

Eastern Cape Police are first and last to lose their lives in World War 1 Africa

The First World War or Great War fought between 1914 and 1918 has until recently been regarded as a 'white man's war', particularly in South Africa if you read accounts of the war. However, new material has come to light proving that South Africa's participation was more multi-cultural than previously thought. The case of the first and last deaths of the war bring this to the fore. All three deaths considered, the first on 13 August 1914, the last on the day the last battle took place on African soil 13 November 1918 and the last within the period counted with war deaths on 21 August 1921, were of Eastern Cape Men who served with 1 South African Mounted Riflemen (1SAMR), two of them Native Constables from the Transkei.

The first recorded South African death is that of 380 Native Constable Isaac Saki Roto of the 13th Squadron, 1 South African Mounted Rifles. Sadly not much more is known about him officially other than that he died on 13 August 1914. It is most likely that Isaac died of an illness as his death occurred eight days after Britain (and South Africa) declared war on Germany. Isaac's unit was based at King William's Town. It can be surmised that he joined the SAMR in or before 1910 as the last 1SAMR was that of 395 2nd Colour Sergeant John Joubert Marincowitz of Port Alfred who we know enlisted on 25 June 1910 and died on 21 August 1921 at West Bank, Market Street, Oudshoorn, his usual residence being Butterworth about 120km north of King William's Town where his unit was based. A little more is known about Roto's private life from his Death Notice: He was born a Tembu (Thembu) in Loyi, Bedford District (near Maclear) to Magidiva and Howayile Roto who were married 'by native custom'. At the time of his death, he was 28 years and 8 months old and married to Elizabeth Roto (born Tabata) by 'Christian rites' and in community of property. He died at his own residence, Mkonyana, Bolotwa. Two months later, on 16 October 1914, his wife Elizabeth gave birth to Stanford Roto, and she, now Elizabeth Mpande, died in 1917, leaving Stanford an orphan aged 2.

The SAMR was formed after the 2nd Anglo-Boer War or South African War of 1899-1902 from various local Mounted and Rifle units. In 1903 the last reinforcements from Britain arrived which meant from then on local recruitment happened. The main task of the SAMR was policing in rural areas and in places such as the Transkei or Eastern Cape, local black South Africans were recruited into a unit which was manned predominantly by white South Africans. Isaac Roto and 128 Native Constable Bashula were two of these, enlisting voluntarily before the war of 1914 began.

While the scant information on Isaac Roto supports the general perception that the white dominated Union government did not value black lives, the case of Bashula challenges the perception. Although his attestation form and other service details remain hidden, we can piece together some of his military service and life.

Bashula, no other name is recorded, was from Libode, District 48 Umtata, Pondoland. He died on the last day of fighting in East Africa, two days after the armistice came into effect in Europe. However, Bashula was in the Transkei when he died aged 57 of Influenza or Pneumonia, the flu pandemic which ravaged the world at the end of the war. He was born in 1861 and enlisted at the age of 42 on 1 June 1903. Why he enlisted at that age is not clear although given his later service it may well have been to do with transport.

He was married with two wives, Nawanti and Mamewazi, his first marriage likely having been in 1883 as his oldest child, William was 23 years old in 1918. He had twelve other children of whom eight were daughters: Alex (20), Moses (18), Sina (16), Sara (15), Nomampondo (13), Elizabeth (8),

Mina (6), Nozitako (3), Ntombi (3), Jeoffrey (1) and Gibson (1). A pension was to be paid to his dependants care of the South African Police Umtata. His pay for his wartime service was recorded as:

14 November 1915 – 30 June 1916: ordinary pay 2/6 with a remount allowance of 2d. This suggests that he served in German South West Africa as part of the Garrison force or in East Africa before the main contingents arrived. Between 1 July 1916 and 30 June 1917 he was paid 2/8, then 2/10 to 30 June 1918 and finally 3/- until his death. Why he was given the increase in pay was not recorded although they could have been annual increments based on the dates. On 1 April 1918 Bashula's service had been transferred to the Native Administrative Department following a restructuring of the police and armed forces in the Union, most SAMR contingents being disbanded.

While we know something about Bashula's family life from his military records, it is the opposite for 395 2nd Colour Sergeant John Joubert Marincowitz whose military record has been better recorded. He enlisted on 25 June 1910, soon after Union, at the age of 24 years and 1 month, suggesting he was born in May 1886. He was from Prince Albert where his brother, George, ran Kopjeskraal. Before joining 1 SAMR, John had previously been a 'boring inspector'. He would have been based at King William's Town with the rest of 1SAMR patrolling Transkei and the Eastern Cape. Following the outbreak of war in August 1914, he saw service in German South West Africa first from 14 June 1915 to 14 July 1915 when he was at Karibib, the town having been captured by the South African forces on 5 May 1915. He also spent some time around 21 June 1915 in Swakopmund where he may have been in hospital pending his removal to Wynberg where he was between 18 July and 20 August 1915 with rheumatism and kidney issues. Having sailed to Wynberg of the Hospital Ship HMHS *Ebani*, he returned to Walvis (Walfish) Bay on 23 August 1915. During this time the campaign in South West Africa ended on 9 July 1915 with most South African units being returned to the unit whilst a garrison force was put in place pending the outcome of the later peace discussions. On 1 May 1916, John was transferred from the SAMR to the Police establishment at King William's Town as part of the restructuring of the Union's police and military forces and died in Oudtshoorn on 21 August 1921 having reenlisted with the service on 25 June 1921 for a further two years. He was 35 when he died.

There is no evidence in the records to suggest the three men served together at any one time although their paths may well have crossed all being in the same military unit.

Together they died – a watery death

On 23 January 1915, two men, one Zulu and one likely Xhosa or Eastern Cape Coloured, lost their lives when the boat they were manning fell into trouble on the Orange River near Upington.

The drowning occurred on the day rebel Manie Maritz refused to surrender and moved into German South West Africa while the last of the rebels surrendered to General Jaap van Deventer. While the focus is generally on the military events, little attention has been paid to the environmental factors the forces had to contend with. While some work has been done on the supply of water to the GSWA campaign, nothing is in the public domain about the floods and droughts which plagued South Africa at the time. It was one of these floods which resulted in the death of Dolly (Solly) Jenniker from South End, Port Elizabeth, and Zulu Madhliwa of Amanzimtoti.

The Orange River was in flood near Upington which caused the government forces to stop on one side of the river as it was deemed too dangerous to cross, no doubt following the loss of these two lives. Although there is no report in the national papers and local papers have not been accessed, there is a detailed report in the military records which gives some idea of what happened.

Information on Solly or Dolly Jenniker is limited although we know he was married to Molly and lived at 1 Armstrong Lane, South End, it is not clear which ethnic group he was from as South End at the time was completely multicultural. However, we know a little more about Zulu Madhliwa, alias Dixon and also known as Mazewa. His father was Ngobongwana and his chief Mtambo in Mbogodweni/Mbogotwini (eZimbokodweni) about four kilometres north-east of Amanzimtoti in Umlazi District, Natal. Zulu's unpaid wages of £3 was paid to his father on instruction from the Magistrate's Office, Durban, although no request had been made for compensation and what was to happen to the outstanding amount of £5-11- for his service was yet to be determined when the file was closed.

Both men were listed as Boat Men and employed by the South African Railways and Harbours Department at The Point in Durban on loan to the South African Defence Department from 16 December 1914 for local service on the Orange River. They were both drowned on 23 January 1915 'through the capsizing of a launch when the river was in flood.' More specific detail revealed that they were 'drowned [...] in consequence of the engine of a low powered motor launch stopping, causing the craft to drift before the force of the current and capsize.' The Department of Native Affairs was involved in considering the matter of compensation. Tracing this correspondence has not yet been possible.

These two men, however, were not the only South Africans to drown during the early years of the war:

4007 Philip NICOSTOR drowned on 6 January 1915. He was from Maseru, Basotholand. Where he drowned has not been revealed.

2966 Walter BAILEY was drowned in the Orange River near Upington on 5 February 1915.

5293 Isaac JACOBS of Cape Town drowned on 16 March 1915, location as yet unknown.

G/269 Klaas SWARTZ of the South African Engineers drowned on 11 April 1915, location as yet unknown.

20432 Smile NKANTZA of Griquatown drowned at Maitland, Cape Town, on 8 May 1915. This was likely in the Swart Rivier which runs through the area, close to where the military camp or base was located. Similarly, on 31 August 1915, Petros MATLANGÉ drowned in Maitland. Petros was from Thaba N'Chu in the Orange Free State/

On 24 October 1915, 26836 Kleinbooi SPATANE of the Mechanical Transport Section died in the Orange River near Upington. He was the fourth known drowning in the Orange River near Upington.

There were other boating related deaths and sea incidents later in the war, not least those of the SS *Mendi* and SS *Aragon*.

Frederick FRIESLAAR of Naval Transport Lighter No 13 died of a broken neck at Walvis Bay on 2 May 1915. It is likely this was as a result of him being hit by equipment being transferred from ship to lighter to land as there were no docks as we know today. Everything had to be lifted and moved from the ship anchored at sea. Photos of the day show how dangerous this work could be. Similarly, 11687 John GWAPE who attested at Port Elizabeth on 14 June 1916 into Boats and Animal work was accidentally killed on board HMT *Ngoma* on 9 September 1916 and 19542 Johnny XABA who attested in Johannesburg on 11 April 1917 died of a fractured skull at Durban on 1 December 1918 after the war had officially ended. He was likely involved with men and equipment returning from war when he was killed.

1803 Stephen MPEKULA, attested at Johannesburg on 28 December 1915 accidentally drowned somewhere on 27 March 1917 whilst on active service whether in Africa or Europe is yet to be determined, while on 8 May 1917 12859 Breakfast SAMKWENA who attested at Kimberley on 1 August 1916, drowned at Njukwas. Njukwa in on the Ruaha River in today's Tanzania. This suggests that Breakfast was in the force commanded by South African General Jaap van Deventer which was holding the drift at Njukwa.

Supporting the war is dangerous work

In both the South West Africa and East Africa campaigns, animal, mechanical (vehicles) and railway transport played a significant role in getting the fighting forces to where they needed to be, as well as ensuring they were fed and equipped.

Many in East Africa died on route from dysentery and malaria, while in GSWA, phthisis more commonly known as tuberculosis or TB and enteric or typhoid were the major causes of death. However, a significant number of men who worked on the railways lost their lives too.

The most famous wartime rail accident in South Africa was that of the derailment of a train on the Hex River Pass on 10 September 1914 when 8 men of the 5th Infantry, Kaffrarian Rifles (Eastern Cape) were killed and 100 were injured. They were on route to Cape Town from where they would leave for South West Africa. This was in anticipation of the mobilisation of the South African forces pending a decision by the Union Parliament on 11 and 12 September to authorise the Union Defence Force serving outside the Union. Seven of the dead are buried in King William's Town, two in East London and one in Macleantown Cemetery.

The death of Sir George Farrar, however, is probably the most well-known. His death on 20 May occurred after the trolley he was travelling on collided with an oncoming train on 19 May 1915. The death, also on the 20th, of his driver, 1105 Albert John Henwood, of the South African Engineers is less well known. The third person on the trolley, Frederick Henry Bradley survived although was hospitalised for two months due to his injuries. It does not appear that any on the mixed goods train which collided with the trolley were killed, the other deaths listed on the day being the result of disease.

The prominence of Farrar's death brings the railway worker to the fore, allowing attention to be directed to the men who ensured the railways were kept operational.

1107 John FREDERICKS, Transport, died at Maitland on 8 May 1915. He is buried at Camp Hospital Cemetery.

M/1564 (447) Andries MAGENA, Transport, was run over by a train on 10 June 1915.

31049 Jan SMOUSE died falling from a train at Hermon on 17 July 1915. Hermon is 22 kilometres north of Wellington, near Cape Town.

1619 Driver Piet MTHEBE, who attested at Parys on 20 December 1915 died in a railway accident six months later on 18 May 1916.

A different transport death was that of 999 George RAMUTLOA who was run over by a wagon, presumably an ox-wagon as opposed to a train waggon, at Kalkfeldt on 19 July 1915. Nearly a month before, on 22 June 1915, Louis Botha's Northern Force had seen action at Kalkfeldt, which lies between Omaruru and Otjwarongo, Damaraland in the now Otjozondjupa Region. This was a

prelude to the signing of the peace on 9 July 1915, suggesting George's death occurred during the withdrawal of Union troops back to South Africa.

What drives a man to take his own life on the battlefield?

Looking at the causes of death on the South African Memorial list it is striking to see 'committed suicide'. There are four names for different locations, and one for a death on the SS *Aragon* although a closer look at the deaths on that ship suggest an additional five making six suicides on board. A total of 10 suicides on this list of 1650 names (0.6%).

This raises some questions: Who are these men? Why did these men commit suicide? And why, having 'damaged army equipment' or rather 'destroyed army equipment', are they commemorated for their war service?

M/1792 John RICHARDS was from Leribe (Hlotse) in Basutoland, today's Lesotho. John was a labourer in B Section, M/C Section presumably Motor Car which saw service in South West Africa. His death was recorded in 'Register 7, Deaths Coloured Persons and Natives' as 'Suicide revolver shot 1.5.15' with a further pencil note recording 'somewhere abt (about) Karibib'. Further details about John are not yet known but his death confirms that men who served in the South African Labour contingents were from Southern Africa, not only the Union, and in this case John was most likely to have enlisted voluntarily. Why did he commit suicide? It is difficult to say. Karibib was captured by the South Africans on 5 May 1915, four days after his death. The march to Karibib was tough. The Official History notes that 'Supplies, with the exception of meat were unobtainable in the country, and the great scarcity of water presented obstacles... The transport problem of urgent interest, however, was how to maintain the far-advanced and rapidly operating mounted field troops, there being absolutely no grazing of any description until Karibib was reached.' In addition to the usual desert conditions of the Namib, the area was also suffering an exceptional drought which had started in 1913.

It is likely that John served with a Free State unit under Colonel Hendrik Mentz as Leribe is on the Orange Free State border. Of this unit, JJ Collyer writes 'at midnight, the 3rd Mounted Brigade (Menz) left on another 25-mile march to OTJIMBINGWE, in the direction of which an enemy patrol had withdrawn, with the object of surprising the place at dawn. An hour later – 1 a.m., April 30 – the Free Staters rode out in the tracks of their Transvaal comrades. // Four hundred men, some incapacitated by sickness, but for the most part whose horses had succumbed to the trying march, were left by Mybergh [Officer Commanding the force Mentz was commanding] at KALTENHAUSEN.' If it was this tough for the fighting forces, it was worse for those involved in transporting as the sandy conditions were not conducive to easy movement and vehicles often got stuck and were eventually abandoned. Unfortunately, little attention has been paid to the transport or logistical services of the war with the result that many names, of all ethnicities, remain unknown.

However, John's death raises another question – how did he have access to a revolver? As a labourer who was not white, he was technically unarmed. This suggests John might have been a batman or personal servant to a white officer. That he might well have been a personal servant is supported by his Anglicised name indicating, for the time, that he was mission educated and therefore able to speak and/or write English. We might not know the exact details John faced, but we can deduce from what is known that the conditions in which he found himself proved too much.

10564 Sandy Kandala enlisted at Potchefstroom on 3 May 1916 under Contract number 458C as a labourer in the Ordnance unit, Potchefstroom. His pay was 60/-. His death is recorded as 'suicide' on

15 October 1917. Other than a note to say, 'All papers in E file' and a reference next to stop order: NE4763/17' no other information appears to be held on him.

Potchefstroom was one of the major camp bases in South Africa during the First World War. Men enlisted, were trained and equipped at the base. There are 13 recorded (white) war dead buried in various cemeteries throughout the town.

13982 Luwayi NYUKA attested at Encobo (Engcobo) in the Eastern Cape (Chris Hani District) on 21 August 1916 under Contract Number 601 as an Ox Driver being paid 60/- for service in the British East Africa Expeditionary Force. He left for East Africa on the *Huntscliffe* on 2 September 1916 and 'committed suicide' on 22 November 1916 at Morogoro, although his Death certificate notes Dodoma.

Dodoma was captured and occupied by the South African forces on 29 July 1916 and Morogoro on 26 August 1916. Both cemeteries have unidentified graves within them. Unfortunately neither the war diaries for Dodoma nor Morogoro cover the time period when Luwayi committed suicide. The Dar es Salaam Base Communication War Diary has the following for 22 November 1916, 'Found dead on train, 1 South African Native, 22nd Octr [Nov? given all the other dates on the sheet] SA Native Cape Boy no name or number given.' It is yet to be confirmed whether this death was later confirmed as suicide, murder or accidental (all are referred to in the diary amongst labourers), however, what this record does show is that Luwayi's death would have been recognised at the time; whether the record has survived or not is another matter (many official records concerning Africa's involvement in the First World War were destroyed accidentally in the 1940s when the building they were in was destroyed by a German bomb).

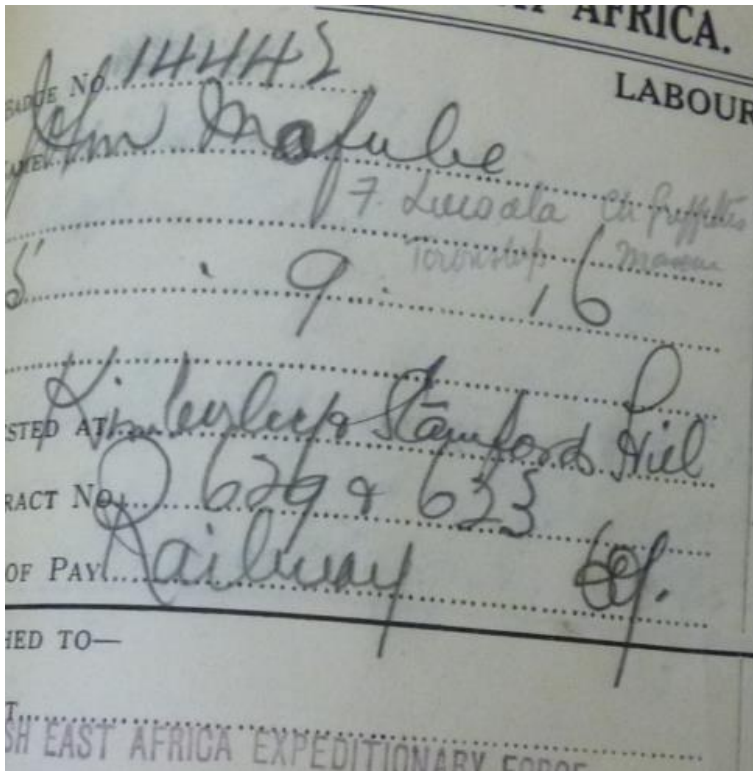
11414 Ephraim SIKOTOANE attested at Pietersburg, Northern Transvaal (Limpopo Province) on 12 July 1916 for service as a Donkey Driver in the British East Africa Expeditionary Force under Contract Number 430 for pay of 60/-. He sailed for East Africa on 3 August 1916 on the *Glen Cluny* which sank on 27 April 1917 and is recorded as having committed suicide at Kilwa on 4 December 1916. His death may be linked with those discussed below under the *SS Aragon*.

These last three mentioned men might well have been coerced into enlisting which added to the various stresses and strains they were experiencing in their respective service areas. Reference is made to men in delirious state due to malaria walking aimlessly into the ocean while Doctor Major **Edward Thomas Ernest Hamilton** who is on the SA Book of Remembrance, of the Mounted Brigade Field Ambulance committed suicide on 8 March 1915 due to 'mental depression'. He had been the Principal Medical Officer at Swakopmund during the campaign where he developed an intestinal condition. 'It is supposed that during one of these fits [during his depression] he terminated his life, as he was found with a fatal bullet wound in his head.' It is clear from these and other suspected suicide cases recorded during the war in Africa that where war-time conditions caused mental instability leading to suicide, they are remembered for their sacrifice.

[SS ARAGON deaths](#)

What follows are a few details on some of the men who lost their lives while on the *SS Aragon*. While only one death of those discussed below directly mentions 'suicide', the case of the *Aragon* deaths is incredibly moving and rivals that of the *SS Mendi*. Of the approximate 1400 men embarked onto the *Aragon* for repatriation, over 200 lost their lives, the CWGC SA Book of Remembrance listing 239 Military Labour Corps deaths between 1 and 15 April 1917, 75 of whom are on the Memorial list. Those who died at sea would likely have found their final resting place in the great

waters. Together with the 156 deaths in March and another 12 of Military Labour Corps who died in Kenya or elsewhere in Tanzania gives 407 deaths out of 18,000 who served in South African Labour units in East Africa. Whilst this figure does not match that of the deaths on the *SS Mendi*, these deaths effectively brought an end to South Africa's recruitment of black and Coloured labour in support of the war effort. There are an additional 8 names on the Lesotho Memorial for these dates commemorating men whose final resting places are not known, although it is known that **14442 John MOFUBE** of 7 Lusala Township, Maseru who attested on 5 September 1916 at XXX Stamford Hill, Durban, in the Railway Company died on 15 April 1917 on the *Aragon*, while **14993 William MAKHALIMA** attested in Johannesburg on 21 September 1916 into the Railway Company for service in the British East Africa Expeditionary Force, died on 14 April 1917 in Kilwa.



On 30 March 1917, men of the East African Native Labour Corps, all from South Africa were embarked as part of the decision to repatriate them home. They were to be on board for 17 days, landing in Durban on 17 April 1917.

The Senior Medical Officer, Kilwa further explained that between December 1916 and March 1917:

‘Union Porters were at this period being brought in from up the line for this evacuation in large numbers. // All were debilitated, of very poor physique, and it was a matter of extreme difficult to decide who could remain out of hospital, and who be admitted. // All were full of malaria and a man would appear comparatively fit, one day, possibly temp 102 degrees; this temperature would fall to normal and two days later he would die in his sleep.’

‘Captain Miller stated he had the same experience on the *Aragon* and Lieut Cherrington of the Union Labour Depot, states that in his camp, convalescent men apparently quite fit during the day suddenly died during the night. // On examination, the blood of these men was found to be full of subtertian malaria parasites, and on a few occasions smears were taken from the brain, showing the capillaries blocked with parasites. // In all cases

the porters belonging to the **Animal Transport** were in a much worse condition than those of other units, as the proportion of deaths in hospital show. The condition under which these porters were, during the rains, could not have been worse. // The porters in this area appear to me to be of a much lower type than I have met in other areas. // Many were old men, others young boys; at one time in the Animal Transport Camp there were two men each without a hand and many stated to me they had never been medically examined before leaving South Africa. // Eventually, in consultation with OC Union Labour Depot, Capt Douglas, SAMC, inspected these porters prior to disembarkation in order to weed out those obviously unfit. The difficulty under which the medical treatment of these porters has been carried out is very great. // In the entire area I do not suppose there is one MO who speaks their language and the Controller of Union Labour was unable to give me any interpreters for the hospital. // They have been nursed all along here by my European orderlies who have to do what they can with the aid of other sick porters in the ward, who may speak a few words of English, and the same difficulty applies to the Medical Officers. I would also point out that there was no representative of the Union Labour in charge on the *Aragon* and that thereby the MO's difficulties in dealing with the sick were much increased.

On 13 April, the Primary Medical Officer, John Miller, on board the Aragon reported:

'The ship was delayed ten days at Kilwa and this had a very depressing effect on the natives, which affected adversely their general health. During the stay in Kilwa seventy-four deaths took place, 46 being from malaria, 27 from dysentery, **and one native jumped overboard**. This occurrence formed the subject of an enquiry on board, conducted by Major Cunningham, Captain Dunbar and Captain Overbeck. [...] The HMT *Aragon* sailed from Kilwa on 9 April and it was hoped that the sea voyage would have a beneficial effect on the health of the natives. It improved the health of those who were convalescent, but had a harmful effect on those who were in hospital.

On 10 April, Pte Wilkinson, RAMC, and Pte Paine, RAMC, were confined to bed with fever. In answer to an appeal to the escort for assistance to replace my two orderlies it was arranged two officers and eight men from the *Kinfauns Castle* should be transferred to the *Aragon*. They came on board on the 12th and took up duties allotted to them. I made a strong representation to the Captain on 11 April that the voyage might be expedited as much as possible on account of the sickness on board.

The deaths on board occurred chiefly from malaria and dysentery. Several cases of sudden death occurred on deck due to the extreme debility and anaemia consequent on the frequent attacks of fever in the country. // In some cases only a few hours illness preceded the fatal termination. The patients received every care possible on board. The food was plentiful and of good quality and served at regular intervals. // No complaints were received on board. The Captain and Officers rendered every assistance in their power and readily acquiesced in any suggestion that was made relating to the care and comfort of the patients.'

Captain RDA Douglas, Senior Medical Officer, Kisiwani noted in November 1917:

'As MO at Kisiwani from 18 January to 19 April 1917, I had charge of the South African (Cape Boys) employed on **Railway Construction** work. I frequently visited their camps at Kisiwani and Mpara and held a sick parade daily. Their total strength in these two areas

would be about 230 to 250. Like the Seychelles porters they were *not* a strong body of men and were not physically fit to endure the trials of a tropical climate especially during the heavy summer rains. On two separate occasions I had to examine drafts of reserves from the Union to fill the vacancies of those I had repatriated early in February. The majority went up to railhead which at that time was near Ngeringeri. Prior to disembarking I examined 353 SA natives on the HT *Glencluny*, rejecting 13, on 29 January 1917, and on 2 February I examined 388 SA natives on the HT *Huntscliffe* rejecting 11. Most of my rejections were due to under age limits.

At the time of my arrival at Kisiwani my morning parades were comparatively light, averaging 30 to 40, but they rapidly increased to 70 and 80 before the end of the month.

I repatriated about 50 as early as 15 February and they were kept in detail camp, doing no work pending evacuation to the Union. These repatriated men were seen daily and given extra milk and comforts. The Cape Boy has not the physique nor the stamina to battle with malaria. One severe attack was quite sufficient to render him useless for further service. Judging from the behaviour of the repatriated cases, extra comforts in the way of food and clothing, no work, and the knowledge of their soon returning to their homes and families, did not cheer them up. They became hopelessly depressed (probably accentuated by perpetual rains and misery of seeing a comrade die from fever) and a fair percentage died before they could be evacuated.

During February the sick parades kept up to average of 70 and 80, but early in March they were well over 100 and before they were repatriated on 28 March they exceeded 200.

Mortality – the total number of porters (Railway Cape Boys) who died at Kisiwani were – 34: 4 in February, 24 in March, and 6 in April, including 4 repatriated cases from Kilwa-Kivinji.

About the middle of March I was asked to get my nominal rolls ready for the *Aragon* which was evacuating all the Cape Boys in the Union. I naturally decided to evacuate every Cape Boy who had attended the morning sick parade frequently. They were *not* all in a feeble condition; still I thought it wiser to evacuate the entire batch knowing their incapacity to fight either fever or dysentery. Approximately 200 Cape Boys joined the *Aragon* who were employed either at Kisiwani or Mpara.

The *Aragon* arrived at Kisiwani on 28 March 1917, and owing to unforeseen naval trouble was detained in harbour until 8 April. The 200 repatriated cases from Kisiwani area embarked on the 29th. A very big percentage of cases were sent down from Kilwa Kivinji by dhows and as these dhows sailed up to the side of the *Aragon* these cases did not pass through Kisiwani at all and as the *Aragon* had a MO on board it was not necessary for me to supervise the embarkation. The SMO and Officer Commanding South African Native Labour Bureau, Kilwa, were on board daily during the embarkation. Whilst the MO on board was incapacitated for two days during the *Aragon's* detention I went on board to conduct the sick parades and attend all sick in Hospital area of ship. This only lasted two days. The *Aragon* sailed for Durban on 8 April 1917, being detained 10 days. During this period I had 64 dead bodies brought ashore for burial and they all passed through the Hospital mortuary. A number of repatriated

cases came down by rail to join the *Aragon*. Of these I detained 12 in Hospital deeming them unfit to travel. Of these 6 died at Kisiwani. When the remaining 6 were fit to travel they were finally sent back to 19 Stationary Hospital, Kilwa.

The OC, South African Labour Bureau gave me every assistance and endeavoured frequently to hurry on the evacuation scheme. The mortality at Kisiwani was small compared to Kilwa and the majority of the Kisiwani cases died from acute dysentery or pernicious malaria. All the cases that were admitted to hospital died within the first seven days after their admission. A fair percentage of the malarial cases developed cerebral symptoms.'

The Medical Officer JA Manifold, on 5 May 1917, at 19th Stationary Hospital, Kilwa Kivinji noted:

Until these **Union Porters** were actually on the *Aragon* there were none reported as sick. // The porters were sent by dhow and rowed to the ship, and it was not until next day that any actual sickness was reported. // They were all "unfit", full of malaria, and appeared to have no resisting power left for relapses.

The question of removing sick from ship was most carefully considered, but in view of the large numbers with temperatures, and the fact that there appeared to be sufficient bunks for the bad cases, that the feeding arrangements for the sick were excellent, that a Medical Officer, one RAMC, NCO, and three Nursing Orderlies were being sent on board with sufficient drugs and equipment, and porters were leaving for a good climate, I considered they would be under better circumstances on board than on shore in the Post Hospital, which was much over-crowded owing to sickness among the Seychelles Porters.

I would also put on record my opinion that if these porters had been taken ashore their chances of recovery would have been less than on the ship, owing to the mental depression that would have been caused.

The improvement in the majority of cases after the first days on board was most marked, largely due to the knowledge that they were being sent home.

11917 Jack DECEMBER attested at Kimberley on 18 July 1916 under Contract 460 as a Driver for service in the British East Africa Expeditionary Force for a salary of 60/-. He was repatriated per the *Aragon* although his whereabouts was questioned. A note on his Death certificate notes there was a 'Derelict £25-16-8'. Another note suggests there is a report by the Officer Commanding Kilwa on the *Aragon* file dated 20 January 1918. This is yet to be sourced.

13516 Bokkie MAYANDU enlisted at Graaff Reinet in the Eastern Cape on 17 August 1916 under Contract 580 as a Driver for the British East Africa Expeditionary Force. He was paid 60/-. He left for East Africa on the *Huntscliff* on 2 September 1916 and had two spells in hospital in Kilwa. The first he left on 19 January 1917 and the second on 2 March 1917, the last being at least 7 days at 19th Stationary Hospital. He embarked on the *Aragon* on 30 March 1917 and died a week later. His death certificate notes 'suicide 7/4/17' with a file reference dated 15/4/17 annotated below. It appears that his wife, Sarah Mayandu, received 20/- which was sent to her care of J Ficklenstein of Graaf Reinet. Is he the man who jumped overboard?

13867 Mack Mokgade attested at PPRust (Paul Pietersrust) on 25 August 1916 under Contract 596 Railway section at 68/- for service in the British East Africa Expeditionary Force. He embarked for East Africa on 14 September 1916 on the *Clan McPherson*. He had two stays in hospital being discharged from 19th Stationary Hospital after four days on 4 February 1917 and then again on 12 March 1917 after a seven day stay. He was repatriated with the others on 30 March 1917 on the SS *Aragon*, whereabouts unknown and died on 15 April 1917 on board. His family were due one instalment of 20/- which was paid to SNC, Pietersburg.

16390 MAELI MAKHALEYANE died 15 April 1917 on SS *Aragon*. He attested at Kimberley on 21 November 1916 under Contract Number 795 and was paid 60/-. His death certificate notes that he was 'repatriated per *Aragon*' and that details are on the '*Aragon* file'. He too left for service in East Africa on the *Glen Cluny*. Before that he had been in Kilwa Hospital for 7 days from 29 January 1917, and then again at 19th Stationary hospital for 7 days before it was noted on his file on 6 March 1917 that he was to be repatriated to South Africa. He embarked on the *Aragon* on 30 March where he later died on 15 April 1917. The CWGC register notes he died of Malaria.

16438 Johannes LIMTWE died 9 April 1917 on the SS *Aragon*. He attested at Kimberley on 21 November 1916, Contract Number 795 and was paid as an Ox Driver 60/- as part of the British East Africa Expeditionary Force. He embarked for East Africa on 1 December 1916 on the *Glen Cluny* and on the SS *Aragon* on 30 March 1917. The death register notes 'Disease not stated at Kisiwani'. His next of kin was not recorded but it was noted that there was a 'Derelict of £13-18-0'.

16485 Piet September attested at Kimberley on 28 November 1916 as an Ox Driver under Contract 807 for service in the British East Africa Expeditionary Force for a salary of 60/-. He died on 13 April 1917 on the SS *Aragon*. As with the others he had left South African on the *Glen Cluny* [should be *Cluny Castle*] on 1 December 1916.

17652 Johnson Mpendulo attested at Kimberley on 9 January 1917 under Contract 900 as a Driver paid 60/- for service in the British East Africa Expeditionary Force. He embarked on the *Glen Cluny* on 22 January 1917. His file notes that he was repatriated on the *Aragon* on 30 March 1917, 'whereabouts ? Death presumed on *Aragon* 15/4/1917'. There was a 'Derelict £9-16-4' which was his outstanding pay.

Not on Memorial list but in book of remembrance

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA. DEFENCE FORCE.

LABOUR IDENTIFICATION REGISTER.

IF ON STOP ORDERS—
(Please insert full address of Payee.)

13564
Name *Sam Bongale*

6 7 16
Address *Launspotters Kimberley*

Contract No. *576*
Rate of Pay. *Leader 40%*

11077
16-1827
✓

E-2199

UNIT.....
SOUTH AFRICA EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

- DATE
- (1) DIED *Mental Cause 20/1/18*
 - (2) DESERTED.....
 - (3) DISCHARGED.....
 - (4) IN HOSPITAL *92 colts ham in 16.12.17 1918 7A stomach*