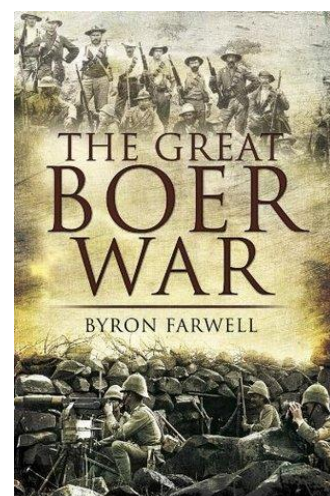
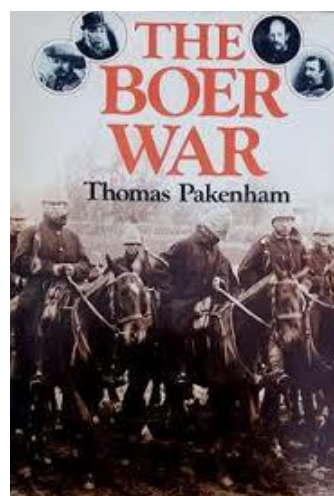
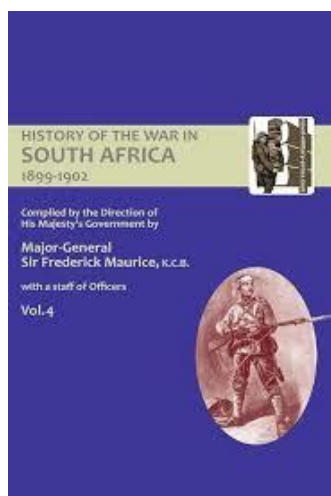
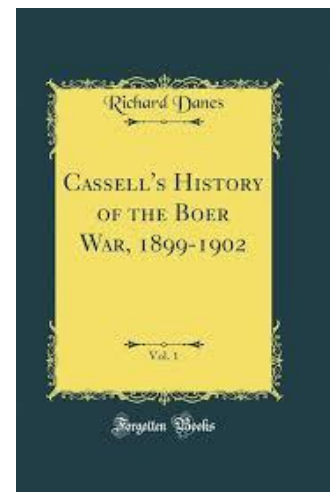
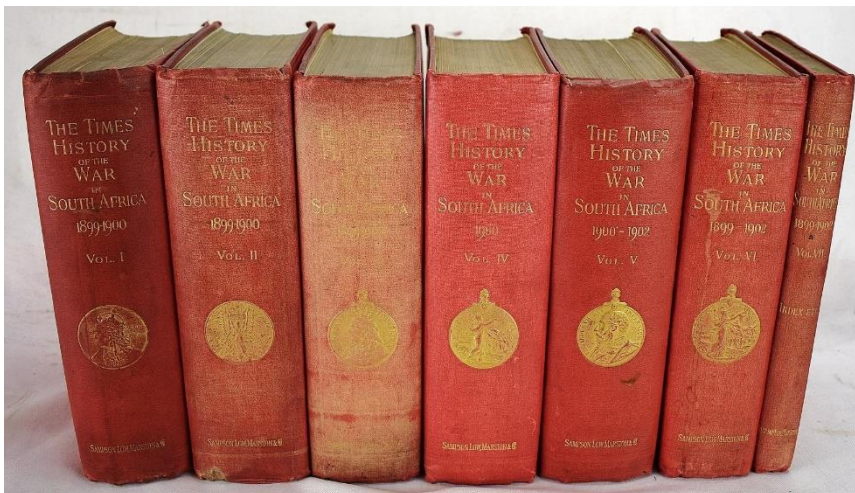


## Mid-Month Visit / Newsletter – March 2025

In my Newsletters I try to standardise when referring to events that happened in South Africa during the years 1899 to 1902 but the inclusion of quotes with different references might cause 'confusion'. I often get asked – what is the actual 'title' associated with the war that was fought during that time. I have many books which refer to the war, and again, there is no standard, a few examples are

- the seven volumes, edited by L.S. Amery are titled 'The Times History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902'
- Richard Danes' book is titled 'Cassell's History of the Boer War'
- the four volumes, authored by Major General Sir Frederick Maurice are titled 'History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902'
- Thomas Pakenham titled his book 'The Boer War'
- Byron Farwell titled his book 'The Great Boer War'
- and I could go on with a number of other titles.





However, a friend of mine, Professor Fransjohan Pretorius, who is widely regarded as one of the most knowledgeable people of the Boer War, with several publications on the war to his credit, has given me permission to record an article he published on the naming of the conflict, fought in South Africa, between the years 1899 and 1902.

What he published follows.



Picture: Professor Fransjohan Pretorius

*"The devastating war that raged upon the South African veld between 1899 and 1902 – the first of the 20<sup>th</sup> century wars – was a small war in comparison with the World Wars of 1914 to 1918 and 1939 to 1945. Yet it remains a war with many revealing, intriguing and amazing facets with regard to military, political, social and a wide range of other issues.*

*The war has been given many names. There is not one of them that is fully acceptable to the exclusion of all others, not even the one I have chosen to use, viz. 'the Anglo-Boer War'.*

*Names that were used in Great Britain, even at the time of the war, include 'the Boer War', 'the Transvaal War' and 'the South African War'. Of course the problem with 'the Boer War' is that it is subjective; it sees the conflict from one side only – that of the British. 'The Transvaal War' is similarly problematic and furthermore does not take into account the Orange Free State, which had a political and military treaty with the Transvaal, making it an official warring party.*

*'The South African War' was a contemporary name, but it was reinvented some three or four decades ago when it was adopted by British and English-speaking South African historians. There is some merit in this name. Not only does it tell us where the war was fought, but it also recognizes that the entire South African population was affected by the war. In this sense it was indeed a true South African War, a civil war. In the past, mistakenly, the war was seen as a clash that only involved the Boers and the British. Now we recognize that black people played an important part in this war and that they were deeply affected by it.*

*I have used 'the South African War' in British texts and fully accept the valid point that it involves all in South Africa who participated in or were affected by the war. But the problem is that it does not acknowledge the involvement of the party that all historians now agree had the major share in causing the war – Great Britain. A colleague has suggested that since we talk of the Vietnam War, why not then the South African War? The answer is simple. The Vietnamese do not call the war on their soil the Vietnam War. In fact, a Vietnamese colleague in the United States claims that it is called 'the war of resistance against the Americans'.*

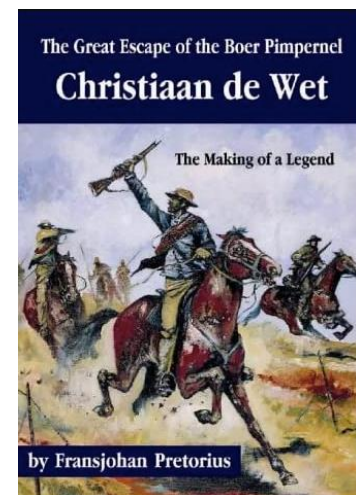
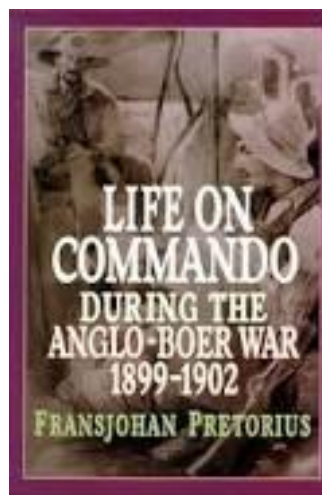
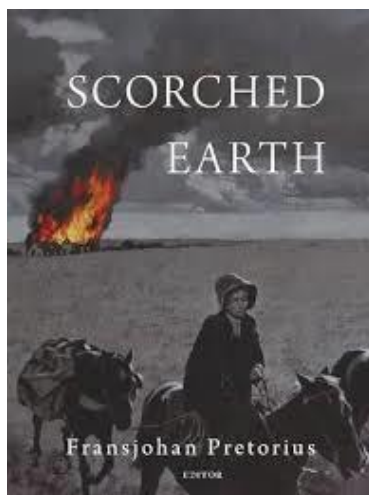
*During the commemoration of the war between 1999 and 2002 the South African government made an earnest attempt to popularize the name 'Anglo-Boer South African War'. However, from the outset there was little enthusiasm for this artificial desire to be politically all-inclusive.*



*Afrikaners have called the war 'die Tweede Vryheidsoorlog' (the Second War of Freedom); 'die Engelse Oorlog' (the English War); 'die Anglo-Boereoorlog' (the Anglo-Boer War); or even 'die Tweede Anglo-Boereoorlog' (the Second Anglo-Boer War, following their first war against the British in 1880-1881). The names 'Tweede Vryheidsoorlog' and 'Engelse Oorlog' have the same problem of subjectivity as 'the Boer War', and are therefore equally unacceptable. Because the war of 1880-1881 involved only the Transvaal Boers, the war of 1899-1902 leaves us with 'die Anglo-Boereoorlog' (the Anglo-Boer War), which gives the names of the parties who entered the war after a breakdown in political and diplomatic relations. However, I admit that to use 'Anglo' is too limited, as it does not recognize the participation of the Welsh, the Irish and the Scots, and even the Canadians, the Australians and the New Zealanders. And, of course, black South Africans.*

*My philosophy is that one can use either 'the Anglo-Boer War' or 'the South African War', as long as one recognizes that officially it was a war between the Boer republics on the one hand and Great Britain on the other, and that black people were involved either militarily or politically and were also affected socially and politically by the war."*

*A few of Professor Fransjohan Pretorius' books ...*



I have grown up calling the war the Boer War, and those in my circles know exactly what I am referring to. So, from now on, the war, in my newsletters will be the Boer War.

**REMEMBER** to keep an eye on our website ([www.battletoursza.com](http://www.battletoursza.com)) for regular updates and news.

**Allan Gordon**