

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL THE HON. ANDREW DAVID MURRAY

1863-1901

BY LIEUTENANT-COLONEL LORD LOVAT, C.B., C.V.O., D.S.O.

BREVET-LIEUTENANT-COLONEL the Hon. Andrew David Murray was born in 1863, was educated at Wellington, and joined The Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders as a lieutenant in 1884.

He served in the Nile Expedition of 1885, and in 1885-1886 throughout the operations of the Soudan Frontier Field Force: he took part in the defence of Kosheh and the engagement at Giniss. In the 1898 campaign he was present with his regiment at the battles of the Atbara and Omdurman, and was on both occasions mentioned in despatches. During the Fashoda operations he was in command of the white troops, was again mentioned in despatches, and received a brevet of major.

In December 1899, shortly after the battle of Magersfontein, Major Murray was asked by Lord Lovat to take command of a body of Scouts which was being raised in the Highlands for service in South Africa; his experience, his popularity, and the reputation he had already gained on active service pointed him out as one eminently fitted for the post, and one whose appointment would ensure success to the new corps.

In February 1900 Major Murray was duly gazetted commandant of Lovat's Scouts, and at once took up his duties with that quickness for objective and grasp of detail which always characterised him. In March 1900, despite official delays and unforeseen difficulties, he got his command out to South Africa, and in May, by sheer dogged determination, forced his way up to the front and joined the main advance at Kroonstad.

Major Murray was present at the actions near Johannesburg, Pretoria, and Diamond Hill. He then marched with General Hunter to the Wittebergen and was given command of the mounted forces of the Highland Brigade. After Prinsloo's surrender in July 1900 he took part in the fighting round Heilbron and Philipolis, and in some of the pursuits of De Wet.

In November 1900 Major Murray was given a brevet and—what he appreciated much more—a column of his own in Cape Colony. This column consisted of two guns, Lovat's Scouts, District Mounted Troops, Imperial Yeomanry, mounted infantry and Police details. Many weary months of hard trekking and occasional fighting ensued.

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In September 1901 the larger portion of Lieutenant-Colonel Murray's column was detached to relieve the town of Ladygrey in Cape Colony, and with 100 mounted men and one gun he himself was sent to watch a country known to be the base of supplies to some 400 Boers. The mission was a dangerous one and the end was not long in coming. On the second night, on the Witberg, while the remainder of his column was approaching and was almost within reach, some 250 Boers under Kritzinger, one hour after the moon had set, crawled between his outposts and overwhelmed his little force.

All that mortal man could do Colonel Murray did that night. Taken wholly by surprise, he broke through the Boer fire to get to his men: at once realising the position, he got the Maxim to work, rallied the men who had escaped out of the lines, and at the last—fell—facing his foes, a bullet through his heart, and "no surrender" his last words.

No truer man ever died for his country, nor have many equalled his rugged personality, his power of inspiring affection, or his military genius. As a soldier Andrew Murray was quick, determined, and resourceful; an absolute competitor for the main object and without a trace of egotism for himself or his command.

Brave as few men are brave, he was nevertheless the most careful of commanders for even the most insignificant unit of his force: he would court death to make certain that a small flank party was secure, and whenever he detached a small force on a more than usually perilous errand it cost him a great mental struggle not to accompany the men to the post of danger. Those who fought with him will always picture him to themselves, perched on the highest ant-hill on the flank of the firing line with his telescope and map beside him; a willing target provided he could thereby draw the fire from his men.

Andrew Murray fell in his eighty-sixth engagement, and it may be safely affirmed that, of all the men who have served under him, there is not one whose thoughts do not go out to him in love and admiration.