

MONUMENTALLY SPEAKING-QLD EDITION
INCORPORATING WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
QLD COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER VOL 6



National Boer War Memorial Association
Patron in Chief

Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

National Patron

General David Hurley AC, DSC
Chief of the Defence Force

Queensland Patron

The Hon Campbell Newman
Premier of Queensland



Captain Adele Catts 2nd/14th QMI speaking at the Battle of Onverwacht Hills commemoration service

The Guest Speaker, Captain Adele Catts, of the 2nd/14th QMI, spoke of the gallant efforts of those men of the 5th QIB on that day in 1902 against a Boer force having the advantage of superior numbers and the added advantage of surprise in that they had ambushed the column. Captain Catts spoke of the pride her unit had in being able to trace their lineage back to the 5th QIB. Members of the 2nd/14th QMI are currently still on active service in Afghanistan.

The service was well attended with quite a number of descendants of Boer War Veterans in attendance and at the completion, participants were invited to a morning tea at the Sherwood/Indooroopilly Sub-branch.

On Monday the 4th of February, the Sherwood/Indooroopilly RSL Sub-Branch held its annual commemoration of the Battle on the Onverwacht Hills, in South Africa at the Sherwood Anglican Cemetery .

This year marked the 111th anniversary of the battle in which 11 men of the 5th QIB were killed. Two of the men killed in that battle were Sgt. R.E.Berry, and Acting Corporal J McFarlane are commemorated on the memorial at the cemetery and also on a memorial at Ermelo, South Africa where the bodies were relocated in 1962. Local Students from the Corinda High School participate in the ceremony as do their counterparts at Ermelo High School in South Africa.

Major-General Digger James AC, AO (Mil), MBE, MC OSJ (Rtd) presented the Onverwacht Essay Medallion to this year's winner, Nikita Gleeson from Corinda State High School.



Major-General Digger James presents the annual Onverwacht Hills Essay price to this years winner, Ms Nikita Gleeson of Corinda

Chairman's Report

- The design is now approved. . The project was recommended by the Steering Committee for ANZAC Centenary Celebrations to be part of the celebrations but funding has to be raised by public donations.
- We have been promised a grant of \$200,000 from the Federal Government and tax deductibility specific to our memorial project. The grant still has not been received as yet and the Tax Deductibility has been granted but only for 2 years.
- A contract has been prepared for the sculptor to create the first model of an Mounted Trooper. An offer has been received for the site works design and is under consideration.

Queensland News National Boer War Day to Commemorate the Signing of the Peace Treaty

On 31st May 2013 we will be holding a Commemoration Ceremony in ANZAC Square Brisbane, at the base of the Boer War Memorial, to commemorate the signing of the Peace Treaty in Melrose House Pretoria in 1902. We have requested support from the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment (QMI). This year's ceremony will be of a much smaller scale than for 2012.

In ANZAC Square we hope to see a crowd of descendants and supporters with representatives from the RSL and numerous historical associations and the general public.

We all realize that the annual commemoration of Boer War Day must be continued and the general public made aware of the importance of building the memorial in Canberra to complete our military history from the date when Federation was proclaimed

Future Events

- The Qld. Boer War Banner will be carried well up the front in the ANZAC Day March in Brisbane. Possible presentation re Eland's River Siege at Harry Dalziel Centre Corinda in August, the 113th anniversary of the siege. I would like to have an indication from those who would be interested.

We have now completed the design stage we have government approval of the design, and we are now chasing funding. We are considering all options to attain funding but we still need more help in the way of descendant registration and donations. Your support is vital to the success of the project which will fill a great gap in our military history.

- Qld has approached the Corporate World for funding and will continue to do so.



Ron McElwaine OAM, RFD, ED
Chairman
Qld Committee of NBWMA



(Cont from p3)

An attack on the exposed outpost had been anticipated before the siege began on 4 August, although it was hoped that a column of 1,000 New South Wales Imperial Bushmen and South African irregulars under General Sir Frederick Carrington was expected to arrive before this eventuated.

As a precaution, though, a defensive perimeter was hastily improvised using ox-wagons and boxes and bags taken from the stores depot.

These preparations enabled the defenders to withstand the enemy's initial onslaught, during which the compound was subjected to a heavy bombardment.

In the first two days over 2,500 shells hit the camp, killing most of the 1,500 horses, oxen and mules, blasting stores in all directions and causing numerous human casualties. On the second day of the investment, the leading elements of Carrington's force were spotted on the rising ground three kilometres to the west.

Hopes of relief were cruelly dashed, however, when the column - advancing without the use of scouts - rode into an ambush and was put into headlong retreat, albeit after sustaining only seventeen minor casualties. Left to their own resources, the garrison completed the digging of rifle pits and building of stone sangars to provide shelter from enemy fire.

Some relief was also afforded by the fact that the Boers badly wanted the stores being defended, and hence eased up on the weight of their artillery barrage. The battle was nonetheless maintained using smaller calibre weapons, and the colonial troops were kept under fire from all directions, around the clock. This fire had to be braved during the night, when small parties were sent of necessity to carry drinking water into the lines from the river.

. Occasional night-time forays were also made to deal with particularly troublesome Boer positions. During daylight hours, however, the defenders remained pinned down in their pits, enduring the heat, thirst and stench from the dead animal carcasses

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Meanwhile, a second attempt at lifting the siege was being undertaken from the east by Colonel Robert Baden-Powell at the head of a column 2,000 strong.

..
This reached within 30 kilometres of the post but received orders to turn away in the belief that the defenders had already capitulated

Not until 13 August was the true position learnt, after a native runner was picked up on the Mafeking railway with the news that the camp was still holding out

A new effort to break the siege was immediately ordered, and columns totalling 10,000 men under General Lord Kitchener started out on the 15th.

In the face of the overwhelming strength of the advancing British force, De la Rey withdrew his burghers before Kitchener rode into the Elands River camp the next day. By this stage twelve of the garrison had been killed, along with seven native porters, and another 58 wounded.

The siege was perhaps the most notable action involving Australians in South Africa, earning high praise from even the Boers' senior commander, Jan Smuts, who said:

"Never in the course of this war did a besieged force endure worse sufferings, but they stood their ground with magnificent courage. All honour to these heroes who in the hour of trial rose nobly to the occasion ."

Extracted from the book produced by Chris Coulthard-Clark, ***Where Australians Fought - The Encyclopaedia of Australia's Battles***, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1998, pp.83-84



Reports on the Centenary Commemoration. Report by Egbert van Bart (South-Africa):

For many decades the area surrounding Swartruggens cemetery concealed under a dense covering of bushveld scrubland, like some dark military secret, the remains of those dramatic events of the early days of a new century. Here a small agricultural republic found themselves resisting the resources of a vast empire ranged against them by disingenuous international financiers in their ongoing offensive to globalise the economic resources of the known world.

Eighty years later Peet Coetzee, a member of the Rustenburg Military History Study Group, recalls a valley thickly strewn with the sun-whitened bones of oxen, horses and mules at the foot of one of these ridges from which Swartruggens takes its name, when he first visited the site in the early 1980's. At the beginning of August 1900, however, neither the bones nor the thick bush covering the area were yet discernable. A black and white photograph of the period reveals bare hills, white grass and a row of tall telegraph poles forebodingly marching in single file across the landscape.

For many years Mr Lionel Wulfsohn, another member of the aforesaid Study Group, would regularly revisit the small military cemetery to tend to the graves of the fallen soldiers who had brought the ultimate sacrifice for their king and empire. He, like a latter day Old Mortality, kept burnishing the memory of these heroes, who had himself returned from other later bloodstained battlefields of global conflict and had perhaps glimpsed another, sounder meaning beyond the superficial manipulations for economic mastery. A native of the Rustenburg area, these interests would in time prompt him into writing an objective but sympathetic account of these events in a published work, Rustenburg at War, now in its second enlarged edition, with Lionel still probing, discovering, adding to the all-too-human story.

It may not be far off the mark to recall an image of dead ashes which, in being blown upon by living breath, rekindles into a glow and may even be prevailed upon through some coaxing, to burst back into flame.

So it seemed on the morning of 5 August 2000 at the site of the main camp adjoining the military cemetery in Swartruggens, a modest little town mainly serving the farming community of the area. Loud explosions awakened echoes in the surrounding hills and billowing clouds of smoke indicated from where, a hundred years before, Delarey's guns had blasted away at a company of colonials from the Australian mainland together with some Rhodesian men suddenly penned in with their British commander in one of the heaviest bombardments of the war and in what was for most of them their first action in this African conflict.

The opportunity offered them by genl. Delarey to surrender was rejected out of hand, and their stout defence under trying circumstances must be seen as one of the finest achievements of Australian forces in the Anglo-Boer war. It is therefore appropriate that out of the six memorials erected on the site at Elands River, half are dedicated to the men from the Australian colonies.

In Africa the departed are never dead. The three to four hundred people present were able to witness an assortment of ceremonial ranging from the strictly military with sentries in BSAP uniform going through the correct steps prescribed by contemporary regimental handbooks to the touching informal gestures arousing a myriad popular feelings, accompanying the spectacle of a small agricultural nation vanquished by an industrial world power; and ending with an unassuming yet proud ceremony of a people coming into their own after so long a time of neglect and at last receiving recognition for the role and sacrifice demanded from them in this war. For it was here at the military cemetery that we were to learn that unidentified graves marked "a British soldier" referred to the black participants who, having been drawn into the conflict, also had to bring the supreme sacrifice.

At an auditory level the participants were treated to threnody and lament as the bugle and bagpipes, concertina or kudu horn contributed their unique sounds to the commemoration.

A touching gesture was the laying of wreaths at the memorials and graves by different people but especially the children from Swartruggens schools. In this many of us were reminded of an unaccountable silence of perhaps more than 50 years surrounding the circumstances of this devastating and wasteful war. To suddenly encounter new roadsigns indicating Siege of Elands river; to see sanghars emerge from under dense bush, and shells and shrapnel surface among rusted bullybeef cans; to be confronted with the odd bandolier some ancestor had collected from a hapless British soldier, or a tarnished bayonet, a hand carved tobacco pipe with dates of forgotten skirmishes inscribed on the bowl; this is to be reminded that time is also of some irrepressible substance, that what has once lived will not forever be denied; perhaps a lesson for politicians to heed, and those who regard their fellow human as a mere collective entity, a soulless herd living in some golden moment without past or future and upheld and manipulated by a credit system that is never to be questioned.

That the commemoration took place at all is due to the perseverance and dedication of a small group of committed people, among them the Rustenburg Military History Study Group, also the Anglo-Boer South-African War Provincial Committee under capable chairmanship of the Kgosi Lucas Mabelane, not to forget the Elands River Commemoration Committee with Koos Olivier and his helpers from Swartruggens who made it all accessible on ground level, grappling many long days with a physical environment that is unforgiving at best. Then the Rhodesian and Australian contributions that were two unhesitating shoulders to the wheel. Now there is this germ of new growth here in Swartruggens - this Garden of Remembrance - not so much the end result of much effort but only the first steps towards realising the dreams of a community.



Perth's 111th Boer War Commemoration day to be held in Kings Park on Sunday 2nd of June from 11.00 hrs

Planning is well advanced for this year's commemoration service in Kings Park. The keynote speaker for the day will be Brigadier Phillip White AM, RFD.

Brig. White was formerly the Commander of 13 Brigade, 2nd Division and prior to that commanded the Land Warfare Centre (WA Training Command). Currently he is Principal at Melville Senior High at the Department of Education W.A.

The Master of Ceremonies will again be Group-Captain Mike Galvin. And the RAAF and RAN will be represented with the RAN providing the catafalque party. The State Governor has been invited to attend and others in attendance will be the RSL State President and representatives of the SASR.

It is perhaps fitting to look at the history of the South African War Memorial. The Foundation Stone was laid by the Duke of Cornwall (& York) who was later to become HRH King George V, on the 22nd of July 1901, on the occasion of his visit to Australia to open the first Commonwealth Parliament.



Western Australia sent 930 volunteers to the war with the first intake of 130 men of the 1st W.A. Mounted Infantry Contingent departing in November, 1899 and the last intake of 121 men leaving June, 1902. Units in which the volunteers

served were 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th & 6th Contingents W.A. Mounted Infantry - 3rd Contingent W.A. Bushmen - 2nd, 4th & 8th Battalions Commonwealth Horse and Australian Army Medical Corps.

Due to the proclamation of the Federation of Australia, the 2nd, 4th & 8th Btns and the Medical personnel went as Commonwealth troops) Seventy five decorations including one Victoria Cross* were won by these men. The Memorial (originally called The Fallen Soldiers Memorial is located some 400m within the main entrance to Kings Park

on the l/h side of Fraser Avenue. A square stone monument surmounted by a life size bronze sculpture (by James White of Sydney) of an Australian soldier protecting a fallen comrade, originally of cast bronze, which deteriorated rapidly, it was replaced in 1915 by a copy in bronze sheet manufactured by Wunderlich Pty. Ltd., Perth. lower down on all four sides are eight bronze plaques in bas relief depicting scenes from the war.

The foundation stone was laid by the Duke of Cornwall & York, the date is recorded as 22 July, 1901 but, in actual fact, the Duke's yacht was delayed by bad weather postponing the ceremony until the 23rd; the Duke and Duchess were on their way home after opening the first Federation Parliament but the Royal entourage was forced to take shelter in Albany Harbour on the morning of the 21st. where, later on that day, the Troopship 'Britannic' carrying 35 Officers and 585 Other Ranks returning from the South African War arrived.

The crew of the Ophir manned the riggings whilst the Duke and Duchess waved to the troops and the Royal Band played 'Soldiers of the Queen' and 'Rule Britannia' as the Britannic passed by and then, in conjunction with the Band of the 'Royal Arthur, 'Home Sweet Home' as the ship berthed. Unveiling of the completed Memorial was performed in September, 1902 by H.E. Sir Edward Sone, Chief Justice and acting Governor.

Above the foundation stone is a brass plaque added after WW1 which records the names of twenty Boer War veterans killed in the Great War, above this on the die stone proper is a plaque reading: *"In memory of the under mentioned Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers and men of the West Australian contingents who were killed in action or died from wounds or disease in the war in South Africa 1899 to 1902"*.

Forty three names are given, 5 Officers, 6 N.C.O's. and 32 Privates. A muzzle loading field gun (Krupps 75mm OVS captured in 1900) bearing the insignia of the Orange Free State stands in front of the Memorial, a brass plate attached reads: *"South African and Imperial Veterans Association this tablet honours the memory of Brigadier General A.J. Bessel Brown* a South African veteran died 3rd. August, 1947, General President of the Association since its inception, Trusty and well beloved"*



Kings Park Perth January 1910. Lord Kitchener (Centre in Light jacket with Lord Roberts to his left) at the South African War Memorial

The Memorial and field gun were renovated in 1999 to commemorate the Centenary of the start of the War. In St. George's Cathedral, Perth are plaques and a flag in remembrance of the West Australians who served in South Africa. Lord Kitchener visited W.A. in January 1910 and inspected the Memorial.

At the Dinner, Her Excellency will announce the recipient of the QUT and Combined Patriotic Societies' "Women as Agents of Change" Scholarship for 2013.

The Scholarship is an important initiative, taking up a suggestion made by the Queen during her address to the CHOGM event in Perth last year.

Combined Patriotic Societies Queen's Birthday Dinner in Brisbane City Hall

In June this year, in the presence of Her Excellency Ms Penny Wensley AC Governor of Queensland, the Combined Patriotic Societies will be hosting a major dinner event at the newly restored City Hall., to celebrate the Queen's birthday. As you may be aware , the Australian National Flag Association joined this group when it formed last year to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, and it has been given an ongoing role at the suggestion of our Governor.

We hope that many of our members from Brisbane and beyond will join us in the magnificent setting of City Hall for this double celebration of Her Majesty's Birthday and the announcement of the inaugural Scholarship winner.

Tickets for this event reflect the special nature of this occasion, and the cost of \$140 a head includes a three-course meal, drinks and entertainment.

The date for this event will be Tuesday the 11th of June 2013

Other members include the the Queensland branch of the following: The English Speaking Union, The Victoria League for Commonwealth Friendship, The Royal Overseas League, The Royal United Service Institute, The Order of Australia Association, The National Boer War Memorial Association, The Royal Society of St. George and the Royal Commonwealth Society..

Those interested in attending this Gala function should make contact with Miles Farmer via e-mail at milesfarmer@bigpond.com or the Secretary P.O. Box 165 Fortitude Valley 4006.

We will endeavour to set up a Boer War Table for the event.

MONUMENTALLY SPEAKING - QLD EDITION
Memorabilia for sale



Queen Victoria Chocolate tin: Slouch Hats
\$25 per tin+ postage. Allow 3-4 weeks delivery



Boer War Service Plaques
\$60 + P & H

To Purchase contact: Pamela Hore– Victorian Committee Member

pamelah5@bigpond.com

All Objects below may be purchased from Bob Hagerty
sabaay2@bigpond.com

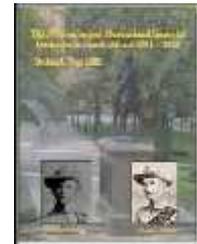


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