

Some interesting Facts about Elandskloof

Elandskloof is the oldest trout farm in Mpumalanga situated close to Dullstroom, 280km from Johannesburg.

It started around the 1960's, when Dolf Combrink took an interest in fly fishing and the breeding of trout. He built the first dam in the area in 1952, which he stocked with trout he got from Lydenburg State Hatchery. It was a small dam but the start to a well-known Trout Farm.

Friends came from near and far to fish and after the fishing attraction between the friends Dolf saw the mess they were making and decided to charge them 5c for a day's fishing. Around 1960 Dolf accommodated the first overnight guests in the original farmhouse, which is still in the resort area available to guests. In 1962 Dolf built the biggest private dam in the Transvaal, 2 hectares, and thus 3 more dams followed.

In 1966 Dolf and his son Kobus built a hatchery to breed their own trout and had around 400 females and 100 males in the hatchery dams. During these years, the adult hatchery had around 1 million trout at any time.

The farm was selling fresh as well as smoked trout to the public and stocked the dams on the farm, as well as those of other trout & leisure farms. The resort was only a small part of the farming operation those days and was only marketed to Family and their Close friends.

The resort is now a much bigger part of the farm operation and the hatchery trout is only used to stock the dams on the farm. Due to the increased demand by the public for a place to relax with plenty of space that can accommodate families and enough recreational activities for everyone.

Not only is Elandskloof well known for the fishing, but many may not know that Elandskloof has made a name for itself in history. Elandskloof played an important role in the Anglo Boer war where our country made an everlasting impression on the English. The battlefield where the boere laid waiting patiently for the enemies to approach is still visible on the farm with the original boundary walls still standing.

The Other Vlaktefontein, an action I the Anglo-Boer War. 3 July 1901

DIE GEVEG BY ELANDSKLOOF/VLAKFONTEIN, 3 Julie 1901

Boere Kommando's van Lydenburg en Middelburg het onafhanklik van die ander geopereer. Op 3 Julie het hulle, hulle in die gebegtes tussen Lydenburg en Machadodorp bevind waar hulle 'n goeie uitsig oor die areas rondom gehad het. Op 2 Julie het Lt.-Kol George Benson se magte saamgetrek te Machadodorp.

Onder sy bevel was: 102 Offisier, 2101 manskappe, 1696 perde en 89 kanonne. Op 2 Julie ontvang hy inligting dat 60 – 70 Boere met 'n groot hoeveelheid beeste op Elandskloof saamgetrek is en beplan 'n operasie om hulle aan te keer. Die Boeremagte van die Lydenburgse kommando (60 – 70 man) en die Middelburgse Kammando (140 man) was onder bevel van vke. Andries du Toit & Pieter E Minnaar, het die Engelse vanaf Maréskop dopgehou. Kol. Benson se modus operandi was om met 'n nagmars tussen 01h30 en 03h30 vanuit Machadodorp te begin in 'n noordwaartse rigting na Vlaktefontein en Elandskloof. Hulle wou die Boere met sonsopkoms verras. Die roete soontoe was moeilik en hulle arriveer eers omtrent 08h00 by die Witrand wat te laat is vir die aanval. Boere is gewaar wat reeds na Elandskloof en Roodekrans met hulle beeste getrek het. Die Engelse het 'n soek-operasie begin en na 'n agtervolging van omtrent 3 – 4 myl teruggekeer.

Die Engelse Kommando was in groepe verdeel en is teen 15h00 gese om kamp opteslaan, F groep het 2 groepe van 38 man gestuur vir vekenning van 2 klowe, aangesien geen Boer insig was en dit veilig was om die groep te verdeel. Die boere het 'n groep omsingel, en die het boodskap aan die F groep gestuur om te help.

Met Middelburgse kommando (MK) op die oostelike hange en Lydenburgse kommando (LK) op die westelike hange met diep klowe en "dooie grond" tussen hulle, moes die MK op die oostelike helling onttrek omdat hulle geen dekking gehad het en blootgestel was aan aanvalle vanuit die ooste en suide. Die LK het op die westelike helling stelling ingeneem tussen die klippe op die hoe klipbanke. Toe die Boere gewaar die daar nie so baie Engelse was nie (+- 25), was hulle gedetermineerd om hulle te oorrampel. Met die dekking wat die klipkoppies gegee het, het hulle die Engelse bestorm en amper daarin geslaag. Tydens die geveg is 'n boodskap n Kol. Benson gestuur waarin daar met 'n teenaanval op die Boere begin uit die weste.

Die geveg het vir ure aangehou, – F eskadron skryf dat die Boere hulle amper verneder het toe die Boere tot 50 jaars van hule gevorder het toe die geveg plaasgevind het. Die Boere het hulself die "Mountain Devils" genoem.

STERFTES: Engelse 3, Boere 1

GEWOND: Engelse 6, Boere 5

Die Engelse/Skotte begrawe hulle manne, en begrawe Adam Johannes Botha (04/04/1868 – 03/07/01) oneervol dwars by hulle voetenend. Die Boere het vir Adam Botha onder hulle neuse kom opgrawe toe die engelse 'n paar dae op Vlaktefontein gekampeer het. Die Boere herbegrawe hom 4.5km in 'n Noord-westelike rigting, vandag nog sigbaar.

Op 4 Julie kamp Benson steeds op Vlaktefontein. Boere-families (Basch, Combrink en Kruger) is vanaf Elandskloof soontoe gebring. Op 5 Julie vertrek Benson met 2 kompanies na die hoogtes opsoek na die Boere en vee wat gewaar is, met geen sukses.

COMBRINK-familie van Elanskloof

Jan Hendrik Combrink (snr) (17/09/1837 – 30/06/1913) se woning is ook ten weste van die gevegsterrein op Elandskloof gewees. Uit wraak het die Engelse sy 6 slaapkamerhuis met al die meubels, waenhuis, ossewa, perdekar, saals, trekgoed, ploëë, mielies, koring, hawer en boontjies wat hy opgeberg het verbrand. Sy oudste seun, Pieter Christiaan (04/10/1866) het op 18 Feb 1902 homself oorgegee, maar sy broers, Jan Hendrik (23/08/1873) en Johannes Diederik (24/09/1877) was bittereinders was onder vk. Matthias P Taute.

Jan Hendrik se seun, Pieter C Combrink, sy huis, waenshuis met al sy besittings is ook afgebrand, en al sy vee en pluimvee is gebuit. Hy kon wegkom met 5 osse, 1 bul, 3 koeie, 2 verse en 2 perde maar die is die 3 Aug deur Benson se magte gebuit. Jan Hendrik (jnr) se woonhuis, en als y besitting is dieselfde tyd vernietig. Johannes Diederik se huishoudelike besittings en perdekar is verbrand en 136 stuks vee gebuit. Waarmee hy weggekome het is op die 24 Desember gebuit op Elandskloof. Die 14-jarige **Rudolph Jacobus Combrink (18/01/1887)**, wat na die familie se vee omgesien het, is voor die geveg reeds vort met die vee in die rigting van Windhoek wes van Dullstroom, en gerugte is hy het na die oorlog met die vee teruggekome.

Etlieke familieledede van die Combrink-familie was op 3 Julie 1901 op Elandskloof saamgetrek. Die familie is deur Benson se troepe na Machado geneem en dan na Barbertonse konsentrasiekamp geneem. Pieter Christiaan se vrou – Anna Dorothea Elizabeth (34jr) met haar dogtertjie, twee seuntjies en 'n baba. Jan Hendrik se dogter, Judith Christina (26 jr.) wat met Christoffel Gerhardus Botha getroud was met haar twee minderjarige dogtertjies en 'n seuntjie. Jan Hendrik (jnr) (28 jr) wat met Anna C M Basch (28 jr) getroud was, met haar dogtertjie en 'n seuntjie en verwagte met 'n derde kind, 14 dae na die geboorte van haar dogtertjie op 27 Oktober 1901, is sy weens bronchitis oorlede in die konsentrasiekamp. Die familie is later na Merebank Konsentrasiekamp in Natal oorgeplaas.

Vandag nog word die plaas besit deur die nageslag van die 14 jarige Rudolph Jacobus Combrink.

ENGLISH VERSION

Boer Commandos from Lydenburg and Middelburg operated independently from the others. On 3 July they found themselves in the fields between Lydenburg and Machadodorp where they had a good view of the surrounding areas. On 2 July Lt.-Col George Benson's forces gathered at Machadodorp.

Under his command were: 102 Officers, 2101 men, 1696 horses and 89 cannons. On 2 July he received information that 60-70 Boers with a large amount of cattle had gathered at Elandskloof and was planning an operation to arrest them.

The Boer forces of the Lydenburg commando (60 – 70 men) and the Middelburg commando (140 men) were under the command of vke. Andries du Toit & Pieter E Minnaar, watched the English from Maréskop. Col. Benson's modus operandi was to start with a night march between 01h30 and 03h30 from Machadodorp in a northerly direction towards Vlakfontein and Elandskloof. They wanted to surprise the Boers at sunrise. The route there was difficult and they only arrived at the Witrand at about 08h00 which is too late for the attack. Farmers were spotted who had already moved to Elandskloof and Roodekrans with their cattle. The English started a search operation and returned after a chase of about 3-4 miles.

The English Commando was divided into groups and was told to set up camp by 15h00, F group sent 2 groups of 38 men to clear 2 ravines, as there was no Boer insight and it was safe to split the group. The farmers surrounded a group, and they sent a message to the F group to help.

With Middelburg Commando (MK) on the eastern slopes and Lydenburg Commando (LK) on the western slopes with deep ravines and "dead ground" between them, the MK had to withdraw on the eastern slope because they had no cover and were exposed to attack from the east and south. The LK took up a position on the western slope between the stones on the steep stone banks. When the Boers noticed that there were not that many English (+- 25), they were determined to overwhelm them. With the cover provided by the stone cups, they charged the English and almost succeeded. During the battle, a message was sent to Col. Benson in which a counter-attack on the Boers from the west began.

The battle continued for hours, - F eskradon writes that the Boers almost humiliated them when the Boers advanced to 50 yards from them when the battle took place. The Boers called themselves the "Mountain Devils".

DEATHS: English 3, Boers 1 WOUNDED: English 6, Boers 5

The English/Scots bury their men, and bury Adam Johannes Botha (04/04/1868 – 03/07/01) dishonourably right next to them. The Boers came to dig up Adam Botha under their noses when the English camped for a few days at Vlakfontein. The Boers reburied him 4.5km in a north-westerly direction, still visible today.

On July 4, Benson is still camping at Vlakfontein. Farmer families (Basch, Combrink and Kruger) were brought there from Elandskloof. On July 5, Benson left with 2 companies for the heights to look for the Boers and cattle that had been spotted, with no success.

COMBRINK family from Elanskloof

Jan Hendrik Combrink (snr) (17/09/1837 – 30/06/1913)'s residence was also west of the battle site on Elandskloof. In revenge, the English burned his 6 bedroom house with all the furniture, coach house, ox cart, horse cart, saddles, drafts, ploughs, corn, wheat, oats and beans he had stored. His eldest son, Pieter Christiaan (04/10/1866) surrendered himself on 18 Feb 1902, but his brothers, Jan Hendrik (23/08/1873) and Johannes Diederik (24/09/1877) were bitterly dead. Matthias P Taute.

Jan Hendrik's son, Pieter C Combrink, his house, carriage house with all his belongings were also burnt down, and all his livestock and poultry were looted. He was able to get away with 5 oxes, 1 bull, 3 cows, 2 heifers and 2 horses but these were looted by Benson's forces on 3 Aug. Jan Hendrik's (jnr) residence, and all his possessions, were destroyed at the same time. Johannes Diederik's household belongings and horse cart were burned and 136 livestock were looted. What he got away with was looted on December 24 at Elandskloof. The 14-year-old Rudolph Jacobus Combrink (18/01/1887), who looked after the family's livestock, had already gone with the livestock in the direction of Windhoek west of Dullstroom before the battle, and it was rumored that after the war came back with the livestock.

Several members of the Combrink family were gathered on 3 July 1901 at Elandskloof. The family was taken to Machado by Benson's troops and then taken to Barberton concentration camp. Pieter Christiaan's wife - Anna Dorothea Elizabeth (34yrs) with her little daughter, two boys and a baby. Jan Hendrik's daughter, Judith Christina (26 yrs.) who was married to Christoffel Gerhardus Botha with her two minor daughters and a boy. Jan Hendrik (jnr) (28 yrs) who was married to Anna C M Basch (28 yrs), with her little daughter and a boy and expecting a third child, 14 days after the birth of her daughter on 27 October 1901, she died of bronchitis in the concentration camp. The family was later transferred to Merebank Concentration Camp in Natal.

Today, the farm is still owned by the descendants of the 14-year-old Rudolph Jacobus Combrink.

If you would like to know more details about Vlakfontein visit the internet page to follow where you can see the columns and the tactics of the Battle.

