

MONUMENTALLY SPEAKING-QLD EDITION
INCORPORATING WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
QLD COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER VOL 8 November 2013



Queensland Committee's Conducts an Elands River Presentation

On Saturday the 3rd of August, the Queensland Committee held a power point presentation on the siege of Eland's River at the Sherwood/Indooroopilly RSL Sub-branch. The power point presentation courtesy of Colleen O'Leary, was ably delivered by Miles Farmer. Miles has visited the site on several occasions. Miles was supported in his presentation by Miss Pixie Annat MBE OAM, whose grandfather was killed during the siege. Pixie visited the site in 2001 for the dedication of a plaque honouring her grandfather the late Lt. Annat.



Sub-branch President (and Editor Monumentally Speaking) Kevin Alcock, welcomes those attending.

A presentation from a Boer perspective, was given by Mr Dick Cijffers. Dick is from Bloemfontein, South Africa where he served in the South African Army.

Dick runs "Journeys World Wide" and returns to South Africa on a regular basis.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle of Sherlock Holmes fame was a war correspondent in South Africa and visited the siege site after it was relieved by Lord Kitchener. He said "When the ballad writers of Australia are looking for a topic, there

National Boer War Memorial Association Patron in Chief

Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC
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Premier of Queensland

Will be none finer than the Siege of Eland's River."

The epic ballad "Elands River" by Goerge Essex-Evans, late of Toowoomba was recited by Will Stanfield, *The Bushie*, holder of several Australian Bush Poetry awards.



A Full House

Miss Pixie Annat MBE OAM Grand-daughter of Lt. Annat, 3rd QMI, who was killed at Elands River in August 1900, spoke of her visit there in 2001 for the dedication of a memorial to Lt Annat. It had been arranged by the Rustenburg Military History Group. Lt. Annat was a mining engineer from Warwick. He had served in many campaigns with the British Army before coming to Australia. He had been at Majuba Hill.



His experience was invaluable to the defence of the Elands River Post.
(Cont P.3)

Queensland Chairman's Report

Welcome to the sixteenth Queensland National Boer War Memorial Association newsletter.

National News

Progress with our Memorial

Design Progress

The design process is now reached practical completion. One item still to be finalized is the wording on the front wall.

Construction Process

We have held a second construction meeting with GSA (formerly POD). From this meeting we need \$50000 to commence the site works. The Army has promised to do much of the work including survey for free.

The first sculpture is on track. Once the full size clay model is finished we will endeavor to use it for PR and help with our funding drive.

We have a dedicated Project Manager in Maj. Steve Bain with financial support from Dept. of Defence.

Model of the Monument

Background

Initiated by the ACT Committee; to promote the NBWM, the intent was to undertake a display and presentation at Parliament House.

The model has been completed and was presented to parliament in June

Petition

A Petition of approximately 10,000 signatures was presented to the Government with much fanfare on the 14th May. The petition was delivered on horseback by a rider dressed in a Boer War uniform to the Shadow Minister for DVA Senator Donaldson & Jane Prentice Member for Ryan. A most spectacular event.

Finance

In June we received a seeding grant of \$200,000 from the Dept. of Veteran Affairs. This allowed the Sculptor to be commissioned and the first clay model has commenced.

Nationally we have raised in the order of \$0.5m with Qld. raising in excess of \$59000.

We have recently engaged a firm of professional fund raisers Donorcentricity to advise us if there is

funding available. They are progressing well with their survey and we have had some encouraging responses.

We now must raise the balance of \$4m to build the memorial. You, our supporters, have been very generous with your help. Descendants of Boer War veterans are about 30% of our current supporters and donors. There are only about 150 sons and daughters of Boer War soldiers and nurses still alive and they strongly desire to see the memorial completed before they join their parents. We estimate that there must be at least 200,000 descendants through-out the nation. Many don't know that they are and are not aware of the part Australians played in the Boer War.

Queensland News

In the previous Monumentally Speaking I reported on the National Boer War Day on the 31 May.

This time I wish to report on a Presentation re Eland's River Siege at Harry Dalziel Centre Corinda on 3rd August. It was a great success. We had approximately 80 attending the Eland's River Presentation, a recital from a bush poet and a discussion of a book "A Skirmish in Africa" by Daryl Sahli.

This Remembrance Day wreaths will be laid in honour of our Boer War veterans at Sherwood-Indooroopilly RSL and Redcliff RSL.

Future Events

Our next event is in February on the 4th at Sherwood Cemetery to commemorate the last major battle of the Boer War.

Conclusion

We are now in the construction phase and we are still chasing funding.

Donation form is included in this newsletter.

May I wish you all the compliments of the season and look forward to success in this long overdue completion of the very start of our military history



Ron McElwaine OAM
Chairman Qld Committee of NBWMA



Correspondence and Donations to Secretary P.O.Box 165 Fortitude Valley Qld 4006

(Cont from P.1)



Dick Clifffers had just given his talk "The Boer War from a Boer Perspective", when posed an interesting question from **Marguerite Breitenach**, Great Grand-daughter of **Piet Joubert**, Commandant-General of the Boer forces at the outbreak of the second Anglo-Boer War.

He was the Hero of many wars against the Zulus other tribes and the first Anglo-Boer War (Majuba Hill). He died early in the second Anglo-Boer War. Looking on in the above picture are **Miles Farmer** and **Steve Bain**. Dick, who runs an excellent travel agency *Journeys World-Wide* has been a long time supporter of our organisation.



Bushie Bill, Will Stanfield giving his stirring rendition of **The Ballad of Elands River**.

Will is a Bush Poet of some renown and is the holder of several national Bush Poetry Awards.

His performance was given a rousing reception by all in attendance.

The Queensland committee was delighted with the strong support from all who attended what proved to be a most enlightening and entertaining afternoon.

"A SKIRMISH IN AFRICA"

(The Bush War in Rhodesia/Zimbabwe 1966-1981)

By Daryl Sahli

Reviewed by Lt Col Miles W Farmer OAM (ret'd), former member of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, 1969-70.

It has been described as a great action thriller. It is that and more. Daryl's well crafted story takes us back 40 years to the early days of the 'Bush War' between the liberation movements and Ian Smith's Rhodesian regime, ending with the independence of the new Zimbabwe in 1981.

Whilst many of us in Australia were preoccupied with our own war in South Vietnam, the trials and tribulations of our cousins in Rhodesia were followed keenly. Daryl relives those times for us in what could be described as a most useful military textbook in a realistic counter insurgency setting. Geographically it is set in the corner of Rhodesia which adjoins Botswana, South West Africa (now Namibia), and Zambia (formally Northern Rhodesia). The book begins with a most useful set of maps. My only criticism is that North is not shown and I had to rely on my own placement of the settings. This was made easier having visited Victoria Falls and Botswana in 2002. The maps are followed by an extensive glossary of terms used throughout the book. They are accurate, having been taken from the Rhodesian Army Counter-Insurgency Manual 1975, and prove very useful in making sense of the narrative. Further maps are well placed to illustrate specific actions.

In the Foreword, Daryl outlines the upheavals which had been and were taking place in post-colonial Southern Africa, and the interference by the two outside communist super-powers of Russia and China. The first named supported Joshua Nkomo (Matabele), and the latter Robert Mugabe (Mashona). The apartheid regime of South Africa provided support for Rhodesia. What a complex web.

He explains the ill fated attempts by various British Governments to negotiate a settlement between the opposing groups. The resultant dictatorship of Robert Mugabe does no credit to Britain.

Being a keen student of the Anglo Boer Wars in South Africa, and the British (Cecil Rhodes) move into the tribal areas of the Matabele and the Mashona, I can see that the grounds for discontent by these people started in the late 19th century. Both tribes rebelled at various times against the occupation of their lands by the British.

I will not attempt to discuss the many actions which are detailed in the book, apart from saying that they portray realistically the experience of the combatants on the ground. They will be readily understood by soldiers, and former soldiers. Anyone who served in the Malayan Emergency and/or South Vietnam will appreciate Daryl's accounts.

(Continued on p 6)



WA Chairman Maurice Kissane's Report - October 2013

The Australian Bushmen and the relief of Mafeking are proposed 2014 BWD themes.

Perth's 112th Boer War Commemoration will be held on Sunday 1st June 2014 at the South African War Memorial in Kings Park. Approval was sort and obtained to install two permanent flag poles to remember the fallen so named on this Boer War memorial. DVA met half the cost. MHS WA Boer War Committee helped fund the state flag pole.

The Memorial Gun requires once in 100 years maintenance. The RAAHS Restoration Team inspected the Memorial Gun and produced a report. The Krupps 75mm OVS is a muzzle loading field gun that was captured in 1900. It bears the insignia of the Orange Free State. This Memorial Gun permanently guards the South African War Memorial

South African War Memorial in Kings Park with two newly installed flag poles.

The WA NBWM Committee was instrumental in locating



and refurbishing the grave of LTCOL Harry Vials CB MID. This ex-British Army Officer was promoted Major on 13 February 1900 and commanded the 3rd West Australian Bushmen's contingent.

Major Vials had emigrated from England to Western Australia prior to the Boer War. He was promoted to the local rank of Lieutenant Colonel in South Africa to command the 3rd Australian Bushmen's Regiment RFF. The Rhodesian Field Force under the command of Major-General Carrington included the Australian Bushmen Regiments plus two regiments of New Zealand Roughriders. The 3rd

West Australian Bushmen and 3rd Victoria Bushmen were combined to form 3rd Australian Bushmen Regiment.

LTCOL Harry Vials CB MID remained in South Africa after the 3rd West Australian Bushmen went home. He fought at Onverwacht and was later given command of the 5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen in January 1902. He was mentioned in dispatches, and made a Commander of the Bath before returning to Western Australia. Awarded the QSA with 4 clasps: Cape Colony, Transvaal, Orange Free State and Rhodesia.

LTCOL Harry Vials CB MID settled in the South West of Western Australia and died in Bridgetown Hospital in 1918. The WA NBWM Committee notified the Bridgetown RSL sub-branch that a Commander of the Bath is buried in the local cemetery. This RSL under the leadership of Terry Lyn then refurbished the grave. The graveside service was conducted on 2nd June 2013. This BWD service was held concurrent with Western Australia's prime BWD service held in Kings Park

: LTCOL Harry Vials CB MID Grave Bridgetown Cemetery, Western Australia.

He commanded 3rd West Australian Bushmen then 3rd Australian Bushmen Regiment in the Rhodesian Field Force. Later LTCOL Vials commanded 5th QIB from January 1902.



Left: **State Secretary Kevin 'kiwi' Bovill** [Vietnam Veteran] Centre: **Boer War Historian and PR Officer John Sweetman**. Right: **WA Chairman Maurice Kissane** [ex-RAAF and Boer War Bushman descendent]

.There is an interesting connection between the Relief of Mafeking and the timber industry in Western Australia. The advance party, which arrived at Colonel Baden-Powell's HQ on the evening before the relief column arrived, led by Major Walter Karri Davies. This Officer made it through the Boer lines a day ahead of the main 17 May 1900 relief column.

He adopted the name 'Karri' because of his family's interest in WA Karri timber industry. He is said to be the most prominent Australian in South Africa in the pre-Boer War period. Timber starved South Africa needed timber from Western Australia for mines and railways.

Walter Karri Davies became involved in Transvaal politics and was imprisoned for his role in the 1896 Jameson Raid. He was one of those released in 1897 as a special gesture for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Walter Karri Davies then helped form the Imperial Light Horse. However all but A SQN ILH were later trapped in the siege of Ladysmith.

Following the relief of Ladysmith on 28 February 1900, Lord Roberts honoured the ILH by giving ILH the opportunity to relieve Mafeking. Colonel Brian Mahon's relief column included one hundred ILH men. Major Walter Karri Davies was one of the ILH Officers.

He was MID by General White at Ladysmith, again by Lord Roberts on 2nd April 1900 and by Lord Kitchener in his 23 June 1902 dispatch. He respectfully declined honours.

The Karri and Jarrah Forrest's in the South West still produce quality timber products. Finally, the Designated Gift Recipient or DGR status is a vital element in encouraging the corporate sector to make a contribution to the National Boer War Memorial. The Western Australian Government made a donation of \$30,000 at a function organized to launch the NBWM appeal on 13th May 2008. There has now been some WA RSL support. The most noteworthy being Mr George Starceвич from the Esperance RSL Sub-Branch whose team raised \$827.80. However corporate philanthropy is needed.
Maurice

RSL Esperance Sub-branch President George Starceвич and Mrs Ruth McIntyre. Local fundraising event for the National Boer War Memorial building fund

The urgency to raise funds to help the beautiful Boer War Memorial become a reality had been eating away at several members of the Returned and Services League in Esperance. This town of about 14500 people on the south-east coast of Western Australia has no local Boer War memorial, but several descendants. We have had a number of family visits from a certain editor of NSW *Monumentally Speaking*. It's a family thing, but petitions arrive, visits to the RSL are made and MS is faithfully sent.

All of this had the RSL thinking that they would like to help. Nothing official, just some of the interested members working together to create a donation. One day, the President was looking at some timber on his rural retirement hectares. That's it! A raffle to sell a trailer load of logs.

A barbecue was organised, the logs were cut and loaded on the trailer partially hiding this modest fivesome. Just for the record, their average age is 78. There weren't too many worries on the day, except that it was lucky Stan Starceвич had already been to the Korean War Reunion in South Ko-

rea because he had a bit of an accident when he dropped a section of the log on his arm. He bled a little but he is a tough nut and just shrugged it off. Stan's brother Joe was a POW in Changi, Burma Railway and a coal mine outside Hiroshima – a tough veteran.

The raffle was won by a most appreciative wood-fire owner, Ann Hampel of Princess Street, Esperance.

The smoky, wood-burning barbecue that followed was attended by Joan Starceвич, Pat Morton, Jo Starceвич, Dorothy Andre, Val Clayton, Dorothy Hayes, Colleen Young, Kelley Penny, and in a poetic touch, Lyn and Gordon Baker, formerly of South Africa. Many of these helped later by selling the tickets.

Joan and George were in Canberra a week later and went to Anzac Parade. They found the memorials to Australians in all the wars the Starceвич family members had fought and realised just how much they were appreciated. Great sadness then, that the Boer War people had had no such sign of their involvement and would never see it. Other returning veterans had lived to see theirs. They stood at the spot where the stunning Boer War Memorial would be and were able to visualise it.

The raffle raised \$827.80 to hasten the completion of this wonderful memorial.

Note – the Starceвич family is extremely well represented among servicemen in Australia and have been a part of many wars. Brother of Stan and uncle of George



is the late Tom Starceвич VC.

L-R Brian Clayton, Merv Andre, RSL Sub-Branch President



George Starceвич, Neville Young and Stan Starceвич.

(Continued from P3)

One can almost hear the drum of the helicopters overhead. His portrayal of the main characters is very good—Fullerton (Rhodesian), Benkov (Russian), Chabanga (Insurgent), Smith (Rhodesian National Serviceman). The first two might seem a little bit larger than life, but that makes the story more interesting, particularly if you have ever known any men like them. Any Australian National Serviceman will empathise with Sergeant Mick Smith and his experience with some regulars.

The partying and romancing that is woven into the story probably makes it easier for many Rhodesian readers to recall the times they lived in, and the dangers they faced. After all their country was at war.

I found the book exciting to read, enlightening and enjoyable. I look forward to reading Daryl's next book—"Steely-eyed Killers From The Sky", again set in the Rhodesian Bush War.

Footnote:

The story is based on Daryl's own experiences as a young National Serviceman in 4 Independent Company, Rhodesian African Rifles during the Bush War. He has several degrees in Commerce and Law from the universities of Natal and Queensland. Daryl and his family now live in Brisbane. His books can be purchased on line via his website www.mystorypublishing.com.au

"-LONG CECIL"

THE STORY OF THE 4.1 INCH RIFLED BREECH LOADING GUN CONSTRUCTED IN KIMBERLEY DURING THE SIEGE Nov1899-Feb1900

The 7 pounder guns of the Garrison could not effectively reply to the 15 and 94 pounders of the Boers, and everyone in Kimberley suffered as a result. Cecil Rhodes, Chairman of De Beers Consolidated Mines (DBCM) gave the order on Christmas Day 1899 to George Labram, chief engineer of DBCM to make a gun of greater power.

Although DBCM had been making shells and cartridges for the 7 pounders since the siege began there was no expertise in making artillery guns. Nonetheless, Labram and his team gathered what information they could, and using materials on hand began design and construction of the gun and its shells. It was a tremendous challenge, and is a credit to the ingenuity and workmanship of all involved, particularly when the workshop came under fire of the Boer artillery.

By 19 January 1900 "Long Cecil" was ready for its test firing. "The enemy appeared much disturbed when the first shells burst in their headquarters, and could be seen hurrying out in all directions, not expecting they could be reached, and there was no reply from any gun of theirs during the ranging trial". Some minor alterations were shown to be necessary, and on 23 January 1900 it was returned for service.

Some 255 shells (29 pounds in weight) were fired in all, at ranges of 5-6,000 yards. On one occasion at least a range of 8,010 yards was reached, by firing at a very high altitude. Sadly George Labram was killed on 9 February 1900, before the siege was lifted.

It was ironic that he was killed by a shell fired from "Long Tom" a bigger 104 pound gun the Boers brought into play some two weeks after Long Cecil came into action. The photo of Long Cecil shows it at the Kimberley Memorial.



**NOW
AVAILABLE**

National Boer War Memorial Edition of 'THE AUSTRALIANS AT THE BOER WAR'

In response to numerous requests for information about the Boer War and Australia's part in it, the National Boer War Memorial Association has secured permission to reprint this excellent and most readable book by the late Bob Wallace. First published by the Australian War Memorial in 1976, it has been out of print for many years and has become most difficult to acquire.

The Australians at the Boer War has long been a bible for Australian Boer War historians, militaria collectors and descendants of veterans and we are proud to be able to bring it back for our descendants and supporters.

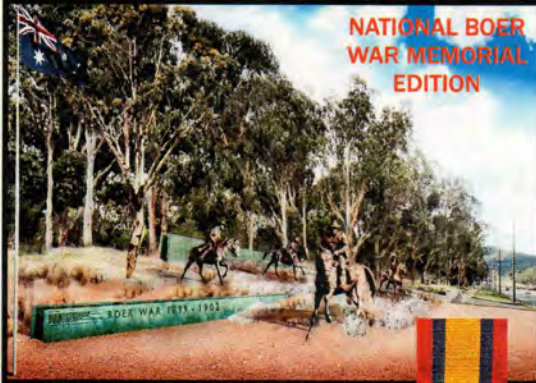
The book covers the causes and background to the conflict and Australia's commitment to join with Britain and other parts of the Empire - Canada, New Zealand, Cape Colony, Natal, India and Ceylon, together with other smaller outposts.

It then follows the call to arms and the recruitment of the Australian contingents before following their distinguished service around the southern parts of the African continent from the Cape to the Zambesi River.

It should not be forgotten that about a third of the Australians who served in South Africa between 1899 and 1902 did not serve in Australian contingents. Many had been lured to the Rand goldfields during the tough financial times of the 1890s and, due to the oversupply of volunteers for the Australian contingents, large numbers were balloted out and then made their own way to South Africa and joined the various Colonial and Irregular Imperial units recruiting there.

The Australians at the **BOER WAR**

R.L.WALLACE



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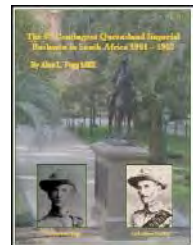
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History of the 5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen

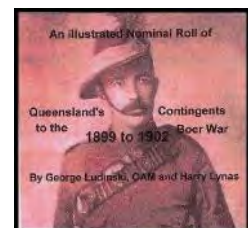
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