

BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA COMPANY (BSAC) - RHODESIA MATABELE REBELLION PROVISIONAL STAMPS

These stamps were surcharged in black on BSAC stamps: SCOTT Nos 4, 13-14 by
The Bulawayo Chronicle in April-May 1896 during the siege of Bulawayo
Perf. 14^{1/2}



Coat of Arms
1d on 3d Grey &
green
SC 40, SG 51



Coat of Arms
3d on 5/- Yellow
NH SC 42, SG 53



Coat of Arms
1d on 4/- Grey &
vermillion
NH SC 41, SG 52

The second Matabele war was instigated by the Mlimo, the spiritual leader of the Matabele nation.

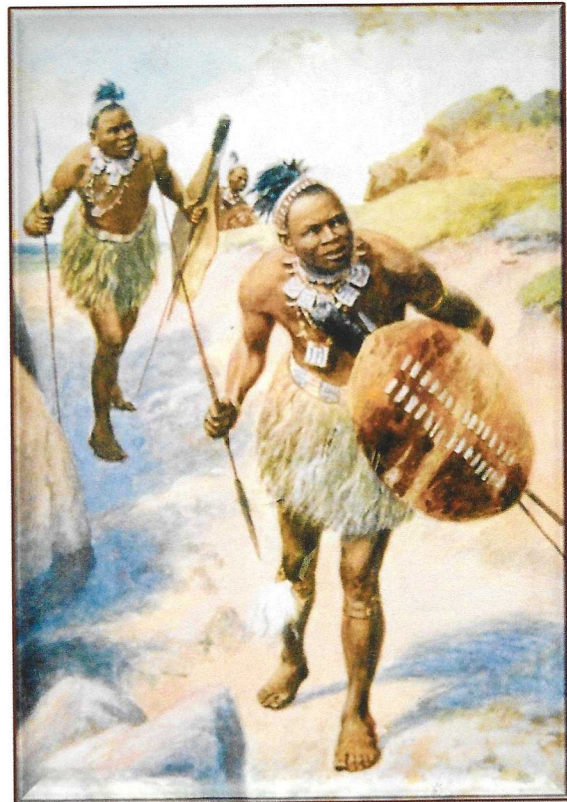
He persuaded the young warriors that the European bullets would turn to water and their cannon shells to eggs! He timed the uprising for when virtually all the troops defending the area were absent on the ill-fated Jameson Raid. He planned to attack Bulawayo and kill or drive out everyone, but keep the town for their own use. He wanted to start on March 29 after a ceremony called the Big Dance, but young warriors jumped the gun and killed a native policeman on March 20th. The Mlimo left a pass through the Matobo Hills unguarded so that the settlers could be driven out through it. On March 24, some 2,000 warriors began the war.

In the first week 244 settlers and their families were slaughtered, and hundreds of homes, ranches and mines were burned.

Some 10,000 warriors besieged Bulawayo, but did not cut the telegraph lines. Relief columns set out but did not reach Bulawayo until late May.

Meanwhile the settlers organized a Bulawayo Field Force under hunters like Frederick Selous and Frederick Russell Burnham, who searched for settlers to escort them to the town. The threat from the deadly Maxim machine guns kept the town safe from direct attack. The relief columns with Cecil Rhodes and Colonel Robert Baden Powell finally arrived in late May and the siege was broken. Some 50,000 Matabele retreated to their stronghold in the Matobo Hills. Although the Shona nation joined the war, they lacked leaders and did not take much action.

In October 1897 Frederick Burnham and the native commissioner Bonar Armstrong were sent to capture or kill the Mlimo. They found him in his cave and shot him dead when he began his dance.



Matabele warriors. The second Matabele war lasted from March 1896 to October 1897, when Cecil Rhodes, unarmed and alone, entered the Matabele camp after being told of the assassination of the Mlimo by Frederick Burnham. He then persuaded the tribesmen to lay down their arms and accept peace.

Image: warfarehistorynetwork.com