



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

BOER WAR DESPATCHES

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2012 - VICTORIA & TASMANIA

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DEFENCE OF ELANDS RIVER

At the Boer War Memorial Association's National Executive meeting held in Sydney on 28th August it was decided to adopt the Defence of Elands River as the Australia wide theme for Boer War Day 2013. Up to the First World War this famous siege was the iconic event in Australia's Military History. While the main body of Australian defenders at Elands River were from the eastern States (Colonies), mostly Queensland and New South Wales, all Australian states were represented.

The Elands River Post garrison, mostly Australian Bushmen, held out from the 4th to the 16th August 1900 against massive odds when the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Roberts, had given them up believing that surrender was their only possible option. When the relief column, under the command of Kitchener himself, arrived they were appalled at the destruction around them and could not believe how these colonials had managed to hold out against such overwhelming odds.

Included amongst the well over 500 Elands River defenders were 201 Rhodesian volunteers, two Canadians and three from British units. There was also a fever hospital down on the river away from the camp manned by three members of the Cape Medical Staff Corps. These three were taken POW on 14 August.

FIRST AUSTRALIAN KILLED IN THE BOER WAR

It is often not appreciated that about a third of the Australians who served in the Boer War were not in one of the Australian Contingents. Due to the large numbers of Australian volunteers it was necessary to conduct ballots to reduce their numbers and a great many of those who missed out made their own way to South Africa to join one of the Imperial or irregular units which were being formed there. Some Australians were already serving in British regiments or the Royal Navy and because of the economic recession during the 1890s others had gone to South Africa to make their fortunes on the goldfields and they too swelled the ranks of the Imperial units in the country.

From time to time there has been debate as to who was the first Australian to be killed. It was once thought to be Midshipman C.A.D. Huddart who was serving in the Royal Navy. He was killed in action at Ensilin on 25 November 1899 during the campaign to lift the siege of Kimberley. We now know that a man from Victoria No. 5336 Private H. Schultze, serving in the 2nd Battalion, Grenadier Guards, died of wounds at Fraserburg Road on 24 November 1899. Who is to say that there is not an earlier Australian casualty yet to be discovered.

FIRST AUSTRALIANS WOUNDED ?

The first Australians wounded in the Boer War may well have been two members of the Durban Light Infantry who were wounded in the 'Armoured Train Disaster' in Natal on 15 November 1899 and who were also taken prisoner with Winston Churchill after the ambush

Private Alexander Wright from Wentworth, NSW, was serving in 'C' Company of the Durban Light Infantry and was on the armoured train when it was ambushed. He suffered a non fatal wound to the head and was taken prisoner of war and imprisoned in Pretoria with Winston Churchill.

George Bolton Humphries from Woolongong in NSW was also serving on the armoured train on 15 November 1899 with the Durban Light Infantry when he was shot through both legs. He too was among the group of about 50 who were taken prisoner with Winston Churchill. The Boers thought his wounds were too serious for them to handle so they dropped him off at Ladysmith where he remained throughout the Siege. He was one of only five Durban Light Infantry men to receive the 'Defence of Ladysmith' clasp on his Queens South Africa Medal.

Humphries' two sons were both killed in action with the A.I.F. during the First World War— one at Villers-Bretonneux and the other is on the 'Le Grande Hasard Military Cemetery' Memorial at Morbecque.



Marker at Chieveley in Natal where the armoured train was ambushed

If any reader should become aware of an Australian killed in South Africa between 11 October and 24 November 1899 or wounded between 11 October and 15 November 1899 please let the Editor know. Battles at Talana and Elandsplaaght might be worth investigating.



ARMOURD TRAIN

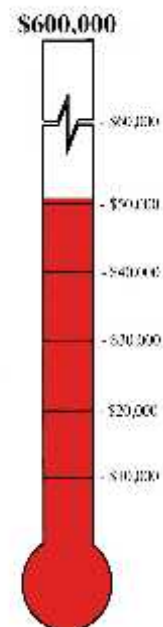
Train compliment was, 'A' company of Dublin Fusiliers of 72 NCO's and men under Lieutenant Frankland. 45 men of 'C' company Durban Light Infantry under Captain Wylie and Lieutenant Alexander. 5 men and a Petty Officer of HMS Tartar with a 7 pound gun. A civilian train crew consisting of driver Charles Wagner, stoker Stuart, some platelayers and linesmen. A telegraph operator and Winston Churchill completed the force. Captain Haldane DSO, Gordon Highlanders, just recovered from wounds received at the battle of Elandsplaaght was in overall command.

FUND RAISING

We have been told that the Government is considering funding for the National Boer War Memorial in the 2013 budget and we eagerly await what that may bring. Meanwhile we must continue with raising public awareness and gathering what funds we can to encourage more Government financial support. If you belong to any community group such as Rotary, Lions, RSL, Scouts, Probus, etc and would like to have a speaker or speakers talk to them about the Boer War and the National Memorial please contact us.

The NBWMA Victoria, committee can put on a presentation including a short DVD and an interesting talk with question time for you. Phone 9890 2465 or write to PO Box 2006, Blackburn South VIC. 3130

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Given Names Surname:.....

Rank:..... Regimental number:

Unit:

Second tour if applicable

Rank:..... Regimental number:

Unit:

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I would like to donate -

\$10	\$25	\$50	\$100	\$250	
\$1,000	\$2,000	\$5,000	\$10,000		
Other					

(Circle one) Mr Mrs Dr Ms Miss Other

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Public Recognition of Donors

To recognise larger donations certificates will be awarded as follows -

Bronze	\$1,000 to \$9,999
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Platinum	\$100,000 and above

Recipients will be permitted to use that level of donor logo on their stationery. Gold and Platinum donors will also have their logo placed on future BWM promotional materials and the National website.

TASMANIAN NURSE IN BOER WAR



Elizabeth Orr

Tasmanian nurse, Elizabeth Orr, joined Princess Christian's Army Nursing Service Reserve to get to the Boer War where she served in military hospitals and mobile casualty centres until the end of the war in 1902. She then worked in other hospitals in South Africa and from 1908 was matron of the Mine Hospital at Krugersdorp. She later returned to Australia and opened a private hospital at Maitland in NSW.

Sister Orr served with distinction in England and Egypt in WW1 as well as on hospital ships and troop ships including in the Gallipoli and Salonica areas. She served through the Palestine campaign and was matron of a 2,500 bed tent hospital at De-el-Belah in sandy desert country

Elizabeth Orr was twice mentioned in despatches and was awarded the Royal Red Cross. In 1919, following debilitating bouts of Malaria, she was invalided to England where she worked for some time before returning to Tasmania in 1920. She died in Hobart in April 1945.



The plaque to Sister Elizabeth Orr which this year was placed at the foot of the Boer War Memorial in Hobart, Tasmania

WILMANMSRUST DISASTER AN OFFICER'S ACCOUNT

WARRNAMBOOL JULY 18 1901

Lieutenant P.J. Dallimore, who was severely wounded in the disaster to the Victorians at Wilmanrust, has written a brief account to his relatives in this district. It was penned in the Middleburg Hospital and reads as under :-

“Since I last wrote you a terrible disaster has happened to the 2nd Battalion. We were completely surprised by night, losing in all, killed and wounded, 62. I received two bullet wounds, one in my head and one through my hip. They are both clean wounds and the doctors tell me they are not very dangerous.. I shall never forget that night. It was something awful – one continued blast of rifles, just as if packets of crackers were put into the fire; and the yells of the Boers singing out “Hands up you *****!, Hands up!”. There were about 600 of them altogether.

I was nearly asleep when I heard the first volley. I got up as quickly as possible, got hold of my rifle, and ran out, and got hit in the head. This threw me down and for a minute or two I knew no more. However, I soon recovered, and immediately grabbed my rifle again and had just shoved a cartridge into the breach when I got hit again on the hip. By this time the Boers were well around me. They collared my rifle and bandolier and that finished me. I shall tell you all about it when I get a bit better. At present I am getting the best of attention, a room to myself, an orderly, and a nurse to look after me.”

ASOLDIER SAVED

On 28th July 1900 at 8am Cpl. Eugene Daylesford Patterson, born 1865 in Daylesford Victoria, set off carrying dispatches from General Broadwood's Column. He was serving in Robert's Horse and had with him three men, Chadwick, Benson and Hilton who were to act as lookouts to ensure the precious cargo was carried safely over twelve miles of veldt, crossing enemy lines in the process. Arriving at Vrededorst, they waited several hours for responses before being able to head back to their Column.

Some miles short of camp they were attacked by a group of Boers. Chadwick and Benson were captured but subsequently managed to escape; Hilton's horse was shot from beneath him and he also faced capture. Patterson backtracked and grabbed the young soldier's hand and hauled him aboard his horse, Dandy, and headed frantically for home with both men riding low to the horse's neck. Around the campfire several nights later Patterson and Hilton discovered they shared the same birthday, Patterson being the elder by eight years.

Herbert Philip Hilton, born in India on 13 August 1873, was also serving in Robert's Horse. On discharge from that regiment in December 1901 he was appointed Second Lieutenant in the 2nd Battalion, Middlesex Regiment, a British Army unit. He was promoted to Captain in January 1906 and in WW1 saw service in France and Flanders. He was killed in action in Flanders on 16 February 1915 and is commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres in Belgium.

For his efforts in saving Hilton's life Eugene Patterson was awarded the DCM; it sits alongside his Queen's medal with 8 clasps and the Kings medal with two clasps.



Private George W. Stratton,
5th Victorian Mounted Rifles
Killed in action at Wilmansrust 1901



Brigadier Neale Bavington presenting the Boer War Descendants medal to 104 year old Mrs Mary Sadler at the July meeting of the National Boer War Memorial (Vic) Committee at Box Hill RSL.

IN THE PUBLISHED WORKS OF GEORGE ESSEX EVANS

From the great Australian's ballad about
the Defence of the Elands River Post

“We saw the guns of Carrington
Come on and fall away;
We saw the ranks of Kitchener
Across the kopje grey - For
the sun was shining then
Upon twenty thousand men - And
we laughed because we knew, In
spite of hellfire and delay
On Australia's page for ever
We had written Elands River -
We had written it for ever and a day!”