NSW Chairman’s Message

Whilst most of our readers know who we are and what we do, several phone calls to our staff recently show the need for us to revisit these basics.

We are an all volunteer organisation. In running the organisation, no funding is received other than funds that we generate ourselves through activities and merchandise. Our volunteers give a great deal of their time and often their money to keep us going forward. We have been greatly assisted by the Australian Defence Force with non-financial support. Our aim is to construct a Memorial to commemorate those Australian men and women who volunteered to serve in Australia’s first National war.

In constructing the Memorial we have received a grant of $200,000 from the National Federal Department of Veterans Affairs which does not go far in completing the Memorial’s estimated cost of $5 million. All other funds have to be raised from private sources. All donations go direct to the memorial fund.

Quite a number of Newsletters have been returned to us as people have left addresses, can I plead with you to remember to let us know if you are changing addresses.

Finally in this edition you will see that further progress has been made on the design of the second horseman and some of you might have seen the excellent coverage that we received from the ABC on the occasion of a bronze pour of the first horseman, so slowly it is all coming together.

David Deasey
In this issue

NSW Chairman’s Message........... 1
First Horseman........................ 2
Second Horseman.................. 2
Book a Speaker........................ 3
Elands River Reception............. 3
NSW Committee........................ 3
National and State Contacts .... 3
Captain George Lawson............ 4
Narromine’s contribution.......... 5
More Piano Music.................... 5
South Australian contributions....
  George Henry Goodall............. 6
  Descendants’ Day................... 7
  Guest Speakers.................... 7
  SA Committee...................... 7
ACT Committee....................... 7
Reserve Forces Day Council..... 7
South Africa Memorials.......... 8
Sydneians & the BW (Part 2)... 10
Commemorative Envelopes...... 11
How Many Fought? (Part 3)... 11
Merchandise.......................... 12

In the last newsletter we announced that the first phase, the half sized plasticine model of the second horseman, would be undertaken. The artist’s impression shown then has been developed to this working sketch which shows much more detail. However, there are still likely to be further changes as the design subcommittee fully develops the equipment. As the patrol leader, the second horseman will have binoculars and a revolver holster not shown on this diagram. It is expected that this phase will be completed by the end of the year.

On Tuesday 12 August we had a very successful Pour event at the foundry at 11am in the morning during which a portion of a Boer War Pom Pom shell was inserted into the molten bronze mix. A series of media releases were made in the few days beforehand: a general release through Australian Associated Press on Friday 8 August, an extra email circulation which included a photo of the full size clay model to the nine major Melbourne media outlets on Sunday followed by a repeat in hard copy to the same nine which was sent by Express Post on the Monday before.

There were three camera crews in attendance from the ABC, HSV7 and ATV Channel 10. All three crews re main ed f il i n g throughout most of the entire process (over two hours). All three crews were enthusiastic about the occasion. While the news service would not use more than short grabs there would be a large amount of file footage which could be used later. They were all keen to return for a later pour and also when the finished horseman is ready to go to Canberra. The occasion could only be described as a great success.
At our annual Elands River Reception on 14 August at Victoria Barracks Officers Mess, the principal guest was His Honour Mr Justice Thomas Bathurst AC, Chief Justice of NSW. He spoke on the importance of the historic links between military and judiciary in maintaining democracy in the country, the significance of the Boer War coming as it did across Federation and the importance of Elands River as a symbol of the coming Federation. He referred to Jan Smuts’ assessment of the Australians at Elands River. We presented His Honour with a notebook, keyring and BW tie. Overall a successful night. We thank our sponsor, Bruce Tyrrell of Tyrrell’s Wines and Dr Swartz of the Canberra Mercure.

In addition in speaking with a guest of one of our descendants we discovered yet another Australian participant in the war that we previously knew nothing of so quickly signed him up and Paul sold him a tie.

I would particularly like to thank our chief organisers of the night Bernadette Mottram and Jilly Warren who did as usual a superb job. Thanks also to Tony for organising Tyrrell’s as our sponsor and Owen Graham and Ina Taylor for organising the Mercure package.

Finally I would like to thank those NSW and National committee who supported us by attending, John Haynes, Tony Larnach-Jones, Ian Guild, Chris Dawson, Bill Molloy, Bernadette Mottram, Jilly Warren, Brian Walters, Owen Graham, Paul Lenehan and Ken Griffin. Finally I should mention the wonderful support that we always receive from the Mess staff.

David Deasey
A Surgeon Captain of Distinction

Recently the New South Wales committee was shown an important item of Boer War Memorabilia. This was an illuminated address to Captain George Langrigg Leathes Lawson, the regimental medical officer of the New South Wales Imperial Bushmen.

George Lawson was born in England in approximately 1858 and completed his medical training in Scotland (LRCP Edinburgh), and England (MRCS). This included a stint working at Guy’s Hospital, London before coming to New South Wales on the ‘Midlothian’in 1883.

Most of his career prior to the Boer War was as a resident medical officer in New South Wales country towns including Gosford, Bega, Balranald and Goulburn. He also had a short stint in Auckland, 1885, and on the Western Australian goldfields at Yaloo, 1897 -1898. His chief interest appeared to be in the prevention and treatment of infectious diseases. This would stand him in good stead in his role in South Africa.

Selected as RMO of the NSWIB in 1900, he served with them throughout the campaign and was clearly regarded as having a major impact on disease control in the unit. He wrote personally to the families of those who were casualties in the unit. One such letter was printed in Sydney newspapers in 1900.

Klerksdorp, November 19, 1900. My dear Mrs. Murray,
— You will already have heard the sad news about your son. He was one of the advanced scouts. They had been told to be careful and not fire too hastily, as we expected to meet Lord Methuen’s men. They saw four men dressed like ours, and one with overcoats on very like our men. They rode quietly up, quite close, and

Major-General G A French and the Premier of New South Wales. This was accompanied by a travelling dress-bag and a Coromandel writing-desk presented by the men of the contingent alone.

Upon the occasion of our return from South Africa we, the officers and men of the Imperial Contingent, wish to testify to our high estimation of your many good qualities as a soldier, surgeon, and a man. It is with feelings of admiration and pride that we recall instances of your many humane acts in the battlefield while your devoted attention at all times to the sick and wounded has won the heart of every one of your comrades in arms. We ask your acceptance of this address as a token of our sincere regard.

The address was presented by Col J A K Mackay, the Commanding Officer on behalf of the officers and men. We know of no other such address being given to a Boer War medical officer.

At the outbreak of World War I, already too old for the AIF, Lawson travelled to England to enlist. There he formed, trained and commanded the 2/3 City of London Field Ambulance, part of the 56th (1st London) Division of the British Army serving in France. He rose to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel by the end of the war.

After World War I he settled in the Rooty Hill area of New South Wales and became a prominent member of his community holding various positions including President of the New South Wales Imperial Bushmen’s Association. Newspapers in the 1920s and 30s regularly carried reports of Dr Lawson’s involvement with the local schools of Walgrove, Eastern Creek and Rooty Hill.

In World War II, by then in his eighties, he travelled to France, probably in an attempt to join the French Red Cross. After the collapse of France he was found to be in England where he was an active member of the Emergency Services as fire watcher for the remainder of the war. He returned to Australia after the war and died at his home in Rooty Hill in 1948. His dress uniform is on display at Rooty Hill RSL.

David Deasey
Narromine and its contribution to the war

Many small towns and localities, some of which do not exist today, sent soldiers to the Boer War. In some cases these were just local lads, in others they were born elsewhere but were working in the town at the time of enlistment. Often, much later, Boer War veterans would move into the area to live post-war.

An example of a small country town and its war effort is the town of Narromine in western New South Wales. In early 1900, four men from the town were noted as having joined up as Bushmen. They were 365 Charles Ritchie, 352 Frederick George Bullock, 356 Herbert Charles Monk, all of whom as mates ended in up ‘D’ Squadron of the New South Wales Citizens Bushmen Regiment, whilst 182 Robert Levett was a corporal in ‘B’ Squadron. These men were at the severe engagement of Koster’s River, 22 July 1900, part of the attempt to lift the siege of Elands River.

Long after the war, an English migrant moved into the town with his family. William George Sollars, usually referred to as George, was a regular at RSL and other town functions. He is believed to have served in the British army with the Gloucestershire Regiment in South Africa.

There may well have been others and it is important that local historical societies and the current residents of towns try and document their towns’ participants. The war spurred on the townsfolk of Narromine to petition for a half Squadron of the Australian Horse to be established in the town. Later this became the Narromine Light Horse troop numbering some 40 soldiers at its peak.

David Deasey

More piano music

When war broke out between Britain and two Dutch South African republics in 1899, colonial defence units as well as civilians throughout Australia volunteered their services to the Empire.

The Australian Regiment was formed by the amalgamation of companies from New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. Piano pieces were written to commemorate the service of Australians during the Boer War.

Piano popular dances of the day included Bushmen’s Contingent Polka by George Castleden and the Ladysmith Waltz by Evangeline Davies.

Here are two more posters from Christina Whitely’s article. Piano popular dances of the day included Bushmen’s Contingent Polka by George Castleden and the Ladysmith Waltz by Evangeline Davies.
George Henry Goodall was part of the 1902 Coronation Contingent in England and during this time he became involved in the Adelaide Boer War Memorial Project.

Colonel Cameron, the Commanding Officer of the Australian Corps, sent Mr Goodall to Captain Jones and thereupon consulted him about the accoutrements worn by South Australian soldiers during the South African War and about the attitude likely to be adopted by a trooper when surprised by the enemy.

He then persuaded Mr Goodall to sit for him for half a day during which he made a clay model of Mr Goodall’s head. A comparison of a photograph of Mr Goodall, taken in 1902, with the statue itself certainly indicates a strong facial likeness.

Mr Goodall made it clear that he did not pose on horseback and that the model was confined to his head. He also insisted that he was not selected for this purpose on account of any outstanding merit on his part as a soldier during the South African War.

The sculptor, Adrian Jones MVO, is responsible for many noted works including the Quadriga on Wellington Arch, Piccadilly, London and the Cavalry Memorial for WW1 in Hyde Park.

Farrier-Sergeant George Henry Goodall’s medal group as worn by his descendant, Mr Don Pedler.
SA Descendants’ Day
Our South Australian Boer War Descendants Day will be held on Sunday 16 November 2014 at the Gilles Plains & Hampstead RSL.

It is situated in a park on the corner of Bennett Avenue and Ways Road, Manningham and is on a bus route from the city. The bus stops right outside the park. There is free car parking available surrounding the building and in nearby streets.

Descendants already registered with the South Australian data base will receive invitations. Other folk interested in Boer War matters are most welcome to attend and register their interest on the day.

For queries and information call Monty Smith on 08 8662 4085.

SA Guest Speaker Presentations
If your Group or Club is looking for an interesting guest speaker, with or without a power point presentation, for 2015 then contact Mrs Monty Smith on 08 8662 4085 or email at montavon@reachnet.com.au.

Our two speakers have considerable knowledge and experience. Tony’s special interest is the 4th South Australian Imperial Bushmen and Monty’s special interest is the Transvaal Nurses. Both are members of the Anglo-Boer War Study Group. It’s best to book a date early.

SA SCHEDULE OF PRESENTATIONS
11 Nov …. Campbelltown Historical Society … Monty Smith
28 Nov …. North Brighton Probus Club ………… Dr Tony Stimson

Reserve Forces Day Council
The support the RFDC has given fundraising for the National Boer War Memorial has been invaluable, as has the side-effect of spreading the message about it.

The RFDC has now moved on towards doing similar work for the centenary of the First World War in August when the combined naval and military Australian Expeditionary Force went into battle in the German Pacific in 1914 only a week after the Australian government joined Great Britain in declaring war against the Kaiser. As we know, nearly 30% of early enlistments were by Boer War veteran soldiers and nurses.

The RFDC will continue to make their Descendants and Supporters medallions, and the War Bars for descendants of multi-war enlistees available, and pass the proceeds to the National Boer War Memorial project.

RFD Medallions and War Bar clasps still available
for Boer War veterans who also served in WWI and WWII

These bars may only be worn with the Boer War Descendant’s Medallion

OR telephone RFD on 0403 160 750

Non-descendants “IN MEMORY” Medallions may be worn by all supporters of the National Boer War Memorial project to any Boer War related event.

For more information and order forms Reserve Forces Day website: www.rfd.org.au/BWM_Fundraise
Second Boer War Memorials in South Africa

Whilst leading the military History Tours pilgrimage to the South African War Battlefields in May and June 2014, I took the time to note the changing approach to war memorial preservation in South Africa. Some of the changing approach is very positive. The Ditsong National Museum system has delivered much needed funding for the professional preservation and presentation of historical artefacts. The funding and volunteer maintenance of sites by Afrikaner businesses and groups has not faded. In other cases there was evidence of neglect and, in the case of President Brand Cemetery Bloemfontein, a decision you would have to describe as irrational.

Ditsong Museums

Let us start with the positive. The Ditsong Museums of South Africa are eight national museums, seven in Tshwane (Pretoria) and one in Johannesburg. Two were of specific interest to the Boer War. Paul Kruger’s House in Pretoria, and the Museum of Military History at Saxonwold in Johannesburg.

The Paul Kruger House is a great window into what the President’s life would have been like in the period leading up to and during the Second Boer War. The modesty of the building is striking. Most of the furniture came from the house, all of it is contemporary. There are many portraits of the man and his family.

Ditsong Museums

The back yard houses the train that carried him over the Delgola Bay Railway toward Europe.

The Museum of Military History at Saxonwold had a number of items that dated from the Second Boer War, however, as a former soldier who spent most of his service in the RAAC, it was the extensive collection of armoured vehicles, their condition and the facilities for display that really impressed.

In Mafikeng, the Museum is being refurbished. This is rather essential, when I visited in 2012, torches were issued to see parts of the Museum as the wiring was water damaged, and there were other serious problems with the building.

Afrikaner Museums

Sites with an Afrikaner link are still very well maintained. The best example is the Voortrekker monument in the hills that dominate Pretoria.

This monument does have one room that deals in part with the Second Boer War, the Basement museum. Every aspect of the monument is in excellent condition and it is maintained with limited (if any) current government funding. You know that it was built to glorify a repressive regime but you cannot help being impressed. The scale, the marble frieze that tells the story of the trek, the stone wagons in the courtyard. It is a must visit. And yes if Hitler had survived long enough for Germania to have been completed, we would probably be impressed there too.

Kroonstad was another example of local Afrikaners maintaining links with the Second Boer War.

The group of citizens, in this case not funded at all by government, maintain two boer war cemeteries,
one at 50 metres by 50 metres walled and topped with razor wire. Here you will see most of the original metal grave markers intact and standing above the grave sites. The group also maintain the concentration camp cemetery. This they would very much like to fund to fence. I must admit that every time I go there a donation is given from my own pocket.

The Onverwacht monument and Ermelo cemeteries are further Afrikaner group high maintenance examples. Here in conjunction with and cooperation from the local councils in the interest of developing tourist interest and infrastructure, a model that is deserving of more universal application.

**Neglected Cemeteries**

Many of the cemeteries suffer from neglect with little local community. It is there, however, you are most likely to make major finds. Armed with the description of a soldier’s passing and intelligence there is a cemetery in the area, and it is amazing what you will find. On tour in June 2014, I had tracked the death of a Gunner Legg, one of the tourist’s great uncles, to an action near Lindley east of Kroonstad. He was serving with the CIC’s bodyguard. Took quite a bit to find the cemetery, the description and GPS coordinates for the Boer War Cemetery were 1,000 metres out. A check of the civil cemetery found the Boer War one hidden within and Gunner Legg’s name on the granite plinth.

The historical site of the Elands River supply depot defence is not by any means well maintained though, as the locals do not show much interest, there is only minor evidence of vandalism. The original grave markers stand sentinel over the grave sites and the major stone markers are in good condition except for a few plaques having disappeared. There is no sign the grass is ever trimmed and the white gravel paths are deteriorating.

Klerksdorp was a good find. There the cemetery is mostly neglected, but is quite a size, and a local contact indicated the local council was helping with maintenance. The local council funded town museum is also well worth a visit.

**The Strange Situation in Bloemfontein**

Bloemfontein is home to the magnificent Women’s Monument and the Museum of the Boer Republics. The Museum of the Boer Republics is a little incongruous. It was closed down two years ago for refurbishment. This year it was again open. No sign whatsoever of the “refurbishment” no change in the displays, maybe a vacuum cleaner passed through the halls. Sad, as the displays are magnificent and the huge paintings in particular need brightening. No photos of course, this is generally the case with Museums in South Africa, however, the Boer Republics Museum is the only one that applies it with a degree of paranoia. Eyes everywhere to ensure that telephones or cameras are not uncased. I also noted the display on John Brooks has not been updated, it still has him as an Aboriginal not a West African and makes no mention of John Searle. After my last visit I noted this in their comments log and wrote when I got home. This time Dr Dale Kerwin is writing, perhaps

*To page 10*

Please note there is an error on this page. John Brooks is of West Indian not West African descent.
someone whose grandmother is Aboriginal rather than Bavarian may be listened to.

Perhaps the no photography rule is so heavily enforced to cover-up the fact that there was no refurbishment. Then we get to the President Brand Cemetery. This cemetery has more British dead than any other, the advance on Bloemfontein resulted in many dead, as did the pause to allow supplies to catch up. Most deaths were typhoid related. Some years ago, the cemetery had been vandalised with grave markers strewn all over the site. Not knowing the grave site each marker represented, the markers were refurbished and laid out in a squared-off U to the north east and west of the central plinth. This gave an exceptional impression of the scope of the carnage. This was the case in 2012 when I took the time to photograph all of the Australian and New Zealand markers. By 2014, all of the markers had disappeared. The policy appeared deliberate. Many of the marker centrepieces being used to decorate ornamental bridges into the site. All had been desecrated by having the names plated over, some further by being cut in half. The action is almost incomprehensible. The decision and subsequent action is hard to understand.

John Howells 2014

Sydney Grammar School was founded in 1854 by an Act of the NSW Parliament as a secular ‘nursery’ for the fledgling Sydney University. Although it remains a government school it retains much of this historical independence.

Sydneians and the Boer War

Part Two (from August issue)

Mackellar mentions another Old Boy in his correspondence to The Sydneian. John Macquarie Antill, who attended Grammar in 1880, was a senior Colonial army officer in the NSW Mounted Rifles and was present at the war over February 1900, later becoming an Australian Army General in WWI, known for his suicidal charge orders at the Nek at Gallipoli.

While at Klipts Drift a troop of Australian Horse, under an old Sydneian, was sent out by General Pole-Carew to rescue some of the Rensberg Horse, supposed to be cut off by about 90 Boers. After sighting the enemy the Napoleonic plans of their young leader were suddenly disconcerted by the fact that, while in sight of the enemy, the Rensberg Horse escaped unaided.

Mackellar goes on to recall Colonel Antill at Poplar Grove going out with a patrol among the kopjes (a small hill) but found little except:

…a long piece of string lying on the ground; next morning in company with another Sydneian he found the string again but in a different place. The two consulted on its possibilities; was it a guide to some Boer stronghold among the kopjes? A still pull had no apparent result, it was decided to cut the cord and take a yard or two back with them, but at the moment they spied a man of the Royal Engineers: interrogated, he answered, serenely “That’s Lord Roberts’ field telephone that we laid yesterday as soon as he occupied the position.” The couple of yards of cord lost their attraction and the two departed at a gallop.

In 1901 Colonel J.M. Antill, along with fellow old Sydneians Colonel W.D.C. Williams and Colonel J.A. Kenneth Mackay, were all awarded the Companion of the Order of the Bath for their services in South Africa, the only decorations of this kind awarded in the NSW Forces.

After this submission, Mackellar became official war correspondent of The Sydneian, despite him adding a post script of “Please don’t put any of this in The Sydneian.”

Diary date for next year

Next Boer War Day is Sunday 31 May 2015
**How many Australians ACTUALLY fought in South Africa 1899 -1902?**

Part Three – Who were these people?

Were they all Australian soldiers, or were they colonial soldiers or just British soldiers who happened to come from Australia?

Shortly after the war there were several moves to write a history of Australian involvement in the war. It is said that the Defence Minister of the time heard of this move and put a stop to it by saying that as Britain was writing an official history it would be useless and impertinent for Australia to attempt to write one. This led in time to much destruction of operational reports written during the war and Australia is the poorer for that.

Historians generally refer to State contingents and then to those Federal contingents sent in 1902. Australia became a federated nation on 1 January, 1901. Under Section 51 of the Constitution all Defence powers and responsibilities were transferred to the new Australian Government. Nothing could happen in this area without the direct authorisation of the Australian Government. This meant that all except a few units of the first and second contingents were still serving in South Africa at that time and were therefore immediately national units even if still administered by their home States. The new government was not in a position organisationally to raise its own units until 1902. It then raised the eight regiments of the Australian Commonwealth Horse, the Australian Army Medical Contingent. Even the 200 reinforcements (Carington Contingent) for the 3rd New South Wales Imperial Bushmen, a unit which was staying on in South Africa under federal command, whilst privately recruited, were trained by the army in conjunction with 3ACH and must be counted in this group. In all more than 65% of all official contingents by number were sent after Federation in 1901.

Published in 1911 P. L. Murray’s work, *Official Records of the Australian Military Contingents to the War in South Africa*, provides the evidence that the Australian Commonwealth accepted retrospectively the responsibility for all official units in the war both before and after Federation. So all Boer War service personnel in official contingents may be safely described as Australian soldiers.

*David Deasey*

---

**Commemorative Envelopes**

To commemorate the construction of the statue of the first horseman the NSW Committee is issuing a commemorative envelope. This features a bronzed figure of the clay model of the horseman and a commemorative stamp – Victoria Barracks Boer War 1899-1902. (shown in the picture is the prototype only). The envelopes are available in the following forms:

a. Envelope with two Australia/Israel joint issue sixty cent Lighthorse stamps and commemorative Victoria Barracks stamp plus Australian Mint 50 cent Boer War coin $20.00 (This is limited to 50 sets).

b. Envelope with two Australia/Israel joint issue sixty cent Lighthorse stamps and commemorative Victoria Barracks stamp $5.00.

c. Envelopes with only the Horseman figure $2.50 each or 10 for $20.00.

Orders to Major Bernadette Mottram, NBWMA, Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Paddington, NSW, 2021
The main side shows a picture of the memorial design whilst the reverse shows the Queen’s and King’s South African medals. The beige background represents the South African Veldt, the date shows Boer War 1899 – 1902. The bucket is in the form of a side drum approximately 170mm high with a diameter of 170mm (6½ inches). The cost is $145 including postage and packing. Please make your cheque or money order payable to: William Molloy and send to:

Monumentally Speaking is an occasional newsletter © National Boer War Memorial Association
Correspondence and donations to Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Paddington, NSW 2021.

The New South Wales Contingents for South Africa

$20 inc. postage
Order tie and book from Paul Lenehan 02 9427 3781 paul.lenehan@bwm.org.au
Or by mail: 6 Angus Ave, Lane Cove, NSW 2066.

Reprint of original and available NOW

The Australians at the Boer War by RL Wallace
New foreword by Col. John Haynes OAM

Memorial Certificate
Free to Registered Descendants with book purchase.
Gluestick it inside the cover for future generations of your family.
Please advise veteran ancestor’s Army Number (if known), Surname, Given name(s) and unit(s) on the form below.

To NBWMA – Victoria, PO Box 2006, Blackburn South, VIC 3130.
Please mail me The Australians at the Boer War. Enclosed is a cheque/money order (no cash please) for $60 to cover one book and postage.
Name

Address

Town/Suburb State Postcode

Please enclose a Memorial Certificate as our tribute to:
Surname Given name(s)

Army number Unit(s) in which he/she served

If necessary, please add a note to clarify your required entry

We need more funds. If you are not internet connected, please send your cheque or money order to our Victoria Barracks address below.

Thank you

Now so that it can be completed prior to 31 May 2017

Monumentally Speaking is an occasional newsletter © National Boer War Memorial Association
Correspondence and donations to Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Paddington, NSW 2021.