THE FINE SOUTH AFRICA CAMPAIGN GROUP TO AN INSPECTOR NATAL MOUNTED POLICE, WHO, SERVED AS AN NCO DURING THE ZULU, 1ST BOER AND BASOTHO GUN WARS BEFORE RETIRING IN 1897. HOWEVER, WITH THE 2ND BOER WAR RAGING, HE JOINED KITCHENER'S FIGHTING SCOUTS AND WAS WOUNDED IN ACTION AT GROOTGELUK FARM ON 31 AUGUST 1901. PREVIOUS TO HIS SERVICE IN SOUTH AFRICA, HE WAS AS AN OFFICER IN THE ROYAL EAST MIDDLESEX MILITIA



SOUTH AFRICA 1877-79, CLASP, 1879 'SERGT MASSON. NATAL MD POLICE' CAPE OF GOOD HOPE GENERAL SERVICE 1880-97, CLASP, BASUTOLAND 'SGT J. A. MASSON N. M. POL.', QUEEN'S SOUTH AFRICA 1899-1902, 3 CLASPS, CAPE COLONY. ORANGE FREE STATE, TRANSVAAL '461 SERGT: J. A. MASSON. KITCHENER'S F.S.'

John Andre 'Jack' Masson was born in Harrow, Middlesex, in 1853 and attended Harrow School, where is Father was a French Master (and renowned author). He was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, 1st Royal East Middlesex Militia on 4 September 1872 but resigned a year later, possibly on moving to South Africa. On 23 May 1877, he enlisted into the Natal Mounted Police as a Trooper (No 175) and was noted for being able to speak 'a little Kaffir', suggesting he had lived in South Africa for some time. By the outbreak of the Zulu War, Masson had risen to the rank of Sergeant and crossed into Zululand with No3 Column in January 1879. Initially camped at Isandhlwana, on 21 January, Masson was present with Major Dartnell when he led a mounted reconnaissance force from the British camp into the Mangeni Valley region to search for Zulu army. They were joined by Lord Chelmsford in the early hours of 22 January, the camp at Isandhlwana being attacked a few hours later.

'It was stated that during No3 columns withdrawal from Zululand early on the morning of 23 January, they moved silently and within close proximity of the Zulus who were seen retiring from Rorke's Drift. Both groups moved past each other, being too tired to do anything of any military value. At this point, Masson was stated to have called out to the Zulus.'

He was recorded as present at Rorke's Drift in June 1879 when he represented the NMP in a cricket match and in August 1879 submitted a claim for loss of kit at Isandhlwana.

The Natal Mounted Police represented the only permanent force in Natal. Initially this force had very little support from the colonial authorities, the Commanding Officer (Major, later Major General Sir John Dartnell), having a difficult time trying to obtain arms and equipment. In 1894 the title was changed to the Natal Police. When Shepstone annexed the Transvaal in 1877, Sub-Inspector Phillips, with 25 NMP, formed the sole escort. 26 men of the Natal Mounted Police were killed at Isandlwana. Later in the War, part if the unit took part in the hunt for Cetshwayo and part joined Baker Russell's Column in pacifying North Western Zululand in August/September 1879. Post Zulu War the Natal Mounted Police took part in both the Basutoland and 1st Boer Wars.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Natal_Mounted_Police



OFFICERS OF THE NATAL MOUNTED POLICE, SUB-INSPECTOR MASSON STANDING 3RD FROM RIGHT

BASUTOLAND, FIRST AND SECOND BOER WARS

Post Zulu War, Masson took part in the BaSotho Gun War 1880-1, including patrol work on the Natal East Griqualand Border (CGHGS medal and clasp) and the 1st Boer war of 1879. During the latter disastrous campaign, the Natal Mounted Police were primarily involved in scouting and communications. They were present at the battle of Laing's Nek but not engaged.

Promoted Sub-Inspector on 9 January 1883, Acting Resident Magistrate at Ixopo in 1888 and Inspector, he retired to a pension in 1897.

With the 2nd Anglo-Boer raging, on 14 December 1900, Masson enlisted as a Sergeant in the 1st Kitchener's Fighting Scouts (no461). Taking part in operations in the Cape Colony, he transferred to 2nd Kitchener's Fighting Scouts on 29 April 1901, taking part in operations in the Orange Free State. Re-enlisting on 14 June 1901, he was slightly wounded in action at Grootgeluk Farm on 31 August 1901, when Kommandant P. W. Voss's commando attacked Colonel A. E. Wilson's column.



Discharged at Pretoria on 19 December 1901 and resided in various places in Natal until January 1915, when he joined the Vryheid Commando as a Trooper. Taking part in operations in German South West Africa, he was discharged on 7 August 1915 and joined a veteran's regiment until discharged again on 20 June 1916.

The above taken from Cam Simpson's outstanding 'Blue-Blood Troopers in Zululand', which contains a more detailed write up on Masson

He was not entitled to the K.S.A. Medal but was issued with the South Africa 1901 clasp which would have been issued later and loose to slip on his medal ribbon. He was issued a 1914/15 Star in 1920 and presumably the pair but this in unconfirmed



Condition GVF. Sold with copy research

A very fine and scarce group of medals to a long serving member of the Natal Mounted Police