

A FINE Q.S.A. 1899 AWARDED TO A CIVILIAN NURSE MAFEKING DURING THE FAMOUS SIEGE. SHE IS FEATURED IN A WELL KNOWN GROUP PHOTOGRAPH, TAKEN AFTER THE SIEGE OF THE NURSING STAFF OF THE VICTORIA CIVIL HOSPITAL, MAFEKING



QUEEN'S SOUTH AFRICA 1899-1902, NO CLASP 'NURSING SISTER MRS RISING'

Mrs Rising was a civilian Nursing Sister at Mafeking during the period of the siege; 13 October 1899 – 17 May 1900. She is one of 18 nurses featured in a well known group photograph, taken after the siege of the Nursing Staff of the Victoria Civil Hospital. Her husband, A. C. Rising, was in the Mafeking Town Guard and received the medal with one clasp for the Defence of Mafeking.

Conditions and duties of nurses at Mafeking are well summarised by W. A. Hayes, principal medical officer during the siege:

"All through the siege every lady in Mafeking engaged in nursing the sick worked under conditions such as I hope no woman will ever have to live or work under again. Ill-fed (but with the best we could give them), hard worked, in constant danger of shell and bullet, their true British pluck came out. No order given was disobeyed month after month in the terrible heat, and when we were constantly being disappointed by rumours of relief close at hand no murmur was ever heard. Every day women unaccustomed to such work or to the sights incident on war braced themselves together, and held bleeding and mangled limbs whilst myself or my colleagues operated. I am afraid the public has heard very little of those ladies who did the really hard and dangerous work in attending the sick and wounded during the siege. Like all true nurses they are satisfied with the thanks of their grateful patients, and prefer not to see themselves figuring as heroines in the daily prints. "



Nursing Staff of the Victoria Civil Hospital Mafeking

Back, left to right: Mrs Rising, Mrs Buchan, Sarah Wilson, Miss Crawford, Mrs Werener,

And an interview by a Special Correspondent:

"It was rather difficult to secure a chat with Sister Gamble, who was in Mafeking during the siege, but I found her at last, and was glad to see she was not alone in the huge hotel off the Strand, where the only way of finding your friends to send a page-boy over the building to chant the number of your friend's room. When we had been talking a few minutes two other ladies joined us, Sister Wilson, from Maritzburg, and Sister Flower, from Durban. "But we hide our heads when Sister Gamble is here," said Sister Wilson, laughingly; "we are nowhere when a siege nurse is present." But this was denied by Sister Gamble, and we agreed that each had done her best in the circumstances in which she had been placed. Only, when a nurse has been through a siege, and such a siege as Mafeking, she is, of course, an object of special interest. In Mafeking Hospital. "Had you many cases of wounds?" I asked Sister Gamble. "A great many," she answered. "The Mauser bullet wounds were very bad, but not so bad as the expanding bullets. The expanding bullets tear away the tissues, and are a long time healing. One man who was in hospital with a wound was wounded a second time by a bullet from outside; we had put him in a safe place, as we thought, but a shot struck him. We carried many of the men into the passages, anywhere where we thought they would be safe; and we had often to pick the bullets out of the walls over the beds. The hospital stands high, you see. Once a shell burst in the ward, but only one person was killed, a native boy."



Condition VF, minor contact wear and a little polished. Ex Uphill-Brown Collection, Buckland Dix & Wood, December 1991; Dix Noonan Webb, December 2006, when this medal was incorrectly listed as officially reimpresed. This medal measures out at around 36.17mm, so well above what you'd expect for a reimpresed medal, especially after taking account of its wear.

A fine medal to one of the few nurses at Mafeking during the famous siege