

MONUMENTALLY SPEAKING-QLD EDITION
INCORPORATING WESTERN AUSTRALIA AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY
QLD COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER VOL 9 April 2014



National Boer War Memorial Association

National Patron

General David Hurley AC, DSC

Chief of the Defence Force

Queensland Patron

The Hon Campbell Newman

Premier of Queensland



Australian Government

Department of Veterans' Affairs

**Onverwacht Hills Memorial Day
2014**

The Boer War Memorial service was once again conducted by the Sherwood/Indooroopilly RSL Sub-branch at the St Matthews Cemetery Sherwood. The service was a moving tribute to the 112th anniversary of the battle of the Onverwacht Hills in which 11 Queenslanders were killed. As part of the memorial, Corinda State High School student, Kurt Enkara (pictured) was presented with the Onverwacht Essay Medallion for 2013, by Capt Matthew Daniell who stood in for Maj Gen Digger James (Retd) who was unable to attend.

The messages between Ermelo High School, South Africa and Corinda State High School were read. The guest speaker was Capt Matthew Daniell of the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regt. The response was delivered by Lt Col (Retd) Miles Farmer, OAM former CO of the 2nd/14th Qld Mounted Infantry.

Following the benediction by Father Geoff Reeder the service concluded with the national anthem. All those present were then invited back to the sub-branch where a light lunch was provided.



The presence of a catafalque party from the Albert Battery historical Troop gave added colour to the ceremony. The firing of a ceremonial volley by the party also ensured that the service ended with a bang. (sorry, I couldn't resist that last bit. Ed.)

Queensland Chairman's Report

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

National News

Progress with our Memorial

Great News - Chairman of Appeal Committee Appointed

Michael Crouch, the founder of Zip Industries (small instant boiling water heaters) has agreed to Chair the fund-raising committee of the National Boer War Memorial Association. Michael Crouch was awarded the AO in 2004 and appointed an Officer of the Order of St John (OStJ) in 1996 for inspired work on the St John Ambulance Finance Committee and many other charities.

Design Progress

The design process is now reached practical completion. A contract has been let to prepare working drawings for the civil works.

Construction Process

The first horse and rider is due for completion in June. We have included a recent photo of the horse and rider at the sculptor's factory.

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 will soon be taken to Melbourne for display.

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 grant is ready for acquittal.

Nationally we have raised in the order of \$500,000 with Qld. raising almost \$60,000 of that.

We have received a report from a professional fund raising firm, Donorcentricity.

As I mentioned in the beginning we now have Michael Crouch as the Chairman of our Appeals Committee; Under Michael's direction we must raise the balance of the \$4m needed to build the memorial. We look forward to working with Michael to get our Memorial up and running. You, our supporters, have been very generous with your help. Please keep it up.

Queensland News

We are looking forward to commemorating National Boer War Day in ANZAC Square on Saturday the 31st May commencing at 10.00am. We have requested support from 2/14 LH (QMI) and we will have representatives from the Light Horse Historic Troop.

A big feature of this year's ceremony will be the presentation of an original letter dated Sept. 1901 written by LT Dodds about the death of his friend LT "Jack" Caskey. I hope to see you there in particular the descendants of LT Caskey.

Future Events

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

Conclusion

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

A Donation form is included in this newsletter.



Ron McElwaine OAM
Chairman Qld Committee of NBWMA





First Horse and Trooper Takes Shape

The full size clay rendition of the first of the four horsemen Has now been completed by sculptor Louis Laumen and is ready for the casting process. The size of the one and a half times life size piece, can be gauged by comparison with Louis and the head of the National Capital Planning Authority standing next to it. As the Queensland Chairman stated in his report, the model will be used in the fundraising efforts. The first priority will be the site works.



Lt. Lachlan John Caskey 5th QIB

He was born 30 Jun 1870, Spring Creek, Clifton. His next of kin was his Mother, Margery Caskey, widow, of Spring Creek, Clifton. His parents were farmers at Spring Creek. He was educated at Spring Creek School 1875 - 1885. He was a teacher at Spring Creek School and the Leichardt State School prior to the war. He departed Pinkenba on the *Templemore* on the 6 Mar 1901 and arrived at Port Elizabeth on the 1 Apr 1901. He was involved in operations in Transvaal, Orange Free State and Cape Colony. He was killed in action at Mokari Drift on the Caledon River, in an action which saw the 5th QIB suffer 4 KIA and 3 WIA.

National Boer War Day Memorial Service Anzac Square Brisbane on 31st May 2014

You are invited to attend our commemoration of the 112th anniversary of the signing of the peace treaty at Vereeniging, ending the war on the 31st May 1902. The service commences at 10.00 am on Saturday the 31st of May in Anzac Square, with guest speaker Lt-Col Ash Collingburn, Commanding Officer of the 2/14th Light Horse Regiment (Queensland Mounted Infantry). The Regiment will also provide a Catafalque Party for the service. A highlight this year will be the presentation of the original letter written by Lt. Dodds, on hearing of the death of his good friend Lt. "Jack" Caskey of the 5th QIB in action at Moraki Drift on the 27th September 1901. This valuable glimpse into Australia's military history will be presented to Lt-Col. Collingburn to add to the Regiment's magnificent collection of Boer War memorabilia at their museum at Enoggera.

Ingham RSL Sub-branch to honour Boer War Veteran

Ingham Cemetery holds the unmarked grave of No. 311 Trooper George Madigan of the Commonwealth Horse. George Madigan went to South Africa in 1902, but did not see action due to the intervention of the Armistice. His body has lain in an unmarked grave in the Ingham Cemetery. His Grand-daughter Virginia Wyles wrote to Veteran Affairs and obtained a war graves plaque. She has his plot number and has arranged for the Ingham RSL Sub-branch to hold a Military funeral service for him and also to erect a headstone with the war graves plaque. Kel Ryan from the Cairns RSL was liaising with the CO of 31 RQR for a military party for the service.



Western Australian Chairman's Report.

The Western Australian Committee seeks to raise the profile of the Boer War. It is facilitating a two day Boer War conference in 2015 to be held at the Army Museum of Western Australia. The proposed format is to have state, national and international speakers presenting lectures about specific units or actions.

This includes Australian, British, Canadian, New Zealand, Rhodesian and South African perspectives – both British Empire and Boer perspectives. Conference attendees will be able to visit newly upgraded displays plus participate in a service on 11 Oct 2015, at South African War Memorial. This international event will be held on the weekend of 10 & 11 Oct 2015. John Sweetman will be liaising with Army Museum of Western Australia. This worthwhile initiative is still in the early planning stages. However it is necessary during the Anzac centennial to remember this earlier conflict.

BOER WAR DAY ACTIVITY

Perth's 112th Boer War Commemoration will be held at the South African War Memorial in Kings Park on Sunday 1st June 2014. This service will commence at 11 AM. BRIG Phil White AM will deliver again the keynote address. He is a past commanding officer from 10th Light Horse Regiment. This 1914 Regiment carries forward the South African battle honours from the West Australian Mounted Infantry.

The WA colonial government raised, equipped and armed six W.A.M.I. contingents then dispatched them to the war in South Africa. The South African War Memorial in Kings Park lists the names of the fallen Officer's and men from the W.A.M.I. contingents.

The keynote address will focus on the 3rd West Australian Bushmen who were regimented with 3rd Victorian Bushmen under LTCOL Harry Vials. They formed the 3rd Australian Bushmen Regiment in the Rhodesian Field Force. The WA Chairman is descended from a veteran of this regiment. His mother's grandfather TPR Richard Palmer [617] 3VBC served in RFF.

The Rhodesian Services Association of Western Australia will lay a wreath as will the South African Military Veterans Association of Australasia (WA). The WA Committee has located the grave of LTCOL Harry Vials and were instru-

mental in facilitating a grave side service concurrent with Perth's 2013 BWD service. The British Defence Attaché sent an RN Commander to lay a wreath at the South African War Memorial last year. The New Zealand Defence Attaché sent an RNZN LT Commander to lay NZ wreath while the Canadian wreath has laid last year by a retired LTCOL. SAMVOA laid a Boer wreath.

Perth's Boer War Commemoration falls on the W.A. Day long weekend. Monday 2nd June 1014 is gazetted Western Australia Day Public Holiday. Hence the WA Committee is endeavouring to have Perth's Boer War Commemoration, which is held on the Sunday of Western Australia Day long weekend, included in advertised Western Australian heritage events. The rational is that the W.A.M.I. is part of the colonial military heritage.

This will draw attention to the fallen W.A.M.I. Officers and men so named on the South African War Memorial. The need for a national memorial is then put before the public via the media. Three Commonwealth Horse Battalions were raised in Western Australia after Federation to fight in this conflict but there is still no National Boer War Memorial for them.

John Sweetman will speak briefly about a kopje in South Africa called West Australian Hill. This is necessary because few West Australians have any knowledge of this conflict, let alone the action at WA Hill. WA Hill lies 25km east of Colesburg in the Eastern Cape. This is where 1WAMI thwarted a surprise Boer attack and held against a larger force.

The battle on 9th February 1900 was called the Battle of Slingsfontein. The GOC re-named the kopje where 1WAMI lost three Officers and men, West Australian Hill. Then on the centennial of this 1WAMI first Action, in 2000, a group of Western Australians including John Sweetman erected a monument on West Australian Hill. This is where 23 West Australians withstood an attack from some 400 Boers that lasted for at least 13 hours.

Brian Ross will deliver a Boer perspective on Boer War Day. His Irish born grandfather George Ross fought for his adopted Orange Free State as a Boer Commandant. Brian serves on the Western Australian Committee as a Boer combatant expert. He is an Oxford educated local Author of Boer War books

Monument on West Australian Hill



Photo Courtesy - John Sweetman Dated 9th Feb 2000

The Battle of Diamond Hill

Diamond Hill, an action fought on 11 - 12 June 1900, during the Second South African War, between British forces under the direct command of Field Marshal Lord Roberts and the main Boer army of the Transvaal republic under General Louis Botha. The latter, comprising 6,000 men and 23 guns was menacing the Transvaal capital, Pretoria, which the British had entered with 25,000 men on 5 June, by occupying a 50-kilometre front east of the town.

To deal with this threat Roberts moved out on 11 June with 14,000 men and 70 guns - all he could spare from the protection of his lines of communication. His plan called for attacks by Lieut.-General John French's cavalry and mounted infantry in the north and Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton's infantry and mounted infantry in the south, which were intended to tie up both enemy flanks before a main attack was attempted against the centre. Botha had accurately anticipated Roberts' tactics, and was ready to deal with both flanking movements. French's force comprised only 1,400 horsemen (including ten members of the 1st Australian Horse and 35 of the New South Wales Lancers) and, although supported by a dozen field guns, was easily stopped by General J.H. De la Rey and forced to remain in defensive positions for the night. In the opening moments on this flank, a troop of the New South Wales Lancers which was sent forward on scouting duty, was mistaken for Boers and shelled by the British guns, fortunately without any of the Australians being hit. Not so lucky was the New South Wales Ambulance, which was later struck by an enemy shell and damaged while moving about in the front-line.

On the right flank, meanwhile, Hamilton found himself strongly opposed by Boers under General Piet Fourie who occupied a long rocky ridge line dominated by Diamond Hill. In attempting to press ahead in the face of fierce resistance, part of the British force was almost surrounded when night ended the first day's operations. In the face of the situation which now confronted him, Roberts was reluctantly forced to contemplate a costly frontal attack in the centre against enemy positions which had been barely touched. Reports during the night, however, persuaded him to lend his support for a main thrust to be mounted by Hamilton against the Boer strong point at Diamond Hill.

The assault which was finally launched shortly after noon the next day entailed five battalions moving against the western slopes leading onto the Diamond Hill plateau. Although successful, the effort soon became bogged down when the Boers retreated to covering positions and the attackers were exposed to murderous fire from high ground on both flanks.

This pressure was only relieved when the brigade under Colonel H. De Lisle, which contained a battalion of British mounted infantry along with both the New South Wales Mounted Rifles and West Australian Mounted Infantry, made an assault onto the Rhenosterfontein kopje on the British right.

This position was effectively the eastern extension of the Diamond Hill ridge line, and the source of much of the fire which pinned down the main assault force. De Lisle, sent to concentrate his efforts against the Rhenosterfontein position during the morning, had used the two pom-pom guns with his force to cover the men of the 6th Mounted Infantry Battalion as they began steadily working their way forward on foot until they were close under the hill. By 2 p.m. De Lisle ordered the Mounted Infantry to advance.

As soon as he saw that the leading troops had gained a foothold, he moved his pom-poms up to within 1,300 metres and in the words of The Times history of the war - 'let go the New South Wales Mounted Rifles'.

The four squadrons of the New South Wales regiment, commanded by Lieut.-Colonel G. Knight, came under fire as they galloped in long well-spaced lines across the broad grass-covered valley to where the local farmhouse stood among a grove of gum trees.

Leaving their horses in dead ground here, they rushed forward, still widely spaced—27 metres between men and 45 metres separating the ranks formed by squadrons
(Continued on Page 6)



Diamond Hill War Cemetery

The role of the Australians during the action at Diamond Hill - the last great defensive battle fought by the Boers - was much praised, and during a review at Elands River on 14 June Knight's men were cheered by British troops for the gallantry they had displayed there.

Extracted from the book produced by Chris Coulthard-Clark, ***Where Australians Fought - The Encyclopaedia of Australia's Battles***, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1998, p. 78-81.

The Battle of Diamond hill has particular significance for your editor, as my Grandfather, 976 Trooper Joseph Nehemiah Alcock of the New South Wales Lancers took part in that battle and has the Diamond Hill Clasp on his Queen's Medal. The Photograph below shows him with his father Jonas and nephew prior to leaving for South Africa



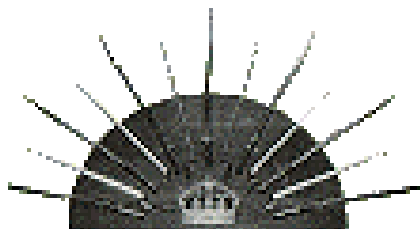
It is also worth pointing out that on my Grandfather's return from South Africa with the first draft of the Lancers on the 6th of December 1900, they were sent to Melbourne to form the ceremonial Guard of Honour for the opening of the first Australian Commonwealth Parliament. (Editor)

The Commonwealth of Australia came into existence on 1 January 1901 as a result of the federation of the Australian colonies, and defence was made a responsibility of the new centralised, federal government. This brought about the creation of the Department of Defence and two months later on 1 March 1901, the formation of the Australian Army. All existing military units of each of the six colonies were transferred into the Australian Army, which at the time of formation, consisted of 28,923 colonial soldiers, including 1,457 professional soldiers, 18,603 paid militia and 8,863 unpaid volunteers, including those on active service in South Africa. For practical reasons, and so as not to disrupt the ongoing war effort in South Africa, individual units continued to be administered under the various colonial Acts until the Defence Act 1903 brought all of the units under one piece of legislation.

In reality the only clear indication of the Australian men's new allegiance to the Commonwealth, was in the form of hat-badge changing ceremonies that took place in the field. The colonial troop's original badges of their home colony were replaced with Rising Sun Badges, the symbol of the newly formed Australian Army. It was also not practical or economical for the men to adopt a single uniform, or standardise equipment, and so each colonial unit continued to utilise their original uniforms and equipment.

After Federation in 1901, eight Australian Commonwealth Horse battalions of the newly created Australian Army were also sent to South Africa, although they saw little fighting before the war ended. Some Australians later joined local South African irregular units, instead of returning home after discharge. These soldiers were part of the British Army, and were subject to British military discipline. Such units included the Bushveldt Carbineers, which gained notoriety as the unit in which Harry "Breaker" Morant and Peter Handcock served in, before their court-marshal and execution for war crimes.

(Wickapedia)

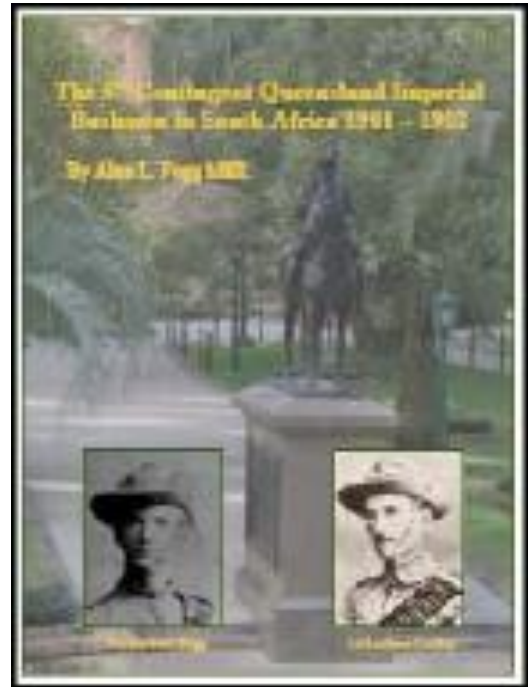
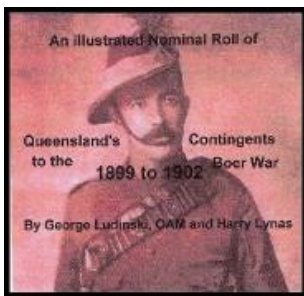


The first version of the Rising Sun badge was to appear during the course of the Second Boer War

MONUMENTALLY SPEAKING - QLD EDITION

Memorabilia for sale

Illustrated Roll of Qld Units
On CD. CD can be purchased
for \$15.00 each + \$2.00 P&H



History of the 5th Queensland Imperial Bushmen

By Alan Fogg MBE

Books sell for \$15.00 each + \$8.00
Postage for one book

BWM Ties!

These quality ties are a great hit. Designed and made in Australia, these ties are in the Queen Victoria Medal colours on navy background embossed with the leading horseman from the memorial design.

Priced at \$25.00 incl GST + \$3.00 postage

