

Review Article

Deneys Reitz and the First World War: An Introduction to the Department of Defence Archival Holdings

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Abstract

The historical sources detailing South Africa's participation in the First World War are vast, and range from official publications to regimental histories, private diaries and first-hand accounts. The Department of Defence (DOD) Documentation Centre is the custodian of all military archival material generated since the inception of the Department on 1 July 1912. Nonetheless, the material in the repository remains underutilised, despite the number of researchers who have worked or those who are now working on the military history of the Union Defence Force (UDF) during the Afrikaner Rebellion, as well as the campaigns fought in German South West Africa (GSWA), German East Africa (GEA), the Middle East and Europe. The centennial commemoration of the First World War gave rise to an increase in both professional and amateur military historical research, and a resurgence in First World War studies globally. A large number of researchers are expected to consult the First World War material at the Documentation Centre. An increase in interest in a variety of themes relating to South Africa and South African participation in the war is already detected. This article reports on a review of the Documentation Centre's First World War holdings in relation to South Africa's participation in the war by using Deneys Reitz, of *Commando* fame as a lens to illustrate the range of information available to researchers.

Keywords: Deneys Reitz, DOD Documentation Centre, Personnel Archive, Correspondence Archive, archival research

1. Introduction

In August 2014, the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War was commemorated. The so-called 'Great War', which lasted from 1914–1918, was primarily fought in Europe, on the Western and Eastern Fronts, with a number of secondary theatres in Africa, Asia Minor, the Middle East and South East Asia. The Union of South Africa, a British Dominion, entered the war on the side of the Entente Powers (the chief of which were Britain, France and Russia) when it declared war on the Central Powers (Germany and Austria–Hungary) on 14 September 1914.¹ The historiography on the South African participation in the First World War is reasonably extensive, and covers the period

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from 1914 to 1918 with specific attention focused upon the Afrikaner Rebellion and the campaigns in GSWA, GEA, the Middle East, and Europe.²

The major shortfall of most of these works is that the majority of the authors never consulted the archival holdings of the Documentation Centre. This can be ascribed to a number of factors, the foremost being a general disdain for archival research. One also has to acknowledge that the analogue nature of the Documentation Centre at times constrains research and that historical guidance and research support may at times appear to be lacking.³ In fact, one might note in all fairness that some of the more contemporary publications are simply revisions of the official histories, in essence, a collated summary of previously published material. As such, recent publications have often brought no new information to light, despite the wealth of archival material in the care of the Documentation Centre. Vast hiatuses therefore exist in the South African historiography surrounding the First World War and the role played by Union troops in it.⁴ This article reports on a review of the military archival holdings of the Documentation Centre in the light of these hiatuses.

Deneys Reitz (1882–1944), third son of a former president of the Orange Free State and State Secretary of the Transvaal under Paul Kruger, is a useful lens through which to appraise the archival holdings of the Documentation Centre, for he saw active service from the outbreak of the war up until the Armistice in November 1918. More so, Reitz's pre-war social standing in the South African society, including his distinguished service during the Anglo-Boer War, allowed him to mingle with the upper echelons of the UDF in both a personal and a professional capacity throughout the war. It was indeed Reitz's personal relationship with Jan Smuts – often even referred to as his 'Chief' – that ensured that he saw active service during the Afrikaner Rebellion, as well as the campaigns fought in GSWA, GEA and Europe.⁵ Gerhard Calitz, in a 2008 doctoral dissertation on Reitz,⁶ accurately describes him as a soldier, adventurer and politician. Although Reitz is best known for his Anglo-Boer War memoir *Commando*,⁷ it is the sequel, *Trekking on*,⁸ that provides valuable personal insight into his military service throughout the war.



Figure 1: Deneys Reitz (front left) serving on Jan Smuts's staff in East Africa, circa 1916⁹

Reitz served with the UDF during the Afrikaner Rebellion and the campaigns in GSWA and GEA, after which he re-enlisted with the British Army in Western Europe for the remainder of the war. Reitz served as an officer in both the UDF and the British Army during the war, including spells as the officer commanding of the 4th South African Horse, King's Shropshire Light Infantry and the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers. His war experiences, as noted in *Trekking on*, provide the historian with a valuable first-hand account of the nature and conduct of the war as seen through the eyes of a South African. The strength of Reitz's memoir lies in the fact that it provides a rare glimpse into the life of an infantryman on the Western Front during 1916–1918, often with vivid descriptions of trench warfare and the all-encompassing nature of a total war. As such, Reitz's wartime experiences in Europe are no different from those of the 36 703 South Africans who served in France and Flanders throughout 1916–1918, including the approximate 6 500 South Africans who served in the British (Imperial) Units in this same period.¹⁰ Deneys Reitz's war experience throughout 1914–1918, both in the UDF and in British Army, is highlighted in this review article in order to give an indication of the value and extent of the First World War archival holdings of the Documentation Centre.

2. Personnel archives

During the First World War, no fewer than 254 666 South Africans served in the UDF, of whom some 12 354 were killed whilst on active service. This figure was an approximate 10% of the total white male South African population (136 070) during the war years, of whom 5% of those recruited were killed whilst on active service in the UDF.¹¹ During the First World War, the predecessors of the Documentation Centre, the General Information Bureau (GIB) and the Officer in Charge of Records – Imperial Service Contingents (OC Records), were tasked with collating information relating to the UDF and its operational undertakings. Initially established to deal primarily with enquiries about missing persons, pay problems, UDF casualties and information regarding the South African campaigns, these offices grew exponentially to act as the official information link between the UDF and the South African public. The office of the OC Records was furthermore required to open a personal file for each South African volunteer who served with the Imperial Service Units (ISU) in GEA, the Middle East and France.¹² However, these first attempts at effective military record keeping were fraught with inadequacies owing to the haphazard nature of military record keeping in the operational theatres, post-war political interference and ineffective military administration.¹³ Upon demobilisation, following the Armistice of November 1918, the office of the OC Records was tasked to issue military service certificates, war stars and medals to the South African soldiers who were then returning to civilian employment. The information needed for the afore-mentioned tasks was readily obtained from the soldiers' individual files, which contained each individual's personal, medical, pay and disciplinary record.¹⁴

To this day, the Documentation Centre remains the custodian of all personnel files of the South African soldiers who saw service in the First World War as part of the UDF. As such, this source of personal information on a quarter of a million South Africans provides valuable insights into any genealogical research concerning South Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the information contained within the respective personnel files is primarily focused upon personal and military-administrative documentation, the files provide the researcher with a wealth of information that needs to be deciphered.¹⁵ As with all military jargon, acronyms remain the order of the day within the UDF personnel files. When the military acronyms and abbreviations are not deciphered correctly, it essentially renders a personnel file 'impenetrable' to the untrained or unformed eye. The most valuable documents in a personnel file are the attestation forms of individual

soldiers, which provide valuable genealogical data including dates of birth, places of birth, next of kin, physical addresses, information on dependants, and so forth.¹⁶ Some of the personnel files, as in the case of Reitz, contain a host of official cables (even some from Jan Smuts himself), information on salary grades and pay scales, letters of appointment and promotion, both in the UDF and in the British Army, and information relating to wounds incurred during active service. Even as he was completing his own 'Record of Service' form in 1919, Reitz casually wrote in the section dealing with 'Honours and Awards' that he had received "two decorations, both conferred by German gunners".¹⁷

Although Reitz's personnel file might be one of the exceptions in terms of the wealth of information it contains, partly due to his pre-war social standing and personal relationships within the upper echelons of the UDF, the personnel records at the Documentation Centre continue to provide a wealth of information on most soldiers who served in the UDF during the First World War. In fact, any individual literally willing to dirty his or her hands will be sure to find the information he or she is after. Even though the personnel records relating to the UDF and the First World War remain largely in an analogue format, the collection is well organised and accessible to professional and amateur historians and researchers alike. Access to these personnel files may at times be restricted owing to the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act of 2013,¹⁸ yet this legislation is not applied uniformly to all researchers or enquiries at the Documentation Centre. This is of course an unforgiving situation that can be surmounted by recourse to the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) of 2002,¹⁹ which obliges the DOD to provide reasons for withholding information. This applies to both the personnel and correspondence archival holdings of the Documentation Centre.

| SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZEN. | |
|--|---|
| Name (Surname)..... | Reitz (Christian)..... Deneys |
| Reg. No..... | |
| Unit..... | 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers 61746 |
| Soldier's usual Address in South Africa..... | Box 40, Deilbron O.F.S. |
| Soldier's usual Occupation..... | |
| Next-of-kin: Relationship..... | Name..... |
| Address..... | |
| Remarks..... | * mentioned in Despatches 8-7-19 (also see G.C. No 264-1-10-19) |
| | WOUNDED buttock - severe - sep. 2 4 18. |
| | 4 th S. Africa Home G.S.W. G.S.W. |
| | 7 th Royal Irish Rifles, 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers |
| | Two Decorations |

Figure 2: Deneys Reitz's personnel card showing valuable military information relating to his service during the First World War²⁰

A further 98 nominal rolls, which provide detailed information on specific units of the UDF throughout the First World War, are accessible in the Documentation Centre's Reference Library. Each nominal roll focuses on a specific unit, rendering a wealth of information on the soldiers who served with that specific unit throughout the war. The information is organised in terms of force numbers, ranks, dates of attestation into the unit, posts occupied, demobilisation, campaigns served in and wounds sustained. The accuracy of the nominal rolls, however, differs from unit to unit. Fortunately, these sources are not guided by the POPI legislation, and are thus available for perusal.²¹

3. Correspondence archive

Following the demobilisation of all South African servicemen in November 1918, the DOD had to take stock of all the administrative documentation which had been generated by the UDF throughout the course of the War.²² By January 1919, all heads of sections and commanding officers were instructed by the Secretary for Defence "that the time had come to collect, classify and index the records which had accumulated during the war. Heads of sections and commanding officers were instructed to carefully sort files in their custody ..."²³ The documentation was roughly organised into three broad categories: ephemeral records – to be destroyed, records that were to be retained for a short period due to administrative needs, and records which were considered to hold enough intrinsic value to be classed as permanent archives. Once classified, the archival material was transferred to the offices of the Central Registry and Custodian of Military Records in Pretoria. The archival documents were hence indexed and sorted into four broad categories based upon permanent archives, personnel files, financial and other records.²⁴

On 1 July 1920, the office of the Staff Officer War Records was established, which brought about the first centralisation of all military archival material relating to South Africa and her participation in the First World War. The office of the Staff Officer War Records was thus the direct predecessor to the current Documentation Centre. During the interwar period, amidst post-war rationalisation, budget cuts and staff retrenchments, which took place within the DOD, the Staff Officer War Records had to destroy a number of military archival files due to inadequate shelf space within the archives.²⁵ As such, the First World War archival holdings of the Documentation Centre may not be complete, but "it is a problem which can be overcome as archivists conversant with these groups can guide visiting historians through them".²⁶ It is important to note that all military documentation generated before 31 December 1969, regardless of security classification, is considered to be declassified and in the public domain. As such, all First World War archival material is accessible and open to researchers. What follows is a brief overview of the correspondence archives of the Documentation Centre in relation to South Africa's participation in the First World War, with specific emphasis on historical documents dealing with the Afrikaner Rebellion and the campaigns in GSWA, GEA, the Middle East, and Europe.

Soon after the South African declaration of war in September 1914, the Union was thrown into turmoil following the outbreak of a fully-fledged Afrikaner Rebellion. The Afrikaner Rebellion erupted in protest against the South African participation in the First World War at the behest of Great Britain.²⁷ After the South African defeat at Sandfontein in September 1914,²⁸ the Afrikaner Rebellion pitted Boer rebels against fellow South African soldiers for the better part of 1914 and early 1915.²⁹ Whilst Deneys Reitz played an active part in quelling the Afrikaner Rebellion as the district commandant of Heilbron, he also served as the junior commandant of the town's commando, which formed part of the Citizen Reserve of the UDF.³⁰ At the outbreak of the Rebellion, Reitz hastened himself to Pretoria, whereupon Smuts promoted him to the military commander of the Heilbron

district with strict orders to quell the Afrikaner unrest in that district. After an impasse with David van Coller's rebel forces around the town of Heilbron, Reitz and his men accompanied Gen. Botha's column as they attempted to trap Gen. Christiaan de Wet's force in the central Free State. Reitz and his men saw action at the battle of Mushroom Valley, after which they were engaged in several smaller skirmishes in the northern Free State in order to round up the remnants of the rebels still in the field.³¹

Within the provost marshal (KPMK) archival group, valuable information regarding the legal proceedings brought against the rebels is found, more notably files dealing with the subsequent military courts of enquiry, lists which show rebels according to district of origin, and subsequent petitions and appeals lodged against the UDF by various rebels after the cessation of hostilities. The provost marshal (PMP) archival group contains personnel files relating to individual rebels and the treason charges brought against them by the South African authorities upon their capture or surrender. For the most part, however, the military documentation dealing with the Afrikaner Rebellion in general is spread out across a number of different archival groups, and contains information relating to mobilisation, the outbreak of hostilities, the UDF campaign against the rebels and the subsequent treason trails, to name but a few. Whilst the information is readily available to researchers, it has rarely been consulted despite the number of historical works that have appeared on the subject.³²

| Archival group | Number of boxes | Linear metres |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Adjutant General 1914/1921 | ± 30 | 3 |
| Commandant General Citizen Forces | ± 40 | 4 |
| Diverse group 1 | 9 | 1 |
| OC Records group 1 | ± 50 | 5 |
| Provost Marshal (KPMK) | ± 30 | 3 |
| Provost Marshal (PMP) | 148 | 15 |
| Rebels 1914 Nominal roll | 1 | 0.1 |
| Secretary for Defence Group 2 | ± 150 | 15 |
| South African Mounted Riflemen | ± 300 | 30 |
| SA Horse Transport Companies | 2 | 0.2 |
| World War I General Information Bureau | ± 50 | 5 |
| World War I German South West Africa ³³ | 6 | 0.6 |

Table 1: Archival holdings dealing with the Afrikaner Rebellion, Department of Defence Documentation Centre.

The South African campaign in German South West Africa, primarily aimed at capturing the German wireless station at Windhoek, was fought relatively swiftly, save for the brief interlude brought about by the Afrikaner Rebellion.³⁴ Whilst Reitz joined the campaign fairly late in 1915, he served as the intelligence officer on the General Staff of the general officer commanding (GOC) Southern Army from 15 April 1915. A mere four days later, on 19 April 1915, he was transferred to the Headquarters Staff of the Southern Army until 6 June 1915.³⁵ Having journeyed from Heilbron to Cape Town, and then by sea to Lüderitzbucht, Reitz eventually caught up with Smuts at the town of Aus where the latter was readying his troops for the eventual push on Gibeon. After the battle of Gibeon, Reitz was tasked along with another officer to journey by motor car north towards Windhoek in order to effect contact with Gen. Botha's troops. Although Reitz spent little time in the operational theatre of GSWA, his description of the conditions in the country adds some valuable insight into a campaign which has hardly produced any personal narratives worth mentioning.³⁶ After the German

surrender at Otavifontein on 9 July 1915, the South African troops started their occupation of the colony, after which the majority of UDF soldiers returned to the Union.³⁷

| Archival group | Number of boxes | Linear metres |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Adjutant General 1914/1921 | ± 50 | 5 |
| Commandant General Citizen Forces | ± 60 | 6 |
| Director Medical Services | ± 10 | 1 |
| Diverse group 1 | 16 | 1.6 |
| OC Records group 1 | ± 60 | 6 |
| Provost Marshal (KPMK) | ± 30 | 3 |
| Secretary for Defence Group 2 | ± 250 | 25 |
| South African Mounted Riflemen | ± 300 | 30 |
| SA Horse Transport Companies | ± 10 | 1 |
| SA Native Labour Corps | 1 | 0.1 |
| World War I Diaries (Public Record Office) ³⁸ | 1 | 0.1 |
| World War I Diverse | 1 | 0.1 |
| World War I General Information Bureau | ± 50 | 5 |
| World War I German South West Africa | 23 | 2.3 |

Table 2: Archival holdings dealing with German South West Africa, Department of Defence Documentation Centre.

Although numerous books deal with the South African campaign, few works have consulted the myriad of archival sources on the South African campaign in the former German colony available at the Documentation Centre.³⁹ Perhaps it is the overreliance on previously published secondary sources and the regular recourse taken to the official UDF history which dealt with the campaign that brought about the general apathy for new archival research. Whilst popular topics such as the battles, mobilisation of units, operational reports, lists dealing with missing/wounded soldiers, intelligence reports, logistical needs/operations, prisoners of war, individual unit war diaries and general correspondence are readily found in all archival groups dealing with this campaign, some interesting files are often overlooked. The persistent researcher will find files dealing with accounts of rape, murder, cattle theft, punitive expeditions against local inhabitants, personal correspondence of various senior officers, aviation reports, water supplies and information regarding railways, to name but a few. As such, the final chapter on the South African campaign in GSWA during the war is yet to be written.

After the conclusion of the campaign in GSWA, Reitz returned to the Union where he busied himself with local politics in the district of Heilbron until deciding to join Gen. Smuts in German East Africa in 1916.⁴⁰ Upon the personal request of Smuts, Reitz joined the staff of the general officer commanding-in-chief (GOC-in-C) East Africa with the rank of major granted to him under a temporary imperial commission. By April 1916, Reitz had disembarked at Mombasa after which he served on Smuts' staff until being appointed as the officer commanding (OC) of the 4th South African Horse on 25 October 1916. Reitz served as the OC of the unit until February 1917, when he returned to the Union.⁴¹ Whilst Reitz had only seen service in East Africa for about a year, he nevertheless fought in a number of battles against Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck's troops. His descriptions of the harsh fighting conditions in East Africa, in stark contrast to those of the UDF operations in GSWA, add immense value to an analysis of the said campaign.⁴² Whereas only a limited number of books deal

with the South African involvement during the campaign in East Africa,⁴³ few of these have taken recourse to the official documentation housed at the Documentation Centre.

| Archival group | Number of boxes | Linear metres |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Adjutant General 1914/1921 | ±80 | 8 |
| 1st Cape Coloured Labour Regiment | ± 2 | 0.2 |
| Chief Staff Officer (CSO) group 1 | 80 | 8 |
| Director Medical Services | ± 10 | 1 |
| Diverse group 1 | 8 | 0.8 |
| OC Records group 1 | ± 70 | 7 |
| Provost Marshal (KPMK) | ± 30 | 3 |
| Secretary for Defence group 2 | ± 250 | 25 |
| SA Cape Corps | 1 | 0.1 |
| 1 st SA Cape Corps | ± 2 | 0.2 |
| SA Native Labour Corps | ± 2 | 0.2 |
| World War I Diaries (Public Record Office) | 19 | 1.9 |
| World War I German South West Africa | 101 | 10.1 |
| World War I: Imperial Service details | ± 15 | 1.5 |

Table 3: Archival holdings dealing with German East Africa, Department of Defence Documentation Centre.

The archival documentation relating to the campaign in GEA was primarily organised around unit correspondence, disciplinary matters, medical-related issues, operational and intelligence reports, personal correspondence of senior UDF officers, and war diaries of individual units. Upon further investigation, the determined researcher will find information on atrocities committed, German prisoners of war, demobilisation orders, lists of casualties, documents dealing with influenza epidemics, maps and nominal rolls of various units. Whilst not limited to the above-mentioned, the information on the South African campaign in East Africa is vast and deserves further investigation.

| Archival group | Number of boxes | Linear metres |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Diverse group 1 | 5 | 0.5 |
| OC Records group 1 | ± 10 | 1 |
| Provost Marshal (KPMK) | ± 5 | 0.5 |
| Secretary for Defence group 2 | ± 50 | 5 |
| SA Cape Corps | 1 | 0.1 |
| 1st SA Cape Corps | 7 | 0.7 |
| World War I: diaries and appendices | 2 | 0.2 |
| World War I German South West Africa | ± 5 | 0.5 |
| World War I: Imperial Service details | ± 5 | 0.5 |

Table 4: Archival holdings dealing with the Middle East, Department of Defence Documentation Centre.

By the latter half of 1915, with promises by Louis Botha of South African troops for service in France, the decision had been made by the British War Office that the services of the 1st South

African Infantry Brigade were required in the Middle East – more notably Egypt, Libya and later on, in Palestine.⁴⁴ With notable battles fought by the South African soldiers at Halazin and Agagia during 1916,⁴⁵ the South African Cape Corps (SACC) furthermore fought a gallant action at Square Hill during September 1918.⁴⁶ The documentation covering the South African deployments to the Middle East is scant at best, and as such, only a relatively small number of books have been written on the exact topic.⁴⁷

Information contained within the archival groups dealing with the South African deployment to the Middle East can be broadly classified according to the intelligence, operational, medical and logistical reports with varied information on casualties, war diaries, prisoners of war, operational conditions, general correspondence, nominal rolls, graves and memorials, and acts of gallantry in the field. Whilst the information on the South African campaign in the Middle East may at times appear to be extremely varied and difficult to come by, persistence will reward the researcher prepared to cast a wide net.

| Archival group | Number of boxes | Linear metres |
|--|-----------------|---------------|
| Adjutant General 1914/1921 | ± 30 | 3 |
| 1st Cape Coloured Labour Regiment | 6 | 0.6 |
| Director Medical Services | ± 20 | 2 |
| Diverse group 1 | 9 | 0.9 |
| Horse Brigade | ± 1 | 0.1 |
| OC Records group 1 | ± 70 | 7 |
| Provost Marshal (KPMK) | ± 50 | 5 |
| 1st Reserve Battalion | 6 | 0.6 |
| Secretary for Defence Group 2 | ± 350 | 35 |
| SA Heavy Artillery | 24 | 2.4 |
| SA Infantry Reserve Brigade | 4 | 0.4 |
| SA Railway Section | 7 | 0.7 |
| 1st SA Infantry Brigade | 12 | 1.2 |
| 2 nd SA Infantry Brigade | 26 | 2.6 |
| 3 rd SA Infantry Brigade | 16 | 1.6 |
| 4 th SA Infantry Brigade | 32 | 3.2 |
| SA Native Labour Corps | ± 4 | 0.4 |
| World War I | 68 | 6.8 |
| World War I: diaries and appendices | 8 | 0.8 |
| World War I diaries (Public Record Office) | 9 | 0.9 |
| World War I diaries: SA Infantry Brigade | 8 | 0.8 |
| World War I Diverse | 34 | 3.4 |
| World War I German South West Africa | 29 | 2.9 |
| World War I: Imperial Service details | ± 15 | 1.5 |

Table 5: Archival holdings dealing with France and Flanders, Department of Defence Documentation Centre.

The South African deployment to France and Flanders started in all earnest during 1916 when the 1st South African Brigade disembarked at Marseilles on 19 April 1916.⁴⁸ The deployment to Europe was to be the South African soldier's first taste of total war, where entire nations were mobilised to ensure each other's destruction.⁴⁹ Whilst the general perception surrounding the South African deployment to Europe is overshadowed by the actions fought at Delville Wood⁵⁰ and Butte de

Warlencourt,⁵¹ and the disaster surrounding the sinking of the SS *Mendi*,⁵² the varied contribution of the UDF to this theatre of operations is often disregarded despite the number of books that have been published.⁵³ With labourers, logisticians, artillerymen, medical personnel and signallers, to name but a few, all contributing to the eventual Allied victory in November 1918, their experiences did not differ too vastly from that of Reitz, who served in the British Army in Europe throughout 1917–1918.⁵⁴

Of the 6 500 South Africans who served in Imperial units, 1 568 lost their lives during the conflict.⁵⁵ Whilst Reitz served in Europe, he mentioned meeting quite a number of South Africans who served as officers in the British Army, with some attaining quite high ranks.⁵⁶ By far the most costly campaign for the UDF during the entire war, it was – after GEA – the best-documented South African campaign. As such, a myriad of archival documentation relating to the South African deployment can be found at the Documentation Centre. The files within these archival groups contain a wealth of information dealing with mobilisation, general correspondence, unit war diaries, casualty reports, intelligence reports, operational reports, logistical and medical reports and demobilisation reports, to name but a few.

4. Conclusion

Although a vast number of secondary sources surrounding South African participation in the First World War are available, there are few works that have consulted in detail the extensive and varied archival material housed at the Documentation Centre in Pretoria. Some prominent writers and historians have consulted select military archival sources throughout the years; however, the vast majority of the military archival holding relating to South Africa and her involvement in the First World War remain undiscovered. As a result, historians, both amateur and professional, have simply rephrased and recirculated ideas and concepts emanating in the first instance from the official histories of the 1920s and 1930s. The First World War centenary has generated a renewed interest in South Africa and her involvement in this global conflict. It is hoped that this renewed interest will lead to a more thorough use of the Documentation Centre, and that the gaping historical hiatuses will be addressed in the process.

¹ Ian van der Waag. “The battle of Sandfontein, 26 September 1914: South African reform and the German South-West Africa campaign, 1914–1915”. *First World War Studies* vol 4, no 2. 2013, pp 141–143.

² The most important of these sources are JHV Crowe. *General Smut's campaign in East Africa*. London: John Murray, 1918; UDF General Staff. *The Union of South African and the Great War 1914–1918: Official history*. Pretoria: Government Printer, 1924; D Reitz. *Trekking on*. London: Faber and Faber, 1933; HF Trew. *Botha treks*. Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1936; JJ Collyer. *The campaign in German South West Africa 1914–1915*. Pretoria: Government Printers, 1937; JJ Collyer. *The South Africans with General Smuts in East Africa 1916*. Pretoria: Government Printer, 1939; GD Scholtz. *Die Rebelle 1914–1915*. Johannesburg: Voortrekker Pers, 1942; SB Spies. “The Rebellion in South Africa, 1914–1915”. Unpublished MA dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 1962; GW Warwick. *We band of brothers: Reminiscences from the 1st S.A. Infantry Brigade*. Cape Town: Howard Timms, 1962; I Uys. *Delville Wood*. Unknown: Uys, 1983; AM Grundlingh. *Fighting their own war: South African blacks and the First World War*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988; PKA Digby. *Pyramids and poppies: The 1st SA Infantry Brigade in Libya, France and Flanders 1915–1919*. Rivonia, Ashanti, 1993; I Gleeson. *The unknown force: Black, Indian and coloured soldiers through two world wars*. Rivonia: Ashanti, 1994; G Genis. “Recruitment for 1 South African Infantry Brigade for Europe during the First World War”. Unpublished MA dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2000; R Warwick. “Reconsideration of the Battle of Sandfontein: The first phase of the German South West Africa campaign, August to September 1914”. Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Cape Town, Cape Town, 2003; H Strachan. *The First World War in Africa*. New

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- ³ For a brief overview regarding research at the Documentation Centre, and insights in to some of the ‘pitfalls’ that might hinder research, the following sources can be consulted: J Miller. “South African National Defence Force Archive (SANDFA)”. *Archives Made Easy*. 18 April 2011. <<http://archivesmadeeasy.pbworks.com/w/page/24649495/South%20Africa%20-%20Main>> Accessed on 31 July 2014; G Baines. “Accessing Information in South Africa’s Department of Defence Archives”. In C Saunders (ed.). *Workshop report: Documenting liberation struggles in southern Africa*. Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2010, 87–94. <https://www.academia.edu/926807/Accessing_Information_In_South_Africas_Department_ofDefence_Archives> Accessed on 31 July 2014; S Onslow. “Research report: Republic of South African Archives”. *Cold War History* 5/3. 2003. 369–375.
- ⁴ Three of the most recent publications dealing with South Africa and its participation in the First World War consult either a limited range of sources at Documentation Centre or none at all. These are Sampson *op. cit.*, D Williams. *Springboks, troopies and cadres: Stories of the South African Army, 1912–2012*. Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2012 and Nasson *op. cit.*
- ⁵ Deneys Reitz was the son of the former Chief Justice and President of the Republic of the Orange Free State, FW Reitz, and from a very young age mingled with the likes of Paul Kruger, Piet Joubert, Louis Botha and Jan Smuts. Of these aforementioned, Reitz proved most loyal to Smuts, whom he aptly referred to as his ‘Chief’. In order to fully comprehend Deneys Reitz’s pre-war social standing, as well as his personal relationships within the upper echelons of the UDF, it is advised to read the entire Deneys Reitz trilogy. All three books are available in a single volume by TS Emslie (ed.). *Adrift on the open veld: The Deneys Reitz Trilogy*. Cape Town: Stormberg, 2009.
- ⁶ GJ Calitz. “Deneys Reitz (1882–1944): Krygsman, avonturier en politikus”. Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, 2008.
- ⁷ D Reitz. *Commando: A Boer journal of the Boer War*. London: Faber and Faber, 1929.
- ⁸ Reitz, *Trekking on op. cit.* The last book in the Reitz trilogy, *No outspan* (Faber and Faber), which deals with Reitz’s life after the First World War, appeared in 1943.
- ⁹ DOD Archives, Photographic collection, Photo no. 781001972.
- ¹⁰ UDF General Staff *op. cit.*, pp. 220, 230.
- ¹¹ Ian van der Waag. *The marriage of Clio and Mars: The practice of military history within the South African Defence Force*. Pretoria: Directorate Documentation Centre, 1993, 10; Ian van der Waag. “All splendid, but horrible: The politics of South Africa’s second ‘little bit’ and the war on the Western Front, 1915–1918”. *Scientia Militaria*, vol 40, no 3, 2012, p 93.
- ¹² Van der Waag, *The marriage of Clio and Mars ... op. cit.*, pp. 8–9.
- ¹³ IJ van der Waag. “Military record preservation in South Africa, 1914–1992: A history of Directorate Documentation Service”. *Militaria* vol 23, no 4. 1993, pp 16–22.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 19; Van der Waag, *The marriage of Clio and Mars ... op. cit.*, pp. 10–11, 16.
- ¹⁵ Van der Waag, “Military record preservation ...” *op. cit.*, p. 19.
- ¹⁶ See Ian van der Waag. “Military records as a genealogical source in South Africa”. *Familia: Quarterly Journal of the Genealogical Society of South Africa*, vol 29, no 4, 1992.
- ¹⁷ DOD Archives, Personnel archive. Personal file Deneys Reitz. *SADF Record of Service for Deneys Reitz MP – Issued during February 1993*; DOD Archives, Personnel archive. Personal file Deneys Reitz. *Record of Service for Major Deneys Reitz – Completed by Reitz on 14 June 1919*.
- ¹⁸ Michalsons – Protection of Personal Information Act (<http://www.michalsons.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Protection-of-Personal-Information-Act-4-of-20131.pdf>) Accessed 2 March 2016.
- ¹⁹ Department of Justice and Constitutional Development - The Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000) (<http://www.justice.gov.za/legislation/acts/2000-002.pdf>) Accessed 2 March 2016.
- ²⁰ DOD Archives, Personnel archive. Personal file Deneys Reitz.
- ²¹ DOD Archives Reference Library. *First World War nominal roll – Cape Town Highlanders* (consulted 30 July 2014).
- ²² Van der Waag, *The marriage of Clio and Mars ... op. cit.*, p. 10.

- ²³ Van der Waag, "Military record preservation ..." *op. cit.*, p. 17.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 17–19.
- ²⁵ Van der Waag, *The marriage of Clio and Mars ... op. cit.*, pp. 19–26.
- ²⁶ Van der Waag, "Military record preservation ..." *op. cit.*, p. 21.
- ²⁷ Emslie *op. cit. (Trekking on)*, pp. 215–228.
- ²⁸ For a comprehensive overview of the battle of Sandfontein, read R Warwick *op. cit.* and Van der Waag, "The battle of Sandfontein ..." *op. cit.*
- ²⁹ Nasson *op. cit.*, pp. 35–57.
- ³⁰ Emslie *op. cit. (Trekking on)*, pp. 215–228; DOD Archives, Personnel archive. Personal file Deneys Reitz. SADF Record of Service for *Deneys Reitz MP – Issued during February 1993*.
- ³¹ Emslie *op. cit. (Trekking on)*, pp. 215–228.
- ³² These include Grundlingh & Swart *op. cit.*; Swart *op. cit.*; Spies *op. cit.*; Geyer *op. cit.*; G. L'Ange, *Urgent imperial service: South African forces in German South West Africa 1914–1915*. Rivonia: Ashanti, 1991; UDF General Staff *op. cit.*; Strachan *op. cit.*; Nasson *op. cit.* and Scholtz *op. cit.*.
- ³³ This specific group, despite what its official title suggest, covers the entire period 1914–1919, and is hence not only limited to the South African campaign in GSWA. The group broadly cover the Afrikaner Rebellion, and the South African participation during the campaigns fought in GSWA, GEA, Egypt, Palestine and France. The most important documentation found in this group includes the war diaries, intelligence reports and various maps.
- ³⁴ Strachan *op. cit.*, pp. 63–70.
- ³⁵ DOD Archives, Personnel archive. Personal file Deneys Reitz. SADF Record of Service for *Deneys Reitz MP – Issued during February 1993*; Emslie *op. cit. (Trekking on)*, pp. 228–234.
- ³⁶ Emslie *op. cit. (Trekking on)*, pp. 228–234.
- ³⁷ Strachan *op. cit.*, pp. 82–92.
- ³⁸ These files were photocopied from the original files house at the National Archives of the United Kingdom (Public Record Office), and contain documentation taken from the original Air-1 Series, war diaries 1914/1922 and WO95 archival groups.
- ³⁹ These books include, but are not limited to: Sampson *op. cit.*; L'Ange *op. cit.*; Williams *op. cit.*; Collyer, *The campaign ... op. cit.*; Trew *op. cit.*; Strachan *op. cit.*; Gleeson *op. cit.*; UDF General Staff *op. cit.*; Grundlingh *op. cit.* and Nasson *op. cit.*
- ⁴⁰ Emslie *op. cit. (Trekking on)*, pp. 234–235.
- ⁴¹ DOD Archives, Personnel archive. Personal file Deneys Reitz. SADF Record of Service for *Deneys Reitz MP – Issued during February 1993*; Emslie *op. cit. (Trekking on)*, pp. 234–260.
- ⁴² Emslie *op. cit. (Trekking on)*, pp. 234–260.
- ⁴³ These books include, but are not limited to: Sampson *op. cit.*; Crowe *op. cit.*; Collyer, *The South Africans with General Smuts ... op. cit.*; J. Ambrose Brown. *They fought for King and Kaiser: South Africans in German East Africa 1916*. Rivonia, Ashanti, 1991; Strachan *op. cit.*; Gleeson *op. cit.*; UDF General Staff *op. cit.*; Grundlingh *op. cit.* and Nasson *op. cit.*
- ⁴⁴ Nasson *op. cit.*, pp. 123–126.
- ⁴⁵ Digby *op. cit.*, pp. 51–70.
- ⁴⁶ Gleeson *op. cit.*, pp. 83–99; Nasson *op. cit.*, pp. 157–159.
- ⁴⁷ These books include, but are not limited to: Grundlingh *op. cit.*; Nasson *op. cit.*; Gleeson *op. cit.*; Digby *op. cit.* and UDF General Staff *op. cit.*
- ⁴⁸ Digby *op. cit.*, pp. 81–83.
- ⁴⁹ Van der Waag, "All splendid, but horrible ..." *op. cit.*, p. 99; Nasson *op. cit.*, pp. 123–155.
- ⁵⁰ Uys *op. cit.*, pp. 36–211.
- ⁵¹ I Uys. *Rollcall: The Delville Wood story*. Johannesburg, Uys, 1991, 121–124.
- ⁵² Nasson *op. cit.*, pp. 168–169.
- ⁵³ These include, but is not limited to: Gleeson *op. cit.*; UDF General Staff *op. cit.*; Grundlingh *op. cit.*; Nasson *op. cit.*; Digby *op. cit.*; Uys, *Delville Wood op. cit.*; Uys, *Rollcall ... op. cit.*; I Uys. *Devil's Wood*. Knysna: Fortress Financial Group, 2006; I Uys. *Longueval*. Germiston: Uys, 1986; GW Warwick *op. cit.*; Genis *op. cit.* and G Genis. "South African Great War poetry 1914–1918: A literary historiographical analysis". Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of South Africa, Pretoria, 2014.
- ⁵⁴ Emslie *op. cit. (Trekking on)*, pp. 260–354. Reitz served with the 7th Royal Irish Rifles, the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers and for a brief while with the 7th Battalion the King's Shropshire Light Infantry.
- ⁵⁵ UDF General Staff *op. cit.*, pp. 220, 230.
- ⁵⁶ One of the most important individuals that served in a British unit throughout the war was the future Chief of the General Staff of the UDF, Pierre van Ryneveld.