

Article
pub. in No. American Review
1899-1900

No. 8. Vol 8.

Subject:
A Study of the Military Problems
in South Africa

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Burlington, Vt., _____ 1900.

(1)

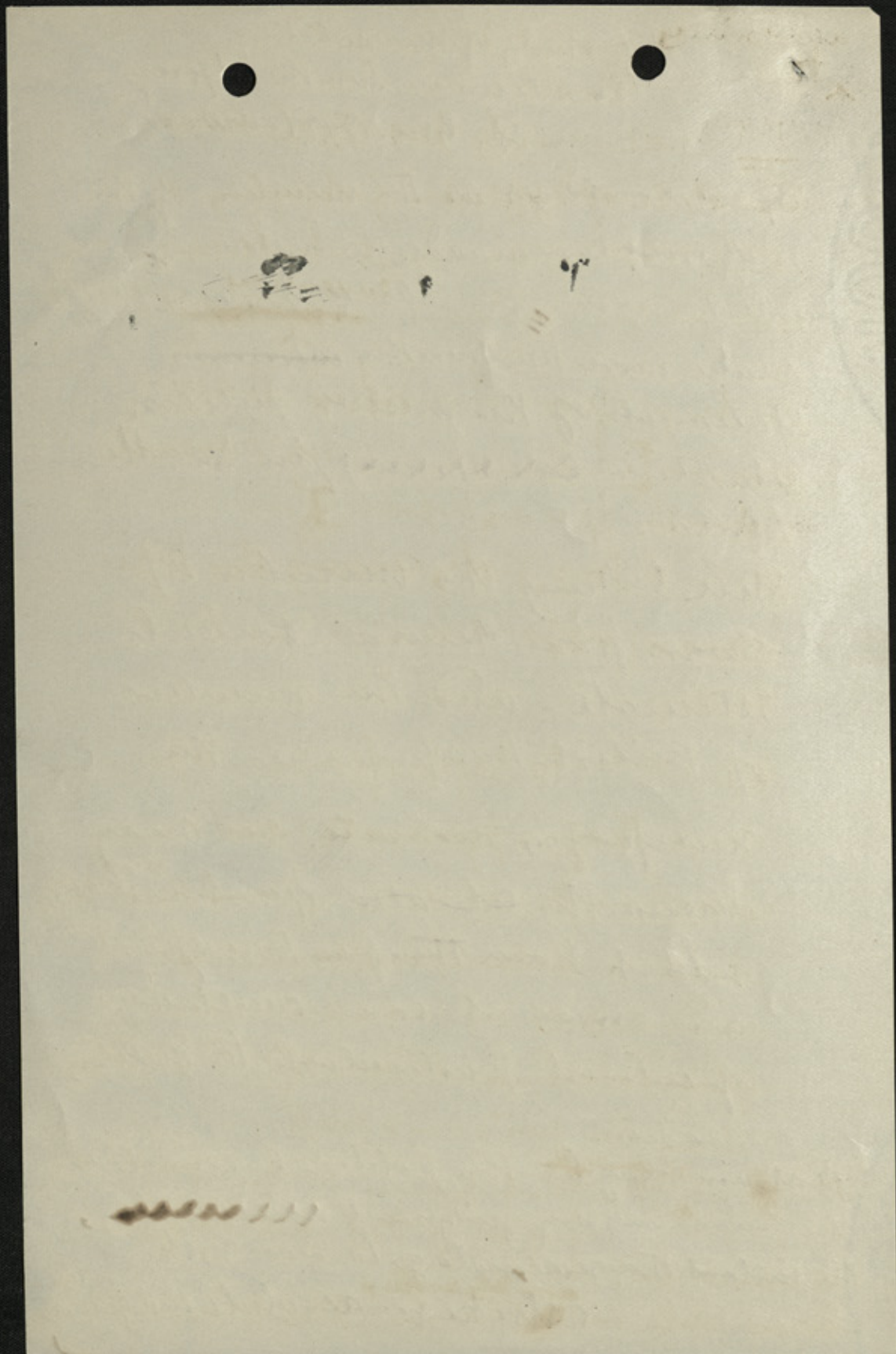
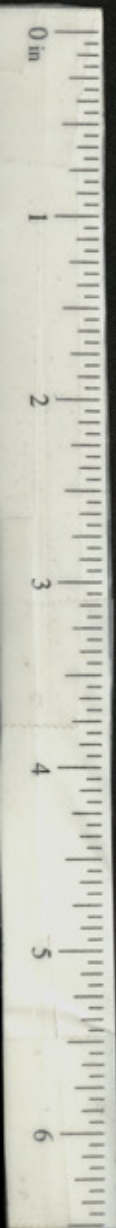
A study of the military
problems in South Africa.

By Gen. O. O. Crawford

If we could get at the numbers of the
different commands, as historians
after the events are able to do, we could
make more trustworthy estimates
statements of the present military
situation ~~existing~~ in South
Africa.

Still taking the number of
Boers from General Goubert's
estimate - and the number
of British troops from the
newspaper accounts, we may
discuss the ~~strategic~~ operations ^{tactics}
which have thus far transpired,
and arrive at some conclusions
of interest particularly to military
readers.

Whatever may be the political conditions
the Boers in my judgment ~~are~~ ^{are} ~~not~~ ^{not}
the instant they resolved to go to war with
Great Britain & strike for absolute independence.



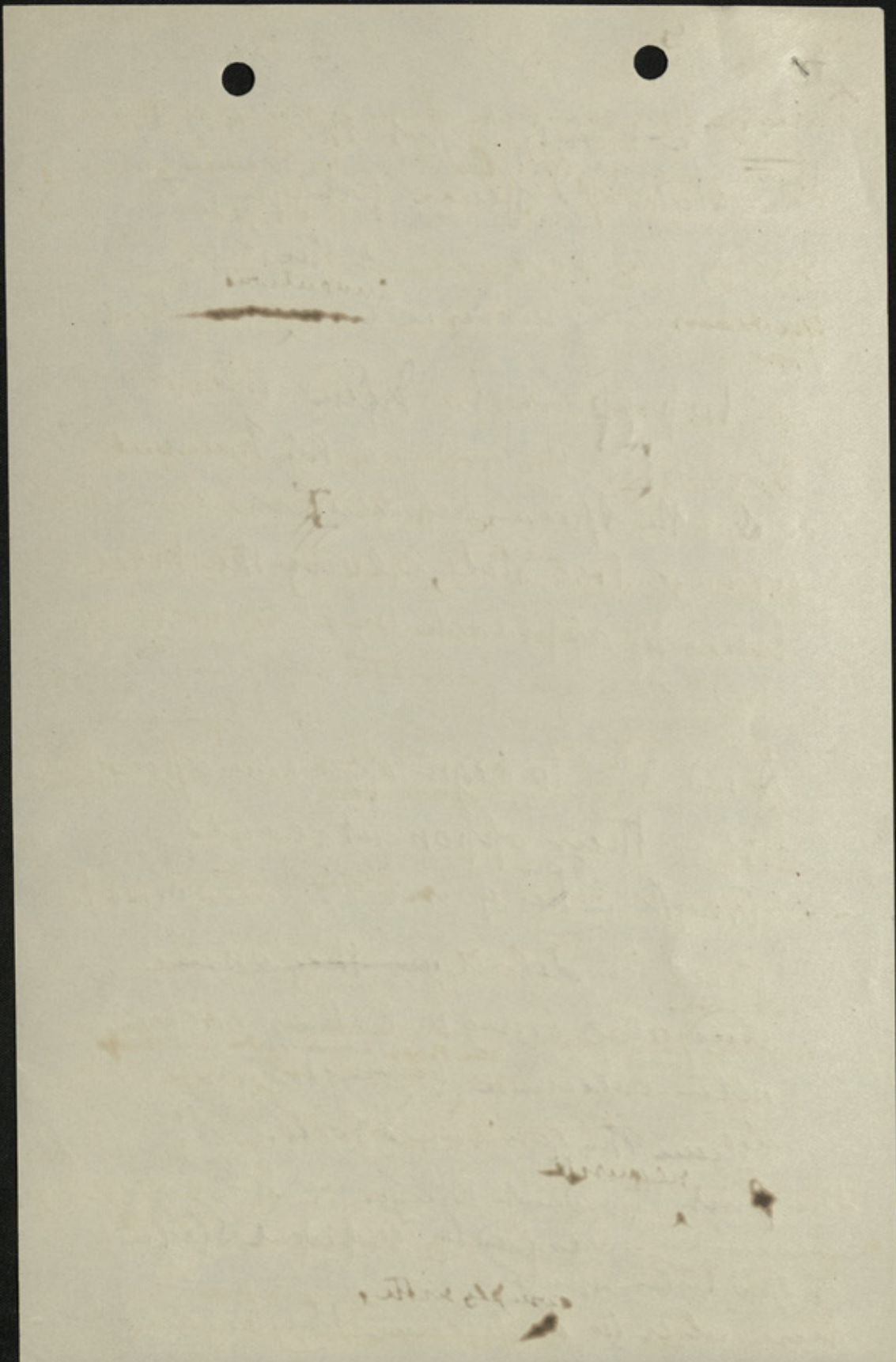
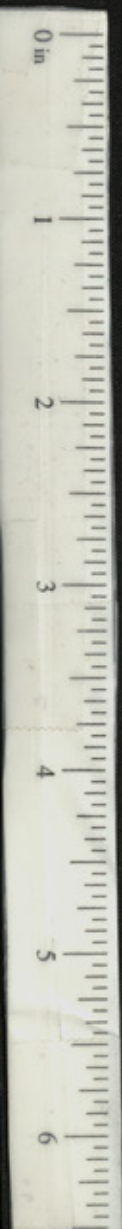
acted wisely
to do as they did (2)

1st ~~not~~ only to put their Capital
in a state of defence fortifying &
using for armament the best
procureable modern ^{inventions} armament.

2nd to prepare to defend their
borders ~~the~~ the borders of the Transvaal
or South African Republic and the
Orange Free State, along the three
lines of approach by every military
means -

And 3^d, to begin offensive operations
before their opponents could
strengthen ^{their} their garrisons, and crush
them in detail, ~~as they came~~
and also bring to battle columns
of their foes before they could
relieve the garrisoned forts.

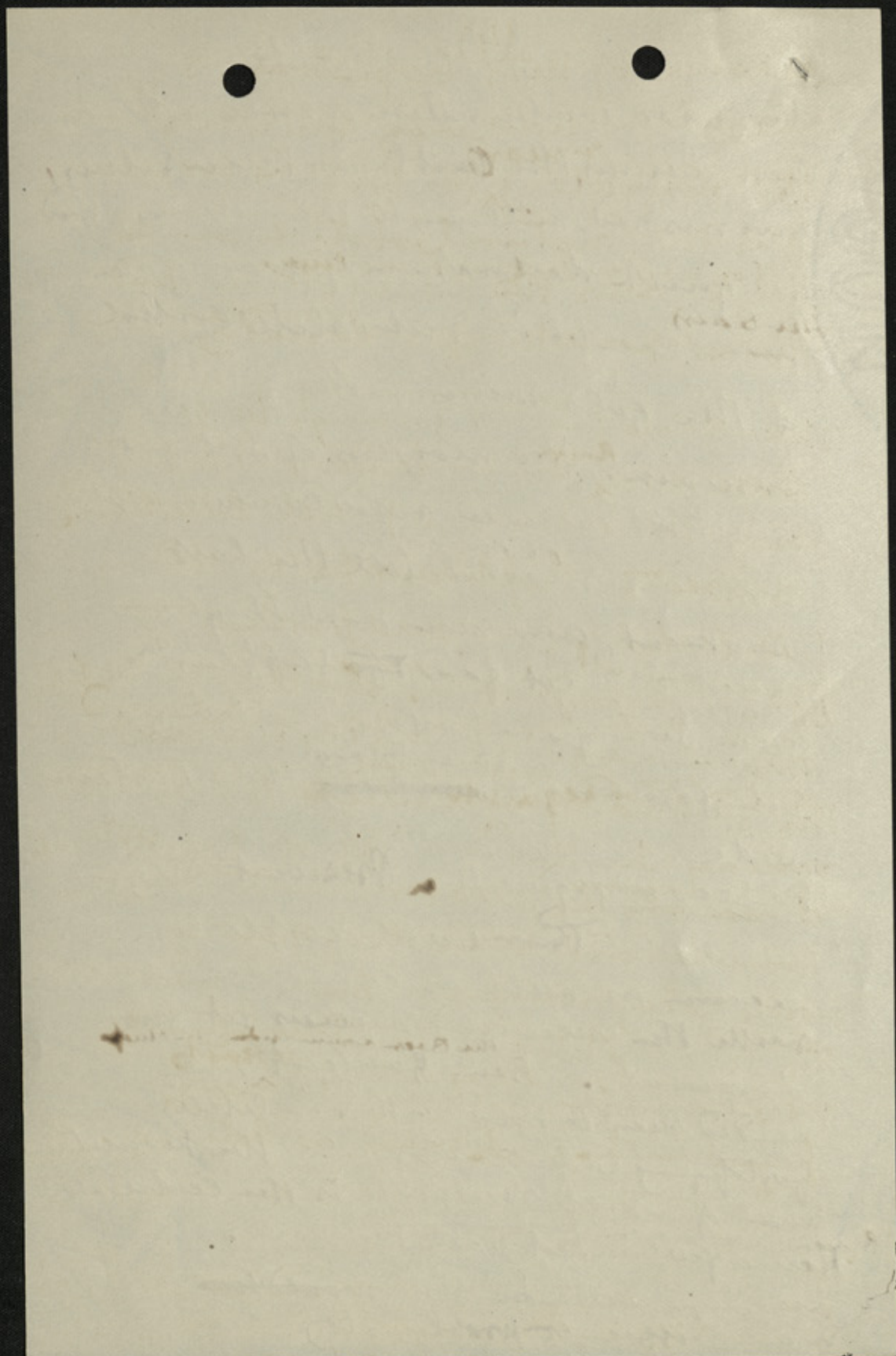
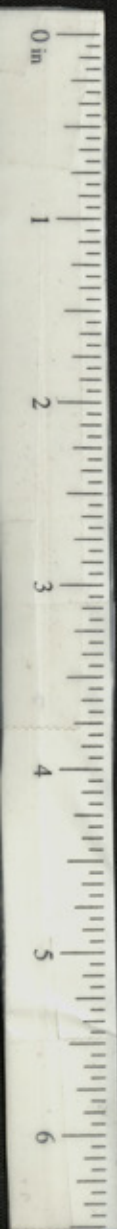
The first President Kruger & his governing
assembly - supported by President Steyn
of the sister Republic, ^{in concert with}
were able to ~~do~~ because they began



years ago to get ⁽³⁾ ready. - By a
singular combination of circumstances
their enemies, the Quitlanders, their selous,
furnished millions to their Treasury, and
the quick declaration of war gave
the Boers
then complete & absolute control
of the gold mines within their

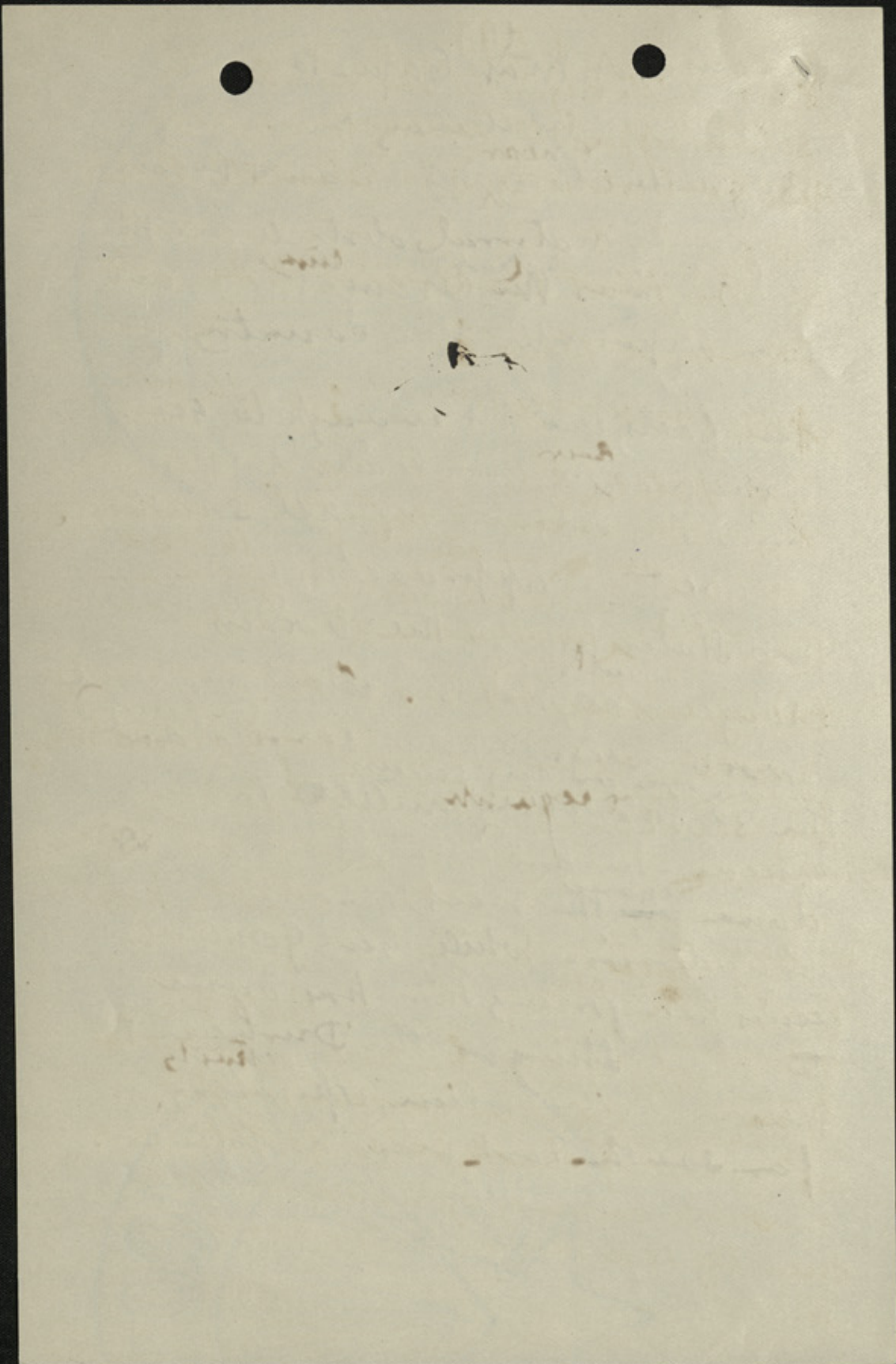
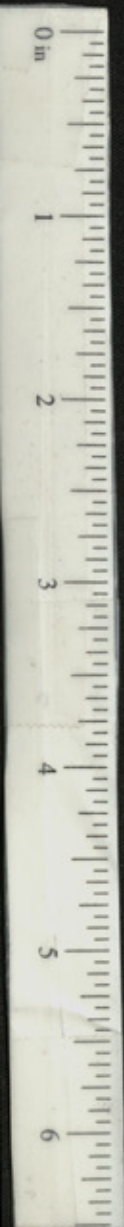
Domain. The narrowness of Delagoa
Bay kept them in rapid communication
with all markets ^{of the world}, till the last
moment, and even now they are
permitted to get food ~~the~~ supplies ^{arrange} or
from Portuguese possessions lying on
Delagoa Bay & ~~touching~~ ^{bordering} their Eastern
Side.

The second requisite in President Steyn
helped the Transvaal people to
secure as much as could be done
with the new and means at his
disposal. Gen. Buller ^{the Boer Command-in-Chief} only
needed ^{enough} men to hold with very little
fortifying to put in ^{strongest} defense the mountain
passes of which Newcastle is the centre.
Here a few ^{men with modern arms} can keep back the many.
Pres. Steyn within his State would have had
more difficult problems to solve.



because of that ⁽⁴⁾ Gape-Town &
Maifesting Railway running
150 miles ^{+ near} along his border & became
his only natural obstacle on the
S. side ^{for 200 miles (East & west line)} was the Orange River and
an apparently open country.

These facts might enough to Gen.
Grainger, a ^{very} military leader of experience,
control the defence of all southern
& western approaches to the
two States beyond the border -
Grainger who ^{evidently} had this ^{most} important
work assigned him ^{has} carried ^{forward} out
the 3^d ^{or 4th} ^{or 5th} ^{or 6th} ^{or 7th} ^{or 8th} ^{or 9th} ^{or 10th} ^{or 11th} ^{or 12th} ^{or 13th} ^{or 14th} ^{or 15th} ^{or 16th} ^{or 17th} ^{or 18th} ^{or 19th} ^{or 20th} ^{or 21th} ^{or 22th} ^{or 23th} ^{or 24th} ^{or 25th} ^{or 26th} ^{or 27th} ^{or 28th} ^{or 29th} ^{or 30th} ^{or 31st} ^{or 32nd} ^{or 33rd} ^{or 34th} ^{or 35th} ^{or 36th} ^{or 37th} ^{or 38th} ^{or 39th} ^{or 40th} ^{or 41st} ^{or 42nd} ^{or 43rd} ^{or 44th} ^{or 45th} ^{or 46th} ^{or 47th} ^{or 48th} ^{or 49th} ^{or 50th} ^{or 51st} ^{or 52nd} ^{or 53rd} ^{or 54th} ^{or 55th} ^{or 56th} ^{or 57th} ^{or 58th} ^{or 59th} ^{or 60th} ^{or 61st} ^{or 62nd} ^{or 63rd} ^{or 64th} ^{or 65th} ^{or 66th} ^{or 67th} ^{or 68th} ^{or 69th} ^{or 70th} ^{or 71st} ^{or 72nd} ^{or 73rd} ^{or 74th} ^{or 75th} ^{or 76th} ^{or 77th} ^{or 78th} ^{or 79th} ^{or 80th} ^{or 81st} ^{or 82nd} ^{or 83rd} ^{or 84th} ^{or 85th} ^{or 86th} ^{or 87th} ^{or 88th} ^{or 89th} ^{or 90th} ^{or 91st} ^{or 92nd} ^{or 93rd} ^{or 94th} ^{or 95th} ^{or 96th} ^{or 97th} ^{or 98th} ^{or 99th} ^{or 100th} ^{or 101st} ^{or 102nd} ^{or 103rd} ^{or 104th} ^{or 105th} ^{or 106th} ^{or 107th} ^{or 108th} ^{or 109th} ^{or 110th} ^{or 111st} ^{or 112nd} ^{or 113rd} ^{or 114th} ^{or 115th} ^{or 116th} ^{or 117th} ^{or 118th} ^{or 119th} ^{or 120th} ^{or 121st} ^{or 122nd} ^{or 123rd} ^{or 124th} ^{or 125th} ^{or 126th} ^{or 127th} ^{or 128th} ^{or 129th} ^{or 130th} ^{or 131st} ^{or 132nd} ^{or 133rd} ^{or 134th} ^{or 135th} ^{or 136th} ^{or 137th} ^{or 138th} ^{or 139th} ^{or 140th} ^{or 141st} ^{or 142nd} ^{or 143rd} ^{or 144th} ^{or 145th} ^{or 146th} ^{or 147th} ^{or 148th} ^{or 149th} ^{or 150th} ^{or 151st} ^{or 152nd} ^{or 153rd} ^{or 154th} ^{or 155th} ^{or 156th} ^{or 157th} ^{or 158th} ^{or 159th} ^{or 160th} ^{or 161st} ^{or 162nd} ^{or 163rd} ^{or 164th} ^{or 165th} ^{or 166th} ^{or 167th} ^{or 168th} ^{or 169th} ^{or 170th} ^{or 171st} ^{or 172nd} ^{or 173rd} ^{or 174th} ^{or 175th} ^{or 176th} ^{or 177th} ^{or 178th} ^{or 179th} ^{or 180th} ^{or 181st} ^{or 182nd} ^{or 183rd} ^{or 184th} ^{or 185th} ^{or 186th} ^{or 187th} ^{or 188th} ^{or 189th} ^{or 190th} ^{or 191st} ^{or 192nd} ^{or 193rd} ^{or 194th} ^{or 195th} ^{or 196th} ^{or 197th} ^{or 198th} ^{or 199th} ^{or 200th} ^{or 201st} ^{or 202nd} ^{or 203rd} ^{or 204th} ^{or 205th} ^{or 206th} ^{or 207th} ^{or 208th} ^{or 209th} ^{or 210th} ^{or 211st} ^{or 212nd} ^{or 213rd} ^{or 214th} ^{or 215th} ^{or 216th} ^{or 217th} ^{or 218th} ^{or 219th} ^{or 220th} ^{or 221st} ^{or 222nd} ^{or 223rd} ^{or 224th} ^{or 225th} ^{or 226th} ^{or 227th} ^{or 228th} ^{or 229th} ^{or 230th} ^{or 231st} ^{or 232nd} ^{or 233rd} ^{or 234th} ^{or 235th} ^{or 236th} ^{or 237th} ^{or 238th} ^{or 239th} ^{or 240th} ^{or 241st} ^{or 242nd} ^{or 243rd} ^{or 244}

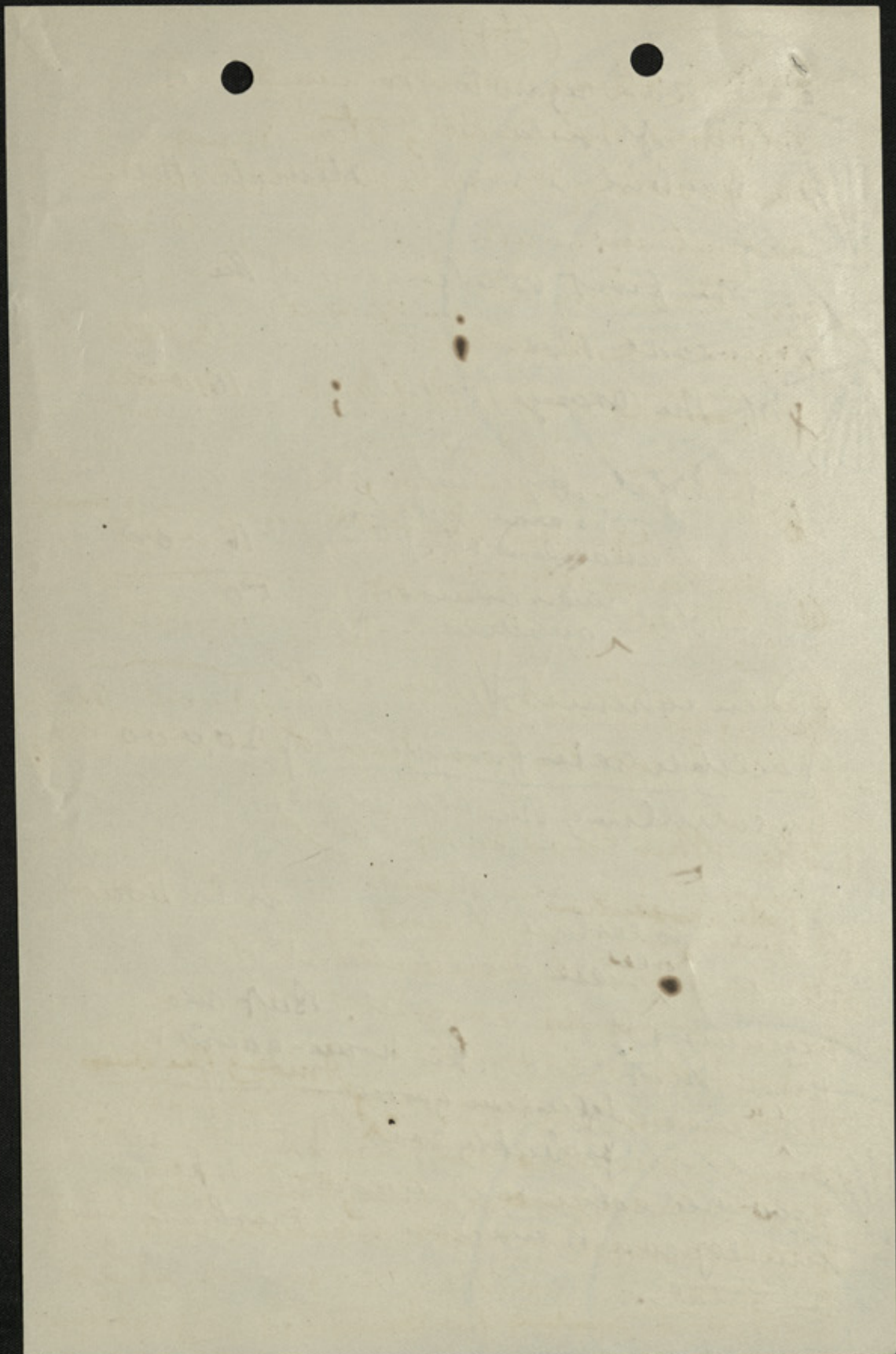
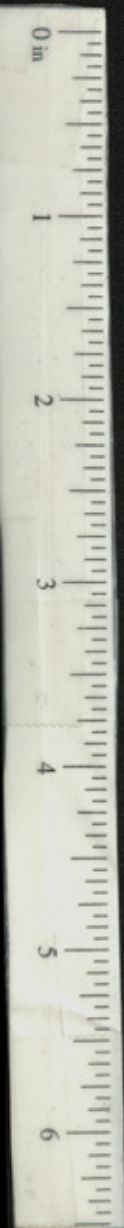


(5)
Now with regard to the number of
soldiers opposed to the British.
Gen. Goubert is said to estimate them
as follows:

The first contingent of the
"Transvaal Bataillon"; 18,000
of the Orange Free State; 16,000
of Natal, Cape Colony &
Benchuanaland ^{who are helping} 16,000
Total ^{under arms or} available -- } 50,000

And in extremity there is a
possible reinforcement of 20,000 men
by counting the old men &
boys.

We have no certain statements as to how
the Bataillon ^{forces} were distributed at the
beginning of the conflict. But we
know that besides his home-guards &
and ^{the} necessary defensive garrisons in the
Transvaal, probably 3000, Goubert had a
marchable column of 9000. That he
himself commanded on the Durban line
in Natal.



(6.)

Turning into account all the
different statements, there must
have been of the Boer force in the
mountains south of the Orange River

near Stormberg about 5000

Opposing Methuen directly on the west ---- 22,000

and ~~around~~ around Vryburg, Mafeking &c. 4000

Calling the total thus divided

Brassey's estimate

he has available --- 31,000 men

the Eastern column.
Adding the garrisons &

have - we and we have 12,000

actually on duty

Giving us in the war

for the Boer force =

43,000 men

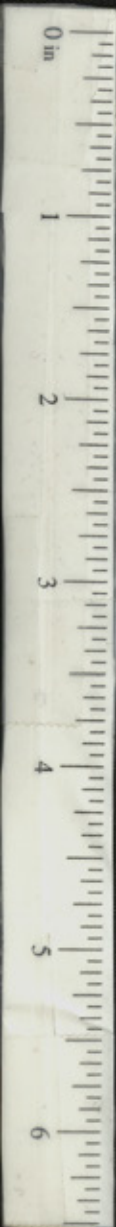
The other 2000 may be
regarded like our Minit
of the ~~Boer~~ Boer
men to be called out
when necessity demanded
for ~~short~~ very short
periods - a reserve.

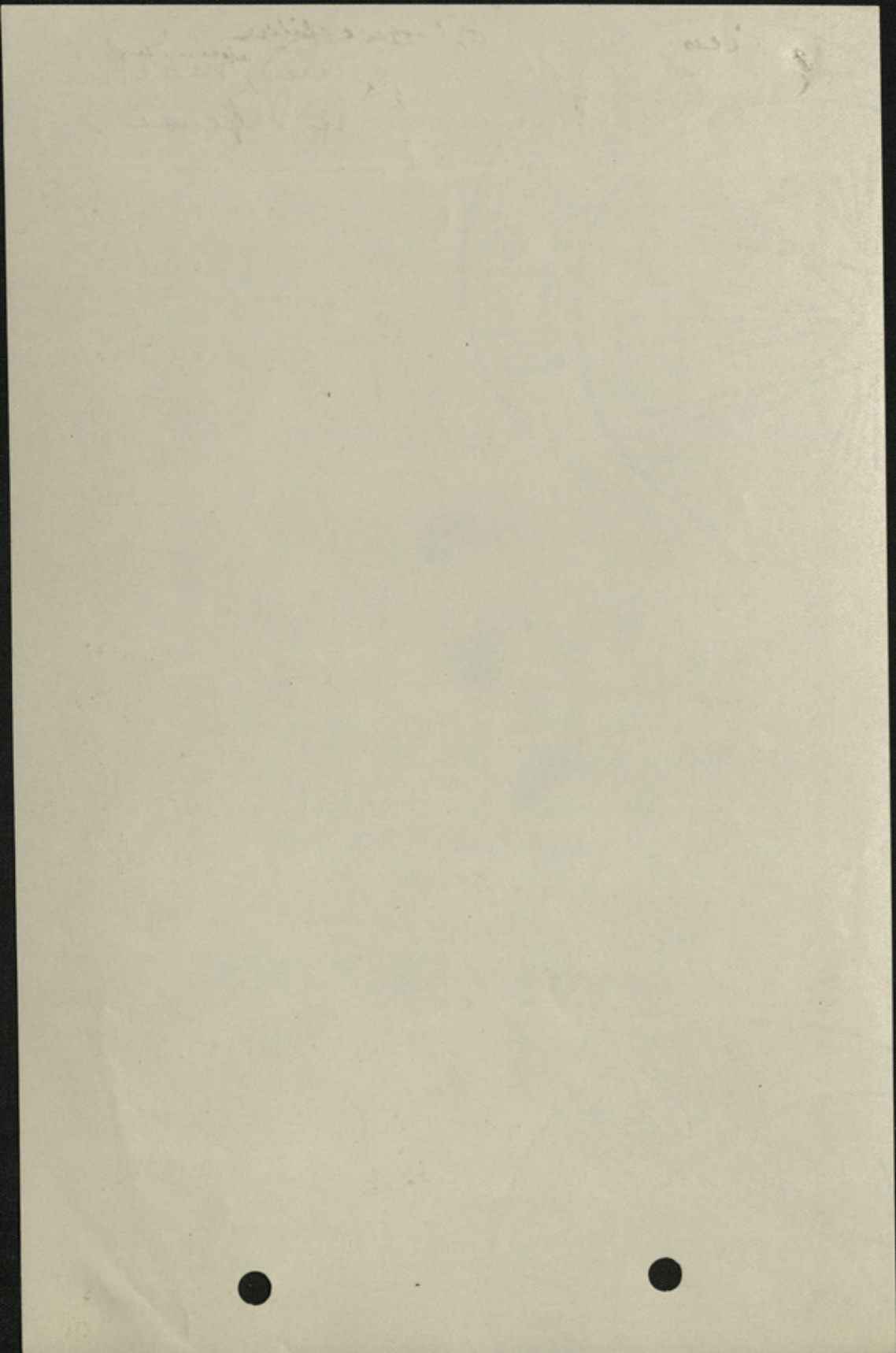
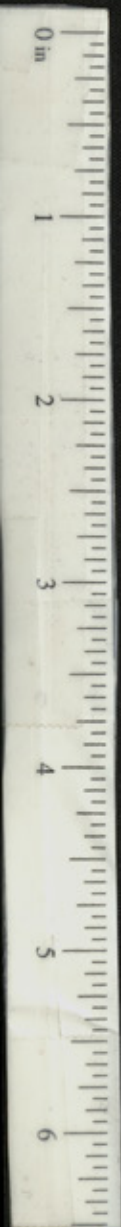
Among the Boers
The character of the troops. The mounted
infantry prevails. The Boers carry the soldiers
rapidly from place to place, then they
fight as infantry & not as cavalry with
carbines. Their artillery thus far keeps about
abreast of ~~that of~~ the British, having modern



[Faint, illegible handwriting, likely bleed-through from the reverse side of the page.]

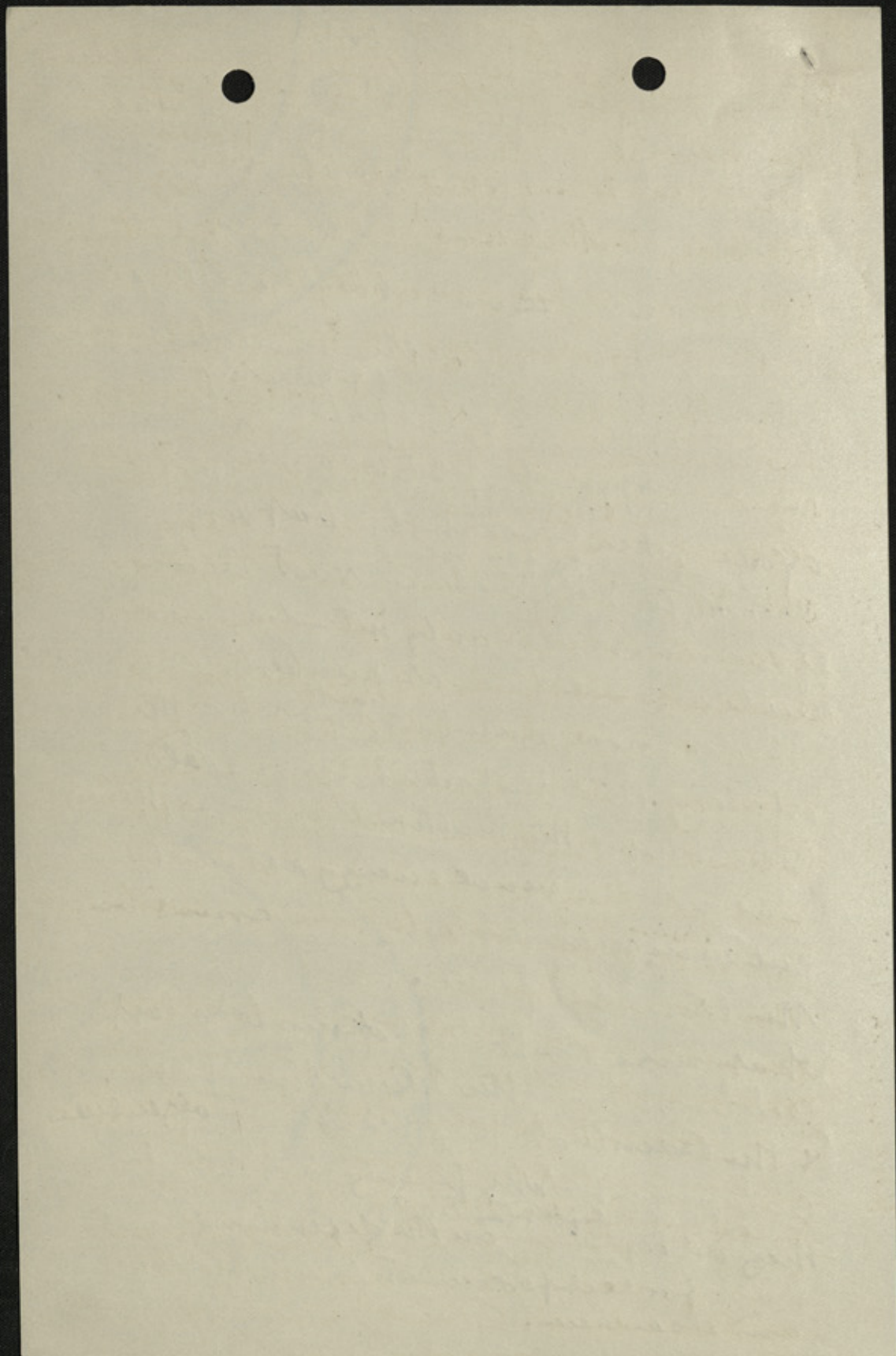
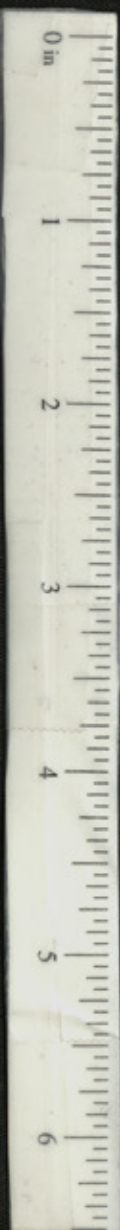
pieces of large caliber
as well as other guns, and machine
guns for close work in defense.





(8) ^{forts &}
The English had several garrisons within
the field of prospective operations when
the war began; for example 5000
at Ladysmith & 1200 at Dundee; 3000
at Kimberley, ~~1200~~ ⁸⁰⁰ at Vryburg & 1200
at Mafeking, with enough more
at Durban & Cape Town ^{+ elsewhere} to make
up an aggregate of 25000 men, - quite
a force when concentrated, but very
weak ^{when so far asunder} to hold such a vast region.
Of course it was only intended as a
nucleus. The force at Kimberley, it is
reported, now numbers ^{about} 8000 for the
defence of that important stronghold.
Cecil Rhodes, the multimillionaire is there,
and with his usual energy has doubtless
put every man able to bear arms on
the line of defence.

What were the British officers to do last
October, when the ultimatum passed,
& the Boers took the field for an offensive
campaign? - Why, plainly just what
they did do, ^{substantially} stand on the defensive &
wait for reinforcements from England
and elsewhere.



9.

Gen. White with four fifths of his garrison at Ladysmith, having men, was doing that ^{very thing} effectively at Glencoe the 20th of October. General Buller divided his guns into three parts - only one part that coming from the West did ^{eye} White aided by Gen. Symonds came to meet & overcame on that day. The British loss was about 300 & the Boer 700.

Oct. 21 ^{Saturday} came on the next combat called the battle of ^{the} Sandbagge between the same contestants. They fought all that day & Gen. White scored a ^{second} victory. Then Glencoe resisted ^{another} a second attack of the Boers - but General Buller out at Dundee failed to resist an assault ^{losing the day} & fell back to Glencoe with the remainder of his 1200 not disabled.

The next engagement was near Ladysmith. It was not called a victory for Gen. White. The British loss was heavy but the defence of Ladysmith was maintained & secured by the British Commander.

A little earlier the 17th of October the Orange-garrison of 800 was forced to surrender; but Col. Baden Powell held out against Orange's

His loss was this time about 600 killed wounded & prisoners taken

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1

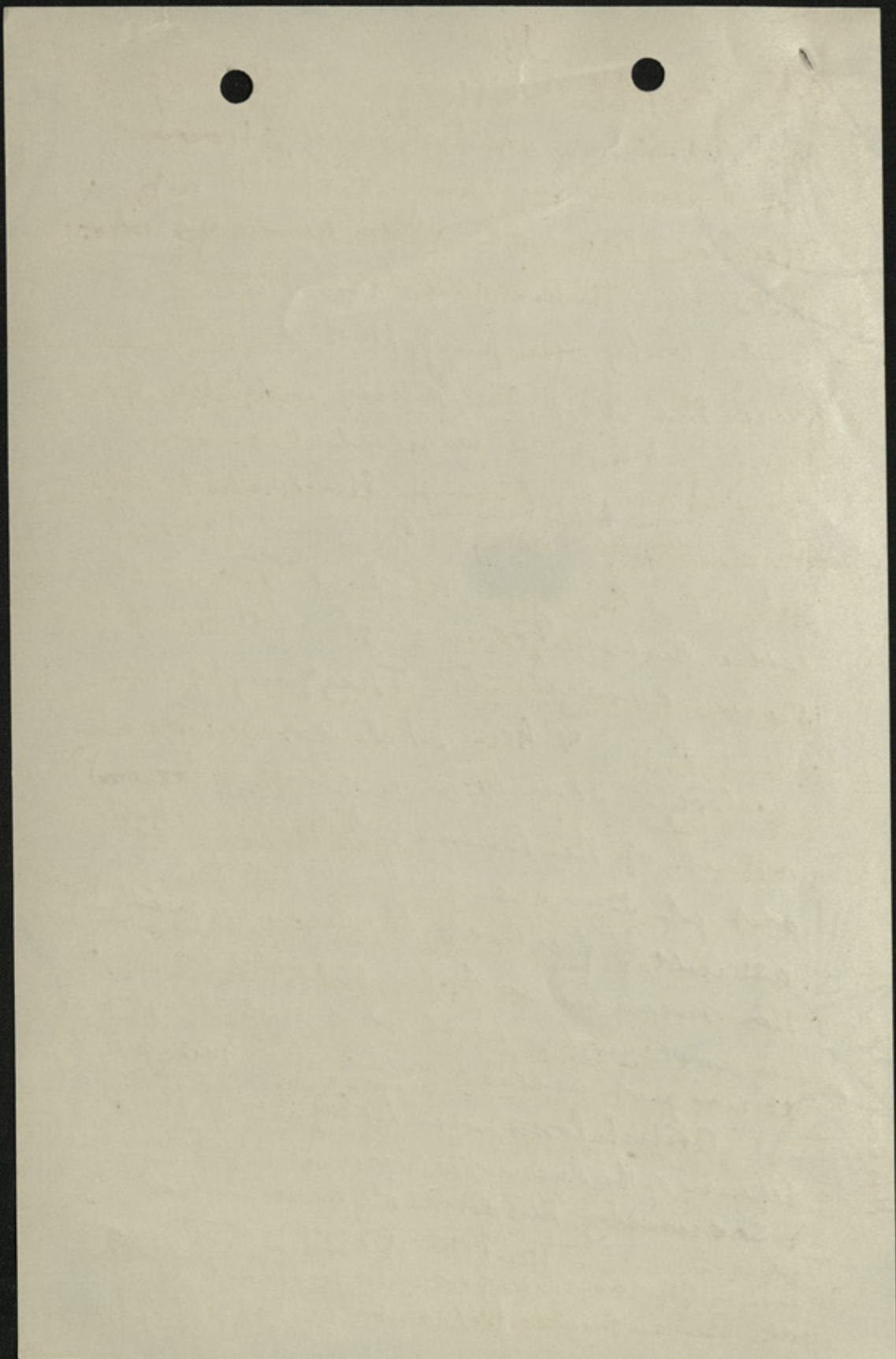
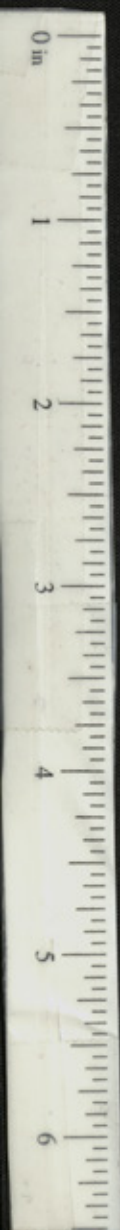
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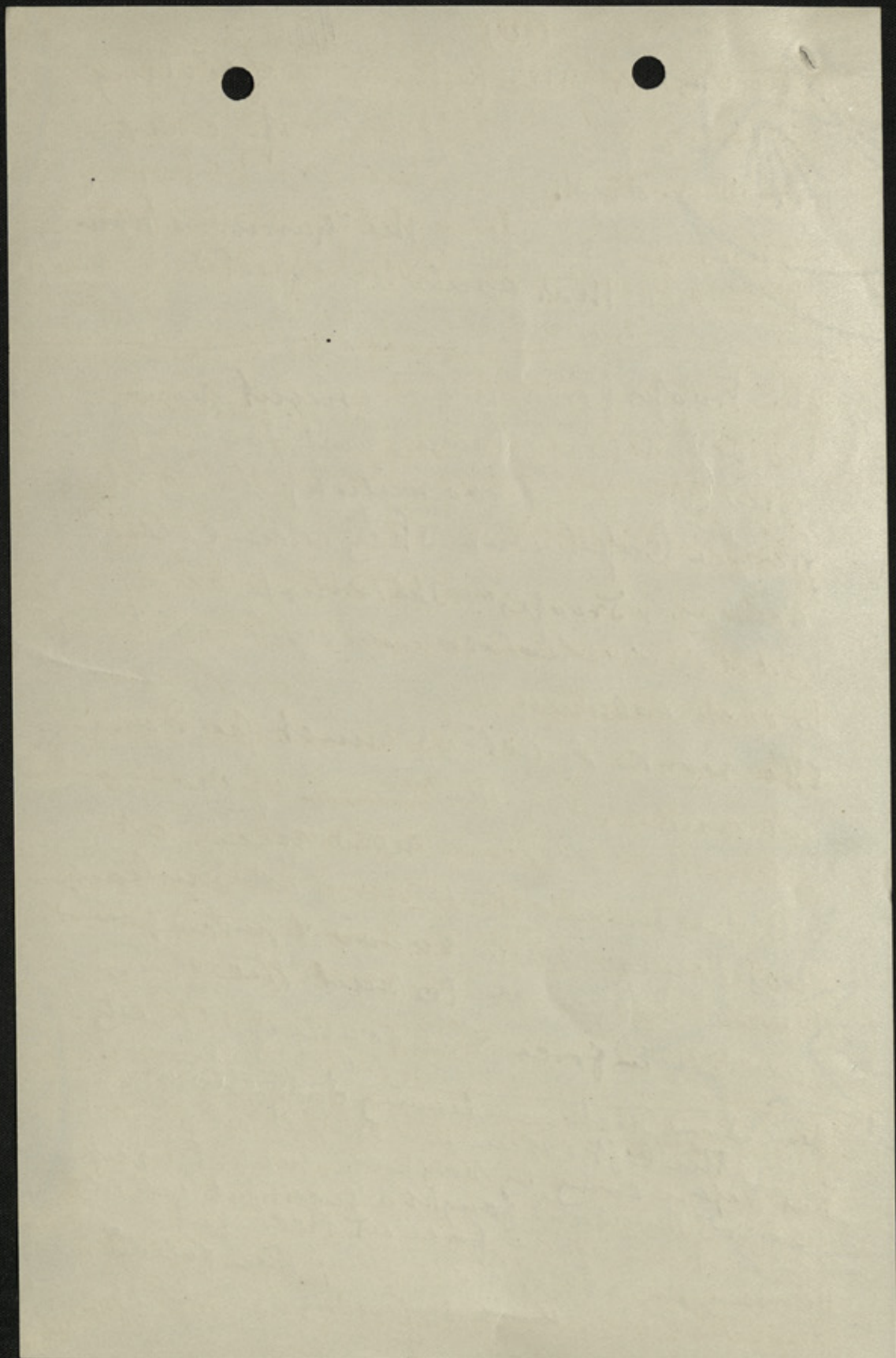
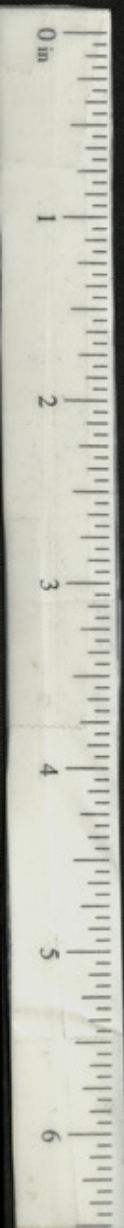
(10)
attacks or defeating inflicting
a loss upon his ^{own} force of over
a hundred.

Thus we see that the garrisons ^{had} ~~now~~
done all that could be expected of them.

The troops for reinforcement were
landed at Capetown, East London,
and Durban (800 miles up the coast
from Capetown). They were called
"Relieving Troops". The British Navy
added a wholesome contingent
to each column.

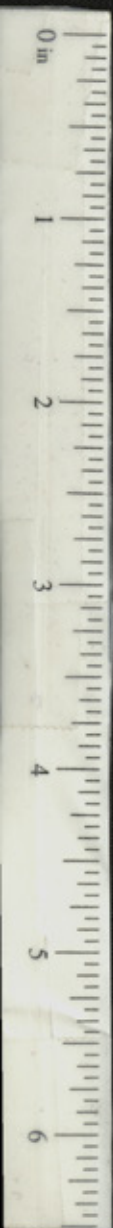
The work of relief must be done
at once. By the — of November
there were 15000 new men at
Cape Town & 15000 at Durban.
Soon increased to 20,000 & pushed forward
toward Ladysmith to meet the Boers
already in force far south of that city.

Gen. Lord Methuen leaving ^{Cape Town} ~~Ladysmith~~
with the left column - small at first
but before long, by navy help, mounting up
to 5 or 6 thousands fought a successful battle
about an equal ^{Boer} force at Belmont
Thursday the 18th of November; then followed
a second victory ~~the~~ Saturday the 25th of November.



(11)

The fighting was ^{enough} severe and the losses great; but with an energy like that of our Sheridan he pushed on to Modder River. By his reinforcement coming up by rail he had ~~at last~~ nearly 15000 soldiers with considerable artillery. The Boers ^{soon} ~~hardly~~ ^{realizing} that they had been defeated at Belmont and Graspan, were ^{well} placed in defense ~~along~~ ^{at} the Modder River, intrenching on ~~along~~ both banks & on an island which was convenient. The fight this time was stubborn indeed lasting 14 hours. Methuen's loss was 400 killed, 1800 ~~wounded & missing~~ ^{wounded & missing}. The Boer loss ^{as far as known} counts 590 killed & wounded. Methuen secured his crossing of the Modder River; but has been able to get forward ^{quite} in sight of the strongest line of intrenchments at Magersfontein. Still he communicates by long search-lights & other signal - contrivances with the Garrison at Kimberley.

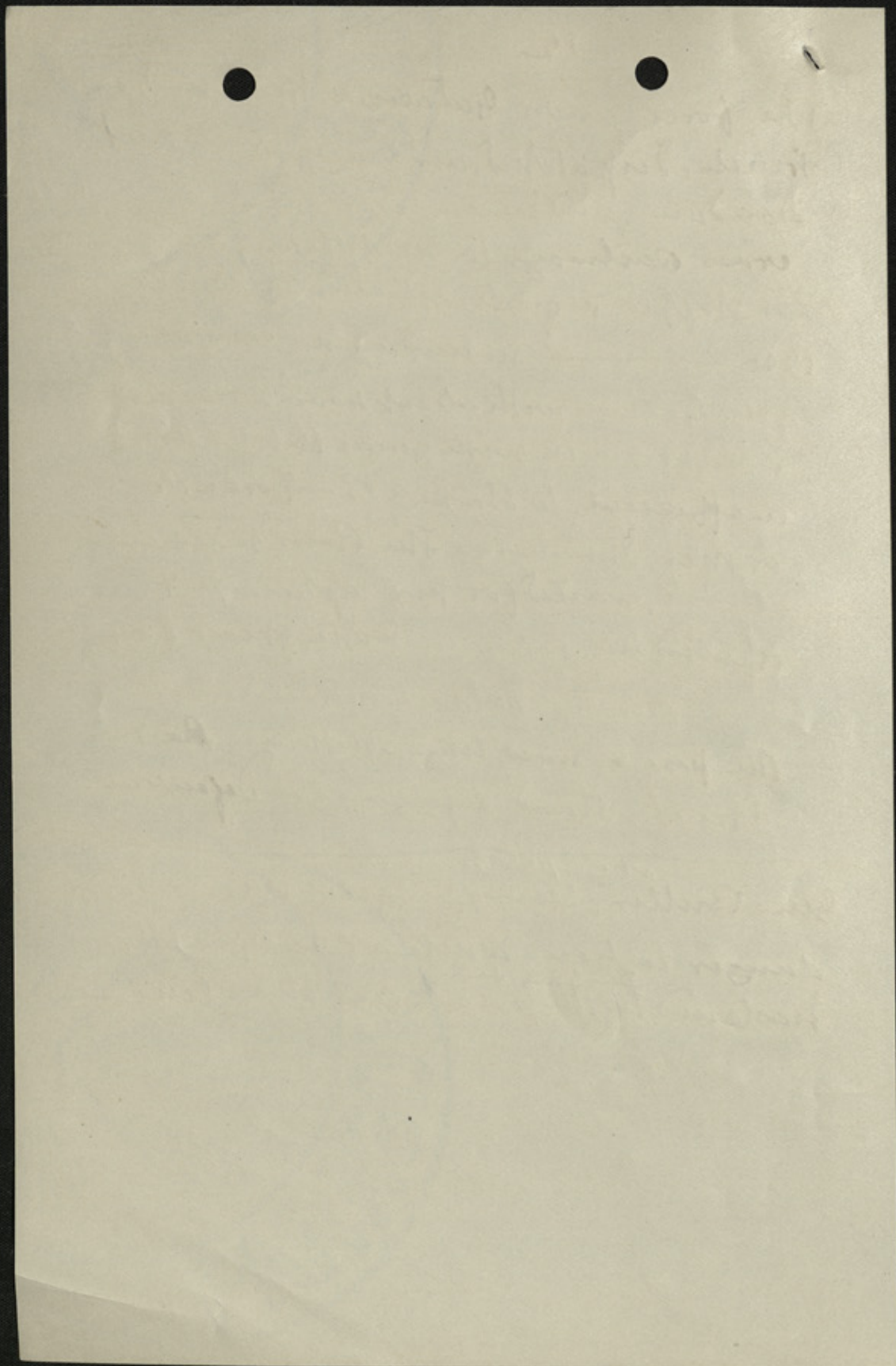
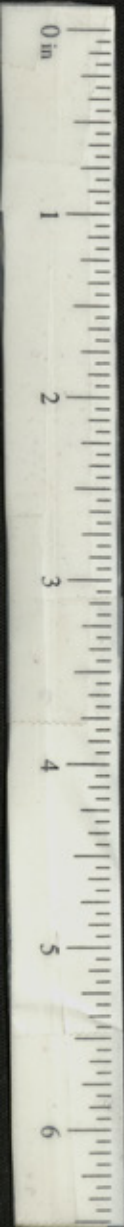


The force under Gatacre & the under French, dispatched, as I fancy, from East London - and intended to clear the cross railways to Middleburg & Be Star, ~~was~~ stopped & quite effectually debased.

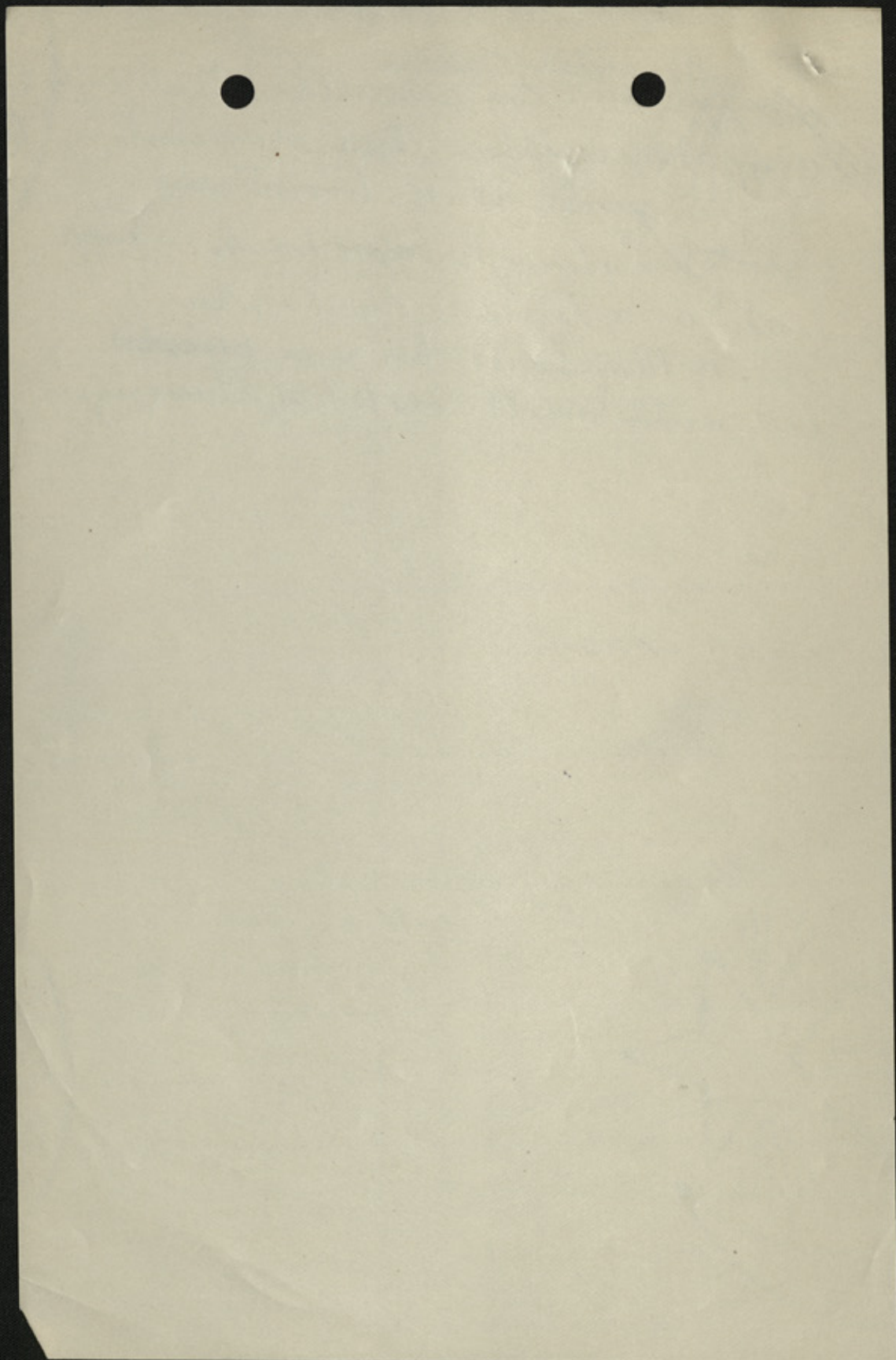
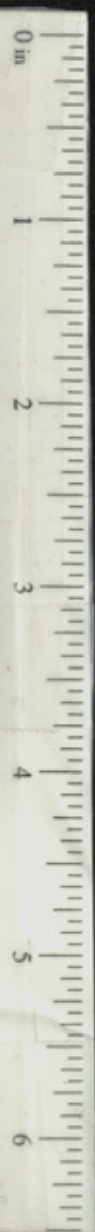
On ——— Saturday November 9th the Gatacre with about 4000 men made a night march with guides ~~who~~ ^{who} proved inefficient, to strike a Boer force at or near Stormberg. The Boers, ^{superior in numbers} ~~men~~ in fine ambush, waited for his approach & repulsed his columns with great loss & ^{to the British} confusion. Gatacre retreated across the pass & now like Methuen ~~he~~ & French stand safely on the defensive.

at Cape Town.

Gen. Buller, seeing the greater immediate danger to Gen. White at Ladysmith, hastened to ^{Durban} the point on that line —



^{with} ~~who~~ ready Methuen ^{with} ~~and~~ made an assault ^{the results}
to ours at Kennerly, straight against
prepared works - with the curved wings
stretched along the Baer front. ^{This battle} ~~which~~
ended in a terrible disaster when
over a thousand of his men ~~perished~~
fell with small loss to his ^{Baer} adversary.



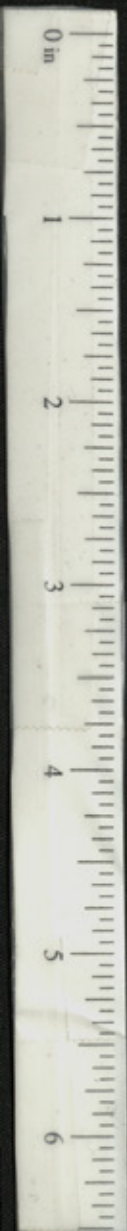
(14.)

He was so confident of victory that
he threw his forces square against
the intrenchments of the Boers,
as Burnside did ^{before} ~~at~~ Marge Heights.
Bringing up his splendid artillery
into marvellous proximity
to well filled rifle-pits.

The defeat ~~was~~ repulse under
the Boer's fire ~~sure & steady~~ ^{steady} is
steady & accurate in its aim all
along the well hidden lines,
was sudden & complete.

Eleven British cannons ^{were} taken -
and hundreds of ^{of officers & men} soldiers ^{wounded}
prisoners or slain.

Gen. Buller ^{quickly} ~~promptly~~ brought back
his battalions to ~~the~~ the position
they ^{had} left for the battle, that
the useless destruction of life might
cease. It would not do to ^{let them} spring
again. Next well set trap, even if
they ^{themselves} ~~were~~ notified at the loss of
their artillery. ~~Since~~
It is probable that Gen. Buller had



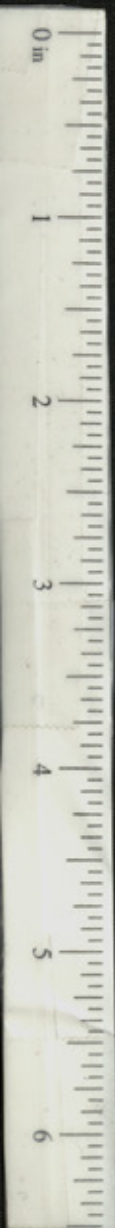
(15)
caused to be brought up all the
house-guards ~~the~~ ^{the} reserves &
perhaps ^{conceding} ~~the~~ ^{the} grim ~~correspondence~~ ^{determination}
of the Boers enough ~~to~~ of the
old men & boys, to make a
frontage of at least 2,000
against General Buller.
The latter like Hatarem & Methuen
has been put completely on
the defensive.

~~The new~~ ^{now} ~~commander-in-chief~~
Lord Roberts has the military
problem before him.

He ~~must~~ ^{must} choose one of the three
lines of advance, as soon as he
shall have men enough to warrant
a decisive movement.

(1) Will he take the Durban line?
It is the shortest, but it is intrin-
sically the strongest and has the
best Boer troops to defend it.

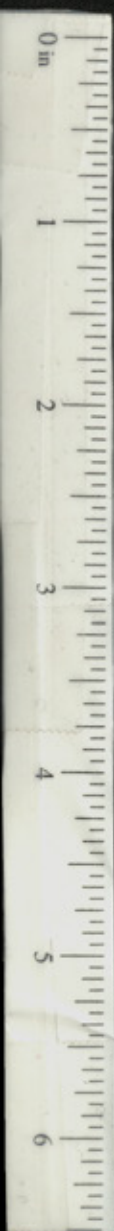
(2) Will he chase the line thro. the
Orange Free State? Possibly. But I
think ^{not} he will need to clear those
cross railways, & secure the Orange



(16)

The country to the Orange River -
that he may have the connecting
railways from Molteno, via
Middleburg to De Aar as a
Secondary base. That could be
done promptly.

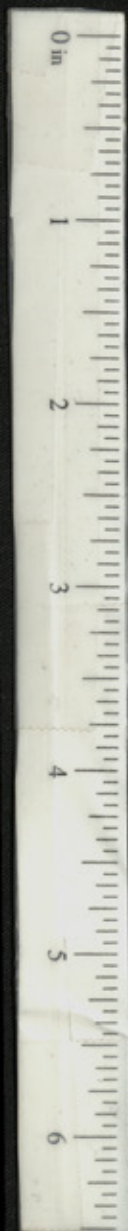
There go ^{the command} ~~forward~~ ^{forward rapidly} repairing the rail
road above De Aar as he pushed
on to join Methuen; ~~relieve~~ ^{western} then
crush Orange's force, relieve
himself and ^{at once} make across
the ^{eastward} central Railroad and use
that road for a rapid advance
upon Pretoria. Of course Goutlet
wouldn't know ~~that~~ Golems &
Badgsmittie the instant he saw
Lord Roberts plan. Then Buller
could pick up Gen. Whites four
or five thousand & press ~~on~~ ^{onward} along
with vigor enough to keep as many
Boer soldiers as possible there to
oppose his threats, ^{against} to go to Johannesburg
& Pretoria by that route.

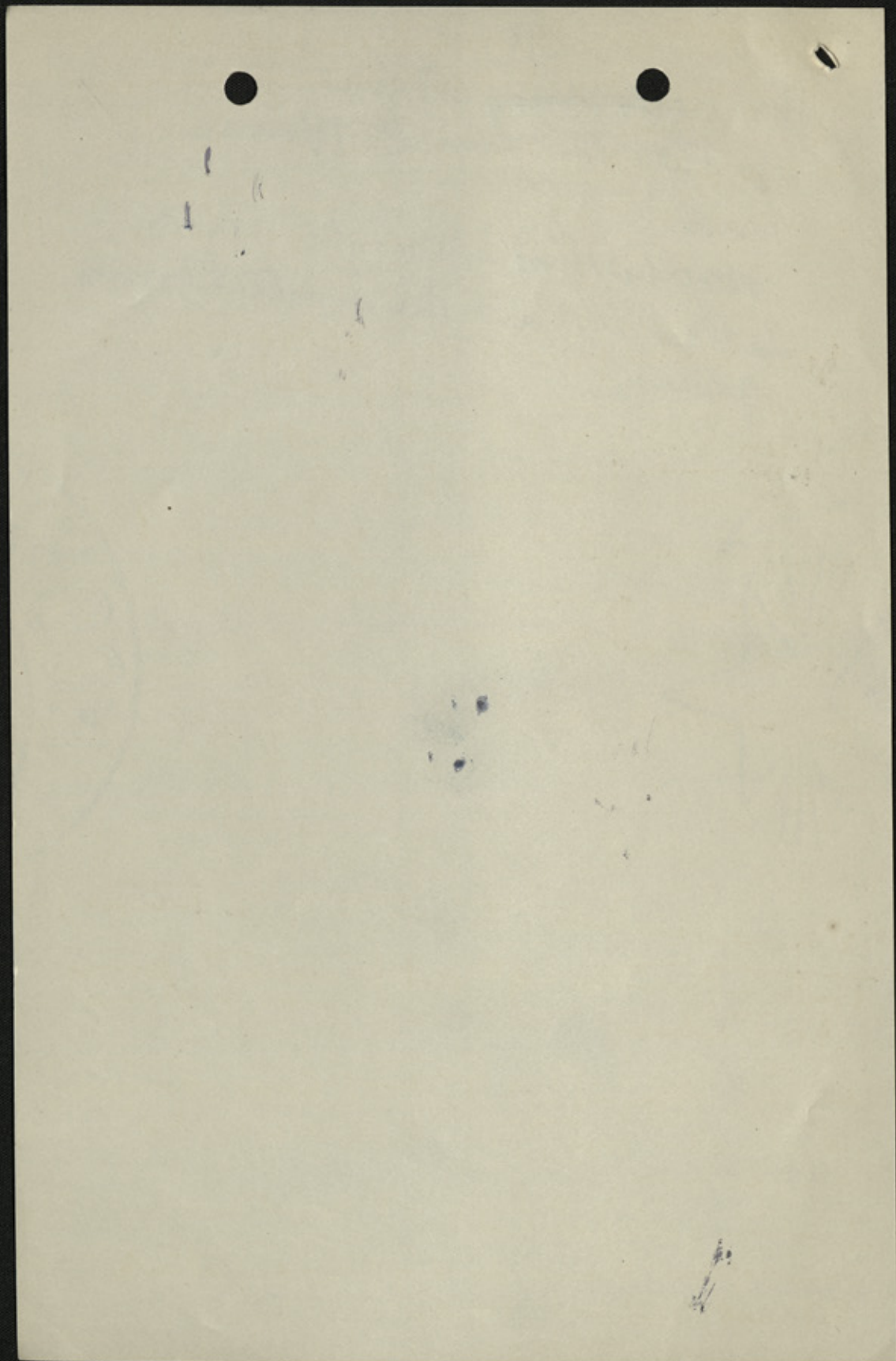
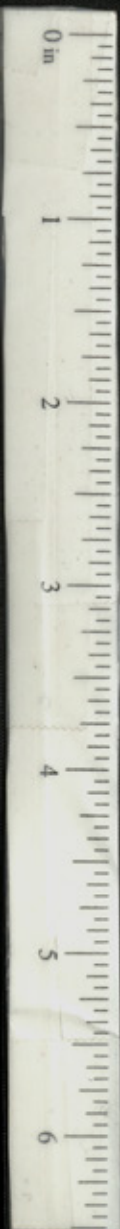


(17)

of after the crushing defeat of
Gronje, Gautier & his Stuart
President did not make peace,
probably there would be ^{first} a
hard fought battle near
Kronstadt ^{again} - and the last one
at Johannesburg.

The British will be constantly
reinforced, - while the Boers are
already at their best in numbers,
in morale & in supplies. ~~THE~~
General ^{Winfield} Scott ^{in 1861} by opening his hand
& slowly closing it showed how
the Confederacy was to be conquered;
we tried to keep many armies going ^{all at the same time},
from the outer to inner circles of
which Richmond was the center - but
ultimate success came ^{to the Union forces} by so combining
armies as to ~~be~~ greatly outnumber
the enemy on some important line ^{& then}
defeat him in battle all along that
line. Kindred should be the Nashville
Kronstadt the Atlanta, & Johannesburg





16 or 17th Oct. Boer success at
Mogale's - Major Scott shot himself - Garrison
surrounded.

18th or 19th Oct. Col Baden Powell - had
successful battle near Mafeking with
Boer (?) British loss - a garrison + (?)
Boer " 100

Gen. White fought near Ladysmith
and was defeated

Losses 3000 & w. + 500 missing + Irish facilities
(1500 men at Pretoria) late

Gautier turns Ladysmith - Massing at
Galenso - causing troops there to fall
back toward Durban.

Gen. Buller's estimate: 18,000 J. Boer

16,000 O. Boer

16,000 N. G. - Bencherland
K.K.K.

50,000

75,000 (including 20,000?)
(included) (?)

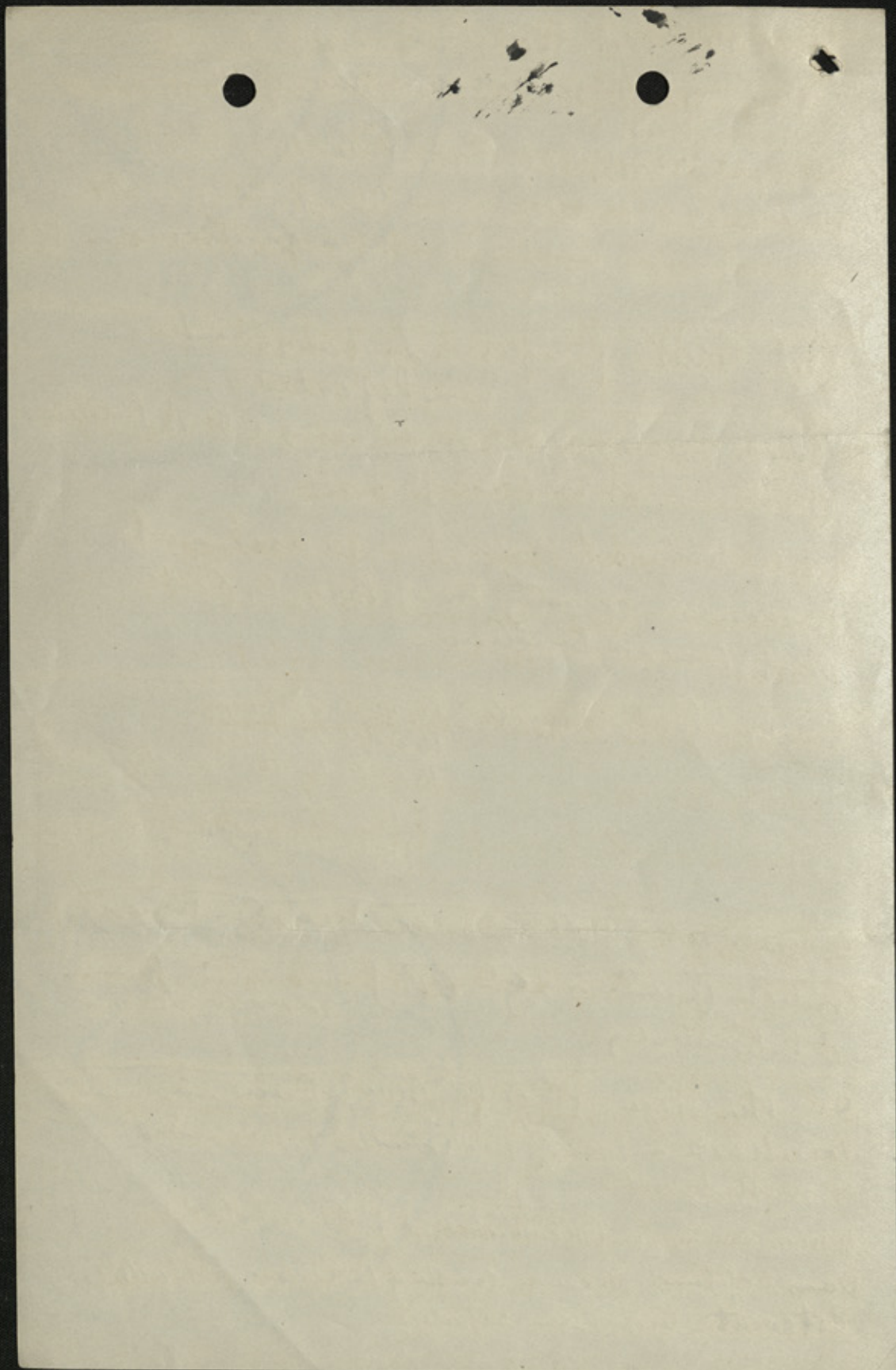
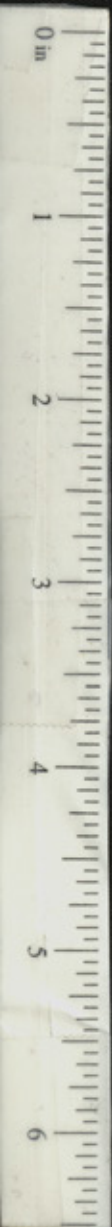
2. 500,000 Tons - Boer help (in transit)

Dutch (Sunday 29th Oct.) - morning - from
3000 O & 2000
At Kimberley

In the siege - (16 or 17th Nov) Boer advance
to attack - lose ^{for Boer} 700 + killed + wounded
& withdraw.

Armored train (K. Boer) 100 British loss

Boer capture Maseru south of Galesso - attack
Estcourt - but were repulsed



(13)
By 25th of November (British)
15000 troops arrived at Durban -
relief column -
1500 had arrived at Cape Town.

Gen. Methuen fought at
Belmont — at Gwesper
(2 battles) = He had about 4000
men - loss over 500.
He fought again at Madder
river - loss over 1000 - leaving
him only 2500 1/2 hours fight.
Barr-han 5 miles in hinterland
along the river - on an island - from
the south bank / British 4200
men - killed 400 - wounded 1800 - missing
2000 /

2nd battle Saturday the 25th Nov.
Methuen's 2nd battle -
1st battle Thursday the 23rd Nov.
very greatly helped - - Barr loss 50

4000
2000
5000
3000

14000

31000

12000

43000

