

MONUMENTALLY SPEAKING

National Boer War Memorial Association Newsletter for NSW, SA, WA and ACT



Artist's impression

NUMBER 27 – NOVEMBER 2015

NATIONAL BOER WAR MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION
National Patron: Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC

NSW Committee of NBWMA Inc – Chairman: David Deasey

NSW Chairman's Message

This issue sees the completion of a number of milestones. The second horseman is well under way and design studies are now proceeding on horsemen three and four. Perhaps the most important news is that the Federal government has now invited us to apply for a grant of up to \$1.45 million to assist in the construction of the Memorial. Assuming that we are successful in this we will move a lot closer to our completion target. We will still have a way to go in fundraising, perhaps as much as \$700,000 subject to site issues. So after a hard slog for many years

seeking this grant we appear to have been successful. I must stress that we have still a continued need to raise funds; we are close but we are not there yet.

In this issue we finish our series on those Australians who served in the Boer War and were awarded the Victoria Cross in World War I. There are interesting stories about Boer War veterans. We also asked people's assistance in the case of some Boer War ephemera which has turned up.

I wish everyone all the best for Christmas and New Year 2016.

Let's build the memorial, remember our target date for opening is 31 May 2017.

Very successful Western Plains presentations

Monumentally Speaking is a periodic newsletter of the National Boer War Memorial Association
Correspondence and donations to Building 96, Victoria Barracks, Paddington, NSW 2021.

In this issue

NSW Chairman's Message.....	1
Progress on the Memorial	2
Book a Speaker	3
NSW Committee.....	3
National and State Contacts	3
ACT and SA Committees.....	3
Anyone for Cricket?	4
Reserve Forces Day Council	4
A Rare Find	5
Bessie Pocock	5
William Thomas Dartnell.....	6
Men from Forbes.....	7
4.7" Naval Guns	8
The Actress and Boer War Soldier	9
Western Plains Presentations	10
South Australia dates	11
Commemorative Envelopes	11

A special request: this time not for money!

Some of you have told us you missed an invitation or didn't know that something was happening when your committee was sure they had sent out the necessary information or it was in *Monumentally Speaking*.

Maybe you didn't tell us your change of postal or email address. We are receiving an increasing number of envelopes returned and emails bounced. Please help us save money on postage and frustration with emails by keeping us up to date with your details. If we only have your email address please also let us know which state you live in so we send appropriate information.

Even if your *Monumentally Speaking* is delivered by post we would like your email address so we can contact you on the odd occasion when there is news at short notice.

Everyone on the committee is a volunteer giving up their personal time. Please add value to that time by ensuring all our communications are delivered and not wasted. Our database is kept secure and confidential and your details will never be revealed or traded.

Your help will really be appreciated.

Progress on the memorial



Full scale Second Horseman commenced

Since our last newsletter, work has begun on a full scale model of the second horseman as you can see in these pictures. From this casts will be taken and a mould constructed for the bronze pourings.

The third horseman design is currently being worked on by the

design sub committee and the design matrix for this horseman should have been given to the sculptor for artwork and its half size model by the time you read this.

Money of course is currently the only restriction that we have.



An invitation from David Deasey, Chairman, NSW Committee of NBWMA

Book a Speaker for Your Association

Don't hesitate to contact me to arrange a speaker for your association. Our lively presentations are about 40 minutes allowing time after for questions, but are often adapted for both shorter and longer periods to meet your needs, lunchtime or a conference.

The story of Australia's contribution to the Boer War is little known. Our presenters are

delighted to put our first war as a nation into context. 23,000 Australian soldiers and nurses served, 1,000 did not return. We are remembering them.

Regardless of the duration of the presentation requested, our speakers need a working computer, video projector and screen for supporting visuals and, for larger groups, a microphone.

David Deasey



To arrange for a speaker contact David Deasey – 0409 585 877

NSW SCHEDULE OF PRESENTATIONS 2015 - 2016

24 Nov	10:00am	Brighton-le-Sands View Club	Brighton-le-Sands RSL Club	David Deasey
26 Feb	10:00am	Pennant Hills Men's Probus	Pennant Hills Bowling Club	David Deasey
19 Mar	9:30am	West Wyalong Family District Group	West Wyalong	David Deasey

***A special request:
Your details please***



Anyone for Cricket?

Recently the Australian women's cricket team recovered the Ashes. Women's cricket, however, was alive and well during the Boer War. Nurses including Australians such as Dora Burgess from Parramatta, NSW played inter-hospital competition, between hospitals in the war zone, during the 1900s when war was at its height. A prime mover to this competition was the Rev Matthew Mullineux, a British padre. Mullineux was quite an extraordinary character having captained the British Lions rugby team to Australia in 1899. Banjo Paterson had even written a poem about him.

He had been appointed a temporary chaplain for the voyage of the first New South Wales Contingent in 1899. That appointment, he concluded, gave him carte blanche to act as chaplain for all Australian contingents



7 Sister's Cricket Team has only been beaten once and that when we had to play without our best batswoman. The Rev. Mr. Mullineux, who came to South Africa with one of our contingents as chaplain, is now attached to No. 7. He is great fun, and an acquisition to life in camp. He is a real good sort and is very popular. He acts as umpire in our cricket matches. And wasn't it just a joke, when the Commission of Investigation came round, eleven of us Sisters with Chaplain Mullineux and a civilian surgeon were away at Maritzburg playing a match with the Sisters there! The Commission only stopped two hours at Estcourt, and expressed*

for the rest of the war. In World War 1 he had himself appointed chaplain to the New Zealand Army. Read more about him here bwm.org.au/site/Matthew_Mullineux.asp.

Dora Burgess, then serving as a nursing sister at No. 7 General Hospital, Estcourt, wrote home to friends at Toongabbie about the matches and her letter was published in a local Parramatta paper.

Soon after I was attached to this hospital the work got very slack and the staff went in for sport so tremendously that I gave myself up to such matters almost entirely. We have made quite a reputation and No.

satisfaction with everything. Of course, there were sisters on duty — and no questions were asked! They wanted the Chaplain though, to get evidence from him about the Bloemfontein Hospital, and he was in a great way about it, to have missed them, but he managed to see the Commission later on at Mooi River.

* Medical services were initially sub standard for soldiers as the Army had not realised the size of the war and had little understanding of or interest in the advances of modern medicine. This led to a Commission of Inquiry into medical services.

David Deasey



Reserve Forces Day Council

RFD Medallions and War Bar clasps are 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

Applications to:
rfd.org.au/documents/BWM_Medallions/Clasppapp.pdf
or telephone 02 9908 1863

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

A Rare Find

Recently a supporter showed us an interesting artefact from the Boer War. This was a nurse's brooch shown in the attached photos.

The brooch itself may well be silver but is hard to tell from the photos. The obverse (front) has a red enamel Maltese cross with a large 'A' (for Australia) superimposed on the cross. The reverse side has the letters NSW ANSR (Army Nursing Service Reserve) and the date 1900 with the words South Africa at the bottom. None of



us has seen anything like this before and the person who owns it believes that it came into Australia with the family either from the UK or South Africa. There is no record of any family connection to the nurses from NSW during the war. The conclusion, however, is it must be one of fourteen made and given to each of the fourteen nurses from NSW dispatched to South Africa by the NSW Defence Force in 1900 on the SS Moravian.

This group was commanded by Nursing Superintendent (Matron) Ellen Julia 'Nellie' Gould (seen left in the photo).



A number of these nurses would go on to serve in the First World War including Nellie Gould who would be awarded the Royal Red Cross in that conflict.

If anyone has further information on this item, the likely wearer or its use, we would like to hear from you.

David Deasey



The Royal Red Cross

The story of the The Royal Red Cross brooch highlights yet another recent story concerning these fourteen nurses from New South Wales who went to the war.

This story is the fight to save the historic 1895 Queen Anne Federation style house *Ismailia* in Beaconsfield Road, Chatswood, New South Wales. which at one point was owned by Mary Ann "Bessie" Pocock.

Pocock served in both the Boer War and in World War I. In the Boer War she was awarded both Queen's and the King's South Africa Medals. She was Mentioned in Despatches by Lord Kitchener and in WWI went on to serve as matron, especially on hospital ships.

As a result of her First World War service she was awarded the Royal Red Cross

(2nd Class) sometimes known as the Associate of the Royal Red Cross (ARRC). Bessie trained and worked in Sydney Hospital from 1890 to 1900 and joined the New South Wales Army Nursing Service Reserve in 1899. As with all the other nurses she operated under extremely difficult and stressful conditions, working often singly or in scattered groups nursing wounded and, more importantly, those with infectious diseases such as typhoid. She returned to Sydney Hospital in 1903 and in 1907 was appointed matron of Newcastle Mental Hospital and finally Gladesville Hospital in 1911.

She sailed for WWI as matron on the troopship *Argyllshire* and later on hospital ship *Assaye* during the Gallipoli campaign. She spent time at *Ismailia* in Egypt and in France before going to England to work in convalescent hospitals. She was twice Mentioned in Despatches.

Bessie Pocock

Medal winner, matron and provider of a convalescent hospital

In Australia after the war she bought the house in Beaconsfield Road, named it *Ismailia* and established the convalescent hospital there in 1924. This she ran until her retirement in the late 1930s.

After some opposition *Ismailia* was nominated for heritage listing by the Willoughby District Historical Society and is now formally listed. Lynne Saville highlighted the story in the North Shore Times in July this year.

The full story of Bessie's career can be found at

bwm.org.au/site/Mary_PocockNDD.asp.

David Deasey



Sister Pocock with Boer War Hospital staff

William Thomas Dartnell

a.k.a. Wilbur Taylor Dartnell.

Boer War Soldier, Actor, Victoria Cross Holder.

Dartnell was the fourth Australian Boer War soldier to receive a Victoria Cross in the First World War. He gave his life attempting to save the lives of others. William Thomas Dartnell was born 6 April 1885, in Collingwood, Melbourne. At fifteen he enlisted in the 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles having his sixteenth birthday in South Africa. It appears that he raised his age to nineteen to enlist and served as trooper No 1172 in the Right Wing (A, B, C Squadrons) of the regiment.

The unit served from March 1901 until March 1902 in east Transvaal and Natal frontier under General Beatson then Colonel Pulteney. The unit suffered the heaviest casualties

of any Australian contingent. Dartnell, being in the Right Wing, was not involved in the Wilmansrust disaster (12 June 1901). In August 1901 the regiment operated for six days in torrential rain with only half rations and no blankets. On 23 November Lt Maygar's actions in rescuing a soldier under fire saw him awarded the Victoria Cross. In January the regiment was involved at Onverwacht supporting the Queenslanders followed by an action

at Johnston Hoek supporting the blockhouses under Boer attack where three Boers were killed and fifty-five captured by the regiment.

After return from South Africa at the age of seventeen Dartnell became an actor and in 1907 married Elizabeth Smyth with whom he had two daughters. In 1912

he migrated to South Africa leaving his family in Fitzroy in Melbourne. When World War I broke out Dartnell sailed to England to join up. Using the

name Wilbur Taylor Dartnell he was commissioned into the 25th (Frontiersmen)

Battalion, Royal Fusiliers on 12 February 1915 as a second lieutenant.

There is a suggestion that prior to this he was involved in assisting with shipping horses from England to France. The 25th Battalion was drawn mainly from an Empire patriotic society known as the Legion of Frontiersmen. The regimental history noted that "it included men of various ages and with strange experience, from all quarters of the Empire."

It was raised specifically for service against German troops in East Africa and was the only unit sent on active service without prior training. The Battalion was assigned the role of protecting the Uganda railway from German attacks. The unit was part of the force which advanced and drove the Germans out of their base at Bukoba. Dartnell personally retrieved the German Imperial ensign from the headquarters (now held by the Fusiliers Museum) and

it is believed that he was Mentioned in Dispatches (MiD) for his service at Bukoba. 'Bukoba' was awarded to the Fusiliers as a battle honour. In July he was promoted to lieutenant.

By September 1915 his unit had moved to a Maktau in Kenya hunting enemy raiding parties and Dartnell was given



Clockwise from above: in full uniform, a young recruit, official photo, war grave.



command of 3 Troop, a composite mounted infantry company of the brigade. This company was mounted on mules. On 3 September 1915 reports came in of a German patrol attacking a ballast train. The Mounted Infantry Company 67, all ranks, was sent out with a half company of the 130th Baluchi Infantry Battalion to ambush the German force as it returned. Moving quickly, the MI Company became separated from the infantry but set up a position on the likely escape route. An accidental shot betrayed the unit's position and the German force, estimated at two hundred, attacked. Badly outnumbered, the British force was now in severe trouble and taking casualties. The commander (also a Boer War veteran) was badly wounded and made the decision to withdraw. Seven British soldiers were so badly hit that they could not be got away. Knowing that German African troops (Askari) often murdered prisoners Dartnell, who had been wounded in the leg, made the decision to stay despite being twice ordered to leave. Some sources have suggested that he intended a heroic last stand and this was reported as such in many Australian newspapers. This is not in accordance with the unit war diary



nor the VC citation and it seems much more likely that he hoped that, as an officer, the Germans would want to capture him and he would be able to negotiate the safety of the wounded. In fact the story of him being surrounded by seven enemy bodies was an invention of the Australian press at the time.

An hour after the engagement a Baluchi relief force occupied the position. Inspection of the bodies of the eight British soldiers showed that they had all received multiple bullet and bayonet wounds at close range. Dartnell received the Victoria Cross posthumously.

The citation read:

For most conspicuous bravery near Maktou (East Africa) on 3rd September, 1915. During a mounted infantry engagement the enemy got within a few yards of our men, and it was found impossible to get the more severely wounded away. Lt Dartnell, who was himself being carried away wounded in the leg, seeing the situation and knowing that the enemy's black troops murdered the wounded, insisted on being left behind in the hopes of being able to save the lives of the other wounded men. He gave his own life in a gallant attempt to save others.

His medal is now held by the Australian War Memorial. His body was reburied in the Commonwealth War Cemetery at Voi in Kenya.

David Deasey



Final headstone at Voi War Cemetery.

Forbes in Central Western New South Wales contributed significantly to the Boer War. As a key agricultural centre it not only contributed its own residents but itinerant agricultural labourers who were just passing through or working on local properties also enlisted. It is estimated that there were up to one hundred and fifty enlistments who came from the district. The town's Boer War Memorial lists ten men who did not return. These included a number of men who were part of the Forbes Half Squadron of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles pre-war, including Harry Bennett and Alfred Allen.



John Waddell was employed as a horse breaker on Burrawong station near Forbes. He was said to be a crack rider and a perfect master of bushcraft when he enlisted in C Squadron of the New South Wales Citizens Bushmen. He was part of the famed Forbes 50, a group who enlisted in the Bushmen. His employer offered him the choice of the horses on the station. Nothing ventured, nothing gained, John picked the boss's own horse 'Jackpot' and what's more the boss never blinked. Waddell was killed on the first day of the Siege of Elands River, 4 August 1900 by a pom-pom shell. He was buried by the senior New South Wales officer, Captain J F Thomas of 'Breaker' Morant fame, and by the famed chaplain, the Rev James Green, under heavy Boer small arms fire.

Three members of the Battye family served during the war. Arthur Battye became the guardian of the NSW Citizens Bushmen's mascot, a kelpie named 'Bushie', which was eventually presented to Her Majesty, Queen Victoria after his war service. Some, like Edwin Gentle, moved into the town after the war. Gentle, who had served in the South African Constabulary (SAC), became the licensee of the Post Office Hotel.

Men from Forbes

Others like Trooper Bert Duckering of the 3rd New South Wales Mounted Rifles joined the AIF in WWI and was killed in France whilst serving with the 3rd Battalion AIF in October 1917.

George Howland who had served with the Essex Regiment in the Boer War, served with the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force in New Guinea before returning to be the CSM of the local company of the 15th Infantry Battalion on home defence.

The town's memorial to the Boer War veterans was dedicated on 19 December 1904 by Colonel C W Waddell, acting NSW Commandant.

We would like to hear from any descendants of the men from Forbes.

David Deasey



Clockwise from above: Arthur Battye, Boer War Memorial in Forbes, John Waddell



4.7inch (120mm) Naval Guns

Saving the day in 1899

Introduced into the Royal Navy in the 1880s/1890s to provide ships with a defence against torpedo boats, later versions became standard armament for destroyers until after World War II. The sudden discovery in the first two weeks of the Boer War that the Boer artillery outranged British artillery, produced a panic. Captain Percy Scott RN, Commander of HMS Terrible, improvised a field carriage for guns from warships in Cape Town and coastal defences.

The guns allowed British forces to regain parity with Boer forces at a critical point in 1899. Later the British Army mounted some on 6" Howitzer



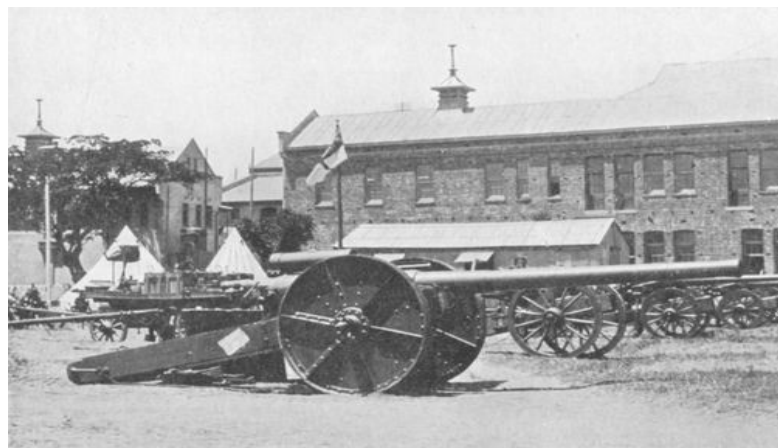
carriages to save weight although this was a very lively weapon for crews to fire.

Some of the original naval mounts survived to provide medium artillery support to South African forces in the German South-West African campaign in World War I. One was even used by the 1st Heavy Artillery Battery, a joint unit of Australians and Royal Marines at Gallipoli to counter long-range Turkish fire.

Its destroyed barrel is now in the Australian War Museum.

The guns fired a 45 pound shell (about 21kgs) to between 9000 and 11000 metres. It is believed that twenty-four were used in the Boer War and over 3000 rounds were fired. As many as twenty-four oxen were used to tow the gun as well as naval personnel.

David Deasey



Quality Australian-made
NBWMA tie in the colours
of the Queen's South
Africa medal ribbon
on a navy
background

**\$28 inc.
postage**

From NSW

Original 1900
collection
of Boer War
photographs.
NSW recruits
train and leave
for service in
South Africa.
In this full
A4 sized
publication
photos are
reprinted in
black and white
as crystal clear
as the glass
plates, long
exposures and
huge lenses
made possible
then.

\$20 inc. postage

The New South Wales Contingents for South Africa

BEING a Pictorial Record of the organisation of
the Colonies' Forces for active service, and the
scenes of unparalleled enthusiasm marking their
departure for the front.

FROM BLOCKS KINDLY LENT BY
"THE SYDNEY MAIL" AND "THE AUSTRALIAN FIELD,"
AND FROM NEW MATTER.

PUBLISHED BY
THE NEW SOUTH WALES BOOKSTALL CO.,
SOLE PROPRIETOR,
R. G. ROWLANDSON, Sydney.
1900.

(COPYRIGHTS) Printed by JOHN SAKDS, 214 George Street, Sydney.

**A4
size**



The Actress and the Boer War Soldier

Whilst not completely a Boer War story it is too good a love story not to tell. The love story of a Boer War officer and an American stage star who was nine years his senior.

Lieutenant James Bunbury Nott Osborne was the son of a wealthy Bungendore grazier, Pat Hill Osborne. He was born in Bega in 1878. When the 1st Australian Horse Regiment was established in 1897 James volunteered and was commissioned as a lieutenant and made a troop commander of the Bungendore troop.

Granville Ryrie, later a Light Horse commander in World War I, was a fellow troop commander of the Michelago troop. He was a cousin of Lieutenant Septimus Frank Osborne who commanded the Fighting 29 of the New South Wales Lancers in the Boer War. In 1899 he was appointed ADC to the Governor of New South Wales, Earl Beauchamp, who was also Honorary Colonel of the Regiment at that time.

After the Boer War broke out, it was decided to send an operational squadron from the Australian Horse to the war zone. This was done by sending a troop with the 1st NSW Contingent followed later by the main body of the squadron. James Osborne, appointed a second lieutenant, was the commander of the first troop to leave Australia although the force was under the overall command of Lt Willoughby Dowling. The troop left Newcastle on the *SS Langton Grange* on 14



November 1899, along with a troop of the New South Wales Mounted Rifles and seven hundred re-mounts for the British Army.

Osborne was present at the battles of Slingersfontein and Paardeburg, the Relief of Kimberley and the surrender of Bloemfontein. In March 1900 it was announced that he had received a commission in the 16th Lancers. The British cavalry had found that using colonial officers was a convenient way of replacing officer shortages or losses. James was joining a regiment that his older brother, Edwin had served in in India in 1897. Sadly, Edwin had died from enteric fever in 1897. James unfortunately also had only a short time to serve with the Lancers as in May he contracted

enteric fever (typhoid) and was evacuated to England. It was standard procedure to evacuate patients, after overcoming the worst of the fever, to a home area. Many Australians took advantage of the free passage to England.

Following his war service, in 1901 James was appointed ADC to the

Governor General of New Zealand, Lord Ranfurly. It is possible that he met his future wife at this time.

He had been awarded the Queen's South Africa medal with five clasps. His medal was presented to him by the Duke of York, later King George V, during the Royal visit to New Zealand in 1901.

Maud Jeffries was one of the stage stars of the age – serious star power. She had been born on a Mississippi cotton plantation in 1869. She had taken part in amateur theatricals prior to moving to New York in 1889. It is not clear whether this move was a financial necessity or a desire on her part as after her marriage she did not seem to hanker after the stardom. She began her career in small roles in

Daly's theatre, New York. In December of 1890 she made her London debut in Wilson Barrett's production of *The People's Idol* and very soon was his leading star. In St Louis in March of 1895 she established the role of Mercia in Barrett's *The Sign of the Cross* based loosely on the popular novel of the day, *Quo Vadis*. This established her in both the USA and in England as a great star. The company visited Australia for J C Williamson in 1897-1898. In 1903-1906 a company organised by Julius Knight and Maud Jeffries under the auspices of Herbert Beerbohm Tree and J C Williamson played to packed audiences in Australia and New Zealand. It was during this tour that Osborne joined the company as a bit player, perhaps during the New Zealand leg, having admired Maud from the audience. They were married in New Zealand



in 1904. Interestingly enough due to the severe illness of Knight in 1905, Osborne stepped into the leading man's role to critical acclaim.

The company disbanded in 1906 and Maud was content to retire to the family grazing property 'Bowylie' at Gundaroo in New South Wales where she remained for the rest of her life. She made a few charity appearances and a film, *Cupid Camouflaged* in 1918. This was a fund raiser for the Red Cross and was regarded by the critics as amateurish although both Maud and James received plaudits for their work in the film. James would die in 1934 and Maud in 1946.

David Deasey

From top left: Maud Jeffries, in costume, James Osborne.

Western Plains Presentations

This initiative was all Ron Hampton's. As father to Donna, the National Boer War Memorial Association's Database Manager, the idea germinated as a way to give his eldest daughter a hand with her voluntary job. It helped that at that time Ron was President of the Lions Club of Young.

He'd had a 'bit of a yarn' with the other five clubs that make up Lions' Zone 5, at Canowindra, Eugowra, Grenfell, Boorowa and Cowra to see if there was any interest in having visitors from the NSW NBWMA deliver presentations to a series of schools in the morning and the public at large in the afternoon over a week. Ron made it clear that Lions would not be supporting the BWMA financially, purely providing contacts into schools and local organisations.

Months went by as Ron (and Robyn his wife), toured the district, gradually firming up the proposal for presentations in three towns in one week and another three in the second week. Representatives from

accommodate the levels of interest for 5-year-olds and at the same time the 11-year-olds.

The PowerPoint pictures helped to keep everyone interested at their own level. At the end of the session a Year Six lad told Paul of his family's military history going back to the Boer War.

The Eugowra Bowling Club gathering produced two surprises. Robert Ellis, the author of the *Molong, Forbes and Districts' Involvement in the Boer War (1899-2012)*, attended as well as Reg Golding, sergeant in the 4th Light Horse Regiment of WW 2 (this is 1st Australian Horse country!) and Ngaire Soley from the *Forbes Advocate*.

Grenfell's The Henry Lawson High School assembled their full school, and listened carefully to the message that, had it not been for Australia's involvement in the Boer War, we would not have been able to participate in WWI from the outset. The afternoon session, in freezing temperatures, attracted RSL Sub-branch officials as well as local historian Olga Mitton.

Boorowa's Central School was a highlight of the tour. Principal Jennie Green packed ninety students into the library for a session

that ran overtime. Principal Green had the BWMA's national website up on the school's Facebook page before we arrived! Students showed particular interest in Paul's exhibition of medals. In the afternoon session, people were able to recognise faces in a photo from the 2002 unveiling of their refurbished Boer War Memorial obelisk outside the Town Hall.

Young's High School also had to withdraw and reschedule. The afternoon session in the Young Services Club was limited due to



Boorowa Central School red carpet
From left: Ron Hampton, Paul Lenehan, Keith Smith.

freezing weather. The upside was that news of the Boer War presentation had spread (we had a radio interview on 2YYY) so the Wombat Social Club invited us to redo the Young presentation on a Sunday in October, preceding Young High School's rescheduled presentation then possibly followed by one in Blayney.

In Cowra everything ran according to plan. The presentation to Cowra High's students and staff was very well received despite running slightly into students' recess time. The interest was intense, the questions exploratory. The South African Soldiers Association flag and Paul's table of medals and other Boer War memorabilia attracted a lot of attention.

In kinder weather the afternoon public presentation brought the largest numbers and three huge surprises. No less than four descendants of Boer War veteran soldiers identified themselves and briefly addressed the meeting. One, Mr Rod Corrie, had found an unmarked grave of a Boer War veteran, decided that it should be marked, and had a brass plaque cast to announce its owner's place in Australian history. Surprise number two was that a descendant from the Boer side attended the presentation,



Paul Lenehan discusses Boer War memorabilia with Boorowa students

NSW NBWMA were Paul Lenehan and Keith Smith (Keith being a retired and former member of NBWMA).

After venues, timings and catering had been finalised, Canowindra had to reschedule at the last minute to 7 September. So Ron, Paul and Keith made their way to Eugowra. And what a welcome! The teachers at the Eugowra Primary assembled the whole school – all thirty-one – with Keith making some hasty adjustments to his presentation to

Mr Ponie de Wet, who works for the Council. Mr de Wet's ancestor, General Christian de Wet, commander of the Orange Free State forces, was the Boer leader the British most respected. Although our memorial planned for ANZAC Parade in Canberra will be dedicated specifically to Australian soldiers and nurses who died in South Africa it will also be a reminder about the sacrifices of all those who served. The organisers, Ron Hampton for Lions and Paul and Keith for NSW-NBWMA, unfortunately didn't find out Mr de Wet's identity until after the session had ended otherwise he would have been made especially welcome. The third surprise was that Mr Tony Smith, President of the Lions



Boorowa Central Principal Jennifer Green

Western Plains Region, attended both the school and public sessions and is enthusiastic to consider Ron Hampton's model for Lions' support around other country regions of the State. Illustrated presentation tours such as ours are rarely included in Lions activities.

Adapted from an article by Keith Smith

Forthcoming South Australian Presentations

South Australian Chairman, Monty Smith will be giving the following presentations.

15 October 2:00pm.

Guest Speaker, Balaklava Council & District History Groups at the Balaklava Library.

"What did Stephen Ralli and the South African Boer War have in common?"

24 & 25 October.

Delegate to the S.A. State History Conference at Robe, S-E.

28 October.

Guest Speaker. S.A. Genealogy and Heraldry Society A.G.M.

"Before Gallipoli – what?"

1 November 1:00pm.

N.B.W.M.A. (SA) Descendants & Friends Day. Hosted by the Walkerville RSL at 1pm.

Information sessions, guest speakers, Devonshire tea and a Q & A session. Book stalls, raffles, fellowship and fun.

More information from Hon.

Secretary, June Haggett

86325574 email

junehaggett@bigpond.com.au.

Further, we are assisting the Crystal Brook RSL with their Boer War research and planning a community awareness event.

To commemorate the construction of the statue of the first horseman the NSW Committee recently issued commemorative envelopes. They feature a bronzed figure of the clay model of the first horseman and a commemorative stamp – Victoria Barracks Boer War 1899-1902.

Please order Commemorative Envelopes

Orders please to
Major Bernadette Mottram
NBWMA Building 96
Victoria Barracks
Paddington NSW 2021

Two combinations are available (same envelope sizes)



A. Envelope with two Australia/Israel joint issue 60c Lighthorse stamps and commemorative Victoria Barracks stamp \$5.00.



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

A Horseman of Memorial's design

From NSW

LAPEL BADGE

\$10.00



PRICE INCLUDES POSTAGE



bwm.org.au/fund

NEW NATIONAL MEMORIAL BADGE



\$10.00

The new National Boer War Memorial Badge has just arrived. It is similar to the Medallion but 30mm diameter, thin and with different wording.

PRICE INCLUDES POSTAGE

Get yours before the postage goes up!

National

Order from Brian Walters at
brian.walters@bwm.org.au

or by mail:
NSW Boer War Memorial Asscn Inc
Building 96 Victoria Barracks
Paddington NSW 2021

National Boer War Memorial Commemorative Ice Bucket



The main side shows a picture of the memorial design

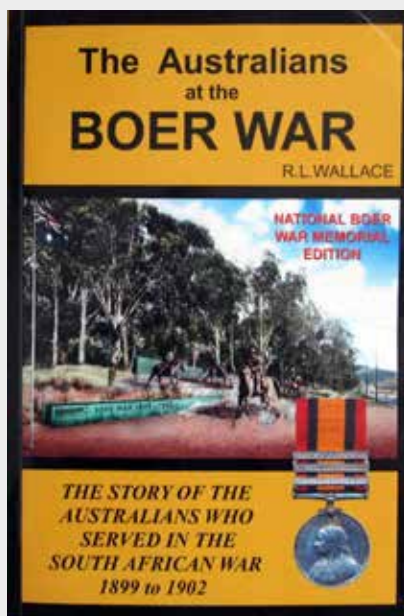
whilst the reverse shows the Queen's and King's South African medals. The beige background represents the South African Veldt, the date shows Boer War 1899 – 1902. The bucket is in the form of a

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:

Reprint of original and available NOW

The Australians at the Boer War by R L Wallace



New foreword by

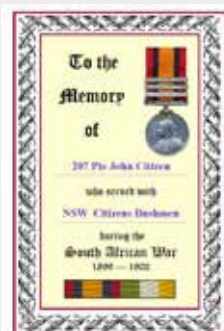
Col. John Haynes OAM

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.



From Victoria

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

bwm.org.au/fund

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



MONUMENTALLY SPEAKING WEST AUSTRALIAN EDITION NOVEMBER 2015

DISTRIBUTED WITH MONUMENTALLY SPEAKING 27
the National Boer War Memorial Association Newsletter for NSW, SA and ACT

National Boer War Memorial Association. National Patron:
Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC

WA Committee of NBWMA Inc
Chairman: Maurice Kissane

Lieutenant (later Lieutenant Colonel) Frederick Bell VC, MiD.

Bell was awarded a VC during the Boer War. He again performed gallantly in World War 1 and after the war his fearless testimony at a Commission of Inquiry saw him run foul of authority.

He was born in Perth, Western Australia, 3 April 1875. Two of his brothers served in the Australian Imperial Force in WW1; Edgar was killed at Gallipoli and Bert at Pozieres in France. Fred Bell was initially in the Western Australian Customs Dept, joining as a cadet in 1894; he later became a cashier.

In October 1899, at the outbreak of the South African War, he enlisted as a private in the 1st West Australian Mounted Infantry (1 WAMI).

He first saw action at Slingsfontein, and later took part in the relief of Johannesburg and Pretoria and the battles of Diamond Hill and Wittenbergen. On 19 July 1900, in a sharp engagement at Palmetfontein, Bell was seriously wounded in the abdomen and invalided to England. He returned to Perth in February 1901, was commissioned lieutenant in the 6th Contingent on 8 March and re-embarked for South Africa.

He gained the VC at Brakpan in the Transvaal for bravery in action.



The citation read: *On 16 May 1901 at Brakpan, Transvaal, South Africa, when retiring through a heavy fire after holding the right flank, Lieutenant Bell noticed a man dismounted and returned and took him up behind him. The horse not being equal to the weight fell with them, Lieutenant Bell then remained behind and covered the man's retirement till he was out of danger.*

He was the first Western Australian to achieve this honour.

After his discharge in May 1902 he joined the Australian section of the

Coronation Escort for King Edward VII. He then settled in Perth, but returned to England, joined the Colonial Service in 1905 and was appointed to British Somaliland as an Assistant District Officer in April.

He became an Assistant Political Officer later that year, a post which he held until 1910. He took up big game hunting and in 1909 narrowly escaped death in a lion hunt. He found himself alone as a lion charged. He shot it, but managed only to infuriate it by blowing away its lower jaw. The lion and he wrestled in the dust until help arrived. He spent six months in England recovering from the mauling.

He became Assistant Resident in Nigeria in 1910 and an Assistant District Commissioner in Kenya in 1912. In 1914 he became ill and was sent to England to recuperate.

At the outbreak of WWI, on the eve of his recovery, he immediately volunteered for service. (In 1907 he had been commissioned in the 4th Reserve Regiment of Cavalry). He went to France with the Royal Irish Dragoon Guards. He was Mentioned in Despatches and promoted to captain in October 1915. He was also wounded again. He returned to England and was made commandant of a rest camp and promoted to major. Later he was made Lt Col and became Commandant of the Embarkation

Camps in Plymouth. After the War he became a district commissioner in Kenya. In May 1922, aged 47, he married in London to Mabel Mackenzie Valentini (nee Skinner), a divorcee. She died in 1944.

In 1924/25 he gave evidence at the Masai Inquiry Committee which appeared to displease the Government. He was retired in 1925,



allegedly on the grounds of age - he was fifty at the time. The Government denied the allegations he gave under oath to the Inquiry.

He remarried on 20 February 1945 to Brenda Margaret Cracklow (nee Illingworth), a widow. At this time he was sixty-nine. He visited Western Australia with his wife in 1947 and took part in a ceremony with other holders of the VC.

Prior to 1952 he lived in England at Darklands, Symonds Yat, Hereford. He moved to 89 Stoke Lane, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol following the purchase of the house by his wife

on 11 July 1952. He died in Bristol on Wednesday 28 April 1954 at the age of 79. Buried in Canford Cemetery, Bristol. Lt Col Bell had no children of his own.

In 1991 a permanent display about him, including his VC was placed in the foyer of the Customs Department in Fremantle.

John Sweetman

WA Committee of NBWM Association Inc

The Battle of West Australian Hill



This battle took place on 9 February 1900. The first West Australian contingent consisted of a rifle company and a machine gun section of one hundred and thirty soldiers later mounted as a mounted rifle squadron under the command of Captain, later Major, H G Moor. By the time of the battle the force had been designated as 1st West Australian Mounted Infantry (1 WAMI).

"The General Officer Commanding wishes to place on record his high appreciation of the courage and determination shown by a party of twenty men of the Western Australians under the command of Capt H G Moor in the above operations. By their determined stand against three hundred to four hundred men they entirely frustrated the enemy's attempt to turn the flanks of our position."

With these words, Major General R A P Clements congratulated the soldiers of the First WAMI who, through their gallant defence of the small hill to the south of the main camp, had prevented a major Boer attack from that quarter. While on patrol large numbers of the enemy were seen advancing to their right. Captain Moor, the Western Australian commander, ordered his patrol to a nearby kopje in an effort to delay the enemy advance. Two infantry assaults along with artillery fire were launched at their position; these were stopped effectively by accurate aimed rifle fire. Sniping and artillery fire continued throughout the day. Corporal M Conway was killed and Lt G Hensman was wounded. As a result of this action Quartermaster Sgt G Bishop later died of sunstroke and fever. As recognition of their gallant stand here the scene of their first action

would be forever known as West Australian Hill.

So who were these people that were involved in this first battle?

Private Geoffrey Gordon William Hensman, twenty-four years of age, born in Bermuda in the West Indies, was a miner. He had served as a soldier in the Royal Horse Guards from October 1895 to March 1897. Following enlistment in the first Western Australian contingent he was promoted to sergeant and then commissioned as a lieutenant on 1 January 1900. He was shot through both legs with explosive bullets. Eventually taken to hospital at Capetown he died following the amputation of his right



leg. Originally he was buried in St Thomas's Church cemetery in Rhondebosch, Capetown, South Africa. In 1965 his remains were moved to the newly established Garden of Remembrance, Maitland, Cape Town, South Africa.

Private George Neville Bishop, also twenty-four years of age. Born in New South Wales and accountant by profession he had served eight months in the Fremantle Infantry Volunteers before enlisting. He had



been promoted to quartermaster sergeant perhaps because of his accountancy background. He had suffered sunstroke during prolonged exposure to the sun during the action at West Australian Hill. He died at De Aar on 14 February 1900 and was buried in the Garden of

Remembrance at De Aar in Cape Colony, South Africa. His name appears on a Central Memorial there although his initials are given as G M.

Private Michael Conway was twenty-eight years of age. Having been born in Victoria he was a tramway employee in Perth Western Australia. He had served with C Battery, Victorian Field Artillery Volunteers and

then with No 1 Battery, Perth Artillery Volunteers prior to enlistment. As an employee of the Perth Electric Tramways Company Conway had been presented with a gold medal inscribed "M Conway from PET employees 11-1-1899." Making the presentation was the managing director of PET who said he trusted to see Conway return with another medal, the reward of a brave soldier. Unfortunately this was not to be the case. Michael Conway had been promoted to corporal prior to the action at West Australian Hill. He was killed instantly by a bullet to the forehead, whilst assisting Private Krygger to protect the critically wounded Lt Hensman from both Boer marksmen and the effects of the sun.

Corporal Michael Conway was the first member of a Western Australian contingent to be killed in the Boer War which was not the recognition that had been wished for him. He was buried in the Garden of Remembrance, Colesberg, Cape Colony, South Africa. His actual grave location is not known as he does not have a headstone. His name appears on the Central Memorial as J Comwhy which is a sad end to Western Australia's first fatality of the Boer War.

All received the Queen's South African Medal (QSA) with the clasp Cape Colony. A memorial placed on West Australian Hill on the centenary commemorates the action.

John Sweetman



From the top: WAMI Section, George Bishop, Geoffrey Hensman, WA Transvaal Contingent at Karrakatta station.