombarded by two British artillery pieces. Facing little resistance, Brereton captured 23,000 cattle, gave 11,000 to Ngqika, and moved back into the colony. In January 1819 Ndlambe retaliated by launching numerous raids against settler farms west of the Fish River. Colonel Thomas Willshire was sent from Cape Town with a British regiment and Andries Stockenstrom,

now a landdrost like his late father, was instructed to organize a large commando. However, before the British could mount any operations, Ndlambe's warriors appeared to withdraw from the colony. In reality, they were massing in the Fish River bush in preparation for the most ambitious military endeavor in Xhosa history.

On April 21, 1819, at midday, around 10,000 Xhosa warriors from Ndlambe's Rharhabe and the Gqunukhwebe attacked Grahamstown that was now a small colonial settlement as well as military camp. A few days earlier a Xhosa interpreter, in reality a spy working for Ndlambe, had warned Willshire that the Xhosa were crossing the Fish River close to the coast and a British company was sent to patrol that area. This left Grahamstown with around 350 defenders, mostly British and Khoisan infantry, 5 cannon, and a few armed settlers. Sixty British soldiers were sent to defend the military barracks on the east side of the village, whereas the rest of the colonial force lined up on a slope in front of a stream, infantry in front and artillery on higher ground in back, to confront the Xhosa attackers. The Xhosa divided their large force into four divisions. Two of these, under Mdushane, attacked the main colonial defensive line. A third group under Nxele, who promised that colonial bullets would turn to water, assaulted the military barracks, and a fourth, the smallest division, moved around to the south to intercept anyone fleeing the settlement. Mdushane's men, who broke off the long shafts of their spears for close combat, made repeated attacks but took heavy casualties from colonial muskets and artillery firing grapeshot. Many of them were terrified by the smoke and flash of the firearms, and warriors were seen holding their hands or hide cloaks up to their eyes so they would not see it. The most intense fighting took place when Nxele's men penetrated the external walls of the barracks with some getting inside the hospital building. A wife of one of the British soldiers passed through the Xhosa, who did not molest women during war, carrying what looked like a baby but was in fact a sack of gunpowder to the beleaguered defenders. Willshire sent some Khoisan soldiers from the Cape Corps to reinforce the barracks. At this critical moment a party of 130 Khoisan buffalo hunters, Christian converts from Theopolis, arrived and their accurate shooting helped to drive off Nxele's division. After two and a half hours of fighting, the Xhosa retreated toward the Fish River but the British did not pursue for fear of leaving Grahamstown defenseless.

On the colonial side two men were killed and five wounded. Estimates of Xhosa losses vary considerably. Three days after the battle Willshire reported that 150 Xhosa corpses had been left behind, three weeks later a Cape Town newspaper claimed that 500 Xhosa had been killed, and 10 years later settler Thomas Pringle stated that 1,400 had died. In 1876 Charles Stretch, who

had fought in the battle, wrote that 2,000 had been killed, and in the early twentieth century, historian George Cory put the figure at around 1,000. Regardless of their exact losses, the largest Xhosa army ever assembled had suffered a grave defeat at what became known as "The Battle of Grahamstown." Historian Ben Maclennan observed that the Xhosa might have overwhelmed the town had they attacked under the cover of darkness and from several different directions.[14]

In late July Willshire organized his forces and led three converging columns across the Fish into Ndlambe's territory. The right column consisted of 160 mounted Cape Corps soldiers and 380 Boer volunteers. The centre, accompanied by Willshire, was made up of 400 British infantry, 68 British cavalry, and 400 Boers supported by four artillery pieces. Commanding the left column, Stockenstrom led 560 mounted Boers. Another 360 soldiers and Boers were held in reserve at Grahamstown and other frontier outposts. Xhosa hit-and-run attacks at night and unexpected winter rains hampered colonial operations. While Ndlambe attempted to concentrate his people in the dense bush around the Fish River, Boer volunteers under Stockenstrom drove them into the open where British cavalry pursued them further east. Once again, the Xhosa were shocked that colonial forces killed women and children. Colonial destruction of crops and seizure of cattle meant that famine threatened Ndlambe's people. In mid-August Ndlambe capitulated to the British by giving up Nxele who later died trying to escape from Robben Island. Willshire then took another 13,000 cattle from Ndlambe's subjects and brought them into the colony. British support had made Ngqika the dominant Rharhabe ruler but this came at a steep price. Charles Somerset, Cape governor, forced Ngqika to accept the advance of the colonial boundary to the Keiskamma and Tyume rivers with all Xhosa having to move further east. Known as the "Ceded Territory," the strip of land between the Fish and Keiskamma/Tyume was meant to remain mostly uninhabited, with the exception of some colonial military posts, and constitute a buffer between settlers and Xhosa. Furthermore, British settlers arrived in the eastern Cape Colony in 1820 and throughout the rest of that decade colonial patrols would continue to cross into Xhosa territory in pursuit of supposedly stolen livestock.

By 1828 Matiwane's Ngwane had moved south from present-day Lesotho and settled at Mbolompo near the Mtata River. In late July 1828 Major Dundas, a British officer conducting reconnaissance far to the east of the colonial boundary, led 50 armed and mounted settlers and many more Thembu allies against the Ngwane and seized 25,000 cattle along with an unknown number of female prisoners. Impressed by the effectiveness of the settlers' firearms, local African rulers such as Hintsa of the Gcaleka Xhosa and Faku of the Mpondo saw an

opportunity to eliminate the newly arrived Matiwane and absorb his herds and subjects. In late August a colonial army—led by Colonel Henry Somerset and consisting of about 1,000 British infantry, Khoisan Cape Mounted Riflemen, armed settlers, and several artillery pieces—with roughly 30,000 Thembu, Gcaleka, and Mpondo allied warriors advanced on the Ngwane. On the morning of August 27, Somerset launched a surprise cavalry charge against Matiwane's people supported by artillery bombardment. An African oral account from the late nineteenth century describes the rather one-sided engagement:

> The AmaNgwana [*sic*] made no stand, but fled and went into the bushes. The reports of the guns were very dreadful, none of the native allies fought, they just looked on in astonishment. The report of the cannon was fearful, it was directed into the bush; women and children screamed, and cattle bellowed, and all came out of the forest where the army was, and were captured.[15]

Over 700 Ngwane were killed, the settlers brought over 100 women and children back to the colony, and their African allies seized many cattle and prisoners. Matiwane's power was broken and many of his former subjects scattered among the Thembu and Mpondo. Somerset covered his actions by maintaining that he had heroically defended the colony and its African neighbors from an advancing Zulu army and what was in fact a massive cattle and labor raid was remembered as "The Battle of Mbolompo." A British officer who had witnessed the raid stated that "it was one of the most disgraceful and cold-blooded acts to which the English soldier had ever been rendered accessory."[16]

Warfare on the Indian Ocean Coast (1815–30)

On the east side of the Drakensberg Mountains, population increase caused by the adoption of American maize and competition over the ivory trade with the Portuguese at Delagoa Bay had, by the late 1700s, led Nguni-speakers to amalgamate their previously small states. By the early 1800s the Ndwandwe, a highly centralized and militarized state under Zwide, and the Mthethwa, a looser confederation under Dingiswayo, were vying for power north of the Thukela River. Around 1818 the Ndwandwe moved south to defeat the Mthethwa and kill Dingiswayo. Shaka, new leader of the small Zulu portion of the Mthethwa, took over from Dingiswayo by killing his legitimate heir, organized resistance against the Ndwandwe, and brought new groups under his authority. In 1819 Zwide renewed his southward offensive and Shaka responded by destroying food resources and withdrawing south. When the

exhausted and starved Ndwandwe reached the Thukela River, Shaka launched a counterattack that sent them fleeing north. Around the same time, Shaka organized a stealthy night raid on Zwide's capital. As a result, Zwide moved north of the Pongola River and many of his allies deserted.[17]

There is no doubt that Shaka, ruler of the Zulu Kingdom from around 1815 to his assassination in 1828, is the most famous person in South African military history. Before Shaka, it is often claimed, battles between African groups were ritualized performances in which a few spears would be thrown, little life would be lost, and one side would eventually back down. In books and films Shaka is popularly portrayed as a great military genius, sometimes compared to Julius Caesar and Napoleon Bonaparte, who revolutionized warfare in the region and turned the Zulu state into an expansionist empire. Other African people submitted to his dominance or fled to the mountains or across the subcontinent. This period of upheaval became called the "Mfecane" or "crushing." Shaka is credited with numerous military innovations, which included the invention of a short stabbing spear for more lethal close combat, discarding of sandals and dancing on thorns so his men could run faster, a "chest and horns" battlefield formation to outflank and annihilate enemies, an age-based regimental system that united the Zulu state across regional lines and built up a martial spirit, the banning of marriage by younger regiments so that warriors' sexual energy could be channeled into fighting, and a much more aggressive and deadly approach to warfare.

The main problem with much of this story is that there is little evidence to support it. Short spears and age regiments existed before Shaka's time, there is no proof that he forced his men to dance on thorns, and it seems he used the famous "chest and horns" tactic only once. Shaka's most important military victory, where he first defeated the Ndwandwe at Gqokli Hill in 1819, seems to have been invented by a twentieth-century novelist. Historian Norman Etherington points out that Shaka's real military innovation was a "heightened ruthlessness" or, as author Dan Wylie suggests, a selective use of "military terror." Shaka employed surprise night attacks, set fire to huts to blind enemies, and executed those suspected of cowardice. The age regiments, probably pioneered by Sotho-speaking people in the interior, were not entirely military formations but meant to give the ruler control of young men's labor. These men were motivated by the fact that later in life the king would release them from full-time service and grant cattle so they could provide bridewealth for marriage. This meant that Shaka would have had to repeatedly add to his royal herd by launching cattle raids against neighbors. Seen in this light, Shaka's military campaigns did not represent territorial expansion but a continuing process of restoring royal herds needed to maintain the Zulu military-social organization.

The Zulu state was much smaller than many previous historians have suggested, probably no more than 160 kilometers in diameter. Etherington sees it as essentially a defensive formation, one of a number developing in the region at that time, which occasionally launched long-distance cattle raids. The rise of Shaka is also associated with the decline of circumcision as ritual male initiation in this area as it tended to keep young men of about 18 years old away from military service while they healed.[18]

Historians have debated whether Portuguese-sponsored slave raiding from Delagoa Bay influenced African state formation in southeastern Africa, particularly the rise of Shaka's Zulu. While some claim that before 1820 the slave trade was too limited to have much impact, the evidence is far from conclusive. What is not in doubt is that a significant slave trade existed in the area after 1820 that must have had repercussions. In the early 1820s powerful African leaders such as Zwangendaba, Soshangane, and Nxaba, all former Ndwandwe allies driven north by Shaka, took their people closer to Delagoa Bay where they defeated the local Tsonga and Tembe and took over their role as intermediaries in the oceanic slave trade. Around 1815 a dispute over agricultural land between Zwide's Ndwandwe and Sobhuza's Dhlamini resulted in the latter moving north into a relatively mountainous area from where they engaged in cattle and slave raiding. Eventually known as the Swazi Kingdom, this polity specialized in exporting beef to Delagoa Bay. In the early 1820s Shaka moved the Zulu state to the south probably to gain distance from increasing slaving further up the coast. This southward move also brought Shaka into closer alliance with independent British ivory and slave traders establishing themselves at Port Natal, and he eventually employed them to lead gunmen in his operations against the Ndwandwe in 1826 and the Mpondo in 1828.

At one time historians commonly portrayed the Mpondo state, ruled by Faku and located along the coast southwest of the Zulu, as typical victims of Shaka's aggression. The Zulu supposedly took all the Mpondo cattle and pushed their settlements west of the Mzimvubu River hitherto the center of their territory. It was only in the 1830s and 1840s that Faku's Mpondo would recover and emerge as an important regional power. However, this story is contradicted by available evidence, including Zulu oral testimony recorded in the early 1900s. Shaka's Zulu attacked the Mpondo twice. In 1824 a cattle-raiding Zulu army was decisively beaten by the Mpondo and had to flee home. The Zulu raided Mpondo territory again in 1828 and were more successful because of assistance from Henry Francis Fynn with a contingent of Port Natal musketeers. Clearly, this raid did not seize all the Mpondo cattle and although Faku moved his great place west of the Mzimvubu, other

Mpondo settlements remained east of the river. In fact, during the 1820s Faku's Mpondo became a feared military power in the region. Between 1815 and 1819 Faku's Mpondo raided the Bomvana and drove them west where they settled between the Mtata and Mbashe rivers. Around 1820 or 1821 Ngoza's Thembu moved southwest from the Thukela Valley to escape incorporation into the Zulu state and sought to make a new home by expelling the Mpondo from the eastern portion of their territory. After two days of fighting on the west side of the Mzimkhulu River, Mpondo numerical superiority defeated the Thembu with survivors being absorbed by Faku and Shaka. In 1826 Faku, together with new Bhaca allies, led another cattle raid west against the Bomvana, but the captured livestock was recovered by a successful counterattack. In 1828, shortly after the Zulu incursion of that year, the Mpondo launched a punitive expedition that brought the rebellious Xesibe back into line as a tributary state. The Mpondo, in August 1828, joined Gcaleka, Thembu, and the British from the Cape to destroy the recently arrived Ngwane at the Battle of Mbolompo. In 1829 Nqeto's Qwabe, displaced from the Zulu state after the assassination of Shaka, moved into Mpondo territory where they captured a wagon load of guns and ammunition from Cape traders bound for Port Natal and seized cattle. Faku's army eventually trapped and annihilated the Qwabe on the banks of the Mzimvubu River. Mpondo military organization was based on local communities, not age regiments, and during the 1820s, Faku personally banned circumcision because it endangered the health and readiness of his young warriors.[19]

Warfare on the Highveld (c.1800–1830)

During the eighteenth century Khoisan refugees from Boer expansion and other fugitives such as escaped slaves and outlaws from the Cape moved north to the Orange River area where they used horses and guns, acquired through trade, to raid established Sotho and Tswana communities. These new groups, each led by an independent "captain" directing Boer-like commandos, were called by many names such as Griqua, Kora, Koranna, Oorlams, and Bastards. They captured cattle and children and traded them with the Boers to the south for more horses, guns, gunpowder, and other items. These horsemen also maintained large numbers of captives to work in their homesteads. By the beginning of the nineteenth century, mobility and firepower had made them a major force in the southwestern Highveld. Traditional means of defense such as surrounding villages and cattle enclosures with thorn bush walls could not stop bullets. Repeating what the Boers had done in the Cape, they drove groups such as the Tswana-speaking Rolong and Tlhaping off their lands

and contributed to their division by working as mercenaries for rival leaders. Sotho and Tswana people often lived around Griqua settlements in a type of feudal arrangement. In the 1810s British missionaries began to establish themselves among the Griqua, who had picked up Christianity and Afrikaans language from the Boers. Believing the Griqua to be the key to the future spread of Christianity in the region, the missionaries turned a blind eye to their raids. The drought of 1823 prompted Sotho and Tswana people living on the grasslands around the Vaal River to head southwest in search of food. When they were driven off by the Ngwaketse, Rolong, and Hurutshe, this refugee group, which was sometimes called Mantatees because they had been attacked by the Tlokwa under Mantatisi, headed south toward the Kuruman River where water and food was available. A combined force of Tlhaping and Griqua, accompanied by missionary Robert Moffat and British agent John Melville, confronted this group on June 24, 1823, near the Tlhaping settlement of Dithakong. Having never fought against horses and guns, the so-called Mantatees were easily scattered leaving behind around 500 dead. The Griqua went back to their homes with 1,100 cattle and some captives.[20]

In the western Highveld and southern Kalahari area, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was a period of increased warfare, characterized by cattle raids, among Tswana-speaking people. A period of good rainfall had enhanced food production and led to population increase, but this resulted in competition over useful land that was limited by the arid Kalahari to the west and the tsetse fly–infested Limpopo River to the northeast. Increased conflict over cattle also seems to have been related to the growing Tswana engagement in regional trade focused on Delagoa Bay to the east and the Cape Colony in the south. The Tswana exchanged cattle and sometimes ivory for metals, beads, and tobacco. In the early 1800s the Ngwaketse Tswana, located to the northwest and thus isolated from the new trade routes, fought a series of wars against neighboring Tswana and Griqua/Kora groups to extend authority to the south and control the trade. In the late 1700s the Ngwaketse broke the monopoly of the Tlhaping and Kora over trade in the southern Kalahari. Under the famous warrior king Makaba II (1790–1824), the Ngwaketse established a fortified capital at Kanye Hill, beat off an attack by Griqua and Kora under Jan Bloem, attracted many new subjects, reduced other Tswana groups such as the Kgatla and Rolong to tributaries, and raided the Hurutshe who were their main rivals for control of trade. In the 1810s the Ngwaketse defeated a Hurutshe-led coalition of Tswana and Kora groups in what became known as the "War of Moabi" named after an uncle of Makaba who had gone over to the other side. In 1818 a combined Ngwaketse and Rolong army attacked

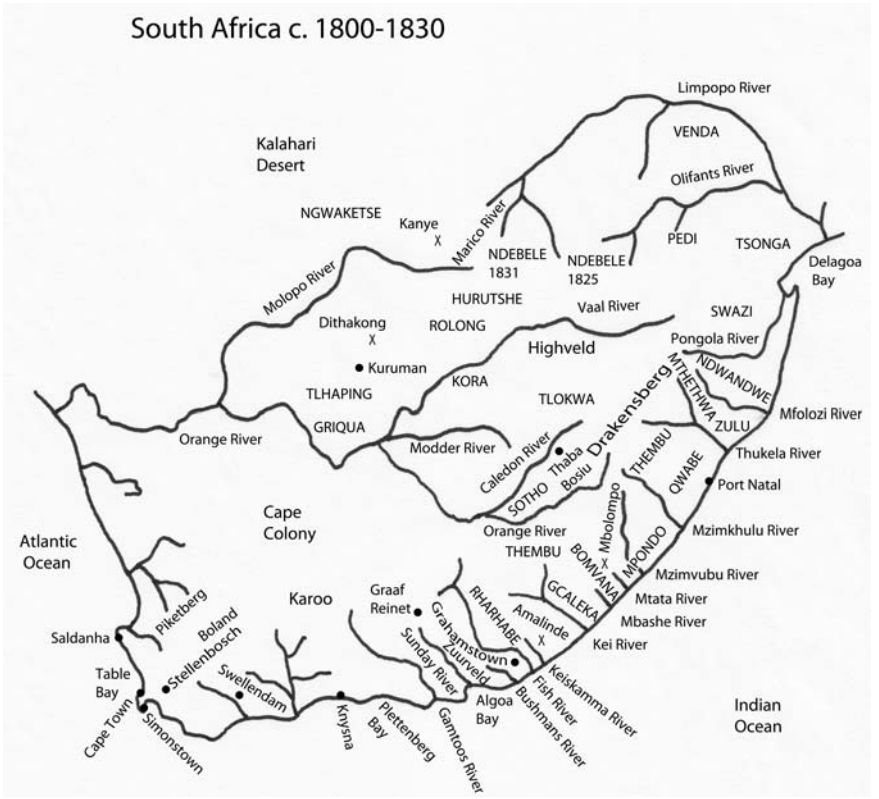
the Hurutshe who avoided serious losses by hiding their cattle. Historian Andrew Manson makes the point that although a few Europeans, such as Conrad de Buys who assisted both the Ngwaketse and Hurutshe at different times in the 1810s, participated in and aggravated these conflicts, they arrived long after the "Tswana Wars" had begun.[21]

In the early 1820s the Caledon Valley, with its water and defensible flat-topped mountains, became the scene of conflict as groups such as Mantatisi's Tlokwa, Mpangazita's Hlubi, and Matiwane's Ngwane moved in from nearby drought stricken areas and tried to control valuable grazing land and increase their herds. By this time Moshoeshoe, a relatively minor leader of one of many Sotho-speaking groups in the area but with a reputation as a ruthless fighter, had amassed a large herd through raiding and was using it to develop client relations and marriage alliances with neighbors. In 1820 or 1821 he had founded his own village on the slopes of a defensible mountain called Botha Bothe and gathered various dispossessed people around him. Around 1822 or 1823 the Tlokwa inflicted such a serious defeat on the Ngwane that some of the latter committed suicide rather than return to Matiwane in disgrace. In early 1823, in a prolonged battle, Matiwane's Ngwane inflicted significant damage on the Hlubi. Later that same year the Tlokwa, encouraged by their success against the Ngwane, attacked communities under Moshoeshoe but were initially driven off by a counterattack that broke into their camp and destroyed their cookware in what would be remembered as the "Battle of the Pots." The Tlokwa then attacked once again, driving Moshoeshoe and his followers up into the Maluti Mountains. When Moshoeshoe recruited some Hlubi refugees as military allies, the Tlokwa retired without a fight. Around this time the Tlokwa took the mountain of Marabeng, located just west of Botha Bothe, from a local group and made it their stronghold. In 1824 Sekonyela, Mantatisi's son, laid siege to Botha Bothe, on top of which Moshoeshoe and his people almost starved, but after three months withdrew because of their own hunger and a raid by an Nguni group allied to Moshoeshoe. Realizing that his stronghold was too close to his Tlokwa enemies and open to any group moving south from the plains, Moshoeshoe shifted his people 100 kilometers down the Caledon River to a new mountain fortress called Thaba Bosiu, which he seized from a minor chief. Thaba Bosiu had a spring on top that would enable Moshoeshoe's people to hold out against a long siege; it was also protected from direct access by the Berea Plateau and backed by the Maluti Mountains where cattle could be concealed during war. In the mid-1820s Matiwane was the strongest ruler in the Caledon and received cattle tribute from local chiefs such as Moshoeshoe. In March 1825 Matiwane's Ngwane finally crushed the Hlubi in a decisive

battle in which Mpangazita was killed. However, in 1826 a destructive Zulu cattle raid, which had been invited by Moshoeshoe, reduced the power of the Ngwane. In July 1827 the Ngwane tried to reassert dominance over Moshoeshoe by attacking Thaba Bosiu. The Sotho defenders rolled large stones down on the Ngwane and two regiments of Moshoeshoe eventually drove them off. With this defeat and further attacks from the north by Mzilikazi's Ndebele who had recently moved onto the Highveld, Matiwane decided to leave the Caledon Valley and led his subjects south into what is now the Eastern Cape. After the departure of the Ngwane, Moshoeshoe and Sekonyela expanded their territories around their respective strongholds and at the same time Griqua horsemen from the southwest began to raid more aggressively up the Caledon Valley.[22]

In the early 1820s, but perhaps as late as 1825, it appears that Mzilikazi, leader of the Kumalo lineage, became caught up in the Ndwandwe-Zulu conflict and led his people north onto the Highveld where they were called Matabele or Ndebele, meaning outsiders. Sometime after 1825 Mzilikazi's people settled near present-day Tshwane (Pretoria) and began to absorb local Sotho- and Tswana-speaking communities. It was at this time that refugees from the defeated Hlubi moved north to join the new state. This area had been dominated by the Pedi Kingdom that controlled the trade between the Limpopo River and Delagoa Bay. Historians disagree over whether the Ndebele inflicted a major defeat upon the Pedi in the late 1820s, but clearly the movement of new groups, such as the Ndwandwe and their allies, into that area reduced Pedi influence. Like the Zulu state, Mzilikazi's Kingdom was fairly compact but sent raiding parties all across the Highveld, including into present-day Botswana, in search of livestock. In 1828 a combined force of Jan Bloem's Griqua and Moletsane's Taung, who had been raided by the Ndebele, attacked some of Mzilikazi's settlements and made off with around 3,000 cattle. There had been little resistance because the main Ndebele force was off to the west raiding the Ngwaketse. Ndebele warriors rallied, chased after the Griqua-Taung force, and managed to recover most of the livestock. Mzilikazi then decided to eliminate the Taung once and for all. In June 1829 a large Ndebele army of 5,000 men, mostly Tswana in origin, destroyed Moletsane's town on the Vaal River that had been abandoned and caught up with the fleeing Taung on the Modder River near the site of present-day Bloemfontein. Mzilikazi's men seized cattle and killed many people. Moletsane escaped and eventually sought refuge with the Griqua and then Moshoeshoe. In 1830 or 1831 an Ndebele raiding party ventured south into the Caledon Valley where they mounted unsuccessful assaults on the mountain strongholds of both Sekonyela and Moshoeshoe.

Mzilikazi began to dominate the Tswana groups on the western Highveld. By 1830 the Ndebele had forced the Hurutshe to pay a regular tribute of crops and Ndebele raids in 1828 and 1830 pushed the Ngwaketse west into the Kalahari Desert. This restricted Griqua trading and elephant hunting in that area. In June 1831 the Griqua leader Barend Barends put together a coalition of 300 Griqua horsemen and several hundred Tswana spearmen from the Ngwaketse and Rolong, and marched off to confront Mzilikazi. At this time the Ndebele army was raiding the Ngwato Tswana far to the northwest leaving their undefended communities easy targets for Barends's commando that seized cattle and women. On their homeward journey the Griqua-Tswana force camped near present-day Sun City where at night they were surrounded and attacked by Mzilikazi's recently mobilized reserve warriors. Several hundred Griqua and Tswana were killed and the livestock recovered. The Ndebele captured large numbers of firearms and horses but



Cartography by Fungai Madzongwe

did not make much use of them. It appears that Mzilikazi, with his easy victory over the Griqua, began to underestimate the effectiveness of firearms and most of the captured horses eventually died of disease. Soon after the massacre of Barends's commando, Mzilikazi moved his state 200 kilometers west to the Marico River where he hoped to subdue the Tswana groups that were allying with the Griqua, dominate trade between the Cape and the Zimbabwe plateau, and distance himself from Zulu cattle raids. The Hurutshe Tswana were now conquered with little resistance and the Ndebele launched punitive raids against other groups such as the Rolong who moved south to seek protection from the Griqua and the Ngwaketse who moved further west. Griqua horsemen would continue to harass Ndebele settlements for the next five years.[23]

Conclusion

By the end of the 1820s, the Cape Colony had a military system based on settler commandos mobilized when required, Khoisan regular soldiers, and British imperial units rotated in and out. The Khoisan, who had been conquered earlier by the Dutch, were the main African military allies of the British. The eastward expansion of the Cape was facilitated by a standing army, superior firepower, and a total approach to war that targeted the productive aspects of Xhosa society. Some of the Xhosa had been decisively defeated, whereas others had allied with the British to overcome local rivals. At the same time the Xhosa had shown the potential to use rough terrain and bush fighting to counter colonial advantages that they developed further in subsequent years. The expansion of long-distance trade in cattle, ivory, and slaves led to increased conflict and the growth of larger African states along the Indian Ocean coast and in the interior. Adopting eighteenth-century Dutch methods, predatory bands of mounted Griqua gunmen attacked settled African communities in the interior but were not strong enough to hold large territories. The Zulu and Mpondo kingdoms became aggressive cattle raiders. Although the Sotho and Swazi states concentrated on developing defensive mountain strongholds, they could go on the offensive when required. Absorbing subject peoples, the Ndebele Kingdom moved around the Highveld to avoid enemies, launched cattle raids, and collected tribute. Some groups such as Matiwane's Ngwane and Mpangazita's Hlubi that lacked alliances, strongholds, imaginative leadership, or luck did not survive.

CHAPTER 2

Wars of Colonial Conquest (1830–69)

At the beginning of the 1830s most of what is now South Africa was dominated by independent African societies with the only colonial presence being the British-ruled Cape Colony in the southwest. Within 30 years this situation changed completely. In a fundamentally military process African states were marginalized by rapidly expanding colonial powers. The Cape extended eastward and many Xhosa fell under colonial rule. The Boers from the Cape moved into the interior; broke the power of prominent African states such as the Ndebele, Zulu, and Sotho; and created new settler republics that would become the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (Transvaal). In the southeast, the British seized the territory the Boers had taken from the Zulu and created the colony of Natal.

Colonial Conquest in the Eastern Cape (1834–48)

By the early 1830s, Cape colonial expansion against the Xhosa had intensified. Under the "patrol system" (also known as the Spoor Law) settlers and soldiers from the Cape Colony could pursue allegedly stolen livestock into the territory of independent Xhosa chiefdoms. This often became an excuse for colonial raids that constantly harassed Xhosa communities and seized their livestock. The last straw came in December 1834 when Xhoxho, a brother to high-ranking Rharhabe Xhosa leaders such as Maqoma, was shot in the arm by a colonial patrol. In turn, late that month some Xhosa launched retaliatory stock raids into the colony and many surprised settlers took refuge at frontier towns such as Fort Beaufort, Grahamstown, Bathurst, and Salem where they built barricades and fortified stone churches. Further west, the Boers formed laagers and one of these was attacked by Xhosa on eight successive nights. The Xhosa chiefs gave orders that the missionaries living among their people were not to be harmed.

These Xhosa raids were quickly portrayed, by British colonial officials and the settler press, as a massive and an unprovoked invasion of the colony. Based at Cape Town, Governor Benjamin D'Urban sent Colonel Harry Smith, a veteran of the Peninsula Campaign against Napoleon, to take command of military operations in the eastern districts. By the time Smith arrived in Grahamstown, in early January 1835, the Xhosa were already retiring east of the Fish and Keiskamma rivers. Smith declared martial law, ordered barricades taken down, and immediately organized an offensive. On January 10, a column of 400 armed volunteers moved east from Grahamstown and burned the kraals of Xhosa leaders Nqeno and Tyhali. Smith directed Colonel Henry Somerset, another veteran of the Napoleonic wars, son of a former Cape governor and commander of the Cape Mounted Rifles (CMR), to lead a force in clearing the road to Algoa Bay, the main colonial supply route, and patrols were sent to secure other strategic points along the frontier. D'Urban arrived in the area in late January and spent the next eight weeks putting together a large invasion force. In early February Smith led 900 men, mostly armed Khoisan and settlers, against the Xhosa who were occupying the bush around the Fish River. After three days of many small desperate engagements in the overgrown terrain, Smith returned to Grahamstown with 2,000 captured cattle. Twelve colonial troops and around seventy-five Xhosa had been killed.

Preparing his forces, D'Urban devised a plan to invade Rharhabe territory and cross the Kei to attack Hintsa's Gcaleka. With 358 regular cavalry, 1,639 mounted Boers, and 1,570 regular infantry now at his disposal, the governor organized four divisions of roughly 800 men each. On March 26, Smith led a strong patrol into the Amatola Mountains and returned with 1,200 cattle. Five days later, on March 31, the governor began his invasion. Leaving Fort Willshire, the first division, under D'Urban and Smith, marched northeast toward the Amatolas. Camped between Fort Willshire and the coast, Somerset's second division also swept toward the mountains. Led by Major William Cox, the third division left Fort Beaufort and traveled east over the Tyume River. Finally, assembled in the northern extremity of the Ceded Territory, the fourth division, consisting entirely of mounted Boers and led by Field Commandant Stephanus Van Wyk, entered the Amatolas from the north. Facing the most serious colonial intrusion to date, Maqoma delayed the converging columns and withdrew his followers into the most inaccessible mountain kloofs. Harassed by small groups of Rharhabe, some of whom had muskets, D'Urban's forces destroyed settlements and seized women and children for service in the colony. In mid-April the governor left the third and fourth divisions to continue ravaging the Amatolas and personally led the first and second east of the Kei River to confront Hintsa.

D'Urban's column crossed the Kei River in mid-April 1835 and made camp thirty miles east at the abandoned Butterworth Mission in Gcaleka Xhosa territory. Although Hintsa's people had not participated in the Xhosa raids upon the colony, as senior Xhosa ruler he was guilty by his association with the Rharhabe Xhosa and the British were looking for an excuse to seize cattle. Smith led a patrol of 300 horsemen in a series of raids against Gcaleka communities and at around the same time 5,000 Thembu, led by Major Henry Warden, attacked the Gcaleka and captured 4,000 cattle. These actions prompted Hintsa to agree to D'Urban's demand that he surrender 50,000 cattle and 1,000 horses as compensation for the December raids. Hintsa then accompanied a 500-man colonial patrol, commanded by Smith, as it collected cattle from various Gcalaka settlements. On May 12, Hintsa, according to colonial witnesses, attempted to escape by riding away but was pursued and knocked off his horse by Smith. Running into some bush, the Xhosa king was shot to death by colonial soldiers who cut off his ears as trophies. At around the same time, groups of African people began gathering around D'Urban's camp. Some were Gcaleka Christian converts from the Butterworth Mission, others were simply Gcaleka seeking food and protection from colonial attacks, and there were also opportunistic mercenaries who wanted to side with the British. D'Urban reported to his superiors in London that these people, known as the "Fingo," had been refugees from the wars of Shaka further up the coast that had subsequently been enslaved by Hintsa and were now to be emancipated by the British. Thousands of Fingo were settled between the Fish and Keiskamma rivers, particularly around Fort Peddie, and would provide the Cape with labor and military allies. D'Urban's force also returned to the colony with 10,000 Gcaleka cattle. In addition, the governor declared that the territory between the Keiskamma and Kei rivers was annexed by Britain and would be known as Queen Adelaide Province.

While D'Urban's force was operating east of the Kei, the divisions under Cox and Van Wyk continued pursuing the Rharhabe into the Amatola Mountains but were hampered by rough terrain and heavy rain. In mid-May 1835 Maqoma rejected a colonial offer to suspend hostilities if his people moved east of the Kei. Throughout June D'Urban and Smith, by now west of the Kei, launched a large-scale offensive aimed at engaging the Rharhabe in a decisive battle. Hoping to maintain the goodwill of the British, the Gqunukhwebe leader Phato sent 1,200 warriors to assist colonial forces. The mountainous terrain made it possible for Maqoma and his people to elude the cumbersome colonial columns. Therefore, toward the end of June the British changed their approach and began sending numerous small patrols of 30–100 men, mostly Gqunukhwebe, Fingo, and Khoisan, into

the Amatolas to destroy crops and capture cattle in the hope of starving the Rharhabe into submission. The Rharhabe responded to the British by further developing their ambush tactics and making use of more captured firearms. On June 25, Maqoma's people surprised and eliminated a patrol of 30 Khoisan led by Lieutenant Charles Bailie. By the beginning of September the Rharhabe had to plant crops and D'Urban was under pressure from London to end the expensive war. Several weeks of negotiations, in which Maqoma rejected initial British demands for him to abandon the Amatolas and surrender captured firearms, produced a treaty in which the Rharhabe accepted nominal British authority but retained their land and chiefs.

British rule in Queen Adelaide Province did not last long as in 1836 Lord Glenelg, the colonial secretary in London who disapproved of the abuse of indigenous people in the empire, ordered the retrocession of the territory and withdrawal of colonial forces. At this point British imperial policy did not favor expanding the Cape Colony as the primary purpose of holding it was to control shipping between Europe and Asia. Relations between the Cape settlers and neighboring Xhosa groups would be governed by a "treaty system" in which accusations of stock theft or other grievances were arbitrated by colonial border agents who would negotiate with the Xhosa chiefs. Disappointed that the years of sanctioned raiding and ambitions for more land had come to an end, frontier settler leaders worked hard to discredit this system by exaggerating and inventing Xhosa "depredations." By 1844 these complaints led to a change of policy in London and Sir Peregrine Maitland, a Waterloo veteran, was sent to the Cape with a mandate to cancel the treaties that quickly led to renewed violence. When a Xhosa man accused of having stolen an axe from a store in Fort Beaufort escaped colonial custody in March 1846, Maitland used the incident as a pretext for war.

On April 11, 1846, three colonial columns, commanded by Colonial Somerset and supported by a long supply train of 125 wagons, crossed the Fish and Keiskamma rivers and encountered no resistance as they converged on the capital of Sandile, the new Rharhabe leader, near Burnshill Mission in the Amatola foothills. Leaving his wagon train under guard at Burnshill, Somerset led 500 men into the Amatola valley where they came under musket fire from Rharhabe lurking in the forest. That afternoon Somerset called for the supply train, which had been harassed by Xhosa fire from the bush, to move forward to his position, and as it passed through a mountain defile it was ambushed by a large force of Rharhabe. Abandoning 65 wagons, some of which carried muskets and ammunition, the train pulled back to Burnshill and Somerset then withdrew his entire force to Block Drift on the Tyume River. Encouraged by Sandile's victory, most of the Xhosa leaders

between the Keiskamma and Kei sent their men off to raid settler farms on the colonial frontier. Even Phato's Gqunukhwebe, who had allied with the British in 1835, joined with Sandile because they had lost land to Fingo settlement near Fort Peddie. In early May they ambushed a colonial supply train passing through the Fish River Bush on its way to Fort Peddie and captured 43 wagons. At the end of May a combined Xhosa army of 8,000 attacked Fort Peddie but was repulsed by colonial artillery and muskets that killed 92 warriors. As they withdrew, the Xhosa made off with 4,000 cattle captured from the Fingo. On May 30, Somerset led a supply train of 82 wagons, escorted by 1,200 troops, through the Fish River Bush and pushed straight through a Xhosa ambush—oxen pulling the wagons were shot but then replaced—to relieve beleaguered Fort Peddie. In early June Somerset commanded a cavalry patrol that left Fort Peddie intending to destroy some nearby Xhosa homesteads. Inadvertently, the patrol encountered a group of 500 Xhosa warriors led by Rharhabe chief Siyolo in the open near the Gwangqa River. British dragoons and Cape Mounted Riflemen charged the Xhosa who responded with an ineffective volley of musket fire and then broke in panic. Pursued for 8 kilometers, between 300 and 500 Xhosa were cut down. News of this disaster prompted Xhosa raiding parties to retire east out of the colony.

By the end of June 1846 Maitland had arrived from Cape Town with reinforcements and took command of a colonial army of 3,200 regular troops, 5,500 armed settlers, 800 Khoisan levies, and 4,000 Fingo and Khoisan laborers. The army was divided into two divisions. In mid-July the column under Somerset in the south advanced on the Gqunukhwebe who withdrew east of the Kei River with their cattle. Somerset pursued them and seized a few thousand cattle but lost most to Xhosa ambushes and harassment on the way back to Fort Peddie. In the north, in late July, the column under Colonel John Hare launched a 10-day long sweep of the Amatolas that the Rharhabe successfully avoided. By the end of August Maitland had moved most of his total force, which was badly demoralized and half-starved because of drought and loss of supply wagons, to the mouth of the Fish River where they could be provisioned by ship. Some minor Xhosa leaders, who also had problems feeding their people because of drought, surrendered around the same time. Sudden heavy rains in September meant that colonial forces found it difficult to resume the offensive and the Xhosa concentrated on planting crops. In mid-September most major Xhosa chiefs, including Maqoma and Sandile, attempted to negotiate a settlement but could not accept Maitland's demand that they abandon all their land west of the Kei River. At the end of December Maitland led an expedition across the Kei that seized cattle from the Gcaleka with little resistance. It was at this time that Maitland, unable to end this "War of the Axe," was recalled to London.

The new governor, Sir Henry Pottinger, renewed the colonial campaign against the Xhosa, planning to drive them east of the Kei. At this point the only Xhosa group actively opposing the British was Phato's Gqunukhwebe along the coast. In September 1847 Pottinger led an invasion of the Amatolas and the Rharhabe responded by avoiding colonial forces that resorted to seizing livestock and destroying settlements. While attempting to negotiate with the British, Sandile was detained in late October. During the last three months of the year Somerset directed colonial operations against the Gqunukhwebe who were ensconced in some difficult ground around the west bank of the Kei River. In mid-December Phato, who had allied with the Cape in 1835, was the last Xhosa chief to surrender to avoid starvation imposed by colonial raiding. In December, Sir Harry Smith, who had commanded colonial forces in the Cape during the 1835 war and subsequently distinguished himself fighting Sikhs in India, was appointed as the new governor of the Cape Colony. Late that month he gathered the captive Xhosa chiefs at King William's Town and declared that the land between the Keiskamma and Kei rivers would become a colonial possession named "British Kaffraria." The Xhosa were assigned "reserves" that roughly corresponded to their existing territories. Technically separate from the Cape Colony, the administration of British Kaffraria was conducted by the Xhosa chiefs who were supervised by European magistrates reporting to a chief commissioner. For internal security, 2,000 colonial soldiers occupied seven forts in the area and the commissioners controlled a force of 400 "Kaffir Police."[1]

During the Cape-Xhosa wars of 1834–35 and 1846–47, the Xhosa remarkably adapted to colonial firepower and mobility. They had learnt hard lessons during the disastrous conflicts of the early part of the century. The Xhosa tried to avoid direct contact with colonial fighting units, especially in the open, and concentrated on ambushing supply trains in narrow defiles. They also used more guns than ever before. The British had some difficulty responding but eventually did so by prosecuting a scorched earth campaign that damaged Xhosa food production. Capturing large numbers of Xhosa cattle had the added advantage of feeding and paying colonial forces, and the Gcaleka were especially good targets since they did not offer much resistance. Another major British adaptation to Xhosa bush warfare was the increasing use of African irregular military allies, principally the Fingo.

Warfare and the Boer Trek (1836–40)

During the late 1830s about 15,000 Boers left the Cape Colony and moved into the interior where they defeated dominant African states and established

independent republics. While this movement was certainly a continuation of previous Trekboer and Griqua expansion, there are a number of theories as to why it happened. Seeing this "Great Trek" as the formative moment in the history of their nation, Afrikaner nationalist historians have stressed British oppression of the Boers and a desire for self-determination as the main reasons for their departure. On the other hand, some English-speaking historians have maintained that the Boers, who had missed the European Enlightenment, fled British ideas about equality that had led to the abolition of slavery. The basic similarity of both theories is that the Boers are seen as isolationists who left the Cape in order to escape something that they did not like. The result of the Cape-Xhosa War of 1834–35, in which settlers' desires for expansion were frustrated by British imperial policy, also seems to have contributed to the Boer departure. Historian Norman Etherington has suggested that there were also factors, such as the ambition to conquer new land and establish trade links with the outside world either through Port Natal or Delagoa Bay, that attracted the Boers to the interior. The Boers split into two broad groups. Those under Andries Potgieter traveled north into the high grasslands over the Vaal River and those under Piet Retief crossed south of the Drakensberg Mountains to enter the Indian Ocean coastal area of present-day KwaZulu-Natal. Warfare would be essential to their success.[2]

By the mid-1830s the Ndebele Kingdom of Mzilikazi, based around the settlements of Mosega and Gabeni on the Marico River, constituted the main power on the western Highveld dominating neighboring Tswana and Sotho groups. Mzilikazi knew about the power of mounted gunmen as he had moved to the Marico River partly because of Griqua raids. In August 1836 Mzilikazi sent out a raiding party of 500 men that destroyed several Boer camps and returned with captured livestock. In early October Mzilikazi dispatched an army of 3,000 warriors under Mkhaliphi, his senior commander, to drive off the Boers. On October 16, 1836, a group of around 35 Boers, led by Potgieter, rode out to meet the Ndebele about ten miles from the Boer laager at the base of the hill later called Vegkop (Hill of the Fight). Although it appears the Boers were ready to negotiate, one of them fired into the Ndebele who then charged. Utilizing fire and movement—a tactic where two or more individuals or groups alternate firing and moving to keep continuous pressure on an enemy—the Boers rode back to their laager pursued by the Ndebele. The laager was tightly formed with wagons tied together and thorn bushes placed in gaps. When the Boers reached the laager, they secured their horses inside and manned the defenses. The Ndebele stopped just out of musket range to prepare for the attack that gave the Boers additional time to organize. After a few hours Mkhaliphi launched a typical

envelopment attack on the laager by surrounding it and attacking on all sides. After just 15 minutes of Boer shooting, in which scatter shot from muskets proved particularly effective, Ndebele corpses were piling up around the defensive position. The Ndebele then withdrew with 6,000 cattle and 40,000 sheep that the Boers had kept outside the laager. One hundred and fifty Ndebele died in the assault, and it has been estimated that a total of 450 were killed in the entire engagement. Only two Boers were killed and a dozen wounded. Boer horsemen pursued the Ndebele but failed to recover their livestock.

Over the next two months Potgieter and recently arrived Gert Martiz rallied Boer newcomers and recruited Griqua and Rolong Tswana allies, who had been displaced by Mzilikazi some years before, for an offensive against the Ndebele. In January 1837 Potgieter and Maritz led a raiding party of 107 Boer and 40 Griqua horsemen as well as 60 Rolong infantry across the Vaal River. On the morning of January 17, this party attacked Mosega from an unexpected direction catching the Ndebele completely by surprise. No coherent defense was organized probably because the open ground greatly favored the mounted attackers, and Mzilikazi and Mkhaliphi were away at Gabeni. Between 400 and 500 Ndebele were killed, whereas the other side lost just two Rolong allies. Potgieter and Martiz captured around 7,000 cattle. Most Ndebele abandoned Mosega and fled north toward Gabeni.

News of Ndebele defeats spread around the area and led to further opportunistic attacks against them. In June 1837 Dingane, Shaka's half brother who had conspired in his 1828 assassination and then took over as Zulu king, sent a Zulu army against the Ndebele. The Zulu force split into two with one section seizing several thousand cattle and the other engaging the Ndebele in an inconclusive battle near the Pilanesberg Mountains. In August a combined force of Jan Bloem's Griqua and Hurutshe Tswana raided Ndebele cattle posts meeting little resistance. About 300 Ndebele were killed in both engagements. In November 1837 Potgieter and Pieter Uys, another newly arrived Boer leader, led a commando of 360 Boers and a few Rolong allies 50 miles northwest of Mosega where they attacked the Ndebele. The result was a nine-day running battle in which the Boers and Rolong pursued the fleeing Ndebele north, disrupted any attempts to rally large groups of warriors, and seized livestock. While the Boer claim of killing 3,000 Ndebele was probably an exaggeration, Mzilikazi's people certainly sustained heavy casualties. Consequently, the Ndebele moved far north over the Limpopo River where they eventually defeated the Rozvi Shona and built a new capital called Bulawayo in the southwest of what is now Zimbabwe. The Boers, who claimed the entire Transvaal by right of conquest, then replaced the Ndebele as the main

power on the western Highveld and developed similar tributary relations with many of the local Tswana and Sotho groups.[3]

The Boers who crossed south of the Drakensberg entered an area dominated by Dingane's Zulu Kingdom. In early February 1838 Piet Retief and a party of Boers visited Dingane at the Zulu capital of Umgungundlovu where they put on a display of mock combat with their horses and guns, and allegedly obtained an agreement ceding them the vast area between the Thukela and Mzimvubu rivers. However, on February 6, Dingane tricked the Boers, who had begun to demand the return of their cattle that the Zulu had taken from the Ndebele, into leaving their guns outside his royal enclosure before he ordered their execution. At once, Zulu regiments left Umgungundlovu to attack the dispersed and unsuspecting Boer camps at the foothills of the Drakensberg. The shocked Boers quickly organized a number of defensive laagers and then pursued the Zulu who withdrew with 25,000 cattle. In all, 281 Boers, mostly children, and 250 mixed race servants were killed, and although the Zulu had attacked an unprepared enemy, they lost around 500 men. The surviving Boers, who numbered around 640 men, 3,200 women and children supported by 1,260 African servants, immediately organized a consolidated defense and reinforcements came over the Drakensberg from the Transvaal.

In early April 1838 two commandos, one consisting of 200 Boers led by Potgieter and the other 147 led by Uys, crossed the Thukela River and rode toward Umgungundlovu intending to repeat their success against the Ndebele. However, the Zulu were well prepared and set an ambush. On April 10, Uys's commando tried to capture a herd of cattle but realized too late that they had been caught in a trap as several Zulu regiments emerged from concealed positions and attempted to surround them. Potgieter and his men, who had been cautious and did not take the bait, fled the area. Uys's Boer horsemen employed their usual fire and movement drills together with sudden changes in direction to try to break out but the Zulu were too close and too many. Ten Boers, including Uys and his son, were killed before the rest of the commando managed to escape. Although it is likely that several hundred Zulu were killed, the Boers considered themselves defeated and the resultant arguments among their leaders led to Potgieter's return to the Transvaal. On April 13 and 14, a force of 10,000 Zulu under Ndlela attacked a Boer laager near the Bushmans River. Only 75 Boer men defended the laager but with the women reloading muskets, they kept up a steady fire against the Zulu assaults. On April 15, the Zulu, unable to penetrate the laager, retired with the Boers' livestock. The British settlers at Port Natal, who had previously allied themselves with the Boers, led attacks against undefended Zulu communities. In mid-April one of these raiding

groups, consisting mostly of African mercenaries, was caught near the Thukela River by several Zulu regiments under Mpande, the king's half-brother, and annihilated. Mpande's army then attacked Port Natal, burning buildings and killing anyone they found. The white settlers took refuge on a ship, but their black followers were left to fend for themselves.

In late November Andries Pretorius, leading a commando of 60 Boers supported by a small ship's cannon, arrived in Natal and took charge of the combined Boer forces. He led a column of 64 wagons, carrying supplies and ammunition, into the heart of Zulu territory. On December 9, the Boers made a religious vow that if God gave them victory, they would build a church and forever commemorate the day. The column arrived at the west bank of the Ncome River on December 15, 1838. Dingane mobilized a large army of between 12,000 and 16,000 men under Ndlela and Nzobo, his most trusted commanders, to deal with this threat. Boer scouts spotted the Zulu to the east of the river. Pretorius then directed his men to form a laager on the west bank of the Ncome. The Zulu could attack this laager only from the north and west because the east was blocked by a deep section of river and the south by a *donga* with banks four meters high. Defending the laager were 464 Boers, 3 Port Natal settlers, 120 Port Natal Africans, and 200 African servants who held 750 horses in the center of the fortification until they were needed for pursuit. There were also three cannon. The next morning, December 16, the Zulu attack began with a disorderly and impulsive charge by the younger Zulu regiments. Fighting between younger and older Zulu warriors caused confusion. Funneled into a narrow approach, the tightly formed Zulu were cut down by grapeshot from both cannon and musket. The Boers disrupted the Zulu leaders by bombarding the hilltop position from where they were coordinating the attack. By 11 a.m. the demoralized Zulu began to withdraw but were pursued by 160 Boer horsemen who ventured from the laager to prevent their enemy from regrouping. According to the Boers, a total of 3,000 Zulu were killed in the attack on the laager and the subsequent retreat. So many Zulu corpses filled the Ncome River that the Boers renamed it Blood River. No Boers were killed and only three were wounded. To the Boers, this victory seemed the result of divine intervention. The Battle of Blood River was a terrible loss for the Zulu though it did not break them as a military power and Dingane could still mobilize large forces.

Before Dingane fled, he ordered Umgungundlovu burned. When the Boers arrived, they buried the remains of Retief and his party and allegedly found the treaty—the original no longer exists—which had given them vast tracts of land. Shortly thereafter Dingane launched a major invasion of the Swazi Kingdom with the intention of pushing north, as Mzilikazi had done,

to escape the Boers. However, Swazi resistance thwarted these plans and led to civil war within the Zulu Kingdom between Mpande, who acquired support from the Boers, and Dingane. In January 1840 the followers of Mpande defeated the Dingane loyalists in the Maqongqo Hills. At the same time Pretorius led a Boer raiding party across the Thukela to seize livestock. Dingane fled and was eventually killed by a Swazi patrol. Mpande became the new Zulu king allying himself to the neighboring Boers who established the Republic of Natalia.[4]

Boer trekker society did not have a formal military establishment, yet they defeated the principal African states of the region. Almost every person in Boer society contributed to the war effort. Men did much of the fighting, but on the battlefield women loaded weapons and servants held horses. Logistically, their campaigns were supported by livestock stolen from African communities. The key to Boer success lay in concentrated use of firepower from behind fortification, funneling of enemies into narrow killing zones, and fire and movement that lured African forces into attacks on prepared positions. Superior mobility was important. Since every Boer man was mounted, they could strike when and where it was least expected, and pursue retreating enemies to prevent them regrouping The main problem with the Boers' informal system was divided leadership. The African forces lacked guns, were almost exclusively on foot, and had an inflexible command and control system. However, on occasion they managed to cleverly use terrain to ambush the Boers.

Annexations, Rebellions, and Conventions (1848–53)

During the 1840s the British extended political and military control over some of the Boers who had left the Cape. In 1843 the British occupied the Republic of Natalia, which then became the Colony of Natal, because an independent Boer state on the coast directly threatened British strategic naval interests and missionaries had warned that Boer raids westward against the Bhaca and Mpondo could eventually destabilize the Cape's eastern frontier. In early 1848 the newly arrived governor of the Cape, Sir Harry Smith, summarily declared Britain's annexation of the territory between the Orange and Vaal rivers, called the Orange River Sovereignty, which was home to many Boer trekkers.

Boer resistance to the British proved ineffective. Andries Pretorius toured the Orange River Sovereignty attempting to rally the Boers, and by August 1848 he had taken control of the territory with 1,200 armed men. Rivalries among Boer leaders meant that Pretorius did not get much help

from his colleagues north of the Vaal. Smith personally led a force of 800 regulars, 4 companies of CMR, and 4 of British infantry, along with 250 mounted Griqua allies and 3 field guns. As Smith's column crossed the Orange River on August 16, many of the Boers lost confidence and went home to their farms. Pretorius decided to oppose the advancing Cape force on the road to Bloemfontein at a farm called Boomplaats. The 750 remaining Boers deployed along the reverse slope of a ridge that straddled both sides of the road and sentries were positioned on higher ground on both flanks. The terrain favored a fighting withdrawal as there was a succession of ridges that the Boers could pull back and defend. However, the Boers prematurely opened fire as the British advanced up the road toward them. Boer shooting was intense but the long range lessened its effectiveness and Boer positions were now revealed. Initially shaken by the Boer fire, Smith's troops rallied and fought off an assault on the left flank. Smith then launched an attack on the Boer center and left positions driving them back to another ridge. At this point British artillery fire disrupted Boer efforts to regroup and a cavalry charge by the CMR and Griqua put the Boers to flight. The British suffered 25 men killed and another 25 wounded. Although the British reported that they recovered 49 Boer corpses, Pretorius claimed that only nine of his men had been killed and five wounded. Smith's force quickly occupied Bloemfontein and Winburg, and pursued Pretorius's retreating commando until it crossed north of the Vaal River.

While it is remembered as "The War of Mlanjeni," the African rebellion that broke out in British Kaffraria in December 1850 had many causes. In early 1850, around the same time as drought began to hamper agricultural production, a Xhosa prophet called Mlanjeni began to gain popularity by instructing his people to slaughter yellowish or dun-colored cattle, often associated with white people, and abandon the contaminating influence of witchcraft. The rise of Mlanjeni occurred in the context of increasingly intrusive colonial rule in British Kaffraria. In the late 1840s the Rharhabe were expelled from the west bank of the Tyume River and settlers took their place. White military veterans established villages—Woburn, Auckland, and Juanasberg—in the foothills of the Amatolas. Fingo locations were expanded around Fort Hare and Alice. The Fingo began to acquire land in the Kat River Settlement at the expense of the procolonial Khoisan who had been placed there in the late 1820s, and in the north the Fingo gained land from a section of the Thembu who had quietly come under colonial rule in 1848. European magistrates assumed greater powers from the Xhosa chiefs who were forbidden to fine their subjects cattle and sanction witchcraft accusations. More missionaries were encouraged to work in British Kaffraria in

order to westernize and Christianize the Xhosa. During the last half of 1850 the Rharhabe Xhosa, still ensconced in the Amatola Mountains, began to prepare for war by gathering firearms and storing food. In October 1850 Governor Smith officially deposed Sandile as Rharhabe leader when he and Maqoma failed to show up for a meeting in King William's Town.

On the morning of Christmas Eve 1850 Colonel George MacKinnon led 600 colonial soldiers from Fort Cox into the Amatolas under instructions from Smith to capture Sandile. As the British troops moved east through the narrow Booma Pass, hundreds of Rharhabe sharpshooters fired down on them from the rocky precipices. MacKinnon led his men through the ambush and headed south out of the mountains toward Burnshill Mission and Fort White. The Rharhabe counterattacked on Christmas morning by storming out of the Amatolas to destroy the nearby settler villages of Woburn, Auckland, and Juanasberg. Governor Smith was trapped at Fort Cox with only a handful of cavalrymen and along the frontier colonial forts and settlements were similarly besieged. Several other developments shocked the British. Within a few days the Khoisan and mixed race people of the Kat River Settlement, which had been created as a buffer between Europeans and Xhosa, also rose in rebellion by attacking recently settled Fingo. Within a few weeks many Khoisan Cape Mounted Riflemen deserted and joined various rebel groups. On January 6, 1851, a combined force of Kat River and Rharhabe rebels approached Fort Beaufort under the cover of darkness with the intension of capturing the town and its supply of arms and ammunition. When the Khoisan attacked prematurely and were cut down by colonial firepower, the Rharhabe withdrew. Furthermore, in January 1851 the Thembu of northern British Kaffraria, who had also lost land, attacked the nearby colonial town of Whittlesea. A broad multiethnic rebellion, involving three groups that had previously been rivals, broke out in response to the rise of what historian Clifton Crais has called a "racial capitalism" and a "coercive colonial state."[5] However, several Xhosa groups such as the Gqunukhwebe of Phato, who did not want to repeat the disasters of the 1846–47 war or enjoy the protection of a mountainous homeland, sided with the British.

On the morning of January 21, 1851, Sandile led around 2,000–3,000 Xhosa warriors, including a large mounted detachment, in an attack on Fort Hare that was the closest British post to his Amatola stronghold. The Xhosa advanced toward the fort to distract the British from their real goal of capturing the 5,000 cattle, mostly owned by Fingo, grazing around the area. As the Xhosa infantry moved on the fort, their cavalry swept around the flank to cut off and seize the cattle.[6] Fort Hare was short on defenders as a number of soldiers from its regular garrison had been sent to escort supplies coming up

from Grahamstown. This situation left 100 loyal Cape Mounted Riflemen to man the walls and cannon, a few settler volunteers who defended the village of Alice and 800 armed Fingo who went out of the fort to confront the attackers. The Xhosa plan to seize cattle was spoiled by musket fire from Alice and the Fingo concealed within the herd.[7] According to Somerset, the British commander at Fort Hare, 100 Xhosa had been killed and many wounded but on the colonial side only 6 Fingo were dead and 10 severely injured.[8] The Xhosa withdrew with 200 cattle, which was one for every two of their dead. Somerset wrote that "the gallant and determined conduct of the Fingo was the admiration of the whole force."[9] On January 24, 1851, a detachment of 120 loyal Cape Mounted Riflemen and 150 Fingo were sent out from King William's Town to drive off around 600 Xhosa of chiefs Anta and Siyolo who were threatening the town. Although outnumbered and ultimately surrounded, the colonial force managed to send the Xhosa fleeing into the bush before British reinforcements arrived.[10]

Once the Xhosa attacks on Fort Hare and King William's Town were defeated, colonial forces started to regroup and take the initiative. On January 30, 1851, Colonel MacKinnon took a wagon train from King William's Town escorted by a strong force of 300 British regulars, 150 Cape Mounted Riflemen, 1,500 Khoisan, and 300 Fingo irregulars, and 1 cannon to deliver supplies to the beleaguered forts Cox and White. A large body of Xhosa tried to stop MacKinnon's force from crossing the Keiskamma River at Debe Nek by attacking its rear and left flanks but shrapnel shells from the cannon compelled them to withdraw. The Xhosa offered no further resistance to this column.[11] On February 3, MacKinnon send two columns, one led by himself and the other by Lieutenant Colonel George T. C. Napier of the CMR, from King William's Town, to attack the Xhosa of Siyolo. Napier's force, consisting of two companies of British regulars, 100 CMR, and numerous settler volunteers—in total 1,100 men—marched in a direction that would block Siyolo if he attempted to move northwest toward the Amatola Mountains to link up with Sandile's people. MacKinnon's column, made up of three companies of British regulars, 100 CMR, some settler levies, and the Fort Peddie Fingo—a total of 1,150 men—supported by two cannon advanced on Siyolo's settlement, destroyed it and withdrew with some cattle. Both columns spotted Siyolo's fleeing men and pursued them to Mlanjeni's homestead on the Keiskamma River where they made a brief stand before being dispersed by cannon fire. The colonial forces then destroyed the settlement and sent out a patrol of CMR and Fingo which, after some fighting, returned with 500 cattle. After just three days, both columns returned to King William's Town with a total of 700 captured beasts, having lost just one Fingo.[12]

In mid-February 1851, under instructions from the governor, Colonel MacKinnon led a column of 2,750 men, consisting of 5 British regular companies, 100 CMR, and settler and Fingo levies, to reinforce Somerset's command at Fort Hare. At the same time Governor Smith ordered another force of 300–400 Fingo from Fort Peddie to rendezvous with MacKinnon. Once the Fort Peddie Fingo levy determined that all Siyolo's men had been sent to fight against MacKinnon's column, they crossed over the Keiskamma River and raided undefended homesteads in that chief's territory returning with 440 cattle.[13] On February 13, a group of Siyolo's Xhosa attempted to block the passage of MacKinnon's column through Debe Nek, but artillery fire and a "spirited charge" by the CMR and Fingo drove them off.[14] MacKinnon's force then joined up with Somerset at Fort Hare and both commanders each led a column into the Amatola Mountains and, according to MacKinnon, "had the satisfaction of destroying the huts and laying waste the fields of the ruthless savages who so treacherously murdered the military settlers of Woburn and Auckland."[15] In late April 1851 MacKinnon once again left King William's Town with an expedition of 200 cavalry, 1,800 British infantry, and 200 Fingo that went up into the Amatolas, fought off a number of ambushes, and returned a few days later with 400 captured cattle. MacKinnon reported that his patrol had killed 250 Xhosa with a loss of only three British soldiers and one Fingo.[16] Another major colonial sweep of the Amatolas took place in June with similar results.

At Whittlesea, in the far north of British Kaffraria, Royal Engineer officer Captain Richard Tylden took command of a mixed group of armed volunteers consisting of 70 settlers, 200 Xhosa Christian converts, and 800 Fingo, and directed the fortification of four strong buildings. On January 25, 1851, Maphasa's Thembu raided Whittlesea and made off with a large number of cattle. Some Fingo pursued, were caught in an ambush, and rescued by mounted settlers who drove off the Thembu. The next day the Thembu, now joined by some Kat River rebels, occupied the nearby Shiloh Mission. An army of 3,000–4,000 Thembu attacked Whittlesea on each of the next two days and was repulsed by colonial firepower. On February 1, Tylden led 350 Xhosa Christians and Fingo in an attack on Shiloh, but after six hours of hard fighting most of the village was burnt and around 1,000 Thembu and some Khoisan remained in possession of the barricaded church that was too wet to burn. Tylden withdrew to Whittlesea with 600 cattle. In that attack, 40 rebels and 8 Fingo had been killed. On February 3, the Thembu retaliated by launching another ultimately unsuccessful attack on the four Whittlesea strong points. With his contingent running out of ammunition, Tylden sent off a message requesting reinforcements. On February 6, another

Thembu assault, which seemed likely to capture the town, was foiled by the timely arrival of mounted settler volunteers from Cradock which was 200 kilometers to the south. The next day a wagon train of supplies arrived from Cradock escorted by 180 Boers. Tylden then led another attack on Shiloh that again failed to dislodge the rebels because the Boers withdrew to Whittlesea at the last moment. Daily skirmishes ended on February 11 when a confusing order was received from Somerset instructing Tylden to cease operations. By the time the misunderstanding was sorted out and Tylden was ready to resume attacks against the Thembu, they had withdrawn north to defend their communities against a Boer commando. Raiding continued and on July 15, 1851, a patrol of 300 Fingo left Whittlesea, attacked Thembu homesteads along the Black Kei River, and returned the next day with 400 cattle.[17]

In February 1851 Somerset was placed in charge of operations against the rebellious Kat River Settlement. Arrangements were made for a group of armed settlers assembled at Post Retief and Somerset's force at Fort Hare to converge on the Kat River Settlement and take Fort Armstrong that had been captured by the rebels. The settlers arrived first and unwisely attacked the insurgent camp on their own. Taking up positions on higher ground, the rebels poured musket fire down upon the settlers who were caught in the open. Just as it looked like the settlers would have to retreat, Somerset arrived with 1,800 men and the rebels pulled back to Fort Armstrong. Somerset's force bombarded the fort with several artillery pieces and stormed over the walls with overwhelming numbers of CMR and armed settlers. A few rebels tenaciously defended the central tower, but a field gun blew the door off and colonial volunteers went in to finish them off. Overall, 500 prisoners were taken, 400 of whom were women and children, and many more women and children perished in the fort. The Kat River rebellion had been crushed and some survivors managed to join the Rharhabe in the Amatolas.

One of the most inventive tactical moves of this conflict was when the Rharhabe Xhosa leader Maqoma took a few hundred Xhosa and rebel Khoisan into the thickly forested valleys of the Waterkloof Highlands, which lay within the Cape Colony and overlooked Fort Beaufort, to use as a base for raiding settler farms. In trying to dislodge Maqoma's rebels from the Waterkloof, colonial forces were distracted from destroying the main Xhosa reservoir of crops and cattle in the Amatolas. In early September 1851 Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Fordyce, commanding officer of the 74th Highlanders, responded to Xhosa cattle raids by taking a punitive expedition of 250 British regulars, 250 Fingo of the Fort Beaufort levy, and about 150 other settler and Khoisan volunteers up to the Waterkloof. On the fairly open

summit this force was engaged in a brief skirmish by the rebels who then withdrew down into the bush of the ravines. Since his men did not have rations and believing he had chastised the Xhosa, Fordyce decided to return to Fort Beaufort by taking his expedition down a particularly narrow path through a densely forested valley. Maqoma's rebels then ambushed the column and the Fingo, who were acting as a rear guard, panicked and ran down the path causing confusion among the highlanders. Seeing an opportunity, Maqoma's rebels immediately charged, killing eight soldiers and wounding another nine before running back into the forest.[18]

Despite his bad experience with the Fingo, lack of manpower meant that Fordyce had to continue to employ them on a large scale. He led another force up into the Waterkloof in mid-October 1851 that included two Fingo levies of several hundred men each, one from Fort Beaufort and one from Port Elizabeth. They were used to search the dense bush, some of which appeared impenetrable.[19] In early November, during a large but unsuccessful sweep of the Waterkloof, Fordyce was killed by a rebel Khoisan sniper. During yet another colonial operation in the Waterkloof in March 1852, Fingo auxiliaries took the lead and slaughtered anyone they found, including women and children.[20] At this time Governor Smith posted groups of Fingo at various points to prevent rebels fleeing from the Waterkloof to the Amatolas.[21]

In January 1852, the continuation of the war led the colonial office to dismiss Smith and replace him with Sir George Cathcart. In June Cathcart, haunted by "the bugbear of the Waterkloof," planned once again to attempt to extricate the rebels with a large force of 1,200 British regulars and 450 Fingo. His new strategy for the Waterkloof was to build a series of small fortified posts in the highlands to serve as patrol bases for searching the forested ravines. These posts, occupied by detachments of British regulars and Fingo, denied the rebels the high ground for observation and kept them off balance.[22] Colonial sweeps of the Waterkloof continued with one in September involving 3,000 British soldiers, CMR, and the Fingo. Since his position was no longer tenable, Maqoma began pulling his people back to the Amatolas, and by the middle of October Cathcart reported that the Waterkloof was cleared of enemy. The Waterkloof campaign degenerated into a dehumanizing bush war in which British officers collected human sculls as trophies, colonial troops shot Xhosa women and children, dead insurgents were hung from trees, and on one occasion the Xhosa tortured a captured British soldier and fed him strips of his own flesh. The number of Xhosa killed in the Waterkloof will never be known, but accounts from British soldiers refer to large amounts of human bones littering the area.

With the end of the Waterkloof campaign, the British concentrated on destroying the productive capacity of Rharhabe society in the Amatolas.

Throughout October and November 1852 colonial patrols burned crops and seized cattle, and many Rharhabe fled east across the Kei River. Sandile crossed the Kei in January 1853 and Maqoma, who had remained in the Amatolas with only 40 followers, joined him in mid-February and both chiefs sent a message to colonial officials that they wished to surrender.

During the conflict colonial forces mounted several raids east of the Kei River to seize cattle from the Gcaleka Xhosa, now ruled by Hintsa's son Sarhili, who had declared neutrality but were blamed for harboring fugitives and robbing white traders and Fingo. For six weeks in December 1851 and January 1852 Somerset led a force of 5,000 men into Sarhili's territory and returned with 30,000 cattle and 7,000 "Fingo," probably Gcaleka, who had decided to desert Sarhili. At times these patrols encountered stiff resistance. Captain Tylden, who commanded a detachment of Fingo and settlers attacking Gcaleka communities around the Mbashe River, wrote that:

> This movement brought on a sharp engagement—the enemy having retreated to a strong position among the rocks and bush, where they defended themselves for some time, but were eventually dislodged with great loss,—the Fingoes having fairly stormed the position, and contested with the enemy hand to hand, driving him and throwing him over the precipices. Thirty eight dead bodies were counted in one spot, and 14 in another; the enemy's loss therefore, probably exceed 60.[23]

In August 1852 Cathcart prepared for further operations in the Waterkloof and Amatolas by organizing another major raid against the Gcaleka that returned with 10,000 cattle. During this operation Captain Tylden commanded 200 Fingo horsemen, a fairly new development as previously Fingo levies had been infantry that burned villages and captured livestock.[24] These raids against the Gcaleka, who were usually easy targets, provided colonial forces with increased food supplies, loot to reward volunteers, and additional African labor. At the same time, the colonial scorched earth campaign destroyed Xhosa food sources and starved them into submission.

Sir Harry Smith's expansion into the Orange River Sovereignty meant that the British took responsibility for continuous frontier conflict between the Boers and the Sotho, and between various Sotho rulers. In 1849 Major Henry Warden, British resident in Bloemfontein, attempted to define a boundary, later called the Warden Line, between the Boers of the eastern Orange River Sovereignty and the Sotho that stripped land from the latter. In June 1851 Warden decided to move decisively against the Sotho of Moshoeshoe and Moletsane who had been blamed for destabilizing the area. Although he intended to gather a force of 3,000 men, he managed to pull

together only 1,400 consisting of 160 British troops, 120 settlers, 250 Griqua and Kora, and 800 Rolong. Based at Platberg, Warden sent messengers to Moshoeshoe demanding the surrender of 6,000 cattle as compensation for theft from surrounding communities. On June 30, before the deadline for payment had expired, Warden led his composite force against Moletsane's Taung who had occupied Viervoet Mountain. With support from a six-pounder gun, Warden's men drove off the Taung and captured around 3,000 cattle. However, a large force of Sotho under Molapo, Moshoeshoe's son, crested the mountain and poured down on Warden's surprised men. Around 200 Rolong, drunk on captured beer, were killed and the rest of the colonial force fled back to Thaba Nchu in the Orange River Sovereignty. Further British plans to confront Moshoeshoe and his allies were put on hold by the continuation of the "War of Mlanjeni" in British Kaffraria. Learning from their experience of Griqua raiders, the Sotho had adopted widespread use of the horse in combat and acquired obsolete firearms through trade.

In December 1852 Cathcart commanded a force of 2,000 men, which included detachments of cavalry and artillery, that invaded the Sotho Kingdom where he demanded Moshoeshoe surrender 10,000 cattle and 1,000 horses as compensation for stock theft from the settlers of the Orange River Sovereignty. Although Moshoeshoe delivered 3,500 cattle with a promise of more once they were collected, on December 20 Cathcart launched a sweep of the Berea plateau in order to seize cattle and punish the Sotho who he thought would not resist. Based at a crossing point on the Caledon River, Cathcart divided his force into three columns that were meant to converge on Moshoeshoe's capital of Thaba Bosiu. Lieutenant Colonel Napier was instructed to lead 230 cavalrymen—British lancers and CMR—around the northern side of the plateau that was impossible because, unknown to the British, it extended many miles to the east. This mounted detachment climbed the plateau and captured 4,000 cattle but was ambushed and driven back to the colonial camp by 700 Sotho under Molapo and the sons of Moletsane. Just over 10 percent of the column were killed, 25 lancers and 2 mounted riflemen. The main column, consisting of 500 British infantry supported by several rocket tubes, marched to the Berea Mission and then straight across the plateau. It was led by Colonel William Eyre who had fought in the Waterkloof. Although Eyre's force encountered little initial resistance, without cavalry they could round up only 1,500 cattle. During the afternoon, Molapo's 700 Sotho rode south and made several charges against Eyre's column but the sustained fire of the British infantry drove them off. Rounding the southern side of the plateau, Cathcart commanded a column of 300 infantry supported by a small detachment of cavalry and

two howitzers. This group advanced to a small knoll just three miles from Thaba Bosiu from where they waited for the other columns and watched as a large number of Sotho horsemen gathered around Moshoeshoe's stronghold. At around 5 p.m. Eyre's column arrived and reinforced the position just before around 5,000–6,000 Sotho cavalry attacked. Led by several sons of Moshoeshoe, the Sotho made repeated attempts to outflank the British, including one incident in which they recovered 400 cattle, but they were repulsed by colonial firepower. With the sun going down, both Cathcart and Moshoeshoe pulled back their forces. Moshoeshoe sent Cathcart a message, scribed by a missionary, which requested that hostilities cease and the British keep the 5,000 cattle they had captured as compensation for the Boers. Sotho mobility and overwhelming numbers had failed to overcome the firepower of disciplined British infantry. Cathcart, who had been surprised by the tenacity and scale of Sotho resistance, accepted the offer and withdrew his forces from the area.

Who won the Battle of Berea? If victory is to be measured by obtaining objectives, then Moshoeshoe came out ahead. Peter Sanders, biographer of Moshoeshoe, explains that Cathcart's two objectives, capturing cattle and punishing the Sotho, were incompatible as rounding up livestock required the division of the colonial force and gave the Sotho ample warning of their approach. Cathcart's goals were only partly fulfilled; he had captured less than half of the livestock he had demanded, and from the perspective of the Orange River settlers the Sotho remained unpunished. Although the Sotho had inflicted serious casualties on the British, 38 dead and 15 wounded, this was mostly from the ambush on Napier's cavalry and Sotho losses, though unknown, were probably higher. Moshoeshoe's people were so impressed by the British infantry that they called this "The Battle of the Soldiers." Moshoeshoe, whose objective was to protect his people and the integrity of his state, had driven off British invaders through a combination of military action and diplomacy.[25]

In May 1852 Moshoeshoe had raided the Tlokwa, led by his long-time rival Sekonyela, and taken most of their cattle. Sekonyela had prevented the Sotho from attacking his Marabeng stronghold by submitting to Moshoeshoe's authority though within a short time he resumed livestock raids and made an alliance with the Kora leader Gert Taaibosch. After his partial success against the British at Berea, Moshoeshoe gained confidence and set out with an army of 10,000–12,000 men to storm Sekonyela's mountain strongholds of Joalaboholo and Marabeng that were defended by 800 Tlokwa and 100 Kora. Sotho warriors under Posholi and Mohale were sent around the northern side, Moletsane and Mopeli led men to the western end, and Letsie

took his fighters in from the south. Joalaboholo fell first. The final assault on the previously impregnable Marabeng was led by Masopha and a few men who scrambled up a difficult approach and others under Molapo who took the main pass. Taaibosch was killed and Sekonyela escaped to exile in the Orange River Sovereignty. With the collapse of an independent Tlokwa state, Moshoeshoe extended his power over the northern part of Lesotho.

The British withdrew from the interior of South Africa because of continuing conflict and lack of strategic interest. In the Sand River Convention of 1852 the British recognized the independence of the Boers north of the Vaal River and that territory became the South African Republic or Transvaal. Similarly, the Bloemfontein Convention of 1854 recognized the autonomy of the Boers of the Orange River Sovereignty that became the Orange Free State.

The Free State-Lesotho Wars (1858–68)

In the Caledon Valley conflict continued between the Boers and the Sotho. On March 11, 1858, Jacobus Boshof, president of the Orange Free State, sent Moshoeshoe an ultimatum demanding that within eight days he declare in writing that he would force chiefs Posholi and Lebenya to leave the frontier area, pay livestock compensation for thefts against the Boers, and accept the "Warden Line" as the border between the Free State and Lesotho. The Free State mobilized 1,000 men and war was quickly declared on March 19 as no reply had been received from Moshoeshoe. Two Boer commandos were organized, one at Smithsfield in the south under Weber and the other at Winburg in the north under Frederick Senekal and W. J. Pretorius, and moved into Lesotho intending to converge on Thaba Bosiu. The Boers were supported by supply wagons and a total of seven small field guns. In response to this invasion, Moshoeshoe directed his people to drive their cattle up into the Maluti Mountains, Sotho communities in the disputed frontier zone were pulled back toward Thaba Bosiu, chiefs prepared to fight a delaying action against the advancing Boers, and raiding parties were readied to counterattack farms in the Free State. Numerically, Moshoeshoe enjoyed a huge advantage as he mobilized 10,000 men to fight against 1,000 Boers. However, in terms of firepower, the Boers had the upper hand. At this point Sotho cavalry were armed with old flintlocks charged with inferior gunpowder, and their infantry with spears, clubs, and axes. The Boers had newer smooth bore percussion cap muskets and a few rifles, and their powder was of good quality. Between April 12 and 14, the northern Boer column, which crossed the Caledon River at the same point Cathcart had in 1852 and formed a laager,

was repeatedly attacked by 6,000–8,000 Sotho under Molapo, Mopeli, and Moletsane who took heavy casualties and withdrew. This Winburg commando then moved down the Caledon River to Jammerberg Drift to await their colleagues from Smithsfield. In late March the southern Boer column, assisted by Sotho allies, destroyed the mostly abandoned villages of Posholi and Lebenya, crossed the Caledon, and linked up with the Winburg Boers on April 25. The combined Boer force, now under Senekal, then advanced on Morija where it burned Letsie's village and looted the property of European missionaries and traders.

On May 6, 1858, the Boers formed a laager below Thaba Bosiu. When an attack by 10,000 Sotho horsemen on the laager was repulsed, Moshoeshoe pulled his forces back and concentrated on defending the mountain. Learning that their farms in the Free State were being attacked by Sotho raiders from the east, and Griqua and Tswana groups from the west, the Boers of Senekal's commando, on May 8, bombarded Thaba Bosiu and then quickly withdrew across the Caledon. Although the Boers had been driven off, they had destroyed food reserves and crops that caused hunger among the Sotho that worsened with an outbreak of typhoid. This situation put pressure on Moshoeshoe, who also feared that the British would make an alliance with the Boers, to make peace. In the October 1858 the Treaty of Aliwal North, an agreement between the Free State and Lesotho brokered by the British, set a formal boundary between the two states that was not much different from the disputed Warden Line. In addition, the Free State was given permission to send forces into Lesotho to punish those accused of stealing livestock from the Boers. The Sotho had won the war but they lost the peace. Eventually the Boers called this conflict the "First Basotho War," whereas the Sotho named it "Senekal's War."

During the early 1860s internal political problems distracted the Orange Free State from its eastern frontier with Lesotho. An aging Moshoeshoe had trouble controlling his subordinate rulers, and Sotho expansion northward, where the border was not well defined, caused a dispute with the Free State. In May 1865 J. H. Brand, the new and forceful Free State president, directed a Boer commando to drive the Sotho out of this area and warned Moshoeshoe not to interfere. In this conflict the Free State mobilized around 5,000 Boers supported by several hundred white volunteers from the British colonies; several thousand African allies, mainly Rolong and Fingo; and eventually a Boer commando from the Transvaal. The Boers were mainly armed with double-barreled muzzle loading rifles that they were beginning to replace with newer Whitworth breech-loaders. About 20,000 Sotho fought in the war armed with a variety of outdated firearms, mostly smooth bore

muzzle-loaders, as well as spears, clubs, and battleaxes. Both sides had a few artillery pieces. The Boers had purchased some from the British, whereas the Sotho had smuggled them in and cast some with the assistance of British deserters. This gave rise to the Sotho name for the conflict; "the War of Cannon's Boom" also known as the Second Free State-Basotho War. Traders from the Cape supplied the Boers with arms and ammunition but refused to deal with the Sotho. Moshoeshoe's authority had deteriorated to the point where his rival sons, Molapo and Letsie, fought the war as separate rulers.

The first Sotho actions were to simultaneously bring their cattle up into the mountains and launch raids on Free State Boer farms. In mid-June 1865 Commandant-General Jan Fick led 850 Boers supported by two field guns into northern Lesotho where they were attacked by a large Sotho army that, despite a number of determined charges, was repulsed after losing 50 men. Only one Boer had been killed, but instead of pursuing the fleeing Sotho, Fick's commando withdrew to restock ammunition. A few days later 3,000 Sotho warriors under Posholi, Moorosi, and Lebenya raided Boer farms in the Caledon Valley, killing around 14 settlers and returned home with 100,000 sheep and several thousand cattle and horses. Molapo led a raiding party against the Boers in the Kroonstad area and returned with a great deal of captured livestock. Masopha and Lerotholi, Letsie's son, led 2,000 Sotho into the Bloemfontein District where they killed settler men and boys. While these Sotho were on their way home with seized livestock, they were spotted by one of Fick's detachments that chased and killed at least 100. Another Sotho raid crossed into Natal in pursuit of Free State cattle and killed some white travelers from the Transvaal. Throughout July the Sotho, seeing that they were still no match for Boer firepower, generally withdrew to their homes. Boer commandos entered Lesotho, destroyed food stores and crops, and easily captured the small mountain strongholds of Posholi and Masopha.

By the end of July 1865 the Sotho were concentrating on the defense of Thaba Bosiu with around 2,000 men on the mountain and several thousand more ready in nearby villages. At the same time a Boer commando under Fick arrived on the Berea plateau and established a laager a mile and half from Thaba Bosiu. In early August they were joined by another Boer commando under Louis Wepener that had come up from the south. The combined Boer force now consisted of 2,100 Europeans, 5 field guns, 500 Rolong, and 400 Fingo. On August 8, Wepener directed an attack against Raebe Pass on the south side of the mountain that fell into chaos because of lack of preliminary reconnaissance. On August 15, Wepener led another assault against the mountain that concentrated on northwestern Khubelu Pass; the weakest

point in the position that was protected by three stone walls manned by Moshoeshoe's best men. Wepener's plan was to approach the pass from the side and move from one boulder to another using small arms fire to pin down the defenders. Boer artillery bombed the positions higher up the mountain but had to cease as the attackers advanced. However, of the 600 Boers who volunteered for the dangerous operation, only 300 actually went forward at 11 a.m. By 5 p.m. the Boers had taken two of the three walls but many of them had run off leaving only 100 men to complete the assault. As Wepener was calling for reinforcements, he was shot dead and his second in command wounded. While the Boers were mustering reinforcements around sunset, the Sotho launched a massive counterattack that drove them down the mountain.

Fick's force then laid siege to Thaba Bosiu. On August 25, the Boers attempted to seize a herd of 20,000 cattle that the Sotho raced up onto Moshoeshoe's mountain where they starved to death over the next few weeks. President Brand rejected a request from Moshoeshoe to have the British mediate and demanded that the Sotho surrender 40,000 cattle, 60,000 sheep, and 5,000 horses, and that they cede all the land below the Maluti River to the Free State. However, the Boers continued to desert and by the middle of September Fick had to withdraw his camps on the southern and eastern sides of Thaba Bosiu that was now defended by between 1,500 and 1,800 Sotho warriors. On September 25, the Boers left Moshoeshoe's mountain but instead of going home they divided into two commandos with one under Fick raiding to the north and one under P. J. Wessels raiding to the south around the Orange River. At the end of the month 300 Boers from the Transvaal, led by Paul Kruger, entered Lesotho to avenge the killing of their countrymen, attacked Molapo's regiment and eventually joined Fick's commando. This combined force of 1,200 men raided Sotho communities near the Berea plateau capturing 8,000 cattle, 4,000 sheep, and 800 horses. A dispute among the Boer leaders about how to divvy up the spoils prompted Kruger and his men to return home. In the south, Wessels's force so decisively defeated Moorosi's people that they confined themselves to the Upper Orange River and disavowed Moshoeshoe who had provided no support. Sotho attempts to raid Free State farms proved impossible as the Boers had organized a series of frontier laagers. Although Fick intended to starve the Sotho into submission by destroying crops, he did not have enough men to do so.

In January 1866 the Free State commandos withdrew from Lesotho in order to reorganize. Later the same month four Boer commandos, consisting of 400–600 men each, invaded the Sotho Kingdom again and concentrated on capturing livestock and disrupting cultivation. There seems to have been no overall Sotho strategy at this point as local chiefs failed to work together

and resisted only when their own communities were threatened. Sotho cavalry rarely attempted to close with the Boers as they had learned that they would take horrible casualties from gun fire. There were several Sotho raids on the Free State, but most of these parties were intercepted and their captured livestock taken away. In March 1866 Molapo, who had lost a large amount of livestock to the Boers, made a separate peace, called the Treaty of Mpharane, in which he and his followers became subjects of the Free State. This was a major blow to Moshoeshoe. With his people anxious to harvest their remaining crops, Moshoeshoe, in early April, agreed to modified Free State terms that he surrender 3,000 cattle and give up a considerable amount of land that had been taken by the Boers during the conflict. While the Europeans called this the Treaty of Thaba Bosiu, the Sotho referred to it as "the Peace of the Millet."

After they had harvested and planted, Sotho communities refused to vacate the conquered land now claimed by the Boers and maintained that peace had been obtained solely through the payment of cattle. Some prominent Sotho chiefs asked to join the Free State in order to preserve their communities but were rejected because the Boers wanted more land and not more African subjects. In January 1867 Boers moved into the new Free State territory to occupy farms but the Sotho refused to leave. When President Brand threatened to send a commando, the Sotho, who decided not to attack the Boers if they invaded, once again moved their cattle and food stores into the mountains and prepared to defend Thaba Bosiu and other strongholds three of which were within the conquered area. In March Boer commandos began destroying Sotho crops but the only way to do this thoroughly was to take casualties by capturing the strongholds. In turn, the Boers made separate agreements with a number of Sotho chiefs, including Letsie, Mopeli, and Moletsane, who became Free State subjects and were allowed to keep some of their land. Incensed by these defections, Moshoeshoe ordered his remaining men to fatten their horses in preparation for war. The Third Free State-Basotho War broke out when some Boers once again tried to claim farms in the conquered area and several Europeans were killed. In mid-September 1867 two Free State commandos, each with around 500 Boers, attempted to clear Sotho from the conquered territory and bombarded some Sotho strongholds. Hoping that the British would intervene, Moshoeshoe responded by telling his people to plant as much as possible and defend their mountain positions. Moshoeshoe had been seeking British protection for some time, and in late January 1868 he received a letter from the Cape governor, Sir Phillip Wodehouse, offering to accept the Sotho as British subjects. However, the Boers continued their attacks; captured several strongholds; killed Posholi; and on one occasion

seized 10,000 cattle, 8,000 sheep, and 1,500 horses. It seemed as if Thaba Bosiu might fall. In mid-March Moshoeshoe's Sotho were officially proclaimed British subjects, the British prohibited arms and ammunition sales to the Free State, and a detachment of Frontier Armed and Mounted Police (FAMP) from the Cape was sent to Thaba Bosiu. Unwilling to risk conflict with the British, President Brand withdrew Boer forces from Lesotho. In February 1869 the British and the Free State Boers negotiated a new border for Lesotho without any Sotho representation. Lesotho gained arable land in the west that it had lost in the Treaty of Thaba Bosiu, but all its territory north of the Caledon and a section between the Caledon and Orange was taken away. Although the Sotho chiefs resented the restriction of their territory, they were tired of almost constant warfare and ultimately acquiesced to what became the modern borders of Lesotho. Moshoeshoe, who would die in 1870, had invited indirect British colonial rule to prevent the complete conquest of his state by the Boers.[26]

Warfare in the Transvaal

In addition to recognizing the self-rule of the Transvaal Boers, the Sand River Convention of 1852 prohibited Africans in that area from obtaining firearms and ammunition from British territories. This prohibition weakened the ability of Africans in that area to resist Boer attacks. When trekkers initially moved north of the Vaal in the late 1830s and 1840s, they were primarily interested in elephant hunting. However, during the 1850s and early 1860s the growth of cash cropping by the Boers in the western and central Transvaal led to an increase of Boer slave raids in the region.[27] With smaller commandos than the Free State, problems acquiring ammunition from the far south, and a vast territory, the mid-nineteenth-century Transvaal Boers found it difficult to decisively defeat African states and engaged mostly in frontier raiding.

During the 1840s Boer settlers moved into the northwestern Transvaal and began demanding livestock, land, and labor from the Kekana and Langa, led by Mokopane and Mankopane, respectively, around present-day Mokopane (Potsgietersrus). This area was important to the Boers because they used it as a route through the mountains to the ivory-rich northern Transvaal. In 1847 and 1848 the Boers, without any provocation, attacked these groups and seized livestock and children who were sold as slaves. As a result, these African communities began acquiring firearms. The Boers believed that their defeat of Mzilikazi had given them jurisdiction over all the African groups in the area but Mokopane and Mankopane had never been subjects of Mzilikazi. Furthermore, they did

not want to submit to republican authority because of demands for labor and the prohibition on Africans owning guns and horses. In September 1852 a Boer war council at Olifantsrivier declared Mokopane and his people enemies of the Republic. In September 1854 the Kekana and Langa, in several incidents, killed and mutilated 28 Boers, including Field Cornet Hermanus Potgieter who had stolen their cattle and children and killed Mokopane's brother. The Boers in the Rustenburg and Zoutpansberg areas left their farms and formed laagers. Two Boer commandos, 100 men under P. W. Potgieter from Zoutpansberg and 200 under M. W. Pretorius from Pretoria, rendezvoused in Mokopane's territory and were joined by some Kgatla allies.

The Kekana, as they had done before, took shelter in a deep cave where they fortified the two entrances and interior with stone walls, and stockpiled firearms, ammunition, and food. A stream flowing through the cave would supply the defenders with water. In late October the Boers assaulted the entrances, blasted the walls with cannon, and pushed the Kekana back into the cave. P. W. Potgieter was shot dead while standing near one of the cave mouths. After unsuccessful attempts to blow up the cave and smoke out the defenders, the Boers diverted the stream and besieged the Kekana by building stone fortifications around the two entrances. Two weeks later the Boers, suspecting that the Kekana were sneaking out of the cave, used 300 African laborers to block the entrances with trees and stones. When some Kekana tried to slip out of the cave at night, they were discovered by a Boer patrol that killed between 700 and 900. By mid-November around 800 Kekana women and children had surrendered and were taken to work on Boer farms. The Boers called off the campaign at the end of the month because of horse sickness, shortage of gunpowder, Boer desires to get back to their farms after a month away, slim prospects for capturing more cattle or slaves, and the beginning of the rainy season. Though Mokopane escaped, the Kekana were broken up with some survivors taken by the Boers and others seeking refuge with the neighboring Langa. After the siege was lifted, a Boer patrol, under Paul Kruger who was deputy of the Pretoria commando, went north and seized 1,000 cattle from the people of chief Maraba who did not resist. The main Boer army then advanced against the Langa but found little loot as Mankopane and his people had withdrawn. Most of the cattle taken by the Boers during these operations were sold to cover the costs of gunpowder. This lack of booty meant that it was difficult to rally Boers for subsequent offensives against Mankopane's Langa. In April 1858 a commando under Kruger once again attacked the Langa who fortified themselves on a steep-sided mountain around 65 miles northwest of Potgietersrus. Kruger and 100 volunteers attempted to surprise the defenders by scaling the mountain at night

but they were discovered by a sentry and in the subsequent fighting Mankopane escaped. In June 1868 Kruger led 900 Boers in another assault of the Langa stronghold that killed 300 defenders, with a loss of two Boers, but failed to secure the entire mountaintop or capture Mankopane.[28]

When Boer trekkers arrived in the eastern Transvaal in the mid-1840s, they were initially welcomed by Africans such as the Pedi who cooperated with them in hunting and raiding. By the late 1840s, Boer demands for tribute in the form of ivory, cattle, and captive children had alienated the Kopa of Boleu and the Ndzundza Ndebele of Mabhogo. In 1847 Boer leader A. H. Potgieter and Pedi ruler Sekwati fell out over the division of loot gained in a joint raid on the Kgatla of the Zoutpansberg, as well as Boer demands for children. Around that time, the Boers were weakened by the departure of many of their fellows for the richer elephant hunting of the northern Transvaal. As relations with their neighbors deteriorated, the Boers blamed labor desertion and stock theft on local African rulers, and Africans began acquiring firearms by working in the British territories to the south. In 1848 a Boer raid on the Kopa captured 24 guns and some cattle. In 1852 Boers from Zoutpansberg and Lydenburg laid siege to the Pedi mountain stronghold of Phiring but were unwilling to assault it as the defenders had firearms and African allies had tried and failed. After 25 days, the Boers left with 5,000 cattle, 6,000 small livestock, and some captured children. Since the siege revealed to Sekwati that his stronghold did not have a reliable water source, the following year he moved his people to the Tsate Valley that had better rainfall and soils, and a central hill called Mosego was fortified with stone and pole walls. Divisions among the Boers during the late 1850s and early 1860s delayed an expected military campaign against the Ndzundza and Kopa who were rejecting Boer claims to their land. When a commando was finally organized in 1863, the Ndzundza mountain stronghold held out against a siege by the Boers and Pedi allies while Kopa communities were devastated by a Swazi attack that had been called upon by the Boers. The continuation of raiding and retaliation meant that by the mid-1860s many Boers, their farming disrupted by having to live in laagers, sent cattle to Mabhogo who then permitted them to remain on the land. Between 1859 and the mid-1860s the Swazi captured slaves and exchanged them with the Boers for livestock.[29]

On the western Transvaal frontier, Boer commandos regularly raided Tswana-speaking communities for cattle and slaves. In 1844 the Kwena leader Sechele surrounded his principal town with a stone wall, including loopholes from which his men could fire muskets acquired through the ivory trade. Over the next few years Sechele rejected Boer demands for his submission. Tensions increased as the Boers seized guns from white traders doing

business with the Kwena and Sechele prevented Boer hunting parties from passing through his territory. With a view to disarming the Kwena by force, Boer military commander Andries Pretorius, in July 1851, convened a war council and authorized spying operations. Subsequently, in October 1851 a Boer commando went west where it accepted the submission of Tswana groups such as the Hurutshe, whereas others withdrew into what is now Botswana. In August 1852, a large commando of 430 Boers and over 400 African allies attacked Mosielele's Kgatla and Sechele's Kwena. Ernst Scholtz was in command with Paul Kruger as deputy. The Boers used cannon to bombard the Kwena hilltop stronghold of Dimawe (near present-day Gaborone) and during the assault used their African allies as human shields. After six hours of fighting, while Sechele and his entourage held the top of Dimawe Hill, the village had been burned and other Kwena positions captured. Between 4 and 30 Boers and between 60 and 100 Kwena had been killed. That night, Sechele and his people fled to another stronghold called Dithubaruba. Over the next three days the Boers pursued the Kwena and sacked the residence of missionary David Livingstone, who was away, where they found guns. Although the Boers withdrew with around 3,000 cattle and 600 captive women and children, they had failed to conquer Sechele's people. Harassed by the Kwena on its way home, Scholtz's commando had to disband because its horses and oxen were worn out and the Boers were unwilling to continue. In December 1852 a commando attacked Montshiwa's Rolong along the Harts River who, after ambushing the Boers to buy time, withdrew north to live among the Ngwaketse. In January 1853 retaliatory Tswana attacks caused Boer farmers to abandon the Transvaal's Marico District and later in the month the Boers and Tswana concluded an uncertain armistice. By 1857 both sides recognized the Limpopo, Madikwe, and Ngotwane rivers as a border between the Transvaal and independent Tswana groups. With the spread of cattle disease among the Tlhaping of the Harts River in 1856–57, some of them tried to replenish their herds by stealing from the Boers. In 1858 the Boers retaliated by attacking the Tlhaping of chiefs Gasebonwe and Mahura, seizing 4,000 sheep and goats, 2,800 cattle, 165 horses, 23 wagons, and up to 100 children. Gasebonwe fled but was captured and beheaded by a Boer patrol. Some Tswana groups—such as Kgamanyame's Kgatla, Mgale's Po, Mokgatle's Fokeng, and Ramokoka's Phalane—developed alliances with the Boers, participated in their raids, and were allowed to keep firearms and avoid labor conscription.[30]

When the Boers of A. H. Potgieter arrived in the Zoutpansberg area of the northern Transvaal in 1848, eventually founding the town of Schoemansdal, they began to employ local Africans in elephant hunting, which is how the

Cartography by Fungai Madzongwe

Venda first gained firearms. When the elephant population declined in the 1850s, the Boers started capturing local children and exporting them south. The Boers also claimed land for farming and forced African women and children to work their fields. These issues poisoned relations between the Boers and the Venda. Coming to power in 1864, Makhado reformed the Venda military system by introducing age regiments based on existing circumcision lodges and creating military detachments for specific localities that could take initiative when needed. In 1865 Makhado launched raids on settler farms. As a result, in May 1867, Paul Kruger led a 500-man commando into the area but shortage of ammunition and the mountainous terrain forced them to withdraw. In July Kruger and his war council ordered the complete evacuation of Schoemansdal that the Venda then destroyed and the Boers could not muster enough men to take it back.[31]

Conclusion

African efforts to counter the colonial advantage of mobility and firepower varied a great deal. The Xhosa, with experience fighting Europeans, began to use more firearms, sought cover in bush and mountain terrain, and disrupted colonial supply lines. The Sotho, who had been raided by the Griqua, made horses and guns central to their military system though the latter were not very effective. Sotho-fortified mountain strongholds represented a far more important obstacle to British and Boer forces. When their advantages had been neutralized, colonial armies resorted to scorched earth campaigns in which they destroyed food resources to starve Africans into submission. Africans tried to respond in kind, for example, in the Waterkloof in the early 1850s and with Sotho raids on the Free State in the 1860s, but it was difficult because the nature of colonial invasions put them on the defensive. These innovations did enable Africans to prolong their resistance that could present problems for colonial armies with short-term settler volunteers and allow time for diplomatic solutions or mitigation of colonial demands. Confronted with sudden Boer invasion in the late 1830s, the Ndebele and Zulu did not have time for military reforms, had little prior experience fighting Europeans, and their relatively open territories limited opportunities for bush or mountain warfare. African allies, such as the Fingo in the Cape and Swazi in the Transvaal, were becoming ever more important to colonial success.

CHAPTER 3

Diamond Wars (1869–85)

The discovery of diamonds in the Northern Cape in the late 1860s began South Africa's mineral revolution that had a profound impact on the region. In the short term, the discovery led to a series of quick and intensive military campaigns that dramatically expanded colonial rule over indigenous people yet eventually frustrated British imperial ambitions. At the time diamonds were found, what is now South Africa consisted of several colonial entities, the British in the Cape and Natal as well as the Boers in the Orange Free State and Transvaal, and independent African groups such as the Zulu, Pedi, and Tswana. European and African communities had rural agricultural economies. The British seemed content to control the coast as part of the strategic Cape shipping route and had just recognized the independence of the Boer republics in the interior through the Conventions Policy of the 1850s. The discovery of valuable minerals caused the British to once again change their policy and attempt to control the interior of the region. This would be accomplished by the confederation of British colonial territories that would include the Boer republics. The Boers resented how the British had brought the diamond fields under the control of the Cape in the early 1870s ignoring the claim of the Orange Free State. However, at this point the impoverished Boer states, experiencing effective African resistance on their frontiers, were not in a position to defy the might of the British Empire that annexed them in 1877. Of course, the British realized that the confederation scheme ultimately depended upon the cooperation of the Boers, as well as British settlers in the Cape and Natal, and to win them over the British would have to eliminate the remaining powerful African states perceived as obstacles to colonial expansion. The Boers did not have the military resources to destroy the Pedi and Zulu kingdoms, and the Cape Colony had been fighting against various Xhosa states for almost a century. Imperial Britain, on the other hand, could realistically prosecute wars of conquest yet would face considerable and sometimes surprisingly successful indigenous military resistance. In this period both Boers and British soldiers were similarly equipped with breech-loading

rifles. However, while the Boer republics relied on temporary commandos of farmers who supplied their own guns and horses, Britain had a small but professional army with considerable experience in colonial wars. Nonetheless, the confederation of South African territories did not happen at this time. The Boers were all too happy to let the British destroy their African enemies but then reasserted their autonomy in the First Anglo-Boer War of 1881. Together with the armed insurrection of African people in Lesotho and Transkei against increasingly intrusive Cape colonial rule, the resistance of the Boers brought an end, at least for the time being, to British plans for confederation.

The Pedi Wars (1876–79)

The military strength of the Pedi state was based on using firearms to defend a mountain stronghold. By the 1860s, the Pedi had established a heavily fortified capital backed by the eastern side of the Lulu Mountains with an entrance guarded by Mosego Mountain. Defensive features also included the use of stone-built walls at strategic points. Coming to power in 1861, Sekhukhune began building up a stock of muskets acquired from Boer farmers who brought them in from the Portuguese enclave at Delagoa Bay. In September 1869 a Swazi army, encouraged by Sekhukhune's rival exiled brother Mampuru, attacked the Mosego stronghold and was slaughtered by Pedi ambushes and counterattacks. Around 500 Swazi were killed in a single day. Later the same year the Pedi ambushed and routed a Swazi army returning home from raiding in the Zoutpansberg. In 1870 the Pedi abandoned their usual defensive tactics to raid an outlying Swazi village, capturing a large number of cattle and prisoners. Clearly, military power in the eastern Transvaal was shifting away from the Swazi, and therefore also from the Boers who depended on Swazi allies, toward the Pedi. Although the 1869 Swazi attack had failed, it had revealed some defensive weaknesses of the Mosego stronghold and Sekhukhune consequently moved his capital to nearby Tsate, a flat-bottomed and steep-sided valley in the center of which was a prominent hill called the "Fighting Kopje."[1]

In the late 1850s, after numerous frontier conflicts, the Transvaal Boers and the Pedi had agreed that the Steelpoort River would represent the border between them. In the 1870s Sekhukhune, considering himself entirely independent of the Transvaal, refused to allow the Boers to prospect for gold or establish farms on the eastern side—his side—of the river. In March 1876 the Pedi removed markers set up by a Boer who was attempting to claim land east of the Steelpoort. In turn, the Transvaal administration of President T. F. Burgers declared war against the Pedi, and in July 1876, an army of

2,000 Boers supported by a few Krupp guns, 400–500 wagons, and Swazi allies eager for captured livestock advanced on Sekhukhune's stronghold. The force was divided into two sections. The eastern one, under Commandant-General M. W. Pretorius, consisted of around 600 armed Boers from Lydenburg and the Swazi and was to proceed to Sekhukhune's capital. The western division, under Commandant N. Smit, was to clear the Olifants River. Initial success by these columns led to the collapse of Pedi resistance in the southwest and southeast. However, just a few days into the campaign the Swazi, not wanting to repeat their disaster of 1869, took all the cattle they had captured and returned home claiming that the Boers had failed to assist them in an attack on the stronghold of a subordinate Pedi chief.

On July 31, 1876, the eastern and western Boer divisions linked up to assault Sekhukhune's capital. The Boers planned a classic pincer movement with 800 Boers and 500 African allies under Commandant P. Joubert, who had replaced the now ill Pretorius, to attack from the south and another 900 Boers and some African levies under Smit to advance simultaneously from the north. The assault was supported by fire from four Krupp guns. During the night Joubert's force was held up and eventually forced to return to camp by a larger than expected number of Pedi defending the rough terrain. With no communication between the two divisions, Smit did not know what had happened and launched an attack on Sekhukhune's stronghold without support from the other column. Smit's men managed to burn some huts before the Pedi drove them off. Lacking Swazi to lead the attack and thus absorb most of the casualties, the Boers refused orders from their war council to attack Tsate and insisted that they starve the Pedi by destroying their crops. Demoralized, the Boers retreated across the Steelpoort River and returned to their homes.

Following the suggestion of the mutinous Boers, the Transvaal government changed its approach to the conflict. The Boers surrounded the Pedi stronghold with a series of forts, garrisoned by small groups of volunteers, which were used as bases for raids to seize cattle and disrupt cultivation. The aim was to threaten the Pedi with starvation. In late September 1876 Sekhukhune sent his men to attack Fort Burgers where they recovered some cattle but failed to dislodge the Boers. For the next four months the Boers sent small raiding parties into Pedi territory and the Pedi attempted to ambush them. In February 1877 Sekhukhune, bowing to Boer pressure, accepted a peace treaty in which he became a subject of the Transvaal and promised to surrender 2,000 cattle as tribute. This concluded what became known as the First Sekhukhune War or the First Pedi War.

When the British annexed the Transvaal in April 1877, it was clear that Sekhukhune did not consider himself a subject of that state and refused to

hand over the promised 2,000 cattle. This position was reinforced by the British when they convinced the Boers to withdraw their volunteers from the forts surrounding Pedi territory and garrisoned them with a small force of Zulu colonial police. Theophilus Shepstone, the British administrator of the Transvaal, pressured Sekhukhune to concede that he was under the jurisdiction of the Transvaal, but the Pedi ruler surrendered only 245 cattle claiming that famine among his people made supplying the rest impossible. In early 1878 Sekhukhune began to reassert his authority over the smaller African groups in the area, and the British and the Boers feared he was mobilizing an alliance against them encouraged by the Zulu King Cetshwayo. The Pedi pillaged Fort Burgers and Fort Weeber after they had been abandoned by colonial police and attacked Boer farmers who had encroached upon their land. The Boers gathered in frontier towns such as Lydenburg and formed defensive laagers. Shepstone concentrated on trying to confine Pedi raids to the local area until British reinforcements could be brought up from Natal to assault Sekhukhune's stronghold. Over the next few months, small colonial patrols skirmished with the Pedi around the forts.

By September 1878 a colonial army had been assembled under the command of Colonel Hugh Rowlands. It consisted of 1,216 infantry and 611 cavalry as well as 500 Swazi warriors. Keeping the forts garrisoned meant that only a small group, 130 infantry and 338 cavalry supported by two cannon, could be organized for the anticipated assault on Sekhukhune's capital. During October Rowlands led this column toward the Pedi stronghold but encounters with pockets of Pedi resistance, horse sickness, and lack of water sources forced it to turn back. Attempting to compensate for this failure, Rowlands assembled another force of 730 men supported by three guns that destroyed the settlement of a nearby Pedi headman. In late October the British campaign against the Pedi was suspended because men and equipment were moved south for the invasion of the Zulu Kingdom.

After the defeat of the Zulu in early July 1879, General Sir Garnet Wolseley, the new British commander in the region, demanded that Sekhukhune surrender 2,500 cattle and have a British fort built within his stronghold. The Pedi leader refused. For the next few months Wolseley built up supplies and forces in the Transvaal in preparation for a large attack on Sekhukhune's capital that he hoped would decisively crush Pedi resistance. By October this Transvaal Field Force consisted of 1,400 British infantry, 400 colonial cavalry, and 10,000 African allies of which 8,000 had come from the Swazi Kingdom. Armed mostly with spears and a few firearms, Swazi confidence had been bolstered by the British defeat of the Zulu and the promise that they could keep captured cattle. Wolseley, who commanded an army more than twice the size of the one

organized by the Transvaal in 1876, devoted considerable time to planning his offensive and avoiding past mistakes. At a total cost of almost £400,000, this scale of campaign could never have been undertaken by the penniless Transvaal. Seeing that the western approach was too mountainous for horses and lacked water, Wolseley planned to take the majority of the European troops up the Olifants River, round the top of the Lulu Mountains and southward down a 20-mile long valley at the end of which was Sekhukhune's stronghold. A smaller column, based at Fort Burgers and under the command of Major H. A. Bushman, would travel along the eastern slopes of the Lulu Mountains, link up with the Swazi, and assault the Pedi capital from behind.

The "Fighting Kopje" guarded the entrance of Sekhukhune's sanctuary. This stone feature was 300 feet long, 200 feet wide, and 150 feet high, and honeycombed with caves. The Pedi had supplemented these natural defenses with stone walls and stores of grain so they could hold out against a siege. Behind the "Fighting Kopje," the capital town was spread over two miles and consisted of around 3,000 huts built along the foot and lower slopes of the mountain. The Pedi had fortified their settlement by digging rifle pits in front of it. Around 4,000 Pedi warriors defended the stronghold. Sekhukhune would watch the battle from caves further up the mountain.

The British attack on Tsate began at dawn on November 28, 1879. Wolseley divided his main force into three groups. The "Fighting Kopje" was isolated by two small columns made up of dismounted colonial cavalry and some African allies that moved around each side of the stone feature and attacked the Pedi town. Initially the Pedi in the rifle pits managed to hold off the attackers but were eventually forced to withdraw up the slope of the mountain to some rocky outcroppings and ravines. A central column, consisting of all the British regular infantry—just over 12 companies—and the force's four cannon kept the "Fighting Kopje's" defenders suppressed by concentrated fire. That night the 8,000 Swazi warriors, who had joined Bushman's force from Fort Burgers, moved toward the stronghold from the east; climbed the far side of Sekhukhune's mountain; and just after first light, poured down upon the Pedi settlement below as the colonial forces were fighting up the slopes. The Pedi defenders of the town were unexpectedly caught between two attacking forces, one below and another above, and by 9:30 a.m. their resistance was over.

Later that morning, Wolseley committed most of his men to an assault on all sides of the "Fighting Kopje." Masses of lightly equipped Swazi warriors surged up the rocky feature, overwhelming the defenders followed by British and Boer troops who used their firepower to pin down the more ensconced Pedi positions. Although the Royal Engineers attempted to seal some of the caves with

explosives, many Pedi just moved deeper into these caverns and refused to surrender. Wolseley then brought his men down from the Kopje and had them surround it with entrenched positions in order to starve out the defenders. That night, under cover of a thunder and rain storm, numerous Pedi descended the hill and charged through the colonial perimeter. European fatalities during the attack were fairly light with three officers and ten men killed. The Swazi took the brunt of colonial losses with 500 dead. Pedi losses are not known. The extent of the Pedi use of firearms is illustrated by the fact that the British captured 2,014 rifles and muskets. Sekhukhune had escaped from his capital town earlier that day and eventually surrendered to British forces on December 2, 1879. Pedi resistance had been crushed and they were incorporated into the Transvaal. Sekhukhune was released in 1881 but two years later was murdered by his brother Mampuru who had risen to power in his absence.[2]

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Pedi attempted to counter superior European firepower and mobility by acquiring more firearms and defending a fortified mountainous area that was difficult for colonial armies, given their horse and wagon logistics, to approach let alone assault. This tactic was successful against relatively small Boer and British forces that attacked from 1876 to 1878. However, once the British devoted more resources and enlisted vast numbers of African allies, the Pedi stronghold was quickly overtaken. Swazi numbers overwhelmed Pedi defenses and shielded Europeans from Pedi shooting. This allowed the Europeans to bring their superior firepower to bear where it was most needed.

The Cape-Xhosa War of 1877–78

The catastrophic Xhosa Cattle-Killing movement of 1856–57 led to mass starvation in British Kaffraria and neighboring areas, and the removal of thousands of Xhosa into the Cape Colony as labor. At this time the new FAMP crossed east of the Kei River, the colonial boundary, and occupied an inland strip of land around the Butterworth Mission removing it from the authority of Gcaleka ruler Sarhili. In 1865, when British Kaffraria was absorbed into the Cape Colony, armed parties of Fingo assisted by missionaries and FAMP units invaded this section of land and claimed it as their own. Gcaleka people living there were either evicted to Sarhili's remaining strip of territory along the coast or submitted to the new Fingo leaders and therefore became known as Fingo. Cape authorities designated this area as "Fingoland," and although not officially a colonial entity, it did enjoy colonial military protection. One of the most powerful new rulers in this country was Captain Veldtman Bikitsha, a veteran of Fingo levies in the previous two Cape-Xhosa wars.

East of the Kei River, tensions between Fingo leaders and Sarhili's Gcaleka increased in the 1870s with numerous cases of stock theft and violence. In 1876 Charles Brownlee, the Cape's secretary for native affairs, reported that there were 40,000 Fingo living in Transkei all loyal to the colonial government and ready to defend themselves against the Gcaleka Xhosa.[3] A clash between Fingo and Gcaleka in August 1877, at the homestead of Fingo leader Ngcayecibi, provided colonial officials with an excuse to demand allegedly stolen cattle from Sarhili's people that pushed them into war. Within a few months, the Rharhabe Xhosa living within the Cape Colony, such as those under Sandile and Tini Maqoma, would be bullied into rebellion by settlers and colonial officials who wanted to take their land.[4]

In late September 1877 colonial police and armed Fingo skirmished with groups of Gcaleka who were assembling at Sarhili's capital in response to the crisis. At the same time colonial forces created a laager at Ibeka, manned by 180 European FAMP and 2,000 armed Fingo, which was just five miles from Sarhili's great place and thus a major threat to the Gcaleka state. On September 29, an army of 7,000–8,000 Gcaleka warriors attacked Ibeka on three of its four sides. That morning the Gcaleka attempted to probe the defenses with small parties but were countered by Fingo skirmishers. The main assault lasted from mid-afternoon until dusk when the Gcaleka finally withdrew under the relentless fire of cannon, rockets, and breech-loading rifles. Key to the defense was a nearby stone kraal held by 400 of Veldtman Bikitsha's Fingo the fire from which accounted for many Gcaleka casualties. The next morning the Gcaleka men used the cover of thick fog to attack the post on one flank but were again repulsed by cannon and rocket fire. The Gcaleka fled back toward Sarhili's great place pursued for several miles by the Fingo and 60 mounted troopers who burned homesteads and killed stragglers.[5]

Ibeka now became a staging area for colonial attacks on the Gcaleka. On October 9, several columns of FAMP troopers, settler volunteers, two artillery pieces, and hundreds of Fingo, including those under Captain Bikitsha, converged on Sarhili's great place. Cannon fire drove people away and the Fingo pursed them to the Qora River. Some Gcaleka tried to a make a stand on a piece of high ground but were outflanked by armed settlers and Fingo. The great place and many other homesteads were destroyed, livestock captured, and "a vast quantity of miscellaneous loot fell into the hands of the Fingos."[6] In late October and early November a colonial force of 5,100 men, mostly Fingo organized into two divisions, advanced on the Gcaleka along the Mbashe River and swept through the Dwesa Forest. Various patrols were sent out from the main force to harass the Gcaleka and steal livestock. Two companies of Fingo, one under Bikitsha and the other under a European

officer, operating near the Mbashe River captured 3,500 cattle and 5,000 sheep. During the entire sweep 40 Gcaleka and 8 Fingos were killed.[7]

By the start of December 1877 colonial authorities believed that the Gcaleka had been evicted east of the Mbashe River and that their former land was now available for European settlement. It was therefore surprising when, on the morning of December 2, a FAMP patrol was ambushed by a large army of Gcaleka near a destroyed store called "Holland's Shop" just south of Ibeka and Sarhili's abandoned capital. By mid-December forces from the Cape Colony, mostly settler volunteers, were quickly assembled at Ibeka and resumed operations against the Gcaleka. Armed settlers and Fingo conducted raids and sweeps in December 1877 and January 1878. On the morning of December 29, near the junction of the Xabacasi and Qora rivers, the Fingo under Bikitsha were acting as an advanced guard for the main colonial force when they encountered the Gcaleka. The Fingo attacked with such spirit that the Gcaleka were driven off leaving behind 900 cattle and over 100 women and children all of whom were captured.[8] A colonial force sent east of the Kei River to attack the Gcaleka in mid-January 1878 consisted of 50 FAMP, 52 settler volunteers, and 800 armed Fingo. The Fingo were well equipped with firearms, great coats, blankets, and haversacks. While seizing 2,300 cattle, the Fingo encountered stiff resistance from the Gcaleka who retired after 100 of their men were killed. Among the Fingo only four were killed and seven wounded. Several days later, the column was joined by another Fingo contingent of 600 men under Captain McGregor that had already captured 2,500 cattle and 5,400 sheep, and all the seized livestock were then sent west into the Cape Colony.[9]

Since the early 1850s, the Rharhabe Xhosa of Sandile had been living in a small colonial reserve between their former home of the Amatola Mountains and the Kei River. News of fighting east of the Kei led to an attempt by colonial officials to disarm the Rharhabe that then caused a split in that group. Sandile led a section of his people into rebellion while others remained loyal to the Cape government. Sandile's men and the Gcaleka force that had ambushed the police at Holland's Shop met up in the Tyityaba Valley just on the west side of the Kei. While British commander General Arthur Cunynghame was rushing his forces toward the west to deal with this new threat, the combined Xhosa army crossed east of the Kei and on January 13, 1878, attacked a colonial outpost near the Nyumaga Stream. Commanded by Colonel Richard Glyn who had just ridden west from Ibeka that day to take charge, the colonial position was defended by two small detachments of British infantry, a few FAMP troopers, some Fingo levies, Royal Marine rocket launchers, and two cannon. The old muzzle-loading muskets of the Xhosa attackers could not match the fire

of breech-loading rifles and they were eventually driven off. The Fingo and mounted police pursued the Xhosa until dusk killing any who turned to make a stand. Although colonial patrols swept the Tyityaba Valley, the Rharhabe and Gcaleka warriors remained hidden there though they were very short on food and ammunition. While Sandile wanted to raid Fingo communities to the north around Butterworth for supplies, Sarhili overruled him and sent the combined army to attack a nearby colonial supply base that had just been established on Centane Hill near his abandoned capital. This decision was a surprise considering the problems previous Xhosa armies had had with attacking defended colonial positions.[10]

In January 1878 colonial forces had built earthen defenses on Centane Hill that would serve as a forward base to support further sweeps of Gcaleka territory. On February 7, it was defended by 400 European infantry, British regulars and FAMP, 2 cannon, and 560 Fingo levies, including a group under Bikitsha. That morning 1,500 Gcalaka and Rharhabe attacked the camp in an attempt to secure food and ammunition. As usual, the Fingo units were deployed on the flanks outside the European-manned fortifications. After 20 minutes of heavy firing from the defenders, the Xhosa withdrew pursued by Bikitsha's company and FAMP cavalry. Almost 400 Xhosa men had been killed with minimal colonial losses. This decisive defeat ended Gcaleka resistance and Sarhili went into hiding east of the Mbashe River. In late April and early May colonial forces, consisting of British infantry and FAMP cavalry and well over 3,000 Fingo, organized into units of varying size, pursued Sarhili and the Gcaleka, but found only a few cattle.[11]

With the end of the campaign east of the Kei River, colonial forces turned their attention to Xhosa rebels within the Cape Colony. In January 1878 several colonial columns had swept through the Rharhabe reserve, shooting at any Xhosa they saw, loyalists included, seizing cattle, and destroying homesteads. With little reason besides paranoia and greed for land, colonial police surrounded the farm of Tini Maqoma, son of the famous Xhosa leader Maqoma who had died imprisoned on Robben Island in 1873, near Fort Beaufort and tried to arrest him. Tini Maqoma fled and in doing so was instantly caste as a rebel. With the withdrawal of the Gcaleka east of the Mbashe, Sandile and his Rharhabe rebels returned to colonial territory and took refuge in the overgrown ravines of the eastern part of the Amatola Mountains known as the Pirie Bush. Throughout March Lieutenant General F. A. Thesiger (soon to be Lord Chelmsford), the recently arrived British commander, led several columns in a coordinated sweep of the Pirie Bush that was meant to push the Rharhabe south into a line of fortified colonial positions. Thesiger's force quickly fell into disarray as the Xhosa cleverly drew

colonial columns into thick bush where they were ambushed. He responded by uselessly bombarding unoccupied patches of forest. To make matters worse, hundreds of starving Xhosa women and children flocked to the colonial camps where they would have to be feed from military supplies. During fighting in the Pirie Bush in March, the British first sent in Fingo levies to determine the location of the Xhosa rebels and then dispatched British soldiers to attack them. A medical officer wrote that:

> The ground over which these operations were carried was at one place so rugged, rocky, and precipitous that Europeans could not go into it with the slightest chance of success, and the Fingoes had to be employed; they were most unwilling to do this until told that if they went into the bush and scoured it thoroughly they should have all they captured, besides which Sandilli was in the bush, and 500£ was offered by the Colonial Government for his capture.[12]

The roughly 1,000 Fingo recruited from places such as Fort Peddie and Fort Beaufort were not enough to dislodge Sandile's people from the Pirie Bush. At the end of the month, Thesiger brought in another 1,000 hastily assembled Fingo reinforcements from east of the Kei. Reluctant to volunteer because they had already captured livestock from the Gcaleka, these Transkei Fingo were conscripted and forced to march 53 miles within 24 hours to reach the battlefield.[13]

On April 3, 1878, a desperate rebel force was located in the bush and was attacked by the Transkei Fingo supported by two cannon and a company of British infantry. Although they killed 41 Xhosa at a loss of one European captain and 2 Fingo killed and 13 Fingo wounded, European commanders were disappointed. Major John Crealock, Thesiger's secretary, noted that had the Transkei Fingo obeyed orders "we ought to have had a sharp fight perhaps but a successful one; but they hung about in groups and seemed quite afraid of entering the Bush."[14] Of course, a "sharp fight" meant many Fingo would have been killed. Around the same time, Siyolo, another Rharhabe chief who had fought the British decades before and had been released from Robben Island, led 2,000 Xhosa north toward the Amatolas to reinforce Sandile. Attempting to prevent the joining up of rebel forces, Thesiger ordered an attack upon Siyolo's force at Ntaba ka Ndoda, a prominent hill, but the Transkei Fingo once again proved a disappointment and the Xhosa escaped. At this point Thesiger sent these Fingo back east of the Kei River and many of the settler volunteers, disillusioned with the progress of the campaign, went home when their term of service expired.

Thesiger spent several weeks in April 1878 reassembling his forces at King William's Town. In late April he took 4,000 men into the western Amatolas to

root out Siyolo's Xhosa. Cannons were positioned on high ground from where they fired down into the forested ravines that were swept by large numbers of infantry. The Xhosa sustained many casualties, and Siyola and a few other rebel leaders fled east to join Sandile. In early May Thesiger moved his force east to the Pirie Bush that he surrounded with 3,000 men. Sandile was trapped. Thesiger abandoned the idea of coordinated operations and assigned separate colonial columns specific areas in which they would hunt the Xhosa as well as seize food supplies and cattle. In these operations Lieutenant Colonel Redvers Buller proved a particularly aggressive leader. By the end of the month the hungry and harassed Xhosa were trying to flee. In separate incidents, both Siyolo and Sandile were shot and died. Dukwana, son of the Xhosa Christian prophet Ntsikana, was killed in the same skirmish as Sandile. Tini Maqoma, who had been forced into rebellion and ultimately joined Sandile, was captured as he was making for his father's old stronghold of the Waterkloof.[15]

The firepower of breech-loading rifles and the overwhelming number of Fingo allies represented important and interrelated factors in the colonial defeat of the Gcaleka and Rharhabe Xhosa. African levies were used to cushion colonial defenses from Xhosa attack and scour the bush to identify Xhosa hiding places. This tactic allowed the Europeans to use firepower more efficiently. With Fingo seizure of cattle and looting of Xhosa communities, the British accomplished the dual goal of paying off their African allies and depriving their enemy of food. This war was characterized by poor leadership on both sides. Cunynghame underestimated the Gcaleka and Thesiger took a while to realize that complex maneuver was impossible in the Pirie Bush. Sarhili repeatedly ignored decades of Xhosa military experience that had clearly shown the futility of attacking fortified colonial positions. Sandile, who had fought the British in 1846–47 and 1850–53, knew better but went along with the attack on Centane anyway. He later adopted the type of bush warfare that had prolonged Xhosa resistance in the mid-nineteenth century, but this was too late, his area of operations too restricted, and he did not have enough men.

The Anglo-Zulu War of 1879

During the 1850s conflict developed within the Zulu Kingdom between two of Mpande's sons, Mbuyazi and Cetshwayo, over who would become heir. On December 2, 1856, Cetshwayo's 15,000 strong army trapped Mbuyazi's 7,000 men on the eastern bank of the Thukela River near Ndondakasuka Hill. Although Mbuyazi was supported by about 140 African gunmen led by white trader John Dunn, the numerical superiority of Cetshwayo's faction allowed them to roll up the enemy flank that caused a general

panic and flight across the river. Mbuyazi and many of his people were killed. When Mpande died in 1873, colonial agents from Natal arranged an elaborate "coronation" ceremony for Cetshwayo in which he accepted laws that restricted his right to execute Zulu subjects. Since the 1840s the Zulu Kingdom had been at peace with the British in Natal. The British had supported the Zulu in a border dispute with the Boers of the Transvaal. However, with the advent of confederation in the late 1870s the British became hostile to the Zulu Kingdom and portrayed it as a threat to peace in the region. In 1878 the British demanded restitution from the Zulu for alleged border violations and issued an ultimatum that Cetshwayo should disband his army that was impossible because it was inseparable from broader Zulu society. Cetshwayo continued to seek a negotiated settlement to the crisis even as British troops massed on his border and then invaded his territory.

For the invasion of the Zulu Kingdom, British commander Lord Chelmsford (F. A. Thesiger) had just over 17,000 men at his disposal. Of these, 5,476 were British regulars taken from the Cape, Natal, and Transvaal; 1,193 were irregular colonial cavalry; and 9,350 were African allies from Natal. In terms of logistics, the British assembled 10,000 oxen, 400 mules, 977 wagons, and 56 carts to bring up supplies. Chelmsford organized this force into three columns that would each cross the border in separate places and converge on Cetshwayo's capital of Ulundi (oNdini). He hoped that the relatively small size of each column would lure the Zulu army into an attack in which they would be annihilated by superior firepower. However, Chelmsford's staff had inaccurate maps, no idea of the location of Zulu forces, and a serious underestimation of Zulu military abilities. In addition, the Swazi put off British requests to attack the Zulu from the northeast. This meant that Cetshwayo could concentrate his forces on confronting the British invasion from the west and in this regard he sent most of his regiments against the colonial central column that was the largest of the three and accompanied by Chelmsford.

The 4,700 men of the British center column crossed into Zulu territory in mid-January 1879 and, on January 20, made camp near Isandlwana Hill. Chelmsford, who was concerned about finding a location for the next camp on the way to Ulundi, made the fatal mistake of splitting up his forces. On January 21, Chelmsford sent out a patrol of 150 colonial mounted police and 1,600 Natal Native Contingent (NNC), commanded by Major J. G. Dartnell, to check on a report that the Zulu were assembling nearby for a raid on Natal. Zulu commander Matshana with some 2,000 men led this patrol 20 kilometers from Isandlwana. At night Matshana's men built numerous fires to convince the British that they had located a large Zulu army that caused Dartnell to send a message to Chelmsford requesting assistance.

At 4:30 a.m. on January 22, Chelmsford led six companies of British infantry under Colonel R. Glyn out of the Isandlwana camp toward Dartnell's patrol which, once the sun came up, saw that there were only a few Zulu harassing them. Once a detachment of colonial troops under Colonel A. W. Durnford, which had been called forward by Chelmsford, arrived at Isandlwana at 10 a.m., the camp had a total of 1,768 defenders about half of which were poorly trained and inadequately armed African allies. Almost immediately, Durnford took out a patrol of 103 cavalry and a company of NNC to search for the Zulu and ordered Captain Theophilus Shepstone Junior to do the same with another patrol of Natal Native Horse. Durnford assumed the command of Isandlwana camp and instructed the British officer Colonel H. B. Pulleine to use his infantry to support these patrols. Shepstone's patrol pursued some Zulu foragers and ran unexpectedly into the main Zulu army that had been concealed in low ground. The patrol quickly withdrew but many Zulu pursued it triggering the Zulu attack upon the Isandlwana camp. Because of Durnford's instructions to Pulleine, the defenders of the camp, along with their two guns, were spread out in an extended line along a low ridge so as to cover the patrols if they were followed back to camp. As a result, there were no fortified positions and it was impossible for the British troops to concentrate their firepower. Just after midday the Zulu, numbering around 25,000, deployed in their traditional "chest and horns" formation and advanced toward the vastly outnumbered colonial line. By mid-afternoon the Zulu had completely routed the colonial units, rampaged through the camp, and were chasing fleeing survivors toward the border. Some of the regular British infantry rallied near the camp but eventually ran out of ammunition and were overrun. On the colonial side, 52 officers, 727 European troops, and 471 African troops were killed. This represents the worst military defeat inflicted upon the British by indigenous people. It is more difficult to determine the exact number of Zulu who died in the Battle of Isandlwana. The Zulu considered it their worst loss of the war, and historian John Laband estimates that at least 1,000 were killed at Isandlwana and that many died later from untreated gunshot wounds.

On January 22 and 23, 1879, 5,000 Zulu on their way to raid Natal attacked the colonial post at Rorke's Drift, the river crossing the central column had used to move into Zululand, which was secured by 139 British soldiers. Defending improvised fortifications, the small British garrison drove off repeated Zulu assaults. When the exhausted Zulu withdrew, only 15 British soldiers were dead and 370 Zulu corpses lay around the post. Given the British humiliation of Isandlwana, the victory at Rorke's Drift was emphasized for propaganda purposes and eleven of the defenders awarded Victoria

Crosses, the highest number issued for a single engagement. Events at Isandlwana and Rorke's Drift taught the British valuable lessons. It became obvious that the Zulu would attack in large numbers during the daytime and that the British could inflict massive casualties by concentrating their forces and firepower. Although Cetshwayo had hoped for a negotiated settlement, after Isandlwana the British became more determined to crush the Zulu Kingdom.

Close to the coast, the colonial right column under Colonel C. K. Pearson consisted of 4,750 men with 400 supply wagons. Cetshwayo directed a Zulu force of between 4,000 and 6,000 warriors to move southwest to drive off this British column. The Zulu ruler knew this area and suggested to Godide, the 70-year-old Zulu commander, that his men ambush the British at a place north of the Nyezane Stream where flat ground gave way to several high hills covered with tall grass. On the morning of January 22, as events at Isandlwana were unfolding, Pearson ordered his column to halt just before the hills where the Zulu lay in wait. Observing a few Zulu scouts, Pearson sent forward a company of NNC that discovered the Zulu ambush. He then directed two companies of British infantry, two cannon, a Gatling gun—a precursor of the modern machine gun—and a rocket battery to the front of the column from where they poured fire on the hills and drove back the Zulu. This was the first time the British army employed the Gatling gun in action. At least 300 Zulu were killed to a loss of only 11 on the colonial side. Following his instructions, Pearson advanced to the abandoned mission at Eshowe where his men established a supply depot protected by earthen fortifications. At the end of the month Pearson learned about the disaster at Isandlwana, and although he sent most of his cavalry back to Natal, he decided to maintain a garrison at Eshowe to block potential Zulu attacks on the colony. Subsequently, around 5,000 Zulu warriors besieged the post but did not attack.

In the northwest, the left column, consisting of 2,278 men under Colonel Evelyn Wood, advanced from Utrecht into Zulu territory in mid-January. The mounted colonial volunteers of this contingent, under Redvers Buller, spent the rest of the month skirmishing with Zulu groups of various sizes. In late January, when Wood received the news of Isandlwana, he pulled his column back to the fortified camp on Khambula Hill and launched raids against Zulu communities.

After the battles of late January most Zulu warriors returned to their homes for ritual purification. By late March 1879 Cetshwayo had once again assembled a large army of at least 17,000 at his capital. The most pressing problem for the Zulu at this point was the colonial raiding from Khambula. At the same time Wood led a large raiding party of over 1,200 men to the Zulu stronghold at Hlobane Mountain where they captured 2,000 cattle.

Unknown to the British, this was a trap. On the morning of March 28, the Zulu around Hlobane delayed the withdrawal of Wood's force until the main Zulu army, commanded by Mnyamana who was the second most important leader in the kingdom, arrived from Ulundi. The British retreated to Khambula in disarray, leaving behind almost 100 Europeans dead and abandoning around the same number of African allies who were slaughtered by the advancing Zulu. Khambula was defended by just over 2,000 men consisting of 15 companies of British infantry (1,238 men), about 600 colonial cavalry, and 6 cannon. The position was organized into two strong points, a redoubt and a wagon laager, that could provide each other with mutually supporting fire. Despite Cetshwayo's instructions to avoid attacking the fortified position and instead outflank it and draw out the defenders, the huge Zulu army approached Khambula in a "chest and horns" formation spread out over 16 miles. The crucial event in the battle was when Buller led around 100 colonial horsemen out of the defenses toward the Zulu right horn moving around the flank of the camp. Copying Boer tactics from the late 1830s, Buller's cavalry then dismounted, fired, and withdrew in a way that lured the incensed Zulu to within rifle range of the fortifications. This disrupted Zulu strategy and prevented the British position from being surrounded. The Zulu then attacked with their center (or chest) and left horn that were devastated by withering British fire. During mid-afternoon the Zulu captured the post's cattle kraal but two British companies charged out from the fortifications and drove them away with bayonets. While the Zulu attempted to make an orderly withdrawal at sunset, they were pursued by Buller's cavalry who were followed by British and African infantry. The Zulu retreat turned into a confused rout with many slaughtered as they ran away. The Battle of Khambula, in which around 3,000 Zulu were killed, destroyed the capacity of the kingdom to put up significant resistance against the British. Lack of discipline had led the Zulu into the worst possible situation for them: a frontal attack upon a well-prepared and defended colonial position. Buller was eventually awarded a Victoria Cross for bravery at Hlobane where he rescued three British soldiers in three separate incidents.

By the end of March 1879 around 10,000 Zulu warriors, members of royal regiments and local irregulars, had gathered around the British garrison at Eshowe in order to cut off any relief effort. On March 28, the British relief column, led by Chelmsford, crossed the Thukela River into Zulu territory and marched northeast on a route close to the coast where the fairly open terrain made it easy to avoid ambush. Leading African scouts ahead of the column was John Dunn, the British trader who although he had opposed Cetshwayo in 1856 was later made chief of this area and deserted the

Zulu king when the British invaded. On April 1, the column made camp near the destroyed Zulu settlement of Gingindlovu that was in rolling, boggy, and grass-covered country 2 kilometers from the Nyezane Stream. Dunn selected a site on a small hill on which they organized a square laager surrounded by an earthwork trench. If attacked, the column's 2,280 African soldiers would defend the laager that housed 2,000 oxen and 300 horses; 3,390 European troops would man the trenches; and cannon, Gatling guns, and rocket tubes were positioned at the corners of the square. Before dusk the colonial forces cleared their fields of fire by cutting down the tall grass within 100-meters. That afternoon the Eshowe garrison, commanded by Pearson, sent a message to the relief column, warning Chelmsford of a Zulu attack. Just before dawn on April 2, the relief column's scouts reported that the Zulu were advancing. At 6 a.m. a Zulu force of around 11,000 men surrounded the laager and sent small groups of gunmen forward to harass the defenders with mostly inaccurate fire. The Zulu then attacked from all sides. The Gatling guns began to fire when the Zulu came within 1,000 meters and then the colonial rifles, organized in a double tier with one line of men in the trench and the other above in the wagons, opened up from 300 meters. The closest the Zulu made it to the laager was 20 meters. At around 7:15 a.m. the Zulu began to retreat and were pursued by colonial cavalry and the NNC. A Zulu attempt to regroup was disrupted by artillery fire from the laager. Nearly 1,200 Zulu were killed at the Battle of Gingindlovu. Only 41 colonial troops were killed in the entire relief operation. Cetshwayo would severely chastise his commanders for their incompetence. Later that morning Chelmsford led the relief of Eshowe, and on April 5, both Pearson's garrison and the relief column moved back toward Natal. At Gingindlovu the British successfully tempted the Zulu with an isolated laager that seemed vulnerable to the traditional tactic of encirclement and assault that proved disastrous.

Chelmsford's desire to avenge Isandlwana was hastened by the news that General Sir Garnet Wolseley was on his way to take over command. With reinforcements from Britain, Chelmsford launched his second invasion of the Zulu Kingdom in early June 1879. The colonial force was organized into a first division of 7,500 men under Major General H. H. Crealock that would advance from Fort Pearson in the south and a second division of 5,000 men under Major General E. Newdigate that would advance from Dundee to the north and link up with a "Flying Column" of 3,200 men under Colonel Wood moving down from Khambula. It was essentially a two-pronged offensive converging on Ulundi from south and north. The colonial columns moved very slowly and established a number of fortified positions along their respective routes. To make it difficult for Zulu forces

to operate near them and set up ambushes, the colonial forces destroyed Zulu homesteads and seized cattle that also had a terrible impact on the noncombatant population. Cetshwayo sent numerous emissaries to the British with offers to negotiate, but these were answered with ridiculous and impossible conditions. It appears that Zulu royal authority was weakening in the face of colonial defeat as many regiments delayed obeying the king's call to assemble at the capital and more chiefs defected to the British.

At the end of June 1879 the second division and Flying Column reached the vicinity of the Zulu capital and, on July 1, established a double laager near the west bank of the White Mfolozi River. Although thousands of Zulu warriors had witnessed the British arrival and had an excellent opportunity to attack the disorganized second division, they were prevented from doing so by Cetshwayo who was still sending messengers to Chelmsford to negotiate. On July 3, Buller led a patrol of 500 colonial cavalry out of the laager and across the river to drive off Zulu snipers. A small party of 20 Zulu, acting as bait, led the aggressive Buller into a prepared ambush where around 4,000 warriors sprung up from tall grass. Buller managed to flee because he had wisely halted just short of the ambush site and had previously positioned another cavalry unit that covered his rapid retreat. This small action illustrated that the Zulu had the potential to challenge the British. On the morning of July 4, Chelmsford led a colonial force consisting of 4,166 European and 958 African soldiers supported by 12 cannon and 2 Gatling guns across the White Mfolozi. About 600 men were left behind to defend the laager. The Zulu did not attack the British during the river crossing because they wanted to draw them out of the laager and assault them on open ground in hopes of repeating the victory at Isandlwana. Chelmsford formed his men into a huge square, with cannon and Gatling at the corners, and marched awkwardly into the open ground before Cetshwayo's capital. About 20,000 Zulu warriors came out from various regimental settlements to quickly and efficiently surround the British square. Tempting the Zulu to attack, Buller's colonial horsemen went out on three sides of the square and then withdrew by fire and movement. British artillery opened fire first but had little effect on the Zulu who were attacking in open order. As the Zulu closed in, rifle and Gatling fire made it impossible for them, despite attempts to advance through dips in the ground and concentrate on weak sections of the enemy line, to get within 90 meters of the square. A few Zulu came to within 30 meters before being shot down and none actually made contact with colonial troops. As usual, Zulu shooting at the British proved ineffective. By 9:30 a.m. the Zulu, having failed to find any gap in the British defense, had lost heart and began retreating. Attempts by some Zulu to regroup were

countered by accurate British artillery. British lancers and colonial cavalry charged out of the square to pursue and slaughter the fleeing enemy. Ulundi and the surrounding regimental centers were burned. While the British lost only 13 men in the Battle of Ulundi, around 1,500 Zulu were killed. Having fled before the final battle, Cetshwayo was captured by a colonial patrol in August.

When Wolseley arrived he abolished the Zulu monarchy and its control over the Zulu military system. Cetshwayo was taken as a prisoner to Cape Town and then Britain. Zululand remained independent but it was divided among 13 chiefs many of whom, including John Dunn, had deserted to the British during the war. Those most loyal to the British were given control of the areas bordering on Natal and the Transvaal.[16]

The main Zulu problem in 1879 was lack of command and control. Cetshwayo knew that British firepower would eventually defeat his regiments. He gave repeated instructions to Zulu commanders not to attack fortified colonial positions. Cetshwayo wanted to encircle the larger British forces and draw out smaller units that could be isolated and overwhelmed by superior Zulu numbers. This also complemented his hope for a negotiated settlement. However, at critical moments the Zulu did not obey the king or his commanders as they attacked large British forces head on at Isandlwana, Khambula, Gingindlovu, and Ulundi. This was usually the result of ill-discipline and succeeded only at Isandlwana because the British were caught completely unprepared. In fact, Isandlwana probably gave the Zulu too much confidence in their traditional encircle and assault tactics that led to the subsequent disasters. On several occasions the Zulu showed tactical brilliance and great discipline in luring over enthusiastic British forces into ambushes. This usually happened when one Zulu commander could issue orders to a specific unit of a few thousand men and then wait for the British to come to them. While a Zulu commander could coordinate the movements of many thousands of men in several regiments with considerable precision, once actual fighting began it was almost impossible to control what was going on and regiments seemed to do as they pleased. The Zulu had a great number of firearms but were unable to employ them effectively. The most consistently important British tactic, the use of light cavalry to irritate the Zulu into making a disastrous attack upon a prepared position, sought to exploit this weakness of command and control. African colonial allies such as the NNC and Natal Native Horse were also extremely important because they were good at goading the Zulu into ill-considered attacks, helped reduce Zulu numerical superiority, and were ruthless in pursuit.

African Rebellions: The Gun War and the Transkei Rebellion (1880–81)

In late 1880 Africans in Lesotho and Transkei rebelled against the administration of the Cape Colony. Common causes for these uprisings included disarmament legislation passed by the Cape government in 1879 that required all Africans to surrender their firearms, the undermining of African chiefly authority by European magistrates, and the loss of land to European settlers and/or African colonial allies. It also appears likely that some Boers, chaffing under British rule, encouraged Africans to rebel and supplied them with firearms. Eager to prove their self-reliance, Cape authorities suppressed these insurrections with their own forces and did not call upon imperial assistance.

The rulers of Lesotho, called Basutoland by the British, had volunteered to come under British protection in 1868 in order to prevent the Orange Free State Boers from taking more of their land. The Sotho monarchy and chiefs continued to effectively govern their people under nominal British supervision. In 1872 administration of Basutoland had been passed to the self-governing Cape Colony, and eventually colonial magistrates were brought in and challenged the power of the chiefs. The Cape disarmament policy represented a direct threat to Sotho independence that had come to rely on men acquiring horses and guns through migrant labor on the diamond fields. In addition, Sotho land rights were placed in jeopardy when the Cape government opened the Quthing District for white settlement. Warning of future trouble, an 1879 rebellion by Sotho chief Moorosi, whose authority was being undermined by a white magistrate, was suppressed by colonial forces and Sotho under Letsie, Moshoeshoe's successor.[17]

In September 1880 the colonial garrison of Mafeteng, 171 Cape Mounted Riflemen, and 120 African police along with a few volunteers, were besieged by a large force of Sotho led by chief Lerotholi (sometimes spelled Lerothodi). Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Fred Carrington of the CMR, the defenders prepared themselves by constructing three strong points, digging entrenchments, manning a stone horse kraal, fortifying several buildings with barricades and sandbags, loop holing the court house, and pulling down some walls that blocked their line of sight. On the morning of September 21, 7,000 Sotho, mostly mounted, attacked the town. Despite intense colonial shooting, the Sotho made off with all the town's cattle and captured a small African village some 450 yards away that had some strong buildings and walls that provided cover from which they returned fire on Mafeteng. During the next six hours the Sotho from nearby hills fired continuously on the colonial

defenses, whereas large groups of Sotho cavalry made a series of determined charges but were repulsed by small-arms fire. In one instance over 1,500 Sotho cavalry charged down the main road of town but were driven back within 200 yards of colonial fortifications. Some of these Sotho dismounted and set fire to a house the smoke from which allowed around 400 others to crawl up to within 50 yards of one of the strong points where they constructed improvised cover and loop-holed garden walls. These were eventually driven off by a sortie of 25 CMR who withdrew under tremendous fire from the surrounding hills. Later, Carrington remarked that just one cannon would have broken up the Sotho reserves and firing positions further from Mafeteng. By the end of the day the Sotho had pulled back but kept up harassing fire against Mafeteng all night. Since the Sotho carried away most of their casualties, it is impossible to determine how many were killed or wounded. None of the defenders were killed and only five were wounded. Cartridge cases found after the battle suggested that most of the Sotho were armed with up-to-date breech-loading rifles. On October 4, the dismounted Sotho used low ground to attack an outlying section of Mafeteng's defenses known as "Frazer's Store" and although they managed to breach its walls were eventually driven off by repeated colonial counterattacks. On the night of October 14, Carrington dispatched a patrol that destroyed one of the Sotho positions overlooking Mafeteng. The next day he sent out dismounted skirmishers who lured 1,500 Sotho into an attack on the town in which several were killed and the rest repulsed.[18]

In early October 1880, groups of rebel Sotho began to gather around Maseru, the colonial capital which was defended by a fort, and seized cattle from Sotho communities that had not joined in the uprising. On October 12, the rebels began shooting down on Maseru from nearby hills, but return fire from colonial cannon prevented a daylight attack. The Sotho attacked at dusk. Before retiring into the fort, colonial troops set the town's hospital on fire that provided enough light for them to shoot accurately. Following an unsuccessful assault on the fort, the Sotho burned and looted some buildings, captured firearms, and withdrew around midnight. Sotho losses are not known though colonial sources considered them heavy and just one of Maseru's defenders was killed and four wounded. After the attack the rebels abandoned their settlements near Maseru and took refuge in mountain caves. On the morning of October 25, Sotho cavalry charged into Maseru from the south and southwest followed by around 400–500 Sotho infantry who took up firing positions on nearby rocky ground from where they supported the attack. The Sotho cavalry withdrew after capturing some cattle and horses. Twenty Sotho were killed though some had been seen carrying away casualties.[19]

From early October Brigadier-General C. M. Clarke, commander of Cape military forces, had been gathering reinforcements near Wepener in the Orange Free State for the intended relief of the Mafeteng garrison. On October 19, 1880, he led a column of 1,600 European and 75 African troops, together with a supply train, across the Basutoland border. As the relief force passed through the mountain pass near Kalabani Hill the 1st Cape Mounted Yeomanry, settlers from the Eastern Cape, were ambushed by a large group of Sotho cavalry who charged down a slope brandishing lances. Thirty-two colonial troops were killed and ten wounded. The loss was later blamed on the fact that the yeomen, armed with rifles but not swords, were at a disadvantage in hand-to-hand combat. Between 7,000 and 8,000 Sotho then appeared on the heights above the column and were driven back by shelling from colonial artillery. Clarke's force made it to Mafeteng though the ambush proved that he did not have enough men to undertake further operations against the rebels and he requested an additional 1,000 settler volunteers. Several days later, on October 22, Clarke led a strong patrol out from Mafeteng up into the mountains to attack Lerotholi's village that was occupied briefly before stiff resistance and news of an impending attack on Mafeteng forced them to retire. The difficulty of this action prompted Clarke to warn his superiors that a second corps of 1,000 volunteers might be needed. On October 31, Clarke once again took a force, this time numbering 1,450 men, to attempt to seize and hold Lerotholi's village but was again compelled to withdraw by an unexpectedly reinforced enemy tenaciously clinging to mountainous positions. In early November Clarke, faced with a new rebellion in the Transkei, suspended colonial offensive operations in Basutoland until sufficient reinforcements had arrived.[20] From that point the conflict became a stalemate with colonial patrols occasionally raiding the Sotho who defended their mountain strongholds. Negotiations began in February 1881 and a cease-fire was declared. Heavy rains flooded rivers, making military activity almost impossible and the Sotho used the respite to reap their crops and strengthen fortifications. Making it clear that their problems were with the Cape and not the imperial government, Sotho rebel leaders refused demands for their unconditional surrender. The financial cost of the campaign encouraged Cape authorities to compromise. An agreement was reached in April 1881 in which the Sotho accepted colonial rule and turned over 5,000 cattle as compensation for damages during the war. However, they were allowed to retain firearms under license and rebel leaders received amnesty.[21] In 1884 Basutoland was removed from Cape administration and again became a British crown colony with a large degree of internal autonomy. It would eventually become the independent country of Lesotho.

In late October 1880 Hamilton Hope, colonial magistrate at Qumbu in the Cape's Transkei Territory, met with Mhlonhlo, leader of the Mpondomise, and around 800 of his men who had indicated a willingness to fight against the Sotho rebels if they were given firearms. Hope had arranged for the delivery of 265 Snider rifles and 15,000 rounds of ammunition. However, on Mhlonhlo's order the magistrate was killed and the Mpondomise, seizing the weapons, cut telegraph wires and looted European trading stores in the area. They had rebelled. Within days Mhlonhlo was joined by some Thembu people and Mditshwa, the other major Mpondomise leader who later claimed that he had been pressured by his hot-headed sons. The Mpondomise and Thembu had agreed to come under Cape colonial rule in the 1870s but erosion of chiefly authority, loss of land, and the opportunity presented by the Sotho rebellion convinced them to take up arms. The Fingo in Transkei, long-time colonial allies, had just been disarmed by Cape authorities and could hardly defend themselves let alone combat the rebellion. Wagons—full of firearms and ammunition—and parties of settler volunteers were rushed into Transkei from the rest of the Cape. The Fingo and other African loyalists were quickly rearmed and organized into military units. On November 15, the rebels suffered their first major defeat when 65 European volunteers and 500 Fingo intercepted 800 Mpondomise rebels under Mditshwa who were looting Fingo communities near the town of Umtata. After less than an hour 50 rebels were dead and the rest were fleeing east across the Umtata River. On the colonial side only two Fingo had been wounded. The armies of Mhlonhlo and Mditshwa gathered near Umtata, and on November 23, a force of 30 CMR, 50 settler volunteers, and 1,500 African allies ventured out and drove them away. Thirty or forty Mpondomise were killed compared to just one Fingo killed and three wounded on the other side. The entry of the Mpondo, a powerful and independent neighboring African group from whom Mhlonhlo had hoped to gain support, into the war on the colonial side represented another major blow to the rebellion.

Colonial forces then launched an offensive against rebel communities. Raids against several Thembu settlements in December killed several hundred rebels and captured thousands of cattle and sheep. In early December a mounted patrol from Mount Frere attacked Mhlonhlo's people killing 120 and wounding many others. Facing a colonial scorched earth campaign, many Mpondomise prepared to move up into the Drakensberg Mountains and others surrendered to European outposts where they declared loyalty. The defeated Mhlonhlo and Mditshwa withdrew their remaining forces into the rugged Tsitsa Gorge. On December 18, Mhlonhlo's people were trapped in the ravine by two converging colonial columns consisting mostly of

African allies including a contingent of 750 Bhaca. One column engaged the Mpondomise in an intense firefight from across the river, whereas the other moved around and descended upon them from the opposite direction. Two hundred Mpondomise horsemen attempted to flee but most were overtaken by colonial cavalry. While Mhlonhlo was one of the few who managed to escape by horse, over 300 of his followers were killed with the colonial side sustaining minimal casualties. The next day colonial forces observed 400–500 of Mditshwa's people abandoning the gorge and heading into the hills.[22] Mhlonhlo eventually took refuge with rebels in Basutoland. In Transkei, rebel chiefs were replaced by loyalist ones and rebel land was taken and given to African colonial allies such as the Fingo.[23]

The African rebellions against Cape rule in Lesotho and Transkei had similar causes but were very different wars with different outcomes. The Sotho, although their initial attacks had failed, displayed the potential to inflict serious casualties by using rough terrain to mount ambushes and falling back to mountain strongholds. The result was a favorable negotiated settlement. In Transkei rebel operations were a complete disaster from the start, and although they also took refuge in rugged territory, it was an isolated area that was easily surrounded. The rolling, open hills of Transkei generally favored mobile colonial patrols that seized livestock and destroyed crops. In both wars the rebels made extensive use of firearms. Experienced with firearms and equipped with breech-loading rifles, the Sotho adopted some appropriate tactics such as using firepower to suppress an enemy before an attack. However, their cavalry tradition, which had been an advantage in previous conflicts, backfired as mass charges against colonial fortifications proved ruinous. The Mpondomise, although they captured breech-loading rifles, had never fought a colonial army and knew very little of how to utilize or counter firearms.

The First Anglo-Boer War (1880–81)

As a result of British annexation, the previously divided Transvaal Boers began to develop a sense of national unity. The British had crushed the Zulu and Pedi in order to give the Boers of the Transvaal confidence in confederation with the neighboring British territories. Ironically, the defeat of their main African enemies meant that the Boers could dedicate more time and resources to anti-British activities. Wolseley aggravated the Boers by his open contempt for them and by having some of their leaders arrested for anti-British statements. The arrival of British soldiers, immigrants, businesses, churches, and cultural activities in the Transvaal alienated the Boers. The Boer rebellion was sparked by the British imposition of taxation on the

Transvaal Boers who had never before paid tax. In late 1880 British attempts to hunt down tax evaders in the Potchefstroom District led to an armed stand off in which a Boer was wounded. Across the Transvaal the infuriated Boers mobilized 7,000 mounted men for military action. On December 16, the anniversary of the Battle of Blood River in 1838 in which God was believed to have intervened to assure a Boer victory over the Zulu, the Boer leaders at Heidelberg proclaimed a restoration of the South African Republic.

At this point the 1,759 British soldiers in the Transvaal, divided among seven garrisons, began to fortify their positions. Since the Boers lacked artillery and were short of rifle ammunition, their initial strategy was to besiege the British posts and starve the defenders into submission while blocking the mountain pass to Natal from which British reinforcements were likely to approach. The Boers also cut telegraph lines between the British posts. The first major engagement of the war occurred on December 20 when a British column moving west from Lydenburg to reinforce Pretoria was ambushed by the Boers at Bronkhorstspruit. The British commander, Lieutenant Colonel Philip Anstruther, refused a warning from Boer leader Piet Joubert to turn back and the shooting began. The Boers were spread out, fairly well concealed, had previously set out stones as range markers, and were skilled marksmen. Caught unprepared, the British soldiers made excellent targets as they bunched together and were wearing red tunics that contrasted with the brown countryside. Fifty-six British soldiers were killed and ninety-two wounded, whereas only one Boer was killed and four wounded. The British quickly surrendered and were treated mercifully by the Boers who cared for the wounded and returned many of the captives to the Cape via the neutral Orange Free State. In contrast, wounded African wagon drivers were shot in the head.

Holding Pretoria, the largest British detachment sent out patrols to attack surrounding Boer laagers; however, they were pursued back to their lines by Boer horsemen. In an effort to capture several British artillery pieces that could be used against Pretoria, the Boers besieging Potchefstroom had dug a sap trench toward British lines but were driven away by a determined counterattack. By the end of January 1881 it was obvious that the military situation in the Transvaal had reached a stalemate. The Boers were unable to capture any of the British garrisons, and the British could not lift any of the sieges. With some 2,000 Boers tied down at the British posts, there were fewer men to counter the coming British who attempted to enter the Transvaal from Natal. Transvaal leader Paul Kruger ordered an end to further attacks against British positions and warned his men to conserve ammunition.

By late January Major General George Pomeroy Colley, a protégé of Wolseley and now the British Governor of Natal and High Commissioner of Southeastern Africa, had assembled the Natal Field Force and led it north to the mountain pass into the Transvaal. Around 600 Boers waited for them on the high ground, overlooking the only wagon road through the pass. The Natal Field Force was short of cavalry and, to some extent, artillery. Colley had not called up settler volunteer horsemen because he feared the rebellion would expand into a regional Boer-British conflict. On January 28, 1881, Colley directed his 1,200 men to conduct a frontal attack on the Boer mountain defenses. Preliminary bombardment of the Boer positions proved ineffective. During the attack, the British cavalry were meant to protect the right flank of the infantry but completely failed because the ground was so steep that many horses were injured. Caught in a killing zone, the advancing British infantry was exposed to fire from Boer positions to the front and also enfilading fire from the right flank. Fixing bayonets, the British infantry charged but none made it closer than 30–40 yards from the Boer positions as intense fire forced them back. Under cover of artillery and small-arms fire, the British then conducted a disciplined withdrawal. The British had failed to break through the Boer defenses. In the Battle of Laing's Nek, as this engagement came to be known, 16 Boers had been killed and 27 wounded. On the other side, 80 British had been killed and 115 wounded. The British infantry unit that had attacked lost 35 percent of its total strength.

Camped on Mount Prospect, the Natal Field Force depended upon a long and exposed supply route from southern Natal. In early February the Boer commander at Laing's Nek, Joubert, sent a patrol of 200 mounted men under Commandant-General Nicolaas Smit to ambush anticipated British reinforcements moving up this route. When these Boers began to block British messengers and wagon trains, Colley realized that he had to clear his line of communication. On the morning of February 8, 1881, Colley led a strong detachment of five British infantry companies supported by four artillery pieces and forty cavalry down the road leading south. Expecting to return to Mount Prospect that afternoon, Colley did not bring additional rations or water. Soon after leaving the camp, the detachment was ambushed near the Ingogo River by the Boer patrol. Expecting the Boers to flee from British cannon fire, Colley was surprised when they mounted their horses, charged closer to his position, and took up firing positions again. One hundred Boer reinforcements eventually arrived from Laing's Nek almost surrounding the British. The firefight continued throughout the day with men on both sides taking cover behind rocks. It appeared that the British were trapped and

would have to surrender. That night the Boers pulled back and did not post any sentries because they believed that the British could not cross a flooded river, which was their only avenue of escape. However, when the sun came up the Boers were shocked to discover that Colley's force had indeed crossed the river under the cover of darkness and retired to Mount Prospect. Although Smit's Boers had failed to take advantage of a great opportunity, the British had suffered another humiliating loss. In this engagement, 63 British soldiers had been killed and 78 wounded, and the detachment also lost 37 of its 65 horses. Although the British had expended a large amount of ammunition, only eight Boers were killed and nine wounded.

In February 1881 both the British government and the Transvaal Boers began to search for a way to end the conflict. British losses meant that the war was unpopular at home and Gladstone's government was distracted by other imperial issues such as troubles in Ireland. In Southern Africa, settler newspapers were divided over the war, Afrikaners in the Cape were becoming more nationalistic, and in the neutral Orange Free State there was mounting pressure on President Brand to enter the war in support of the Transvaal. Whites feared a wider conflict between Boers and Britons, and that conquered blacks would use the opportunity to rebel. The Transvaal Boers also wanted a quick end to hostilities as they feared the imminent arrival of British reinforcements. After their victory at Ingogo, the Boers sent out peace overtures to the British government and negotiations began.

Despite the negotiations, Colley was determined to salvage his reputation by a decisive military victory and his confidence was buoyed by the arrival at Mount Prospect of 727 British soldiers mostly from India. It was also obvious that the Boers were improving and expanding their defenses around both sides of Laing's Nek and the lower slopes of nearby Majuba Hill. In late February Colley devised a plan to threaten the flank of the Boer positions at the Nek by seizing the top of Majuba and then launching a new assault from his main camp. As diversions, Colley organized a small attack on the opposite Boer flank and sent a column of empty wagons south. During the early morning darkness of February 27, Colley led a force of just under 600 British regulars as well as some African guides and porters up the slope of Majuba Hill. Artillery was left behind because the ground was considered too steep. No preliminary reconnaissance of the summit was conducted. Colley detached some of his troops to guard the line of communication; thus, when his force reached the top of Majuba, it consisted of only 400 men. At dawn Colley realized that the summit was much larger than he had thought and was forced to extend and therefore weaken his defensive positions. It is also important that the soldiers were not instructed to dig in although some units

did this on their own. When the Boers initially realized that the British had seized the imposing hill, they panicked believing that artillery would soon bombard them from above. This did not happen and Joubert quickly organized volunteers for an attack on Majuba. A group of 450 dismounted Boers used fire and movement to assault up the north and northeast slope of the hill which, because of the nature of the ground, could not be observed by the British on the summit. The use of dead ground by the Boers meant that Colley did not fully appreciate the extent of the Boer attack. At the same time another group of 150 Boer horsemen under Smit rode around the western side of Majuba to cut off the British and drive off smaller positions. Just after midday the Boers captured a poorly defended knoll, later called Gordon's Knoll after the Gordon Highlanders who had occupied it, that dominated the summit and allowed them to pour fire down on the British defenders. Continuing with fire and maneuver, the Boers executed a pincer movement around the disorganized British who eventually broke and ran in terror down the hill. Colley, who had been asleep during the critical moment when the Boers seized Gordon's Knoll, was shot through the head and died. In all, 92 British soldiers were killed, 131 wounded, and 57 captured that represented a total loss of 46 percent of the force that had seized the hill. Only one Boer had been killed and six wounded. The Boers did not follow up this success as Joubert feared the other British positions were too strong. At the Battle of Majuba Hill the British army experienced its worst defeat since Isandlwana at the hands of untrained farmers.

Under instruction from the British government, Evelyn Wood, Colley's replacement, signed a preliminary treaty with the Transvaal Boers on March 6, 1881. A final settlement was signed on March 23 in which the Boers regained self-government under nominal British supervision and the British maintained theoretical authority over African affairs in the Transvaal. The last British troops withdrew from the Transvaal in October with the ratification of this agreement through the Pretoria Convention. The British were unwilling to wage protracted war against the Transvaal Boers over what at the time was an impoverished agricultural territory with few known mineral resources.[24]

The main question arising from the Transvaal Rebellion is how a force of untrained irregulars with no artillery defeated the professional soldiers of the British army? One of the main factors attributed to the defeat was Colley's incompetence. Unwilling to wait for much-needed reinforcements, he ordered a near suicidal frontal attack on well-defended Boer positions at Laing's Nek, failure to take rations and water led to a desperate situation at Ingogo, and lack of knowledge of the ground at Majuba caused a major disaster. However, not everything can be blamed on one man. Though Boer

leadership seems to have been better, they had problems in recognizing opportunities and following up successes. More generally, British soldiers of this period were not well trained in marksmanship and instead relied on concentrated volley fire. Through years of frontier experience, the Boers were accomplished shots and had acquired modern rifles. Lack of effective British cavalry or mounted infantry in the crucial early months of the campaign meant that the Boers, almost all of whom were mounted and excellent horsemen as well, enjoyed a serious advantage in mobility. British artillery was present but not in sufficient quantity, and the Boers countered it by digging trenches and moving fast. The political dimension is also important. The British could have eventually overwhelmed the Boers by bringing in masses of men and equipment, but they did not have the political will to do so.

Conflict in Griqualand West and Bechuanaland (1877–85)

In 1873 the British took over the diamond mining area north of the Cape that became the colony of Griqualand West. Two years later white diamond diggers, attempting to exclude blacks from the mining industry, rebelled against British authority and formed units of cavalry, infantry, and signals that conducted parades, drills, and patrols. By April 1875 the rebels, directed by a war council that included some former soldiers, had armed 800 men and recruited a further 400. However, the arrival of 250 British and 60 colonial troops as well as the arrest of digger leaders abruptly ended the revolt.[25]

Loss of land to white settlers, impoverishment, and undermining of chiefly authority caused the 1878 rebellion of Africans, mostly Griqua and Tlhaping Tswana, in Griqualand West. In early May Lieutenant Colonel William Owen Lanyon, administrator of the territory, led a patrol of 100 armed settlers and police to the rebel mountain stronghold of Koegas west of Griquatown. After fending off a rebel attack, Lanyon realized that the position could not be assaulted until artillery arrived from the Cape. On May 22, Lanyon and 34 horsemen attacked Jackal's Vlei, three miles south of Griquatown, killing 25 rebels including some leaders. With colonial reinforcements approaching, 600–1,000 rebels attacked the colonial camp at Koegas at the end of May but were driven off. In early June, 113 colonial cavalry supported by a cannon seized the rebel stronghold at Koegas, killing between 40 and 50 rebels and capturing 1,700 sheep with just one loss. When the main body of the Diamond Fields Horse, a colonial unit under Major Charles Warren that had been fighting in the Eastern Cape, arrived on June 7, the total colonial force amounted to 700 men. During mid-June

Lanyon and Warren led a series of attacks on rebel mountain positions, killing 66 rebels and capturing 2,200 cattle, 3,000 small stock, and 200 horses. Colonial casualties were minimal. Many rebels began to flee north, and on June 25, they were caught by a colonial force at Boetsap where 80 surrendered along with 500 women and children. Three rebel leaders were shot. On June 28, Griqua and Tlhaping unsuccessfully attacked Campbell, a colonial post east of Griquatown.

The flight of rebels north of the border extended the conflict to independent southern Tswana country. In early July 90 colonial volunteers on their way to occupy Kuruman Mission were ambushed by 240 Tlhaping, 40 of whom were mounted but were driven off. In mid-July 300 colonial soldiers under Lanyon and Warren, supported by artillery, drove the rebel Tlhaping from stone fortifications at Gamopedi. Fifty Tlhaping and nine colonial troops were killed. The colonial force captured 600 cattle, 2,000 sheep, and 20 wagons. On July 24, the colonial army bombarded the stone-walled Tlhaping stronghold of Dithakong for three hours and then launched a two-pronged cavalry and infantry attack. As professional hunters, the Tlhaping had firearms and knew how to use them. Despite a determined stand, they were compelled to flee by the attackers' firepower. In what Lanyon called "the most decisive victory of the war," his men captured 3,600 cattle, 6,000 sheep, 63 wagons, some rifles, and much trade goods such as ivory, ostrich feathers, and hides. Five colonial troops and thirty-nine Tlhaping were killed. During the last months of 1878 Warren led patrols through the independent area between Griqualand West and the Molopo River where he apprehended rebels and obtained the submission of all major rulers to British authority. After the rebellion, Africans in Griqualand West were disarmed and taxed, and in 1881 the territory was absorbed by the Cape Colony.[26]

During the mid-1870s the Tswana-speaking Rapulana and Ratlou Rolong moved northwest from the Orange Free State and the Transvaal where they had lost land to the Boers and settled in the Molopo River basin. They gathered around Lotlhakane which had been the capital of Montshiwa's Tshidi Rolong before they had been driven away by Boer raids in the early 1850s. In 1877 Montshiwa and his 7,000 subjects moved south from Ngwaketse country to their old home near the Molopo River. Seeing the British and Boers distracted by the Transvaal Rebellion, Montshiwa, in early 1881, led an attack on Lotlhakane that drove the Rapulana and Ratlou Rolong east into the Transvaal. The Tshidi Rolong gained land for cultivation and control of the trade route to the diamond fields around Kimberley. Subsequently, the Rapulana and Ratlou requested assistance from the Transvaal Boers. In November 1881 the Rapulana and Ratlou, together with some Boer

mercenaries, attacked the Tshidi at Lotlhakane who retired north to their Mafikeng settlement. Continuing the war for their own gain, between 200 and 300 Boers with three cannon and some African allies laid siege to Mafikeng for most of 1882 and seized livestock and prisoners from surrounding communities. Montshiwa send messages to the British pleading for assistance, particularly ammunition which was running low, but was rejected. In October a sympathetic British agent acquired a wagon load of ammunition, but it was ambushed by the Boers. Despite near starvation inside Mafikeng, Montshiwa refused to submit and the Boers forged his mark on a treaty in which they claimed all the land south of the Molopo River. In turn, the Boers established the small Republic of Goshen with its capital at a farm called Rooigrond on the Transvaal border.

Further to the south, around the confluence of the Harts and Dry Harts rivers, competition over grazing developed as Mossweu's Kora were hemmed in by Mankurwane's Tlhaping and the Transvaal Boers. Open warfare began in November 1881 when the Tlhaping attacked the Kora settlement of Mamusa in an attempt to expand east to the Transvaal border that had been formalized by the Pretoria Convention. Although Mankurwane's army was assisted by 50 Boers, it failed to retain captured cattle because other Boers from the Transvaal intervened and drove them back. Mossweu enlisted the support of Boer mercenaries and quickly launched an attack on the Tlhaping capital of Taung. Mankurwane tried to recruit his own white volunteers from Kimberley by promising a farm for three months military service, but this was prohibited by the Cape government which did not want an indirect war with the Transvaal. By June 1882 Taung was besieged by 400–600 white mercenaries who were looting cattle and timber. With the British refusing to help and his few white allies deserting, Mankurwane, in September 1882, agreed to a peace treaty brokered by the Transvaal government. White gunmen from both sides, who curiously had never been able to inflict casualties on each other, gained farms from Tlhaping territory and created the Republic of Stellaland with its capital at Vryburg.

During these conflicts, Boer mercenaries were supported by the Transvaal government that viewed the new minirepublics as a way of extending its western border to tax the trade route to the diamond fields. Concerned about the implications of Boer control of the trade road, Cape officials and British missionaries called on the imperial government to secure the area. The British declaration of vague protection over the southern Tswana in early 1884 prompted Montshiwa, in May, to attack Rooigrond and drive its Boer inhabitants into the Transvaal. The Boers retaliated by seizing Tshidi Rolong cattle and by August full-scale war had resumed around Mafikeng. German colonization on the coast of South

West Africa (now Namibia), which raised the possibility of an alliance with the Transvaal, prompted decisive British imperial action. In early 1885 Major General Charles Warren led 5,000 British and colonial troops north of the Cape Colony. The size of the expedition and the slowness of its advance discouraged Boer resistance. Warren established a fixed border with the Transvaal, the Boers of Stellaland accepted British authority, and those of Goshen moved back into the Transvaal. From April to June the Warren expedition traveled north of the Molopo River and entered into agreements with Tswana rulers such as the particularly anti-Boer Khama of the Ngwato. By September 1885 the area south of the Molopo River, inhabited by the Rolong and Tlhaping, became British Bechuanaland and was eventually incorporated into South Africa and the territory north of that river became the Bechuanaland Protectorate that later became Botswana. The results of an 1886 land commission in British Bechuanaland deprived Africans of most of their land.[27]

The Zulu Civil War (1883–84)

In January 1883 the British returned Cetshwayo to Zululand on condition that he maintain peace with other chiefs, respect the territory assigned to him, accept the advice of a British Resident and not revive the Zulu military system. Cetshwayo's authority was considerably diminished as many young men had abandoned their age regiments to marry and ambitious chiefs like Zibhebhu and Hamu had seized royal herds that the king had previously used to secure loyalty. By this time Zululand had been further reduced by the creation of the Reserve Territory; a thin buffer zone running along the border with Natal. Tensions developed between royalists (Usuthu) and supporters of Zibhebhu and Hamu. In March Cetshwayo demanded that all subjects acknowledge him or leave Zululand, and royalists mobilized 5,000 men organized on the basis of area chiefs rather than historic age regiments. At the end of the month this undisciplined army advanced east plundering and burning the Mandlakazi communities in Zibhebhu's territory. On March 30, the marauders were ambushed in Msebe Valley by a more disciplined force of about 1,500 Zulu, many equipped with firearms, led by Zibhebhu and supported by five or six white mercenaries. The Usuthu fled in panic and were pursued. While Zibhebhu lost just 10 men, it is likely that several thousand Usuthu perished. Hamu then joined Zibhebhu and their combined forces ravaged Usuthu communities across northern Zululand driving many into the South African Republic (Transvaal). In May and June Cetshwayo assembled men at his rebuilt capital of oNdini (Ulundi). An army of 3,000 Usuthu under Dabulamanzi, the king's half brother, set out from oNdini

Cartography by Fungai Madzongwe

but turned back at the Black Mfolozi River when they saw the Mandlakazi. Since the Usuthu had to regain their land for the upcoming planting season, Cetshwayo planned an all-out offensive against Zibhebhu. However, the Mandlakazi leader's spies found out and he rallied 3,000 men at his homestead. Marching 50 kilometers in one night, Zibhebhu and his men attacked oNdini on the morning of July 21. The Usuthu were unprepared and when their hastily assembled battle line was outflanked, they broke and ran, and oNdini was burned. Cetshwayo was wounded while escaping to the Nkandla Forest and many Usuthu leaders were killed. In this "Battle of oNdini," Zibhebhu lost just seven men while hundreds of Usuthu were slain.

After failing to rally support, Cetshwayo took refuge at the British Residence at Eshowe in mid-October 1883 where he died of apparent poisoning in early February 1884. Dinuzulu, Cetshwayo's teenage son and heir, was proclaimed king by surviving Usuthu leaders Ndabuko and Mnyamana

who acted as his guardians. With Zibhebhu in control of northern Zululand, many Usuthu were threatened with starvation as they could not cultivate. Desperate Usuthu leaders turned to Transvaal Boers who had been pressing into Zulu territory for some years. Dinuzulu was taken to a farm in the South African Republic. Dabulamanzi gathered 2,000 royalist men in the Nkandla Forest where on May 10 they repulsed a patrol of black colonial police led by the British Resident. Calling themselves "Dinuzulu's Volunteers," around 350 mounted Boers from Wakkerstroom and Utrecht escorted the teenage king back into Zululand in May. Toward the end of that month the Boers proclaimed Dinuzulu king at a gathering of 9,000 Zulu and Dinuzulu signed away a large chunk of land to the Boers. At the beginning of June an army of 7,000 Zulu, supported by 120 Boers under Lucas Meyer—which included a young Louis Botha who would become South Africa's first prime minister—advanced cautiously into Mandlakazi territory. With only 3,000 men and a few white mercenaries, Zibhebhu directed his people to retreat east to the Lubumbo Mountains. With the Usuthu-Boer force approaching from the west, Zibhebhu used his cattle and noncombatants as bait by positioning them across the Mkhuze River on its north bank. He concealed his fighting men in an ambush position just south of the river near where he expected the Usuthu to cross. On June 5, Dinuzulu personally led the advance of his men in the classic "chest and horns" formation that prematurely sprung the Mandlakazi ambush causing them to lose the element of surprise. Although some of the Usuthu tried to flee, fire from their Boer allies drove them toward the enemy. Cut off from retreat across the Mkhuze River and driven back by Boer firepower, Zibhebhu's men were slaughtered. While the number of casualties in the "Battle of Tshaneni" is unknown, the Usuthu and Boers made off with 60,000 cattle. Zibhebhu escaped on horseback and in September he moved around 6,000 Mandlakazi, about one third of his subjects, into a special location the British assigned him in the Reserve Territory. In August, Dinuzulu gave 800 Boers over 1 million hectares in northern Zululand and authority over all the Zulu who lived there. In turn, Meyers became the president of the New Republic that maintained Dinuzulu as a puppet. Many Zulu moved south while some resisted the Boers who raided and burned their homes. It was this civil war, rather than British invasion in 1879, that destroyed independent Zulu power.[28]

Conclusion

Warfare was central to both the rise and decline of Britain's confederation scheme in South Africa. While the British tried to gain Boer support by using

military might to subjugate the remaining powerful African states, this failed because of costly rebellions, particularly in the Transvaal. By the late 1870s firearms had proliferated across the region and were used to some extent by all combatants. The main difference between the various adversaries was knowledge and skill in firearm employment. The Xhosa, Zulu, and Sotho had many guns—including modern ones—but they had difficulty making effective use of their weapons, whereas concentrated colonial firepower proved devastating to their mass frontal attacks. Although British volley fire and artillery devastated African armies, it was not that effective against the Boers because of their excellent marksmanship skills, use of cover, and fire and movement tactics. The military use of terrain was central with the Pedi, Sotho, and Boers defending mountain strongholds. Lack of knowledge of the ground contributed to British defeats in Zululand and at Majuba Hill. When the Xhosa, Mpondomise, and Tlhaping tried to use rough terrain or fortifications to their advantage, it was as a last resort and these were easily surrounded. Poor leadership was important in several instances as Sarhili, Colley, and some Zulu leaders, all of whom should have known better, sent their men into hailstorms of gunfire. A common feature in most of these wars was the overwhelming colonial use of African allies such as Swazi mercenaries, Fingo levies, and the NNC. The only exception was the Transvaal Rebellion though both sides employed Africans as scouts and logistical workers.

CHAPTER 4

Gold Wars (1886–1910)

During the late nineteenth century "Scramble for Africa," European rule fairly quickly expanded from the coastline to the interior of the continent. In southern Africa, the discovery of gold in the Transvaal in 1886 led to a rapid shift in regional economic power from the British-dominated coast to the interior Boer republics of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State. This opened the possibility of the Boers making a strategic alliance with one of Britain's imperial rivals, such as Germany, that had embarked on the colonization of South West Africa in 1884. While the Transvaal government of President Paul Kruger gained wealth by taxing its fast-growing mining economy, the conservative Boer land-owning elite was generally hostile to the development of industrial capitalism. Particularly galling to the mine owners was the Transvaal state's monopoly on the sale of dynamite, increasingly important as mines went deeper, which was criticized for its low quality and high price. Mining capitalists began to believe that their long-term success would be better facilitated by a different administration. In the early 1890s Cecil Rhodes, premier of the Cape Colony, mining magnate, and dreamy British imperialist, sought to outflank the Boers by orchestrating the colonial conquest of the territory between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers (later named Southern Rhodesia, today's Zimbabwe), largely because he mistakenly believed that it contained another huge deposit of gold. In 1895 tensions between the British and the Boers were enflamed by the Jameson Raid, Rhodes's failed attempt to overthrow the Kruger regime by invading the Transvaal. The imperial British government used the issue of the uitlanders, white foreigners who had come into the republic because of the gold rush, to undermine the Transvaal state and create a pretext for war. The British knew that if the uitlanders, mostly British in origin, were given the vote, they would bring about a pro-imperial government in the Transvaal. The Boers, however, did not want to meekly surrender their independence.

Expansion of the Transvaal

In the 1890s the Transvaal government, strengthened by its mining wealth, embarked on a series of campaigns to conquer the remaining independent African groups on its northern frontier. Since the British had eliminated the Pedi threat in the late 1870s, the Transvaal Boers could now expand elsewhere. During the 1880s the Gananwa of the north experienced increased Boer demands for labor, livestock, land, and taxes. They were, however, able to resist the Boers because many had acquired firearms through wage labor at the diamond or gold mines. Under Piet Joubert, one of the largest commandos in Transvaal history was mobilized in 1894. Made up of groups from all over the republic, the force totaled around 4,000 European and 2,000 African fighters supported by new cannons and Maxim guns (early machine guns). Most of the Europeans were Boers but some British participated because the 1883 Commando Law had made all white inhabitants of the state liable for military service. The same law enabled the Transvaal to requisition supplies from foreign companies operating within its borders.The uitlanders objected to military service without voting rights, and this enflamed tensions between the Transvaal and Britain.

According to historian Tlou John Makura, the Boer-Gananwa War was fought in four increasingly harsh phases. In the first phase, from May to mid-June 1894, the Boer army cut off peripheral African communities from the Gananwa capital at Blouberg Mountain. From June 12 to 29, during the second phase, the Transvaal force assaulted the mountain stronghold from all sides, which, however, failed to dislodge the Gananwa as they had taken shelter in deep caves. During the third phase, from July 1 to 19, the Boers attempted to bury the Gananwa, by dynamiting their caves. This also failed because of the area's topography and effective Gananwa small-arms fire from the caves. In addition, mine owners objected to the waste of a precious resource. The Boers then resorted to "smoking out" the Gananwa, by spraying the bush and caves with paraffin, which was then ignited by artillery fire. With the Gananwa refusing to surrender, the Boers laid siege to the mountain and denied the defenders access to water. With their crops destroyed and cattle seized, at the end of July, many starving and dehydrated Gananwa surrendered.[1]

When Makhado died in 1895, his son Mphephu tried to unite the Venda groups but failed because a German missionary influenced other Venda leaders against the idea. In October 1898 Joubert led a Transvaal army of 4,000 Boers supported by artillery and many Swazi, Tsonga, and Venda allies into Mphephu's territory in the Zoutpansberg. The Boers built a series of forts close to the Venda stronghold at Swunguzwi Mountain. On October 21, a group of Venda fired at some Boers building a fort at Rietvlei. However, Venda

gunpowder was of such poor quality that the volley did little and the attackers were driven off by Boer artillery. On November 16, Joubert launched an attack on three sides of Swunguzwi. After putting up some token resistance the Venda withdrew under cover of thick mist. The Boers then burned Mphephu's capital. Around 10,000 Venda, including Mphephu, eluded the Boers and fled north into British-ruled Southern Rhodesia. This marked the conquest of the last independent African group in the Transvaal, and the following year the town of Louis Trichardt was established in the Zoutpansberg.[2]

The South African War (1899–1902)

In October 1899, as the chances of a diplomatic settlement over the uitlander issue diminished, the two Boer republics launched a preemptive strike on British territories before the British could ship an expeditionary force to the region.[3] In the Boer republics, different groups saw the coming war with Britain in different ways. The Pretoria press saw it as necessary to ensure the survival of the Boer republican state. Rural Boer patriarchs in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State wanted to defend their influence. Ordinary Boer farmers wanted to protect their individual homes from external threat and supported the republican state because it had been devoting one-third of its annual budget to relief of poor whites. Boer women imagined the war as a defense of traditional community from outsiders. Believing the mineral resources as a divine reward, some Boers perceived the war as an antialien struggle and dreamed that it would lead to the creation of a greater Boer republic across all of South Africa. Some African servants and workers remained loyal to the Boers. However, many Africans and foreign Europeans saw the brewing conflict as an opportunity to overthrow the republics. Between May and October 1899 around 100,000 blacks and another 100,000 foreign whites fled the Transvaal for the Cape and Natal. On the British side, the aims of the imperial government and mining interests were the same: they sought to establish a friendly regime in the Transvaal that would move toward federation with British territories. The British wanted to confine the conflict to South Africa, whereas the Boers—given their comparative weakness—were eager to call upon diplomatic assistance from Germany and Russia though this was never a real possibility.

After the Jameson Raid of 1895, the Boer republics had used revenues from taxation of the mining industry to purchase over a million pounds worth of modern weapons. The Transvaal spent one-third of its budget on defense. New Mauser repeating rifles were imported from Germany: 37,000 for the Transvaal and 13,000 for the Orange Free State. At the beginning of

the conflict the Boers had over 100 mobile artillery pieces and among them were new Krupp guns, which were better than British models. Although some Boer officers were trained in the employment of modern artillery, the republics lacked the capacity to manufacture munitions in large numbers and had a stock of only 108,000 artillery shells before the outbreak of war. During the conflict they could not acquire more shells as the British blockaded regional ports and pressured European arms companies not to sell to the republics. Despite some military improvements, republican forces still relied on raising commandos, by which individual Boers would be called up for unpaid obligatory military service and were expected to bring their own horses and guns. Leaders of commandos were elected and battle plans discussed and voted on in councils of war. Although motivated by powerful ideals of manhood, Calvinist Christianity, and national freedom, Boer absenteeism became a serious problem. Boer forces lacked a formal logistics system and relied on soldiers' wives and black servants who were often brought along to tend horses, carry rations, and cook and treat the wounded. Black auxiliaries (agterryers), numbering around 10,000 at the start of the conflict, also performed military functions such as scouting and sentry duty. In October 1899 the Boer republics had 55,000–60,000 available men and deployed around 35,000–42,000 in the opening campaign. Through the conflict the Boers were supported by around 2,000 foreign volunteers including Germans, Dutch, French, Italians, Irish, Americans, Greeks, Russians, and a Jewish Ambulance Unit.[4]

British desire for a negotiated settlement that would preempt war meant that their garrison in the Cape and Natal was weak, consisting of only two cavalry regiments, six infantry battalions, and three light field artillery batteries. Once the conflict began, however, the British mobilized fairly quickly and between October 1899 and the end of January 1900 some 112,000 regular soldiers were shipped to South Africa. Despite numerical superiority, the British army had many problems, mostly because of their recent history of colonial wars against poorly armed indigenous groups. The British had failed to learn from their defeat during the Transvaal Rebellion, which was blamed on the incompetence of the Indian Army. While the British had more artillery than the Boers, the standard practice of firing from forward positions to produce shock and awe was not suited to modern warfare. British soldiers had replaced their distinctive red coats with less conspicuous khaki uniforms in the 1880s and their new Lee series of repeating rifles were similar to Boer weapons. British infantry training had slightly improved during recent years but most recruits were urban men who were physically unfit and had little experience operating at night and moving

over rough ground. Whereas the Boers had developed an effective intelligence network in neighboring British territories, the British knew almost nothing about the strength and location of Boer forces and lacked accurate maps. More important, British commanders were not experienced in leading or supplying the massive forces they would need in South Africa.

The conflict began with a Boer invasion of British territories. Boer plans hinged on quickly winning a two-front war, acquiring international sympathy, and negotiating from a position of strength. The strategic plan of both Boer republics had been partly conceived by Transvaal Attorney General Jan Smuts who had little military experience. Though there was characteristic disagreement among Boer commanders, their initial plan was to capture all of Natal, making it difficult for British forces to land on the coast, and at the same time to occupy a large portion of the Cape Colony to cut off the main north-south British rail line. Commandos moved west into Griqualand West and Bechuanaland, south into the Cape and east into Natal. The war began on October 12, 1899, with a skirmish at Kraaipan railway, where 800 Boers under Koos de la Rey ambushed a British-armored munitions train on its way to Mafeking 30 miles to the north.

The Boers concentrated their efforts on Natal because British defenders were closer to the border and the Orange Free State government was not enthusiastic about launching a major invasion of the Cape from its territory. Natal was invaded by a combined force of 14,000 Transvaal Boers under Joubert and 6,000 Orange Free State Boers under Marthinus Prinsloo. The British commander, Major General Sir William Penn Symons, did little to prepare his forces and they did not dig in. On October 19, 1899, a forward Boer unit pushed to Elandslaagte on the rail line just south of Dundee and Glencoe, captured a British supply train, and cut contact between Dundee and British headquarters at Ladysmith. On October 20, the Boers occupied the high ground around Dundee and bombarded the town. British artillery could not respond effectively as the Boer guns were out of their range. Although surprised, the British repositioned their guns and managed to scatter about 1,000 Boers. Penn Symons led a frontal assault, in which he was killed, that captured Boer positions on Talana Hill and saved Dundee. The Boers had suffered 140 casualties, whereas the British sustained 546, which constituted 10 percent of their Natal force. The next day British infantry and cavalry conducted a pincer movement on Elandslaagte, supported by a bombardment of 18 field guns. The 1,000 Boer defenders fled and many were slaughtered by pursuing British lancers. Successful Boer attacks on Lombard's Nek and Nicholson's Nek as well as rumors of Orange Free State commandos massing for a move on Ladysmith caused the British, lacking sufficient forces to defend such a broad area, to

retreat to Ladysmith. Joubert's force, which had failed to pursue the British aggressively, abandoned the advance on Durban and besieged Ladysmith for the next four months. Historian Bill Nasson sees this as one of the worst Boer errors of the war as it locked them into a protracted siege that did not favor the highly mobile and flexible nature of the commando and gave the British a free hand to land forces at Durban.[5]

In pursuit of the second Boer objective, to occupy part of the Cape, Transvaal General Piet Cronje led around 9,000 Boers supported by a dozen guns toward Mafeking, the largest rail depot between Kimberley and Bulawayo in Southern Rhodesia. Since the British had neglected the defenses of Mafeking, residents called on Colonel R. S. S. Baden-Powell, commander of the Bechuanaland Protectorate Regiment. With 750 trained soldiers and 450 local volunteers and very little artillery, Baden-Powell harassed the advancing Boers and built a ring of trenches and small forts around the town. The siege began on October 14, 1899, and lasted for the next seven months. Cronje made almost no aggressive moves against the British, and within a few weeks, many of the idle Boers had gone home, leaving only 2,000 men behind. In the siege of Mafeking both sides armed African allies. The Boers reestablished their old alliance with the Rapulana Rolong, arming 300 of them to man the trenches while Baden-Powell, who denied food to trapped African refugees, armed 500 Tshidi Rolong to defend Mafeking's African township.

On October 15, 4,800 Boers, commanded by the Free State's General Christiaan Wessels, began what would turn into a four-month siege of Kimberley. Since this was the headquarters of the De Beers Diamond Company of Cecil Rhodes, who was also trapped, the manpower, engineering skill, and resources of the mining industry were diverted to protect the town. The defenders consisted of 400 British regulars with an artillery battery as well as 3,000 volunteers from De Beers. Tunnels were dug as bombardment shelters, 70-feet-tall mine dumps became fortified observation posts, and barbed wire obstacles were laid in front of trenches. Rhodes meddled constantly in military issues and eventually set up his own heliograph to send personal messages to higher authorities. As with other sieges in this conflict, whites survived because rations for blacks were cut; almost all of the 1,500 people who died in Kimberley were Africans. Nasson points out that while these sieges seemed contrary to Boer military culture of mobility, it had been standard practice for Boers to besiege African strongholds during earlier wars. However, Mafeking and Kimberley were colonial towns with well-armed and fortified defenders, and the Boers lacked the necessary supply of artillery shells to pound them into submission.[6]

On November 1, 1899, commandos from the Orange Free State made a lightning strike across the Orange River to raid Cape farms and settlements. They captured the towns of Aliwal North, Dordrecht, Albert, Barkly East, and Colesberg, the last of which was in striking range of the important Naauwport railway junction. In these occupied areas the Boers commandeered African labor and property, which led to African resistance. Taken by surprise, Cape officials organized a 4,000-man African contingent to guard the Transkei. Despite these Boer successes, they failed to capture a bridge on the Orange River, and the much anticipated rising of Cape Boers did not happen.

The two-front strategy proved too much for limited Boer resources and coordination abilities. Although Boer preemptive strikes had caught the British off guard, they did not penetrate British territory far enough to create the conditions by which they could force a negotiated settlement. The rapid Boer advance quickly became bogged down in a series of protracted and ineffectual sieges. Relatively young Boer commanders such as Koos de la Rey, Christiaan de Wet, and Louis Botha blamed this on old and lethargic generals such as Joubert and Cronje.

The British commander in South Africa, General Redvers Buller, arrived at Cape Town on October 31, 1899, along with the first contingents of the British expeditionary force. Although the initial plan was to begin in the Cape advancing up the railway to Bloemfontein, Johannesburg, and then Pretoria, Buller changed this plan as he wanted to confront the largest of the Boer contingents, which was in Natal. Buller divided his 47,000 men into two forces. Lieutenant General Lord Methuen would lead 20,000 men up the western rail to relieve Kimberley and then invade the Orange Free State. Part of this effort involved detachments under Lieutenant Generals William Gatacre and John French, driving the Boers out of the Cape Colony. Buller led the remaining 27,000 men who were sent to Natal to relieve Ladysmith.

On November 23, Methuen led his first division of 8,000 men from Orange River Station near the western border of the Orange Free State toward Kimberley via the Modder River. North of the Orange River near Belmont, Commandant Jacobus Prinsloo and 2,000 Boers occupied a hill position intending to hold off the British until Cronje could send reinforcements from Mafeking. Methuen decided to take the hill in a night attack but bad maps and lack of reconnaissance meant that at dawn his men were caught out in the open in a Boer cross fire. The British, however, swarmed the hill with overwhelming numbers, taking heavy casualties, and the Boers withdrew north up the railway. Although De la Rey brought reinforcements from Mafeking, many demoralized Boers had deserted by then, which meant that their total force was

down to 2,000. De la Rey then established fortified positions on an arc of hills near Graspan that, on November 25, were bombarded and overwhelmed by the British. The British suffered 300 casualties, which was more than double that of the Boers, who once again withdrew. De la Rey abandoned his tactic of defending hills, because they were vulnerable to artillery bombardment. He then entrenched 3,000 Boers in a well-concealed reverse slope position running in front of the Modder River. This would, he reasoned, give the Boers the element of surprise and with the river behind them they would be unable to flee. Believing that the Boers were retreating toward Magersfontein, the last settlement on route to Kimberley, Methuen led his force toward the Modder River on November 28, fell into the Boer ambush, and was pinned down the entire day. Out of 10,000 attacking British soldiers, 500 men were wounded or killed. Instead of exploiting their success, the Boer council of war voted for an orderly night withdrawal. Methuen organized 13,000 men for what he believed would be the final push on Kimberley. At the same time Cronje sent reinforcements to the Boer positions around Magersfontein Mountain, where De la Rey once again chose not to occupy the high ground. Eight thousand and five hundred Boers deployed in a crescent-shaped position in low ground with deep, concealed trenches fronted by low barbed wire entanglements. The British advanced straight along the railway, and on December 10, Methuen ordered a bombardment of the mountain, where he thought the Boers were hiding. That night the 4,000-man Highland Brigade was sent to approach the mountain in preparation for a dawn attack. At first light the highlanders were caught 600 yards from the mountain and the Boers, concealed in the low ground, opened fire on them. To make matters worse the highlanders were struck by misdirected British artillery. The British withdrew, having suffered 1,000 casualties to the Boers' 250. The Boers held Magersfontein for the next three months.

In the Cape Midlands, mounted British troops under French spent three months skirmishing with the Boers around Colesberg. On December 9, 1899, Gatacre led an attempted night assault on Stormberg junction, but his force became lost and exhausted. The next morning the British had to attack uphill against well-prepared Boers on the Kissieberg range. The results were disastrous; the demoralized British retreated. In the confusion Gatacre forgot to order the withdrawal of a 600-man unit that ultimately surrendered to the Boers. Gatacre regrouped his force at Queenstown, where they remained until March 1900. On January 5, 1900, some 4,000 Boer defenders at Colesberg inflicted heavy casualties on a 2,000-strong British force under French that attacked at night.

On the Natal front, in mid-December 1899 Buller led 18,000 men up the rail line from Frere toward Ladysmith. Transvaal commander Louis Botha

attempted to block the British by constructing a trench system on a chain of hills just north of Colenso. News of defeats in the west prompted Buller to attack these positions directly to inflict a swift and decisive defeat on the Boers. The British advanced over open ground toward unknown enemy positions. On December 13, British bombardment of the hills, which had been meant to suppress the Boers while the British moved up, failed to have much impact because of the rocky terrain. On December 15, British artillery commander Colonel C. J. Long, without informing Buller, ran up his guns a half mile ahead of the advancing infantry in order to blast the Boers at close range. While this had worked against the Sudanese in 1898, here the British artillery encountered intense Boer rifle fire and had to abandon many of their guns, which were subsequently captured. Around the same time an advancing brigade under Major General Arthur Hart was caught in Boer small arms fire from three sides, which inflicted 400 casualties in 30 minutes. Faced with another Majuba, Buller ordered a withdrawal. In total, the British had sustained 1,130 casualties, whereas the Boers had suffered only 40. In Britain, the combined losses at Magersfontein, Stormberg, and Colenso became known as "Black Week" and Redvers Buller, dubbed "Reverse" Buller by his troops, was removed as overall British commander in South Africa. However, the Boers failed to take advantage of this situation and stuck to maintaining their sieges.

Command of British forces in South Africa was taken over by Field Marshal Lord Frederick Sleigh Roberts, who arrived at Cape Town, together with his chief of staff Lord Horatio Herbert Kitchener, on January 10, 1900. Just after Black Week, 47,000 British soldiers reached South Africa, and by the end of 1899, another 20,000 regulars and 20,000 volunteers were on their way. On January 10, Buller, retained as commander in Natal, tried another advance toward Ladysmith but was slowed down by flooded rivers and too much baggage. The British attempted to outflank Colenso but managed only a series of badly executed attacks. On January 20 and 21, two British assaults on Twin Peaks were repulsed. In a night attack, the British overwhelmed a small Boer contingent on Spion Kop from which they intended to pour fire down onto neighboring Boer positions. However, Spion Kop offered little cover for the British and the hard ground was almost impossible to entrench. The next morning, January 23, the British on Spion Kop were exposed to a deadly crossfire of artillery and rifles from surrounding Boer positions including Twin Peaks. The British plan had backfired. British reinforcements were slaughtered as they were caught in the open and fear of hitting their own men meant that British commanders failed to provide supporting artillery fire on the Boers. Although Buller wanted to continue the catastrophic British operation on Spion Kop, confusion among British officers led to a sudden withdrawal from the position

on the evening of January 24. Around the same time a diversionary attack by the Royal Rifle Corps around the flanks of Twin Peaks and Spion Kop drove off many of the Boer defenders. On January 25, Louis Botha made a symbolic act by personally leading a small group of Boers unopposed to the summit of Spion Kop. In reality, the Boer defensive line was near collapse as demoralized men began to desert. Botha's leadership was the only thing that held them together. Both sides had suffered badly though the British had the worst of it. At Spion Kop 1,100 British soldiers had been killed or wounded compared to just over 300 Boers. British casualties were carried away from Spion Kop by stretcher bearers from the Natal Indian Ambulance Corps that included M. K. Gandhi.[7] Deneys Reitz, a Boer teenager who witnessed the battle and who would command a British battalion in the First World War, later remembered that while his side sustained serious casualties "a worse sight met our eyes behind the English schanses. In the shallow trench where they had fought the soldiers lay dead in swathes, and in places they were piled three deep."[8]

On February 5, Buller tried to punch through the Boer line at Vaalkranz but was repelled by heavy fire and a surprise Boer counterattack through cover of smoke from a grassfire that the Boers had set. On February 7, the British once again withdrew, having suffered another 400 casualties. On February 17, Buller yet again tried to break through to Ladysmith. This involved a series of well-rehearsed attacks on a string of defended hills east of Colenso. Committing his entire 25,000-man force to this operation, Buller ensured that there was better coordination between artillery and infantry so that bombardments could be lifted just before an assault. The Boer defensive line along the Thukela River collapsed. However, when Buller tried to push his men across a pontoon bridge on the Thukela, they were ambushed and pulled back after taking 1,400 casualties. On February 27, the British renewed their attack supported by heavy shelling, which caused the Boers to begin a slow withdrawal from Natal. British forces entered Ladysmith the next day.

Roberts radically changed the British approach to the war. For the British, the main problem in South Africa was the vastness of the country and the open terrain. In response, they would concentrate on trapping the Boers through a series of well-planned and coordinated encircling movements that would depend on deception and surprise. To do this, the British would have to improve their mobility and logistics. Numerical superiority was also important. In early 1900 the British had 180,000 men in South Africa, including contingents from Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Under Roberts's command, British soldiers practiced shooting and concealment, subordinate commanders were given more authority to exercise initiative, accurate maps were produced, and African spies were recruited to spread

disinformation among the Boers. A new cavalry division was created with every infantry battalion providing one mounted company. Settler volunteers were organized into irregular mounted rifle units. By the end of the conflict, the British had brought half a million horses from various parts of the world into South Africa of which two thirds would be ridden to death. The British also took over the rail system and created a unified transportation network.

In February 1900, Roberts kicked off his offensive in the Cape by moving a huge force west along the railway toward Kimberley and then suddenly diverting east to a point just south of Bloemfontein. Roberts expected that the Boers would pull forces away from Kimberley, Mafeking, the Cape midlands, and Natal to defend the Orange Free State capital, thereby reducing the operational area. Cronje, who had received false reports from African agents of the British, pulled in his 8,000 men to defend Magersfontein because he thought the enemy was making a direct push on Kimberley. This proved incorrect because on February 11 the British cut east in a wide circle and outflanked Cronje's position and then constantly changed direction in order to confuse the Boers. Between February 11 and 15, the Boers threw out a thin crescent defense to the south and at the same time French's cavalry was able to secure several crossing points on the Orange River. The British then advanced on Kimberley, causing the Boers to abandon both that town and Magersfontein. On February 17, the British cavalry caught up with Cronje's 5,000 retreating Boers on the Modder River near Paardeberg. The next day 15,000 British infantry under Kitchener arrived and immediately launched an assault on the Boers who, reinforced by the arrival of 1,500 men under Ignatius Ferreira, responded with heavy fire and a diversionary counterattack on a hill eventually called "Kitchener's Kopje." Kitchener's assault resulted in 1,300 British troops killed or wounded compared to 300 Boers. Roberts arrived on February 19 and took over command. Cronje, although urged by subordinate commanders to pull out before he was completely encircled, decided to confront the British. Over the next week the British, who brought up heavy howitzers, inflicted a sustained and intense bombardment on the Boers. On February 27, Roberts launched an aggressive infantry attack that came to within 50 yards of the Boer positions. At that point groups of Boers began to raise white flags and within a short time they had all surrendered, including Cronje. Four thousand Boers were captured, which represented 10 percent of the republican army, and another 400 were killed or wounded. Among the British there were 1,300 casualties. Reitz wrote that when he learned about the Paardeberg surrender "the whole universe seemed to be toppling about our ears . . . it looked that morning as if the Boer cause was going to pieces before our eyes."[9]

News of the disaster at Paardeberg caused many of the Boers in the Cape midlands, under De la Rey and Hendrik Schoeman, and in the west to withdraw toward Bloemfontein. Republican home front morale fell and many Boer fighters deserted. With Cronje a prisoner and Joubert's death from natural causes, Boer leadership passed to the younger and more dynamic generation of commanders. Louis Botha became commandant-general of the Transvaal. Christiaan de Wet became commandant-general of the Orange Free State, De la Ray was handed more authority and Jan Smuts was given more opportunity to prove himself on operations.

Although Roberts believed that capturing the republican capitals would end resistance, the largely agrarian Boer society did not identify with central towns. As the massive British army advanced toward Bloemfontein, De Wet mustered 6,000 Boers, who were deployed in a 22-mile long front along both sides of the Modder River. The desperate plan was to rely on accurate rifle fire to repel the British. On March 7, 1900, Roberts launched an extended encircling movement around the Boer lines. President Kruger was visiting the front that morning and fears that he would be captured by French's flanking cavalry caused a general Boer retreat to Bloemfontein. Robert's 40,000 men marched toward Bloemfontein looting and burning farms and seizing livestock. The advance was held up for one day when De la Rey, leading 1,500 Boers, clashed with French's 10,000 strong cavalry division at Driefontein though the likelihood of British encirclement caused the Boers to withdraw. Bloemfontein fell to the British on March 13 and Free State President M. T. Steyn fled north by rail. While the capture of a small town of several thousand did not have much strategic significance, the fall of a Boer capital had symbolic impact and would support further British advance north toward Pretoria. Problems with hygiene and sanitation among British troops in Bloemfontein caused a typhoid outbreak, and by the end of April 1,000 soldiers had died. Occupying the Bloemfontein area, Roberts demanded that former Boer commandos surrender their arms and take an oath of submission or face confiscation of property.

On March 17, Boer leaders held a war council and decided to continue the struggle, though with a different approach. De Wet urged the commandos to enhance mobility by abandoning wagon laagers, wheeled transport, and children and older women. Smuts proposed that landdrosts form recruitment committees to comb rural areas for selfless and patriotic young men who would not worry about leaving their farms. However, between March and July 1900, 12,000–14,000 Boers surrendered to the British. Although some Boer leaders wanted to destroy the Transvaal gold mines to deny their wealth to the British, Kruger prevented this act as he believed the Boers would need

mine revenue and some Boer elites had connections to the mining industry. Realizing that the British could not be driven off but that their operations could be made very costly, De Wet launched a campaign to harass British forces dispersed around Bloemfontein. On March 31, De Wet and 400 Boers supported by several Krupp field guns surprised a British detachment near the water pumping station at Sannaspost east of Bloemfontein. The British had neglected to deploy scouts while marching from Thaba Nchu to Bloemfontein. There were 150 British casualties and 480 were captured; on the Boer side, only 5 were killed with 11 wounded. In addition, the Boers captured several artillery pieces, a large amount of small arms and ammunition, and some horses. One reason for this spectacular Boer success was that they shot the horses pulling the British guns, thereby preventing their deployment. De Wet had achieved this by moving his force at night and hiding in undulating ground during the day. In early April, De Wet, who by this time had a total of 1,500 Boers under his command, took a detachment of 800 men and struck the British at Mostert's Hoek near Reddersberg 30 miles south of Bloemfontein. Approaching quickly, the Boers suppressed the British position with a light artillery bombardment and when faced with encirclement the British surrendered. Five hundred and ninety British soldiers were killed, wounded, or captured. With these sudden successes, Free State Boers who had taken a loyalty oath to the British returned to their commandos. In addition, Free State forces were strengthened by Cape Boer rebels and foreign volunteers such as Irish and Russians. In April, De Wet and 6,000 men besieged Wepener, a town on the border with Basutoland, for two weeks before it was relieved. During the siege, 3,000 Sotho volunteers prevented the Boers from attempting a flanking move against Wepener and under cover of darkness they delivered supplies to the town and brought out the wounded. Effective scouting enabled De Wet's Boers to escape being trapped by the enemy relief force.

On May 3, 1900, Roberts resumed the delayed British advance to Pretoria, 300 miles to the north. At the same time Buller's force was moving slowly through Natal toward the mountain pass into the Transvaal. Botha took his commandos out of Natal and moved west to the Sand River area to face Roberts's main thrust. Boers blew up bridges on the Vet and Sand rivers. Botha's commandos clashed with French's cavalry for one day but withdrew to avoid being outflanked. On May 10, the British main force crossed the Sand River despite Boer resistance and two days later seized Kroonstad, which had been the location of important Boer war councils and the temporary home of the Free State's President Steyn, who now once again fled. At this point the British halted for a week to allow supplies to catch up and

bridges to be repaired by a corps of African laborers under military command. The Boers had not yet turned to destroying railways but some Irish volunteers did sabotage British communication lines. British soldiers away from the railway experienced supply problems and ran short on rations. During May, typhoid produced more casualties among British soldiers than the fighting of Black Week.

To the west, 700 Rhodesian mounted infantry under Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Plumer tried to lift the siege of Mafeking but were unable to do so because they had no artillery. Roberts dispatched a 2,000-man flying column under Colonel Bryan Mahon from Kimberley. All of 1,100 men under Mahon and Plumer, including units of Royal Horse Artillery, Canadian artillery, and Australian infantry, advanced on Mafeking from the north. At this time the Boer siege force consisted of 1,500 men under General J. P. (Kootjie) Snyman whose inaction resulted in the capture of a last-minute raiding party of 250 men under Sarel Eloff. On May 17, Mafeking was relieved as the British under Mahon and Plumer arrived and after a brief bombardment the Boers fled. Immediately, Baden-Powell censored press reports about the African role in defending the town and disarmed the angry Rolong.

The British conquest of the Transvaal, almost devoid of military power, now seemed certain. Baden-Powell's Bechuanaland force and Plumer's Rhodesians invaded from the west. The Rhodesian Field Force under General Frederick Carrington moved down from the north. Buller's force marched into southeastern Transvaal. With French's cavalry in the lead, the growing main body under Roberts advanced from the south. By the end of May, the British had crossed the Vaal River and captured the Vereeniging coal fields, which eased the transportation system as coal no longer had to be brought up from the south. The Boers blew up a bridge but did not damage the coal mines. There were new calls from radicals within the Boer leadership, as well as among the Irish volunteers, to destroy the gold mines but the conservative Botha would not allow this. Although he had 6,000 men at his disposal, Botha realized that this was not enough to face Roberts's massive force and he decided to abandon Johannesburg and move further north. The defense of the gold mining Witwatersrand (or Rand) area was left to a few hundred Boers under Ben Viljoen and De la Rey, who dug in around Doornkop. Forgoing artillery support, Colonel Ian Hamilton launched a massive frontal infantry assault that took over 100 casualties but routed the Boers. While there was some skirmishing around Johannesburg, most Boers who wanted to continue the fight headed north. The British and Boers agreed to a peaceful handover of Johannesburg because of their common need to dominate African workers. On May 31, the British army entered Johannesburg without

a fight. A new Rand administration made up of British uitlander elites was created, which expelled undesirable foreigners and retained the exploitive pass system for African workers. Historians have often seen Roberts's failure to press the fight against the fleeing Boers as his greatest mistake of the campaign. He had occupied the Transvaal without a military conquest.[10]

Although they had been expecting a climactic battle that would finish off the Boers, British forces under Roberts entered Pretoria on June 5, 1900, without a fight. Still, there was plenty of publicity. Although Pretoria was protected by four small forts linked by a field telephone system, the heavy cannons had been taken away for other operations. In addition, 20,000 Boers had deserted and only 7,000 could be mustered to defend the Transvaal capital. When Louis Botha and Ben Viljoen had proposed capitulation to Kruger at the start of June, De la Rey insisted that he would fight on his own. On June 2, a war council decided to continue the struggle but to abandon Pretoria as it would be impossible to defend. According to Smuts, "It was not Lord Roberts' army that they feared; it was the utter collapse of the Boer rank and file which staggered these great officers."[11] Kruger left on a train toward Portuguese East Africa and many commandos moved toward the Magaliesberg Mountains. The British abolished the Boer states by declaring the Orange River Colony and Transvaal Colony, and the neutrality oath was extended to the Transvaal. By the end of June 8,000 Transvaal Boers had surrendered and between March and July 6,000 Orange Free State Boers had done likewise. This represented one quarter of the available military manpower. The Boers who remained in the field derisively called these men "hensoppers" (Hands Uppers).[12] Smuts later wrote that by this time the Boers

> had gone through a terrible process of disillusionment. They had expected so much of their high officers who had acquired reputations for prowess and craft in the Kaffir wars, and they had found out that in many senses these so called Kaffir generals had lost the war for them. They had had implicit faith in their own military instincts and organization, and had found that this organization was the most loose, unmilitary and inefficient imaginable, that it led to the slaughter of the brave, the skulking with impunity by those who felt so inclined, the cancer of leave of absence, and the certain failure of almost all movements which required coordination between different commanders.[13]

Roberts sent French's cavalry toward the Magaliesberg to cut off the fleeing Boers, but the north was left open and many commandos escaped in that direction. On June 7, De Wet, leading a total of 8,000 Boers from the Orange Free State, took 380 men and raided British railway garrisons north of Kroonstad, cutting communications south, blowing bridges, destroying several miles of rail

line, capturing supplies, and causing around 700 British casualties. Kitchener led a force of 12,000 mounted men that chased off De Wet's Boers, who went off in different directions, but the damage had already been done. On June 11 and 12, in what would be called the Battle of Diamond Hill or Donkerhoek, 12,000 British soldiers attacked 5,000 Boers under Botha who were holding hill positions east of Pretoria. Facing British flanking attacks, the Boer left position collapsed though the right side held firm. With the British having sustained 180 casualties compared to a dozen Boers, Botha withdrew his force east toward Kruger's railway headquarters at Machadodorp. Smuts later claimed that Diamond Hill, from the Boer perspective, represented "the close of the defensive stage of the Boer War. It was followed by what the English called the guerrilla warfare, which was in essence more of an offensive than defensive nature."[14]

In July 9,000 Orange Free State Boers, led by Steyn, De Wet, and Marthinus Prinsloo, were almost trapped in Brandwater Basin by two British columns converging from the north and the east. On July 15, commandos under Steyn and De Wet broke out and escaped. However, the covering force under Prinsloo fell into chaos, partly because of squabbling subordinate commanders, and 4,500 Boers were compelled to surrender, which also meant that 6,000 horses and 4,000 sheep fell into British hands. For the Boers, this was a disaster equal to Paardeberg and De Wet and Smuts saw it as treasonous. In August Roberts moved to cut the rail line to Portuguese East Africa by advancing a British force east and having Buller's Natal army move northeast from Laing's Nek. West of Pretoria, De la Rey, commanding 7,000 Boers, attacked British posts within a 100-mile radius of the Transvaal capital and seized a railhead site at Klerksdorp, 100 miles southwest of Johannesburg. On August 4, De la Rey besieged a force of 500 British troops at Brakfontein 100 miles west of Pretoria and drove off a relief effort by the Rhodesian Field Force.

By the end of August 1900, Boer forces had been divided into three rough groups. De la Rey in the western Transvaal, Botha in the eastern Transvaal, and De Wet in the Orange Free State. Constantly on the run, they attacked trains, cut telegraph wires, burnt stores, bombarded isolated posts, and temporarily occupied small towns. The guerrilla phase of the conflict had begun. The British strengthened garrisons along rail lines south of Pretoria. Moving north to reinforce De la Rey, De Wet's men raided across a wide front that caused the British to briefly evacuate Potchefstroom. Under Methuen, 30,000 British troops pursued De Wet for six weeks and over 500 miles but encircling movements and overwhelming numbers could not catch this elusive Boer commander. Clearing the area between the Natal and Delagoa Bay railways, Buller's huge force of 20,000 ran into Botha's 5,000 Boers who were

entrenched along a 40-mile front near Machadodorp. The British assault began on August 21 and lasted for five days. With the Boers spread thin, the British exploited gaps in their line, which caused many to surrender and others to flee. This Battle of Dalmanutha or Bergendal was the last large engagement of the war. Roberts then occupied Lydenburg, Barberton, Carolina, and Nelspruit.

On September 11, Kruger went to Delagoa Bay and from there to exile in Europe, where he died in 1904. Steyn remained in South Africa and went north with 300 men. On September 13, Roberts issued a proclamation that the war was over. By the end of the month British forces had taken the border town of Komatipoort, effectively cutting off the Boers from Portuguese East Africa. Having sent away 3,000 uncommitted Boers and foreign volunteers, Botha split his Transvaal contingent in two, with one half under himself and the other under Ben Viljoen. At the start of September Roberts had officially annexed the Transvaal and in October he disbanded Buller's Natal army. Both Roberts and Buller traveled back to Britain, leaving Kitchener in command of British forces in South Africa.

Made destitute by the British scorched earth campaign, many Boers had nothing to lose by rejoining their commandos. By October 8,000–9,000 Boers, many of whom had surrendered or taken oaths, were back in the field. On October 20, De Wet's men attacked a British column on the rail line at Frederikstad. The subsequent battle lasted for five days until British reinforcements arrived from Krugersdorp and the Boers withdrew. In late October Boer forces attacked small towns with British garrisons such as Jacobsdal. Commanders such as De Wet, De la Rey, and Botha hoped to do enough damage to the British so that they would negotiate. At the end of October, Steyn, Botha, De la Rey, and Smuts held a planning session west of Pretoria in which it was agreed to stage a daring attack on the gold mines of Johannesburg to distract the British so that Boer commandos could move into the Cape and Natal. This was expected to divert British attention from destroying rural Boer society but the plan was not put into action. On November 6, Steyn and De Wet were nearly captured on a farm 50 miles northwest of Kroonstad and in a desperate rearguard action they lost 150 men along with artillery, wagons, and horses. From this point on there would be no further joint strategy. During November there was fresh Boer resistance in the Orange Free State, as British convoys were ambushed and African wagon drivers shot. In mid-November De Wet attempted to lead a force into the Cape Colony but was prevented by a British column sent after him. On November 23, De Wet's Boers attacked a British garrison at Dewetsdorp, which surrendered after three days of fighting. While the British were concentrating on De Wet, 2,000 Boers under Generals J. B. M. Hertzog and

Piet Kritzinger crossed the Orange River into the Cape on December 17. In the Transvaal, Botha and Viljoen recruited more men. In early December Boers led by De la Rey and Smuts attacked a large British convoy outside Rustenburg. One hundred and twenty British soldiers were killed, wounded, or taken prisoner; 20 African wagon drivers killed or flogged; 115 wagons burned; and many supplies seized. On December 13, Smuts, De la Rey, Christiaan Beyers, and Jan Kemp combined forces for an attack on a poorly positioned British camp in Nooitgedacht Gorge in the Magaliesberg. Taking the high ground and with a rare two-to-one advantage in numbers, the Boers inflicted 640 British casualties, which represented half of the British force. With hungry Boers looting the camp for food and commanders disagreeing over the next move, the Boers did not exploit this success and let the remaining British retreat to Pretoria.

In early January 1901 Botha and Viljoen linked up for an attack on seven British garrisons along the Delagoa Bay railway. This failed because the Boers became lost in a night fog. In the northeast corner of the Orange Free State a Boer attack killed an entire British company of 150 men. Around this time some Boer leaders renewed the scheme of distracting the British by menacing British territory. On January 27, De Wet began to move south intending to cross the Orange River to link up with Boer rebels. By the middle of February De Wet was in the Cape and using Colesberg as a base. The British sent 15 columns after him though they were hampered by poor maps and communications. De Wet's Boers, who had abandoned all artillery and wagons, eluded the British for six weeks and then moved back into the Orange Free State. Hertzog was sent west from the Orange Free State into Namaqualand, and Kritzinger took 1,000 Boers to raid the Cape midlands. They were eventually pushed back into the Orange Free State by British columns. Botha led another 1,000 men toward Natal to threaten the British supply line but was blocked by 21,000 British soldiers under French. By September 1901 Botha's force had been pushed to the southeast border with Zululand, where the British had raised 10,000–12,000 armed Zulu to prevent Boer infiltration. Botha attacked some British positions in late September and then withdrew into the Transvaal with 15,000 British troops in pursuit. In a last attempt to stimulate insurrection by Cape Boers, Smuts led 300 men deep into the Cape in August 1901 that temporarily distracted the British but failed to attract enough rebels.

In early 1901 a Boer Peace Committee attempted to bring an end to the war, though its members were generally seen as traitors by those still in the field. In late February 1901 Kitchener initiated negotiations with Botha at Middelburg on the Delagoa Bay railway. While Kitchener was ready to make

concessions, British High Commissioner Alfred Milner wanted unconditional surrender. Botha rejected a 10-point peace plan presented by the British.

During the last half of 1901 the Boers dumped all their remaining artillery and broke into small groups to attack British supply convoys, and stage dawn or night raids on British camps. The Boers attempted to make up for their small numbers by using new fighting techniques. At the end of May De la Rey ran into a British column camped at Vlakfontein in the Magaliesberg. The Boers covered their flanking attack by lighting a large grass fire accelerated by gunpowder and then stormed into the camp firing from horseback, killing 180 British soldiers while losing 41 of their own. Although the attack was daring, it had little impact as the British simply resumed searching for arms cashes. During September and October De la Rey attacked a British column in the Zeerust area of the western Transvaal, inflicting 200 casualties. The British then pursued De la Rey's force, which attacked their rearguard. On Christmas Day 1901 De Wet led 800 Boers against a British camp at Tweefontein in the Orange Free State. The British had camped on a hill but failed to guard a steep slope that the Boers managed to ascend through a gulley. In the subsequent carnage the British suffered 300 casualties and lost 500 horses and some wagons. However, in February 1902 General Henry Rawlinson directed a British encirclement that led to the surrender of 800 Boers as well as 25,000 cattle and 2,000 horses. In March De la Rey's force turned on their British pursuers in the vast country between the Mafeking railway and the Magaliesberg. In one incident the Boers ambushed a British column inflicting 380 casualties compared to 50 on their side. A subsequent Boer surprise attack on three British columns at Tweebosch led to a further 200 British casualties, compared to 35 Boers, and the capture of British commander Methuen, who, despite his campaign to burn Boer farms, was well treated. De la Rey was successful in these engagements because he concentrated on the enemy's weak points and was helped by British problems with coordination and inexperienced soldiers.

By the beginning of 1902, Boer commandos were encountering severe logistics and manpower problems while Kitchener was beginning to develop a concerted counterinsurgency campaign. The British established a Field Intelligence Department consisting of 140 officers, 2,300 white civilian agents, and thousands of black spies and scouts. The total British force of 220,000 men was divided into 100 mobile columns, each consisting of around 1,200–2,000 men, which would continuously crisscross the country searching for Boer commandos, destroying farms, and seizing livestock. Kitchener divided the former republics into small sections by creating a series of fortified iron and timber block houses linked by long barbed wire fences.

The flying columns, supported by African scouts and sometimes trains with searchlights, repeatedly swept these cordoned areas, and column commanders were given considerable freedom of action. This strategy sought to enclose the Boers and reduce their mobility. The Boers responded by breaking into smaller groups that were difficult to locate but had less firepower for offensive actions. The British enclosure system sapped Boer morale. At the same time, the British began to recruit Boers for units such as the (Transvaal) National Scouts and the Orange River Colony Volunteers. By war's end 5,500 of these "joiners" assisted the British with their knowledge of local terrain and commando tactics, such as muffling hooves and rifles with cloth so they would make less noise during night operations. Some joiners infiltrated Boer commandos to gather intelligence. With encouragement from the British, the conflict was developing into a Boer civil war between "bitterreinders" (those who would never give up) on one side and hensoppers and joiners on the other. To a large extent, these factions represented long-existing divisions within Boer society. Bitterreinders tended to be well off property owners who had lost everything in the war while joiners were often the landless poor who had long resented commando service.[15]

Beginning in December 1900, Boer noncombatants displaced and made destitute by the British scorched earth campaign were herded into refugee camps. For the British military, Boer farms served as intelligence and supply bases that had to be removed and holding their families hostage put pressure on hostile Boers to surrender. The camps would eventually contain 116,000 Boer old men, women, and children. By the end of the war squalid conditions in the camps meant that 28,000 Boer and 20,000 African inmates had died from diseases such as dysentery, measles, pneumonia, and whooping cough. Boer leaders now began to worry about the survival of their nation. Another important factor in the defeat of the Boer guerrilla war was increased African resistance. Desperate Boer groups turned to raiding African homesteads for food, which prompted the Africans to supply intelligence to the British and also fight back. For example, in the early morning of May 6, 1902, a Zulu raiding party attacked a Boer camp at Holkrantz near Vryheid. Although there were 100 Zulu casualties, 56 Boers were killed at a time when they could not afford such losses. In the north and northwest Cape the British organized mixed race men (Coloureds) into units such as the Namaqualand Scouts and Bushmanland Borderers to fight the Boers. In what has been called a revolution from below, African peasants began to occupy Boer farms in the former republics.

By the start of 1902 both sides wanted an end to this vastly destructive conflict. The British government, facing mounting criticism at home for the

conduct of the war and in particular the camps, wanted to avoid further devastation as it might jeopardize the chances of setting up a friendly civilian administration. As usual, Boer leaders were divided, with Smuts and Botha favoring negotiation, and Steyn, De la Rey, and Hertzog wanting to continue the fight. In April 1902 the Boers reopened talks with the British, who rejected demands that the republics remain independent. At this time the Boers had 15,000–17,000 men in the field, whereas the British had 250,000. Beginning in December 1901, the British refused to take any more Boer refugees into the camps, which meant that the commandos would be burdened by feeding them. Each Boer commando elected a representative to attend new peace talks held at Vereeniging, from May 15 to 31, 1902.[16] Deneys Reitz, who attended the conference but was not a delegate, wrote that

> Every representative had the same disastrous tale to tell of starvation, lack of ammunition, horses, and clothing, and of how the great block-house system was strangling their efforts to carry on the war. Added to this was the heavy death-roll among the women and children, of whom twenty-five thousand had already died in the concentration camps, and the universal ruin that had overtaken the country. Every homestead was burned, all crops and live-stock destroyed, and there was nothing left but to bow to the inevitable.[17]

On the last day of the conference the Boer delegates voted, 54–6, to concede independence. British concessions included the return of all prisoners, a general amnesty, protection of property rights, nonpunitive taxation, up to £3 million toward reconstruction, the promise of eventual self-government, assurances that black political rights would not be extended north from the Cape, and protection of the Dutch language. When news of the settlement reached the commandos many Boers were horrified. By 1907 the Boers of both the Transvaal and Orange River Colony had been granted responsible government. In 1910 the British colonies of the Cape and Natal and the two former republics combined to form the Union of South Africa, a self-ruling British dominion such as Canada and Australia. However, the memory of the war became a powerful grievance for many Boers and an important factor in the rise of Afrikaner nationalism during the early twentieth century.

Around 22,000 British imperial soldiers died out of a total of around 450,000 mobilized for the conflict. Among the Boers, 7,000 fighters died out of 70,000 who saw service. A total of around 75,000 people perished during the conflict. Ten thousand Africans served in the Boer commandos and 100,000 were employed by the British, which included 40,000 armed men. While this conflict has sometimes been referred to as the "Boer War" or the

"Second Anglo-Boer War," these names seem insufficient and historians now tend to call it the "South African War." In addition to British and Boers, Africans were involved in the conflict. While the First Anglo-Boer War had been confined to a limited area, the 1899–1902 conflict was fought in each of the four territories—the Cape, Natal, the Orange Free State, and the Transvaal—that would make up the future country of South Africa. In addition, it spilled over into neighboring areas such as Bechuanaland, had important international dimensions, such as the involvement of Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, Irish, German, and Russian troops, and the peace agreement paved the way for the creation of the Union.[18]

Zulu Rebellions (1886–1906)

German interest in the Zululand coast during the mid-1880s prompted British action to secure the area. In October 1886 the New Republic Boers agreed to limit their territorial ambitions and dropped their protection of Zulu King Dinuzulu. In January 1887 a British commission defined the boundary of the New Republic, and in May the Reserve Territory and central Zululand became the British Colony of Zululand. Extending the indirect rule system from Natal to Zululand, colonial officials planned to gradually diminish the power of traditional leaders. Dinuzulu refused to appear before the British Resident Commissioner, and local chiefs complained about having lost authority over their people within the New Republic. The payment of a colonial stipend to Zulu chiefs divided Usuthu (royalist) leaders as some like Mnyamana accepted it that represented a sign of submission but Dinuzulu rejected it. British regular soldiers, a company of mounted infantry and a cavalry squadron, were ordered into Zululand in August 1887 to support the mostly black Zululand Police. Dinuzulu repeatedly resisted efforts by colonial officials for him to return cattle seized from a subordinate ruler. In December the British allowed antiroyalist leader Zibhebhu and 700 men—they did not initially bring women and children as they knew they would have to fight—to return to their old area in Zululand where they pushed out the Usuthu. In early 1888 the demarcation of a border between the Usuthu and Zibhebhu's Mandlakazi by colonial officials clearly showed a bias toward the latter. Dinuzulu withdrew to caves around Ceza Mountain with over 1,000 armed men and Usuthu leader Ndabuko, the king's uncle, assembled another 1,000 and vowed to destroy Zibhebhu.

Tensions were increased by the upcoming June 1 deadline for payment of hut tax. On June 2 a colonial patrol of 66 Zululand Police, 160 mounted British regulars, and 400 Zulu levies from Mnyamana approached Ceza

Mountain to arrest Dinuzulu but were driven off. A few days later Shingana, another uncle of Dinuzulu, left the New Republic with 1,000 men to support the Usuthu rebels around the White Mfolozi River. With colonial officials calling for reinforcements, British forces in Zululand increased to 300 cavalry, 120 mounted infantry, 440 infantry, 160 Zululand Police, and 200 Sotho cavalry supported by two field guns and two Gatling guns. On the morning of June 23, Dinuzulu and Ndabuko led 4,000 men in an attack on the small colonial fort at Ivuna protected by a few Zululand Police inside and Zibhebhu's 700 men outside. Although the Usuthu employed the usual "chest and horns" tactic, Dinuzulu led around 30 horsemen with guns, some of whom were Boers with blackened faces, who charged at the centre of Zibhebhu's battle line. Outnumbered and outflanked, the Mandlakazi lost around 300 men though Zibhebhu escaped. Capturing 750 cattle, the Usuthu, who had only 20–30 men killed, returned to Ceza Mountain pursued by a few mounted Zululand Police. A column of 500 imperial troops, Zululand Police, and Sotho cavalry reached Ivuna the next day and evacuated its inhabitants. The retiring force was joined by Zibhebhu along with 200 men and 1,500 women and children. A full-scale rebellion broke out along the Lower Mfolozi River as white traders and the local magistrate were attacked. On July 2, a colonial force of 87 Zululand Police, 190 mounted British regulars, 140 Sotho cavalry, and 1,400 Zulu levies surrounded Shingana's 1,000 Usuthu in the open highlands at Hlophekhulu. Another colonial contingent, consisting of a British cavalry squadron, a mounted infantry company, and 400 Zulu, was positioned five kilometers away at Lumbe Hill to prevent a Usuthu withdrawal. At Hlophekhulu 300 Usuthu were killed and the rest scattered in all directions with Shingana escaping to the New Republic. Throughout the rest of July and into August several colonial columns intimidated Zulu communities along the Lower Mfolozi River and the coast. In July 1888 the New Republic joined the South African Republic. On August 11, a punitive expedition, led by Captain R. S. S. Baden-Powell, accidentally wandered across the Transvaal border and mistakenly attacked a group of loyal Zulu. Usuthu confidence was broken by the defeat at Hlophekhulu and Dinuzulu's supporters began to disperse. By the end of September imperial military units had withdrawn from Zululand and colonial police took over the hunt for Dinuzulu. After a short stay in the South African Republic, Dinuzulu and other fugitive Usuthu leaders surrendered at Pietermaritzburg in Natal in November but were quickly escorted back to Zululand where they were found guilty of treason and imprisoned. Dinuzulu, Ndabuko, and Shingana were exiled on St. Helena from 1890 to 1898.[19]

In the British colony of Natal, which had been granted responsible government in 1893, 100,000 Europeans and a similar number of Indians dominated around 1 million Africans. Since the African inhabitants of the original Natal colony had never been militarily conquered, European officials ruled indirectly through African chiefs. The neighboring Zulu Kingdom had been defeated by the British in 1879, torn apart by civil war in the 1880s, and then quietly annexed to Natal in 1898. Although the mineral revolution in the interior led to an expansion of settler commercial farming in Natal, the mines pulled away African labor. The years immediately after the South African War were characterized by economic recession. In 1903 the Vryheid District of the Transvaal, which had been the New Republic in the 1880s, was joined to Natal. In 1905 the Natal legislature, controlled by white farmers, imposed a poll tax on the adult male African population, on top of the existing hut tax paid by homestead heads. The purpose of the poll tax was to generate revenue for the Natal administration and to propel more African young men into wage labor.

In early February 1906 a small colonial police patrol, sent to investigate an African gathering to protest the poll tax south of the colonial capital of Pietermaritzburg, became involved in a skirmish and two white policemen were killed. The presence of independent African Christian church members in this incident served to confirm white paranoia that such movements meant to provoke resistance. Martial law was declared and a colonial army under Colonel Duncan McKenzie moved through southern Natal flogging people, burning homesteads, and seizing livestock. Seventeen men accused of having been involved in the killing of the policemen were either shot by firing squad or hung. To the north, Chief Bambatha's people, most living as tenants on white farms, faced pressures from crop failure, increased rents, and now the poll tax. When colonial authorities deposed him as chief in early March, Bambatha fled to the bush, where he rallied several hundred men and abducted his uncle who had been appointed to replace him. On April 4, his followers shot at a white magistrate sent to investigate and the next day they ambushed a police column at Mpanza, killing three Europeans. Moving east across the Thukela River into what had been the Zulu Kingdom, the rebels took refuge in the Nkandla Forest. Some chiefs who lived in the sheltered valleys to the north and west of Nkandla, similarly angry at colonial demands, joined Bambatha. However, those of the southern open grassland stayed out of the rebellion as their communities would be exposed to colonial firepower. A volunteer settler militia was formed, including a contingent of 500 mounted men from Transvaal, a Maxim gun and crew sponsored by Castle Beer Company, and Sergeant Major Gandhi's Indian stretcher bearers. On May 3, the Natal Field Force, consisting of around 5,000 armed men

and 150 wagons, left Dundee and moved toward the Nkandla Forest in search of Bambatha. Throughout May the militia destroyed Zulu communities and fought a series of skirmishes with the rebels. On the night of June 9–10 the militia discovered Bambatha's camp on the Mome River, artillery was moved to high ground, and the the colonial troops attacked at dawn. Bambatha's force was defeated and the chief's severed head subsequently brought around the colony to intimidate Africans. Of Bambatha's 12,000 followers, 2,300 had been killed and 4,700 taken prisoner.

Another phase of the rebellion began on June 19, when 500 armed Africans attacked European stores and militia 50 kilometers south of the Nkandla Forest in the densely populated valleys of the Maphumulo area. Over the next three weeks, fighting spread east to the settler farms near the coast and to the south through the sugar-producing areas close to the port of Durban. Once again, the rebels attempted to conceal themselves in densely forested valleys to reduce

Cartography by Fungai Madzongwe

the effectiveness of colonial horses and firepower. By the end of June the number of colonial soldiers in Maphumulo was increased from a few hundred to 2,500, with many returning from operations against Bambatha in Zululand. In early July, after failing to encircle a Zulu rebel group that had slipped away, McKenzie's militia went on a rampage in the Mvoti Valley looting, burning, seizing livestock, and indiscriminately shooting any fleeing African, including some "loyalists." McKenzie then learned that a large rebel force was camped in the Izinsimba Valley. On July 8, he repeated his favorite tactic of a night march to position artillery and Maxim guns on the high ground in support of an infantry assault at sunrise. In all, 447 Zulu, including key leaders such as Mashwili, were killed and the militia sustained no losses. The colonial scorched earth campaigned continued throughout the rest of the month and brought the rebellion to an end. Justifying extremely heavy African casualties, colonial authorities claimed that supposedly primitive people did not understand the destructive power of modern weapons. During the campaign, colonial soldiers defended their use of "dum dum" bullets, internationally banned because of the terrible wounds they inflicted, as necessary because savage African warriors could not be stopped by normal ammunition.

Hundreds of Africans were brought before martial law courts, and after October 1906, conventional courts, where they were convicted of treason and usually sentenced to flogging followed by two years of hard labor on the Durban docks or northern Natal mines. Among these was Dinuzulu, who had stayed out of the fighting but was convicted of treason and sentenced to four years in prison for harboring Bambatha's family. According to historian Jeff Guy, the Natal settler community was supremely confident following the South African War and the overreaction to the Zulu rebellion represented "the act of conquest that the colonists had been unable to carry out when Natal was established sixty years before."[20]

Conclusion

In the 1890s and early 1900s, warfare played a crucial role in the creation of South Africa. The development of a mining economy provided settler states such as the Transvaal and Natal with increased military capacity to complete African subjugation. Although mineral wealth made the Boer republics targets for British expansion, it gave them confidence and enabled them to acquire modern weapons. Ahead of their time, Boer tactics such as fire and movement, and concealed reverse slope defensive positions would eventually become standard modern military practice and the term commando would become shorthand for small, highly mobile forces conducting

hit-and-run operations. However, republican military organization, logistical systems, and leadership remained those of a small and isolated frontier settler society. British problems during the South African War originated mostly from a conservative military that had developed during a series of small colonial wars against poorly armed indigenous people and lack of experience with managing the huge forces needed to overwhelm the Boers who resorted to guerrilla warfare. A key difference between these two sides was that the British had the resources, time, and space to overcome their challenges while the Boers did not. Elements of British counterinsurgency against the Boers—cutting off guerrillas from civilian support, cordon and search of specific areas, and use of local allies—would become common in later twentieth-century counterinsurgency campaigns.

CHAPTER 5

World Wars (1910–48)

The military history of South Africa during the first half of the twentieth century was characterized by the establishment of a national defense force, state use of coercive power to suppress internal protest, and its participation in both world wars. In 1910 the British colonies of the Cape and Natal and the former Boer republics of the Orange Free State and Transvaal became provinces of the Union of South Africa, a self-governing dominion within the British Empire. The first government of the union was led by moderate Afrikaners Louis Botha and Jan Smuts who, although veterans of the republican side of the South African War, cooperated with the British within the new dispensation. Elected by the white minority, the union government passed racially discriminatory legislation such as the 1913 Natives Land Act that reduced economic opportunities for blacks and it was clear that the qualified nonracial franchise of the Cape was now a provincial anomaly. Having objected to the terms of union, the Westernized African elite formed the South African Native National Congress, later called African National Congress (ANC), in 1912 to pursue black political rights through the existing system. Around the same time, in 1914, the National Party was created to champion Afrikaner interests such as independence from Britain and the uplifting of their mostly impoverished supporters who felt threatened by black economic competition. Military developments in this period would be greatly intertwined with these emerging nationalist movements.

The Union Defence Force

Creating a national system of defense was one of many issues that had to be addressed by the new union government of Prime Minister Louis Botha. At the end of the South Africa War the British had abolished the Boer commando system and defense was assigned to the imperial garrison. At the South African military conferences of 1907 and 1908, British officials made it clear that only 3,500 imperial troops would be dedicated to the country's

defense and that during any future European war they would be withdrawn completely. At that time, South Africa, which faced no serious regional threats, was not a major strategic concern for the British who were determined to concentrate military and naval forces in Europe for an anticipated conflict with Germany. South Africa, like other dominions, was seen by the British mainly as a potential source of military manpower. With reference to internal security, the primary concern of the Botha administration was Boer rebellion with African resistance coming a distant second. Working out of the new Ministry of the Interior, Jan Smuts became Minister of Defense in 1910 and set about building a union defense establishment. Chaired by Smuts, the committee that prepared the South African Defence Bill was heavily influenced by British officers Lord Methuen—commander of military forces in South Africa—and Colonel Henry Lukin—commandant-general of the Cape—who supported Lord Kitchener's scheme that British settler dominions should adopt a Swiss-style military system where all adult males were members of a part-time reserve that could be mobilized quickly when required, particularly in defense of the mother country. Military volunteerism had been growing in South Africa, particularly among English-speaking whites, and from 1908 to 1910 membership in Rifle Associations, local clubs where white men practiced military skills, had increased from 6,000 to 8,000. By 1908 the Transvaal alone had 3,575 members of various volunteer paramilitary organizations and across the country 11,250 white boys had received cadet training. Smuts believed that South Africa needed a standing army of 26,000 men but the cost was prohibitive as was the option of training all white adult males for a Swiss-like reserve.[1]

During the Imperial Conference of 1911 it was decided, in the context of growing tensions in Europe, that the Union of South Africa should be responsible for its own defense and that military service should become a national undertaking. The Swiss model would be copied but only partially because of financial constraints. In 1912 the South African Defence Act created the Union Defence Force consisting of a Pretoria headquarters and three commands: Permanent Force, Active Citizen Force, and Cadets. General Christiaan Beyers, a Transvaal veteran of the South African War, became the first commandant-general of the Union Defence Force; Brigadier Lukin became inspector-general of the Permanent Force; and a core of 51 officers, after a training course in a new military school in Bloemfontein, took up positions in 13 military districts, based on magisterial districts, across the country. While the union government opted not to have its own navy because of expense, it made a financial contribution toward maintaining a

British naval presence in local waters. Compulsory cadet training was introduced for white boys between ages 13 and 17, and all white males between 17 and 25 were eligible for obligatory military service, but because of cost, only about half of them, selected by lots, had to report for duty. During wartime all white males between ages 17 and 60 were liable for military service. Blacks were excluded from military service without special permission from parliament because white politicians feared that this might be used as a justification for granting them political rights and that a multiracial army would break down racial segregation in civilian society. At the outbreak of the First World War the Union Defence Force was an all-white establishment consisting of a small Permanent Force of about 2,500 South African Mounted Rifles with an artillery battery, an Active Citizen Force of around 23,000 volunteers and conscripts receiving part-time training, and a General Reserve made up of local rifle associations and eventually recreated commandos. While the South African Police was founded in 1913, defense and policing duties were sometimes blurred as the South African Mounted Rifles conducted police duties in rural areas.

Although a defense council was established to make sure that the Union Defence Force developed as a blend of British colonial and Boer republican military traditions, it leaned more toward the British model. This alienated some nationalistic Afrikaners. Some Boers resented the khaki uniform as, during the South African War, it had come to symbolize an enemy that burned farms and detained women and children in concentration camps. British military standards of grooming meant that the characteristic beard worn on commando, a Boer symbol of manhood, was forbidden. Language became a contentious issue as rural units used Afrikaans and urban ones used English, and there was also resentment about holding training camps in cities as it seemed to elevate English and undercut wholesome rural values. Training manuals were available only in English. Afrikaners were concerned that the introduction of cadet training in schools, where the military instructors tended to be English-speaking, would anglicize their young men. Standardized British drill and training appeared to undermine the perceived frontier fighting abilities of the Boer commando. The creation of a professional military hierarchy and trained officer corps meant the demise of Boer commando traditions of elected officers, councils of war, and patriarchal leadership by powerful farmers. Beyers disliked having to answer to a British governor-general and the limitations imposed by a defense council. He packed the senior officer positions with personal supporters from traditional rural backgrounds that caused disaffection among the modernizing commanders of the mostly English and urban Active Citizen Force.[2]

The 1914 Rebellion

Like other dominions, South Africa entered the Great War through Britain's declaration of hostilities against Germany in 1914. Almost immediately, Britain requested that South Africa invade German South West Africa to seize radio stations and harbors that could be used by Germany's naval raiders threatening shipping in the Southern Hemisphere. Ambitious for South African territorial expansion, Prime Minister Botha and Defense Minister Smuts quickly began plans for the offensive. However, the newly formed National Party under J. B. M. Hertzog objected to any support of British imperialism and fondly remembered German empathy during the South African War. These feelings were shared by Commandant-General Beyers and many of the senior officers he had appointed to the Union Defence Force who resigned their commissions and gathered at the house of apocalyptic prophet Niklaas van Rensburg to plan rebellion and the creation of an independent South Africa. Preparations for a September 15 military coup were cut short when Beyers and De La Rey, traveling by car from Johannesburg to Potchefstroom to consult with fellow conspirators, decided to run a police road block and the latter was shot and killed. Beyers and others then pulled out of the scheme. Botha himself now took command of the Union Defence Force and rallied subordinate officers for a campaign in South West Africa. When the South African invasion of the neighboring German colony began in early October, the Upington force under Manie Maritz, a former "bittereinder" who had fled to South West Africa in 1902 rather than surrender, did not move as instructed that left another advancing column, "A Force" under Major General Lukin, dangerously exposed on its flank. In fact, Maritz had been one of the coup plotters and now declared South Africa independent, disarmed loyalist soldiers under his command, promoted himself to general, and made his own treaty with the Germans. On October 11, Smuts declared martial law with strict press censorship, a ban on public meetings, and collection of arms and ammunition. Hertzog's Nationalists avoided direct involvement in the rebellion but sympathized with it.

By the end of October 1914, a total of around 11,500 armed Boer rebels had been mobilized by De Wet in the Orange Free State, and Beyers and Kemp in the Transvaal. Although they briefly occupied towns and ambushed trains, the rebels lacked overall coordination. Rejecting offers of imperial assistance or the recruitment of black soldiers, Botha decided to use his force of 32,000 loyalists, mostly Afrikaners, to crush the rebellion. Botha first concentrated on the Orange Free State and, on November 12, attacked a force of 5,000 rebels under De Wet at Winburg. Partly encircled, most of the rebels surrendered though De Wet escaped only to be arrested near Kuruman in early December.

Botha then turned on Beyers's and Kemp's rebels in the western Transvaal and in an attack on Rustenburg seized 400 prisoners and drove the remainder further west. Beyers sent part of the force with Kemp to join up with Maritz and the Germans. On November 16, near Bultfontein in the eastern Orange Free State, Botha's loyalists routed the rebels under Beyers who then became a fugitive and drowned while trying to cross the Vaal River in early December. Once an insurgent group under Jopie Fourie operating near Pretoria was rounded up, the rebellion in the Orange Free State and Transvaal was over.

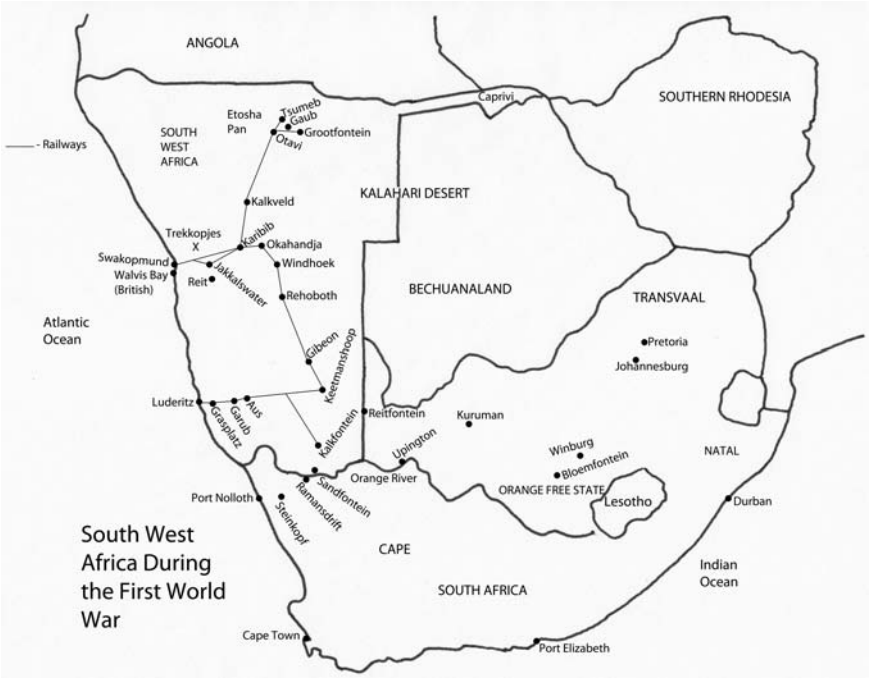
Kemp and several hundred Transvaal men rode some 1,300 kilometers across the Kalahari Desert and arrived in German territory in early December 1914. The German governor Theodor Seitz met Kemp and Maritz at the South West African town of Keetmanshoop and agreed to supply them with equipment and food. Just before Christmas, a combined German and rebel Boer offensive crossed the Orange River into South Africa and threatened Upington. Disagreements between Kemp and Maritz, and fear of Union artillery, prompted Kemp to pull out of the operation and lead his men back toward the Transvaal. The German commander, Joachim von Heydebreck, wanted to mount a two-pronged attack on Upington with Maritz's force in order to draw South African troops back from their invasion of South West Africa. However, Maritz declined to cooperate that closely with German forces as he believed it would damage support for the republican cause. The Germans then moved west 160 kilometers to attack Ramansdrift and Steinkopf. Leading 1,000 rebels supported by a small German field gun detachment, Maritz moved toward Upington in mid-January 1915. News of rebel failures elsewhere encouraged Maritz to send a message to the South African commander at Upington, Jacobus "Jaap" van Deventer, requesting surrender terms. Van Deventer's response was delayed because he had to seek guidance from his superiors and after waiting for five days Maritz launched a badly coordinated attack on Upington that was repelled. Although the Germans tried to take pressure off Maritz by redirecting their offensive toward nearby Kakamas, they also encountered stiff resistance from South African forces. On January 30, Kemp and most remaining leaders surrendered to government officers near Upington. The rebellion then fizzled with Maritz and members of the small German-organized Afrikaner Free Corps seeking sanctuary in South West Africa.

According to the official government report, around 1,000 people were killed or wounded during the rebellion. Among loyalist forces 130 were killed and 275 wounded, whereas 190 rebels were killed and 400 wounded. In the interests of national reconciliation, the Botha administration showed mercy to the defeated rebels. Jopie Fourie, who had forgotten to resign his commission,

was the only rebel executed for treason. Of the 239 rebels tried and convicted, only around 50 were still in prison by the end of December 1915. De Wet served six months of a six-year sentence; Kemp served a year and nine months out of seven years; and the prophet Van Rensburg, who was present with rebels near Upington, received an 18-month sentence. Maritz, who eventually went into exile in Angola, returned to South Africa in 1923 and served a three-year prison term. English-speaking whites considered the lenient sentences disgraceful and emerging black political leaders noticed an obvious double standard when compared to the cruel handling of Zulu rebels in 1906. Conversely, Afrikaner nationalists quickly elevated the rebels to heroic status. In August 1915, 7,000 Afrikaner women staged a march on the Union buildings in Pretoria to demand a blanket amnesty and Hertzog's National Party gained 20 new seats in the October 1915 election.[3]

South West Africa (1914–15)

In South West Africa the Germans had around 2,000 mounted European infantry and a reserve of 3,000 volunteer infantry supported by field guns,



Cartography by Fungai Madzongwe

Maxim guns, railway transport, wireless communications, and three airplanes. However, these forces were dispersed throughout the territory in 132 small units, later formed into four composite battalions. The Germans had plenty of artillery, 46 heavy guns, 11 rapid-firing cannon, and 9 light mountain guns, and ample supplies of ammunition; however, during the campaign the artillery ran out of shells because there was no fodder for the draught animals to pull the wagons. Food supplies were limited as the settlers concentrated on cattle ranching, and agricultural production among the Ovambo in the north was poor because of drought. German leadership was inconsistent as the overall military commander Von Heydebreck was accidentally killed by a premature explosion of a rifle grenade in November 1914; his obvious successor had been killed in action in late September 1914; and the new commander, Viktor Francke, was a reservist without high-level training and his chief of staff died after falling from a horse. Although the Germans made liberal use of wireless communications, this tended to give away their plans to the South Africans who were listening in. Given Germany's genocide against the Herero and Nama from 1904 to 1907, African participation in the defense of the colony was minimal. In 1915 the South African invasion force numbered 45,000 European soldiers supported by 33,000 African, Coloured, and Indian unarmed volunteers who worked as transport drivers, railway and road workers, and general labor. Although union legislation prohibited the arming of black soldiers, some Coloureds who were familiar with South West Africa were given weapons and formed a scouting detachment. The open terrain and vastness of the territory meant that horse transportation became extremely important. This is illustrated by the fact that at the start of the war the Union Defence Force had one veterinary officer and one veterinary noncommissioned officer (NCO), but during the invasion of South West Africa this increased to 47 and 450, respectively. Several South African pilots were recalled from the new Royal Flying Corps in Western Europe to provide aerial reconnaissance for the invasion. In the arid environment of South West Africa, locating sources of water became a key factor for both sides.

The South African attack, planned by Smuts, began on September 14, 1914, when the Royal Navy shelled German installations at Swakopmund. Totaling 5,000 soldiers with 14 guns, the South African force was divided into three contingents each of which was not strong enough for offensive operations. Five days after the bombardment of Swakopmund South Africa's "C Force" landed unopposed at Luderitz. German defenders had pulled back from the coast because of concerns about naval guns and concentrated on defending the Orange River border in the south. Beginning at Port Nolloth, the 1,800 men of South African "A Force" under Lukin traveled northeast

by rail to Steinkopf, marched to crossing points on the Orange River, and pushed quickly into the German territory to secure water sources. On September 24, officials in Pretoria knew about the German move to the south, but this information was sent to Lukin by post that he did not receive until early October which was too late. On September 26, a force of about 1,200 Germans with three artillery batteries under Von Heydebreck encircled Lukin's advance guard at Sandfontein and killed, wounded, or captured all 300 men. This happened because the planned movement of Maritz's "B Force," now turned rebel, from Upington did not take place. At the same time C Force, mostly Natal Mounted Rifles under Duncan McKenzie, pushed inland from Luderitz to Grasplatz, but its movement was slowed to a crawl by German destruction of the railway and poisoning of wells, and soft sand in which horses sank. In early December some of McKenzie's mounted troops raided Garub but were repulsed by heavy German fire. C Force eventually took Garub in February 1915 and used it as a base for an attack on the heavily defended Aus that the Germans abandoned just before it was captured by the South Africans at the end of March. On Christmas Day 1914 South African trawlers landed infantry, mounted riflemen, and artillery at Walvis Bay, a South African–administered enclave, and in mid-January 1915 this force occupied Swakopmund with the Germans falling back to Jakkalswater and Riet in the interior.

In February Botha took command of the northern contingent at Swakopmund with the intention of leading an advance on Windhoek that was drastically slowed by the reconstruction of destroyed rail line and problems acquiring water. The Germans gained time to conduct an orderly withdrawal, establish new defensive positions, and redirect their efforts from the southern to the central region. On March 20, Botha's mounted brigades enveloped four understrength German companies that were holding a 48-kilometer long defensive position in hills west of Jakkalswater and Riet. About 200 Germans were captured and the rest fled. However, the South Africans were unable to pursue because horses were spent, there was little grass, and water was scarce. With Riet as a depot for supplies coming in from the coast, Botha resumed the advance at the end of April supported by a dozen Royal Navy armored cars that consumed less water than horses. Botha sent two mounted brigades—4,300 men with artillery support—north under General Coen Brits to secure the railway junction at Karibib. Another two brigades—4,600 mounted men and artillery—were sent east under General M. W. Myburgh to capture Okahandja. On April 25, a German attack on Trekkopjes, which intended to isolate the South Africans by destroying the rail line behind them, failed because German forces became lost in the dark. The Germans were driven off

by a South African counterattack undertaken by infantry and armored cars that German aerial reconnaissance had previously mistaken for water trucks. On May 5, Botha's force captured Karibib railway junction, abandoned by the Germans two days earlier, which was important because it brought together the territory's central, southern, and northern rail systems. With the Germans continuing to withdraw, the South Africans occupied Windhoek, along with its strategically important wireless station, on May 12.

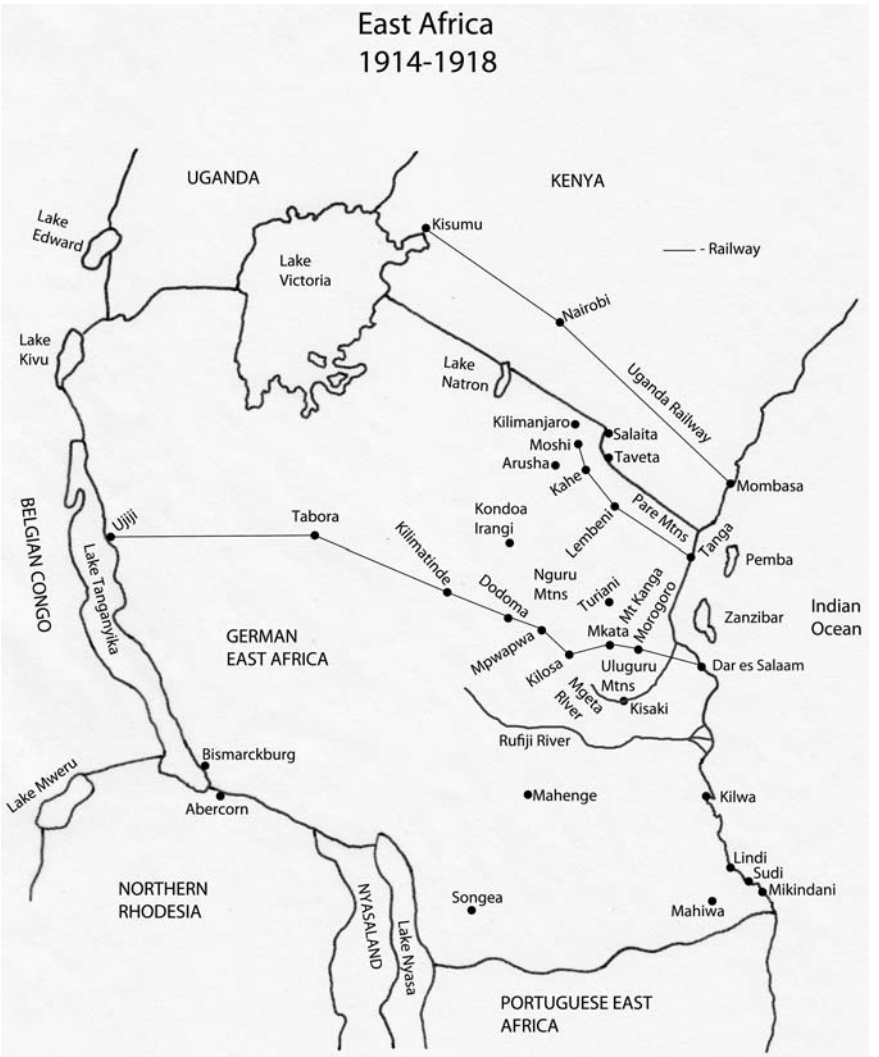
In the south, a South African motorized column of 3,000 men under General Carl Berrange crossed the Kalahari and penetrated the eastern border at Reitfontein at the end of March 1915. By the beginning of April the South Africans had secured all the Orange River crossings, and on April 5, the southern force under Van Deventer seized the German railhead at Kalkfontein. In April Botha sent Smuts to Luderitz to oversee operations in the south, but this robbed the defense ministry in Pretoria of its head. With McKenzie's C Force advancing surprisingly quickly from Aus, the Germans under Captain Otto von Kleist at Keetmanshoop, a potentially strong mountainous defensive position, feared encirclement and withdrew on April 19 moving north to Gibeon. Kleist did not retreat fast enough enabling C Force to advance northeast cross country from Aus to Gibeon and on the night of April 25 they blew up the rail line north of the Germans and shelled an enemy ammunition train. However, a German counterattack caught the South Africans in exposed ground illuminated by moonlight and drove them off. While this enabled Kleist's command to escape north to Rehoboth, 241 out of 800 men became casualties. When Baster communities around Rehoboth, mixed race migrants from the Cape, resisted German livestock seizure and conscription of labor, the Germans retaliated by shooting refugees and burning wagons. Baster leaders, in early April, had offered their military services to Botha who declined on the basis that it was a white man's war. With Botha's advance from the coast threatening to cut them off, the southern German force left Rehoboth on May 8 and retreated north.

Having lost control of the southern half of the colony, German forces moved north along the railway intending to make a stand at Otavi and Tsumeb. At this point the Germans lacked the wagons needed to move far from the rail line. It was obvious that the Germans were only delaying the inevitable though Governor Seitz hoped his forces could remain in the field to exercise a claim on the territory if the war in Europe were brought to an end. Botha rejected a German cease-fire offer in which each side would occupy half of the colony. With the control of the coast and Windhoek wireless station, imperial objectives had been achieved and Botha saw an opportunity for South Africa to claim a vast territory. Botha and Smuts were

concerned that the Germans would resort to guerrilla warfare, as they had done during the South African War, but Francke rejected this option because of overwhelming South African numbers and the potential impact on the small German settler population.

Botha took several weeks to build up a strong force of 13,000 troops, consisting of several mounted brigades and one infantry brigade, supported by light and heavy artillery, 20,000 horses and oxen, and 500 wagons carrying provisions for three days. On June 18, 1915, the South Africans resumed the offensive with a four-pronged northward movement to encircle Otavi. Botha led the central column of two mounted brigades and McKenzie commanded an infantry brigade that marched straight up the northern railway toward Kalkveld. On the flanks, Myburgh led a mounted brigade in a right hook through Waterberg and toward Tsumeb to cut off a possible German escape to the northeast, and Brits took his mounted brigade to the west of the rail line toward Etosha Pan and Namutoni. The German defense of Otavi was entrusted to Major Hermann Ritter who commanded 1,000 soldiers supported by machine guns and artillery. They were meant to hold off the South Africans long enough for Francke to organize defenses at Tsumeb where the Germans had relocated a large ammunition dump. However, the speed of the South African advance caught the Germans off guard, and although fear of encirclement caused Ritter to deploy his men in depth, their positions were not mutually supporting and their artillery was not properly sited. On July 1, Botha's central column—3,500 men—attacked Otavi and within a few hours a flanking movement caused the Germans to withdraw away from the rail line and further north to Gaub where they linked up with Kleist's contingent from the south. Had the Germans been able to delay Botha's column for two days, it would have been forced to pull back for lack of water.

With South African forces closing in from all sides and the Angolan border blocked by an African rebellion against the Portuguese, the few remaining Germans had nowhere else to run. On July 9, after a few days of exchanging messages with Botha who stubbornly refused to accept any conditions, the Germans surrendered. The South African concentration on encircling movements and the German tendency to withdraw produced a low casualty rate. Among Union soldiers, 113 had been killed in action, 153 died through disease or accident, and 263 had been wounded. Of 1,188 German casualties 103 had died. In addition, 4,740 German soldiers, in possession of 37 field guns and 22 machine guns, capitulated. South West Africa fell under Botha's military rule, and at the end of the war it became a South African–administered mandate of the League of Nations. Eventually, many German settlers were deported and poor Afrikaner farmers brought in from South Africa.[4]



Cartography by Fungai Madzongwe

East Africa (1916–18)

The main British imperial concern about German East Africa was to deny the shelter of its Indian Ocean coast to German naval raiders. An amphibious landing by a British Indian Army contingent at Tanga in November 1914 turned into a disaster, there were insufficient Allied forces to invade the German colony by land, and German troops began to cross the Kenyan border to raid the Uganda railway. South African interests in the area were

territorial and long term. Smuts imagined that once the German colony was conquered, Britain would give its southern half to Portugal in exchange for the southern half of Mozambique that would be transferred to Pretoria. This would place the ports of Beira and Lourenzo Marques (today's Maputo), logical trade outlets for the Transvaal, in South African hands. South African involvement in East Africa was delayed by the campaign in South West Africa and by Botha's calculation that it would be politically troublesome to mount another expeditionary force until after the elections of October 1915. Kitchener had wanted to send a South African contingent to Western Europe or Gallipoli, but political concerns in the War Office, particularly Afrikaner anxiety about serving outside Africa, led to Pretoria being given a leading role in East Africa. A recruitment campaign for an East African expeditionary force began in South Africa in November 1915, but the results were slow as the excitement of the early days of the conflict had subsided. This led to the creation, in December, of the Cape Corps that consisted of 1,000 armed Coloured volunteers under white officers and represented a radical departure from the principle of an all-white Union Defence Force. Since the outbreak of war, the Cape Town–centered African Political Organization (APO) had been calling for the enlistment of Coloured soldiers, and as early as December 1914, it had organized 10,000 potential volunteers. Responding to white fears that the Cape Corps would lead to an extension of the Cape nonracial franchise to other parts of the country, the Botha administration pointed out that this force was paid for by imperial rather than South African funds and therefore would have no local claims. All this provided the German military commander in East Africa, Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, with time to prepare for the coming Allied offensive. At the outbreak of the war the Germans had 218 European and 2,542 African soldiers in the colony, and by January 1916 this had increased to 2,712 Europeans, 11,367 Africans, and 2,591 auxiliaries.

While the South West African campaign had been an entirely South African operation, the British War Office played a stronger role in East Africa. With British commander Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien invalided by flu, Smuts succeeded him on February 5, 1916, with instructions to mount a rapid invasion. Smuts replaced British officers with familiar South African colleagues such as J. J. Collyer, who was slipped in as chief of staff instead of the experienced Reginald Hoskins who had been earmarked for the position, and Van Deventer and Brits eventually became divisional commanders. Smuts's approach to the offensive reflected his military experience in the South African War and German South West Africa campaign as well as his ongoing political career. He envisioned large and fast-sweeping maneuvers by mounted units that would envelop the Germans and compel their surrender.

This would avoid high numbers of casualties that would be politically unpopular in South Africa. Smuts did not seem to understand that much of German East Africa, with its thick bush and disease-carrying tsetse flies, was not suitable for horses. While Smith-Dorrien had planned to conduct extensive local training, develop lines of communication, and wait for the end of the rainy season to begin operations, Smuts launched the offensive immediately before all his forces had arrived in the region. Another change made by Smuts was that he divided his headquarters into two with a large logistical section in the rear and a smaller command element, including himself, close to the fighting. This caused problems of coordinating operations and supply, and meant that Smuts was often too caught up in local developments. In mid-February, before Smuts could take control, Major General Michael Tighe, a veteran of British colonial wars in East Africa, directed 2nd Division to assault the German position at Salaita, just east of Kilimanjaro. Since German forces were much larger than anticipated, the 2nd South African Infantry Brigade was almost surrounded, took heavy casualties, and the attack was called off. In early March Smuts initiated another attack on Salaita. Two South African brigades, one mounted and one infantry, under Van Deventer conducted a flanking move north of the objective, while the 2nd Division under Tighe closed in for a frontal attack. The Indian 1st Division under Major-General J. M. Stewart moved west of Kilimanjaro to threaten the rear of the German position and block the way to Arusha. With only 4,000 troops against 40,000, Lettow conducted an orderly withdrawal to high ground south of Moshi and west of Taveta. Smuts could not pursue quickly enough because of overgrown terrain and the need to use some forces to secure rear areas. When it appeared that the Germans were withdrawing down the rail line, Stewart was ordered to move toward Kahe to block this but thick bush and heavy rain slowed his movement. After a series of attacks and counterattacks around Moshi, Lettow moved his forces south remaining close to the railway. In mid-March Van Deventer's mounted troops followed by a battalion of Cape Corps infantry with dozens of supply wagons took the railhead at Moshi where they linked up with Stewart's 1st Division.

The Germans had escaped Smuts's trap and now torrential rains, which turned the ground into mud and worsened tropical disease, delayed British-South African movements in the north. Elsewhere, Belgian forces were advancing from Congo in the west toward Tabora, the Rhodesia-Nyasaland Field Force was moving up between lakes Tanganyika and Nyasa, and the Portuguese to the south had just joined the Allied cause. During the third week of March an impatient Smuts sent South African infantry and mounted troops south under Van Deventer where they sustained heavy casualties

from a German fighting withdrawal down to Lembeni. Tropical disease was beginning to take a heavy toll, and by the end of April more than half the Cape Corps was out of action. Animal and motor transportation was quickly replaced by thousands of local carriers. By April, Smuts had dismissed Tighe and Stewart, and reorganized his force into three divisions with the 2nd and 3rd entirely South African. Emphasizing mobility over firepower, each division consisted of one mounted and one dismounted brigade. Smuts directed the South African 2nd Division under Van Deventer southwest to take Kondoa Irangi, accomplished on April 19 when the German garrison withdrew south, as it would provide a useful point from which to menace the central railway. This prompted Lettow to abandon the northern portion of the central railway and regroup to the south. Mustering a force of 4,000 men for an attack on the 3,000 entrenched South Africans under Van Deventer at Kondoa Irangi, Lettow also placed a blocking detachment of 2,500 troops under Major Georg Kraut northeast in the Pare Mountains. In early May a German night attack on Kondoa Irangi, impaired by lack of thorough reconnaissance, was defeated with heavy casualties, and Lettow pulled his forces back to nearby hills from where his artillery shelled the South Africans. Smuts sent reinforcements south but by June the immobilized South Africans at Kondoa Irangi were short of food, 1,000 men had succumbed to sickness and only 1,000 out of 4,000 horses were fit. In late June Lettow's force withdrew southeast to Turiani, located on the central railway, where they linked up with Kraut's detachment that had been pushed down to the Nguru Mountains. In mid-July Van Deventer's men moved south, sending detachments to seize Mpwapwa and Dodoma, and then turned east toward Kilosa to meet up with Smuts's main force. Smuts then sent a column to assault the main German position on the slopes of Mount Kanga with two other columns moving on Turiani in an attempt to cut off their retreat. Once again, rough terrain slowed Allied movement, and in August the Germans managed to escape south with Lettow taking a group to Morogoro and Kraut leading men further toward Mahenge. Uncertain about German intentions, Smuts sent columns in various directions. In mid-August Van Deventer was sent to take Kilosa, a mounted brigade under B. G. L. Enslin moved southwest to Mkata, and Smuts took the main force east of the Uluguru Mountains. Offering little resistance, the Germans withdrew and at the end of August Smuts took Morogoro without a fight. In early September a South African division under Brits and a British brigade attempted a joint attack on a well-defended German supply base to the south at Kisaki but lack of communication—the British dropped their wireless down a cliff—meant that they were repulsed with heavy losses. Predictably, the Germans then withdrew.

Smuts's forces were more successful on the coast as, during September, they occupied the key port of Dar es Salaam as well as smaller ones such as Kilwa, Sudi, Lindi, and Mikindani. However, for months little was done to bring Allied supplies through these ports. Although the Germans had not damaged the railway, it took until the end of 1916 to establish a supply line between Dar es Salaam and Morogoro in the interior. Allied troops were poorly fed because supply lines were becoming too long, between June and September 53,000 draught animals had died from disease, and motor vehicles were of limited use. Within a few months of arriving in East Africa most South African units had lost around half their strength to diseases such as malaria and dysentery, and by the end of 1916 around 12,000 white troops had been invalided home because of disease, exhaustion, and poor nutrition. Although the 9th South African Infantry battalion consisted of 1,135 men in February 1916, by October its effective strength had fallen to 116. Conditions were even worse for Union Defence Force black auxiliaries who were kept working despite sickness. In South Africa, the campaign became unpopular as the wasted men returned home after only six months and there were accusations of neglect. Smuts appointed a court of inquiry but packed it with timid staff officers who dragged out proceedings for months to reduce the negative impact.

By the start of 1917, Lettow had 4,000 men along the Rufigi River with other detachments, including 2,000 soldiers under Kraut, moving in to strengthen his position. In January 1917 Smuts launched attacks on German garrisons along the Rufigi and Mgeta rivers. However, these assaults were hampered by heavy rain and thick bush. By March the South African infantry, suffering from hunger and disease, were sent home and very few returned to the East African campaign. In late January Smuts left his command for an appointment to the Imperial War Cabinet. He prematurely proclaimed victory in East Africa because the South African–led offensive had secured three quarters of the German territory and German forces were no longer in possession of the colony's infrastructure. Smuts was replaced by Hoskins who left Lettow on the Rufigi until the weather cleared and concentrated on reorganizing the tattered imperial force. European and Coloured South African soldiers were replaced by Africans from a dramatically expanded King's African Rifles and West African units freed up by the conquest of German Cameroon. Tens of thousands of African supply carriers from neighboring colonies were conscripted into service. While Smuts had claimed that the mopping up of remaining German resistance would be quick and easy, Hoskins requested more resources from the War Office, warned that the campaign would continue, and devised a plan to trap the Germans in the south of the territory. However, at the end of May, as the rains ended and

offensive actions became feasible, Hoskins was dismissed by the War Office because of his fatigue and the intrigues of Smuts.

Although he had gone home with most of the South Africans in January 1917, Van Deventer was called back to East Africa to assume overall command and was instructed to conclude the campaign quickly as resources could not be diverted from the main European theater. Between July and August 1917 Van Deventer, commanding a mostly African and Indian army with a few remaining South African units, launched a series of pincer movements against German positions that resulted in three dozen engagements for control of water supplies and food-producing areas. Fighting continuous delaying actions, the Germans withdrew further south. The most serious of these actions occurred at Mahiwa over several days in October and left 600 German and 2,000 Allied casualties. As a result, Van Deventer's advance was deferred for several weeks but for Lettow the impact was much greater as he could not replace casualties and had to abandon scarce ammunition, supplies, and field guns. In November Lettow led his one remaining column of 300 European and 1,800 African soldiers into Portuguese East Africa, which was embroiled in an African rebellion, to acquire food. During this last phase of the East Africa campaign, of the 52,000 Allied soldiers in the field only 2,500 were South Africans who were mostly serving in administrative, transport, intelligence, and technical support roles. Waiting until after the wet season to pursue the Germans, Van Deventer consolidated his forces in German East Africa and then moved units into Portuguese East Africa during July and August 1918 in an attempt to encircle the enemy. Elusive as ever, Lettow's column crossed back into German East Africa in late September and then moved west toward lightly defended Northern Rhodesia to raid supply bases and harass the railway.

Lettow first learned about the armistice in Europe on November 12 from captured British messages, and on November 25, two weeks after the war had officially ended, the Germans surrendered to Van Deventer at Abercorn near the southern end of Lake Tanganyika. This was the last German capitulation of the Great War. During the campaign, Britain had deployed 114,000 European, Indian, and African soldiers of whom 10,000 died mostly from disease, and conscripted 1 million African supply carriers of which 100,000 perished from sickness and exhaustion. With both sides confiscating their food, the inhabitants of German East Africa and sometimes neighboring colonies suffered terrible famine during the war. Leadership of the East African campaign did not gain much for South Africa. Smuts had initially been dismissive of Germany's mostly black colonial force, but white South African troops failed to defeat them and had to be replaced by British African soldiers. Pretoria's territorial hopes in the region were caste aside by imperial

authorities and most of German East Africa, renamed Tanganyika, became a British-administered mandate of the League of Nations. Most South African veterans of the campaign returned home before the fighting was over and were so sick that they were often greeted with pity rather than adulation. Divisions among whites were highlighted when the nationalist press labeled returning Afrikaner soldiers as traitors.[5]

Western Europe (1916–18)

While Hertzog's nationalists were against sending soldiers to Europe, the patriotic English-speaking community demanded an opportunity to serve the mother country within the context of a South African unit. In July 1915 a South African Overseas Expeditionary Force was created to raise an all-white volunteer infantry brigade for service in Europe. Recruits were trained by British instructors at the base of the former imperial garrison at Potchefstroom. Volunteers tended to be English and middle class with both officers and enlisted men coming from colleges, merchant houses, banks, law offices, engineering firms, and mining company offices. Many were veterans of campaigns in South West Africa and/or East Africa and some had South African War experience. The prevailing military culture was Scottish as many volunteers had come through Active Citizen Force units such as the Cape Town Highlanders and Transvaal Scottish or had been recruited by Caledonian Societies. The distinctively English Lukin, who had escaped blame for the Sandfontein disaster, left his position as inspector general of the Union Defence Force to command the brigade. The first contingents of the 1st South African Infantry Brigade left Cape Town in August, and within a few weeks there were 5,800 officers and men training in Hampshire.

In early 1916 the South African brigade, because it had many men with desert warfare experience, was diverted from the western front and sent to Egypt to participate in the suppression of Senussi warriors on the western frontier. In February 1916 Lukin commanded a column that attacked a Senussi force at Aqqaqia and captured a Turkish liaison officer. The South Africans were then involved in the capture of the coastal town of Sollum that they occupied until April.

In mid-April 1916 the brigade was shipped from Alexandria to Marseilles to take part in the anticipated Somme summer offensive. Attached to the British Army's 9th (Scottish) Division where they emphasized a frontier fighting spirit by imitating Zulu war songs and dances, the South Africans first occupied trench lines in May but were held in reserve until mid-July. After July 1, the disastrous Somme offensive degenerated into a war of attrition

and British attacks were concentrated on an arc of woods north of Montauban. As part of this effort, on July 12, Lukin was ordered to take Delville Wood from the Germans and hold it at all costs. Located to the east of the village of Lougueval, Delville Wood was an upward slopping area covered with trees and undergrowth and, if captured, would form a dangerous bulge into German lines. It was held by veteran German troops who had constructed bunkers, trenches, and machine-gun positions supported by artillery. On July 14, part of the brigade was sent into the northern part of Lougueval where they assisted the Royal Scots in a futile effort to dislodge the Germans from the urban ruins. At dawn on July 15, 3,000 men of the South African brigade, led by Lieutenant Colonel William Tanner, advanced into the southwestern edge of Delville Wood. Resistance was light as the Germans withdrew and within a few hours the South Africans had reached the Wood's eastern edge where they had difficulty digging into ground tangled by tree roots. The only part of Delville Wood not captured was the northwest corner defended by well-prepared German machine-gun nests. With German positions almost surrounding the Wood, the South Africans were subjected to several days of determined counterattacks, and intense and accurate bombardment, reaching a peak of 400 shells a minute. When Tanner was wounded, command passed to Lieutenant Colonel Edward Thackeray. On July 18, a German infantry brigade attacked from the east and north, recaptured the northern portion of Lougueval, and pushed the South Africans back into the southeastern edge of the Wood where they beat off assaults from three directions. The same day Lieutenant Colonel Frederick Dawson led 150 men to reinforce Thackeray's beleaguered position, and assaults by British highlander units did little to relieve the pressure. British artillery support was ineffective as counterbattery fire did not work and at times the South Africans were shelled by their own guns. On July 19, Thackeray requested that his brigade be relieved as they had little food and water, casualties were heavy, and men who had not slept for five days fell asleep amid intense shelling. British troops finally broke through on the evening of July 20 and the South Africans were pulled back. It was during the fighting at Delville Wood that Private William Frederick Faulds, in two separate incidents, exposed himself to heavy enemy fire and shelling to rescue wounded comrades. He became the first South African born soldier to win the Victoria Cross. Overall, 750 South Africans were dead and 1,500 wounded, captured, or missing. Of 3,150 members of the brigade who had fought, only 29 officers and 750 other ranks answered roll call on July 21. Almost immediately, the British press began to portray "Devil's Wood" in terms of heroic and selfless sacrifice.

An infusion of 2,900 newly arrived South African troops reconstituted the brigade that spent the next year in and out of action at places such as Vimy,

Butte de Warlencourt, Arras, Fampoux, and Menin Road. In May 1917, at Fampoux, the brigade suffered heavy casualties for a gain of just 200 yards and in turn dubbed themselves "suicide Springboks" or "Springboks in the soup." In September 1917 the South African brigade participated in the British offensive in Flanders, eventually known as the Third Battle of Ypres or Passchendaele, which envisioned a push to the coast to drive the Germans out of Belgium. Instead of the massed shoulder-to-shoulder advance of the Somme, British infantry formed small and fast attack parties to eliminate specific German positions that the South Africans were told would suit their natural inclination toward Boer commando tactics. Since Lukin had been placed in command of a British division, the Springboks were now led by newly promoted Brigadier Dawson. During the early morning of September 20, the 3rd and 4th South African battalions, preceded by a creeping artillery barrage, advanced over muddy and cratered ground and took a series of objectives from surprised German defenders. Unable to organize a counterattack, the Germans withdrew south to the Ypres-Roulers railway with small parties of South Africans in pursuit. The South Africans consolidated their gains by digging in, repelling German raids, calling down artillery on enemy formations, and deploying snipers along wooded sections of the line. Relieved by Highland units, the South Africans were pulled back from the line on September 21 with 1,250 men killed, wounded, or missing out of an original 2,600. Between October 10 and 12, the South Africans, after two weeks rest, were sent to occupy trenches near the base of Passchendaele Ridge where they became immobilized in a rain sodden, artillery-churned quagmire. After suffering another 260 casualties, the Springboks were withdrawn during the last week of October missing the capture of the ridge two weeks later.

At the beginning of 1918 the South African brigade, now only 1,700 strong, was assigned to hold a defensive position at Gouzeaucourt, near Cambrai, in anticipation of a German spring offensive. On the morning of March 21, artillery hammered the South Africans and German assaults overwhelmed their strongpoint at Gauche Wood. Over the next few days the brigade suffered 900 casualties and the remaining 700 men were withdrawn north to escape encirclement. Immediately, 500 able-bodied South Africans under Dawson were sent to Marrieres Wood to plug a gap between the British Third and Fifth Armies that the Germans were trying to push through. During that last week of March German bombardment and flanking assaults caused some South Africans to flee in panic and others, including Dawson, to surrender. A few survivors and reserves from Britain, totally 1,500 men, quickly reformed the brigade and were sent to Flanders to defend a part of Messines Ridge. In mid-April they counterattacked German units that had taken the ridge but

were repulsed with 700 casualties and then once more withdrawn from the line. The brigade was reassembled as a composite force of 1,600 men many of whom were from British Highland regiments. In July this force, along with Australians and Scots, took the village of Meteren in Flanders. In September the brigade was yet again reorganized as a purely South African national contingent and in October it took part in the pursuit of retreating Germans. The South Africans were held up by fortified enemy positions around Le Cateau and along the Selle River that were abandoned in late October. In these actions the brigade suffered another 1,270 casualties. When the war ended, the South Africans were on the far eastern point of a general Allied advance but with each of the three battalions having only 300 men.

Returning to South Africa by August 1919, veterans of the western front were demobilized at camps in Durban, Cape Town, Pretoria, and Potchefstroom. A Demobilization Board and fifty "Returned Soldier Committees" in various towns were established to reintegrate a fairly small number of former white servicemen into civilian life. Many of them returned to former civilian jobs reserved by patriotic employers. While a few right-wing South African veterans joined the Allied Expeditionary Force in Russia that fought the Bolsheviks, others went home and became part of a radicalized mineworkers' labor movement that staged the 1922 Rand Revolt.[6]

In June 1916 the Imperial War Council, anxious about a shortage of military labor behind the lines and at the ports for the coming Somme offensive, decided to request African workers from South Africa and other colonies. Botha responded positively and recruiting began for the South African Native Labour Contingent (SANLC). Realizing that South African whites feared that blacks serving in Europe might return home with potentially dangerous new ideas, Botha did not take the issue to parliament as the contingent was meant for imperial service. The emerging Westernized African elite, eager to secure political rights by proving their empire patriotism, supported the creation of the new unit and were disproportionately represented in its ranks. However, recruiting in rural areas did not go well and authorities were surprised that after seven months only 300 of the supposedly martial Zulu had volunteered. Eventually government officials had to threaten chiefs with loss of pay and position so they would force young men to enlist. Half the contingent came from the Northern Transvaal where severe drought made military wage labor attractive. Falling short of the imperial request for 40,000 workers, South Africa recruited 25,000 men for the SANLC. Around 21,000 of them served in France between September 1916 and January 1918, producing timber, loading and unloading ships, and maintaining road and rail systems. Since it was politically unacceptable in South Africa to have blacks engaged in combat, the shelling of a SANLC

camp by German artillery was kept quiet. In February 1917 over 600 black members of the contingent and a dozen white officers were lost when the Mendi, a troopship ferrying them across the English Channel, was accidentally rammed by another vessel and sank. A legend developed that these doomed men, eager to fight for freedom but knowing they would never get the chance, performed African war dances as the ship went down. White officers and NCOs, mostly recruited from the Native Department and Labour Bureau because of their experience controlling Africans, tried to minimize their black subordinates' contact with European civilians, particularly women, and soldiers by keeping them in closed compounds like those for migrant mine workers back home. African servicemen objected to being treated like German prisoners of war, and in July 1917 there was a disturbance, ignited by the arrest of a man for doing his laundry outside camp, in which thirteen Africans were shot dead by their white South African officers. British officers eventually gave the black servicemen more liberties. In January 1918 Botha abruptly announced the disbanding of the SANLC and by May all its members had returned home where many complained about poor compensation and government refusal to give them war service medals. Although Botha claimed that the contingent was cancelled because of the dangers posed by enemy submarines to troop ships, it is likely that protest and breakdown of racial segregation in the camps became a political embarrassment. Westernized African elites considered this a betrayal.[7]

Two battalions of the Cape Corps, largely recruited from Cape Town dock workers, also provided military labor in France. Established in June 1916, 2,000 men of the Cape Corps Labour Battalion, as part of the British Army Service Corps, transported munitions and supplies from the ports of Le Havre, Dunkirk, and Boulogne to the nearest railway or depot and returned home in late 1919. Three thousand and five hundred men of the Cape Auxiliary Horse Transport, who gained a reputation of hard drinking and lack of discipline, not only hauled goods inland from the ports but also did logging work in French forests. In campaigning for political rights, African nationalists would begin to remind imperial Britain of its obligation to those black South Africans who had performed wartime service.[8]

Palestine (1918–19)

The infantrymen of the 1st Cape Corps Battalion fought in East Africa from February 1916 to December 1917 when, like many South African units, they were returned home. In April 1918 the 1,000-man unit was shipped from Durban to Suez to join General Sir Edmund Allenby's coming British offensive against the Turks in Palestine that was meant to take Lebanon and Syria as well.

From April to June these soldiers conducted field training around Alexandria and Cairo. At the end of June the Cape Corps Battalion joined the British and Indian units of 160th Brigade deployed in forward positions north of Jerusalem and along the Jordan River. The influenza pandemic was beginning to take its toll, and throughout the campaign the unit could maintain only 70 percent active strength. During the third week of September the Cape Corps was part of an advance against Turkish positions northeast of Jerusalem with the intention of carrying on through Nablus and into the Jordan Valley. With the Turks weakened by desertion and disease, and hammered by an artillery bombardment, the Cape Corps took a number of enemy positions including the well-defended Square Hill. On September 20, 400 Cape Corps men formed the vanguard of a frontal night assault on an elevated position from where the Turks could lay down fire to cover their withdrawal. Allied shelling arrived late and was inaccurate, messengers became lost in the dark, and the Turks brought up reinforcements to repel the confused attackers. Loosing over 50 killed and 100 wounded, the Cape Corps withdrew to trenches on Square Hill. In October the battalion was pulled back to Alexandria where it received replacements from South Africa but saw no further combat in the war. As part of the British garrison in Egypt, the Cape Corps was involved in suppressing a nationalist revolt in March and April 1919. In September the Cape Corps was the last South African force to return home and was disbanded in November. Almost 7,000 fighting soldiers of the Cape Corps had served in East Africa and/or Palestine, and over 450 of them had died. Their horizons broadened by travel, Coloured South African veterans perceived themselves as part of a British imperial citizenry of civilized men like those of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and India.[9]

A total of around 146,000 whites (including 400 nurses), 45,000 blacks, and 15,000 Coloureds served in military units during the Great War. Just under 12,500 were killed in action or died as a result of their service.[10]

Internal Security and the Interwar Years

In the early twentieth century the new South African state routinely used coercive power to suppress internal protest. Just before the union, Smuts had used imperial troops to break up a strike by white mine workers. When white workers went on strike at the New Kleinfontein mine in July 1913, the new Active Citizen Force was not prepared to respond. Smuts again called out imperial troops who fired on the strikers, and this incident provoked a much wider industrial action by 18,000 white workers across 63 mines on the Rand. Lacking the capacity to crush this wave of strikes, the government and mine industry conceded to workers' demands and recognized their right

to engage in collective bargaining. Smuts's prestige was partly restored when, later the same year; he used police and South African Mounted Riflemen to intimidate Gandhi into calling off a strike by Indians in Natal. In January 1914 a general strike was called by the white workers of the Federation of Trades because of government plans to retrench railway and harbor employees. Better prepared, Smuts declared martial law and brought 10,000 soldiers, supported by artillery and machine guns, to the Rand. Commandos under generals Beyers and De la Rey surrounded the Johannesburg Trades Hall and the federation executive was arrested. Smuts then introduced the Riotous Assemblies Act that outlawed coercive union recruitment, forbad strikes by public service workers, authorized local magistrates to prohibit public meetings, and expanded police powers of arrest.

In January 1922 white mine workers on the Rand went on strike over the opening of 25 semi-skilled positions, previously reserved for whites, to blacks. As 80 percent of white mine workers were Afrikaners, a nationalist newspaper urged members of the Active Citizen Force to ignore the call-up. Inspired by a mixture of socialist and Boer republican ideals, the strikers organized commandos, practiced military drill, prepared stretcher parties, and fashioned uniforms. The state mobilized 7,966 police but this was insufficient. Striker commandos erected road blocks, raided mines and police stations, and hunted down and murdered over 40 blacks. Smuts, now prime minister, mobilized the Active Citizen Force and on March 10 proclaimed martial law on the Rand and nearby areas. Fourteen thousand Permanent and Citizen Force soldiers were sent to suppress the strikers who military commanders referred to as "revolutionaries." In the subsequent fighting, the rebels initially seemed successful as they held Brakpan and were contesting control of Benoni and Springs. Airplanes from the fledgling South African Air Force (SAAF) strafed the Workers' Hall in Benoni and dropped supplies to besieged police stations. An airplane carrying the air force director, Colonel Pierre van Ryneveld, was shot down though he survived. Rebels attacked a detachment of Imperial Light Horse at Doornfontein and the Transvaal Scottish, on its way by rail to the East Rand, was ambushed at Dunswart suffering heavy casualties. A state counterattack began on March 12 with the seizure of Brixton Ridge and the next day General Van Deventer led the relief of police stations at Brakpan and Benoni. On March 14, artillery shelled the striker stronghold at Fordsburg Square that was captured later that day. The strike was called off on March 17. This "Rand Revolt" seemed much like a war. Overall, 153 people, including 29 police, were killed and 534 injured. After the rebellion, 4,750 people were arrested and 18 sentenced to death of which 4 were actually executed. The police seized 1 machine gun, 1,400 rifles and shotguns, 745 revolvers, and 60,000 rounds

of ammunition. Smuts was blamed for letting the situation get out of control, and in the 1924 election he was defeated by a nationalist and labor coalition under Hertzog.[11]Racial segregation was further entrenched and in the 1930s South Africa, like other dominions, gained more autonomy from Britain and the Cape's nonracial franchise was abolished.

In the wake of the Natives Land Act of 1913, African protests increased but lacking firepower they were generally suppressed by concentrations of police. In October 1920 African strikers confronted police in Port Elizabeth and the latter opened fire killing 25 people and wounding 66. In 1921, 800 police were assembled at Bulhoek in the Eastern Cape to evict a community of the Church of God and the Saints of Christ, an independent African church whose members were called "Israelites," from state land. Facing a hostile crowd, the police opened fire with rifles and machine guns, killing some 200 Africans. The appearance of three airplanes over the Eastern Cape African communities of Qumbu and Tsolo in 1927 intimidated protestors. In the late 1920s, 500 police were mobilized in Durban to suppress African strikes and boycotts.[12]

During the early 1920s budget cuts reduced the size of the Union Defence Force. Four out of five regiments of the South African Mounted Rifles were transferred to police control. The 1922 Defence Act amendment increased the length of service in the Active Citizen Force, but members were placed on reserve status that relieved the government of paying their salaries. The 1920s and 1930s saw a gradual division of the Union Defence Force into army, air force, and navy. During the Great War, South Africa had employed airplanes during the invasion of German South West Africa and South African pilots had been part of the Royal Flying Corps in Europe. The SAAF was formally established in 1920, and in 1921 it received 100 aircraft as an imperial gift. Merging turn of the century naval volunteer organizations in Durban and Cape Town, a South African branch of the Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve was created in 1913. In 1921 Britain released South Africa from its annual payments for the British naval presence at the Cape. The South African Naval Service was established in 1922 and purchased three ships from Britain: the survey vessel *HMSAS Protea* and two minesweeping trawlers *HMSAS Sonnebloem* and *Immortelle*. However, economic problems during the Great Depression forced South Africa, in 1933 and 1934, to return the vessels and cut its Naval Service to just five personnel.[13]

The Second World War (1939–45)

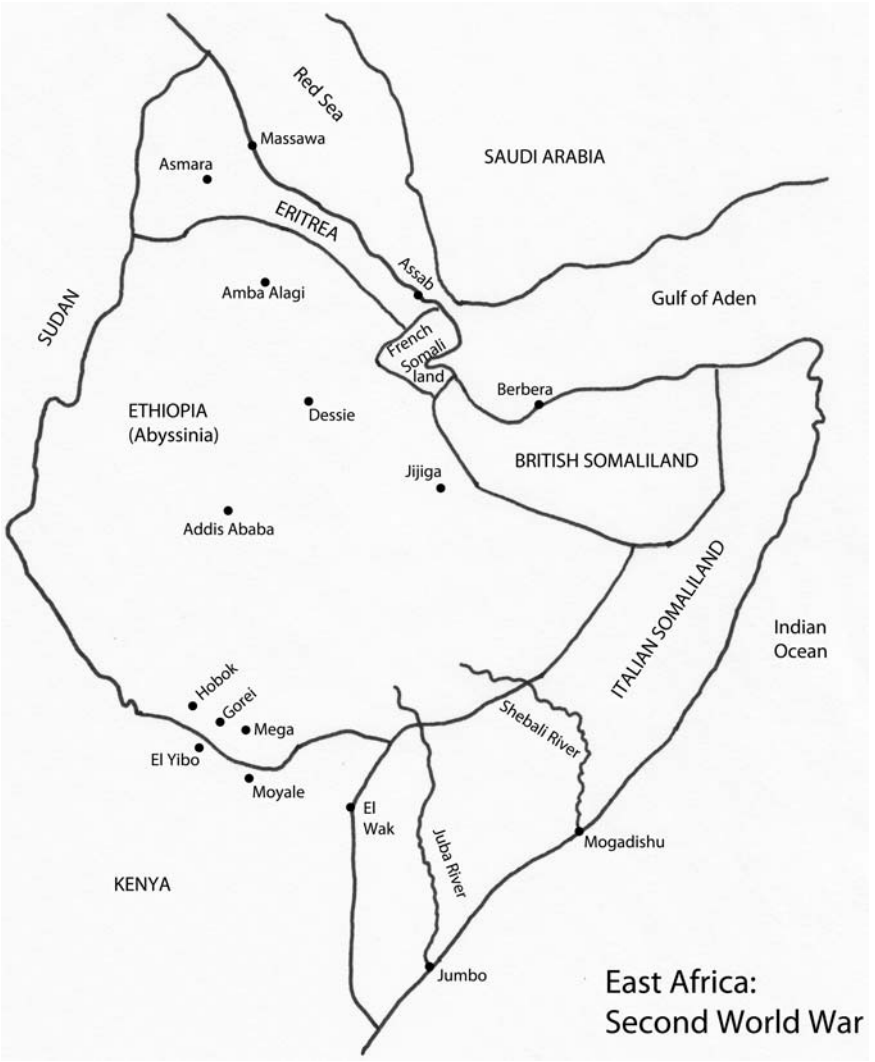
The growth of Afrikaner nationalism during the interwar years meant that South Africa's entry into the Second World War on the side of Britain was not

guaranteed. By a vote of 80–67, the South African Parliament chose to assist the imperial parent and in the same process the pro-British Smuts returned as prime minister. Like other dominions, South Africa was unprepared for war. In 1939 the Union Defence Force was made up of 5,500 permanent members and 13,500 reservists in the Active Citizen Force. With no ocean-going naval vessels and only 40 working aircraft, South Africa initially concentrated on local defense and prepared small contingents for imperial service. Three important developments made the war much more relevant to South Africa and impelled a military expansion. Italy's entry into the conflict on the side of Germany in 1940 meant that there would be fighting much closer to home in North and East Africa, Japan's December 1941 offensive in the Pacific threatened South Africa's Indian Ocean coast, and Germany's submarine campaign in the south Atlantic endangered South African shipping. By 1945 the Union Defence Force had grown to 345,000 volunteers many of whom would serve in East Africa, Madagascar, North Africa, and Italy. While many South Africans enlisted in the Royal Air Force (RAF), 44,569 served in the SAAF which by 1940 had 394 aircraft and by 1945 had 28 active squadrons. With RAF resources stretched to the limit, South African air power played a key role in the campaigns in East Africa, the Middle East, and Madagascar. As part of the British Empire Air Training Scheme (BEATS), South Africa trained 33,500 RAF personnel at various facilities. Only Canada made a larger contribution to this scheme. Over 9,400 men served in the South African Naval Force which grew to 78 vessels that performed escort, minesweeping, and reconnaissance in local waters and supported British operations in the Mediterranean.[14]

Many Afrikaners were hostile to the idea of fighting another war on behalf of Britain and some belonged to Nazi-style organizations. The state responded with a successful recruitment campaign that used weapon displays, newspaper endorsements by sports stars, and patriotic films to link military service to Afrikaner history and culture. In addition, some Afrikaners enlisted to overcome poverty. Of 570,000 white males eligible for military service, 190,000 signed up and at least half of these were Afrikaners. However, many of these soldiers complained about the restrictions of British military discipline, the institutional dominance of English language, and favoritism toward educated urban English-speakers.[15]

A Directorate of Non-European Services was established for the large-scale mobilization of African, Indian, and Coloured military labor. In 1940 the Cape Corps, the Indian and Malay Corps, and the Native Labour Corps (later called the Native Military Corps or NMC) were created and eventually 120,000 volunteers served in these units. By the end of 1943 the Cape Corps and the NMC had a total strength of 92,000 men that represented 37 percent

of the Union Defence Force. Although South Africans maintained a policy of arming only white soldiers, 2,000 Coloured troops of the Cape Corps were deployed as armed guards at home and in North Africa. As with the SANLC in the Great War, a large number of NMC recruits came from the impoverished northern Transvaal. Others came from Bechuanaland, Swaziland, and Basutoland before those neighboring territories formed their own units. While many Africans enlisted for primarily material reasons, some



Cartography by Fungai Madzongwe

Westernized elites believed that wartime service would advance their political rights and they recognized the great threat of Nazi racial ideology. Attempts by white superiors to prevent black servicemen from mixing with foreign soldiers and especially with white women provoked some resistance and was often not possible because of wartime circumstances.[16]

East Africa

As an emerging regional power in Africa, Pretoria took a leading role in the East African campaign that represented the first Second World War deployment of South African troops beyond the Union. As soon as Italy declared war on the Allies in June 1940, Smuts pushed the British to send more forces to East Africa and adopt an aggressive approach. After Italians invaded and seized British Somaliland in August 1940, the British eventually launched, in early 1941, a three-pronged counterattack with a northern force advancing from Sudan into Italian Eritrea, a southern force moving up from Kenya into Italian Somaliland and Ethiopia, and an amphibious force landing on the coast of British Somaliland. The aim for these contingents was to link up in Addis Ababa, capital of Italian-occupied Ethiopia. South African forces played an important role in the southern offensive. Since volunteers had initially signed on for service within South Africa, a new oath was created to allow deployment elsewhere on the African continent. The first South African unit arrived in Kenya at the beginning of June 1940 and by the end of July it had been joined by the First South African Brigade Group. South Africans continued to arrive and in mid-August the First South African Division was formed from three brigades coming under the command of Major General George Brink. By the end of 1940, 27,000 South African servicemen were in East Africa not only in the South African division but in two other African divisions as well.

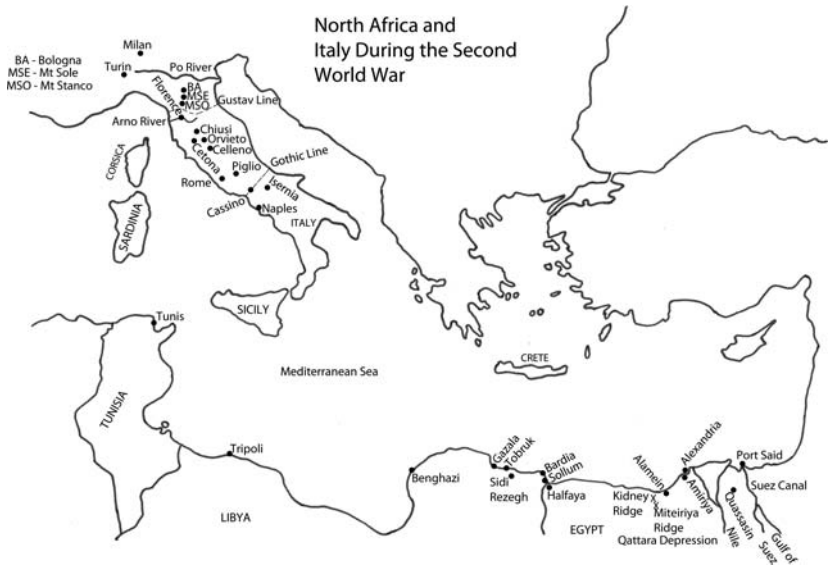
On December 16, 1940, the First South African Brigade, the Gold Coast Brigade, and a company of King's African Rifles with South African artillery in support staged a successful raid on the Italian post of El Wak on the Kenya-Italian Somaliland border. In January 1941 the South African Division, consisting at this time of one East African and two South African brigades, invaded southern Ethiopia where they captured El Yibo and Jumbo. However, the anticipated rising of local people against the Italians did not happen. The South Africans advanced until mid-February—capturing Gorai, El Gumu, Hobok, Banno, and Mega—when Italian resistance brought them to a halt. Around the same time Allied forces from Kenya invaded Italian Somaliland with motorized Nigerian troops of the 11th African Division pushing up the coast to take Mogadishu in late February and the

12th African Division, which included one South African brigade, advancing up the Juba River toward the Ethiopian border. During the first half of March South African units joined the 11th African Division in pursuit of Italians fleeing north of Mogadishu along Italy's "Imperial Road" to Jijiga in eastern Ethiopia. The Allied drive through southern Ethiopia continued throughout March and, on April 6, South African units liberated Addis Ababa allowing the return of exiled Emperor Haile Selassie in early May. The Allied advance had covered 1,725 miles in 53 days.

In mid-April Brigadier Dan Pienaar led his First South African Brigade along with Ethiopian irregulars northward with instructions to link up with the Allied units coming down from Sudan and Eritrea. After a tough battle, on April 20, Pienaar's men captured Dessie, on the main Addis to Asmara road. Between Pienaar and the Allied northern force, which was 200 miles away, was the imposing mountain of Amba Alagi where the Italians had constructed fortifications in solid rock and assembled stores of ammunition and other supplies. The northern Allied units began to surround the mountain and, on May 11, Pienaar's contingent arrived to seal off the position from the south. Before a planned Allied assault could take place, an artillery shell hit an Italian oil drum that contaminated the stronghold's water supply and prompted the Italians to surrender on May 18. Remaining pockets of Italian soldiers surrendered in September and November 1941. Based in Kenya, the SAAF supported ground operations with two bomber squadrons, one fighter squadron, and one aerial reconnaissance squadron. As the first major Allied land victory of the Second World War, this campaign ensured that forces in Egypt could be supplied through the Red Sea and Suez Canal.[17]

North Africa

During the North African campaign, South Africa committed two divisions and an air wing. The first South African soldiers to arrive in Egypt, Pienaar's First Brigade, established a headquarters at Amariya in May 1941 and were soon incorporated into Britain's new Eighth Army. By September 1941 there were 60,000 South African soldiers, including 15,000 blacks, in Egypt. In November 1941 the British launched an offensive, known as Operation Crusader, along the Egyptian-Libyan border to relieve Tobruk where a mostly Australian garrison had been holding out against an Axis siege. The First South African Division was part of this push. This offensive culminated in a large and chaotic tank battle in the open desert around the Axis airfield at Sidi Rezegh, south of Tobruk, in late November. During a German-armored thrust that eventually failed to throw back the Allied advance, the Fifth South African



Cartography by Fungai Madzongwe

Infantry Brigade was overwhelmed with 3,000 men killed, wounded, or captured. This outcome represented the worst single loss in the history of the Union Defence Force and caused considerable anxiety in South Africa where Afrikaner nationalists put an ultimately unsuccessful motion to quit the British Empire before parliament. In December the newly arrived and poorly equipped Second South African Division, commanded by South African Police Commissioner Major General I. P. de Villiers and with two infantry battalions of South African Police, made a number of unsuccessful assaults on the besieged Axis border strongholds of Bardia, Sollum, and Halfaya. These operations had been hampered by Eighth Army desires to limit South Africa casualties because of political issues and problems with acquiring replacements. Supported by the heaviest Allied bombardment of the campaign up to that time, South African infantry and British tanks penetrated the Bardia defenses on New Year's Eve 1941, and after intense fighting the Axis garrison, which outnumbered the attackers, surrendered on January 2, 1942. South African casualties amounted to 132 killed and 270 wounded, and 7,775 German and Italian soldiers were captured. Later in January the Second Division took Sollum and Halfaya in order to secure Allied supply lines. The capture of Bardia and Sollum liberated 1,246 Allied captives, and in all three operations a total of 13,842 Axis prisoners were taken.[18]

During January 1942 Axis forces retook the initiative and the Allies, in early February, pulled back to the Gazala Line, a series of widely spaced strong points just west of Tobruk. The First South African Division was assigned the extreme northern section of the line, and the Second Division was held in reserve at Tobruk in anticipation of a renewed Allied advance. At this time the Fourth and Sixth South African Armoured Car regiments were attached to the British Seventh Armoured Division and 50th Division, respectively, and deployed as reconnaissance ahead of the Gazala Line.[19] At the end of May 1942 an Axis offensive began with a feint on the First Division, under newly promoted Major General Pienaar, that quickly hooked around the southern portion of the Allied line resulting in the First Division joining a general Allied retreat. The Second Division commander, Major General Hendrik Balzaser Klopper, was placed in command of the entire Tobruk garrison, and as the other Allied forces moved east he was instructed to hold out against an Axis siege. Klopper had a week to oversee the reconstruction of the deteriorated Tobruk defenses. Antitank ditches and trenches had filled with sand, many of the position's mines had been removed for use elsewhere, and a third of his men were logistical troops working in the harbor. Klopper lacked operational command experience as did the members of his staff who bickered among themselves. The result was a poorly prepared defensive perimeter in which one of three infantry brigades was uselessly placed along the coast, artillery was positioned too far from the front line, and transport vehicles were not camouflaged. The garrison gained false confident when, in its first engagement with the enemy, the Transvaal Scottish killed 80 Italians and took 200 prisoner. The Germans, under Erwin Rommel, initially appeared as if they were going to bypass Tobruk in pursuit of the fleeing Eighth Army. However, on the night of June 19, Rommel quickly repositioned his forces and launched a surprise armored and infantry assault that pierced the defenses and reached the port. German air support came in from all over North Africa and Crete, whereas the Allies did not have a plane in the sky. The majority of the South African soldiers, defending the western, southern, or coastal sections of the perimeter, did not fire a shot. Although Klopper sent a message to his western units that there would be a breakout, reports that German tanks were gathering for an attack on one of the South African brigades changed his mind. On June 21, 33,000 Allied soldiers of the Tobruk garrison, including 12,722 South Africans of the Second Division, surrendered. When the Germans allowed Klopper to address the Allied prisoners, they booed and heckled him for having sold out to the enemy. After the fall of Singapore to the Japanese, the loss of Tobruk represented the second largest British capitulation of the Second World War. Having famously been

the only incident of the war to make Churchill wince, the surrender of Tobruk cast doubt on South Africa's military prowess and loyalty to the Allied cause.[20] When some white South African officers demanded they be housed in separate prisoner compounds from black South Africans, Rommel refused and pointed out that they all wore the same uniform and would be kept in the same facilities.[21] Among the South Africans taken prisoner was Lance Corporal Job Maseko, a delivery man from Springs who had joined the NMC. In late July Maseko and some fellow prisoners, while being forced to work at Tobruk harbor, sunk a moored German naval vessel by concealing an improvised explosive among petrol drums. He later received the Military Medal.[22]

By the end of June 1942 the Eighth Army, with Axis forces not far behind, had regrouped along the "Alamein Line," a chain of prepared defensive positions called boxes extending from the coast south to the Qattara Depression. What became known as the First Battle of Alamein would constitute the Allies' last attempt to halt the Germans and Italians before they reached Cairo. With the First Division assigned the most northern section of the line, Pienaar positioned his Third Infantry Brigade with considerable artillery support inside the "Alamein Box" and pulled the First and Second brigades back to the southeast from where they would be employed as quick reaction forces. Early in the morning of July 1, the German 90th Light Infantry Division advanced along the coast and was brought to a halt by South African defenses and intense artillery fire. A concentration of German armor attempted to break through just south of the 90th Division but was caught in a crossfire between all three South African brigades and pulled back. All along the front the Axis advance ground to a halt and on July 4 Rommel ordered his men to dig in. Attacks, counterattacks, and raids continued until mid-July. The First Division suffered 1,997 casualties in June and 527 in July. It was around this time that the division received six pounder antitank guns giving them better antiarmor capability.[23]

On the night of October 23–24, South Africa soldiers participated in Operation Lightfoot, a massive infantry assault, supported by artillery and followed by engineers who would clear paths through minefields for tanks. This was the beginning of the Second Battle of Alamein. The Second and Third South African brigades would advance southwest along the Qattara Road with the intention of overcoming enemy strong points and seizing a 5-kilometer long section of Miteiriya Ridge. The First Brigade was positioned to the southeast to provide supporting mortar fire on the ridge and to open gaps in the enemy minefields as required. Held up by enemy artillery and machine-gun fire, the Second Brigade, consisting of the Cape Town Highlanders, Natal Mounted Rifles, and Field Force Battalion, took heavy

casualties but eventually seized Axis defensive positions and reached its objective. Of the brigade's 334 casualties that night, the Field Force Battalion suffered the worst with 41 dead and 148 wounded. Corporal Lucas Majozi, an NMC stretcher bearer who had sustained several wounds, refused medical treatment and continued to expose himself to machine-gun fire to carry injured men to safety. Receiving the Distinguished Conduct Medal he became the most highly decorated black South African soldier of the Second World War. During the attack the Third Brigade—the Rand Light Infantry, Royal Durban Light Infantry, and Imperial Light Horse—advanced more easily taking light casualties. A South African armoured car regiment was attached to the British First Armoured Division that advanced west through a corridor toward Kidney Ridge, was held up by an enemy strong point, and pushed through the next day. During October 24 and 25, the South African infantry dug in on Miteiriya Ridge and tanks, guns and transport moved up the Qattara Road. On the night of October 26–27 two companies, one from the Cape Town Highlanders and one from 2 Regiment Botha, seized an enemy strong point called the "Beehive" and at the same time First Brigade advanced 1,000 yards beyond the division's original objective. In order to create a reserve for future offensive operations, the New Zealanders were pulled back from the line, and by October 28, the South Africa Division had moved right to replace them. Within the division's new area, the First Brigade took the right, the Third Brigade took the left, and the Second remained in reserve. On the night of October 30–31, Axis positions in front of the South African Division were bombarded by South African artillery to divert attention from a northward thrust by the Australians closer to the coast.

During the first few days of November two South African armored car regiments participated in Operation Supercharge, the Allied offensive that broke through enemy lines sending Axis forces in a final westward retreat. Racing forward, South African armored cars operated behind enemy lines destroying transport and supplies. By November 8, the Four/Six Regiment had accounted for 5,000 enemy prisoners, 150 guns, and 350 vehicles, and on November 12, it was the first Allied unit to enter Tobruk, abandoned by the Axis, liberating a large number of NMC prisoners. As British and New Zealand infantry advanced as part of Supercharge, units of the South African Division took their place in the defensive line from where they mounted fighting patrols and were harassed by Axis shelling.

In mid-November, after the general Axis withdrawal from Alamein, the First South African Division was pulled back to Quassasin. In December 1942 and January 1943 the division was transported to South Africa for conversion as an armored formation. On December 19 the plane carrying Major General

Pienaar, who historian Neil Orpen has described as one of South Africa's "most colourful and ablest military commanders," and some of his staff back to South Africa crashed in Lake Victoria with no survivors. After the seizure of Tobruk, the Four/Six South African Armoured Car Regiment continued to lead the Allied advance as part of a British light armor brigade all the way to Benghazi that was taken on November 20, 1942. The Four/Six Armoured Car Regiment was then sent back to South Africa where it was disbanded, as was its parent formation the South African Tank Corps, in order to create the new armored division. It is also important to note that South African engineers, who took part in the Eighth Army's pursuit of Axis forces after Alamein, breached minefields; repaired roads, railway, and harbor facilities; and secured water supplies. On May 12, 1943, South African warplanes dropped the last bombs of the North African campaign in which South Africa had lost 2,104 men killed, 3,928 wounded, and 14,247 captured.[24]

Madagascar and Naval Operations

As a colony of German-occupied France, Madagascar came under the control of the pro-Axis Vichy regime and after December 1941 the Allies feared that the Japanese would seize the island to dominate the Indian Ocean. Smuts was instrumental in persuading the Allies to launch an invasion of Madagascar known as "Operation Ironclad." In March and April 1942 the SAAF conducted aerial reconnaissance of the island, and Durban became the main staging area for naval and amphibious forces that would cross the Mozambique Channel. The invasion force consisted of five brigades, one South African, one East African, and three British and was supported by six RAF and seventeen SAAF aircraft, and forty-six naval vessels. Outnumbered in most respects, the French had 2,000 European and 6,000 African soldiers, 6 tanks, 35 aircraft, and 4 warships. In their first amphibious landing of the war, the British engaged in heavy fighting to take the port of Diego Suarez in early May 1942. The motorized Seventh South African Infantry Brigade—consisting of the First City Regiment, Pretoria Highlanders, Pretoria Regiment, an armored car squadron, and an artillery detachment—commanded by Brigadier G. T. Senescall—landed near the captured port in late June and prepared defensive positions to repulse an anticipated Japanese landing that did not transpire. In September the brigade participated in the occupation of the southern half of the island where little resistance was encountered. Late the same month two Pretoria Regiment infantry companies and two Royal Marine commandos, led by the Pretoria Regiment's Lieutenant Colonel C. L. Engelbrecht, embarked on "Operation Rose," an amphibious seizure of

Tulear, a port in the southern part of the island, where French defenders surrendered without a fight. In late October South African armored cars led the final assault on Fianarantsoa that resulted in the official French capitulation on November 5 and South African forces were withdrawn in December. Of the 107 Allied soldiers killed and 280 wounded during the invasion only four South African troops died from tropical disease. The SAAF flew 401 missions over Madagascar, lost seven aircraft including one from enemy action, and lost three men.[25]

With the Italian navy threatening shipping through the Mediterranean and Suez Canal, for much of the Second World War, the Cape represented the main west-east shipping route for the Allies and South African ports became important centers for naval supply and repair. From October 1941 a total of 32 German U-boats and a few Italian submarines operated in South African waters, and during June and July 1942 five Japanese submarines hunted in the waters between Durban and the northern part of the Mozambique Channel. By the end of 1941 coastal artillery batteries had been established at Walvis Bay, Saldanha Bay, Cape Town, Robben Island, Simonstown, Port Elizabeth, East London, and Durban, and by June 1942 most of the gun crews were Coloured soldiers from the Cape Corps. Eventually, antisubmarine cables, depth charge throwers, antiaircraft guns, and searchlights were installed in major ports. SAAF aircraft undertook coastal antisubmarine patrols and eventually took over the RAF Catalina squadron at Durban. Within a 1,000-mile radius of the South African coast, Axis forces destroyed or captured 153 ships amounting to 875,000 tons. Within the same area the Allies sunk only three German submarines.

In November 1940 the South African government formed the Seaward Defence Force (SDF), commanded by retired British Rear Admiral G. W. Halifax, to take over coastal protection and patrol of local waters from the Royal Navy. Developed from an initial core of South African Royal Navy Volunteer Reserve (RNVR), the SDF converted civilian fishing trawlers and whalers—the government had taken over the whaling fleet for war duties in 1939—for antisubmarine, minesweeping, and escort operations. At the end of 1941 the SDF had 1,232 men on 24 minesweepers and 8 antisubmarine ships. Convoys bound for India, Australia, and the Middle East assembled at Walvis Bay where the SDF maintained a base. SDF ships escorted convoys to the Seychelles, Mauritius, and Madagascar. In May 1940 it undertook the removal of a major minefield off Cape Agulhas that had been laid by the German raider *Atlantis*. In early 1941, on the request of the British Admiralty, the SDF sent four converted whalers, the 22nd Anti-Submarine Group, to the Egyptian port of Alexandria. They immediately began minesweeping and

convoy escort off Tobruk and one vessel was sunk. In a short time another eight SDF ships, the 166th and 167th Minesweeping Flotillas, went to the Mediterranean where they patrolled the Libyan coast, and supported the Royal Navy intercepting Vichy convoys with some captured vessels being taken to South African ports.

Representing the advent of the modern South African navy, in August 1942 the SDF and South African RNVR were amalgamated by the Admiralty into the South African Naval Force (SANF). More and larger vessels were acquired and the Royal Navy gave South Africa three frigates, HMSAS *Good Hope, Natal,* and *Transvaal*, in exchange for South African sailors who worked on British warships. On March 14, 1945, while on trials in British waters, HMSAS *Natal* sunk German submarine U714. To the east, in July 1945 HMSAS *Barbarke* removed Japanese boom defenses at Rangoon in Burma and in August 1945 HMSAS *Natal* escorted Allied convoys through the Malacca Straights. Two Royal Navy ships, the salvage vessel *HMS Salvestor*, and the antisubmarine frigate *HMS Tevoit*, operating in the Pacific against the Japanese, were entirely crewed by South Africans. In October 1943 the Women's Auxiliary Naval Service was established with 280 members performing harbor defense and administration. By the end of the conflict the SANF consisted of over 8,000 personnel of whom 3,000 were seconded to the Royal Navy. During the war 329 members of the SANF died, including 120 who went down with Royal Navy warships. In 1946 the SANF became part of the Union Defence Force.[26]

Italy

The SAAF played an important role in the invasions of both Sicily and Italy. By the end of 1943, in Italy, two out of eight Allied air wings and eight out of twenty-eight Allied squadrons were South African. In early 1943 another new oath was created to allow South African personnel to be deployed outside Africa. The Sixth South African Armoured Division, under Major General W. H. E. Poole, was formed in South Africa on February 1, 1943, and shipped to the Middle East in mid-April. Two factors had prompted the move to armor: it was easier for South Africa to maintain an armored division that was much smaller in total personnel than an infantry division, and the decision had been made during the great tank battles in the North African desert. Manpower problems meant that Smuts's initial plan of fielding two armored divisions had to be shelved and some Citizen Force units were combined for active service. As the Sixth Armoured Division went through a long period of training in Egypt, Allied commanders

began to realize that tank units were not useful for fighting in mountainous Italy. A reorganization of Allied forces in Italy following the Third Battle of Cassino led to the sudden movement of the Sixth Armoured Division, in mid-April 1944, to the peninsula. On the western side of Italy, the South Africans became part of the British Eighth Army preparing for another push on Cassino, a German held mountain top monastery, which blocked the route to Rome. At the beginning of May the division's 12th Motorized Brigade Group, commanded by Brigadier R. J. Palmer, relieved Canadian troops on the line in the mountains of Isernia near Cassino. Within the brigade's area of responsibility that stretched about four and half kilometers along the Rapido River, South African positions to the east were about 900 meters from the enemy, whereas those on the west were within shouting distance of German mountain troops and paratroopers. On the night of May 11 the Allies launched their fourth and final attempt to take Cassino that would coincide with a breakout from the Anzio beachhead. Attached to the Second New Zealand Division, the 12th Motorized Brigade Group held its part of the line from where it used artillery and fighting patrols to distract the Germans from the main assault. The tanks of the Sixth South African Armoured Division were held in reserve ready to exploit a possible breakthrough. Directly involved in the attack on Cassino, South African engineers followed the advancing Indian infantry to clear mines, repair roads, and quickly build a bailey bridge across the Rapido River. Polish troops took Cassino on May 18, and the Germans pulled back to the Caesar Line south of Rome.

In late May, with German withdrawal, the 12th Motorized Brigade Group was pulled back from the line to link up with the rest of its parent division in the Volturno Valley. With more infantry needed in the mountainous conditions of Italy, the British 24th Guards Brigade was attached to the Sixth South African Armoured Division. In early June the South African Division cleared part of Route Six, around Piglio and Paliano, east of Rome. Just after the fall of Rome, the South Africans spearheaded the Eighth Army advance northward along the Tiber River and Route Three (Via Flaminia) where they encountered stiff resistance from the withdrawing German units. The ultimate objective of the push was Florence. On June 10, the 11th South African Armoured Brigade, in its first action as a unit, mauled elements of the German 356th Infantry Division defending Celleno and on June 13, the 12th Motorized South African Brigade Group outflanked Bagnoregio compelling the German paratroopers there to retreat. The next day the South Africans entered Orvieto, with its bridge on the Paglia River, as the Germans were pulling out and pushed on through Allerona and Cetona. Expecting light resistance, the First City/Cape Town Highlanders infantry battalion, on the night of June 21–22, set out to

capture the hill top town of Chiusi but found to their surprise that it was defended by over 300 Germans supported by armor. Trapped in a collapsing theater, one entire company was killed or captured, and the rest of the battalion withdrew. Buying time for the preparation of the Gothic Line, the Germans stubbornly hung on to Chiusi for a few days until a flanking move by the Guards Brigade forced them to move further north.

Throughout July South African infantry and tanks, learning to work together, pressed northward against German forces fighting a series of delaying actions and falling back on a chain of prepared defensive lines. In early August, after tough fighting, South African troops entered Florence where they were pulled off the line for rest and reorganization. Since arrival in Italy, the 12th South African Motorized Brigade Group had lost 127 killed, 510 wounded, and 61 missing. Supporting the advance, South African engineers had built 64 bridges totaling 3,705 feet, constructed 196 major deviations, and filled countless craters. Orpen maintains that because of extensive training and experienced personnel, the Sixth South African Armoured Division was "the most effective fighting formation ever produced by South Africa."[27] South African servicemen contributed to other aspects of the Italian campaign such as the South African Railway Construction Group that was 10,000 strong by the end of 1944 and a Harbour Construction Company. In 1944 a special rest camp for South African troops and a Union Defence Force administrative headquarters were established in Italy.

As part of the Allied push into the Apennine Mountains and the German Gothic Line, the Six South African Armoured Division came under American command, relieved an American division, and crossed the Arno River west of Florence in early September 1944 with little resistance from the withdrawing Germans. In addition to the British guards, an Indian infantry battalion, a British antiaircraft unit converted into an infantry battalion, and a Newfoundland artillery field regiment were attached to the division. General Poole had three armored regiments, nine infantry battalions, and four artillery regiments at his disposal. From mid-September onward the South Africans experienced their heaviest fighting of the war, attacking prepared defensive positions—complete with mines, wire, and concrete pillboxes—often manned by fanatical Waffen SS troops. In addition, mountain conditions meant that it was difficult to maintain supply and soldiers were not prepared for increasingly cold weather. From mid- to late October South African infantry, particularly First City/Cape Town Highlanders (FC/CTH), Witwatersrand Rifles/De la Rey Regiment (WR/DLR), Royal Natal Carabineers, and Imperial Light Horse/Kimberley Regiment, carried out the division's largest attack in Italy. With massive artillery support, they

captured a series of mountain strongholds including Monte Stanco, Campiaro, Monte Pezza, and Monte Salvaro blocking the Allied advance on Bologna. At the end of this drive the division entered a period of static winter operations in which it reorganized. A battalion of SAAF antiaircraft gunners converted to infantry was absorbed by the division's existing units, and with the departure of the Guards Brigade, a new formation, the 13th South African Motorized Brigade, was created under Brigadier J. B. Bester.

In early April 1945 the South African Division, now 18,000 strong, relieved American units on the line in preparation for an Allied push into the Po Valley. The offensive began in mid-April with a massive aerial bombardment of German mountain positions that included the use of napalm. The 12th South African Motorized Brigade would play the central role in capturing the division's main objective, a cluster of three heavily fortified mountains: Sole, Caprara, and Abelle. On April 15, infantrymen of FC/CTH assaulted Monte Sole, destroying ten German machinegun nests before taking the summit. The WR/DLR had a tough fight up Monte Caprara and, at dawn on April 16, made a desperate bayonet charge up a steep slope that routed the Germans. After this action one WR/DLR company was left with just 17 men. South African tanks were then able to move up the saddle between the two mountains where they supported two companies of FC/CTH in a successful assault on Monte Abelle. Throughout these assaults Cape Corps soldiers worked as stretcher bearers. South African possession of these mountains, retained despite German counterattack, facilitated the advance of nearby American units. Within two days the Germans were in full retreat from the Apennines. In this operation the South African Division had lost 70 men killed and another 308 wounded and total enemy casualties were estimated at 500. Pursuing the Germans, the South Africans rounded up thousands of prisoners and sometimes encountered desperate delaying actions. When the war ended in early May the division was located southeast of Milan. During the Italian campaign, the South African division has lost 711 killed, 2,675 wounded, and 157 missing. As they waited for repatriation, South African soldiers in Italy provided security and engineers repaired the railway between Florence and Bologna as well as a 12-kilometer long tunnel on the route between Turin and Paris. Though exact figures vary, it appears that around 9,000 South African service personnel lost their lives in the Second World War.[28]

Conclusion

Participation in the world wars transformed South Africa into a continental and emerging global power distinct from Britain. South Africa had occupied

South West Africa and tens of thousands of its servicemen had fought in East Africa, Madagascar, the Horn of Africa, North Africa, the Middle East, and Western and Southern Europe. By 1945 South Africa could support external operations through its own air force and navy. Yet the capacity to project military power had been limited by several factors. Afrikaner nationalists objected to fighting for Britain and in both conflicts many of them sympathized with Germany or wanted to remain neutral. The link between armed service and citizenship and white fears of black resistance meant that the Union would continually suffer from military manpower problems. While the Union Defence Force had evolved as a mixture of British and Afrikaner military traditions, the world war experience had tipped the balance toward the former.

CHAPTER 6

Apartheid Wars (1948–94)

In 1948, the expansion of black economic opportunities in South Africa during the Second World War impelled fearful whites to elect a National Party government that would implement a thorough form of racial segregation called apartheid. Building upon previous legal and customary discrimination, this system was developed during the early 1950s through a series of laws such as the Population Registration Act that categorized all South Africans into a number of racial identities and the Group Areas Act that defined where each group could live. The Bantu Authorities Act further divided the black majority into ethnic groups that were assigned small and marginalized areas as homelands administered by traditional leaders. Through Bantu Education, black South Africans experienced an inferior form of schooling meant to mould them into subservient low-paid workers. Petty apartheid laws segregated public facilities such as drinking fountains and toilets, and outlawed interracial marriage. Throughout the 1950s the African National Congress (ANC) and other organizations staged nonviolent protests—usually boycotts and the purposeful breaking of unjust laws—against apartheid, particularly the requirement that blacks carry an identity document called a "pass." Violent state repression in the early 1960s drove the antiapartheid movement underground and into exile from where they launched an armed struggle to liberate their country. The rapidly changing international political atmosphere of the late 1950s and 1960s, in which many African colonies became independent and a civil rights movement emerged in the United States, meant that apartheid South Africa became a pariah subject to gradually more restrictive sanctions. The rise of the black consciousness movement that stimulated a black youth uprising in the 1970s reinvigorated the antiapartheid struggle both inside and outside South Africa. In turn, the government initiated cosmetic reforms, such as independence for the black homelands and a new parliament for whites, Coloured, and Asians, which led to even more widespread urban protest and a state of emergency during the 1980s. Throughout the apartheid era the National Party regime became increasingly

dependent on military power while at the same time the antiapartheid organizations developed their own insurgent military structures. During the 1980s Pretoria fashioned a "total strategy" that was meant to mobilize the combined political, economic, and military resources of the state against what it perceived as a Soviet-planned "total onslaught." To weaken the ability of neighboring black ruled countries to assist exiled antiapartheid groups, the South African military used conventional and covert operations as well as support for armed dissidents.

The South African Defence Force

During the late 1940s and 1950s the National Party administration, through Minister of Defence F. C. Erasmus, embarked on a campaign to Republicanize and Afrikanerize the Union Defence Force. The Defence Act was amended so that from November 1949 all correspondence would be in both official languages: English and Afrikaans. As a result, unilingual English-speakers, including the many migrating to South Africa in the 1950s because of economic problems in Britain, were discouraged from enlistment. At the same time, existing English-speaking personnel were pressured to take early retirement and many resigned during the early 1950s. The number of South African service personnel sent to Britain for training was reduced and a local military academy was established to train future officers. Although Afrikaners had made up the majority of the security forces before the Second World War, the eventual result of these policies was that by the early 1970s Afrikaans-speakers constituted 85 percent of the army, 75 percent of the air force, and 50 percent of the navy. Those who had been promoted by Smuts's United Party government were moved out of key positions, and National Party supporters came to dominate the security forces. General Poole, an English-speaking veteran of the Second World War, had been scheduled to take over as chief of general staff in 1949 but Erasmus connived to block him. In late 1949 Erasmus ordered the removal of the red tab displayed on military uniforms to indicate Second World War service, which had been a politically divisive issue in South Africa. This was resented by the predominantly English-speaking Active Citizen Force members who ignored the instruction until the early 1950s. By 1952, new flags, rank insignia, and decorations were introduced, the British disciplinary code was rewritten, the rank of lieutenant-colonial was renamed commandant, and a new military magazine called *Kommando* was launched. Erasmus himself seized the files of Military Intelligence from Defence Headquarters in Pretoria. The office of Military Intelligence in Cape Town was closed without

consultation with the Royal Navy that was based there at the time and South Africa stopped sharing information with Britain. Even before its 1948 election, the National Party had declared opposition to African military service that had been expanded during the Second World War. In April 1949 Erasmus disbanded the black Native Military Corps and the long-established Coloured South African Cape Corps. While the 1957 Defence Act retained the state's right to enlist nonwhite volunteers in the Defence Force, National Party policy maintained that they would be employed on a very limited basis in logistical roles such as cooks and drivers, and that they would never be armed.[1] Predicting the declaration of a republic in 1961, the 1957 Act also renamed the Union Defence Force as the South African Defence Force (SADF), the title royal was dropped from Citizen Force regiments, and the designation of naval vessels was changed from Her Majesty's South African Ship (HMSAS) to South African Ship (SAS).

The National Party's commitment to the Western side of the Cold War was demonstrated through the service of SAAF pilots in the Berlin Airlift (1948–49) and the Korean War (1950–53). As a founding member of the United Nations, South Africa sent a fighter squadron to Korea that operated under American command and flew 12,067 sorties, mostly ground attack missions, with a loss of 34 pilots. Unlike other parts of the world there was no Western-sponsored regional defence organization through which South Africa could develop its armed forces. In 1950 South Africa committed itself to assist Britain in the event of war in the Middle East, and as a result it was allowed to purchase £30 million worth of military equipment. Eventually, Britain delivered 200 Centurian tanks, 20 Comet tanks, several hundred Feret and Saracen armoured cars, artillery, and 9 Canberra bombers. Pretoria also received 40 Vampire and 30 Sabre jets from Canada, and 56 Alouette helicopters from France. At the same time the British were investing in the Central African Federation, Southern and Northern Rhodesia, and Nyasaland, to create an economic and military foil to Nationalist-ruled South Africa. In the June 1955 Simonstown Agreement, Britain turned over its Cape naval facility and command of the South African navy to Pretoria. South Africa agreed to let Royal Navy vessels use the port, and Britain agreed to sell South Africa £18 million worth of naval resources over an eight-year period. This amounted to two destroyers, four frigates, some minesweepers, and seven coastal defence aircraft. For the British the aim of the agreement was to secure the Cape sea-route to the Middle East, and for South Africa it enhanced sovereignty and naval capability. The acquisition of American-made C-130 transport aircraft in the early 1960s gave the SAAF a significant lift capability.[2]

During the 1960s and 1970s, with the rise of the antiapartheid armed struggle, South African military authorities began to rethink the policy of an all-white SADF. On visits to France and the United States, South African officers were exposed to counterinsurgency theories inspired by the wars in Algeria and Vietnam. In the early 1960s SADF officer Magnus Malan attended a command and staff course at Fort Leavenworth in the United States where he learned these concepts and implemented them as head of the army from 1973 to 1976 and head of the SADF from 1976 to 1980. This new approach held that well-motivated insurgents could defeat a strong conventional military. While a military campaign could delay an insurgency, it could be defeated only by nonmilitary measures designed to win the "hearts and mind" of the population. Within this context, indigenous soldiers with intimate knowledge of local language and culture were valued. The establishment of South Africa's own military academy allowed these counterinsurgency theories to circulate among the emerging officer corps of the 1960s and 1970s. In addition, manpower shortages caused by maintaining an all-white Defence Force in a country where whites constituted a minority and the prospect of conventional warfare with African-ruled states made recruitment of black soldiers attractive. The experience of Portuguese and Rhodesian counterinsurgency in neighboring territories, both of which employed armed black troops, was also influential. Since the Cape Coloured community had a long and well-known history of military service prior to 1950, the SADF created the South African Coloured Corps in 1963 as its first extension of military service beyond whites though at the time this unit was assigned a noncombat role. In 1972 it was renamed the South African Cape Corps (SACC) and became part of the permanent force with improved salaries. Within the SACC, strength was increased to 2000 men, a training center opened and an infantry battalion established. Officially designated as a combat unit in January 1975, the Cape Corps sent its first detachment of 190 men on counterinsurgency operations in South West Africa in November of that year followed by another larger force in August 1976. From that point on, South African Coloured soldiers became a regular feature of combat operations in South West Africa. Building on the success of the Coloured experiment, the South African navy established the Indian Service Battalion in January 1975 and its members were given the same training—including firearms instruction—as white sailors. During the 1970s the navy deployed Coloured sailors on many operational vessels, and in 1977 separate sleeping and dining facilities were removed from all ships.

In November 1973 General Malan, chief of the army, authorized the creation of the South African Army Bantu Training Centre located at a prison

guard school to conceal the fact that black South Africans were undergoing conventional military instruction. In December 1975 the center was transformed into 21 Battalion, a multiethnic unit of black South African soldiers armed and paid the same as white troops. In mid-1977, 21 Battalion began training an infantry company for operations, and in March 1978 it was sent to South West Africa and thrust into combat just three days after arrival. With the successful performance of this company, other black units were sent to the operational area regularly. During the late 1970s instructors from the SACC and 21 Battalion trained black infantry battalions for the defense forces of the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, and Venda homelands. From 1977 into the early 1980s a series of ethnically and regionally oriented black infantry battalions were created that could theoretically become part of homeland armies but in practice most remained integral parts of the SADF. These included the Swazi 111 Battalion established in 1977 and based in the eastern Transvaal, the Zulu 121 Battalion formed in 1978 and based in northern Natal, the Shangaan 113 Battalion formed in 1979 and located in the northern Transvaal, and the northern Sotho 116 Battalion created in 1984 and also based in the northern Transvaal. In South West Africa, in 1976, 31 Battalion was organized for Bushmen and 32 Battalion for black Angolans. The military employment of Coloured, Indian, and black personnel was so successful that in 1980 their period of voluntary national service was extended from 12 to 24 months. While whites amounted to almost 100 percent of the permanent force and voluntary national service personnel in the early 1970s, by the second half of the 1980s whites made up around 60 percent and blacks just under 40 percent.

South African defense authorities were quick to realize that the combat deployment of nonwhite personnel meant the inevitability of them advancing in rank including commissioning as officers. The third operational company of 21 Battalion sent to South West Africa in the late 1970s had black platoon sergeants. That black combat soldiers would perform more effectively under their own officers was well known. After one month at the Military Academy and twenty-one months training with the SACC, the first seven Coloured officers were commissioned in May 1975. In 1978 the navy commissioned its first Indian officers and the number of Coloured and Indian naval officers increased during the 1980s. Very few black officers were commissioned in the SADF between 1984 and 1990. One problem was that the many black officers in homeland armies, because of their foreign status, were not subject to racial discrimination when undergoing training with the SADF but South African black officers had to live, sleep, and eat in separate facilities.[3]

In the late 1960s, as African nationalist insurgency spread across the region, SADF authorities began to see a need for a special forces element that could undertake sensitive and covert missions often in other countries. In 1968 volunteers from Citizen Force units around Johannesburg formed the Hunter Group that was initially an unofficial elite counterinsurgency force. Beginning in 1970 Commandant Jan Breytenbach, just returned from leading a small South African military assistance mission to Biafran forces during the Nigerian civil war, was ordered to begin the formation of an embryonic special forces unit that was trained at Oudtshoorn in the Cape with help from the Rhodesian Special Air Service (SAS). In 1972 the new unit, trained in both airborne and seaborne operations, was renamed Reconnaissance Commando (or Recces). Eventually five such units were established each with specific expertise. 1 Recce was based in Durban focusing on advanced parachuting techniques, 2 Recce was located in Pretoria and became a Citizen Force unit originating partly from the old Hunter Group, and 4 Recce was stationed at Saldanha specializing in amphibious operations and underwater diving. Sited at Phalaborwa in the eastern Transvaal, 5 Recce performed "pseudo-terrorist" operations using former insurgents who had changed sides to infiltrate guerrilla groups. What had once been 3 Recce was, by the mid-1980s, turned into Project Barnacle or the Civil Cooperation Bureau (CCB) a highly secretive unit, technically made up of civilians, which collected intelligence and carried out assassinations of opposition leaders and sympathizers both inside and outside South Africa. During the 1970s South African Recces participated in Rhodesian counterinsurgency operations, particularly with the SAS and Selous Scouts, and after the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980, many Rhodesian soldiers moved south to join the SADF. In 1981 the Recce units and other Special Forces elements were removed from army control and were reorganized as an independent structure reporting directly to SADF command.[4]

Insurgent campaigns by antiapartheid organizations and the independence of neighboring African countries led to South African military expansion during the 1960s. In the 1950s white compulsory military service was conducted through a ballot system where a limited number of young men were selected for an initial training period of three months followed by three 21-day training camps. By the early 1960s almost all those with ballots were selected for nine months of training and five camps. From 1968 all 18-year-old white males were required to complete one year of national service. The SADF Permanent Force was increased from 9,000 in 1960 to 15,000 in 1964 and at the same time the number of national servicemen trained annually grew from 2,000 to 20,000. Simultaneously, South Africa spent more than $800 million on major armaments purchases, including frigates from

the United Kingdom, three submarines from France, and reconnaissance aircraft. Creating a quick reaction air mobile capacity, the SADF, in 1961, established a Parachute Battalion made up mostly of white national servicemen with second and third battalions, Citizen Force units, formed in the early and mid 1970s. In 1968 the SADF held its first large-scale exercise, Operation Sibasa, which tested its reaction to insurgent intrusion from Mozambique. Involvement in regional conflicts—discussed later—led to further expansion of the SADF in the 1970s and 1980s. The number of personnel on active duty increased from 50,000 in 1970 to 150,000 in 1980 and 200,000 in 1985. In 1978 the period of compulsory national service for white males was extended from 12 to 24 months with a subsequent annual call-up of potentially three months. In addition to economic stress, this led to the 1983 formation of the End Conscription Campaign by white conscientious objectors allied to the antiapartheid United Democratic Front. Military expenditure rose from R257 million in 1970–71 to R2.4 billion in 1980–81 to R4.8 billion in 1985–86. At least half the annual defense budget was spent on manufacturing weapons and equipment or on foreign purchase of sophisticated aircraft that could not be produced locally.[5]

In 1968 the South African government established the Armaments Development and Production Corporation (Armscor) to facilitate local manufacture of weapons, military equipment, and munitions that were becoming difficult to obtain externally because of the country's increasing international isolation. Through the 1970s and 1980s South Africa produced foreign-designed weapon systems under license such as Belgian and Israeli small arms, French armored cars and missiles, and Italian trainer jets. French Mirage fighter jets were assembled from imported parts in South Africa. Armscor stepped up its efforts in the late 1970s because of a compulsory UN arms embargo and the beginning of conventional warfare in Angola. An Israeli kit was used to upgrade the British-supplied Centurian tanks then renamed Olifant and a Belgian design became the basis for a new South African armored infantry fighting vehicle called Ratel. Collaboration with an American-Canadian firm resulted in the production of the long-range G-5 155-mm howitzer, and a copy of a Taiwanese multiple rocket launcher system was manufactured as the South African Valkiri. With its counterinsurgency operations of the 1970s and 1980s, South Africa became a leading designer and producer of mine-protected vehicles. In 1977 South Africa conducted a nuclear test in the south Atlantic and during the 1980s produced six or seven small nuclear bombs. Meant as a deterrent to foreign invasion and as a diplomatic bargaining chip, South African nuclear weapons were dismantled in the early 1990s as a negotiated end of apartheid became a reality.

Responding to a perceived threat from Soviet-supplied chemical weapons in Angola and the need for riot control within South Africa, the government authorized the military, in 1981, to develop a chemical and biological weapons program known as "Operation Coast." By 1990 this project had produced irritant gases for crowd control, poisons and biological agents for assassinations, and addictive drugs. There have been allegations that the SADF used chemical and biological weapons during operations in South West Africa, Angola, and Mozambique and that these were tested on insurgent prisoners. As with nuclear weapons, South African chemical and biological agents were destroyed in the transition of the early 1990s.[6]

The Antiapartheid Armed Struggle

On March 21, 1960, a crowd of African protestors engaged in passive resistance by gathering at the Sharpeville police station without their passes. The police opened fire killing 69 and wounding 180. With this massacre it was clear that nonviolent civil disobedience was futile against a state willing to use increasingly deadly force. The government banned the ANC and Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) in April 1960 and violent state repression of protest continued into the next year. The possible use of violence against the apartheid regime had been mentioned by some during the ANC's Defiance Campaign of the 1950s as activists were aware of armed struggles against colonialism in Kenya and French Indochina. In 1952 the ANC had created a group of dedicated volunteers called "Amadelakufa" (those who defy death) who performed high-risk assignments such as distributing literature and organizing strikes. It appears that the South African Communist Party (SACP) was the first organization to seriously consider resorting to violent tactics with party military units formed in July 1961 and later that year five or six activists were sent to China for training. Since there was an overlapping membership between the SACP and ANC, it did not take long for these discussions to carry over into the latter. Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu introduced the armed option to the ANC national executive, and in July 1961, after intense opposition from some who remained committed to nonviolent protest, they received permission to establish a military organization, separate from the ANC, which would engage in controlled violence and avoid causing injury. Named "Umkhonto we Sizwe" (meaning Spear of the Nation and abbreviated as MK), the group was led by a high command made up of Mandela, Sisulu, Joe Slovo, and Raymond Mhlaba—who were also SACP members—and regional commands based in Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, and Durban. Splinter groups were brought into

its orbit and agents were smuggled out of the country through Bechuanaland and Mozambique to acquire military training. The Second World War veteran Jack Hodgson, of the Johannesburg command, played a key role in initiating explosives instruction among MK recruits.

On December 16, 1961, MK agents set off a series of explosions across South Africa and acknowledged the group's existence by publishing a manifesto declaring war on the apartheid government and stating that they were fighting for democracy. This was embarrassing for ANC President Albert Luthuli who received the Nobel Peace Prize at the same time and who later claimed he had not been included in plans for armed resistance. Mandela secretly left South Africa in January 1962 to undertake military training in Algeria, arrange for others to follow, and rally support in newly independent African countries. The MK campaign of sabotage continued for the next year and a half with over 200 attacks on targets such as pass offices, power pylons, and police stations in all major cities and many towns. In October 1962 ANC leaders attended a conference at Lobatse in Bechuanaland where, for the first time, they publicly linked the organization to MK and maintained that political policy would determine military strategy. According to MK veteran Rocky Williams, a major weakness of MK as an underground movement was that its leaders had been high-profile activists easily located by security forces. On July 11, 1963, police raided a farm at Rivonia where MK high command had set up its headquarters and many important leaders were arrested and subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment along with Mandela who had been apprehended earlier. Wilton Mkwayi attempted to reorganize the armed wing, but he was also arrested and received a life sentence. The killing of suspected police informers in the Eastern Cape, in December 1962 and January 1964, led to the arrest and execution of seven MK members who became the organization's first martyrs. Those MK leaders not in prison, such as Joe Slovo, fled the country and joined the ANC in exile led by Oliver Tambo.[7]

Criticizing the ANC for being too accommodating to whites and too moderate in its approach to the apartheid state, radical Africanists split from that organization in 1959 to form the Pan-Africanist Congress. In fact, the people who had gathered at Sharpeville in March 1960 were participating in a PAC antipass campaign and after the massacre many PAC leaders, such as founder Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, were arrested. After the group was banned in April, members from across the country attended a meeting in Port Elizabeth where John Nyathi Pokela and Mfanasekhaya Gqobose argued that the time had come to take up arms against the apartheid regime. At a PAC conference in Maseru, Basutoland, in September 1961 Ntsu Mokhehle, president of

the Basutoland Congress Party, placed a gun on the table and urged the participants to only talk about the armed struggle. At this meeting the PAC, led by its secretary general Potlako Leballo, planned to liberate South Africa by a mass uprising that would happen in 1963. At the Maseru conference the PAC decided that its members should receive rudimentary military training conducted in Basutoland by Gqobose, a Second World War veteran, and T. M. Ntandala. During 1961 and 1962 five PAC members were sent to Ethiopia and twenty-six to Egypt for instruction. According to PAC plans, each town in South Africa would stage its own uprising in 1963 so security forces would have to deploy over a wide area. At this time some PAC members, mostly in the Cape, formed military units with the intention of targeting white civilians and began to stockpile simple weapons such as machetes and axes. It appears that the name "Poqo" (Xhosa for "alone") was first used in 1961 as a secret code-word for the PAC organization that was meant to confuse apartheid agents. With attempts to reorganize the group in 1961, a task force called "Lutsha" (Xhosa for "youth") was formed from members between 16 and 35 years old and older people if they were fit. The role of this unit was to eliminate those considered traitors, patrol the streets after dark to kill policemen, collect and manufacture weapons and explosives for the coming uprising, and provide security at PAC meetings. It was around this time that the term Poqo became associated with the PAC armed struggle.

On the night of March 16, 1962, in the Cape Town township of Langa, about 50 Poqo members, armed with petrol bombs and bricks, ambushed two police vans resulting in the death of one policeman and the injury of five others. Eventually, the state executed five PAC activists for their involvement in the attack. Another black policeman there was killed by Poqo on September 26, 1962. After the killing, the attackers visited a traditional healer and acquired white powder to smear over their bodies as protection from bullets. By early 1960 the PAC was active in the Paarl location of Mbekweni, a settlement of migrant black workers from the Eastern Cape, with members practicing military drills, wearing distinctive balaclavas, and greeting one other with the salutation "Mnumzana" (Sir). Male hostel dwellers who joined Poqo were organized into ten-man cells meeting once a week and occasionally there would be larger gatherings. Throughout 1962 Poqo targeted informers, policemen, and whites. On April 14, 1962, a battle broke out when police, learning of an impending attack on African municipal employees, intercepted a group of 120 Poqo members some armed with guns. Poqo strictly banned women from male hostels and in June 1962 three young women were killed for violating the rule and two PAC members were eventually hanged for this. On November 22, 250 Poqo members, armed with axes and machetes,

assaulted the Paarl police station, and when repulsed by small-arms fire, they attacked houses, shops, petrol stations, and cars. Two white residents and five Poqo agents were killed. After this incident police reinforcements descended on Paarl, arrested 400 people, and Poqo members fled.

Throughout 1962 and the early 1963 Poqo launched a violent campaign against headmen, chiefs, and whites in the Transkei homeland where some chiefs were imposing unpopular government land policies. This campaign climaxed in December 1962 with a failed attempt to assassinate Kaiser D. Matanzima, Thembu chief and homeland politician. Tipped off by informers, the police intercepted Poqo groups at Ntlonze Hill and Queenstown train station and in the subsequent skirmishes a total of 13 Poqo operatives and one policeman were killed. The most highly publicized Transkei attack happened on the night of February 4, 1963, when a mob of 60 Poqo members killed five whites at a road construction camp on the Umtata-Engcobo road. Fifteen Poqo were eventually hanged for their role in this attack. The state crushed Poqo activities in Transkei by rigorous police action, arming chiefs with guns and providing them with guards, mobilizing supporters of chiefs into paramilitary units, and launching a local propaganda campaign to discredit the PAC. The anticipated 1963 uprising was aborted when Leballo, on March 27, 1963, gave a press conference in which he boasted that the PAC had 155,000 members ready to overthrow the apartheid state. British colonial police raided the PAC office in Maseru where they found a list of 10,000 names and handed it over to the South Africa Police who within a few weeks had apprehended 3,246 suspected Poqo agents.[8]

From 1964 MK, like its ANC parent, became an exiled organization. In 1963–64 training was shifted from Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco to the Soviet Union and other Eastern Bloc countries where recruits focused on urban guerrilla warfare. Between 1963 and 1965, 328 MK fighters were trained in Odessa with others undergoing instruction at the Northern Training Centre near Moscow and in the Crimea.[9] By 1965–66 MK had around 500 trained fighters living in four military camps in Tanzania; Kongwa, Mbeya, Morogoro, and Bagamoyo. Morale in these rural camps declined because of poor living conditions, squabbling among leaders, and lack of operational activity. During the 1960s MK had two main problems in continuing its armed struggle. First, many of its founding leaders were imprisoned in South Africa. Second, MK lacked a base from which to infiltrate South Africa as all its adjacent neighbors were either allies such as Rhodesia and Portuguese Mozambique or weak, economically dependant African states such as Botswana, Lesotho, and Swaziland. Although Botswana was a favorite route for exiles leaving South Africa, the newly independent government was

under intense pressure from Pretoria to tighten its borders and attempts by MK, in 1966 and 1967, to infiltrate operatives back home were foiled by Botswana security forces. Proposals to infiltrate ANC personnel through South West Africa and Mozambique were rejected by liberation movements in those territories because of the difficult military situation.

The Unilateral Declaration of Independence from Britain in 1965 by Ian Smith's white minority regime in Rhodesia led to an alliance between the ANC and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), with its military wing the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA). This seems to have begun in 1966 at the Kongwa camp in Tanzania, where both groups received Soviet military support, and their alliance was encouraged by the governments of Tanzania and Zambia. MK leaders were looking for a new avenue through which to infiltrate South Africa and ZIPRA commanders believed that insurgency south of the Limpopo River would distract South African security forces from assisting Rhodesia. On the night of July 30–31, 1967, a combined force of MK-ZIPRA crossed the Zambesi River, 15 kilometers below Victoria Falls, into Rhodesia. The MK members, called the "Luthuli Detachment" after the recently deceased ANC president, intended to travel south along the Botswana border and enter the northern Transvaal. The combined unit totaled 80 men with John Dube of ZIPRA in command and Chris Hani of MK as political commissar. Upon reaching the Wankie Game Reserve on August 2, the unit split with 57 men, including Dube and Hani, heading south toward South Africa and another 23 men moving to northeastern Matabeleland to prepare for more operatives arriving from Zambia. On August 13, the smaller detachment was engaged by Rhodesian security forces at the Nyatuwe River and within a week all were killed or captured. News of an MK presence in Rhodesia encouraged Pretoria to dispatch South African Police—50 personnel, 10 armored cars, 4 helicopters, and 2 spotter planes—to assist the Smith regime. Between August 20 and 23, the larger MK-ZIPRA detachment fought a series of running battles with Rhodesian security forces, and low on ammunition they split into small groups and withdrew across the Botswana border where they were arrested. Accounts of casualties in the Wankie campaign vary considerably though it appears between 30 and 47 insurgents were killed, mostly MK members, and 20–30 captured with eight security force deaths.

In Zambia, ANC and ZAPU leaders decided to try to distract Rhodesian-South African forces from Wankie, called the "western front," by opening up an "eastern front" in the Sipolilo area. Better equipped than the Luthuli Detachment, three MK-ZIPRA groups of around 100 men each were sent across the Zambezi in December 1967, February 1968, and July 1968,

respectively. These units remained in the bush south of Lake Kariba where they prepared for guerrilla warfare by building camps and trying to contact local people. Between mid-March and July 1968, security forces detected all these units, either by finding their tracks or by locals informing on them, which were then scattered in a series of skirmishes. The leader of the Sipolilo campaign, ZIPRA commander Moffat Hadebe, fled into Mozambique where he was captured by the Portuguese. A few of those captured changed sides, becoming agents of Rhodesian or South African intelligence. As with the Wankie battles, it is difficult to determine casualties in the Sipolilo campaign because both sides exaggerated the losses inflicted on their enemy. It seems likely that 23 MK members and 8 security force personnel, including one South African policeman, were killed. Although all the MK-ZIPRA units were eliminated, Rhodesian and South African security forces were surprised by their discipline, training, and Eastern Bloc armament. Criticism of ANC leaders for sending MK soldiers on a suicide mission at Wankie and ignoring the plight of prisoners in Rhodesia and South Africa led to the temporary suspension of Chris Hani and six other members from the movement in 1969 and widespread dissatisfaction within MK camps in Tanzania. In 1970 South Africa increased its security force presence along the 500-mile Zambezi River frontier. Although MK units had failed to cross into South Africa and establish a presence in Rhodesia, news of the fighting around Wankie and Sipolilo inspired imprisoned and underground activists within South Africa and encouraged some to join the ANC in exile.[10]

Because the main problem of the Wankie and Sipolilo operations involved lack of sympathy from rural people, the ANC, at the 1969 Morogoro Conference in Tanzania, decided to better integrate political and military actions, and to build popular support before embarking on revolutionary warfare. This led to the creation of a Revolutionary Council to improve training for MK operatives, and to establish a stronger political and military network within South Africa. During the late 1960s and early 1970s MK concentrated on infiltrating individual agents such as Chris Hani into South Africa to re-create underground structures. In 1969 the Tanzanian government expelled all MK members for security reasons and they spent the next year in the Soviet Union.[11] The military culture of MK evolved in exile as a combination of Soviet practices concerning drill, weapons handling, training, and a political commissar system, and guerrilla army traditions of self-sufficiency, minimal rank structure, and mission-oriented command. As with many armies, MK soldiers tended to look down upon ANC civilians.

Following the Soweto Uprising of 1976, in which hundreds of black youth were killed by state security forces, thousands of young black South Africans left

the country and swelled the ranks of the exiled ANC. At MK camps in newly independent Angola, new instructional programs were developed including basic training, communications, intelligence, engineering, and artillery. In the late 1970s and early 1980s hundreds of MK operatives infiltrated South Africa to build covert networks and engage in select military missions called "armed propaganda" that targeted police stations, railway lines, and other state institutions to motivate mass action campaigns. An MK Special Operations unit was established to conduct high-profile missions, and for security it was placed under direct command of Oliver Tambo, president of the ANC. Examples of these operations include a June 1980 oil refinery bombing that caused R66 million damage, an August 1981 rocket attack on the Voortrekkerhoogte military base outside Pretoria, a 1982 bombing of the Koeberg nuclear plant outside Cape Town, and the May 1983 car bombings of South African Air Force and Military Intelligence headquarters in Pretoria in which some military personnel and civilians were killed. While some within the ANC criticized these actions as distracting from the main aim of fostering mass resistance, Tambo and others felt that it was important for MK to undertake specific military operations deep within South Africa. The Special Operations unit assumed an increasingly important role in shaping MK strategy that tended to alienate MK rank-in-file and the MK commander Joe Modise.[12]

Between 1976 and 1991 the ANC ran military training camps in Angola where MK members, from 1979, were trained by Soviet specialists in both conventional and guerrilla warfare, and received large shipments of Soviet weapons and ammunition. From 1983 to 1989, MK units, eventually equipped with heavy weapons such as 122-mm rocket launchers and 81-mm mortars, fought against South African–sponsored National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) in what was called the "Northern Front." Abuse and corruption by commanders, hatred of MK army head Modise, and general boredom led to a series of mutinies in MK's Angolan camps in 1984 that was crushed by loyalist units and ended with the detention of many mutineers and the public execution of some rebel leaders.[13]

In 1983 MK front commanders and commissars held a conference in Luanda, Angola, where they decided to develop military structures within South Africa that could facilitate continuous military action rather than a series of isolated operations. As a result, grenade squads began secret training in Botswana with the intention of infiltrating South Africa where they would organize small cells—called "suicide squads"—to attack black officials of municipal governments. Since this action violated their definition of a legitimate target, ANC political leaders disassociated from the attacks. At this time Botswana became a transit point for MK arms smuggling into

South Africa.[14] With the declaration of a state of emergency in South Africa in the mid-1980s and mutinies in Angola, the ANC's 1985 Kabwe Conference in Zambia identified three critical issues. MK operations had focused too much on urban areas allowing the apartheid state to organize counterrevolutionary ethnic structures in rural homelands; MK had to shift from armed propaganda to pursue a broader people's war; and the conflict should be taken into white areas including use of landmines in white farming areas, killing white farmers active in the security force and attacking security force facilities in white suburbs. Despite increased security force activity, MK operations picked up in the late 1980s and the Special Operations unit conducted a May 1987 car bombing of the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court that killed four policemen and a 1989 mortar attack on the SAAF Satellite Radar Station at Klippan in the western Transvaal. Frustrated by taking casualties from SADF cross-border raids into Lesotho, Mozambique, and Botswana, some MK operatives ignored ANC policy and specifically targeted white civilians such as the Christmas 1985 bombing of a shopping center in Natal and the July 1988 explosions at Ellis Park in Johannesburg and a Wimpy Bar Restaurant in Pretoria. In the late 1980s MK created a military intelligence division called "Mkiza" that successfully infiltrated the SADF and provided analysis of its upcoming operations. Problems in coordinating increasing mass protest and specific military activities prompted the ANC to launch "Operation Vula" in 1986 to infiltrate senior MK leaders, such as Siphiwe Nyanda, Mac Maharaj, and Ronnie Kasrils, into South Africa to better organize covert structures, infiltrate the SADF and homeland security forces, and smuggle more weapons into the country. One notable success in this period was the military coup in Transkei that led to that homeland becoming a liberated zone from which ANC-MK could mount activities in the rest of South Africa.[15]

After the failure of the Poqo uprising in the early 1960s, PAC members fled to Lesotho where Organization of African Unity (OAU) Liberation Committee funds were used to send some of them for military training in Congo, Ghana, and Algeria. Connections with China began in 1965 and the following year PAC members were trained at the Nanking Military Academy. At the 1967 PAC conference held in Moshi, Tanzania, which the OAU had insisted on as a condition for continued funding, Leballo outlined the organization's new Maoist military strategy that would begin with a guerrilla war by impoverished and landless blacks in the South African countryside and eventually extend to the cities. It appears that veterans of Poqo, who valued immediate actions over revolutionary theory, did not fully understand or support the new approach. In 1968 the PAC officially renamed its 200 strong armed wing the Azanian

People's Liberation Army (APLA). In early 1968 the OAU decided that if the PAC did not launch a military operation by June of that year, its funding would be cut off. Around the same time a PAC office opened in Lusaka and an APLA training base established at Senkobo in southern Zambia. In 1968 the PAC allied with the Mozambique Revolutionary Committee (COREMO), a rival of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO), and launched Operation Crusade that aimed at moving a 12-man APLA unit through Mozambique and into South Africa to establish bases and organize a protracted people's war. This group was involved in a month of fighting with Portuguese security forces around Vila Peri, in Lourenzo Marques, was then blocked from crossing the border by the SADF-conducting Operation Sibasa, and it seems likely that a few of its members were later executed by FRELIMO as counter-revolutionaries. Only two APLA soldiers survived Operation Crusade and the PAC lost one of its most charismatic leaders, Gerald Kondlo who had graduated from military academies in Algeria and China. After the failure of Crusade, the PAC's military committee directed APLA to seize the initiative by operating in all parts of South Africa, attacking when least expected, and developing a disciplined people's army. However, none of this actually happened. After Crusade, Zambian authorities, under pressure from South Africa, expelled the PAC and members of APLA moved to Tanzania where they were scattered among Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) camps until 1970 when they were given their own base at Chunya. In the early 1970s Zambia allowed APLA to attempt infiltration of South Africa through Botswana but in 1973 Lusaka once again expelled the group because one of its members was arrested for assault.

The 1976 Soweto Uprising also prompted many South African black young people to join the PAC in exile. During the 1970s and 1980s conflicts among PAC factions, particularly in Tanzania, limited its ability to orchestrate a military campaign against South Africa. Older African nationalist veterans clashed with the newly arrived and younger followers of Black Consciousness. The emergence of a Marxist-Leninist group, which sought to concentrate on the black urban working class as the basis of revolution, led to conflict with the peasant-focused Maoists. PAC dissidents in military camps in Tanzania were subject to detention, beating, and execution. In 1977 Leballo instigated an uprising of new recruits at the Itumbi camp in southern Tanzania against the old guard APLA High Command. In 1979 Tanzanian soldiers suppressed a rebellion at the PAC's Chunya camp killing 11 and wounding another 40. During the mid-1970s 100 PAC members were sent for training in Muammar Gaddafi's Libya and others went to Idi Amin's Uganda and Pol Pot's Cambodia. Another problem that APLA faced was lack of access to infiltration routes as

the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) refused to let them use the Caprivi Strip. In the late 1970s APLA began smuggling weapons into South Africa. Three PAC insurgents were arrested while conducting weapons training near the Swazi border, and in 1978 three others were arrested while establishing an arms cache in Krugersdorp. Attempts by the PAC in the early 1980s to reorganize and wage war within South Africa failed because of further internal quarrels. In 1985 Lesotho expelled 23 PAC members after a skirmish between APLA and Lesotho security forces.

The first attacks by APLA confirmed by the South African Police happened from December 1986 to February 1987 when the "Scorpion Gang" in Alexandria, a township of Johannesburg, wounded two soldiers and two policemen, and killed a shop owner during a robbery. Three APLA insurgents were killed in a car chase with police. By 1988 APLA had become established in the western Transvaal and within two years had a significant national presence. In the late 1980s APLA carried out attacks on police stations and established a special "robbery unit" to acquire funds. During the 1980s there was disagreement between PAC leaders—who wanted to target apartheid police and soldiers regardless of race—and the APLA rank-in-file who were determined to go after white farmers, seen as part of the security forces because of the commando system, to repossess African land and establish Maoist-style rural guerrilla bases. After the PAC was legalized in South Africa in February 1990, it refused to enter negotiations and continued armed struggle. Based in Transkei during the early 1990s, APLA conducted numerous operations against white civilians. These included attacks on a golf club in King William's Town, a church in Cape Town, hotels in Fort Beaufort, East London, and Ladybrand, and white farmers and motorists. According to political analyst Tom Lodge, APLA operations in the early 1990s displayed discipline and sophistication.[16]

In the late 1970s, the Black Consciousness Movement of Azania (BCMA) launched its own armed struggle with the creation of the Azanian National Liberation Army (AZANLA). Among the initial members were some who had already received military training from the ANC and PAC. Connections were made with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), Iran, and Yugoslavia. In 1986 and 1987, AZANLA members undertook military training in Libya and with the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF). AZANLA had trouble acquiring weapons as the Libyan government was willing to provide them but none of the southern African countries where the exiles were based would accept shipments for fear of South African retaliation. In 1988 AZANLA members in Botswana, preparing for an offensive against the apartheid state, were arrested and deported to other countries. By 1990 AZANLA had a few hundred trained

fighters and had organized small cells across South Africa that gathered information and coordinated resistance.[17]

South West Africa (Namibia) and Angola

Frustrated by years of state repression, African nationalists of SWAPO went into exile and formed an armed wing in the early 1960s to fight against South African occupation. Eventually named the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), this group was based in the west of newly independent Zambia from where it began to infiltrate insurgents into northern South West Africa. Marking the start of Namibia's war of independence, in August 1966 South African paratroopers and police destroyed a PLAN camp, including underground shelters, at Omgulumbashe. In September 1966 the PLAN attacked the border town of Oshikango and in March 1967 ambushed a police patrol in Western Caprivi. PLAN Commander-in-Chief Tobias Hanyeko, in May 1967, was killed in a skirmish with police. In October 1968 two large PLAN groups moved across the border but by year end 178 had been killed or captured. From that point the PLAN utilized smaller groups; targeted local headmen and chiefs; and began planting landmines which, from 1970 to 1971, killed 5 and injured 35 policemen. The PLAN stepped up its activities in 1973 that led to the deployment of more South African military resources in northern South West Africa, and in April 1974 the SADF took over command from the police. Initially, the SADF used medical services and development projects to win the "hearts and minds" of local people in South West Africa. However, as years went by and the conflict expanded, South African counterinsurgency became increasingly brutal.[18]

Years of warfare in its African territories led to a military coup in Portugal in 1974 that resulted in the independence of Angola and Mozambique the following year. In Angola a civil war developed between three nationalist organizations: the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) around the capital Luanda, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) mostly in the north near the Zaire border, and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) based in the south and led by Jonas Savimbi. With control of the capital and Cuban military assistance, it appeared that MPLA would take over the Angolan state. This concerned South Africa as Angola would then likely offer formal support to SWAPO/PLAN and the United States worried about Angola's oil falling into Soviet hands. Direct South African military intervention began on August 9, 1975, when SADF infantry and armored cars occupied the Angolan towns of Calueque and Ruacana to secure an important hydroelectric plant.

During August and September SADF personnel, concealing their identity by wearing special green rather than the usual brown uniforms, supplied and trained FNLA and UNITA soldiers. At this time the MPLA, with armored vehicles from Cuba and the Soviet Union, was conducting a successful offensive and taking control of many parts of the country from the other two organizations. In late September the South African government approved a staged plan for "Operation Savannah," a military invasion of Angola in support of the UNITA and FNLA. On October 5, at Balombo, a UNITA force supplemented by 19 South Africans operating three armored cars and several land rovers fitted with missile launchers attempted to halt an MPLA advance on the town of Huambo but were thrown back. South Africa had lost its first conventional battle since the Second World War that resulted in the MPLA occupying the entire coast down to the Namibian border and most towns in southern Angola. Surprised by the effectiveness of MPLA forces, South Africa Prime Minister John Vorster decided to increase the SADF presence in Angola by dispatching a contingent of no more than 2,500 men and 600 vehicles. On October 14, Task Force Zulu, a South African–led column of around 1,000 black FNLA and former Portuguese colonial soldiers, crossed into south western Angola, easily drove MPLA forces north, and captured Perreira de Eca (later called Ongiva) within a few days. A purely South African column of infantry and armored cars, supported by mortars, followed Zulu, captured Rocadas (Xangongo) on October 20, and then joined up with Zulu to continue the advance. On October 24, Zulu took Sa da Bandiera (Lubanga) and, on October 28, captured the port of Mocamedes (Namibe). At the town of Catengue, 43 miles south of Benguela, MPLA forces with 35–40 Cuban advisors tried unsuccessfully to stop Zulu's advance. Task Force Zulu took the major coastal centers of Benguela and Lobito on November 6 and 7, respectively. The rapid advance of Zulu can be explained in terms of superior firepower, aerial supply, effective training, and leadership, and the delay of the rainy season. In mid-October South African transport planes had lifted 100 SADF soldiers and 22 armored cars to Silva Porto (Kuito), UNITA headquarters in central Angola. Known as Task Force Foxbat, this group received South African reinforcements and brought UNITA troops that the South Africans had trained under its command.

Further north, in late October and early November 1975, the FNLA supported by troops from Zaire, CIA-sponsored Portuguese mercenaries, and several South African supplied and operated heavy artillery pieces were trying to break through MPLA lines at Quifangondo to take the nearby capital. In early November Fidel Castro, apparently without seeking guidance from

his own advisors or Moscow, ordered a 650 strong Cuban Special Forces battalion flown to Luanda followed by an artillery regiment transported by ship. On November 10, the day of Angola's independence, FNLA leader Holden Roberto ignored warnings from his South African and Portuguese officers and ordered a frontal attack along the road—that was surrounded on both sides by swamp—to Quifangondo. A preliminary air strike by South African Canberra bombers was ineffective as they flew too high to avoid identification. Funneled down a narrow path, FNLA troops were slaughtered by recently arrived Cuban BM21 multiple rocket launchers and 120-mm heavy mortars. After the subsequent FNLA rout, twenty-six South African artillerymen were picked up along the coast by the frigate *SAS President Steyn* and their two heavy guns were towed into Zaire.

To the south, Task Force Zulu overcame some MPLA delaying actions and on November 13 captured the town of Novo Redondo (Sumbe). Just after the victory over the FNLA at Quifangondo two Cuban Special Forces companies were sent south to deal with the South Africans and made their stand, along with about 400 MPLA soldiers, on the Queve River where they demolished bridges on major roads to Luanda. By this time Task Force Foxbat had moved north to capture Cela where an airfield allowed South African reinforcements to be flown in from South West Africa. On the morning of November 23, as Foxbat's SADF armored cars and UNITA infantry were pressing north toward Quibala, they were ambushed by Cuban and MPLA forces while trying to cross a bridge near the village of Ebo. Cuban rockets did most of the damage, and although accounts vary, it appears that the Cubans and MPLA suffered no casualties, as many as ninety South African and UNITA troops were killed or wounded, and seven or eight SADF armored cars were lost. The South African advance was halted allowing time for more Cubans—there were 3,500–4,000 in Angola by late December compared to around 3,000 South Africans—and Soviet weapons to arrive and with the beginning of the rains the South African armored cars were now restricted to roads. On December 12, South African forces advanced north from Cela and broke through Cuban/MPLA defenses on the Nhia River at "Bridge 14" but a few kilometers further they were stopped by a determined Cuban stand. On December 31, Cuban forces took the Morros de Medunda, two prominent hills between Quibala and Cela, and defeated a South African counterattack by calling in artillery on their own position. Far to the east, Task Force "X-Ray," consisting of UNITA troops and 370 South Africans, tried to control the Benguela railway up to the Zaire border, but after capturing Luso on December 11, it proved impossible to press further east.

Manpower problems in Angola prompted Defence Minister P. W. Botha, in mid-December 1975, to extend the duty of some national servicemen by one month, and Citizen Force units in the operational area would be extended from the usual three to twelve weeks. Reports of the South African invasion of Angola in the western press, made more convincing by the public parading of four South African prisoners by the MPLA, impelled the United States to withdraw support from the operation. The South Africans began to move south leaving Cela on January 16, 1976, and after some skirmishing Cuban forces entered Novo Redondo on January 25. By early February, 4,000–5,000 SADF personnel were holding a roughly 50-mile deep strip of Angolan territory along the South West African border. Lacking South African support, the UNITA collapsed and in mid-February Cuban and MPLA troops took Huambo, Lobito, and Benguela. Extended Cuban/MPLA supply lines and the SADF use of landmines led to a political solution to the crisis. With assurances from the new Angolan MPLA government that it would respect the South West African border and protect the Calueque-Ruacana hydroelectric project, South Africa withdrew its forces in late March. Defeat in Angola greatly damaged the military prestige of the apartheid state and partly inspired the uprising by black students in Soweto in June 1976.[19]

As the new internationally recognized government of Angola, the MPLA allowed the SWAPO/PLAN to establish training and operational bases in its southern region that increased insurgent activity on the other side of the border. Building up its military forces in South West Africa, the South African state was eager to restore its martial reputation after the disaster of Operation Savannah. To inhibit PLAN infiltration, the South Africans created a 1-kilometer wide depopulated strip along the border that was mined and patrolled. Penetration of the border by small PLAN units was facilitated by the flat and vast bush-covered terrain and the fact that indigenous people on both sides of the frontier spoke the same Ovambo language. Trained in revolutionary warfare, PLAN operatives used both persuasion and coercion to gain support and recruits from local people, occasionally launched raids against the white farming community further south, planted mines, and fled to the safety of Angola when required. Insurgents were more active during the summer as rains would cover their tracks and mud restricted cross-country movement of security force vehicles. In March 1977 the South African government reported that during the previous two years 231 insurgents, 33 security force personnel, and 53 civilians had been killed in northern South West Africa. Later that year South African intelligence believed that 300 PLAN insurgents were operating in South West Africa at any time and that there were 2,000 more in Angola and another 1,400 in Zambia.

The war was intensifying as engagements, mostly small skirmishes, between the PLAN and security forces were averaging about 100 a month. Across the border, in southern Angola, South African intelligence estimated that there were 11,000 MPLA soldiers, now referred to as the People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA), and 2,000 Cubans organized into three conventional infantry brigades with armor, artillery, and antiaircraft support. These forces were there just as much to combat the remaining UNITA presence in southern Angola as to assist SWAPO/PLAN and deter South African invasion.

During the late 1970s South Africa increased its military presence in northern South West Africa including the construction of numerous command and logistical bases. In 1977 and 1978 it appears there were around 6,000–7,000 South African military personnel in the region that was divided into two Military Areas. With its headquarters at Rundu, 1 Military Area (1MA) consisted of Kavangoland and Western Caprivi. Though technically part of 1MA, SADF units in Eastern Caprivi operated as a separate command. Ovamboland and the Kaokoveld fell under the authority of 2 Military Area (2MA) that was commanded from the growing airbase at Oshakati. Responsible for the most populous part of South West Africa, 2MA consisted of four infantry battalions, supported by engineer, armored car and antiaircraft elements, made up of national servicemen or Citizen Force or Commando members who were on three-month rotation in the operational area. 2MA also had a paratrooper company serving as a quick reaction force deployed by helicopter and transport plane. The newly formed 32 Battalion, a large special unit consisting of black Portuguese-speaking Angolans who could be disguised as UNITA members, and Special Forces dispatched small patrols across the border to harass the SWAPO/PLAN but had limited impact.

In 1980 the South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) was formed to give the impression that control of the counterinsurgency effort was being passed to local authorities and that local people were playing a role in defending their own communities. However, the SADF retained overall command and many SADF members were seconded to the SWATF. The SWATF would consist of seven Permanent Force infantry battalions, most oriented around a specific African ethnic group such as the Bushmen or Ovambo, and 27 part-time, multiracial battalions. The SWATF eventually numbered around 22,000–25,000 personnel. Around the same time the South West African Police (SWAPOL) created a paramilitary force called Koevoet (Afrikaans for crowbar) that developed from a nucleus of Ovambo special constables and grew to over 2000 men including former insurgents. Supported by mine-protected cross-country vehicles, company size units would track and

eliminate PLAN insurgents and, if needed, pursue them across the Angolan border. Over a decade Koevoet cultivated a ruthless reputation as it fought 1,615 engagements and killed or captured 3,225 alleged insurgents. At the same time, 160 Koevoet members were killed and 950 wounded that was the highest casualty rate of a South African unit since the Second World War. Among Koevoet's founding white officers was Eugene de Kock who went on to command a police death squad in South Africa during the late 1980s and early 1990s.[20]

By 1978 both the SWAPO/PLAN and the South African state were competing to regain the initiative in South West Africa. Seeking to undermine a Western-sponsored scheme for independence, the SWAPO began a campaign of assassinating black political leaders working within the existing system and attempted to create liberated zones in the northern part of the territory. The South Africans began to realize that they had to do more than simply respond to the latest insurgent incident and take bold action to destroy SWAPO logistics and command. A disastrous Special Forces airborne raid on a SWAPO base at "Eheke" in late October 1977, where poor intelligence and air navigation had led to the death of seven highly trained operators and the wounding of many others, made South African authorities even more determined to seize the initiative and show the West that it was an effective anticommunist force engaged in a global struggle. At the start of May 1978 Prime Minister Vorster authorized Operation Reindeer that was a three-part SADF offensive against SWAPO/PLAN bases in Angola that would open with a large airborne raid on Cassinga some 250 kilometers inside that country and continue with an overland and helicopter attack on PLAN forward operating bases within about 25 kilometers of the border at Chetequera and Dombondola. From the SADF perspective, the mining town of Cassinga represented an important SWAPO/PLAN headquarters and training center, but the SWAPO would later maintain that it was a camp for noncombatant refugees. Operation Reindeer began on the morning of May 4 with an aerial bombardment of Cassinga base followed by the dropping of four companies of mostly Citizen Force paratroopers, under Colonel Breytenbach, with supporting antitank and mortar platoons. According to SADF sources, the paratroopers encountered heavy resistance from entrenched PLAN defenders employing antiaircraft guns against ground targets. Reports from Air Force pilots of the approach of a Cuban mechanized battalion, including tanks, from Techamutete led to the extraction of the disorganized paratroopers by helicopter that afternoon. As the last contingent of paratroopers waited for pick up, Cuban armored vehicles entered Cassinga but were funneled down a road where they were ambushed by the South African antitank platoon and then

hit by SAAF warplanes. In South Africa's first conventional airborne operation, the SADF lost three men killed, one missing and eighteen injured. It seems likely that around 600 SWAPO camp residents were killed in the raid, and in the subsequent propaganda war an intense debate emerged about their identity. SADF sources claimed that most were insurgents and any civilian deaths must be blamed on SWAPO for using human shields. SWAPO reports maintained that most of those killed were innocent refugees, including many women and children. Cuban casualties remain unknown.[21]

Further to the south, on the same day, an SADF mechanized battle group called "Juliet"; consisting of 2 South African Infantry Battalion equipped with the new Ratel infantry fighting vehicles and supported by armored cars, crossed the border and hooked around the entrenched SWAPO base at Chetequera attacking it from the rear after a preliminary aerial bombardment. Despite some problems caused by tall maize fields obstructing vision, Juliet took the position killing 248 insurgents and capturing 200 while suffering only 2 of its own killed and 10 wounded. At the same time, two smaller SADF combat groups with some artillery support crossed the border and attacked various SWAPO positions south of Chetequera, known as the Dombondola complex. On May 6, with the other Operation Reindeer units back in South West Africa, 32 Battalion conducted a series of cross-border helicopter assaults on SWAPO camps around Omepepa-Namuidi-Henhombe, finding some abandoned and sometimes overcoming stiff resistance. The SADF considered Operation Reindeer a success as in total around 1,000 SWAPO/PLAN members had been killed and a great deal of equipment captured with the loss of only 6 South African personnel. SWAPO responded by moving its bases closer to protective FAPLA/Cuban units and constructing more elaborately camouflaged positions.[22]

In 1977 South Africa had resumed support for UNITA that quickly took over the southeastern corner of Angola and by 1980 had ventured into the central part of the country and captured the town of Mavinga, which became its main forward base. This distracted FAPLA and Cuban forces from the border with South West Africa and the Angolan government demanded that SWAPO contribute to the fight against UNITA. The success of UNITA would be further bolstered by renewed American support by the Reagan administration in the 1980s. In March 1979 the SADF launched raids on SWAPO bases in western Zambia and others at Muongo, Oncua, Henhombe, and Heque in Angola. Although SWAPO had previously abandoned some of these positions, the raids resulted in the expulsion of SWAPO from Zambia. Launched in June 1980, South Africa's Operation Sceptic (also known as Smoke Shell) was a sudden mechanized assault by three battle

groups (each with a core infantry battalion and supporting elements) on a SWAPO command and logistics complex around Chifufua in southern Angola and represented the first incident of direct combat between the SADF and FAPLA, and the first time, SWAPO mechanized units were employed. After a number of hard-fought encounters, the base was destroyed, the SADF captured a large number of Soviet manufactured vehicles, and 380 PLAN and FAPLA soldiers and 17 South Africans were killed. SWAPO reacted by moving its forward bases back from the border and integrating its logistical system with FAPLA. Responding to increased skirmishes between infiltrating PLAN units and security forces, the SADF embarked on Operation Carnation in June and July 1981 in which 32 Battalion and 44 Parachute Brigade, along with elements of other units, destroyed enemy logistical centers between the border and Cuvelai.

In late August 1981 the SADF launched Operation Protea that aimed at gaining military control of southcentral Angola and eliminating FAPLA's logistical support of the SWAPO. Involving four battle groups, totaling 4,000 personnel, this was the largest South African mechanized action since the Second World War and with 138 aircraft in support it was also one of the biggest air operations of the border conflict. The specific objectives of Protea were to destroy the SWAPO regional headquarters at Xangongo and logistical base at Ongiva both some 50 kilometers inside Angola. A three-pronged South African mechanized force surrounded Xangongo to prevent counterattack by nearby FAPLA and Cuban units. Feigning a frontal attack, the SADF force assaulted the rear and flanks of the well-prepared and concealed SWAPO and FAPLA defensive position made up of trenches, bunkers, and some dug in tanks. With the collapse of resistance at Xangongo, the South Africans advanced on Ongiva where they assaulted an entrenched SWAPO/FAPLA force and after two days of fighting took the town. The capture of a Soviet advisor was offered as proof to the West of the communist onslaught facing South Africa. The SADF claimed to have killed around 1,000 SWAPO and FAPLA members and captured or destroyed almost $250 million worth of Soviet-supplied military equipment. On November 1, 1981, the SADF decided to exploit the success of Protea by launching a mechanized attack some 240 kilometers over the border on a SWAPO headquarters at Chitequeta in southeastern Angola. Called Operation Daisy, this raid represented the deepest penetration of Angola by SADF ground units, and although around 1,200 SWAPO personnel escaped, 71 were killed and the organization's command and control was seriously disrupted.[23]

South African cross-border raids continued throughout 1982. Early that year 75 soldiers from 32 Battalion conducted a helicopter assault on a

SWAPO staging area near the small town of Iona 22 kilometers from the border in southwest Angola. The insurgents were caught off guard and 201 were killed compared to only 3 members of 32 Battalion. During July and August the SADF orchestrated a series of air attacks on SWAPO command centers, killing 345 insurgents and destroying the organization's "east front" headquarters at Mupa. Fifteen South African soldiers were killed when a Puma helicopter was shot down. In early 1983 the PLAN stepped up its infiltration efforts by sending 1,700 men, divided into small groups, across the border. In the subsequent fighting, 309 insurgents and 27 security force members were killed. By this time the SWAPO had reoccupied its bases around Xangongo and Ongiva under the protection of a nearby FAPLA brigade at Cuvelai. In early December 1983 the SADF launched Operation Askari that involved four mechanized battle groups of around 500 men each advancing against SWAPO positions as far north as Cuvelai and an attack by 32 Battalion on Cassinga. On January 3, 1984, SADF units attacking a SWAPO position near Cuvelai clashed with FAPLA's 11 Brigade and 2 Cuban battalions that suffered 324 deaths and were driven off. In that clash, 21 South Africans were killed.

The success of Operation Askari led to the Lusaka Agreement of February 1984, which stipulated that South African forces withdraw from southern Angola and the Angolan government ensure that SWAPO and Cuban units did not occupy that area. By April 1985 the South Africans had moved south of the border but SWAPO, not bound by the agreement, was quickly back in the frontier zone. In late June 1985 South African units crossed into southern Angola following the tracks of SWAPO insurgents to their camps that were then destroyed. In 1985 there were 656 reported insurgent incidents in South West Africa and in 1986 there were 476 with 644 PLAN operatives killed by security forces. In January 1987, SWAPO insurgents became active in the white farming areas for the first time in four years.[24]

After the failure of a 1984 FAPLA offensive against UNITA, Soviet commanders/advisors in Angola began planning a new and much larger operation for 1985 that involved a two-pronged attack on Cazombo and Mavinga. The Soviets intended to drive the UNITA out of the central-eastern Moxico Province confining them to the southeast where Mavinga would be taken before a final assault on Jamba. The Soviets overruled concerns from Angolan FAPLA commanders about splitting their forces and Cuban worries about possible South African intervention. Putting together the largest FAPLA force to date, the Soviets organized at least 20,000 men into 20 brigades supported by T-62 tanks, MIG 23 and SU 22 fighter-bombers, and Mi-24 helicopter gun ships. Soviet advisors were deployed at

battalion level, and despite denials from Havana, it seems likely that Cuban soldiers were involved in artillery, air defense, and air support. Dubbed Operation Congresso II, the offensive was launched from Luena and Cuito Cuanavale in late July 1985. Lacking artillery and armor and fighting on two fronts, 30,000 lightly armed UNITA troops could delay but not halt the FAPLA advance which, in early September, was closing in on both Cazombo and Mavinga. The SADF opened Operation Magneto that provided the UNITA with artillery and medical personnel, as well as airlifts of UNITA troops from Mavinga to Cazombo. However, on September 19, Savimbi withdrew his forces from Cazombo to concentrate on the defense of Mavinga. Responding to desperate pleas from the UNITA, the SADF launched Operation Wallpaper in late September. For South Africa, the destruction of UNITA in southern Angola would mean an increase in SWAPO activity in South West Africa. SAAF transport planes brought thousands of UNITA men back to Mavinga, and South African multiple rocket launchers as well as Mirage and Impala fighter-bombers inflicted terrible casualties on FAPLA units that had crossed the Lomba River and were just 20 miles from Mavinga. Ten Soviet officers sent to salvage the offensive were killed when their transport aircraft was shot down by a South African Mirage. In early October the Soviets withdrew FAPLA formations to Cuito Cuanavale. FAPLA had suffered almost 2,500 casualties and lost more than a dozen aircraft, 32 armored vehicles, and over 100 trucks. Fifty-six Cubans were killed and another sixty wounded. The UNITA lost 500 killed and 1,500 injured.

Determined to renew offensive operations in 1986, the Soviets sent over 1,000 advisors and more than $1 billion worth of military equipment, including antiaircraft missiles and aircraft, to Angola. By May 1986 more than 20,000 FAPLA, 7,000 SWAPO, and 900 MK fighters had been assembled around Luena and Cuito Cuanavale for another push against the UNITA. The operation began in late May with two armored columns advancing from Luena and a third waiting at Cuito Cuanavale for fuel. The UNITA, which had just received Stinger antiaircraft missiles from the United States and the SADF, disrupted the offensive by breaking down its logistical support. On the night of June 5, South African Special Forces divers raided the port of Namibe, destroying two full fuel storage tanks and damaging another, and sinking a Cuban freighter and damaging two Soviet ones. The loss of this fuel together with UNITA ambushes on FAPLA supply columns delayed the advance from Cuito Cuanavale until late June when FAPLA units in Moxico Province were becoming bogged down because of UNITA resistance. A surprise raid on Cuito Cuanavale on August 9 by 4,000 UNITA fighters, supported by 200 SADF members operating artillery, damaged

several ammunition dumps, antiaircraft, and radar infrastructure, and forced the airfield to close temporarily. At the same time a South African Special Forces team partly destroyed the only bridge across the Cuito River just after some FAPLA units had crossed it which meant that they were now cut off from their base. By late August the Soviets had cancelled the offensive, pulled back all FAPLA columns including those in Moxico, and planted mines south and east of Cuito Cuanavale to discourage a counterattack.

Planned for 1987, Operation Saluting October represented the last Soviet-led initiative to eliminate the UNITA by advancing on Mavinga and Jamba. Another $1.5 billion worth of Soviet military equipment, including 150 T-55 and T-62 tanks, helicopter gun ships, and heavy artillery, was brought into Angola. Desperately needing a military victory to bolster deteriorating support for the war at home, Castro authorized the frontline employment of Cuban soldiers—mostly tank crews, pilots, and artillerymen—in the new offensive and sent massive arms shipments to Luanda. Soviet officers made no contingency plans for a South African intervention despite warnings from senior MK commander Ronnie Kasrils, who was getting information from agents implanted in the SADF. In May 1987 the UNITA, responding to SADF warnings of a FAPLA build up, organized attacks on FAPLA supply lines around Cuito Cuanavale. With an upcoming election and a state of emergency at home, the South African government was initially hesitant to become more directly embroiled in the Angolan conflict and dispatched just two small liaison teams to assist the UNITA. However, by mid-June Pretoria realized Savimbi would need more support and authorized the use of SADF antitank and artillery units as well as air transport for UNITA soldiers. Of the eight FAPLA brigades assembled at Cuito Cuanavale by early July, four protected supply routes and four (16, 21, 47, and 59) began an advance on Mavinga. However, when these FAPLA units were delayed by UNITA resistance just 20 miles east of Cuito Cuanavale, the Soviet commanders ordered them to temporarily halt to receive reinforcements and supplies.

Since it became obvious to Pretoria that Savimbi's men could not hold out against the advance, on August 4, 1987, the SADF launched Operation Modular in which the 700 men of 20 Brigade, consisting of five motorized infantry companies from 32 Battalion with supporting artillery and antiaircraft elements, were sent to assist the UNITA. In late August this was supplemented by the arrival of 61 Mechanized Battalion Group (61 Mech) that included two motorized infantry companies from 101 Battalion supported by a battery of G-5 howitzers and another of heavy mortars. Never exceeding a total of 3,000 men, these SADF units were expected to confront a much larger enemy while remaining covert and were not given clear instructions

on when to withdraw or whether to capture Cuito Cuanavale. From mid-August the advance of FAPLA's 47 and 59 brigades toward the Lomba River, the last obstacle on their way to Mavinga, was slowed down by South African artillery fire, and late in the month an SADF Special Forces team damaged the Cuito River Bridge to delay the arrival of enemy reinforcements and supplies. By the end of August FAPLA's 47 and 59 brigades had moved southeast and west just two miles north of the Lomba River. FAPLA's 21 Brigade moved east toward the Lomba and 16 Brigade swept further east to approach Mavinga from the north. FAPLA's 47 Brigade then hooked west around the source of the Lomba to secure a bridgehead on the river's south bank and 59 Brigade moved east along the north bank of the river attempting to link up with 21 Brigade so they could cross the river together. This separation of FAPLA forces, aggravated by many rivers and marshes, presented the South Africans with an opportunity to isolate and destroy each brigade.

The "Battle of the Lomba River" began on September 2, 1987, as SADF heavy artillery and rockets bombarded FAPLA's 21 and 59 brigades moving along the north bank. On September 9, Combat Group Bravo of the SADF's 20 Brigade, consisting of one mechanized infantry company and an antitank troop of four Ratel armored vehicles, engaged FAPLA's 21 Brigade as it was attempting to cross the Lomba River on a mobile bridge. After an exchange of artillery by both sides, two troops of South African armoured cars arrived and the FAPLA abandoned the crossing leaving behind over 100 dead and six destroyed tanks. Bravo then moved west and, on September 13, engaged FAPLA's 47 Brigade on the south bank of the Lomba River. Several hundred FAPLA infantry were caught by surprise in a dry river bed and shot down. Nevertheless, when the wheeled South African Ratels became stuck in enemy trenches, a counterattack by FAPLA tanks caused the SADF to pull back at dusk. Bravo lost eight men killed, four wounded, and three Ratels destroyed. With 400 men dead and five tanks and all its bridging equipment ruined, FAPLA's 47 Brigade relented on the plan to link up with 59 Brigade for a river crossing. An SAAF air strike against 47 Brigade on September 16 was followed by a ground attack by SADF Combat Group Alpha, another part of 20 Brigade, in which armored vehicles became stuck and the force had to withdraw under enemy mortar and machine-gun fire.

On September 17, another attempt by 21 Brigade to cross the Lomba was disrupted by South African artillery that inflicted serious casualties. In late September P. W. Botha, South African state president, ordered the SADF to destroy all FAPLA units east of the Cuito River before the beginning of the rainy season. On October 3, part of the SADF's 20 Brigade, a squadron of antitank Ratels and three mechanized infantry companies supported by

artillery and rockets, attacked FAPLA's 47 Brigade that was still on the south bank of the Lomba River attempting to build an improvised bridge. Despite stiff resistance from FAPLA tanks, the South Africans staged several assaults that broke FAPLA morale leading to a slaughter as men and vehicles attempted to flee. In this one-sided battle, 1 South African was killed and 5 wounded while more than 600 FAPLA soldiers were killed, and 127 FAPLA vehicles, including tanks, were destroyed or captured. In addition, the SADF seized a Soviet SAM-8 surface to air missile system, the only one ever taken intact by pro-Western forces, and shipped it to South Africa over protests from UNITA leaders who had promised it to their American sponsors. On October 5, the FAPLA, having suffered more than 4,000 casualties in the failed Operation Saluting October, began pulling back the remnants of its units to Cuito Cuanavale. The next day the SADF reinforced its 20 Brigade with the 4th South African Infantry Battalion Group (4 SAI) that included antiarmor Ratels and the first Olifant tanks and G-6 self-propelled artillery sent into Angola. South African forces pursued fleeing FAPLA units, keeping pressure with air strikes and artillery.[25]

The siege of Cuito Cuanavale began on October 14 when South African artillery shelled a FAPLA forward command post killing 25 soldiers and beginning seven months of bombardment that would close the town's airstrip to jets and heavy transport. The humiliating FAPLA defeat at the Lomba River prompted the Soviets to reduce their military role and encourage a negotiated settlement. During early November 1987, around Cuito Cuanavale, the South Africans killed 500 FAPLA soldiers and destroyed or captured 33 tanks and 110 logistical vehicles. This impelled a desperate Angolan government to request direct Cuban intervention. In mid-November Castro took control of Angolan operations and ordered 3,000 Cuban troops, including an armored brigade, self-propelled artillery and air-aircraft units, to defend Cuito Cuanavale, and Cuba's top fighter pilots were sent to Angola. Around the same time, Cuban forces were moved into southwestern Angola to threaten the border with Namibia and by January 1988 some 3,500 members of Castro's elite 50th Division were in Cunene Province. During this period Castro pursued a double strategy of putting military pressure on the South Africans to gain concessions from them in international negotiations. In late November FAPLA's 21 Brigade, which crossed the Chambinga River Bridge, fought a rear guard action against advancing South African forces, buying time for the Cubans to prepare the defenses of Cuito Cuanavale. Several factors proved incompatible with the SADF mission of destroying FAPLA east of the Cuito River. Condemnation of the South African military presence in Angola by the UN Security Council made Pretoria hesitant to send further reinforcements.

Additionally, disapproval of the war among white South Africans led to political pressure on SADF commanders to avoid casualties.

By December 1987 Cuito Cuanavale was protected by a three-tier defense with 4,000 men, 45 tanks, 65 armored cars, and 10 multiple rocket launchers. Representing the first tier was FAPLA's 25 Brigade guarding the Chambinga River Bridge with 59 Brigade on its left flank and 21 Brigade two miles to the north at the Cuatir River. The second tier focused on the "Tumpo Triangle," the area between the Cuito, Tumpo, and Dala rivers, with 66 Brigade securing the Cuito River Bridge and 16 Brigade nearby. Based in Cuito Cuanavale itself, the third tier consisted of FAPLA's 13 Brigade, 40 Cuban Special Forces advisors, and most of the Cuban operated antiaircraft and artillery elements. Each FAPLA brigade constructed trenches, bunkers, and minefields, and were assisted by Cuban detachments. On January 13, 1988, South African artillery pounded FAPLA's 21 Brigade in preparation for an attack by 4 SAI, with 61 Mech and UNITA in support that saw intense tank versus tank combat. Despite Cuban air strikes, South African tanks penetrated FAPLA minefields and destroyed bunkers, and by the next day a mauled FAPLA 21 Brigade had withdrawn to the southwest. The FAPLA had suffered over 250 killed and nine tanks destroyed or captured, whereas the South Africans had one casualty and two damaged Ratels. The SADF units pulled back to prepare for further attacks but an outbreak of hepatitis delayed this for a full month providing Cuban officers time to reorganize. The Cuban Tactical Group, consisting of one battalion each of tanks, mechanized infantry, and artillery, was immediately sent to Cuito Cuanavale. FAPLA units were moved closer to the Cuito River to reduce the size of the perimeter. Most Cuban artillery was positioned on high ground west of the river that offered an excellent view of the battlefield out of range of South African guns. During late January and early February UNITA attacks against the FAPLA proved ineffective and FAPLA's 21 Brigade reoccupied its former position. On February 14, the UNITA launched another assault on 21 Brigade, whereas 4 SAI and 61 Mech advanced between the positions of FAPLA's 21 and 59 brigades attacking both. Combining firepower and mobility, a mixed force of Olifants and antitank Ratels overran 59 Brigade's defenses and defeated an armored counterattack. Preventing the South Africans from seizing the Cuito Bridge, seven Cuban-manned tanks launched another counterattack in which all but one of their vehicles was destroyed. The first tier of Cuito Cuanavale's defenses collapsed as FAPLA units withdrew to the "Tumpo Triangle" having suffered over 500 Angolans and 32 Cubans killed, and 17 tanks and 18 other vehicles destroyed. While UNITA casualties appear to have been heavy, only four South Africans were killed and seven wounded.

In late February 1988 the Cubans initiated a new defensive plan, conceived by Castro, in which all units would be withdrawn west of the Cuito River except FAPLA's 25 Brigade and the Cuban tank battalion that would guard the bridge and the "Tumpo Triangle." Cuban engineers laid minefields along every approach to Cuito Cuanavale to both slow down the anticipated South African advance and reveal their position to Cuban artillery on the western highlands. On February 19, an attack by 4 SAI on a battalion of FAPLA's 59 Brigade north of the Dala River was aborted when the South African Ratels and Olifants were hit by over 30 Cuban air strikes and struck antitank mines. Just as FAPLA's 59 Brigade was beginning its extraction west of the Cuito River on February 25, it was attacked by the tanks and mounted infantry of 61 Mech, which linked up with 32 Battalion and UNITA. However, the South African advance was held up by minefields and intense artillery and air strikes. At sunset the South Africans pulled back east of the Tumpo River allowing FAPLA's 59 Brigade to complete its departure and 25 Brigade to dig in just east of the Cuito Bridge. Although 172 FAPLA and 10 Cuban soldiers had been killed and seven tanks destroyed, the defeat of the South African assault greatly boosted the morale of the Cuito Cuanavale garrison. The South Africans had lost two men killed, several dozen wounded, and four Olifants and one Ratel seriously damaged. Only 17 out of 28 South African tanks were still operational, but another attack was mounted as the national service period of many 20 Brigade members was about to expire. On the night of February 29, an attack on FAPLA's 25 Brigade by 61 Mech, supported by 32 Battalion and UNITA, was abandoned because of minefields, Cuban artillery, and mechanical problems with the remaining tanks. Within a few days the SADF's 20 Brigade began to demobilize and was replaced by 82 Brigade that took two weeks to arrive because of flooding in South Africa.

Moving into southeast Angola in March 1988, the SADF's 82 Brigade consisted of two mechanized infantry battalions, two squadrons of Olifant tanks and one of antitank Ratels, a battery of G-5 howitzers and mortar, rocket and antiaircraft elements. During the lull in the fighting, the FAPLA and the Cubans had improved the defenses of Cuito Cuanavale with more minefields designed to funnel attackers into gaps covered by artillery. Preparing for an offensive called Operation Packer, South African air strikes repeatedly hit FAPLA's 25 Brigade over two days and the UNITA staged diversionary attacks. Launched on March 23, the assault by 82 Brigade ground to a halt because of minefields, artillery, and air strikes, and by the end of the day the SADF had withdrawn abandoning three Olifants. To the north, the UNITA attacks on FAPLA's 36 Brigade were also driven off. With this last failure, the

South African government realized that it could not expel the FAPLA west of the Cuito River without suffering politically unacceptable casualties. South Africa's 82 Brigade was quickly demobilized and Combat Group 20, consisting of 1,500 men, organized to protect SADF engineers as they laid minefields between the Dala and Tumpo rivers to thwart a possible FAPLA counteroffensive against the UNITA.[26]

By mid-March 1988, with Cuito Cuanavale secure, Castro sent the Cuban 40 Tank Brigade into southwestern Cunene Province to reinforce FAPLA and SWAPO positions at Cahama, Xangongo, Mupa, and Cuvelai. In late March the Cubans upgraded several airstrips in this part of Angola to extend their air power into South West Africa. In addition, a system of 150 SAM-8 missile batteries was established that finally ended South African air superiority in southern Angola. The first major engagement between South Africans and Cubans in the southwest of Angola happened on April 18 when a SWATF unit in pursuit of SWAPO insurgents was ambushed by 200 Cubans near Chipeque, 20 miles south of Xangongo. Two South Africans were killed and eleven wounded. On May 4 a combined FAPLA-Cuban company ambushed a mechanized force from 101 Battalion on its way to Donguena. Fifty-four Cubans were killed, whereas the South Africans lost seven men and four vehicles. By the end of May there were two full Cuban divisions, some 12,000 men and 200 tanks, in southwestern Angola, three new 500 man mixed SWAPO-Cuban battalions had been formed, and the SWAPO training camp at Tchipa was reinforced so that it was defended by over 2,000 men with 30 tanks. Three companies from South Africa's 32 Battalion were deployed to screen Tchipa and soon clashed with the SWAPO and Cubans. The South Africans responded by creating a new task force, code named Zulu, made up of a battle group from 32 Battalion, three companies from 101 Battalion, 61 Mech, and batteries of artillery, mortars, and multiple rocket launchers. On June 22, Cuban forces attempted to push south from Tchipa but ran into a company of 32 Battalion and both sides pulled back. At the end of June the SADF opened Operation Excite that involved a massive artillery barrage of Tchipa that was meant to draw the Cubans out into a South African ambush. Refusing to take the bait, the Cubans organized an offensive by three armored detachments, each consisting of 600 men and dozens of tanks that drove south toward Calueque that would be simultaneously hit by Cuban air strikes. On June 27, the advance of Cuban ground forces was stopped by South African Ratels and Olifants from Task Force Zulu. Around 300 FAPLA troops and probably 10 Cubans were killed in addition to two tanks, two armored personnel carriers, and eight trucks destroyed.

The South Africans lost two Ratels and one man was killed. However, news of a large Cuban tank unit coming from Tchipa encouraged Task Force Zulu to move south across the border while harassed by Cuban air strikes. That same day Cuban MiGs bombed Calueque, 11 kilometers north of the border, damaging the hydroelectric facility and killing 11 South African soldiers. This illustrated Cuban air superiority over the Angola-South West Africa border area prompting the South Africans to destroy a major bridge over the Cunene River, the boundary between the two countries, to forestall a FAPLA-Cuban ground offensive.

The casualties suffered on June 27 were politically disastrous for the National Party government that ordered the SADF to pull back from confrontation with the FAPLA and the Cubans. In mid-July South Africa's 10 Division was deployed along the border to defend against possible invasion from Angola. While the Cubans increased their total force in Angola to 65,000 and planned an invasion of South West Africa, they were also concerned about the political consequences of casualties and avoided conflict with the South Africans. These factors ultimately led to the success of American-facilitated negotiations between Cuba, South Africa, and Angola. In a staged plan, South African forces withdrew from southern Angola and all of South West Africa in 1989, the Cubans pulled out of southern Angola around the same time and left the country in 1991, and Namibia became independent in 1990. The last SADF combat operation in South West Africa occurred in April 1989 when 1,500–1,800 PLAN fighters crossed from Angola to establish a military presence before the upcoming November elections. With the SWAPO in violation of a cease-fire that it had agreed to, the United Nations authorized the SADF, on the eve of its complete withdrawal from the territory, and the South West African Police to eliminate the insurgents. In the subsequent fighting the SWAPO lost 250 troops and by May the insurgents had moved back into Angola. At the same time 26 South Africans were killed and 145 wounded. In October 1989, South Africa, under UN pressure, disbanded the police counterinsurgency unit Koevoet because of accusations that its armored columns were intimidating voters and, according to the settlement, police were supposed to be lightly armed. The SWAPO won the election and became the first government of independent Namibia. Civil war in Angola continued until the death of Savimbi in a FAPLA ambush in 2002.[27]

South Africa lost the long "Border War" in Namibia and Angola. Those who wish to claim a South African victory point to the high number of casualties inflicted by the SADF on PLAN, FAPLA, and the Cubans. However, in warfare killing the most people and doing the most damage—while important—does

not always translate into success, particularly in counterinsurgency where political issues dominate. The SADF conducted many successful cross-border operations against PLAN's command and logistics, and won conventional battles such as at the Lomba River where it saved UNITA and thwarted a Soviet-planned FAPLA offensive. It is more difficult to say that the South Africans achieved a victory at Cuito Cuanavale where their aims were not clear. While it appears that the SADF never meant to take Cuito Cuanavale itself, they fell just short of expelling FAPLA/Cuban units west of the Cuito River. With a well-defined objective, FAPLA and the Cubans intended to hold Cuito Cuanavale and they did this despite massive losses. The FAPLA-Cuban advance in Cunene Province was more important in prompting a South African withdrawal from Angola and bringing about an international settlement. In focusing on who won and lost specific engagements, there is a danger of losing sight of the bigger picture. The South Africans intervened in Angola because of insurgency south of the border where the SWAPO/PLAN—because of a mix of political and military factors—ultimately achieved its long-term goal of Namibian independence and has been in power for the past 20 years.

Regional Destabilization

Upon the sudden Portuguese decolonization of 1974–75, the FRELIMO took over the government in Maputo and began offering greater assistance to the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) that was using Mozambique as a staging area for insurgent infiltration of white-ruled Rhodesia. In retaliation, Rhodesian agents organized former soldiers of the Portuguese colonial army and other dissidents into the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) that sought to destabilize the FRELIMO state by guerrilla warfare. With the independence of Zimbabwe in 1980 and the election of Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF), South Africa took over the sponsorship of RENAMO which, at the time, had about 2,000 fighters in Mozambique. The SAAF airlifted 250 RENAMO personnel from their base in Zimbabwe to Phalaborwa in the eastern Transvaal where a new training and logistical center was established. In June 1980 FRELIMO overran RENAMO's Mozambican base at Gorongoza, located in the mountains north of the Zimbabwe-Beira road, and discovered evidence of South African assistance: ammunition containers, equipment, and parachutes. RENAMO soon recaptured Gorongoza and by February 1981 its strength had risen to 10,000 trained insurgents.

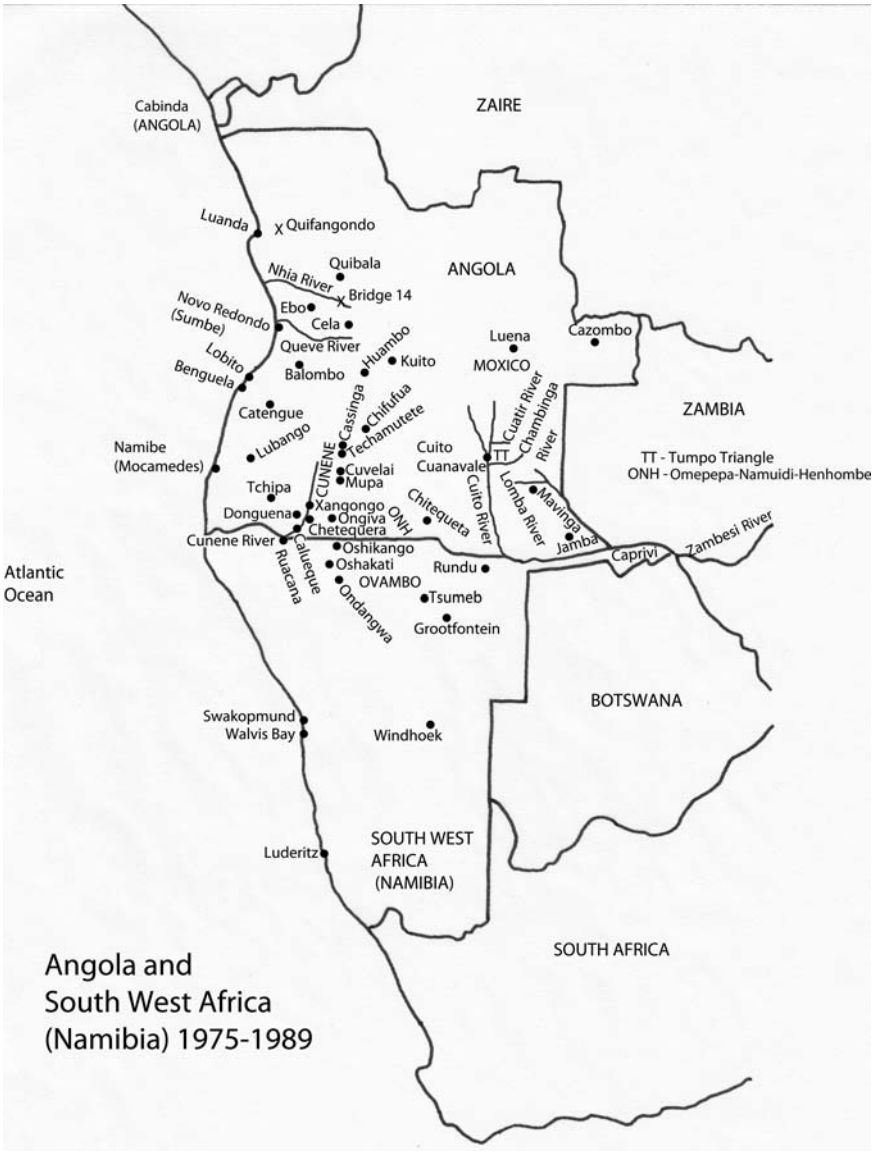
In "Operation Altar" and later "Operation Mila," South African Special Forces began training, advising, and supplying RENAMO as well as conducting their own raids in Mozambique. While South African "Recce" teams and supplies were initially brought into Mozambique by helicopter or parachuted from airplanes, when RENAMO expanded its operations into Inhambane Province in 1981, South African naval vessels landed huge amounts of equipment on the coast. At Phalaborwa, South Africans trained RENAMO recruits, some of whom had arrived via the Kruger National Park, and played a central role in planning RENAMO operations that in the short term were meant to damage Mozambique's economy and in the long term overthrow FRELIMO. Since continuous RENAMO sabotage of the railway and oil pipeline between Beira and Mutare threatened the economic development of Zimbabwe, units of the Zimbabwe National Army were sent into Mozambique in the early 1980s to assist FRELIMO in its growing counter-insurgency war. In January 1981 South African Recces raided ANC houses in Maputo, killing 13 ANC members and 1 bystander. During November of the same year South African Special Forces attacked two bridges near Beira and destroyed marker buoys in Beira harbor. In December 1982 a South African Recce team blew up the Zimbabwe government's oil storage facilities in Beira. Pretoria was undermining attempts by the Frontline states, neighboring black-ruled countries, to reduce their economic dependence on South African ports by shifting export and import to Mozambique. South African warplanes, in May 1983, struck an MK facility at Maputo, probably killing 41 MK operatives, 17 FRELIMO soldiers, and 7 civilians. In October of the same year a SADF Recce team infiltrated Maputo by sea, planted a bomb in an ANC safe house that injured several people and might have killed two, and returned home overland. The success of RENAMO's insurgency and South African raids led directly to the March 1984 Nkomati Accord between Mozambique and South Africa in which both parties agreed to withhold support from rebels in each other's territories. Subsequently, FRELIMO expelled many ANC members from Mozambique that denied MK an important infiltration route into South Africa. On the other hand, Pretoria continued to secretly supply and assist RENAMO, often through Malawi, until 1989. In October 1986 Samora Machel, president of Mozambique, died in an airplane crash in the eastern Transvaal. Suspicions that the SADF had arranged the disaster were never proven.[28]

From the 1960s, Tanzania's President Julius Nyerere had given sanctuary to many African liberation movements, including the FRELIMO, ANC, and PAC. In 1972 the Tanzanian port of Dar-es-Salaam was rocked by a number of bomb blasts that had been set by a South African Special Forces team

landed by submarine. While the aim of the operation, to instill fear that a local dissident group had turned to terrorism, proved initially successful, a follow-up seaborne raid on the harbor's oil storage facility was cancelled by the South African navy because underwater coral would endanger submarines. During the mid- to late 1970s South Africa sponsored an insurgent group active in western Zambia. Led by Adamson Mushala, later killed by the Zambian army in 1982, these fighters were trained by South African Recces in the Caprivi Strip. In the 1970s the government of Lesotho quietly allowed the ANC to use its small territory as a stepping stone for those going to exile and for MK infiltration of South Africa. From 1979 into the 1980s, the South African state sponsored the Lesotho Liberation Army, supposedly the military wing of the opposition Basotho Congress Party, which operated forward bases in the QwaQwa and Transkei homelands from where they mounted attacks inside Lesotho. In 1980 and 1981 Chris Hani, the MK leader in Lesotho, survived several South African attempts to assassinate him by car bomb. In early December 1982 some 70 South African Recce operators, mostly black, infiltrated Lesotho and raided numerous ANC houses in Maseru before extraction by helicopter. It appears that 42 people were killed in the attack, including 27 ANC members and 7 women and children. The Recces returned with captured Soviet small arms and MK documents outlining plans for a campaign of bombing and assassination.

With Pretoria's military pressure on Lesotho and Mozambique reducing ANC safe havens in the region, in the mid-1980s Botswana became the main staging area for MK penetration of South Africa. While the Botswana state did not allow the ANC or PAC to use its territory for military purposes, it had granted sanctuary to South African refugees many of whom were involved in underground military operations. According to the South African Police, between August 1984 and June 1985, MK agents in Botswana had been responsible for 36 acts of violence in South Africa in which five people, including three policemen, had been killed. On June 14, 1985, Recce operators raided a number of suspected ANC houses in Gaborone killing nine ANC members, two local women, and a Somali refugee. In Zimbabwe, South African agents set off an explosion at ZANU-PF headquarters in Harare in early 1981 and destroyed a quarter of the Zimbabwean Air Force's combat aircraft at Gweru in July 1982. Exploiting tensions in post independence Zimbabwe, a South African backed group called Super ZAPU committed murder and robbery in Matabeleland during the early 1980s and tried to attract recruits from the original ZAPU. Although Super ZAPU failed to gain popular support, its activities partly contributed to a brutal state crackdown in that area. During the mid-1980s MK operatives based in Zimbabwe made

forays across the border to plant landmines around the white farms of the northern Transvaal. As a result, in May 1986 the SADF, targeting ANC facilities, launched simultaneous Special Forces raids in Harare and Gaborone, and an air raid on Lusaka.[29]



Cartography by Fungai Madzongwe

Conclusion

With the creation of apartheid, the South African military increasingly became a tool of the National Party, moved away from British connections, tried to create an all-white establishment, and sought broader alliances on the Western side of the Cold War. From the early 1960s African nationalists, aided by newly independent African countries, launched armed struggles and developed revolutionary military wings in exile supported by Eastern Bloc powers. While the ANC saw violence as one aspect of an essentially political struggle, the PAC planned mass revolution. South African incursions into Angola, counterinsurgency in South West Africa, and destabilization of other black-ruled neighbors meant that the apartheid state relied increasingly on military power. In the 1970s and 1980s Pretoria, facing internal protest and international sanctions, developed an arms industry, spent lavishly on defense, dramatically expanded white conscription and recruited blacks for combat duty.

Conclusion: The Post-Apartheid Military

By the end of the 1980s South Africa's apartheid regime was in a difficult situation. International sanctions were crippling the economy, fears of communist conspiracy disappeared with the end of the Cold War, many parts of the country were in a state of unrest, and long-occupied Namibia became independent. In February 1990 F. W. de Klerk, who had recently replaced P. W. Botha as state president, legalized the antiapartheid movements and released political prisoners. Under de Klerk, the SADF lost the considerable political influence it had gained under Botha yet anxiety over a potential military coup proved groundless. Despite threats and continued violence from disenchanted groups such as right-wing Afrikaners, Zulu nationalists, and the PAC, subsequent negotiations between the ANC and National Party led to a nonracial constitution. In turn, South Africa's first democratic elections in late April 1994 brought an ANC-led government of national unity to power and Nelson Mandela became the country's first black president.

As part of this transition, a new South African National Defence Force (SANDF) was created as an amalgamation of the SADF (90,000 personnel); the homeland armies of Transkei, Boputhatswana, Venda, and Ciskei (11,500); and the liberation forces of MK (28,000) and APLA (6,000). Since conscription and compulsory call-ups were eliminated after the 1994 election, the new defense force would consist of voluntary full-time and reserve personnel. Given their administrative skills and conventional military experience, SADF officers had dominated the planning process during 1993 and ensured that SADF structures and traditions would morph into the new SANDF. From an entirely land-based force, MK officers contributed little to discussions on the new navy or air force. In practice the old SADF would absorb the other forces. When the SANDF was established in early 1994,

most of the influential command and staff positions went to former SADF officers with a few others appointed to posts with little real authority. Many former liberation movement officers had to attend compulsory courses to confirm their SANDF rank that meant they were delayed in assuming posts. Seeing themselves as senior partners in the process, some former SADF members displayed racism to their new colleagues and excluded them by continuing to use Afrikaans as a medium of instruction and communication. With their similarity to the old SADF, former homeland armies were easily transferred to the new SANDF. By September 1994 the SANDF had taken over command of homeland forces, and by 1996 the vast majority of these personnel had joined SANDF. The absorption of MK and APLA personnel was considerably more difficult because of their historical antagonism toward the SADF, the irrelevance of their insurgent military skills to a large conventional force, and the lack of standardization in their training that had taken place in many different countries.

In June 1994 members of the liberation armies began returning from exile and reported to a number of assembly areas where boards, made up of SANDF officers of various backgrounds and British military adjudicators, determined their ranks, salaries, and additional training needs. About 90 percent of inductees were assigned to the army. A demobilization package, including gratuity and pension, was accepted by about 10,000 of those not wishing to continue military service or who were prevented from doing so because of age, ill health, or lack of education. In October 1994 thousands of former MK members went absent without leave in protest over poor living conditions and treatment in the camps, were given seven days to return by President Mandela, and 2,000 were subsequently dismissed. Eventually, conditions in the camps improved. By 1996, 6,421 former APLA members and 14,791 former MK members had been adsorbed into the SANDF. A major transition occurred in early 1998 when chief of the SANDF, General Georg Meiring, submitted a letter to the president, warning of an anticipated coup by prominent political, military, business, and international figures. The report was rejected and Meiring was forced to resign. As a result, a number of conservative, former SADF officers left key positions and were replaced by former MK officers just returned from training including General Siphiwe Nyanda who became the new SANDF chief.[1]

Since 1994, several contradictory motives have shaped the role of South Africa's military. With a pressing need to address internal problems such as poverty and lack of obvious external threats, defense spending has not been a priority. However, there is a view that South Africa, as a major regional power with a history of struggle against oppression, should help promote democracy

and human rights in other parts of Africa and that the damage done by the apartheid regime to neighboring countries during the 1970s and 1980s makes this an obligation. Emerging from isolation, South Africa is an important member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) both of which are involved in international security issues, conflict resolution, and peacekeeping. The desire to find African solutions to African problems has meant that South Africa, wealthier than most African countries, has been called on to contribute to various international missions. In 1998 the SANDF and Botswana Defence Force, acting under the auspices of SADC, intervened in Lesotho to reverse a military coup. From the late 1990s, the SANDF has participated in AU and UN peacekeeping operations in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. Internally, the SANDF has been employed to secure South Africa's borders from illegal immigration and smuggling of drugs and guns. In 1996 SANDF personnel were deployed in Qumbu in the Eastern Cape to suppress stock theft violence, and in 2008 SANDF units assisted police, responding to a wave of xenophobic attacks on immigrants in the provinces of Gauteng, Mpumalanga, and Kwa-Zulu/Natal.

In 1999 the South African government embarked on an ambitious arms purchase scheme, worth $4.8 billion, to replace aging apartheid era weapons systems. Four naval corvettes, three submarines, around two dozen fighter and trainer jets, and thirty light helicopters were required to secure the country's coastal waters and airspace as well as participate in regional peacekeeping. The project became mired in controversy and accusations of corruption. At the same time, the SANDF announced plans to reduce costs by decreasing its total permanent force strength from 93,000 to 70,000. Following the unionization of police and prison services in the early 1990s, the South African National Defence Union was successful in its 1999 bide to have the constitutional court strike down a prohibition on military unions.[2] Two developments in 2009 illustrate the impact of unionization on the SANDF. In August over 1,000 striking soldiers, demanding increased pay, clashed with police in Pretoria and in December the SANDF lifted its restriction on sending HIV-positive members on foreign deployments.

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Notes

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