

peace and Kitchener commenced with the barbed wire and block house campaign to try and thwart guerrilla attacks by the Boers.



Picture: Lord Kitchener

February 1902 saw the start of Lord Kitchener's 'New Model Drives'. The 'modus operandi' of these drives necessitated that lines of men would walk side by side, twenty yards apart, driving the Boers before them until they were squashed against the blockhouses and posts where they were forced to surrender.

Drives were planned and actioned against the Boer Generals, de Wet and de la Rey who were becoming 'thorns' in the side of the British with their continued guerrilla activities. De Wet was active in the Free State and de la Rey in the Western Transvaal with continued guerrilla activities.

General de la Rey attacked a British convoy at Ysterspruit towards the end of the month, and Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson was forced to surrender.

British losses were 187 of 490 men killed or wounded, with Boer casualties being 51. De la Rey escaped with 170 horses, several hundred rifles and half a million rounds of ammunition.

During the three February months of the South African War (1900, 1901 and 1902), ten V.C.'s were awarded:

1900

Lt. F.N. Parsons	Essex Regiment	Paardeberg
Sgt. A. Atkinson	Yorkshire Regiment	Paardeberg
Pvt. A.E. Curtis	East Surrey Regiment	Natal
Lt. E.T. Inkson	Royal Army Medical Corp	Natal
Sgt. J. Firth	1st Manchester's	Caesar's Camp
Pvt. J. Pitts	Duke of Wellington's	Plewman's Farm (C.C.)
Cpt. C. Mansel-Jones	West Yorkshire Regt.	Terrace Hill (Natal)

1901

Sgt. W.B. Traynor	West Yorkshire Regt.	Lake Chrissie (Tvl)
Cpl. J.J. Clements	Rimington's Guides	Strijdenberg (C.C.)

1902

Sur-Capt. A. Martin-Leake	S. A. Constabulary	Vlakfontein (Standerton)
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Anniversary of the birth of Lord Baden-Powell – 22 February 1857

Lieutenant-General Robert Stephenson Smyth Baden-Powell was born in London on 22 February 1857. He was educated at Charterhouse School and on joining the British Army he saw service in India and Africa, from 1876 until 1910. During the South African War (1899-1902) he successfully defended the town of Mafeking during its 217 day siege.



Picture: Lord Baden-Powell

In 1876 Baden-Powell joined the 13th Hussars in India with the rank of Lieutenant. In the 1880's he was posted to Zululand in South Africa and it was here, gathering information, that he developed his military scouting skills amidst activities in the Zulu Nation. These skills impressed his superiors and he rose through the ranks, becoming the youngest Colonel in the British Army at the age of 40. He frequently travelled disguised as a butterfly collector, incorporating plans of military installations into his drawings of butterfly wings.

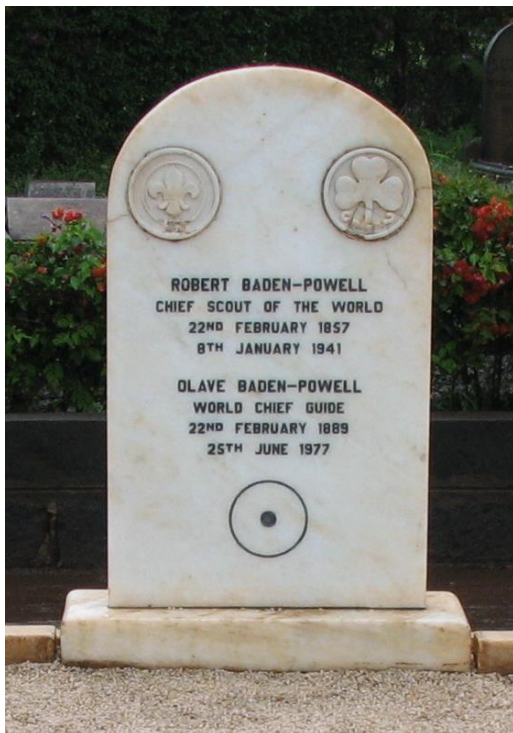
In 1896 he saw service in the Second Matabele War, in the expedition to relieve British South Africa Company personnel under siege in Bulawayo. This experience, where he commanded reconnaissance missions into enemy territory in the Matopos Hills, helped him formulate many of the principles related to his Boy Scout movement. With the possibility of the outbreak of hostilities between the Transvaal and the British, Baden-Powell was instructed to maintain a mobile mounted force on the border with the Boer Republics. He then established a garrison Mafeking.

The siege of the small town received much attention from both the Boers and international media because Lord Edward Cecil, the son of the British Prime Minister, was besieged in the town. The garrison held out until relieved, in part thanks to cunning deceptions, many devised by Baden-Powell. Fake minefields were planted and his soldiers pretended to avoid non-existent barbed wire while moving between trenches. Baden-Powell did much reconnaissance work himself. In one instance, noting that the Boers had not removed the rail line, Baden-Powell loaded an armoured locomotive with sharpshooters and sent it down the rails into the heart of the Boer encampment and back again in a successful attack. (*Acknowledgement – Wikipedia*)

During the siege, the Mafeking Cadet Corps of boys below fighting age, helped with non-combatant tasks such as guard duties, helping in hospitals, and carrying messages. This freed up adult men to take up arms. Baden-Powell did not form the Cadet Corps, however, they made a huge impact on him as he referred to their activities and involvement in the first chapter of Scouting for Boys, his reference book for Boy Scouts.

Late in October 1900 the South African Constabulary was formed and Major-General Baden-Powell was appointed the first Inspector-General. He recruited men from the two British colonies of the Cape and Natal and from other overseas countries. The uniform was designed by Baden-Powell, with the distinctive hat being adopted by his Boy Scout movement.

On his return from Africa in 1903, Baden-Powell found that his military training manual, 'Aids to Scouting', had become a best-seller, and was being used by teachers and youth organisations. Following his involvement in the Boys' Brigade as a Brigade Vice-President and Officer in charge of its scouting section, with encouragement from his friend, William Alexander Smith, Baden-Powell decided to re-write 'Aids to Scouting' to suit a youth readership. In August 1907 he held a camp on Brownsea Island to test out his ideas. About 20 boys attended: eight from local Boys' Brigade companies, and about twelve public school boys, mostly sons of his friends. Baden-Powell was also influenced by Ernest Thompson Seton, who founded the Woodcraft Indians. Seton gave Baden-Powell a copy of his book 'The Birch Bark Roll of the Woodcraft Indians' and they met in 1906. The first book on the Scout Movement, Baden-Powell's 'Scouting for Boys' was published in six instalments in 1908, and has sold approximately 150 million copies as the fourth best-selling book of the 20th century. (*Acknowledgement – Wikipedia*)



Baden-Powell died on 8 January 1941 and is buried in St. Peter's Cemetery in Nyeri, Kenya.

His gravestone bears a circle with a dot in the centre 'O', which is the Boy Scout trail sign for 'Going home', or 'I have gone home'.

In 2001 the Kenyan government declared Baden-Powell's grave a National Monument.

Picture: The headstone of Lord Baden-Powell's Grave

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