

DISORDER ON THE RAND

SUNDAY 12 MARCH - The rebellion is crushed

Government forces were finally ready to take the offensive

The Air Force, established on 1 February 1920, was deployed on its **first operational** duty – to suppress internal dissent – and **bombarded** the strikers’ strongholds as well as providing reconnaissance flights and information of the situation on the ground

At 06h30 in Benoni, **combined** military and Police members under Lieutenant Colonel Burne **linked** up with the 1st SA Mounted Rifles and two Police units near Dunswart Station. On their **advanced** towards Benoni, they came under heavy fire from the Dunswart Iron and Steel Works where a large force of strikers was **entrenched**

The government forces, under Lieut.-General van Deventer, **shelled** the position heavily, and **detached** the strikers who disappeared, **seeking** the safety of their homes in the town

The forces **pursued** their advance along Main Reef Road, **sustaining** losses due to **sniping** from roadside gardens and roofs of nearby houses

Then, military **airplanes** arrived under command of the Director of Air Services, **Colonel Pierre van Ryneveld**

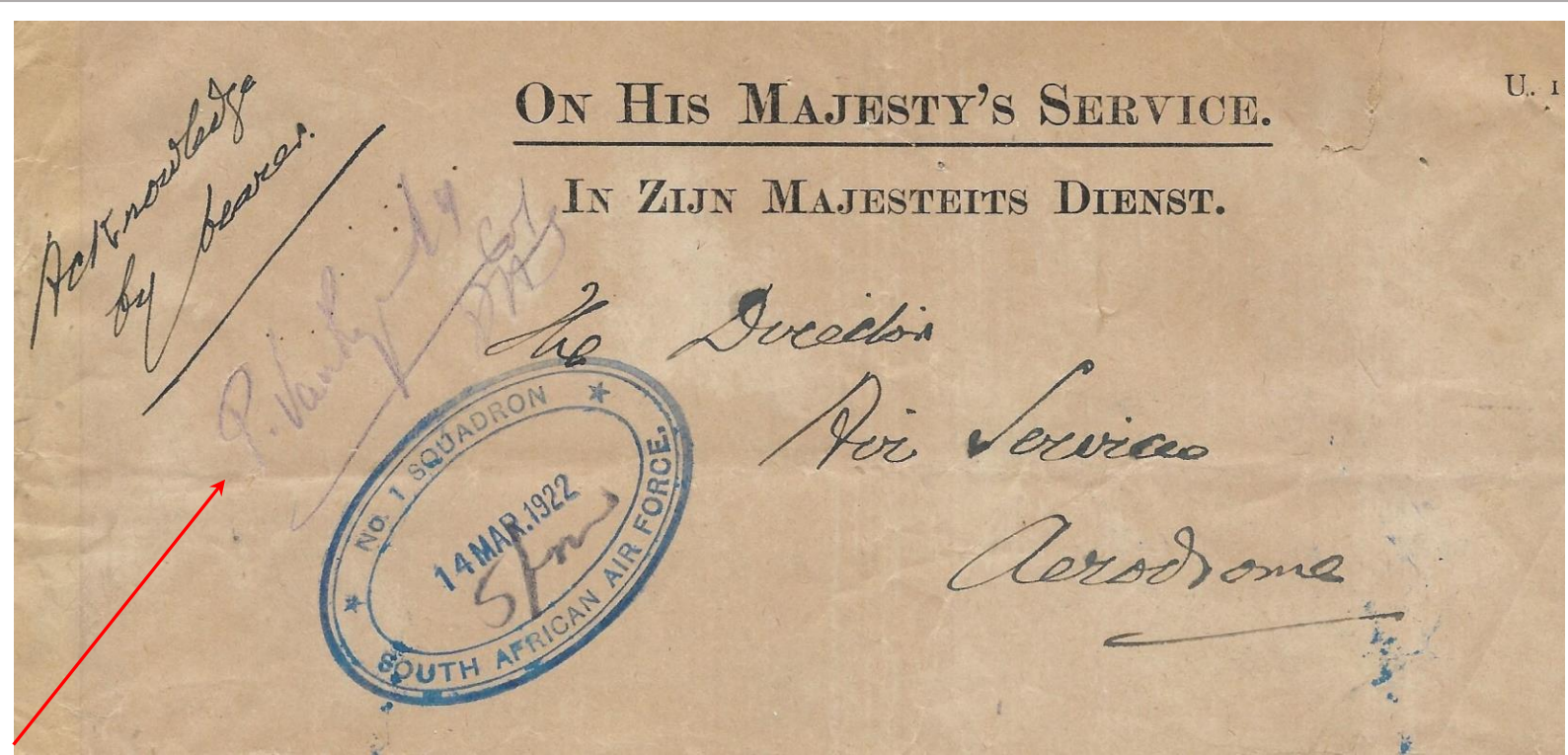
They **circled** around the town, **descended** flying low over the town and dropping **bombs** on the Trades Hall

Unfortunately, the bombs were **distributed** over a considerable area, **damaging** property and lives

The commandos struck back, **fired** many shots at them and an observer in one plane, Captain Carey Thomas was **shot** dead during one of these maneuvers



DE HAVILLAND 9
Fitted with one 230 h.p. Siddeley Puma engine



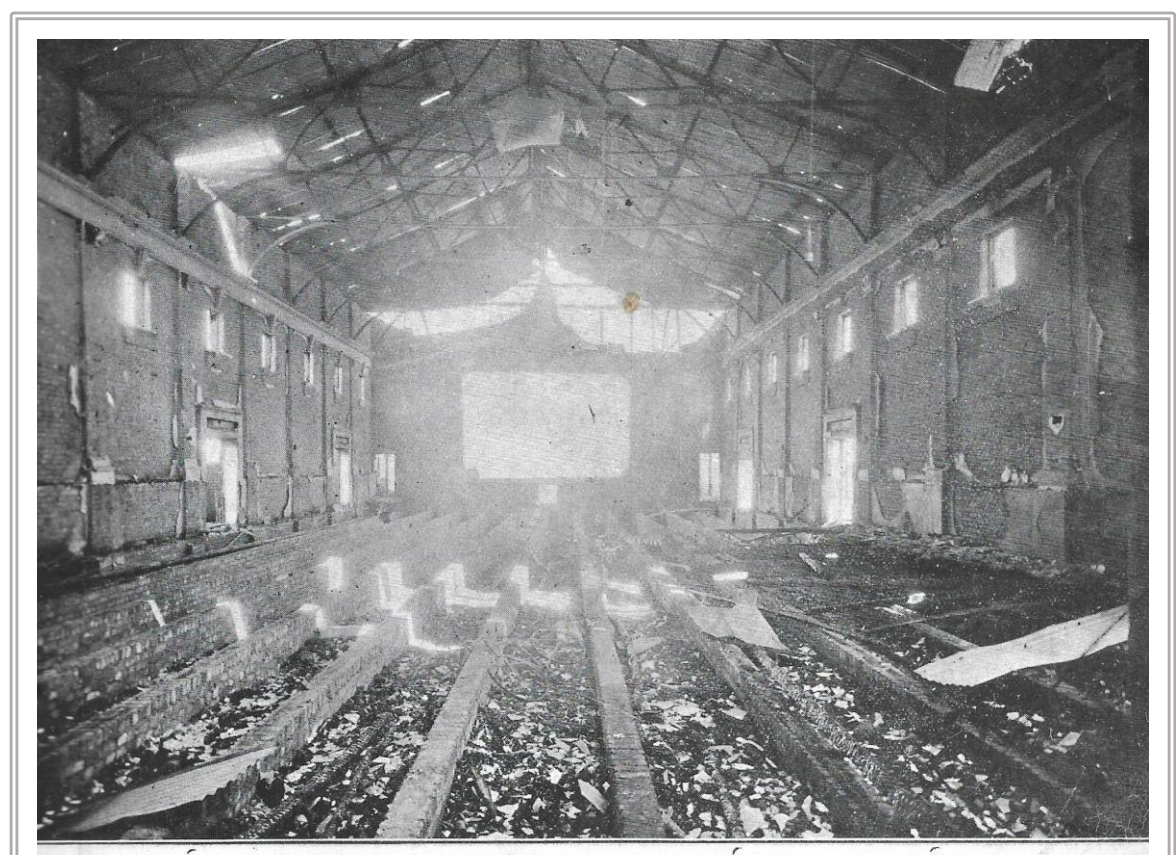
Cover of Official letter addressed to the Director, Air Services, Aerodrome dated 14 March 1922 bearing the signature of Colonel Pierre van Ryneveld as acknowledgement of receipt

By 12:30 the relieving forces had marched **out** of Benoni and advanced to Brakpan, without opposition. By 14:30 Brakpan was in Van Deventer’s hands and the process of **rounding up** the strikers began

The revolt on the East Rand was for all practical purposes over

On Monday 13th the Government forces **occupied** Benoni, and General van Deventer's first act was to **proclaim** regulations under Martial Law, inter alia **restricting** movement of persons by means of vehicles, night permits and travelling permits

The occupation **continued** for some days until all those believed to have taken part in the revolution, and also those who were suspected of murder and related offences, were under **arrest**



All that is left of the notorious Workers' Hall at Benoni.

DISORDER ON THE RAND

MONDAY 13 MARCH

Government made use of this advantage and issued an Official Information **leaflet** in which they gave an overview of the Government Forces successes over the Revolutionaries. The leaflet was **dropped** from an airplane all over the Rand on the evening of 12 March and carried in the press on 13 March

In Johannesburg the striker's position on **Brixton Ridge**, was the **focus point** of the Armed Forces' operations. A half a dozen **airplanes** operated on these positions and with no middle-class property endangered, as was the case in Benoni, the Air Force planes could **operate** with impunity

Artillery bombardment **proceeded** at the same time, but the position was stubbornly defended, and only given up after terrible losses

Two companies of the Durban Light Infantry (DLI) approaching via the Johannesburg Country Club, **relieved** the Police on the **ridge** without suffering any losses

The commandos - **demoralized** by the advancing troops, shelling from the artillery, and bombing by the air force - either **surrendered** or fled

More than 2 000 prisoners were taken and sent to interim **prison** enclosures around town and casualties on both sides were **temporarily** buried at Milner Park

Following this successful **advance**, Lieutenant Colonel Thackeray established his headquarters at the Johannesburg Country Club in **preparation** for **attacking** the striker stronghold at the Fordsburg Market Square

DIAMOND FIELDS ADVERTISER. 3.30 p.m. 13/3/1922.
SPECIAL. PRICE 1d.

BATTLES WITH REVOLUTIONARIES

GENERAL BEVES TAKES 2,200 PRISONERS.

SENSATIONAL EXPERIENCE OF AIRMEN.

SIR J. VAN DEVENTER CHASES THE REBELS INTO BENONI.

PRETORIA, March 12.

The following official communique was issued to-night:—

Central Area.—The operations carried out by the force under General Beves' command have been entirely satisfactory. The two squadrons of police which were besieged for the last two days in the Brixton and Auckland Park

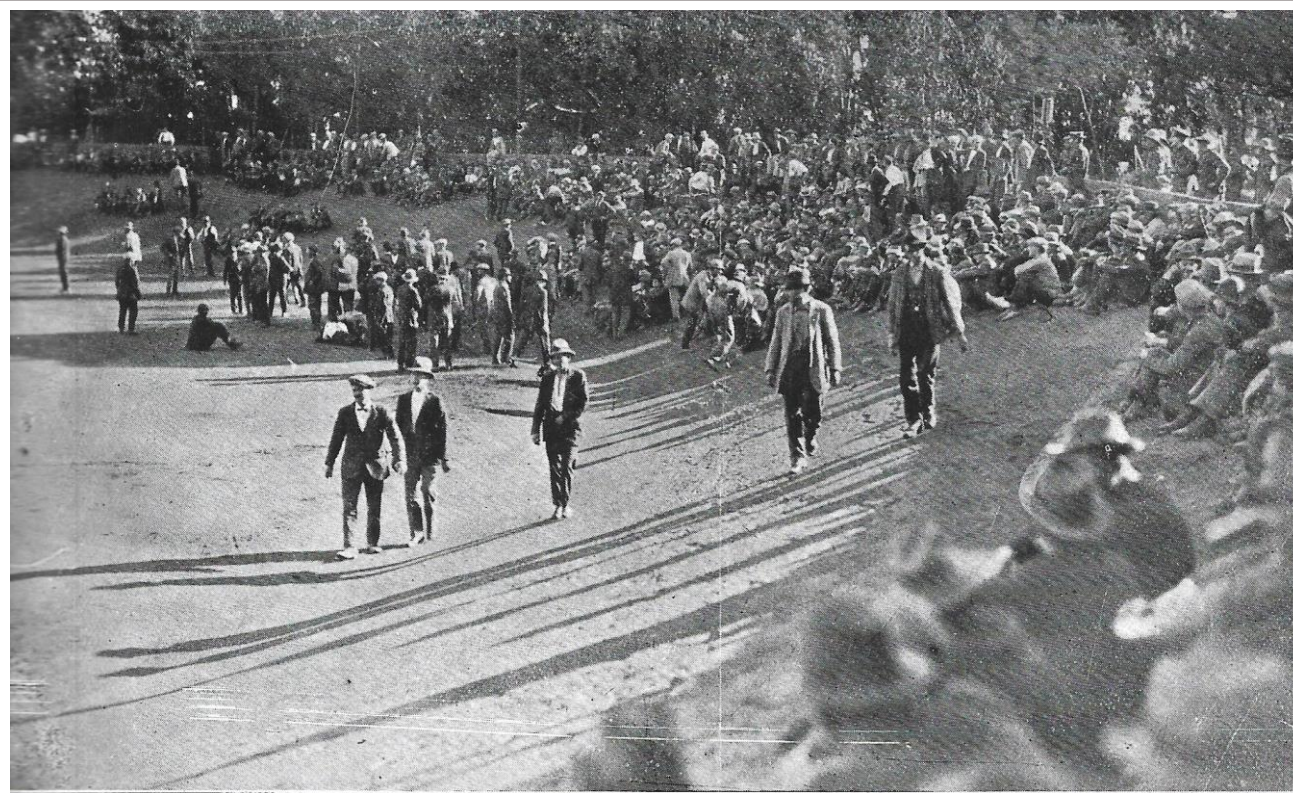
second pilot also fired and killed the man. After dressing his comrade's wound, this pilot obtained civilian clothes for himself and his wounded comrade, and succeeded in reaching the hospital. The third aviator reached a friend's house, and managed to reach the Drill Hall by car.

Eastern Area.—General Van de Venter's forces have heavily engaged the revolutionaries, who retired into Benoni. Our forces now occupy the position held by the revolutionaries this morning.

Western Area.—Large numbers of our forces reached Krugersdorp late in the afternoon, and are now pushing eastward.

Pretoria-Germiston Area.—Operations have been continued throughout the day against the revolutionaries in the vicinity of the Pretoria-Germiston railway line, between Rietfontein Station and the ridge of kopjes from New Kleinfontein, running south-west to Germiston Kop. The revolutionaries have been

Headlines of the Diamond field Advertiser of 13 March 1922 regarding the information published by Defence Headquarters on 12 March



The first batch of prisoners from Vrededorp and Brixton Ridge interned at the Wanderers Ground, March 12.

OFFICIAL INFORMATION.



GENERAL STAFF,
DEFENCE HEADQUARTERS, PRETORIA,
3 P.M. SUNDAY, 12TH MARCH, 1922.

1500 Revolutionaries have been taken prisoners at the Show Ground.

The Revolutionaries in the Brixton-Auckland Park District lost very heavily this morning through bombs. Thirty-two bombs were dropped there. Two squadrons of Police who were besieged for the last day or two at this spot have been relieved. Our casualties slight. Food supplies and ammunition have been dropped to small Government forces in isolated positions. Our forces now occupy all the high ground North of Langlaagte, and are pressing the Revolutionaries back on to the railway.

The strong force of Revolutionaries who were responsible for the blowing up of the Pretoria-Johannesburg railway line last night at Rietfontein, have been repeatedly bombed, and have surrendered in considerable numbers. Their casualties have been heavy.

The Revolutionaries have been pressed back through the suburbs on the North, North-east, and West of Johannesburg. Operations still continue there—over 2000 prisoners taken in these operations, including Show Ground prisoners.

General Van Deventer is conducting operations on the East Rand between Boksburg and Benoni, Brakpan, Springs Area. The Revolutionaries have been heavily bombed in this area. Their losses from this source and from gun-fire have been severe. General Koen Brits is arriving from the east to co-operate with General Van Deventer against the Springs, Brakpan, Benoni Area. His forces will arrive there shortly.

The first train from the Potchefstroom District is now near Krugersdorp with large numbers of armed Government forces. Several other trains are following close behind. Colonel A. H. N. Nussey is in command.

Colonel Dirk van Deventer, District Staff Officer for the whole of the Free State, has just wired from Bloemfontein saying that Commandants and Officers of the Free State offer their services to the Government as volunteers in order to maintain law and order now that the public peace has been so seriously disturbed.

The conduct of many of the Revolutionaries has been indescribably brutal. A few officials at Brakpan Mines, who held out until their ammunition was expended, were clubbed to death after surrendering. Two of our men who became isolated were proceeding to rejoin our forces in a cart when they met a Revolutionary. They told him to "hands up" and he put one hand up, whipping round the other, and fired point blank at the stomach of one of our men. His comrade got in the next shot, shooting the Revolutionary through the head.

DISORDER ON THE RAND

TUESDAY 14 MARCH

Shortly after daybreak, a military aeroplane dropped thousands of **pamphlets** over Fordsburg, warning all well-disposed civilians to **evacuate** the area before 11h00 to an emergency camp at Milner Park

The assault was almost due to be launched when an envoy from the strikers' headquarters reached General Beves asking for terms, only to be told to surrender unconditionally

At **11:00**, one field gun of the Artillery **commenced** firing from Sauer Street, its observer placed on the roof of The Corner House. The remaining two artillery pieces **fired** from Brixton Ridge

MARTIAL LAW. KRYGSWET.

NOTICE.

Women and children and persons well disposed towards the Government are advised to leave between 6 and 11 a.m. to-day that part of Fordsburg and vicinity where the authority of the Government is defied and military operations may take place. They will proceed to Show Ground with such blankets, food, and personal belongings as they can carry with them. They will take the following route:—Through Vrededorp Sub-way along Kaffir Street and 17th Street, then via Toll Street to tram line, following tram line to main entrance of Show Ground. No immunity from arrest and punishment is guaranteed to any person coming out under this notice who has broken the law.

P. S. BEVES,

Brigadier-General,
Control Officer.

Johannesburg,
14th March, 1922.

Isi Zulu ne Sesuto beka ko lunye uhlangoti.
Se Zulu le Sesuto lebang ka hlakoring le leng.

KENNISGEWING.

Vrouens en kinders en persone wat die Regering goed gesind is, word aangeraai om vandag tussen 6 en 11 uur v.m. die gedeelte van Fordsburg en omgewing te verlaat waar daar verset is teen die gesag van die Regering en waar krygs-operasies moontlik uitgevoer sal word. Hulle moet na die Tentoonstellingsterrein gaan en so veel komberse, kos en persoonlike goedere meeneem as hul kan dra. Hulle moet met die volgende pad gaan:—Deur Vrededorp Subweg langs Kafferstraat en 17de Straat; dan langs Tollstraat naar die tremlyn en dan met die tremlyn tot by die hoofingang van die Tentoonstellingsterrein. Vrystelling van arres en straf word nie gewaarborg aan iemand wat die wet oortree het en onder hierdie kennisgewing uitkom.

P. S. BEVES,

Brig.-generaal,
Kontrole-offisier.

Johannesburg,
14 Maart 1922.

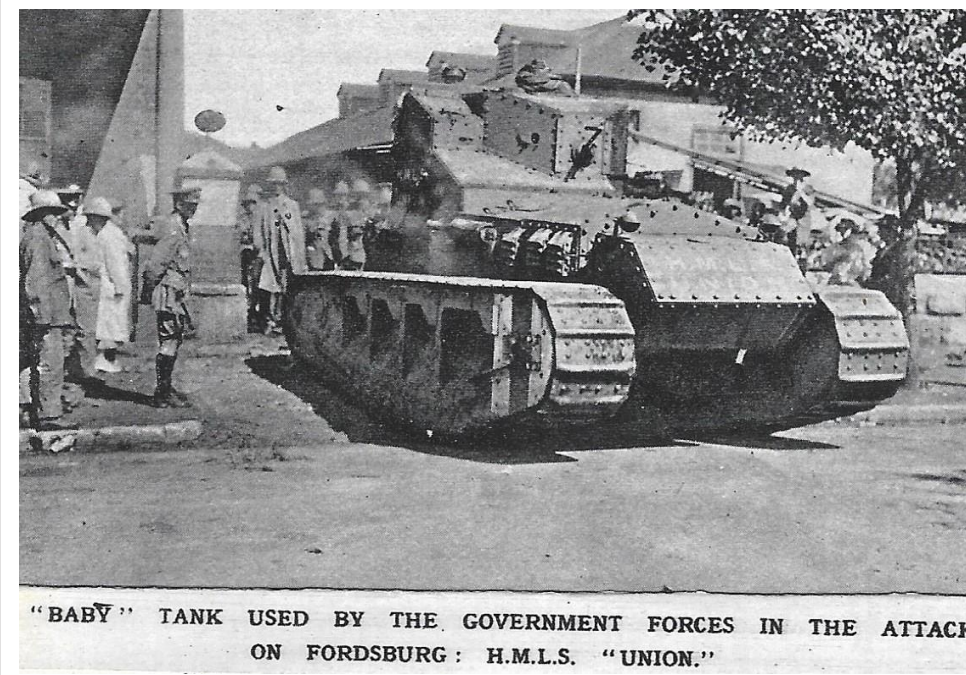
1691—13/3/22—10,000.

For **seventy** minutes almost 140 shrapnel shells rained down on Fordsburg, until the order to **cease** fire was given for fear of **injuring** captive policemen held in the Market Square building

The Durban Light Infantry (DLI) advanced on Fordsburg from the north with the Transvaal Scottish approaching from the north-east

Lieutenant Colonel Godley's force attacking from the south-east and south that consisted of Police and special Police also had a **"baby tank"** (Whippet), which broke down in the Fordsburg Subway

The strikers nevertheless found its appearance unnerving



The DLI **entered** a bottle store with frosted windows directly **opposite** the square and placing a Vickers machine gun in the shop

They commenced **firing** at point blank range at the surprised strikers in the **trenches** and Trades Hall



Artillery on Brixton Ridge on March 14 after shelling Fordsburg, the attack on which was soon afterwards completely successful.

DISORDER ON THE RAND

TUESDAY 14 MARCH

A **bayonet** charge then carried the square and inside the Market Square **building** they found the bodies of the two communist leaders, Fisher and Spendiff, both seemingly had committed suicide leaving a joint signed note:

"March 14, 1922. I died for what I believed to be right, The Cause"

Also found in the building were policemen held **captive** there following the surrender of the Langlaagte Police Station on Saturday 11 March



Some of the captured Fordsburg police after their rescue. These police, who were imprisoned at the Workers' Hall, had to undergo a severe ordeal at the hands of the Reds. Their lives were threatened and they were in serious danger, but they remained steadfast all through.

Documents were found indicating a **"Red"** campaign for the **seizure** of Johannesburg as well as an execution and assassination **list** of the most prominent people in the Transvaal

In the **afternoon**, Fordsburg **fell** to the government and by 14:00 the market square was secure and although sporadic sniping continued, Fordsburg was again occupied by the Government

The **captive** strikers were marched off to the old Wanderers ground, next to the Johannesburg Railway Station, where they were **screened** and either formally charged and imprisoned or released

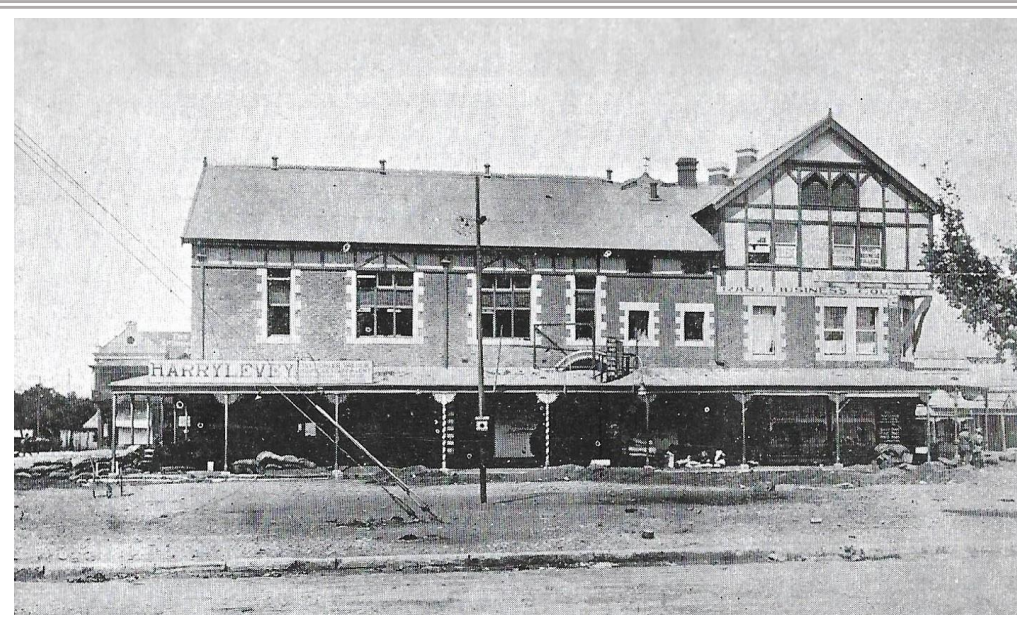


Some of the damage done by shells and bombs in Market Square, Fordsburg.

The revolt on the Witwatersrand was crushed



WITH SOME OF THE 6000 REBELS CAPTURED: TROOPS BRINGING PRISONERS FROM FORDSBURG THROUGH THE NATIVE TOWNSHIP OF VREDEDORP.



A STORM CENTRE.
MARKET BUILDINGS, FORDSBURG, AFTER THE FIGHTING.



FORDSBURG TRENCHES AFTER CAPTURE.

DISORDER ON THE RAND

From 15 to 19 March, government troops started to fine-combed and **cleared** areas of snipers and did house-to-house **searches** of premises belonging to the revolutionaries, making many **arrests**

On March 16, the Union Defence Headquarters issued a **press statement** that the revolt had been a social revolution **organized** by Bolsheviks, international socialists, and communists

On 17 March, 16 rebels were **arrested**, and 200 rifles **captured** at Alberton where a large contingent of revolutionaries were located



ALBERTON: Where 16 prisoners and 200 rifles were captured on March 17. Alberton is near Germiston.

At midnight on **17 March 1922**, the SAIF **called** the strike **off** and government gained **control**, restored law and order, and **declared** it **over** from midnight on **18 March**

Strikers anxiously **reported** for work hoping to find out that their **jobs** had been held open for them. Many found themselves **rejected** because of their activities during the revolt

Almost 3 000 mine workers were left **unemployed** due to a review of the mine's labour force and their **refusal** to take back militant strikers. Even those who **retained** their jobs were subjected to **lower** earnings - In many ways, this was a rather **sad** end to the strike

Two incidents, labelled as **atrocities**, occurred on **16 March** placing the Transvaal Scottish Regiment and government in **poor** light

- **W E Dowse**, a member of the Rosettenville striker committee was arrested at his house for allegedly molesting a Mrs. Adams, the wife of a scab worker. While he was taken to their headquarters, Dowse allegedly tried to escape and was shot and killed by two soldiers
- **Hanekom brothers and M W Smith**, the **three** brothers and Smith were arrested by the Transvaal Scottish in connection with the cutting of telephone wires and concealing arms and ammunition, which they denied

They were taken down a secluded valley south of Rosettenville to point out possible hidden arms caches. There, all four were shot and killed while also allegedly trying to escape

There is a lingering **suspicion** this was in retaliation for the casualties suffered at the Dunswart Crossing and Brixton Ridge, although the subsequent commission of enquiry **exonerated** the regiment

DIE HANEKOM TREURSPEL. THE HANEKOM TRAGEDY.



DIE RANDSE WOELINGE VAN 1922.

'N AFSKUWELIKE GEBEURTENIS.

Op die 16de Maart, 1922, was Pieter Albertus Hanekom, Johannes Petrus Hanekom en Barnard Daniel Hanekom, drie broers, en Marthinus Wessel Smith gevange geneem en daarna doodgeskiet deur die Goevernements troepe. In getuienis voor die Krygswet Kommissie was dit beweer deur die militere dat die gevangene doodgeskiet was toe hulle perbeer het om te ontsnap en hierdie uitleg was aangeneem deur die Krygswet Kommissie nietteenstaande baie getuienis wat dit teenspreek. Daar moet op gelet word dat elke man geskiet was in die bors of kop, soas bewys deur dokter's getuienis, uitgesonder Smith wat deur die heup was geskiet en, soas gesê word, die kop ingeslaan. Dis seker dat onfevooroordeelde publieke opinie na behoorlik die getuienis te wee wat afgelê is voor en teen die saak van die Regering nie instaat is nie om in te stem met die uitspraak van die Kommissie.

Hierdie belangwekkende foto van die Hanekoms en Smith was geneem 'n paar minute voor hulle doodgeskiet was.

THE RAND REVOLT OF 1922.

A GHASTLY STORY.

On 16th March, 1922, Pieter Albertus Hanekom, Johannes Petrus Hanekom, and Barnard Daniel Hanekom, three brothers, and Marthinus Wessel Smith, were taken prisoners and then shot dead by Government troops. In evidence before the Martial Law Commission it was alleged by the military that the prisoners were shot whilst attempting to escape, and this explanation was accepted by the Martial Law Commission—notwithstanding voluminous evidence to the contrary. It should be noted that every man was shot in the chest or head, as proved by medical testimony, with the exception of Smith, who was shot through the hips and whose head was alleged to have been battered in. It is safe to say that unbiassed public opinion after carefully weighing the evidence for and against the Government's case is unable to agree with the finding of the Commission.

This interesting photo of the Hanekoms and Smith was taken a couple of minutes before they were shot.

DISORDER ON THE RAND

On 17 March Rand Mines Ltd informed mine management of the **end** of the strike as it is reported in the press and **arrangements** for extra labour, if needed

Normal activities on the gold mines could **resume** after 67 days of striking and insurrection and mine managers were constantly informed of administration responsibilities

The second letter from the Native Recruiting Corporation, Ltd. to all mine managers informed them that the Commissioner of Police has requested that **rifles** and ammunition issued in January should be **returned** to the Quartermaster, SA Police Central Barracks, Johannesburg

RAND MINES, LIMITED.

(Incorporated in the Transvaal)

HEAD OFFICE:
SECRETARIAL DEPARTMENT.
 All Communications to be addressed to
 The Secretary,
 P.O. Box 1056.

Telegraphic and Cable Address:
 "RANDINES," Johannesburg.

Telephone Nos. 6261/6279
 Rand Mines Exchange

In your reply please refer to our
 No.....

THE CORNER HOUSE,
 JOHANNESBURG.

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17th March, 1922.

The Manager,
MODDERFONTEIN EAST, LTD.

Dear Sir,

This serves to confirm the message telephoned
 to your Mine Office this afternoon :-

No. 34.

Notices are appearing in the Press that the Mine
 Workers' Union, Engine Drivers and Firemen's Association
 and Reduction Workers' Union have declared the strike off.

If you require natives to be recruited for your mine
 will you please advise the Native Recruiting Corporation
 of your requirements in number and class of labour.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]
 secretary.

NATIVE RECRUITING CORPORATION LTD.

ALL COMMUNICATIONS TO BE ADDRESSED TO
 THE SECRETARY,
 P.O. Box 1251.

26th March, 1922.

TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS, "PAMBILI"
 TELEPHONE NO 4747.

JOHANNESBURG,

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MINES.
CIRCULAR LETTER NO.379.

TO ALL MINE MANAGERS.

Dear Sir,

Return of Arms and Ammunition.

I have to refer you to my Circular Letter No.367
 of the 10th January last, and to inform you that we have been
 requested by the Commissioner of Police to intimate to you
 that Rifles and Ammunition issued for the service of Mine
 Guards must be returned to the Quartermaster, South African
 Police Central Barracks, Johannesburg, with the least
possible delay.

You are requested to give this matter your
 immediate attention.

Yours faithfully,

[Signature]

DISORDER ON THE RAND

The Defence Force, on 24 March, started **demobilization** of the troops and issued such orders to soldiers

An interesting aspect is that incidents of **victimisation** were reported by mine workers against ex-striking workers. On 25 March, the Chamber of Mines send a circular to Mine owners to prevent this and to act against culprits

UNION DEFENCE FORCES.

No. 71738 RANK Lt. S. Thompson

NAME IN FULL, S. Thompson

UNIT, 8th. INFANTRY. (TRANSVAAL SCOTTISH)

Is hereby released from Service on DEMOBILIZATION, having served in the operations against the REVOLUTIONARY FORCES on the Witwatersrand.

Captain, for
Lieut.Colonel.
8th. Infantry (transvaal Scottish)

Johannesburg.
Date, 24 March, 1922.

Transvaal Chamber of Mines.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR AND STATISTICS.

JOHANNESBURG.

25 MAR 1922

ALL COMMUNICATIONS FOR THIS DEPARTMENT TO BE ADDRESSED TO THE ACTUARY AND LABOUR ADVISER.

P.O. Box 1162.
TELEPHONES 4164/4167.
TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS: "BRAINWORK."

GROUPS

Circular - No.53/22.

Dear Sirs,

INTIMIDATION

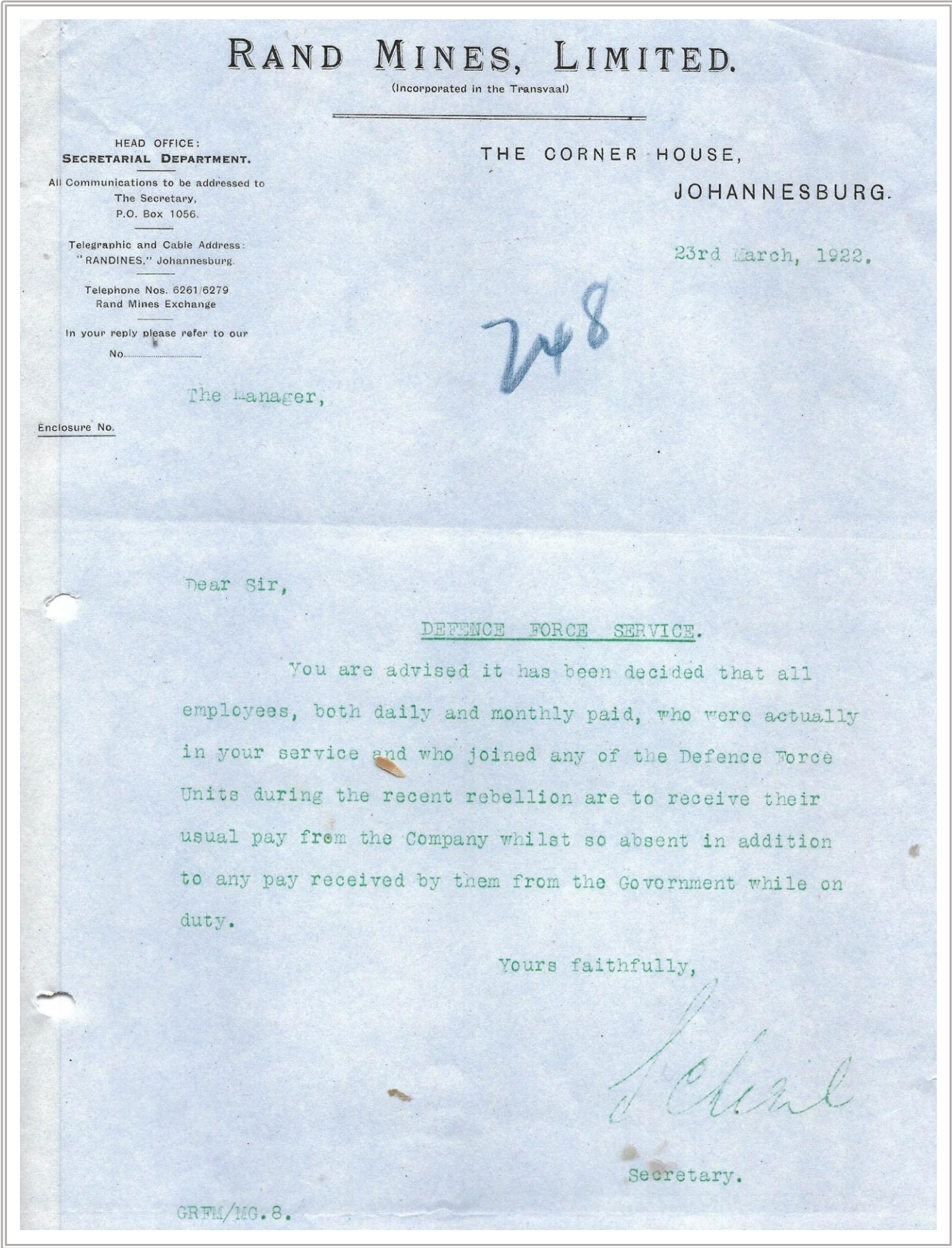
It is reported that some intimidation is still being carried on on the mines by men who have returned to work; for example, that certain men in employment are going round making notes of those whom they consider to have acted as "scabs". I am directed to ask you to bring this to the notice of Managers, in order that any men discovered acting in this manner should be instantly discharged. Intimidation by persons other than mine employees should be reported to the Police.

Yours faithfully,
W. GEMMILL,
Actuary & Labour Adviser.

W. Williams
R. L. L. L.
W. J. P. P.
C. H. C.
S. M. M.
D. M. M.

DISORDER ON THE RAND

On 23 March, Rand Mines informed its affiliates that all **employees** who joined any of the Defence Forces during the rebellion, are **entitled** to their normal **remuneration** in addition to any payments received from government
Modderfontein East Mine **returned** the rifles and ammunition, 13 cartridges short, to the SA Police on 25 March for which they received an acknowledgement of receipt



The **severity** of the action is realized from the heavy casualty roll

According to the *Report of the Martial Law Inquiry Judicial Committee* **fatalities** of the strike and armed revolt comprised a total of 153 lives:

- 43 soldiers
- 29 policemen
- 11 revolutionaries
- 28 suspected revolutionaries and
- 42 civilians.

A further 534 people were wounded: 133 soldiers

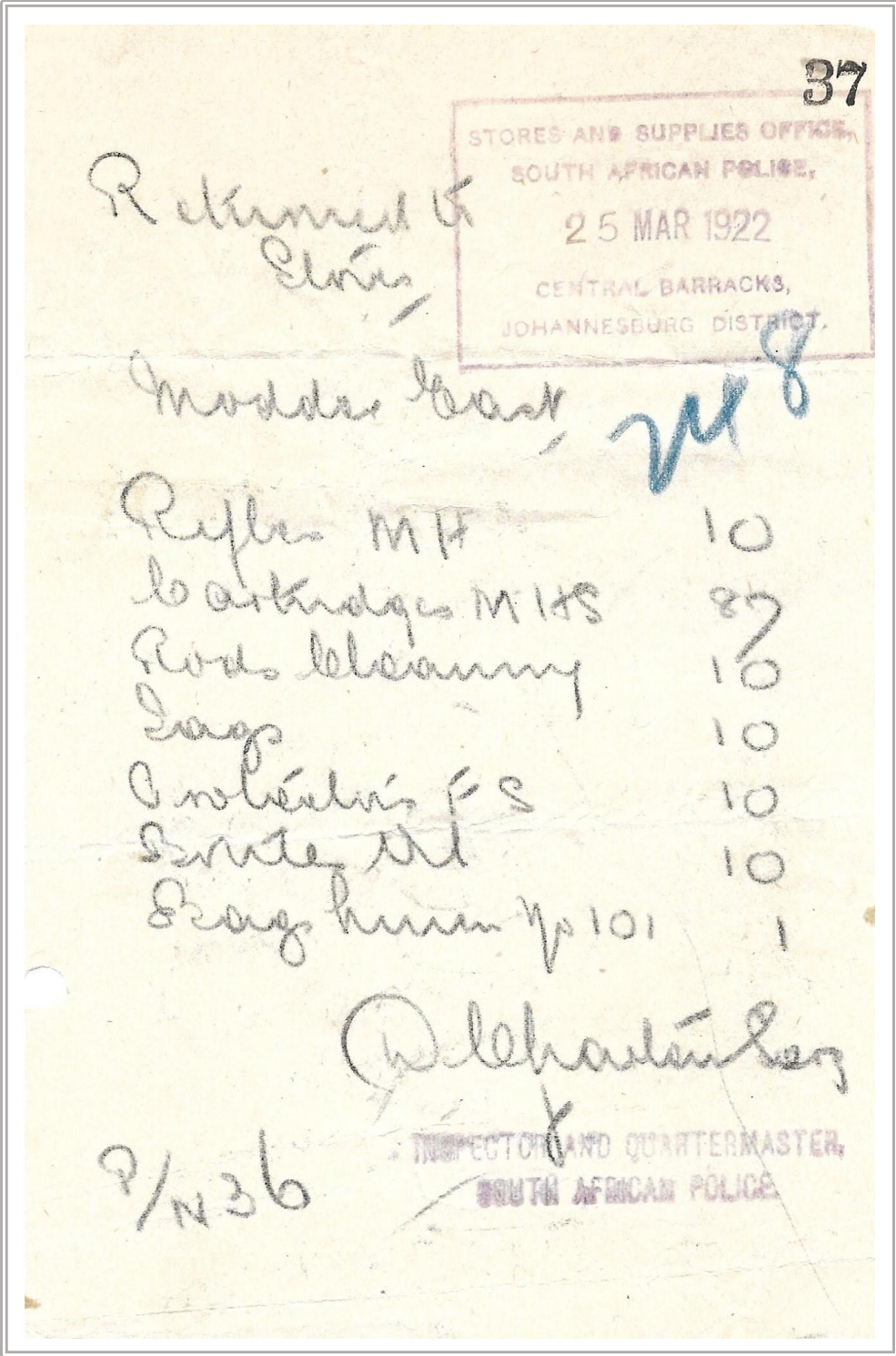
- 86 policemen
- 45 revolutionaries
- 73 suspected revolutionaries and
- 197 civilians

After the revolt was quelled, 4 692 men, 62 women and 4 children, were detained for questioning

853 people, including 9 women, were charged with various contraventions, from murder and treason to minor infringements of martial law regulations.

46 people were charged with murder and 18 were sentenced to death

Only four namely, CC Stassen, SA (Taffy) Long, Herbert K Hull and David Lewis were executed between 5 October and 17 November 1922



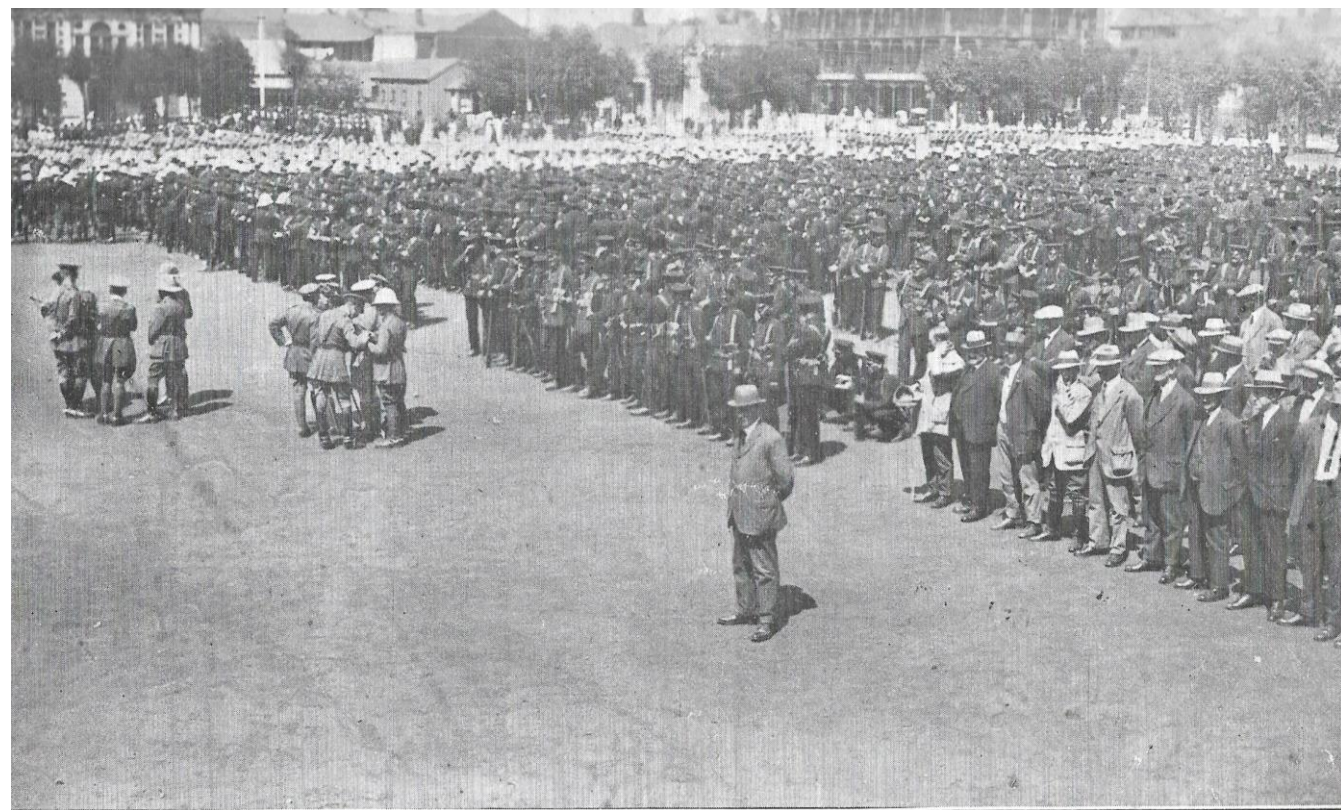
Vehement public **protests** against their hanging forced the government to backtrack and instead recommend **compassion** to the Governor General, for the remaining fourteen

The Rand Revolt was a **catastrophe** that inflicted **suffering** on a broad spectrum of the community

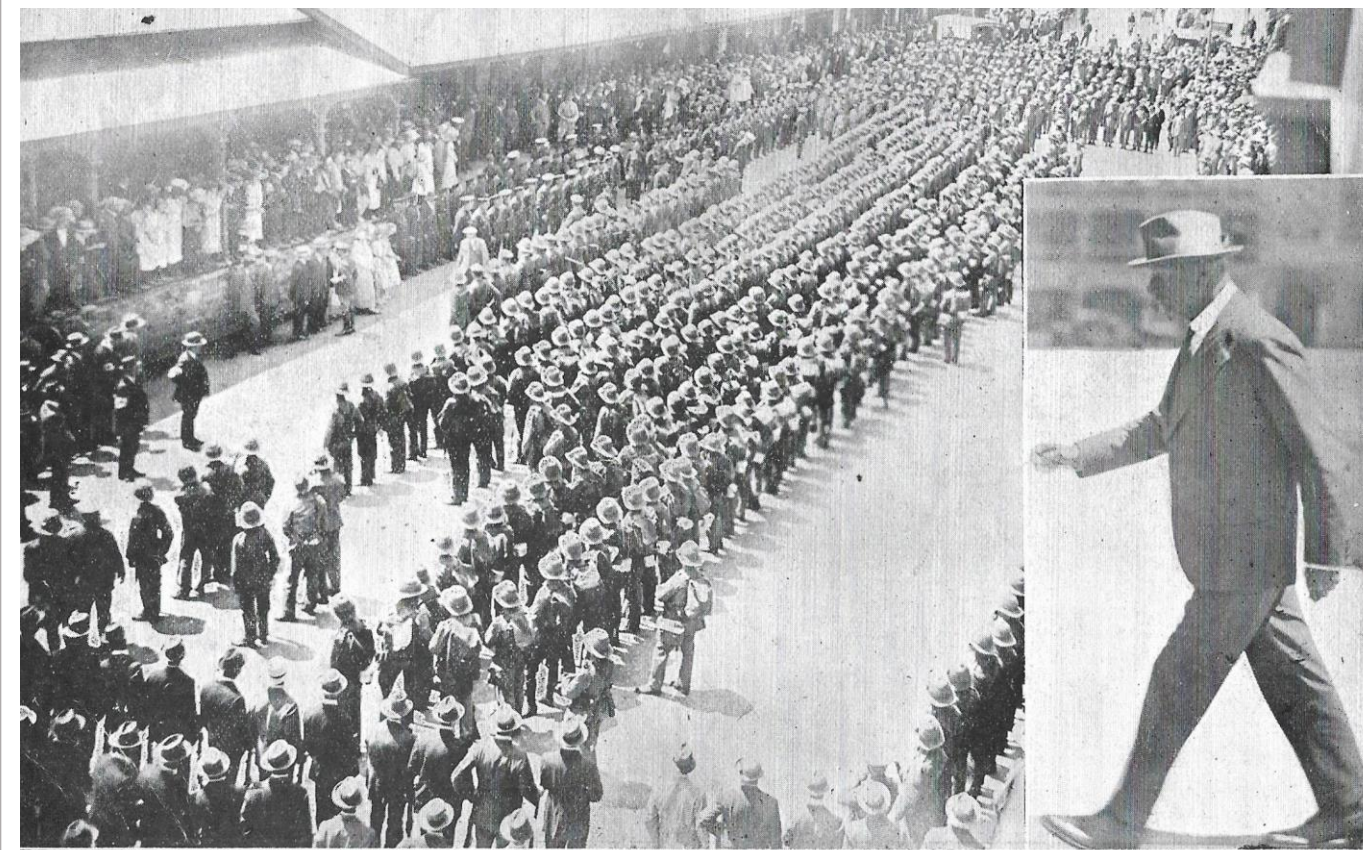
It cost many lives and millions of pounds, 15 000 men were put **out of work** and gold production slumped long afterwards

DISORDER ON THE RAND

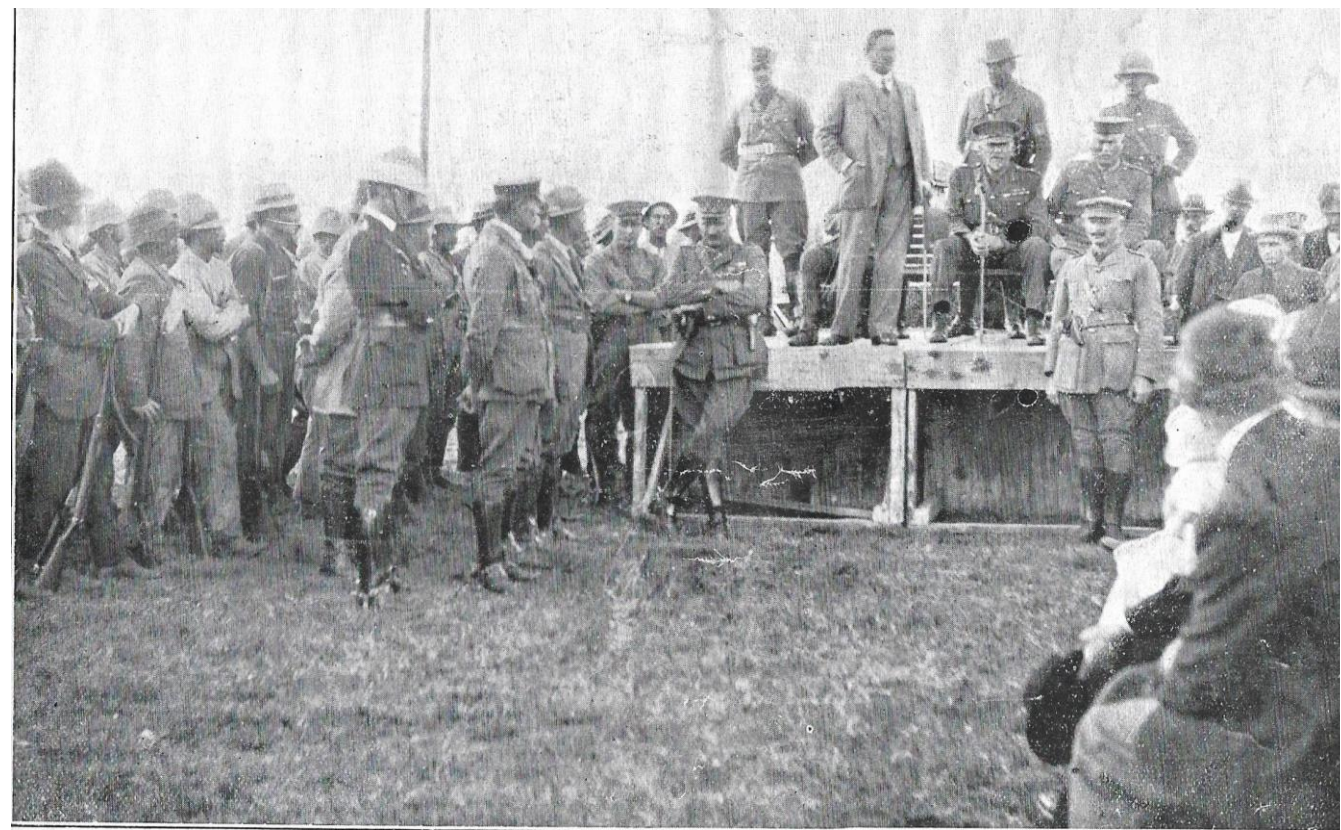
After government gained control and law and order was restored, General Smuts, Prime Minister, and Colonel Mentz, Minister of Defence, made an effort to personally thank the Military, Police and Active Citizen Force for their splendid duties



Review of the South African Police at the Union Ground, Johannesburg, when they were thanked by Colonel Mentz (Minister of Defence) and Mr. N. J. de Wet (Minister of Justice) for their exceptional services. The force on parade included representatives of the Mounted and Dismounted Police, the C.I.D. and the Special Police.



General Smuts addresses and thanks the troops at Park Station. (Inset, General Smuts).



Burgher forces on the East Rand, where they rendered great assistance under General van Deventer and General Brits. Colonel Mentz addressing the Pretoria burghers at the Springs Racecourse.



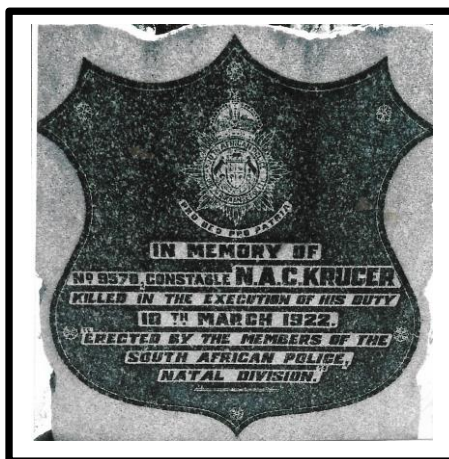
COLONEL. MENTZ THANKS THE DURBAN LIGHT INFANTRY.

DISORDER ON THE RAND

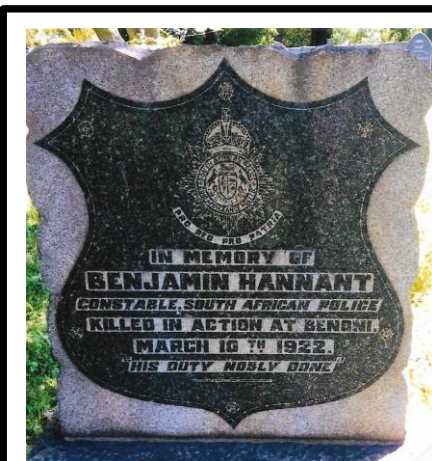
On 19 March, a memorial service was held for the men who lost their lives



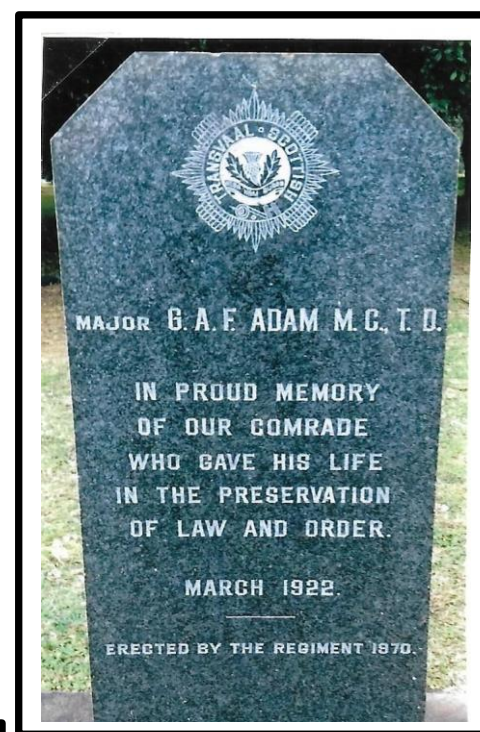
The Great Memorial Service in front of the Johannesburg Town Hall on Sunday, March 19. The units present included the Transvaal Horse Artillery, Rand Light Infantry, Imperial Light Horse, Railway and Harbour Rifles, Durban Light Infantry, Witwatersrand Rifles, Air Force, Regular and Special Police. "We have had a great deliverance," said the Rev. E. Baker in his address.



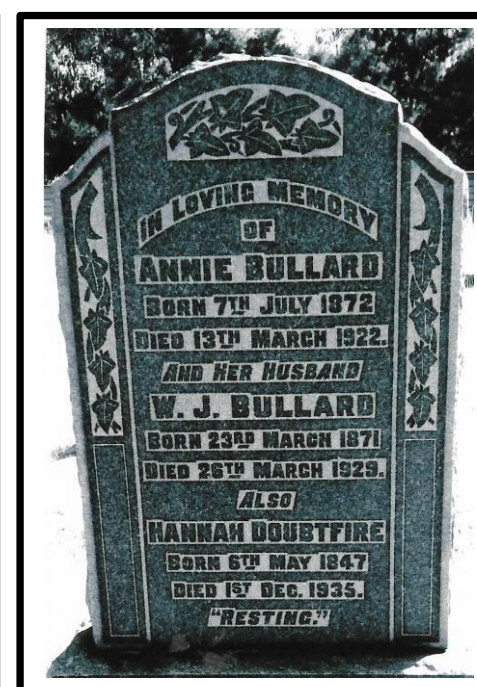
Rynsoord Cemetery, Brakpan



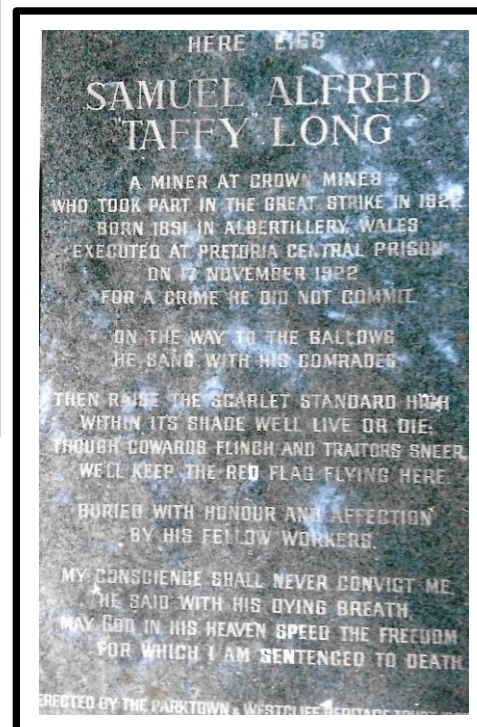
Rynsoord Cemetery, Brakpan



Braamfontein Cemetery, Johannesburg



Rynsoord Cemetery, Brakpan
Annie died of a stray bullet that hit her in the head (Benoni)



Braamfontein Cemetery, Johannesburg
(see page 24)



Family Grave site of Marais Family, where Pieter Marais was buried in the Brixton Cemetery (SJ de Klerk) (see page 24)

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very own Communist Revolution – The Rand Revolt of 1922

This presentation was put together with material owned by two ardent stamp collectors, André du Plessis RDPSA and Dr Jim Findlay RDPSA.

It is hoped that the presentation, which is rather an outline of events and in no way complete, assisted the observer to get a basic knowledge and better understanding of the 1922 White Mine Workers Strike.

We accept that the emphasis could not always been correctly placed and, we have as far as we could, endeavored to refrain from derogatory terms as commonly used in writings of the time.

We would also encourage and invite comments and feedback on the topic.

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