

Emily Hobhouse

A Remarkable English Woman !

Introduction: This exhibition is the story of an extra-ordinary English woman, from a country area in England (the daughter of a priest), who opposed the barbaric methods of war in South Africa. She attacked senior British officers, soldiers and parliamentarians. She was successful in saving the lives of 1000's of Boer women and children in the horror British concentration Camps.

When the war was over, she assisted the poor and ragged people, to return to their destroyed farms. She assisted with food, clothing and moral support. The men were assisted with *“ploughing teams”* and the women were given the opportunity to learn *spinning, weaving* etc at newly established schools. This brought great relief and upliftment.

Eventually she returned to Britain, just to find that the troops of *“Her Majesty”* were involved in the First World war. She immediately started collecting funds and opened up a *“soup kitchen”* in Leipzig. Emily eventually returned to England, where she lived a life in isolation and semi poverty.

She died alone in 1926 at the age of 66.



The above mint stamps were issued by the SA Post Office on the 8th June 1976. This to commemorate her death 50 years ago.



*Above: A photo of Emily Hobhouse (1902)
A life devoted to love and striving for peace.*

I acknowledge the following people for their research, which I have used in this exhibition:

1. **Heldin uit die Vreemde.** Deur Rykie van Reenen. (Tafelberg 1970).
2. **Wikipedia.**
3. **Emily Hobhouse, “Geliefde Verraaier”** Deur Elsabe Brits (Tafelberg 2016).
4. **Die Smarte van die oorlog.** Paul Alberts (Kraal Uitgewers – 2005).
5. **Krögerhuis** deur Dr WJ de Kock. Tvl Museum. 1947

Emily Hobhouse Plan & Lay-out of Exhibition.

I quote Genl. Jan Smuts at the funeral
of Emily on the 27th October 1926

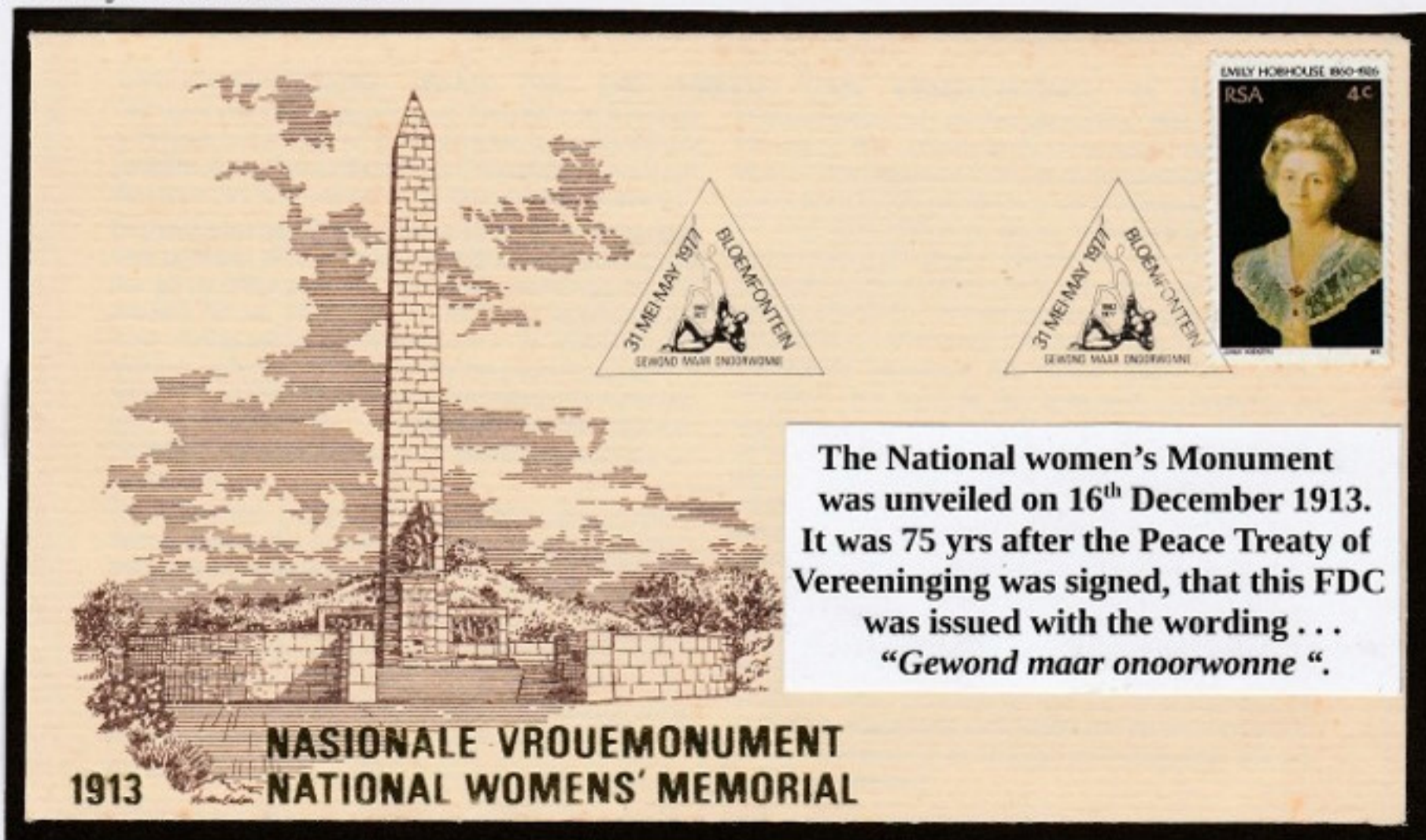
*“ We stood alone in the world, almost friendless
against the mightiest Empire on earth. And then
one small hand, the hand of a woman, was stretched
out to us. At the darkest hour, when our race almost
seemed doomed to extinction, she appeared as an
angel . . . Strangest of all, she was an English woman.”*

Please enjoy the following in this exhibition

1. December 1900. Emily arriving in Cape Town.
2. January 1901. Emily meet British command in SA.
3. February 1901. Emily visits Bloemfontein Camp.
4. Mch/Apr 1901. Emily visit several Concentration Camps.
5. Emily Hobhouse and her friendships with:
 - Tibbie Steyn (Wife of Pres. MT Steyn).
 - General Jan Smuts.
 - The English writer, Olive Schreiner.
 - Mahatma Gandhi.
 - General Christiaan De Wet.
 - President Paul Kruger.
6. Emily meets the three Boer Generals in London after the war.
7. The 1st World War and Emily at Leipzig.
8. Unveiling of the National Women’s Monument in Bloemfontein.
9. Emilys death and Funeral.



Above:
Two stamps issued on the
11th October 1999 to
Commemorate the start of
Anglo Boer War, 100 yrs ago.



**The National women’s Monument
was unveiled on 16th December 1913.
It was 75 yrs after the Peace Treaty of
Vereeniging was signed, that this FDC
was issued with the wording . . .
“Gewond maar onoorwonne “.**

Emily and the British Commanding Officers.

(Anglo Boer War)

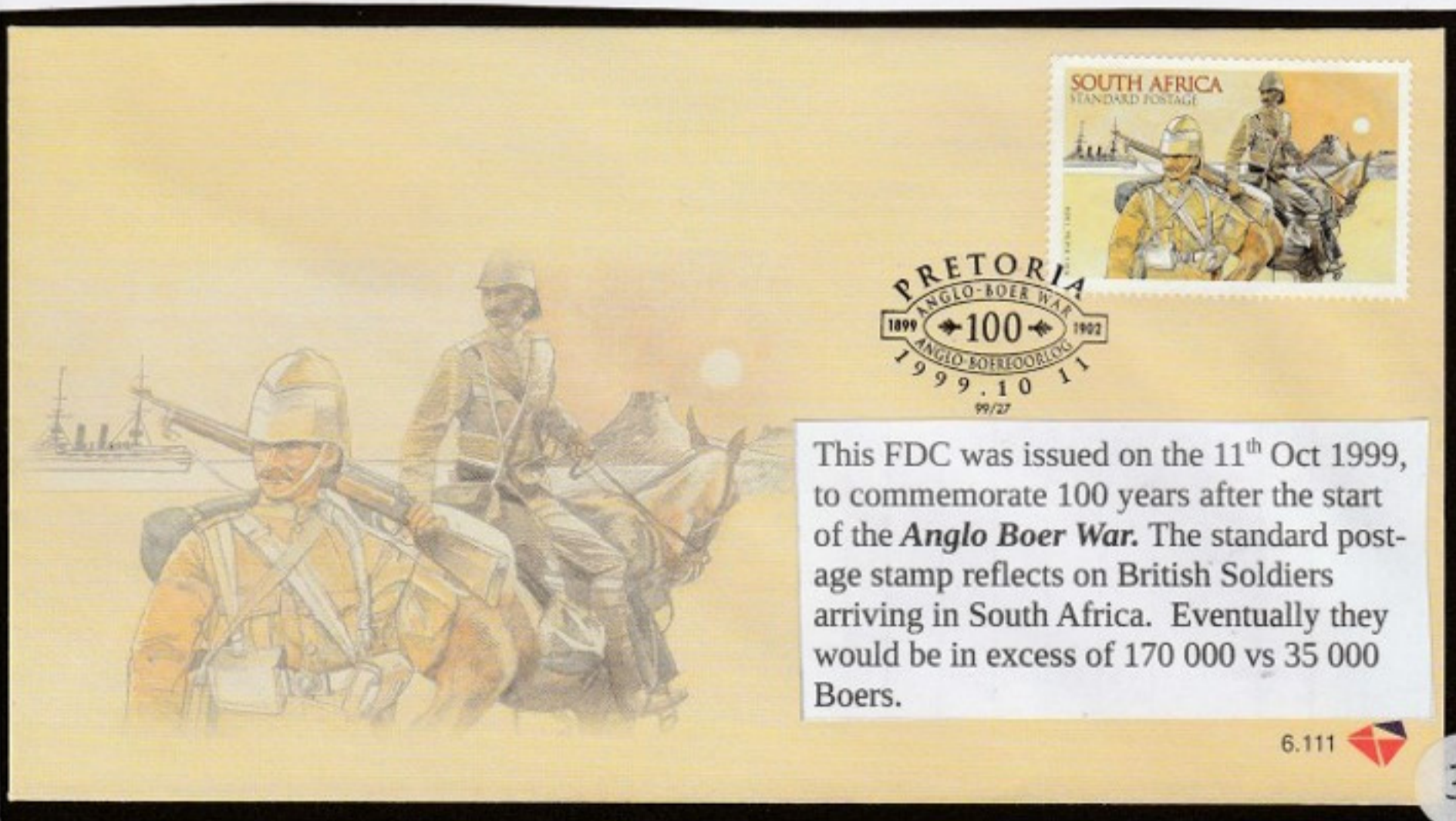
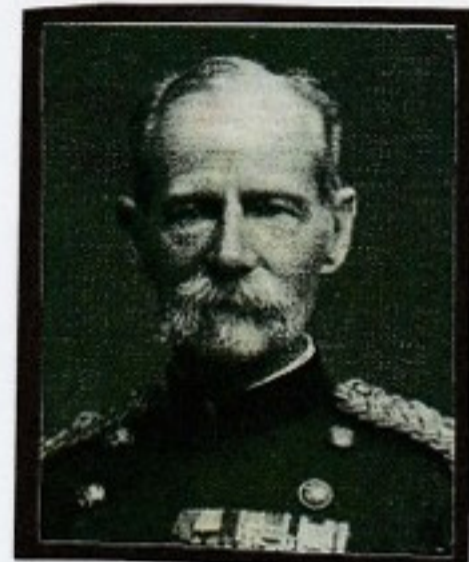
Two days after Christmas 1900, Emily arrives in Cape Town. She needed permission to visit the concentration camps in SA. This brought her in touch with the three gentlemen on the right, being . .

1. Sir Alfred Milner. He was the British high commissioner for the Cape, Natal and now the conquered Transvaal and Orange River Colony. He was 47 and a Bachelor. Despite that she had letters of introduction from British parliamentarians, he made it extremely difficult for her to see him. Eventually she was invited for lunch with him and eight other men. She begged him over lunch for only half an hour, privately. He reluctantly agreed to her request, namely assistance with the transport of clothing, food and blankets. She also may only visited camps south of Bloemfontein and may not take any person to assist her. (This after approval by Lord Kitchener.)

2. Lord Frederich Robbarts. Emily had limited dealings with him. He was initially the officer commanding of British forces, but with the arrival of Lord Horatio Kitchener, he handed over command.

3. Lord Horatio Kitchener. He arrived from Sudan where he was successful in conquering the country of Sudan for Her Majesty & Britain. In the final "**Battle of Khartoum**", his troops killed 11000 Sudan soldiers and wounded 17000 against the lost of only 71 British soldiers. Nicknamed, "**The Butcher of Khartoum**", he started by immediately taking custody of all Boer women and children and moved them in open railway trucks to camps. This after he destroyed (burnt) their farms and its contents. He killed all livestock and burnt all crops.

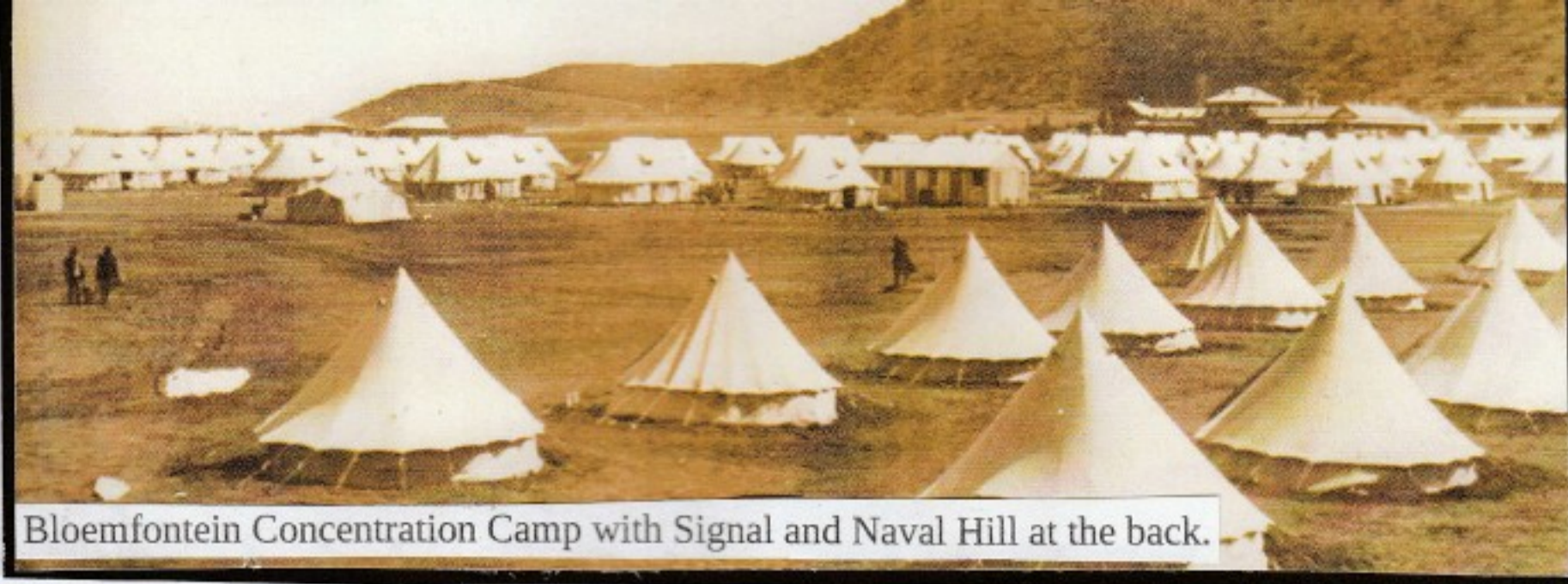
Emily Hobhouse was about to bring this "*Methods of Barbarism*" to the attention of the British public.



This FDC was issued on the 11th Oct 1999, to commemorate 100 years after the start of the *Anglo Boer War*. The standard postage stamp reflects on British Soldiers arriving in South Africa. Eventually they would be in excess of 170 000 vs 35 000 Boers.

6.111





Bloemfontein Concentration Camp with Signal and Naval Hill at the back.

Emily visits the Bloemfontein Concentration Camp on 24th Jan 1901

There were 2000 women, 900 children and a few *"hands up men"* (*hensoppers*) in the camp. Eight people shared a tent. There are no trees nearby and it is extremely hot in the tents. Only two buckets of water per tent is supplied, which must be used for drinking, cooking, washing etc. Basic articles, such as coal, wood, candles and soap are unobtainable. If somebody dies, the corpse remain in the tent till collected the next day. There are between 15 to 20 deaths per day. Emily, to put it mildly, is shocked at what she saw. Yet the Boer women are strong, cry very seldom, only when it affects their dear children.

Daily Emily wrote many letters to her friend and support teams in Cape Town and Britain. She noticed that all the stamps of the *"Oranje Vrijstaat"* issued since 1st Jan 1868, has been seized by the British and surcharged by Curling & Co. Bfn. with the letters, *V.R.I. (Victoria Regina Imperatrix)*.

Herewith is a complete mint stamps set of such overprints.



This is a photo of Lizzie van Zyl, who Emily met in Bloemfontein. Food was withheld from her and her mother as they were *"undesirables"*.

Lizzie holds in her right arm a doll, handed to her by Emily. Lizzie died in May 1901.

Emily Hobhouse visits the concentration camps at:

- Norvalspont
- Bethulie
- Kimberley
- Springfontein
- Mafikeng.

Everywhere she goes it is very much the same scene . . . Hunger, semi naked and sick people, squashed into very hot tents. They are without medicine, basic needs and fresh clean water. Fortunately she is able to bring some relief with truckloads of clothes, food and necessities, such as medicine and blankets. All from her support base in Britain and Cape Town.

Emily travelled by train and noticed more and more people are arriving at the camps that were already over crowded.

I quote from Emily's notes . . .
"Those truckloads of women and children, unsheltered and unfed – bereft of homes, bearing the vivid recollection of their possessions in the flames and that mass of "Sweepings" of a wide military drive – flocks and herds of frightened animals bellowing and baaing for food and drink, tangled up with wagons of all sort and a dense crowd of human beings - combined to give a picture of war in all its destructiveness, cruelty, stupidity and nakedness such as not even the misery of the camps could do".



We mentioned previously that Emily wrote daily a lot of letters, informing the world about the situation in the camps. She now noted that new postage stamps were issued in the Orange River Colony, being Cape of Good Hope overprints, done by WA Richard. Above is a complete set of Mint stamps.

Below is a Post Card issued by the Gov. Of Bophuthatswana to commemorate the siege of Mafikeng 100 yrs ago.



Photocopy of Card Chief Montshiwa & Sir Charles Warren.

The war is over !

Kitchener and Milner left behind a "Scorched Earth" in the two previous model Republics, namely the Transvaal and Oranje Vrijstaat.

Britanje het 21 942 soldate verloor op die slagveld en dmv siektes. Die Boere het 6189 manne verloor agv slagveld sterftes en siektes.

- 30 000 plase is verwoes.
- 100 000+ skape en beeste is gedood.
- 500 000 perde is gedood.
- 52 Wit & 89 Swart Konsentrasiekampe.
- 27 927 Vroue en kinders dood in die kampe.
- > 20 000 Swart mans & vroue oorlede.



Against this background, we remember the words of Mr Campbell-Bannerman (later Prime Minister of Britain)

"War is war and bad things happen.

But

When is a war not a war ?

Answer

When it is carried on by methods of barbarism, as in South Africa"

Emily Hobhouse stepped in and returned from London to do her utmost in assisting the poor and starving people on the destroyed farms. She trained people to start with weaving and spin schools all over the country. She bought oxen and start with "ploughing teams" on the farms. Etc.

Right: A, once lovely farm, but now burnt down farm.



Emily se Besondere Vriendskap met Pres. M.T. Steyn en sy vrou Tibbie.

Dit was tydens die Anglo Boere Oorlog dat Emily vir die 1ste keer vir Tibbie in die strate van Bloemfontein sien loop het. Haar man was met sy troepe aan die front. Tibbie is ingeperk en het orals beweeg met 'n Britse soldaat agter haar. Emily ontmoet haar en beskryf haar as . . . *"A Handsome woman, dignified and self controlled !"*

Die twee vroue gesels lank en innig en Tibbie beskryf Emily as . . . *Sy was een beeld shcoon vrou, wat hart en siel daarin is om verbetering in die kampe te bring".*



Hieronder is 'n poskaart foto van Rachel Steyn (Tibbie), eggenote van Pres MT Steyn

Die vriendskap tussen Emily en Tibbie was lewenslank. Besondere kenmerke daarvan was . . .

- Meer as 2000 briewe tussen mekaar.
- Emily laat haar onvoltooide biografie agter as een lang brief, geadresseer aan Tibbie.
- Tibbie onthul die vroue monument namens Emily toe laasgenoemde te siek was.
- Tydens die 1ste Wêreld oorlog samel Tibbie in Suid Afrika meer as £ 15000 in vir die Duitse weeskinders in Leipzich en verskaf aan Emily.
- In haar laaste jare begin Tibbie geld insamel vir behuising vir 'n siek Emily in Brittanje. (Die bekende half-kroon insamelings in SA).
- Tibbie en haar ouers, Ds. Colin Fraser, is intrumenteel in die eerste spin- en weef skole se opening in Philippolis, waar haar vader 'n predikant is.



Emily Hophouse en Boere Genl. Jan Smuts.

Aanvanklik was hulle boesemvriende met buitengewone bewondering vir mekaar. Die generaal was 'n troue ondersteuner en hulp vir haar welsyn ophefingswerk na die oorlog onder die verarmde Boere op hulle verwoeste plase. Sy het weer geweet dat hy bestem was vir groter take en stel hom bekend aan Britse Parlementariërs. So effektief was Emily se gebruik van hom, dat dit lei tot 'n persoonlike ontmoeting met die Britse Eerste Minister, Campbell-Bannerman. Tydens die ontmoeting oortuig Smuts hom tot **self-regering** vir die 4 Suid-Afrikaanse provinsies, slegs enkele jare na die Boere-oorlog.



Op die 24ste Mei 1975 het die Poskantoor die 4c Poseëls van van Genl Jan Smuts uitgereik, as herdenking van sy geboorte.

Emily Hobhouse het die volgende gesê oor Jan Smuts . . . *“ Ek wens jy kon hom ontmoet het. Hy is gekultiveerd, slim en hope pret, tog onderliggend breek sy hart oor die verliese wat sy land ly”.*

Jan Smuts het die volgende aan Emily geskryf . . . *“If we could have you for ever among us, to bind the wound, which even time could scarcely heal, to be our priestess of suffering and sacrifice, how many hearts there would be in this land of sorrows . . . “*

Met die Unie-Kabinet van Louis Botha word Smuts aangestel as Minister van Verdediging. Emily was 'n volskaalse pasifis, humanis en feminis. Sy wens Jan Smuts geluk met sy aanstelling en skryf aan hom . . . *“Liewe Oom Jannie, jy sal jou land die beste verdedig deur dit nie te verdedig nie !”*



Emily hier tydens 'n deftige tuin-partytjie, aangebied in Pretoria deur Genl. Beyers, uit dankbaarheid vir haar buitengewone werk.

Genl CF Beyers

Genl Jan Smuts

Emily Hobhouse

Emily Hobhouse meets Olive Schreiner

These two dynamic women had a lot in common. Both were outstanding English writers, both had very strong feelings against war and were pacifist, hence their fights with Jan Smuts and his war efforts. They also fought for the rights of women, poor and helpless people.

Schreiner, a Karoo girl, meets Emily at Beaufort West. The talented Olive (the daughter of a missionary) wrote a letter to Emily with the following words.

"I fear your work must have told heavily and permanently on you! One does not pass through such a time of combat with injustice ever to be quite the same again!" (Indeed the truth about Emily in later years.)

Olive's "Thoughts on South Africa". Almost certainly the best of her non-fiction works, was published posthumously by her husband, Cornwright Schreiner. (Olive died at 65yrs.)

"The Burnt of the War and where it fell." Emily's most famous book. (She died at age 66yrs.)



Above a picture postcard plus 25c postage stamp of Olive, issued on 24.02.1984, part of S.A. writers.



31st January 1983. The Matjiesfontein Hotel published a cover with Olive Schreiner and her "The Story of an African Farm" of which 3X prints had to be done in London, due to demand. Affix is a 15c postage stamp issued on the 15th July 1982, reflecting the famous Hotel.

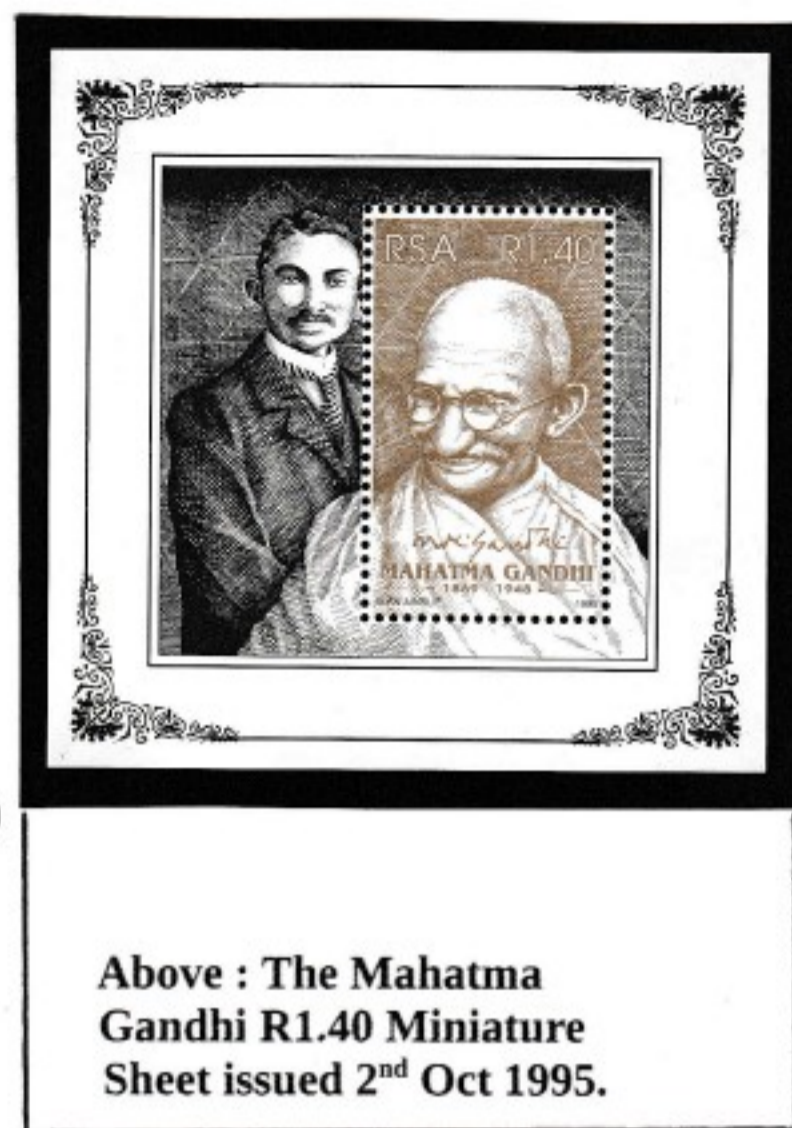
Emily meets Mahatma Gandhi

1906 : The Transvaal Government accepts a law, whereby

- All Indian workers must register and supply a thumb print.
- All Indian workers must pay £ 3.00 to stay in the country after their work contracts lapse.
- Traditional Indian marriages were not acknowledge in SA as they were not Christian mariages.

1913 : Mahatma Gandhi arrange a strike against this and was taken into custody. (He was later released without trial.)

1914: Mahatma Gandhi plans another protest march. Emily intervene and convince him to cancel it as it will create more aggression. She promise to take it up with Genl. Jan Smuts, the responsible minister.



Above : The Mahatma Gandhi R1.40 Miniature Sheet issued 2nd Oct 1995.

Emily Hobhouse then put pen to paper and wrote to Smuts. . . . ***“Never withholding from others in your control, the very liberties and rights you have valued and won for yourself !”*** . . . She went on in saying that she is not asking for voting rights for Indians, as she, as a woman has also no voting rights in her own country, but she is sure he can scrap this discrimination laws ! And . . . ***He did it !!!***

Gandhi then wrote a letter to Emily with the following words . . . ***“ It was during the Boer war that I came to admire your selfless devotion to the truth, and I have often felt how nice it would be if the Indian cause could plead before you for admission . . . “***

The friendship grew and Emily met him and his wife, **Kasturba**, at Groote Schuur where she was staying on invitation from Prime Min. Louis Botha. With the consent of Louis Botha a lunch between the two were also arrange by Emily.

Emily went on in saying later . . . ***“I have always been of the opinion that Gandhi is by far the most important man I have met in the British Empire . . a modern St Franciskus from Assisi !”***

On the Right : A miniature postage sheet, issued on the 2nd June 1997 by the GPO. This to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Congress alliance for a democratic SA.





7.38

Emily Hobhouse and the famous Boer General C.R. De Wet.

Christiaan de Wet fascinated Emily as she believed, . . .”they will never catch him!”

Emily had several interactions with the clever Boer General being :

1. London: (October 1902)

Emily met him for the 1st time when she invited him and the other two generals, Louis Botha and Koos De La Rey, for dinner to her house. She found him very friendly with a face that carries the scars of war. He invited her to his farm.

2. Koppies in the Vrijstaat: (1903)

Emily travelled by train to Koppies where the Generals two sons picked her up at the station three o'clock the morning. On the farm the General is standing with his white horse, “Fleur” and his rifle. The only possessions he has left after the war. Not only was his house burnt down, it was further destroyed with dynamite, being the house of De Wet. Emily made a colour painting of the farm before she left. (Museum piece today).

3. Rebellion of 1913.

She pleaded with Smuts for his freedom when he was jailed during this period.

Above: A first day cover issued on the 17th May 2002. Lord Kitchener and Genl De Wet signing the peace document at Melrose House. This FDC was issued to commemorate the end of the Anglo Boer War – 100 years ago. (Kindly note the signatories on the document.)



4 Genl. C. R. de Wet

Finally Peace !

Emily meets the three surviving Boer-generals in Britian.

The ship, the **Saxon**, docked at Southampton on the 9th October 1902. Emily is among the crowd to welcome three important passengers, namely the three Boer Generals Louis Botha, Koos De La Rey and Christiaan de Wet. They are here to meet the new **British King, Edward VII** and his wife **Queen Alexandra**.

Furthermore, they are desperately seeking more funds for their destroyed country, burned down farms, slaughtered farm animals and destroyed crops. They also visited Europe & Germany. Whilst not all that successful, they eventually came home with **£105 000**.

Before they departed for South Africa, Emily invited them for lunch at her house in Chelsea. She wanted them to feel "at home" and decided to buy each a quality cigar for the occasion. She even practise her Dutch before the time. To her big surprise (and joy) the cigars were turned down as no one was smoking. She describe Louis Botha, a "Kingly man" with a strong commanding personality. Koos De La Rey again was a "silent patriot" and General de Wet, more the secret type face and looks. He was extremely friendly towards her in a one on one conversations. (This friendship was later further enhance, when Emily visited the General on his farm and made a painting of the farm.)

Below is a fairly unique and rare *French Postcard*, issued in France in 1902. It reflects the three Boer Generals in smart black suites and bow-ties with the French parliament members in Paris.



Emily Hobhouse meets President Paul Krüger in France

March 1904. Emily travelled to Venisië via France. Her purpose was to further investigate the possibility to try and introduce “**Spin and Weave**” schools to the “Boeremeisies” on the farms and country towns. She wanted to learn the trade herself and believed that the surplus wool in SA would greatly supplement the new school idea.

On her way, she stopped in France to see her great friend Tibbie Steyn (wife of Pres. MT Steyn). From there she moved to the French Riviera where Pres. Krüger was temporarily living. She has never met him before, although he and his secretary personally contributed towards her **Stress and Relief Fund**. When she walked down the aisle, she noticed that he was dressed in black and sitting at a table, reading the Bible. After Peace was declared in SA, he did not return to his country. He did not want to be a British subject and his beloved wife died some three years ago. During their talks, she noticed that the world has ended for the man, previously known to everyone as a formidable strong man. When she left he returned in reading the bible and it was clear to her that he was now in a new era.

Shortly before the Presidents death, she received a letter from him. He thanked her for the wonderful work she is doing among his people and he personally appreciated very much.

Right : A picture postcard photo of Pres. Krüger. This is how Emily met him, reading the Bible and dressed in black.



The above stamps was issued on the 21st October 1955, during the Centenary of Pretoria. The 3d stamp reflects the President.



Unveiling of the National Woman's Monument

(Done by Tibbie Steyn, Pres Steyn's wife, on behalf of Emily Hobhouse)

On the 16th December 1913, the 1st monument ever for woman & children was erected against a hill, south of Bloemfontein. The idea was from Pres. Steyn, but Emily chose the design from a picture in her mind of a dying child in the arms of the mother. This was what she saw one day at Springfontein railway station of a woman on her way to the concentration camp, without food for six days. . . *“deathly white, she sat there, motionless, looking not at the child, but far away into depths of grief beyond all tears”.*

Emily was in Rome to oversee the design and creation of the monument by Anton Van Wouw. She was invited to unveil the monument and travelled to SA. Unfortunately ill health prevented her from doing so. She personally printed 4000 copies of her speech in Afrikaans and it was distributed at the event. 20 000 people listened motionless in the hot sun, how 28 000 woman and children died in the horror concentration camps.



An extract from her speech reads as follow . .

“Ons huldig die nagedagtenis van alle vroue en klein kindertjies dmv die Profet se vision, naamlik : So sê die Here. Bly stil, moenie huil nie, moenie trane in die oë hê nie ! Vir al die swaarkry sal jy vergoed word, sê die Here. Jou kinders sal uit die vyand se land terugkom. Daar is ‘n toekoms vir jou nageslag, sê die Here, jou kinders sal na julle besittings toe terugkom”

Duisende telegramme en geskenke het Emily bereik te Kaapstad na haar toespraak. Daar was ook ‘n pragtige Karos van silverjakkals pelse en ‘n handvol wit volstruispluime van C.J. Langenhoven.

Die seels hieronder is uitgereik op 1 Augustus 1973 om die skrywer se 100 jarige geboorte te herdenk.



14.

The aged Emily Hobhouse changed her focus to WW1

Emily is a pacifist and she believed she must try and prevent this anticipated war on the horizon. Prior to the outbreak of World War One, Emily travels to Belgium and Germany, where she met with important dignitaries including German ministers, in order to try and prevent the war. It however broke out between France and Germany.



She returned to England, where her visit becomes a great discussion point in the British parliament and where her visit to Germany was seen as a "treason against the British nation".

When Jan Smuts join the British war Cabinet, she change her focus on him and wrote to him . . .
*"Vrede sal nie dmv oorwinning kom nie,
maar oowinning sal kom deur vrede."*

The war was eventually over in 1919 and claimed 11 million soldiers, 7 million citizens and left 20 million wounded people behind. President **Friedrich Ebert** was the first democratic elected President of the new Germany. Below is a set of used stamps issued with the portrait of Pres. Ebert.



Emily was the co-founder for the "Swiss relief fund for starving Children" and she also establish the "Russian Babies Fund". When peace was evident, the 59 year old Emily does not waste time and in September 1919 she departed for Europe and Germany. With the aid and donations from all over the world, she focussed mainly on Leipzig (Germany), where the need for food was very high. Even her life-long friend, Tibbie Steyn, got involved in fund-raising in South Africa. Tibbie raised £ 7 500 and the South African Government doubled this amount by donating also £ 7 500.

Eventually Emily and her team fed 11 000 German children with her feeding scheme. An amount of £ 49 000 was eventually collected for Leipzig and 5.5 million meals were supplied here.

Emily's Death.

- 8th June 1926.

She was alone, poor and depressed. She died at age 66 due to heart failure and a form of internal cancer. A few family members was present at her small funeral, 3 days after her death at St Mary Abbots Church in Kensington. She was cremated, which was unusual at that time.

- 27th October 1926.

Emily ontvang 'n staatsbegrafnis in Suid-Afrika, die enigste buitelanders ooit, wat dit te beurt val. Die blomme en kranse bedek die hele groot kansel van die Twee-toring kerk in Bloemfontein. Deur die nag waak vroue by die kis in die kerk. Ook sit 400 eks-konsentrasiekamp vroue in wit, voor in die kerk saam met Genl Jan Smuts, Genl Louis Botha, Dr DF Malan, Tibbie Steyn en ander. Die stoet word deur 100 eks-konsentrasiekamp seuns en mans te perd begelei. Ses meisies wat vernoem is na Emily, dra in ligpers rokke met sluiers, haar kis na die vrouemonument. Sy word by die monument neergelê aan die voete van die wenende vrou met haar sterwende kind. Die ontwerp van die vrou en kind is 'gedoen van 'n beeld wat sy op Springfontein stasie gesien het, tydens die Boere-oorlog. Anton van Wouw het dit ontwerp. 200 Meisies in wit, plaas palmtakke om haar kis. Jan Smuts skryf aan haar broer die volgende woorde . . . **"Ons het vandag 'n prinses begrawe !"**

"Sy was 'n engel van vertroosting, die vertolker van ons weemoed, ons voorspraak voor die wêreld, die versorger van ons hongeriges, die heler van ons wonde, die moeder van die moedeloses . . ."

Dr. DF Malan tydens die begrafnis.

Hierdie poskaart is van 'n foto uit die Kaapse argief en toon 'n gedeelte van die begrafnisgangers tydens die begrafnis van Emily Hobhouse.



2. Die skare op die koppie by die Vrouemonument tydens die herbegrafnis. (Foto: Kaapse Argief)



Die seëls hierbo is uitgereik deur die Poskantoor op 23 Aug. 2001 en toon Vader (Ds.) Kestell wat die Boere op Kommando vergesel het en Emily se begrafnis op 27ste Okt. behartig het.