

'Youth Under Fire': A Socio-Statistical Analysis of the Musketry Results of Cape Province Cadet Corps 1941-1960

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Abstract

Cadet training consisted primarily of physical fitness, military drills, and musketry. Of these activities rifle shooting is the most technical and useful military skill, with cadet participation signalling the youth's wilful and deliberate self-militarisation. When South Africa declared war on Germany on 6 September 1939, the Union Defence Force (UDF) expanded the cadet quotas substantially in anticipation for future mobilisation. Shooting competitions took on a new urgency and significance. Teams from cadet detachments and rifle associations regularly competed in provincial, national and international shooting competitions. In South Africa, many cadet rifle competitions trace their origins to before union in 1910. The Watts Cup and Empire League Challenge (ELC) originated as challenges for cadet detachments in the Cape Colony, with cadet detachments competing in the same format from 1939 to 1960. The article presents data from the complete results of the Watts Cup and Empire League Challenge from 1941 until 1960, and data relating to support for the war among cadet officers. Analysis of this data reveals fault lines in the response of the white youth of the Cape Province from mobilisation for war to the aftermath of the pivotal 1948 elections.

Keywords: Cadets; shooting; competition; youth militarisation, Second World War.

Opsomming

Kadetopleiding het grotendeels bestaan uit fisieke fiksheid, militêre dril oefeninge en skietkuns. Hiervan was skietkuns die mees tegniese en bruikbare krygsvaardigheid, met deelname aan kadette 'n uitdrukking van die jeug se vrywillige en opsetlike self-militarisering. Toe Suid-Afrika op 6 September 1939 oorlog op Duitsland verklaar het, het die Unie Verdedigingsmag die kadette-kwotas wesenlik uitgebrei met die oog op toekomstige mobilisering. Skietkompetisies het 'n nuwe dringendheid en betekenis

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aangeneem. Spanne van kadetkorpse en skietverenigings het gereeld meegeding in provinsiale, nasionale en internasionale skietkompetisies. Vele kadet skietkompetisies in Suid-Afrika het hul oorsprong voor Uniewording in 1910. Die Wattsbeker en die Empire League Challenge (ELC) het hul oorsprong as kompetisies vir kadetkorpse in die Kaapkolonie, met kadetkorpse wat vanaf 1939 tot 1960 in dieselfde formaat meegeding het. Die artikel verskaf data van die volledige resultate van die Wattsbeker en die Empire League Challenge van 1941 tot 1960, en data wat betref steun vir die oorlog onder kadetoffisiere. 'n Ontleding van dié data onthul skeidslyne onder die Kaapkolonie se wit jeug, van die mobilisering vir die oorlog tot die nadraai van die verreikende 1948 verkiesing.

Sleutelwoorde: Kadette, skiet, kompetisie, jeug militarisering, Tweede Wêreldoorlog.

Introduction

Weaponry features in every aspect of the soldiers' profession, with common reference to the rifle, the carbine, the horse, and the gun in military vocabulary. When a military organisation fails, the focus often falls on the soldiers' ability to successfully employ weaponry in battle. Thus, when the British Army failed to perform to public expectation during the Second Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902) the focus fell on the soldier's ability or inability to shoot accurately. The *Times History of the War in South Africa 1899-1902* puts the British soldiers' failure in modern warfare down to *inter alia*, a lack of skill in rifle shooting, saying: 'Neither in skill with the rifle, nor in individual intelligence and initiative, nor in physical and moral endurance, was the British soldier equal to the terribly exacting demands of modern warfare'.¹

Historians such as Andrew Risio and Spencer Jones highlight the musketry shortfall of the British soldier. According to Risio, the Eglin Commission of 1907, which was convened to investigate the British Army's conduct in the war, pointed out: 'Marksmanship was a significant deficiency that many attributed to this same rigid mechanical perfection of drill in the pre-war army'.² Jones, when investigating the influence of the Second Anglo-Boer War on the regular British Army, concluded that this war served as a catalyst for reforms to the British Army musketry training.³ British propaganda and the popular media also exaggerated the shortcomings of the British soldier by portraying the Boer fighter as a sharpshooter and the Boers being a

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1. L.S. Amery, ed., *The Times History of The War in South Africa 1899-1902*, vol. 3 (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co, 1905), 298.
 2. A.J. Risio, 'Building the Old Contemptibles: British Military Transformation and Tactical Development from the Boer War to the Great War 1899-1914' (MA thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2005), 17.
 3. S. Jones, 'The Influence of the Boer War (1899-1902) on the Tactical Development of the Regular British Army, 1902-1914' (PhD thesis, University of Wolverhampton, 2009), 78.

‘martial race’.⁴ The ‘martial race’ status of the Boer became a comfortable, enduring ‘after-myth’ of the war in South Africa.⁵

The belief that British and colonial soldiers had fallen short in ‘skill with the rifle’ permeated through not only British society but had also held ground in South Africa. Even during the war, South African pundits identified better marksmanship and musketry training as the silver bullet for military shortcomings. In 1901 the Rector of Grey Institute High School (now Grey High School, Port Elizabeth), when reviewing the activities of the school’s cadet corps in his annual report, emphasised the importance of instructing boys in shooting:

The Cadet Corps has continued, as far as possible, under the very great disadvantages, its work of giving military training and teaching boys how to shoot. The necessity for this instruction seems to be one of the principal lessons taught by the war, which is now, let us hope, nearly at an end.⁶

The colonies’ political and military leadership echoed the public belief that individual marksmanship had become an important facet of modern warfare. Directly after the war, in 1903, Major General Sir Edward Yewd Brabant, KCB, CMG, Commandant-General of the Cape Colonial Force, while on an inspection tour of the eastern Cape ‘impressed upon the boys the necessity of becoming good shots and learning the construction and mechanism of their carbines’.⁷ Then, in December 1906, Lord Selborne, the High Commissioner for Southern Africa and Governor of the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies, when addressing a cadet Bisley competition, exhorted the need for shooting skills among South African men and boys, and emphasised the importance of instilling these skills at an early age.⁸

Prominent individuals and civil society organisations worked hard to address this seemingly obvious lesson of the Second Anglo Boer war by sponsoring local, regional, provincial, national and commonwealth shooting competitions and challenges. One of the most energetic and prolific patrons of shooting in the British

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4. G. Teulié, ‘A Portrait of the Boer as an Enemy: British Juvenile Literature and the Anglo-Boer War’, *SA Journal of Cultural History*, 15, 2 (2001), 87.
 5. J. Boje and F. Pretorius, ‘Kent Gij Dat Volk: The Anglo-Boer War and Afrikaner Identity in Postmodern Perspective’, *Historia*, 56, 2 (2011), 60. See also S. Swart, ‘A Boer and His Gun and His Wife are Three Things Always Together’: Republican Masculinity and the 1914 Rebellion’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Special Issue on Masculinities in Southern Africa, 24, 4 (1998), 737-751.
 6. W.C. Meredith, ‘Grey Institute High School, Christmas 1901, Rector’s Report’, *The Cape Daily Telegraph*, 19 December 1901.
 7. ‘General Brabant’s Visit: Inspection of the Cadet Corps’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 24 March 1903.
 8. Reuter’s Colonial Service, ‘Johannesburg News’, *Cape Daily Telegraph*, 24 December 1906.

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Commonwealth was Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Schumacher (also known as Ffennell) of the Witwatersrand Rifles. Schumacher had amassed a small fortune as a Randlord from which he funded many musketry competitions, the largest being the Imperial Challenge Shield for cadet corps and school shooting teams held throughout the British Empire.⁹

Schumacher was not alone in the effort to improve youth marksmanship. In 1905 Colonel Watt CB instituted the Watt's Cup in the Cape Colony. The competition was open to cadet corps teams of eight boys, all of whom had to be under the age of eighteen years. The young marksmen each had to shoot seven shots at 200, 300, 400, and 500 yards. In the inaugural competition of the Watt's Cup in 1905, seventeen schools competed, with one disqualification. The Normal College Cadet Corps of Cape Town won the competition.¹⁰

Similarly, in 1905, the Cape Branch of the League of Empire donated a Challenge Shield for a field shooting competition for the cadet corps in the Cape Colony.¹¹ The conditions of the Empire League Challenge (ELC) was for a 12 man team (two to a target) to advance from 500 yards to 200 yards, halting to shoot one round at every 100 yards, and four rounds at the 200 yards within four minutes.¹²

Various other local cadet shooting competitions supplemented the two colony-wide competitions. In the Cape Peninsula, cadets competed for the Woodhead Cup presented by Colonel Woodhead CMG in 1906.¹³ Similarly, in the Eastern Cape, cadets competed for the local Knights Cup.¹⁴ In 1906, the South Africa College School (SACS) school magazine listed multiple levels of shooting competitions available to the cadets in school.¹⁵ In the Eastern Cape the Kingswood College magazine boasted: '[w]e do not think Cadets have any cause to complain about the lack of competitions, no fewer than 4 open to the whole Colony taking place

9. 'Local and General', *Times of Swaziland*, 18 July 1908; 'Sporting Notes', *Times of Swaziland*, 1 April 1905; 'Schumacher Cup', *Cape Times*, 25 May 1909; 'Empire Contests for Cadet Shots', *Eastern Province Herald*, 30 September 1916.

10. 'Watts Shooting Competition', *The Kingswood College Magazine*, 9, 2 (June 1905), 3-4; J.J. Redgrave, A.M. Pollock, and J. Hattle, *Neath the Tower: The Story of the Grey School Port Elizabeth, 1856-1956* (Cape Town: Howard B. Timmins, 1955), 54.

11. 'Rifle Shooting Empire League Shield: St Andrew's Win', *Cape Times*, 9 November 1905.

12. 'Empire League: "Field Firing Competition"', *The RBHS Magazine*, 2, 8 (September 1906), 15.

13. 'Shooting Woodhead Cup Competition', *South African College School Magazine*, 1, 7 (December 1906), 12.

14. F.L. Coleman and T. Farnell, *St Aidan's College Grahamstown* (Grahamstown: Rhodes University, 1980), 51; 'General School Notes', *The Kingswood College Magazine*, 7, 4 (December 1903), 14.

15. 'Cadet Corps Notes', *South African College School Magazine*, 1, 5 (July 1906), 17.

every year.¹⁶ Even with so many competitions, the insatiable appetite for shooting competitions persisted, with Major General Scobell CVO CE presenting in 1909 another ‘...Challenge Cup to be shot for by the Cadet Corps...’¹⁷

Despite substantial activity, cadet musketry has escaped the attention of historians and sport results chroniclers. For instance G.A. Parker in the 1897 book *South African Sports: An Official Handbook*, only makes passing mention of the Cadet Match in the Cape Colony that had been increased in value with an addition of a shield, medals and prizes.¹⁸ In the 1914 book, *South African Sport*, H.P. Swaffer after providing a solid description of the state of shooting in the Union of South Africa, only lists the adult shooting competitions, ignoring the various cadet trophies available for young marksmen. Similarly, the *Stangen Sports Records RSA 1990* has no record at all of youth shooting competitions.¹⁹ This trend is continued in Mark Leach and Gary Wilkins’ *Olympic Dream: The South African Connection of 1992*, which fails to mention cadet shooting in the chapter on the history of shooting in South Africa.²⁰

Works on firearms in southern Africa may provide an additional view on youth shooting. However, Shula Marks and Anthony Atmore in their survey of firearms in southern Africa focuses only on the dominant black groups’ involvement with firearms. They claim that although white involvement with firearms was a vast area of investigation, a full exploration had yet to be done.²¹ In this regard, William Storey deals with the influence of guns in southern Africa in the nineteenth century, but ends his discussion well before the twentieth century, providing little insight into youth shooting during the union years.²² Jones focuses on Boer shooting expertise during the Second Anglo-Boer War, without investigating British settler shooting during the same period. Indeed he does not cover cadet musketry at all.²³ Likewise Sandra Swart limits her focus to the musketry traditions of the Afrikaner.²⁴ Within South African military historiography, cadets are implicitly seen as part of the Union

16. ‘Cadet Corps News’, *The Kingswood College Magazine*, 11, 1 (April 1907), 18.

17. ‘Cadet Corps’, *The RBHS Magazine*, 4, 20 (November 1909), 20.

18. G.A. Parker, *South African Sports: An Official Handbook* (London: Sampson Low, Marston & Co, 1897), 212.

19. P. Matthiassen, ed., *Sports Records RSA 1990* (Randburg: Resource Dynamics, 1990).

20. M. Leach and G. Wilkins, *Olympic Dream: The South African Connection* (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 101.

21. S. Marks and A. Atmore, ‘Firearms in Southern Africa: A Survey’, *The Journal of African History*, 12, 4 (1971), 529.

22. W.K. Storey ‘Guns, Race and Skill in Nineteenth-Century Southern Africa’, *Technology and Culture*, 45 (2004), 687-711.

23. S. Jones ‘“Shooting Power”: A Study of the Effectiveness of Boer and British Rifle Fire, 1899-1914’, *British Journal for Military History*, 1, 1 (2014), 29-47.

24. Swart, ‘A Boer and His Gun and His Wife’.

Defence Force (UDF), with the exception of M.J. Viljoen,²⁵ and Graeme Plint and Andri Delpont,²⁶ who discuss the cadet movement in some depth in their works. However, neither discuss cadet shooting results in detail. In the historiography of the schools of the Cape Province, the various commemorative books published by the elite schools often weave the cadet corps and cadet shooting into the wider narrative. In some cases, these books deal with the cadet corps and musketry in separate sections and chapters. However, when musketry is discussed, specific competitions, such as the Watts Challenge Cup and the ELC, are only mentioned when the school performed well.²⁷ Unfortunately there is insufficient continuity to construct an understanding of the competitions themselves. Thus, a significant gap exists regarding the cadet movement and cadet musketry in South Africa. This study provides a start in addressing the gap in military, sport, and youth historiography, and will deal with two competitions, namely the Watt's Cup and the ELC, with specific focus on the years 1941 to 1960.

The article takes a quantitative approach, using descriptive statistical analysis contextualised by a qualitative narrative to describe cadet musketry in the Cape Province during Union. The quantitative approach has gained traction among South African historians. Johan Fourie, an economic historian argues that historians have 'rediscovered the value of transcribing large numbers of historical documents and analysing them statistically'.²⁸ The massive development of information technology capacity, such as computation power and software, has assisted historians to capture and unlock historical data and military records on an unprecedented scale.²⁹ The

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25. M.J. Viljoen, 'Die Ontstaan en die Ontwikkeling van die Skoolkadette-Stelsel in die RSA: Grepe uit die Geskiedenis en 'n Oorsig oor die Huidige Stelsel', *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies*, 15, 2 (1985).
 26. G. Plint and A. Delpont, 'Testing Imperial Loyalties: Collegiate Boys Schools on the South African Home Front during the Second World War', in E. Kleynhans and A. Delpont, *Home Front South Africa and the Second World War* (Stellenbosch: African Sun Media, 2024).
 27. N. Emslie and T. Webster, *Bearers of the Palms: A History of the Selborne Schools*, (Wynberg: Selborne Schools History Committee, 1976), 178-190; Coleman and Farnell, *St Aidan's College*, 50-56; S.G. Barry, *History of Queen's College, 1858-1983*, (Queenstown: Queen's College, 1983), 115-120; J. Gardiner, *Bishops 150: A History of the Diocesan College, Rondebosch* (Cape Town: Juta, 1997), 188 and 195-200; N. Veitch, *SACS 175 - A Celebration* (Epping: ABC Press, 2003), 128 and 182-188; T. Viljoen, *Non Vobis: The Story of the Cambridge Schools, 1879-2004* (East London: Cambridge Schools' Past Pupils' Association, 2004), 77-78; Veitch *Queen's College 1858-2008* (CTP Books: Queenstown, 2008), 134-136 and 173-179.
 28. J. Fourie, 'Cliometrics in South Africa', *Studies in Economics and Econometrics*, 42, 2 (2018), 1.
 29. I. Kovalchenko 'The Role of Quantitative Methods in Historical Research', *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung: Quantitative Methods in Soviet Historiography*, 16, 2 (1991), 5-16; K. **Inwood and J. Ross, 'Big Data and the Military:

availability of historical military data is partially due to the British Empire having experienced an ‘acceleration in the collection, production and analysis of information in the early nineteenth century’.³⁰ Hamish Maxwell-Stewart points out that often this bureaucratic hunger for statistical information outstripped the ability to digest it fully at the time.³¹ Many of these records still lie unexploited in archives, ready for modern analytical tools. Economic historians like Fourie and others, have used military records, specifically soldiers attestation forms, as a window into understanding living standards and as a source of other societal information.³² Military historians, such as Johnathan Fennel, Plint, and Jean Pierre Scherman, have also used attestation forms to unlock cultural and demographic information about the UDF during the Second World War.³³ However, much of the material in the South African Defence Archives remains undigitised, offering historians who are willing to undertake the arduous work of data capturing, the opportunity to uncover new areas of research.

This article analyses three main data sets quantitatively. It unpacks the results of the Watt’s Cup Challenge, the Empire League Challenge and the ‘red tab’ vote of cadet officers to provide a description of cadet shooting in what was the Union of South Africa. These data sets consist of multiple documents held in the SA Defence Archives.

Description of the Datasets

As discussed earlier, the Watt’s Cup and ELC were different in format at their inception in 1905, than was the case between 1941 and 1960. The introduction of miniature rifles to cadet corps in 1913 soon changed the nature of the various cadet rifle shooting

First World War Personnel Records in Australia, Britain, Canada, New Zealand and British Africa’. *Australian Historical Studies*, 47, 3 (2016), 430-442, 430; J. Fourie, ‘The Data Revolution in African Economic History’. *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 47, 2 (2016), 193-212, 194; H. Maxwell-Stewart, ‘Big Data and Australian History’. *Australian Historical Studies*, 47, 3 (2016), 360.

30. Maxwell-Stewart, ‘Big Data and Australian History’, 359.

31. Maxwell-Stewart, ‘Big Data and Australian History’, 360.

32. K. Inwood and O. Masakure, ‘Poverty and Physical Wellbeing among the Coloured Population in South Africa’, *Economic History of Developing Regions*, 28,2 (2013), 57; Fourie, ‘The Data Revolution in African Economic History’, 199; J. Fourie, A. Grundlingh and M. Mariotti, ‘Poor South Africa! Will No Nice English People Ever Come Out Here?’ The South African Constabulary of the Anglo-Boer War’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 45, 4 (2017), 583.

33. J. Fennel, *Fighting the People’s War: The British and Commonwealth Armies and the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 85-86; G. Plint, ‘The Influence of Second World War Military Service on Prominent White South African Veterans in Opposition Politics, 1939–1961’ (MA dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2021); J.P. Scherman, ‘The War Experiences of the Men of the 2nd South African Infantry Division, 1940-1945’ (PhD thesis, Stellenbosch University, 2023), 38-40.

competitions.³⁴ For instance, in 1913 the Watt's Cup changed from carbines to miniature rifles,³⁵ a transition that would be followed by all schools in the British Empire by the end of the 1920s.³⁶ During the First World War the UDF gave scant attention to the cadet movement and shooting, which resulted in the '...withdrawal of Range Rifles and ammunition, and the absence of Regular Army drill instructors.'³⁷

When cadet shooting recovered from the neglect of the First World War, the UDF consolidated various shooting competitions.³⁸ The ELC and Watt's Cup now had the same conditions, with the Watt's Cup open for juniors (under 15 years old) and the Empire League Challenge open to senior cadets (under 18 years old). The lack of .303 ammunition after the First World War led both competitions to transition to the miniature rifle which in turn resulted in the discontinuation of rapid fire and the shortening of shooting to the 25 yards' mark.³⁹ In this period the format of the two competitions stabilised to a format where '[t]argets were of the standard type for 25 yards, at which each competitor fired seven rounds deliberately and seven rounds rapidly. The two teams consisted of eight members each.'⁴⁰ In 1938, the UDF decreased the size of the target for both competitions after St Andrew's College had scored a 'possible' or perfect score in the ELC the previous year.⁴¹

Geographically, the borders of the competitions continued to reflect the original Cape Colony, despite various changes to the provincial and UDF command boundaries. The UDF command boundaries proved to be more malleable than the government administrative borders and thus rarely aligned with the old colonial boundaries or newer provincial borders.⁴² The archaic conditions for competition meant that the participants came from multiple command structures, meaning that as the command affiliations changed over time the co-ordination and recording of results occurred at colonial level in King Williams Town and then later at national level in Pretoria. This anomaly in military command and control led to an interesting

34 'Cadet Corps: Cadets under the Defence Act', *The RBHS Magazine*, 8, 34 (March 1913), 25.

35 'Cadet Corps', *The RBHS Magazine* 8, 35 (June 1913), 11.

36 Coleman and Farnell, *St Aidan's College*, 51.

37 Coleman and Farnell, *St Aidan's College*, 52.

38 South African Department of Defence Documentation Centre (Hereafter DoD), Defence Shooting Associations (hereafter VSV) Box 418, File: 41340, Re: Cadet Trophies, 12 February 1920; DoD, VSV, Box 418, Circular 1/40230 'To All District Staff Officers', 16 April 1919.

39 'Cadet Corps Notes', *The Kingswood College Magazine*, 25, 2 (August 1922), 96; DoD VSV, Box 418, File 41340, Cadet Trophies, Trofees voor Kadetten, 15 December 1920; DoD VSV, Box 418, File: 41340 Cadet Trophies, 'Cadet Trophies', 11 August 1920.

40 'Shooting', *The Kingswood College Magazine*, 54, 1 (May 1953), 57.

41 'Shooting', *The Andean: St Andrew's College Magazine*, 27, 220 (November 1938), 69;

'Shooting', *The Andean: St Andrew's College Magazine*, 27, 219 (August 1938), 38.

42 I. van der Waag, 'The Union Defence Force Between the Two World Wars, 1919-1940', *Scientia Militaria South African Journal of Military Studies*, 30, 2 (2000), 203.

replication of the archiving of results in the South African Defence Archives across national, command and school records. Furthermore, schools often reported detailed results in their school magazines. From these reports the article references a complete array of scores from 1941 to 1960. The author has compiled all the maps, tables, and graphs in this article from the documents listed in the footnotes unless indicated otherwise.⁴³

In addition to these competition results, the analysis uses a third dataset, being the outcome of the ‘red tab’ vote of the cadet officers. On 29 March 1940, the UDF instituted the Africa Oath whereby soldiers undertook to serve anywhere in Africa during the war. The Africa Oath became known as the Red Oath, because soldiers wore a ‘red tab’ on their shoulder straps to show their commitment to the war. The wearing of the ‘red tab’ during the Second World War became a proxy for support of the government war efforts and by implication support for the United Party government.⁴⁴ However, cadet officers were not united in their support for the war. In some cases, security forces went so far as to allege that the Afrikaner nationalist movement, the Ossewabrandwag (OB), had infiltrated the cadet movement. Upington Police Chief Inspector A.H. van Blerk reported in 1941 that;

The strength of the Cadets at Upington is approximately 220 school boys of the age 13yrs. and upwards. It is suspected that most of the Cadets are also members of the O.B., and that they are drilled under the cloak of Cadets.⁴⁵

In 1942, when the UDF decided to include cadet officers in the Africa Oath the Afrikaans press responded with an outcry.⁴⁶ Caught between the UDF and their communities, some Afrikaans-speaking teachers tried to avoid taking the oath under the guise of political neutrality. A teacher wrote to the UDF to express his quandary:

*Verder, deur ‘n Eed te neem kan ek beskuldig word van aktief deel te neem aan die huidige politieke beleid. Ek staan onder kontrak met die Department van Onderwys en volgens regulasies van my werkgewer mag ‘n onderwyser hom nie inmeng met die politiek nie op gevaar of dat hy sumier uit se diens ontslaan kan word.*⁴⁷(By

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43. The author compiled the tables in this article from the undermentioned data unless otherwise stated. The shooting results for the Watts’s Cup and ELC from 1941 to 1960 are found in the archival boxes DoD, VSV, Box 334, Box 346, Box 348, Box 399, Box 414 and Box 418.
 44. J Crwys-Williams, *A Country at War, 1939-1945: The Mood of a Nation* (Rivonia: Ashanti Publishing, 1992), 66–67.
 45. DoD, VSV, Box 349, File: DGL 9761/316, Upington se Hoerskool, Re: Censored Letter from ‘flo’ PO Box 4 Upington, to Pat Human, West Rand Hotel, Randfontein: Re: Drilling of Cadets, 9 September 1941.
 46. ‘Rooi Eed En Skoolkadette’, *Volksblad*, 8 February 1942.
 47. National Archives of South Africa (hereafter NASA), Transvaal Department of Education (hereafter TOD), Box 1756, File: 1/48/1, Defence Cadet Policy, Letter to BO Kommandement Witwatersrand from Turfonteinse AM Skool, 24 November 1942.

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taking the Oath, I stand accused of being part of the current political policy. I am contractually obliged to the Department of Education and according to departmental regulations a teacher may not interfere in politics, under threat of summary dismissal. Author's translation.)

By January 1943, the heads of the provincial education departments argued that UDF's pressure on cadet officers to commit to the Africa Oath had a detrimental effect on the functioning of the cadet movement. The heads of department believed that enthusiasm for the cadet movement did not translate into support for the war effort. They believed that:

Under the new cadet policy it appears that the wearing of the Orange tab ['red tab'] which connotes the taking of the Oath in schools, tends to introduce a political cleavage which is so strongly felt that teachers who previously were enthusiastic about the cadet movement ... they now refuse to take any active part in school cadets on account of the fact that the movement is breaking down at an alarming rate.⁴⁸

The UDF initially concurred with the education departments and the secretary of defence arguing on 23 January 1943 that the UDF '...should revert to the Cadet arrangements prior to 1939, and not apply the Red Flash [red tab]...' However, General Jan Smuts, quickly dispelled any idea of government consensus on the issue when he explained his position to the heads of the Department of Education.

Sy [Smuts's] moeilikeheid is dat sommige skole onder geen omstandighede wil aangaan as die Afrika Eed en rooilissies ingevoer word. Ander skole het onmiddellik hulle uniforms ingehandig toe hulle hoor dat hulle nie meer rooilissies moet dra nie. (Smuts's difficulty was that some schools indicated that under no circumstances would they be prepared to continue with school cadets if the Africa Oath or 'red tab' was enforced. Other schools immediately returned their uniforms when they heard that they could no longer wear the 'red tab'. Author's translation).⁴⁹

After the April 1943 meeting with the heads of the Department of Education, Smuts sent instructions to the UDF saying that the issue would be resolved by a vote among the cadet officers themselves.⁵⁰ Serendipitously, the record of the cadet officers' vote was recorded by detachment with the national distribution indicated in Table 1 below:

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48. DoD, VSV, Box 373, File: DAI 3/1 Vol 1 Cadet Policy, Report of a Discussion at a meeting of the Heads of Education Departments appertaining to matters in connection with Cadet Organisations, January 1943.
 49. NASA, TOD, Box 1756, File: 1/48/1 Defence Cadet Policy, Beleid: Skoolkadette, 21 April 1943.
 50. DoD, VSV, Box 373, File: DAI 3/1 Vol 1 Cadet Policy, Cadet Policy DAI 3/1, document 82.

Cadet Policy: Wearing of ‘Red Tab’ Summary of Commands ⁵¹				
Command	Abstained	Against	For	Grand Total
Cape Fortress		44	23	67
Central Command		80	10	90
Durban Command		1	52	53
EP Fortress	4	14	27	45
Northern Command	5	34	33	72
Wits Command		23	42	65
Grand Total	9	196	187	392

Table 1: Cadet Policy: Wearing of ‘Red Tab’

As mentioned above, the Watt’s Cup and the ELC were open to cadet detachments located on the borders of the old Cape Colony, and accordingly they drew responses primarily from the Cape Fortress, Eastern Province Fortress, and some from the Central Command. A brief survey of the table above suggests that most of the qualifying detachments were against wearing the ‘red tab’.

Using this dataset allows for the comparison of shooting results with support for the war efforts among the competing cadet corps. Geolocating the school cadet detachments provides insight into the geographic distribution of the cadet movement’s support for the war effort and by proxy for the Smuts government. The correlation of ‘red tab’ data and shooting results, reveals the possible political and geographic lines that influenced the level of marksmanship of white South African youth.

The statistical analysis of the dataset will be conducted thematically, supported by a qualitative historical narrative, to smooth the fragmented feel that is common to the quantitative approach.⁵² Firstly, a chronological analysis will be implemented to explore and interrogate key trends and to identify discrete periods in chronological format. It will also be used to place the analysis into historical context. Thereafter, the shooting results will be carefully correlated with the ‘red tab’ data indicated above, to determine the relative role of loyalty and geographic space on all the shooting results. Finally, the research will move from the analysis of regional rivalry to study specific schools that excelled at shooting practice during the period under analysis. This research will also focus on the role played by coaches at these schools in achieving positive shooting results.

51. DoD, VSV Box 373, File DAI 3/1, Vol 1 Cadet Policy, Wearing of Orange Flash, Summary of Commands, document 82a.

52. J.F. Reynolds, ‘Do Historians Count Anymore?: The Status of Quantitative Methods in History, 1975–1995’, *Historical Methods: A Journal of Quantitative and Interdisciplinary History*, 31, 4 (1998), 141-148, 143.

Broad Analysis of Participation and Results

The Watt's Cup and ELC enjoyed healthy participation in the early 1920s. However, by the mid-1920s the Department of Defence noted a decline in musketry, particularly in Cape schools. In 1925 it complained that the standard of shooting in the Cape was far below that of Natal and the Transvaal and there was a marked 'paucity' of entries in the ELC and Watts Cup. Of the 186 detachments in the Cape only 65 teams entered.⁵³ After the 1925 competition, Lt Col Michell-Baker again complained about the extremely low participation and standard of shooting, saying that of the 135 possible detachments only 65 teams had participated with success.⁵⁴ By 1927, the organiser of the competitions complained once again about the lack of interest shown and the resultant failure to compete.

On the whole the shooting has again been very poor, and if no marked improvement in the number which compete is shown in the future, the question as to whether these trophies would not be competed for in another way, will have to be considered. A large number of detachments did enter but the number that failed to compete is out of all proportion.⁵⁵

Economic conditions in the late 1920s and early 1930s led to the disbandment of many cadet detachments and Defence Rifle Associations, and the halving and even discontinuation of ammunition allocations made for such activities,⁵⁶ which meant less participation in both competitions as shown in Table 2. By 1932, a further reduction of support by the UDF to the cadet movement led to calls to disband the cadet movement altogether.⁵⁷

In 1935, the Labour Party in an attempt to capitalize on public sentiment condemned 'the practice of inculcation of the spirit of militarisation in schools by the allotment of much precious time to cadet drilling and training.'⁵⁸ Some schools that were able to sustain cadet detachments under in these conditions, did so by reducing the range of cadet corps activities offered to the boys. For instance, in 1936, SACS almost entirely

53. DoD, Chief General Staff (hereafter CGS), Group 2, Box 367, file 41340, 14/8/41340/G2, Empire League Challenge Shield Competition, Watts Challenge Cup, January 1925.

54. DoD, CGS Group 2 Box 367, file 41340, 16/8/41340/G1, Empire League Challenge Shield Competition, Watts Challenge Competition, November 1925.

55. DoD, VSV Box 418, Empire League Challenge and Watts Challenge Cup Competitions, Empire League and Watts Cup Challenge, 1927.

56. Van der Waag, 'The Union Defence Force Between the Between the Two World Wars, 1919-1940', 204.

57. 'Abolish Cadets!', *Rand Daily Mail*, 10 May 1932.

58. 'SA Labour Party Condemns Cadet System', *Rand Daily Mail*, 25 November 1935.

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neglected shooting.⁵⁹ By 1939, participation was less than half what it had been a decade earlier as indicated in Table 2. The onset of the Second World War exposed the malaise of the inter-war periods.

	Watt's Cup	ELC
1927	27	34
1929	25	33
1930	23	27
1932	20	21
1939	11	16
1941	25	25

Table 2: Participation in Watt's Cup and ELC from available results from 1927-1941⁶⁰

An analysis of shooting results from 1941 to 1960 brings into focus the development of these two competitions in the period from after the inter-war doldrums until 1960. Figure 1 below shows the participation in the ELC and Watt Cup for this particular period.

The greater participation of senior teams in the ELC in relation to the junior Watt's Cup is immediately clear. Four distinct phases can be discerned, which seem to align with the political and social changes taking place in South Africa during the period. This allows for the contextualisation of these results within the broader historical narrative. The first phase was the war-years from 1941 to 1946 during which entries increased every year. Then the immediate post-war years from 1946 to 1952 are shown, in a period when South Africa transitioned from a wartime society to a nationalistic and pro-republican Afrikaner administration when the National Party (NP) won the 1948 elections. Thirdly, the second NP administration from 1953 until 1957 was one in which the Union Defence Force (UDF), under the leadership of the Minister of Defence, Frans Erasmus, underwent substantial changes. Finally, the post-UDF phase was one in which the passing of the Defence Act of 1957 marked a break with the British colonial past.

59. 'SA College Cadets, 1936', *South African College School Magazine*, 12, 11 (May 1936), 28.

60. DoD, VSV, Box 414, Empire League Challenge Shield, Empire League Challenge Shield 1927; DoD, VSV, Box 414, Empire League Challenge Shield, Empire League Challenge Shield 1932; DoD, VSV, Box 414, Empire League Challenge Shield, Empire League Challenge Shield Competition 1941; DoD, VSV, Box 414, Watts Challenge Cup, Watts Challenge Cup 1932; DoD, VSV, Box 414, Watts Challenge Cup, Empire League Challenge and Watts Challenge Cup Competitions 1941; DoD, CGS, Group 2, box 369, Empire League Challenge Shield and Watt's Challenge Cup 1930; DoD, Chief General Staff (hereafter CGS) Group 2, box 368, Empire League Challenge Shield and Watt's Challenge Cup 1939.

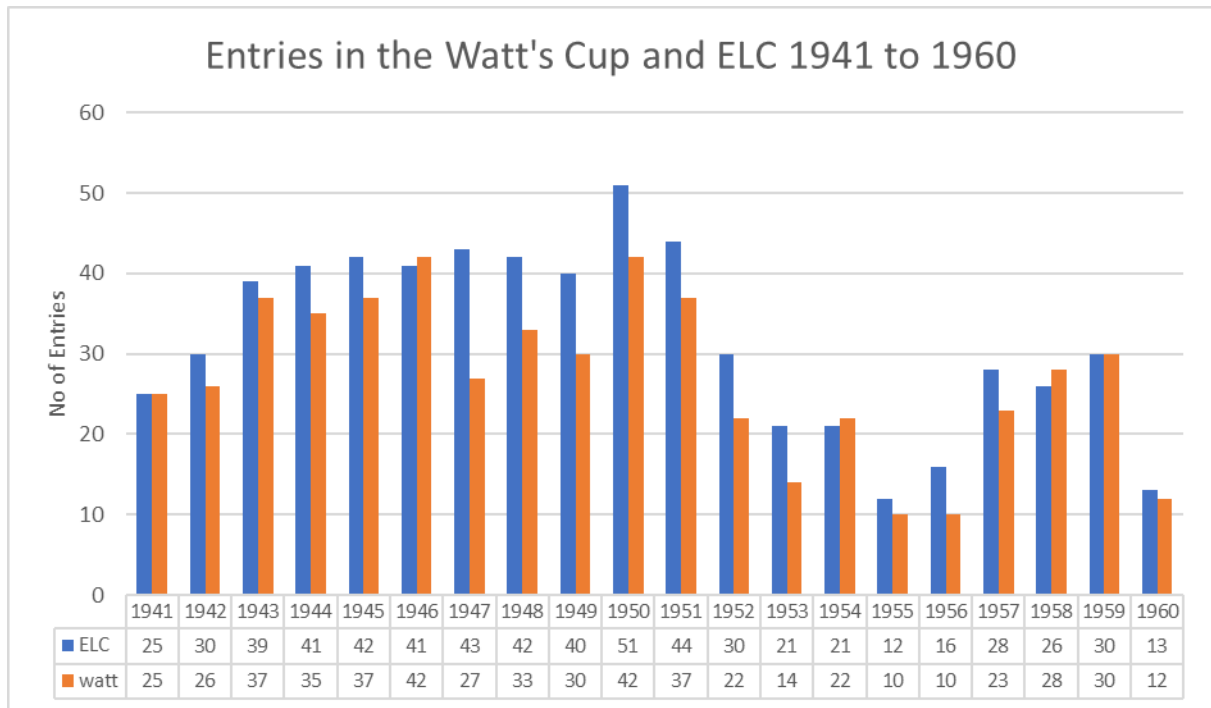


Figure 1: Entries in the Watt's Cup and ELC 1941 to 1960

The martial atmosphere generated by the second world war invigorated school cadet detachments and is evident in the increase in participation from 1941 to 1946. Schools that had suspended cadet activities in the interwar years, reinstated their cadet detachments and gave more attention to shooting practice than in the previous decade. For example, in 1940, the Rondebosch Boys High School (RBHS) resuscitated its cadet detachment and reported that '[t]he Defence Department is soon to build us a miniature range'.⁶¹

In 1941, the Wynberg Boys High School (WBHS) followed suit to resuscitate their cadet detachment.⁶² In May 1942, SACS recognised that 'although rifle shooting leaves much to be desired, several boys show promise of becoming excellent shots with a little more practice'.⁶³ Likewise, the 1943 Kingswood College school magazine acknowledged that although musketry had regressed during the inter-war period, efforts were made to change the situation for the better.

The Corps is at present busy with the Empire Challenge Shield Competition It is many years since our Cadets have taken part in these competitions, and it-will take a few seasons to reach high standards, but we have made a start.⁶⁴

61. 'RBHS Cadet Corps', *The RBHS Magazine*, 34, 127 (June 1941), 12.

62. 'School Notes', *The Wynberg Boys High School Magazine*, (December 1941), 8.

63. 'Cadets', *South African College School Magazine*, 14, 4 (May 1942), 43.

64. 'Cadet Notes', *The Kingswood College Magazine* 46, 3 (December 1943), 34.

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The number of participants in 1945 should have been higher but St Andrew’s College complained that ‘[n]one of the Grahamstown Schools were allowed to compete in the Empire League Challenge Shield and Watts Cup Competitions [in] this year...’⁶⁵

The resurgent interest in shooting during the war naturally decreased directly after the war as a war-weary society recovered and the government reprioritised its resources. In 1947, the Officer Commanding of the WBHS School Cadet detachment, D.F. Marias, noted that the UDF no longer prioritised cadets claiming that ‘[w]e regret to state that this Corps no longer receives the support from the Castle it had during the war years ... Owing to the small number of officers, shooting practices cannot be carried out satisfactorily’.⁶⁶

However, the 1950 participation defies the downward trend, which will be discussed later. Yet, the graph suggests that the enthusiasm was short lived. Participation across all detachments wavered towards 1953, and then levelled off in 1956. Finally, the increase thereafter occurred during the promulgation of the Defence Act in 1957, which may have triggered new interest among cadet officers.

The influence of changing socio-political conditions on cadet shooting efficiency is not readily apparent by participation numbers alone. The following section will deal with the quality of marksmanship in the two competitions.

Quality of Marksmanship

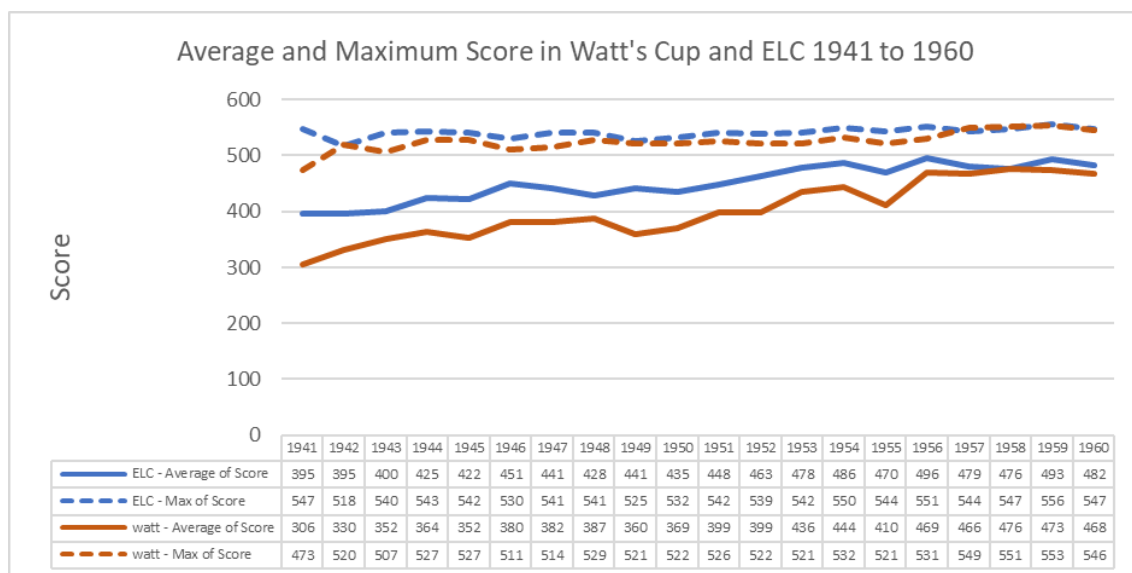


Figure 2: Average and Maximum Score in ELC and Watt's Cup 1941 to 1960

65. ‘Cadet Corps’, *The Andean: St Andrew’s College Magazine*, 235 (December 1945), 32.
 66. ‘School Cadet Det. No. 36 Report, 1947’, *The Wynberg Boys High School Magazine* (December 1947), 23.

Figure 2 above shows the maximum and average scores of the two competitions. In terms of overall quality of shooting, both junior (Watt's Cup) and senior (ELC) accuracy improved during the Second World War. Directly after the Second World War the maximum and average scores in both competitions seems to have stagnated, with averages only increasing in the 1950s again. However, the improvement of average scores in the 1950s may be due more to the decrease in entries among the weaker shooting detachments than the marginal gains in accuracy made by the top shooting detachments. Subsequent discussions will elaborate on the incremental improvements of maximum score during the 1950s. The next section deals with influence of age, loyalty, and geographic distribution on shooting results.

Influence of Age of Marksmanship

Figure 2 above shows that at the beginning of the Second World War the junior cadets shot with less accuracy than the senior cadets. Often it was the junior teams that suffered the most under UDF austerity measures. Shooting by junior cadets had courted controversy in the Cape Colony even before Union. In 1908, austerity measures meant that the colonial government withdrew the capitation grant and half the cadet movements' ammunition allocation. Furthermore, cadets younger than 14 years of age were forbidden to participate in shooting.⁶⁷

However, as competition became normalised for both junior cadets and senior cadets, the results became closer across all detachments as well as in terms of the best detachments, with the SACS junior teams scoring even higher than the school's senior teams towards the end of the 1950s. The junior marksmen's final surpassing of their older peers can be attributed to changes in the rules for the Watt's Cup and the ELC in 1958, which raised the maximum age of marksmen to 17 years of age for the Watt's Cup. Smaller cadet detachments were thus able to reinforce their Watt's Cup team from their ELC team.⁶⁸

This meant that not only were the ELC teams denuded of marksmen, resulting in a reduction of teams entering the ELC in relation to the Watt's Cup, but there was an instant improvement in the Watt's Cup scores in that year.

Figure 3 below shows how the deviation of the scores narrowed in both competitions until 1957. However, the junior detachments were more erratic, possibly because junior cadets often received less attention. This suggests that junior cadets were more sensitive to instruction. Later discussion explores the role of the instructor on shooting results.

67. 'Cadet Corps Notes', *The RBHS Magazine*, 3, 16, (September 1908), 10.

68. 'Shooting', *The Kingswood College Magazine*, 59, 1 (July 1958), 20.

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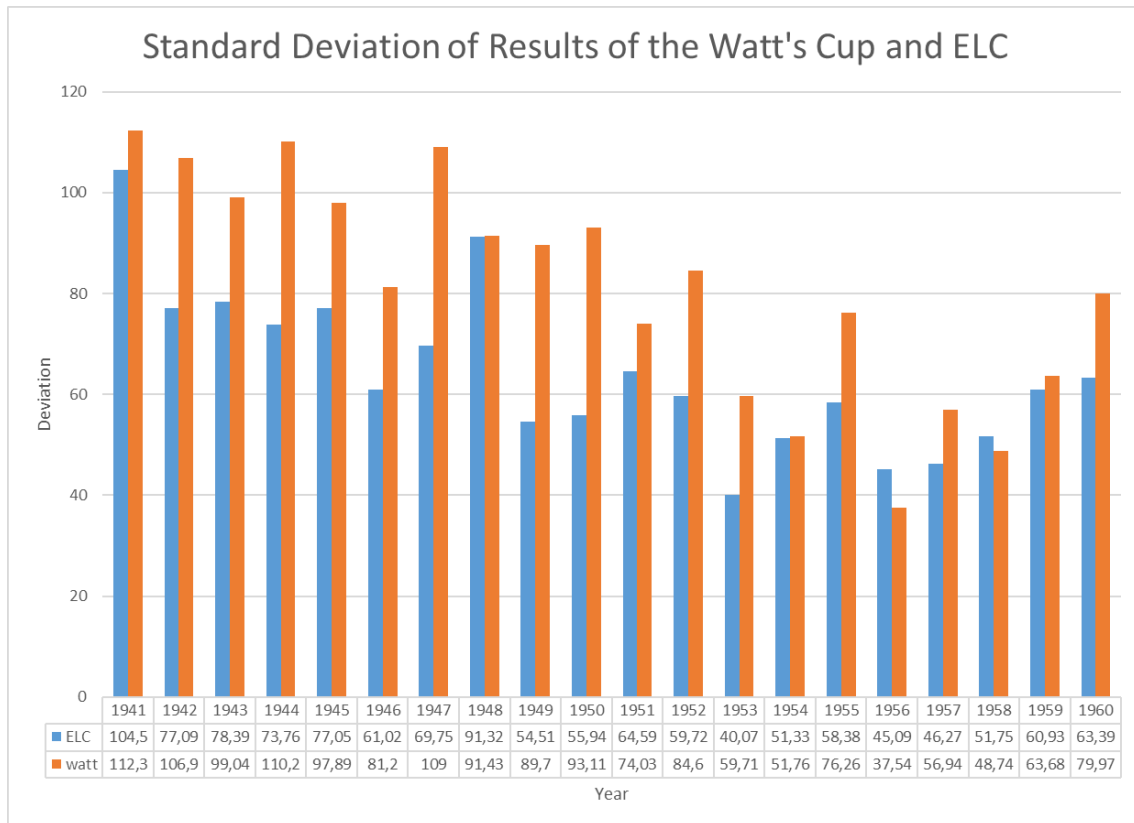


Figure 3: Standard Deviation of the Watt's Cup and ELC

Analysis of the Loyalty and Shooting

As discussed above the 'red oath' provided cadet officers with a way to display their loyalty to the war efforts and the United Party government, and as such is a useful marker to trace political loyalties.

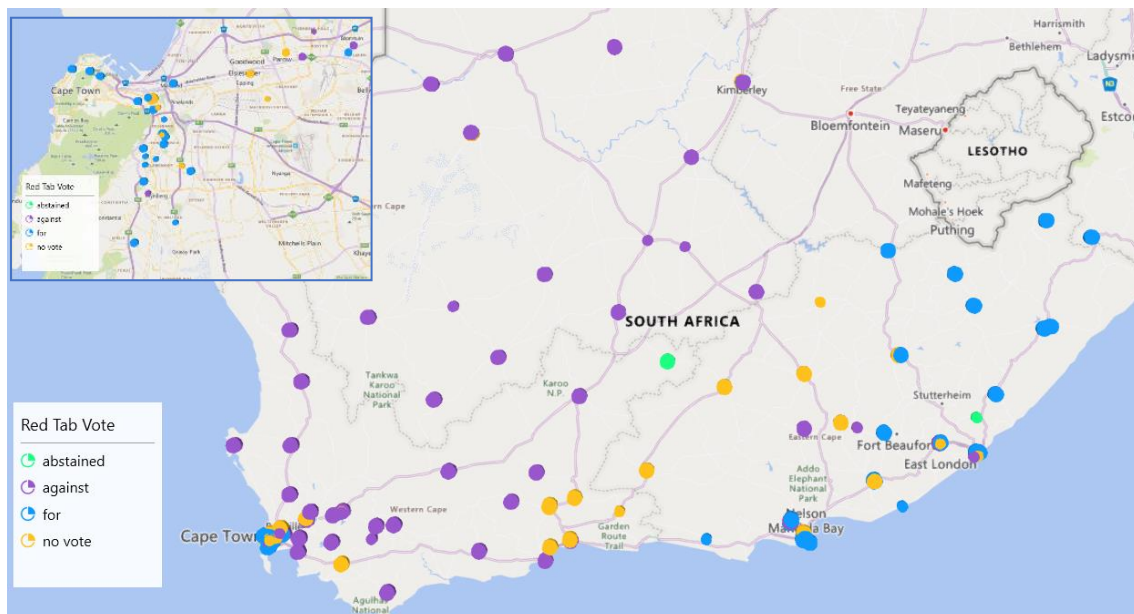


Figure 4: Distribution of Cadet Detachments participation in the Watt's Cup and ELC from 1941 to 1960⁶⁹

69. Compiled by author from geolocating cadet detachments to known locations of the schools.

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Figure 4 above shows the geographic distribution for the cadet corps that entered the ELC and Watts Cup according to their support for the war effort. The detachments shown as ‘no votes’ are detachments that were inactive during the war, indicating the locations of growth after the war.

The distribution of the votes not only reflects support for the war but also divisions in the South African white population. Brian du Toit describes the divisions in white South African society as follows:

‘[t]hese people [English-speaking] were mainly in the towns and cities and represented the British administration which had for the past century attempted to anglicize the Afrikaner. The other [Afrikaner] was basically rural, from the stock of pioneers, farmers - and freedom-fighters.’⁷⁰

Sandra Swart indicates that these divisions extended into the in the UDF, where English was used in the industrial areas, and Dutch in the rurally based regiments.⁷¹ F.D. Tothill highlights that the cultural and language divisions identified by du Toit and Swart extended into the political sphere, where language and locality often aligned with political beliefs,

To a large extent, Afrikaners and English-speakers found themselves in different political camps and both groups sought to play the dominant role. Between 1910 and the 1940s there were realignments, but English-speakers largely voted for one party and Afrikaners for another.⁷²

The data reflects these divisions, with the Western Cape-rural areas being dominated by Afrikaans-speakers, who showed little appetite for the war, whereas the Cape Peninsula schools (see map), and predominantly English-speaking schools of the Eastern Cape area positively aligned with the war effort.

Figure 5 below shows the influence of political disposition on in shooting competition participation. Pro-war cadet detachments make up the lion’s share of participants in each year except the anomaly of 1949-1950, where anti-war detachment participation increased. Furthermore, many of the newly-activated cadet detachments were in the rural areas as indicated in Figure 4. The post-1948 increased participation of non-‘red tab’ cadet detachments and newly activated detachments can be attributed to the efforts of the Minister of Defence, Frans Erasmus. According to Louisa Jooste, he placed great value in the cadet system. He worked to standardise

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70. B.M. Du Toit, ‘Afrikaners, Nationalists, and Apartheid’, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 8, 4 (1970), 553.
 71. Swart, ‘A Boer and His Gun and His Wife’, 749.
 72. F.D. Tothill, ‘The South African General Election of 1943’, *Historia*, 34, 1 (1989), 78.

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the cadet uniforms and bring equity between the wealthy and poorer cadet detachments and under his guidance the cadet organisation expanded rapidly.⁷³

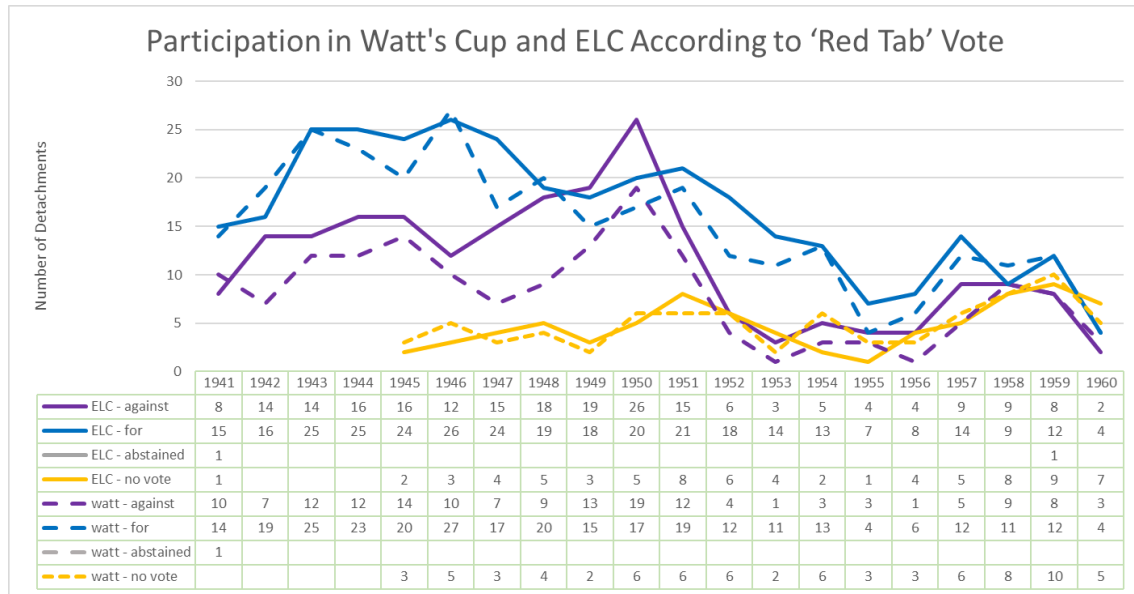


Figure 5: Participation in Watt's Cup and ELC According to 'Red Tab' Vote

However, when considering the number of individual detachments that competed in the period from 1941 to 1960, there is an even balance between the war-attitude of the total number of detachments over the period with a slight majority being anti-war. This suggests that where pro-war detachments competed consistently, anti-war detachments, although a larger number tended to participate less consistently as indicated in Table 3 below.

	Watt's Cup	ELC	Total
<i>Abstained</i>	0,79%	1,72%	1,48%
<i>Against</i>	38,10%	37,93%	37,78%
<i>For</i>	36,51%	37,07%	35,56%
<i>No vote</i>	24,60%	23,28%	25,19%

Table 3: "Red Tab" Vote Distribution for Individual Cadet Detachments Participating in the Watts Cup and ELC from 1941 to 1960

73. L. Jooste, 'F.C. Erasmus as Minister van Verdediging, 1948-1959' (MA dissertation, UNISA, 1995), 80-81.

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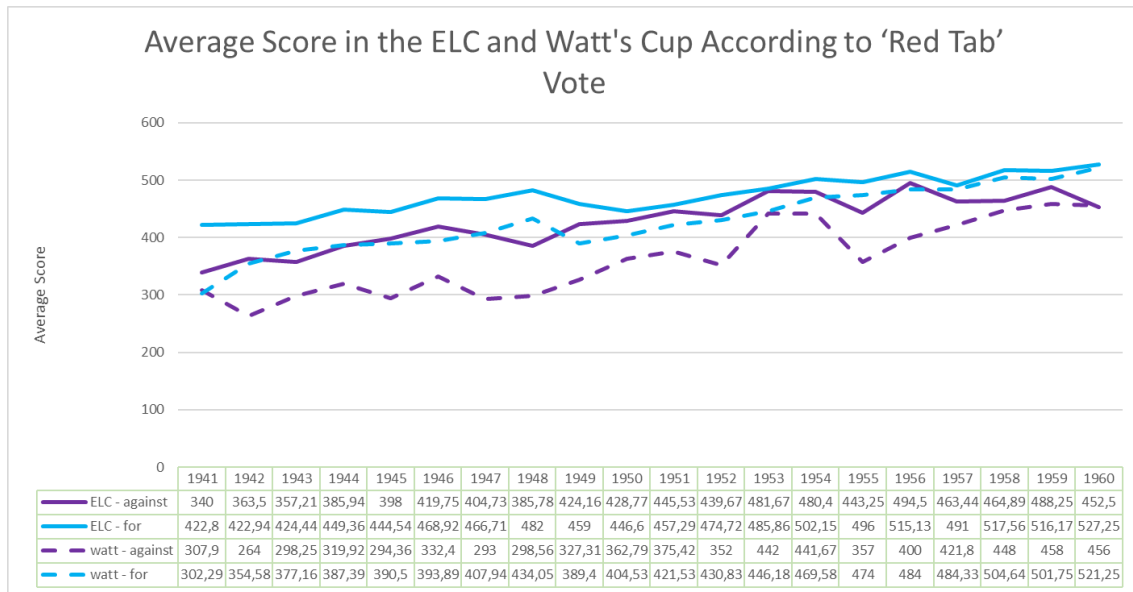


Figure 6: Average Score in the ELC and Watt's Cup According to 'Red Tab' Vote

Figure 6 above, reveals a general improvement in shooting across all cadet detachments. The 'red tab' detachments consistently out-performed non-'red tab' detachments in both competitions throughout the period, indicating a close and persistent relationship between support for involvement the Second World War and shooting performance. The consistently lower scores and less consistent participation of the anti-war cadet detachments suggest that, at least in the Cape, the Second Anglo-Boer War 'martial' mythology discussed in the introduction had not influenced youth shooting results during the period under consideration. The results also support William Storey's broad assertion that rural communities did not necessarily have a natural affinity for musketry.

As local adaptations occurred, guns improved, game disappeared, and skills declined. This is an empirical argument that contradicts cherished myths about colonial frontiersmen in southern Africa being natural marksmen.⁷⁴

The next section explores the divide between town and country by considering the regional rivalry between the cosmopolitan Cape Peninsula cadet detachments and the more frontier Eastern Cape detachments.

Regional Rivalry

The map of distribution of cadet corps in Figure 4 further suggests that geographic distribution of cadet detachments encouraged an element of intra- and inter-regional competition especially between pro-war cadet corps. Schools in proximity to one another often shared ranges and range officers. The prominent Cape Peninsula schools, include SACS, RBHS, Bishops (Diocesan's College), WBHS and St Joseph's College are

74. Storey, 'Guns, Race, and Skill', 691.

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clustered together. In the Eastern Cape, schools are in the main towns such as East London (Selborne College), Grahamstown (St Andrew’s College, Kingswood College, Graeme College and St Aidan’s College) and Port Elizabeth (Muir College, Marist Brothers College Uitenhage and Grey High School). In the first shooting of the Watt’s Cup in 1905 the detachments were in these two regions. See below in Table 4.

Watt’s Cup 1905 Participants			
Western Cape	Score	Eastern Cape	Score
Normal College Cadet Corps	898	Muir High School Cadet Corps	837
St. George’s Cadet Corps	858	Queenstown High School Cadet Corps	804
SACS Cadet Corps	817	Kingswood College Cadet Corps	796
RBHS Cadet Corps	753	Grey Institute Cadet Corps	752
Diocesan College Cadet Corps	649	Butterworth High School Cadet Corps	732
Sea Point Cadet Corps	582	Umtata Public School Cadet Corps	726
Mossel Bay Cadet Corps	565	East London Cadet Corps	709
Observatory Public School Cadet Corps	313	Dale College Cadet Corps	651
		Cathcart Public School Cadet Corps	621

Table 4: Watt's Cup 1905 Participants⁷⁵

Similarly, the first shooting of the ELC show a similar trend, as shown in Table 5 below.

ELC 1905 Participants			
Western Cape	Score	Eastern Cape	Score
St George’s College	105	St Andrews College	141
Cape Town Normal College	99	East London Cadet Corps	138
RBHS	48	Graeme College Boys High School	126
Sea Point	78 DQ	Butterworth High School	126
Mossel Bay	78 DQ	Queens College	120
SACS	63 DQ	Cathcart Public School	99
Diocesan’s College	57 DQ	St Aidan’s College	48
WBHS	54 DQ	Kingswood College	177 DQ
		Muir College	111 DQ
Kimberley High School (OFS)	93		

Table 5: ELC 1905 Participants⁷⁶

75. ‘Cadet Corps News’, *The Kingswood College Magazine*, 9, 2 (June 1905), 4.

76. ‘Cadet Corps’, *Saint Andrew’s College Magazine*, 27, 4, 108 (December 1905), 161.

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The division of winners from 1936 to 1960 between the two regions are shown in Table 6 and this further highlights the long legacy of the regional rivalry between the Cadet detachments in schools situated of in the Eastern Cape and those in the Western Cape.

Province/Detachment	ELC Wins (Winners)	Watt's Cup Wins (Winners)
WC	16 (4)	13 (6)
SACS	10	8
Salesian Institute	2	1
Diocesan College	3	1
St Joseph College	1	1
Cape Town Christian Brothers College (CBC)		1
Salesian School		1
EC	10 (4)	13 (6)
Selborne College	4	1
Gill College		2
St Andrews College	4	2
Hoerskool Aliwal Noord	1	1
Uitenhage Marist Bros College		1
Dale College Boys High School	1	
West Bank School		4
OFS		2 (1)
CBC (Kimberley)		2

Table 6: Winning Detachments of the ELC from 1936 to 1960

Note however, that the tables above do not fully illustrate the extent, depth and closeness of the inter-regional rivalries. Figure 7 below provides further granularity by plotting the highest score for the ELC per region from 1941 to 1960.

Whereas the top Eastern Cape and Western Cape detachments remain evenly matched, Figure 7 does not indicate the highly erratic scores from the other regions. The Eastern Cape and Western Cape domination of the ELC occurred in two periods, namely the war years (during which the Eastern Cape dominated) and the 1950s that were dominated by the Western Cape.

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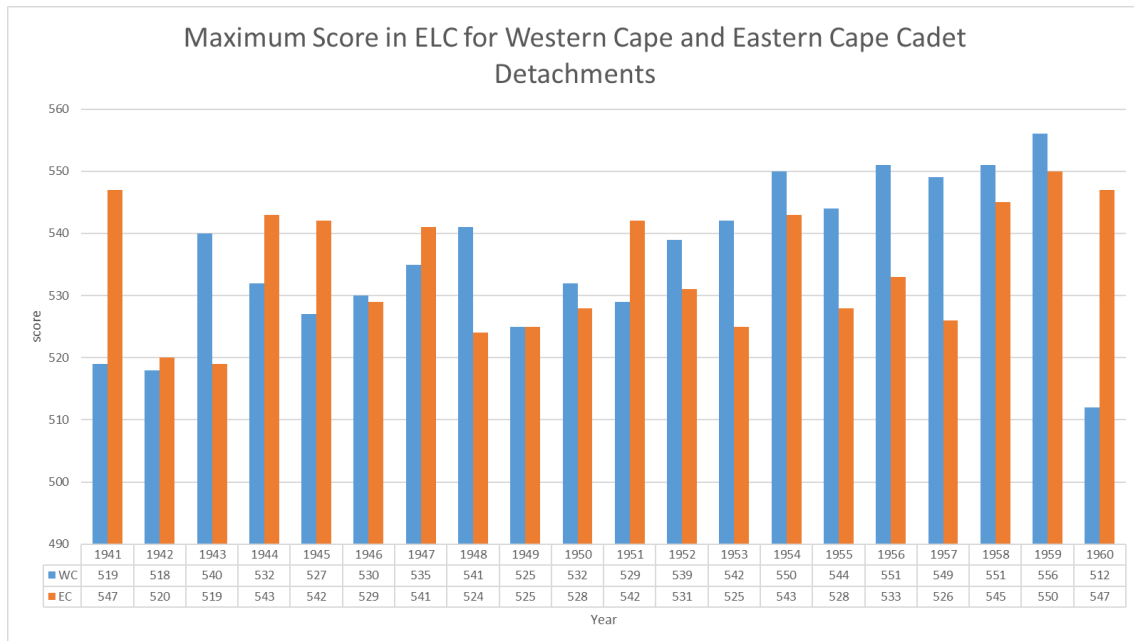


Figure 7: Maximum Score in ELC for Western Cape and Eastern Cape Cadet Detachments

Focusing on the top school cadet detachments in the ELC from 1941 to 1960, Figure 8 below shows that although the top detachments remained closely matched, two cadet detachments dominated these two identified periods. Selborne College (in the the Eastern Cape) dominated in the war period, and SACS had the best results in the 1950s, standing almost unopposed in the ELC. Such changes in fortune over time suggest that although environmental influences, such as historical continuity of cadet detachments, investment in infrastructure and societal endorsement of youth musketry may all contribute to shooting efficiency and (as seen in the Diocesan results), the human element also influenced the results.

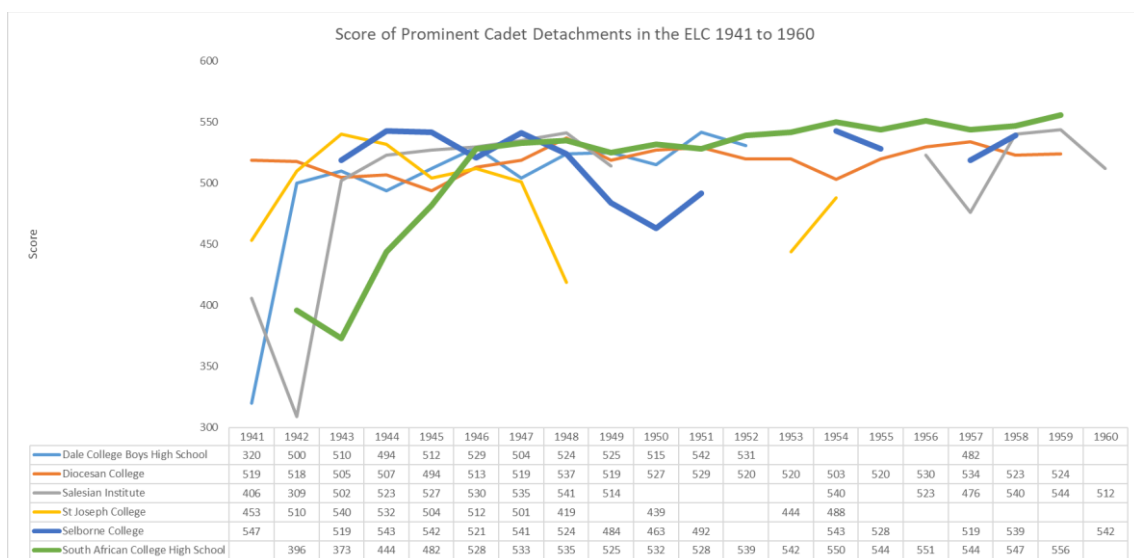


Figure 8: Score of Prominent Cadet Detachments in the Empire League Challenge 1941-1960

During the inter-war years, St Andrews College achieved successes that Selborne College and SACS repeated these in the war and after the war respectively.

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Figure 9, below, shows the scores of St Andrew's College for the 1930s and 1940s. St Andrew's College attributed their long run of success to two shooting coaches, a Mr Lightfoot (1926 to 1929)⁷⁷ and Mr W.R.G. "Rex" Palmer (1935-1938).⁷⁸ Lightfoot's hard work showed in the marked improvement in 1926;

Our thanks are due to Mr. Lightfoot for the very able and painstaking manner in which he has coached the members of the teams. The high standard of the shooting is due, in a large measure, to his invaluable work.⁷⁹

No higher praise can be given Mr. Lightfoot for his untiring energy in coaching shooting than to regard the tremendous improvement in this branch of the College activities –improvement not only in scoring results, but also in knowledge of the science of shooting.⁸⁰

Palmer was an Andean Old Boy who had shot for the college team in 1920.⁸¹ He began to assist with shooting in 1935,⁸² and focused on coaching on the open range:

Shooting on the Open Range has started and has been rather disappointing, but owing to the coaching of our 9th man (Mr Rex Palmer) improvement can be seen. We shall be well prepared to meet the Old Andeans on 27th November. We also thank Mr Palmer for coming out to the Range and coaching during practices.⁸³

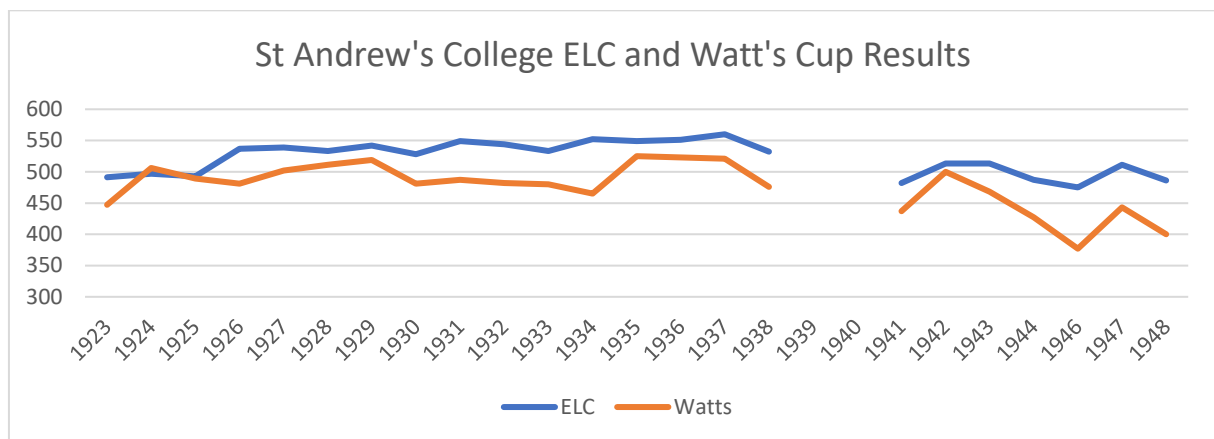


Figure 9: St Andrews College ELC and Watt's Cup Results ⁸⁴

77. 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 22, 1, 193 (April 1929), 16–17.
78. 'Shooting', *The Andean: St Andrew's College Magazine*, 26, 211 (November 1935), 42; 'Shooting', *The Andean: St Andrew's College Magazine*, 27, 218 (April 1938), 47.
79. 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 18, 3, 186 (December 1926), 38–40.
80. 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 20, 3, 189 (November 1927), 17–19.
81. 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 24, 1, 196 (June 1930), 52.
82. 'Shooting', *The Andean, St. Andrew's College Magazine*, 26, 211 (November 1935), 42.
83. 'Shooting', *The Andean, St. Andrew's College Magazine*, 26, 214 (November 1936), 43.
84. Graph compiled from data in 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 46, 3, 180 (December 1924), 34; 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 47, 3, 183 (December 1925), 13; 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 18, 3, 186 (December 1926), 39;

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Figure 9 shows that the shooting scores, already reduced by the change of the size of the target after St Andrew's "possible" in 1937, dropped even further when Rex Palmer stopped coaching the shooting team at the end of 1938.

We regret to say that Mr Rex Palmer, who has been our invaluable coach for many years, has found it impossible to continue, and we wish to express our sincere thanks for all he has done for College shooting in the past.⁸⁵

Much like at St Andrew's, Selborne College also attributed its success to the master-in-charge of shooting. Their successful run began in 1940 after Mr George Smith left the West Bank School. Mr Smith had a reputation for musketry training after coaching the West Bank to victory in the Watt's Cup from 1936 to 1939.⁸⁶ At Selborne College he quickly repeated his success but interestingly had better success with the senior boys, winning the ELC in 1941, 1944, 1945, and 1947 and the Watt's Cup only in the year 1942.⁸⁷

SACS provides another example of the influence that the shooting coach had on the success of the cadet teams. SACS attributes its almost complete domination of the 1950s competitions to the singular efforts of a Mr NA Vlok. He arrived at SACS in 1945 from King Edward VII School in Johannesburg and almost immediately set to work improving the marksmanship at the school.⁸⁸ From 1946 to 1948 SACS finished third in the ELC and in the Watt's cup improved from 10th in 1946 to third place in 1948. In 1949 SACS was on the cusp of domination with the seniors tying with Dale College for first place in the ELC and the juniors came fourth behind Gill College in

'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 20, 3, 189 (November 1927), 18; 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 21, 3, 192 (December 1928): 6; 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 22, 1, 193 (April 1929), 16–17; 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 23, 3, 195 (December 1929), 7–8; 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 24, 1, 196 (June 1930), 52; 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 25, 1, 198 (May 1931), 75; 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 25, 2, 200 (November 1931), 57–58; 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 25, 4, 202 (August 1932), 29; 'Cadet Corps', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 25, 4, 203 (November 1932), 40; 'Shooting', *S. Andrew's College Magazine*, 25, 2, 205 (1933), 52; 'Shooting', *The Andean: St. Andrew's College Magazine*, 26, 208 (November 1934), 38; 'Shooting', *The Andean: St. Andrew's College Magazine*, 26, 211 (November 1935), 41; 'Shooting', *The Andean: St. Andrew's College Magazine*, 26, 212 (May 1936), 43; 'Shooting', *The Andean: St. Andrew's College Magazine*, 26, 214 (November 1936), 43; 'Shooting', *The Andean: St. Andrew's College Magazine*, 27, 217 (1937), 43; 'Shooting', *The Andean: St. Andrew's College Magazine*, 27, 219 (August 1938), 38; 'Shooting', *The Andean: St. Andrew's College Magazine*, 27, 220 (November 1938), 69–70.

85. 'Shooting', *The Andean: St. Andrew's College Magazine*, 27, 220 (November 1938), 70.

86. DoD, VSV 414, File: Watts Challenge Cup; Watts Challenge Cup.

87. Emslie and Webster, *Bearers of the Palms*, 185.

88. 'Cadet Notes', *South African College Schools Magazine* 15, 2 (December 1945), 65.

the Watt's Cup.⁸⁹ The following year SACS consolidated its dominance in both competitions. In 1950, it won the ELC outright for the first time and the junior team improved its position by finishing third in the Watt's Cup.⁹⁰ SACS dominated both competitions from 1951 to 1959 with only two lapses in form. The first was in 1951, when the senior team finished fourth in the ELC, and in 1954, when the juniors disappointed by finishing third in the Watt's Cup.⁹¹ In 1957, SACS not only celebrated a 5-year winning streak in the ELC but also registered record scores in both competitions (ELC 551/560 and Watts 531/560).⁹² The role played by individual shooting instructors seems to be consistent between three schools from very different geographic areas.

Conclusion

The British Army's failings during the Second Anglo-Boer War aroused interest in South African colonial society for shooting competitions. Numerous prominent soldiers and businessmen championed a robust marksmanship culture in the school cadet movement. Within the borders of the old Cape Colony two competitions, the ELC and Watts endured from 1910 until after republic in 1960. Despite the abundance of cadet shooting competitions, South African historians have devoted very little attention to youth shooting. This article, using the results of two competitions, has analysed issues of location, loyalty, age, and performance in cadet shooting.

Participation in these two competitions occurred in a wider political-military context in South Africa. The Second World War both militarised and divided the white South African population. The militarising effect of the Second World War accounts for the increased participation in the competitions. The political loyalties of the cadet officers and schoolmasters may have influenced the participation in the events, both during and after the war. After 1948, the increased attention given to the cadet system by the Minister of Defence, Frans Erasmus, may explain the anomalous peak in participation in 1949 and 1950. His reforms may have triggered interest in shooting in the predominantly anti-war cadet detachments and new cadet detachments. The last increase in participation in the late 1950s coincided with the discussion and passing of the Defence Act of 1957 which marked the decolonisation and renaming of the UDF as the SADF. These tentative parallels offer avenues for further research.

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89. 'Shooting', *South African College School Magazine*, 15, 6 (December 1947), 50; 'Cadet Notes', *South African College School Magazine*, 15, 8 (December 1948), 35, 39; 'Shooting Notes', *South African College School Magazine*, 16, 1 (June 1950), 56.
90. 'Shooting Notes', *South African College School Magazine*, 16, 3 (June 1951), 60.
91. 'Shooting Notes', *South African College School Magazine*, 16, 5 (June 1952), 63; 'Shooting Notes', *South African College School Magazine*, 17, 4 (December 1955), 43.
92. 'Shooting Notes', *South African College School Magazine*, 17, 8 (December 1957), 65.

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Marksmanship efficiency in the competitions shows that the older cadets shot better on average throughout most of the period of review. This can be ascribed to the younger boys being less experienced and less coached than the older boys. However, in 1958 when the age limit for the Watt's Cup was increased to seventeen, the junior teams outperformed the now reduced senior teams. In terms of political loyalty, the pro-war and predominantly English-speaking cadet detachments shot better than the anti-war detachments. The reforms made by Erasmus did not reduce the pro-war detachment domination of the competitions. The consistent lacklustre performance of the predominantly rural Afrikaner anti-war cadet detachments suggests that neither the rural setting nor an enduring legacy stemming from the Boer 'martial race' mythology were persistent contributors to cadet shooting results in the Cape Province. These findings however may be unique to the Cape Province and require further research.

The geographic rivalry between the winning cadet detachments was a persistent feature of the competitions, with cadet detachments from the Eastern Cape and the Cape Peninsula dominating the contests. Although the top cadet detachments were closely matched, three school cadet detachments surface as consistent winners, namely St Andrew's College, Selborne College, and SACS. All three schools attribute their persistently high scores to their shooting coaches, and performance dropped when these men were not available to coach. This suggests that although environmental factors, such as tradition, infrastructure, and participation are important contributing factors, good instruction can be the deciding factor for excellence.

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