

Assegais, Drums & Dragoons: A Military And Social History Of The Cape

Willem Steenkamp

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Assegais, Drums & Dragoons: A Military And Social History Of The Cape Willem Steenkamp What motivated a small multiracial force of Cape-born soldiers - whites, coloureds and Malays - to put up such stiff resistance at the Battle of Blaauwberg in 1806, in spite of odds so overwhelming that even some long-serving professional soldiers broke rank and ran? This was the intriguing question that launched author Willem Steenkamp's research. It was an investigation which eventually took him back to 150 years before Jan van Riebeeck landed at the Cape in 1652, and involved examining the social as well as the military history of the Cape. What Steenkamp discovered differs from what most South Africans think about that period, and he corrects a number of serious misconceptions not only about the soldiers of 1510-1806 but about the social and political development of the Cape. For students of the Napoleonic Wars, the book provides new information about a forgotten aspect of that conflict; for the ordinary reader here is a story noone has ever told before in its entirety. Assegais, Drums and Dragoons: A Military and Social History of the Cape is a well-researched and fascinating account that now illuminates a previously lightless corner of South African military history Descended from a 1690s-era solider, Willem Steenkamp is a writer, journalist and specialist tour guide who has also been a solider, a security advisor and a director of military tattoos and other spectacles, among several other things. Since childhood he has been absorbing the Cape's history from family stories (one of his ancestors was a hero of the Battle of Blaauwberg) and voluminous reading. And yes, he actually has fired flintlock muskets and muzzle-loading cannon. Willem lives in Cape Town.



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