

**VEREENIGING HET ROODE KRUIS VAN GENÈVA.**  
**Oranje Vrystaat Afdeling – Ambulance Commissie**

Description of archival document:

Title: Hand-numbered [No. 391] bilingual Certificate of Authority  
Origin: Bloemfontein, Oranje Vrijstaat Republiek  
Physical Description: Leaf from a bound, printed book each folio perforated down the left margin  
Dimensions: 22 x 21 cm  
Material: Gray laid paper; printing in red and black India ink  
Watermark: Britannia facing right in a cartouche with a “St. Edward’s” crown above. That portion below mid-chest not visible

Text: in Dutch & English

Red Cross Society of Geneva.  
Orange Free State-Ambulance Commission  
In terms of the Resolution of the Volksraad, dated 17<sup>th</sup> May, 1897  
*We hereby certify that bearer [C W Kies]*  
*is an active and enrolled member of this Society and is entitled to the mark of neutrality and the privileges of the Geneva Convention.*  
BLOEMFONTEIN [January 20th 1900]  
[G.A. Hill] *Secretary* [Melius de Villiers] *Chairman*

Canceller: indistinct stamp of Orange Free State-Ambulance Division, Bloemfontein in red ink.  
Script: hand-written in black ink diagonally across certificate  
Uitgereikt door }  
Issued by } A.E.W. Ramsbottom F.R.C.S. P.M.O.

**ORANJE VRYSTAAT AFDELING – AMBULANCE COMMISSIE**

Through the assistance of the Consul-General of the Oranje Vrijstaat Republiek (O.V.S.) in Holland, Dr H.P.N. Muller<sup>i</sup>, the republic was ratified as a signatory to the Geneva Convention in 28 September 1897<sup>ii</sup>. In September 1899, the Volksraad requested Dr A.E.W. Ramsbottom, then a general practitioner, to establish an ambulance corp; and appointed him as *als Hoofd van het O.V.S. Ambulans* (Principal Medical Officer of the OVS Red Cross Ambulance) assisted by an Ambulance Commission constituted of Judge M de Villiers (Chairman), J D Palmer, Advocate G A Hill (Secretary) and T Elliott (Registrar).

De Villiers makes the point that there was little formal medical organisation in the O.V.S., with doctors tending to volunteer their services without expectation of neither reward nor reimbursement for expenses. Doctors quoted as being formally associated with the ambulance service include Drs. C.H. Bidwell, O.C.H. Krause, G.A. Mangold, H.J. Poutsma, A.E.W. Ramsbottom, S.J.J. Van der Poel, D.J.L. Van Wyk and J.B. Voortman.

So well did the service function under the headship of Ramsbottom that it received accolades and significant support from a number of European governments. Throughout the course of the war, various base hospitals were established by the OVS Ambulance, their management frequently being relinquished thereafter to the more sophisticated and better equipped foreign ambulance corps.

The Ambulance Commission served as the official organ of the International Red Cross in the O.V.S, and through the office of the Registrar of the OVS Ambulance widely informed people of the content and meaning of the Articles of the Geneva Convention. The same was not the case amongst the British allies, resulting in many serious contraventions of the Convention as a result.



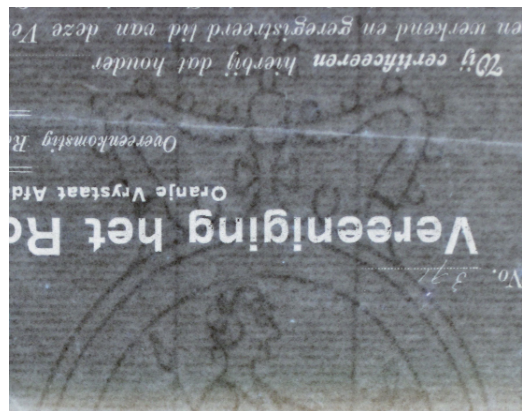
Certificate No. 391 issued in the name of C W Kies



Negative image of Certificate No. 391



Similar image of Britannia to that used



Watermark: Britannia in a cartouche with a "St. Edward's" crown above

## **ALFRED ERNEST WILLIAM RAMSBOTTOM**

M.D. (Dublin, 1902), F.R.C.S.(Ireland, 1896), L.K.Q.C.P.(Ireland, 1883) (1860-1921).

Born in Grahamstown (1860), Ramsbottom matriculated at Grey College, Bloemfontein (1878), qualified with a L.K.Q.C.P. (Ireland, 1883), became a district surgeon at Fauresmith (1884-1895). He later gained a post-graduate F.R.C.S. (Ireland, 1896), thereafter returning to general practice in Bloemfontein.

He married Mary Isabel née Smith of Sea Point, Cape at Fauresmith, OVS and together they had five children.

At outbreak of the South African War he was appointed *als Hoofd van het O.V.S. Ambulans* and served in this capacity until he, together with Drs. Bidwell, Krause and Voortman, was captured by the British Forces whilst tending the injured after the Battle of Modder River (28 November 1899). He was sent by rail to Cape Town in an open cattle truck, only to be returned ten days later but without the ambulances which the British confiscated. He was again taken into custody by the British on 26 December 1900 and held under house arrest in Bloemfontein until he travelled to Europe in 1901.

In Ireland he gained a M.D. (Dublin, 1902), thereafter returning to his Bloemfontein practice. He became President of the Orange River Colony Medical Council upon its creation (1904); and was President of the Eighth South African Medical Congress, Bloemfontein (1906).

With the advent of Responsible Government (1907), responding to a public request, he retired from practice, was elected to the Orange River Colony Legislative Assembly and became Colonial Treasurer; and later first Administrator of the Province of the Orange Free State (1910-1915). He returned to medical practice at Heilbron (1915-1920), whereafter he travelled to London intending further postgraduate study. He died in Guys Hospital soon after his arrival on 16 April 1921<sup>iii</sup>. His wife died on 24 December 1944 in Johannesburg<sup>iv</sup>.

He was a profoundly patriotic English-speaking burgher and devout member of the Anglican Church. He is characterized as having been extremely capable both as a physician and politician, with an unflappable, polished courtesy and profound respect for his fellow man, no matter whom.

## **MELIUS DE VILLIERS**

Melius de Villiers was born 5 September 1849, Paarl<sup>v</sup>. He attended Paarl Gymnasium and South African College School. In 1872 he obtained the "Certificate of the Higher Class in Law and Jurisprudence" and this, together with two other Certificates of Merit and Attainment of the Board of Examiners, allowed him admission as an advocate to the Cape Bar.

On 15 May 1876, he was sworn in as Second Puisne Judge of the High Court of Justice of the Oranje Vrijstaat along side the Chief Justice Francis William Reitz and Justice James Buchanan. In 1898, the University of the Cape of Good Hope conferred on him the honorary degrees of MA and LLB.

In January 1889, he succeeded Reitz as Chief Justice and held the position until May 1900, the fall of Bloemfontein to the British forces during the Second Anglo-Boer War. At that time, De Villiers was refused permission to join President Steyn in the field and was sent to the Cape as a prisoner-of-war. He and his family lived in the United Kingdom between 1900-1902 whereafter he rejoined the Cape bar.

Offered the position of Chief Justice of the Orange River Colony by Alfred Lord Milner, he declined citing as his reason the oath of allegiance he had sworn to the independence of the former Oranje Vrijstaat. In 1905, the Law Faculty of the University of Leyden, Netherlands established a Chair in "Zuid-Afrikaansche Recht" which he accepted. There he became a staunch advocate of and international authority on Roman-Dutch Law. He held the post with distinction until 1912, when he resigned for reasons unknown.

Though his unassuming, almost self-deprecating nature at first had him being overlooked, his unquestionable intelligence, capacity for work, reputation for impartiality and ability for calm methodical

analysis earned him the respect of most with whom he had contact. Together with his brother, Henry Lord de Villiers, he is still acknowledged as being one of the most influential southern African jurists of his generation.

He married Sarah Adelaide Holmes-Orr who bore him four children<sup>vi</sup>. He died on 6 July 1938<sup>vii</sup> and is buried in the graveyard of the Anglican Church, Groot Drakenstein; she died on 16 January 1940<sup>viii</sup>.

## GEOFFREY ALLAN HILL

Geoffrey Allan Hill was born in Kroonstad, Orange Free State in September 1875, the son of Samuel George Hill and Anne Franklin. An attorney-at-law, in 1906 he is listed by H R Brown as being one of four attorneys with a practice in Bloemfontein<sup>ix</sup>. He married Flora MacDonald Innes circa 1901 who bore him four children, Doris Flora (1902), Basil Allan (1904) Phyllis (1906) and Geoffrey Allan (1912). He died in Bloemfontein on 25 June 1921<sup>x</sup>.

## CARL WILHELM KIES

Carl Wilhelm Kies was born in Degerloch, Stuttgart 16 November 1849, so. Carl Friedrich Kies and Susanna Elizabeth REBMANN. After living in France and England, he emigrated to southern Africa in 1872. On 30 March 1880, in Georgetown<sup>xi</sup>, he married Louisa Philippa WARDEN<sup>xii</sup> (1852-1923). Together they had four children, Susanna Elizabeth (1883), Charles Frederick (1885), Paulina (c. 1888) and Henry Douglas (1892). The family appears to have moved from the Eastern Cape to Harrismith circa. 1885. The nature of his employment is unknown. C W Kies died in Harrismith on 22 November 1921<sup>xiii</sup>

### References:

1. Brown, H(ubert) R(utherford). The Lawyers' list (1906) Publ: H.R. Brown, New York .1922
2. Burrows, E H. A History of Medicine in South Africa. Publ: A A Balkema. 1958
3. de Villiers, DP. A History of the De Villiers Family. Nationale Boekhandel Bpk, Pretoria. 1960
4. de Villiers, JC. Healers, Helper and Hospitals: A History of Military Medicine in the Anglo-Boer War. (Vol. I & II) Publ: Protea Book House, Pretoria. 2008
5. de Villiers, JC. The Medical Aspect of the Anglo Boer War, 1899 - 1902: Part 1. Military History Journal;1983: 6 (2)
6. FreeBMD <http://freebmd.rootsweb.com>
7. Schulze, W.G . Chief Justice Melius de Villiers : a Cape liberal with a Roman-Dutch heart. Fundamina 2006; 12 (1) . University of South Africa <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/3667>
8. Schulze, W.G . Chief Justice Melius de Villiers : a Cape liberal with a Roman-Dutch heart. Fundamina 2006; 12 (1) . University of South Africa <http://hdl.handle.net/10500/3667>
9. South African Archives Repository, Cape Town
10. South African Archives Repository, Bloemfontein
11. South African Archives Repository, Pretoria
12. South African Medical Journal 1921;XIX Jan-Dec (4 April);156-157. Obituary: Dr AEW Ramsbottom
13. The Dublin Journal of Medical Science 1921; 4: 240. Obituary: AEW Ramsbottom
14. Walker E. A. Lord de Villiers and his Times: South Africa 1842-1914. Publ: Constable, London. 1925

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<sup>i</sup> Dr Hendrik Pieter Nicolaas Muller was an extraordinary fellow. You are referred to [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hendrik\\_Pieter\\_Nicolaas\\_Muller](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hendrik_Pieter_Nicolaas_Muller) for an excellent synopsis of his career.

<sup>ii</sup> Spies F J du T. quoted in de Villiers, JC. Healers, Helper and Hospitals: A History of Military Medicine in the Anglo-Boer War. (Vol. I; 61: ref. 53)

<sup>iii</sup> TAB MHG REFERENCE: 46494 DESCRIPTION: RAMSBOTTOM, ALFRED ERNEST WILLIAM. 1921. REMARKS: SURVIVING SPOUSE MARY ISABEL RAMSBOTTOM (BORN SMITH).

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BMD: Deaths Jun QRT 1921 Ramsbottom Alfred E W 60yrs Register Ref: Southwark 1d 6

The couple had four daughters, Kathleen Nora, Enid May, Doreen (Roberts) & Eileen Alice (Whitfield b. 27 October 1901), and one son, Mr Justice William Henry Ramsbottom (1894-1960) later famous for his (politically counter-intuitive) judgment concerning the activities of Nelson Mandela.

<sup>iv</sup> TAB MHG REFERENCE: 363/45 DESCRIPTION: RAMSBOTTOM, MARY ISABEL (BORN SMITH). 1944

<sup>v</sup> He was the seventh child of Carel Christiaan de Villiers and Dorothea Elisabeth Retief. Four brothers all joined legal profession; the eldest, Jacob (Japie) Nicolaas Pieter de Villiers (1837-1922), became a magistrate at Victoria West and member of parliament for Worcester, Cape; the second eldest Lord Henry de Villiers (1842-1914) was Chief Justice of the Cape (1873-1910), first Chief Justice of the Union of South Africa (1910-1914); the third eldest, Carel (Charles) Christiaan de Villiers (1847-1937) became an eminent attorney at the Cape bar and member of parliament for Malmesbury; Melius de Villiers (1849-1938) was born in Paarl, the fourth and youngest brother. He died aged 88 years at the home of his son, in Banhoek, Stellenbosch.

<sup>vi</sup> Children: Francis Melius (d.1946); Claudine Seugnet Taillefer (d. ), Marguerite Gardiol (d.1950), Frances Lilian Thompson (d. between July 1938-December 1939).

<sup>vii</sup> KAB MOOC VOLUME\_NO 6/9/5120 REFERENCE: 60179 DESCRIPTION: DE VILLIERS, MELIUS. ESTATE PAPERS. 1938. Estate in community of property appraised at £21,518/2/7.

<sup>viii</sup> KAB MOOC VOLUME\_NO 6/9/5934 REFERENCE 67500 DESCRIPTION: DE VILLIERS, SARAH ADELAIDE. NEE HOLMES-ORR. ESTATE PAPERS. 1940. She was born February 1856 in Dublin, Ireland, do. William Holmes-Orr and Katharine Jane née THOMAS. She died aged 83 yrs 11 months at Zorgvliet West, Banhoek, Stellenbosch. Estate appraised at £21,616/19/11.

<sup>ix</sup> Orange River Colony BLOEMFONTEIN 1906 : E.W.Fichardt, J.G.Fraser, J.B.M.Hertzog, Geoffrey Allan Hill

<sup>x</sup> VAB MHG REFERENCE H2177 DESCRIPTION: HILL, GEOFFREY ALLAN. EGGNOTE FLORA MACDONALD (GEBORE INNES). 1921

NAB MSCE REFERENCE 6876/1921 DESCRIPTION: HILL, GEOFFREY ALLAN. (SSP HILL, FLORA MACDONALD). 1921

<sup>xi</sup> Georgetown was established in 1812 and named after George III of Great Britain; later becoming known simply as George.

<sup>xii</sup> VAB MHG REFERENCE K2155 DESCRIPTION: KIES, CARL WILHELM. EGGNOTE LOUISA PHILIPPA (GEBORE WARDEN). 1921

<sup>xiii</sup> VAB MHG REFERENCE 16769 DESCRIPTION: KIES, LOUISA PHILLIPA. NOOIENSVAN WARDEN. EGGNOOT CARL WILHELM KIES. 1923