



National Boer War Memorial Association

Patron

**Air Chief Marshal Mark Binskin AC
Chief of the Defence Force**

BOER WAR DESPATCHES FEBRUARY 2017 - VIC & TAS

VICTORIAN EDITOR PO Box 2006, Blackburn South 3130

Phone (03) 9890 2465



HISTORIC DAY FOR AUSTRALIA WED. 31st MAY 2017 DEDICATION OF THE LONG AWAITED NATIONAL BOER WAR MEMORIAL BY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OF AUSTRALIA

Thanks to all our descendants and supporters of our Boer War Veterans and generous grants totalling nearly two million dollars from the Federal Government, the National Boer War Memorial is now fully funded. Apart from minor fund raising to cover our local Boer War Day Service costs, we can now let you rest.

This has been a great effort by all of you and we are sure you will be delighted when the great Memorial is completed. It will be a fitting tribute to the men and women who served in the very first expeditionary force sent overseas by the Australian Nation.

The works are proceeding without delay in Melbourne where the four magnificent 1.5 times life size Mounted Infantry bronzes are well on the way. In Sydney, where the copper walls are under construction, progress is on schedule as are the site works in Canberra where the works area is now fenced off. It will all come together for the Dedication by the Governor General on 31 May this year.

Later pages in this Newsletter contain pictures showing progress with the horses. By the time you receive this, the first two horses will be completely finished, and the third will be almost there.

Now that our sculptor, Louis Laumen, has completed his studio work on the four horses, and the fourth is in progress at the foundry, he spends much of his time at the foundry repairing and touching up the waxes for the last horse, and ensuring that every detail is covered as the work moves to its completion.

Right now the foundry is a hive of industry making sure that the bronzes will be delivered to Canberra in plenty of time to be installed before 31 May.

As we close in towards the Historic Dedication on 31 May, we can advise that there is an open invitation to all to attend and be part of this momentous event. Please read the enclosures with this Newsletter and the information in the following pages.



ABOVE: Two aspects of the Memorial site fenced and ready for ground works to begin. First week in February

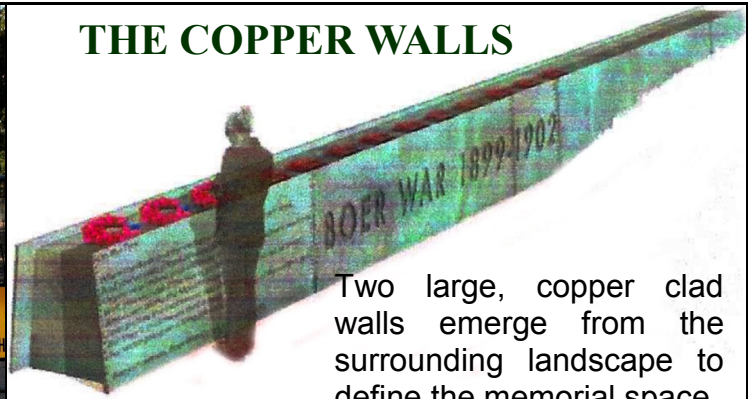


ABOVE: Louis Laumen with the first three horses. The 2nd is almost ready for the patina. The third is being assembled and one leg has been removed to insert the nearly 2 inches thick stainless steel reinforcing. By the time you read this number #3 will be well advanced.

BELOW: The fourth and last horseman in the wax stage being readied for the bronze pour.



THE COPPER WALLS



Two large, copper clad walls emerge from the surrounding landscape to define the memorial space.

The walls are aligned to the dominant parallel geometry of Anzac Parade to create a simple yet strong framing of the memorial. The different heights of the walls reflect their different functions; the higher back wall is a backdrop to the bronze sculptures, and the lower front wall frames. The ceremonial forecourt while allowing interpretation to be read along its top. The faces of each wall will be composites of several large, hand-forged copper sheets joined with rivets and finished in a green copper patina. On top of the lower front copper wall will be nine bronze replica journals showing extracts of the letters of Private F H Booth (No128) 2nd Victorian Mounted Rifles which give a continuous picture of a typical soldier's twelve months of service. We are very excited to be able to include excerpts of letters sent home by Private Frederick Harper Booth that tell the personal story of the excitement of arriving in Cape Town, moving out to the front, fighting, disgruntlement, hunger, exhaustion, the necessity for the scorched earth policy and rounding up of women and children into concentration camps. These have been archived and made available for use in the Boer War Memorial by his grandchildren including author Peter Fitzsimons. Also on the top of the front wall will be three bronze plaques giving the history of the war from the Australian perspective. On its front face will be an extract of Banjo Paterson's "On the Trek".

**When the dash and the excitement
and the novelty are dead,
And you've seen a load of wounded
once or twice,
Or you've watched your old mate dying,
with the vultures overhead --
Well, you wonder if the war is
worth the price.
And down along the Monaro now
they're starting out to shear,
I can picture the excitement and the row;
But they'll miss me on the Lachlan
when they call the roll this year,
For we're going on a long job now.**

WHY ARE WE INVOLVED IN THIS MEMORIAL PROJECT?

Why have we embarked on this journey? The committee felt that we should revisit for all of our readers what this is all about.

On 11 October 1899 war broke out between the Boer republics and Great Britain. The causes were of long standing and still excite passions today. At that time there was no Australian government, only six individual state or colonial governments as well as New Zealand. Everyone, however, knew that nationhood was on the way in 1901.

Australians saw it as our fight and, despite initial opposition from the British War Office, were determined to be involved. The first Australian contingent - a Squadron of the New South Wales Lancers commanded by Capt Charles Cox (later Brigadier General in World War One) - arrived in on 2 November 1899. At Federation in 1901 the new Federal government clearly stated that Australia's continued involvement was about reinforcing our first strategic alliance - the British Empire. By war's end Australians would serve in Australian brigades or even in Anzac brigades associated with their New Zealand cousins. The war concluded with a peace treaty on 31 May 1902. During the war over 16,000 Australians served in official Australian contingents, 65% after Federation in 1901. It is believed up to a further seven thousand (men and women) who were either in South Africa or who paid their own way served in British and South African irregular units. It was the first war that Australian women would serve in Australian uniform and in which the first Australian woman would die on active service. Approximately one thousand Australians would die on campaign, over six hundred of them in the official contingents. The first members of the Australian Aboriginal community would serve on active service, one at least with two tours of duty. After the war many former British veterans would migrate to Australia and many of those would serve with the AIF in World War One. Six Victoria Crosses would be awarded (all would serve again in World War One), the first to Neville Howse from New South Wales as well as more than one hundred and sixty other decorations to contingent members.

Four Australian women (one in British service) would be awarded the Royal Red Cross, whilst four others would be Mentioned in Despatches. Many Boer War veterans would go on to conspicuous service in World War 1; amongst the most notable names being William Throsby Bridges, Harry Chauvel, Thomas William Glasgow, Granville Ryrie, H E 'Pompey' Elliott, Nellie Gould & Maude McCarthy. Four Australian Boer War veterans would be awarded the Victoria Cross in World War One.

It is estimated that fifteen percent of the assault force at Gallipoli on the morning of 25 April 1915 were Boer War veterans. Some Boer War veterans, including Sir Harry Chauvel, would continue service into World War Two. Without the Boer War experience the AIF as we know it in World War One would not have existed. Brilliant commanders such as Monash and Chauvel would not have come to the fore and probably Australians would not have operated as Australian Brigades or Divisions until the end of the war. Our soldiers would have been merged into British units and formations. David Deasey

DEDICATING THE MEMORIAL WED. 31 MAY 2017

All our descendants and supporters are welcome to attend the historic dedication of the new Memorial by the Governor General and we expect to see a good contingent from Victoria. There may not be seats for everyone on the day so those who have not already notified us of their expected attendance should do so ASAP.

WHAT VISITORS WILL HAVE TO DO:

1. **Notify us of your intention to attend if you can.**
2. **Arrange your own travel and accommodation.**

WHERE WE CAN HELP:

As there will be no parking at all in the ANZAC Parade area arrangements are being made for two remote parking areas from where we will have busses to transport you to the Service site. For further guidance on the day or before please contact:

Nigel Webster.....0428 697 747

Col Joe Johnston.....0408 284 529

Kathy Wearn.....0412 280 544

Light refreshments and coffee will be available after the Service in St John's Hall which is behind the Memorial site.

MEMORIAL DINNER; A Memorial Dinner has been arranged for 7pm on 31 May at the Mercure Hotel, Cnr Ainslie & Limestone Avenues, Braddon ACT.

Musical entertainment will be provided by the Army Band and a Speaker will be engaged to address the guests. Numbers will be strictly limited to 120 and it will have to be first in gets the tickets. Cost will be \$85 per Head.

Dress: Suit and Black Tie. Medals to be worn.

(See enclosed flyer for further information)

NO ORDINARY MAN

Arnold Mercer Davies, No 454, 3rd Victorian Bushman Contingent served in the Boer War, First and Second World Wars. A remarkable story, of a man that served his country in three wars.

Davies was born on the 11th February 1876, the son of a Melbourne Solicitor Sir Matthew Henry Davies and was educated at Melbourne Grammar. At the age of 24, then a grazier at Lockwood, Narre Warren he was selected to join the 3rd Victorian Bushmen Contingent of 15 officers and 261 men. They left on the transport Euryalus on the 10th March 1900 and arrived at Beira Portuguese East Africa on the 3rd April. Davies saw service as a trooper in Rhodesia and the Transvaal he writes home about his involvement in the Koster River action, returning to Melbourne on the transport Morayshire on the 6th June 1901. Married Millicent Beatrice Yvile [1885-1975] in 1907, they had two children.

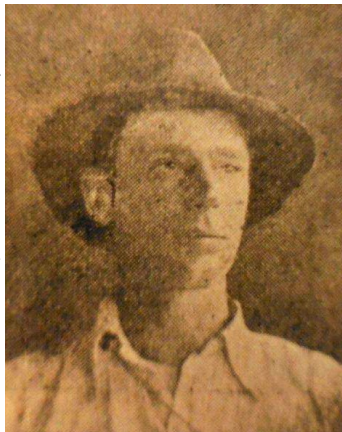
World War one: - On the 6th November 1914 he again enlisted, No 139 Corporal C Company 3rd Battalion Special Tropical Corps Australian Navy and Military forces Rabaul New Guinea garrison force. Davies with his CO named an unnamed river the Francisco River. Sergeant Davies returned to Australia on the 7th April 1918 only to return to New Guinea in the following years becoming a farmer and planter.

In World War two he enlisted in the Citizens Military forces at Paddington NSW on the 8th September 1942, discharged on the 3rd October 1942 reaching the age of 66 medically unfit. He then enlisted in the New Guinea home defence force; he was later reported as having died in a Japanese P.O.W. ship sunk by the Allies. He survived the sinking and his time as a POW. After the war he returned to Oakleigh Victoria dying in New Guinea age 99 years in 1975.

KOSTER RIVER ACTION

Private Arnold Davies, son of Sir Matthew Davies, of the 3rd Victorian Bushman's Contingent, gives the following account of the attempt made to reach Elands River at the end of July:-

"We are camped now-that is 20 of our division on a large kopje, about a mile from our old camp, on the Water Hill Fort, and it looks as if we were going to have a fairly easy time for a day or two, and I think we could all do



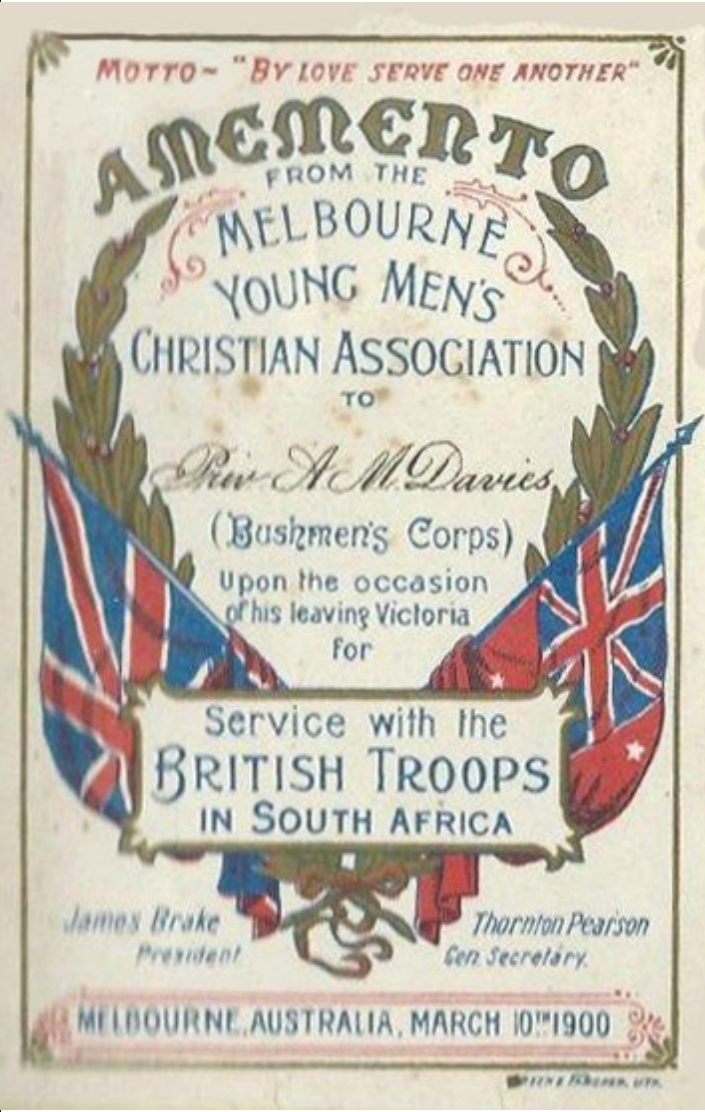
with a rest. I suppose you have heard by now that we had a go with the Boers last Sunday, and I think even the most sanguinary amongst us had enough fighting then to do them for a day or two. The wonder is that any of us came through alive; as it is, there are four killed and 21 wounded and missing. We left the Nek about 8 o'clock on Saturday night for Elands' River to bring in a large convoy. My horse went lame just before we started and M'Culloch lent me his second one. At about 12 that night the advance party came across a small party of Boers at the top of a ridge we had to cross. They fired a few shots and cleared. We dismounted. I forgot to say there were about 300 of us Victorians, West Australians, and New South Wales, and Queenslanders and Colonel Airey was in command. We dismounted as I said, had a walk round the country but finding nothing came back and formed up in open order round the hill waiting to be attacked.

At daylight we all took another walk, but could see nothing of the enemy. We mounted again about 7 and started off. After going for about a mile and half our right-flankers fired on the Boers, but they all got away. We rode on again thinking of when we would get breakfast, when suddenly they opened fire on us from two hills on the left of the road. We dismounted and lay down, and the horses were taken away, and then the fun began. The place where the Victorians were was very like the centre of the two ends of a horseshoe, and about 500 yards away and had cross fire from each hill, and later on from behind as well. We had ridden fairly into a trap. While we were on our horses we could see Boers

Running over the hill, but soon as we got on the ground we could not see a trace of them. We were lying nearly in the open. If a man made the slightest movement he brought down the whole of the fire on himself. We stayed there till about 1 o'clock doing nothing except now and then having a stray shot. The funny thing was that nearly all of us went to sleep; I know I slept for over two hours and it was a long way the best way to pass the time. At about 1 o'clock we made a dash for a drain about 30 yards in front of us and two of our men were killed while they were running. Once in the drain things were more comfortable, but we could see nothing to shoot at. I was lying on my back when a bullet hit the ground at the back of my head and threw the dirt over my face that was the nearest shave I had.

"At about 2 o'clock the major called for 20 Victorians to help charge the hill and I thought I had done nothing all day, so I went, but somehow I did not like the idea of it till we got started. We fired a few

volleys advancing and then fixed bayonets and charged, but not a shot came after we began to rush, and when we got to the top not a Boer was to be seen. That was about all I saw of the fight. Nearly all our horses were killed, and the horses-holders had by far the worst time of it. What would have happened to us if relief had not come is hard to say. We would never have got out of the hole we were in by ourselves. We heard yesterday from a young Botha, who was wounded that there were 1000 Boers and they had us surrounded only they did not know it, but thought by us keeping so still that we had a trap for them.



BOER WAR DAY MELBOURNE

PLACE: SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE
DATE: SUNDAY 28TH MAY 2017
TIME 12.00 NOON MARCH OFF

REMEMBER
SUNDAY 28th MAY
12 Noon AT THE LOWER END
OF THE SHRINE FORECOURT
SHOW THAT WE CARE



Boer War 1899 - 1902

MAFEKING
KIMBERLEY
LADYSMITH
ELANDS RIVER
CAPE COLONY
RHODESIA
RHENOSTER KOP



PINK HILL
TRANSVAAL
ONVERWACHT
KOSTER RIVER
WILMANSRUST
WITTEBERGEN
PIETERSBURG

6 VICTORIA CROSSES TO AUSTRALIANS

ANZAC DAY MARCH

Arrangements for ANZAC DAY are the same as last year. All our descendants and supporters will meet in Collins Street on the east side of Swanston Street next to the Town Hall. We will move off at 12.05pm for the Shrine turning left into Swanston Street and proceeding down Swanston Street over Princes Bridge and along St.Kilda Road. Hope to see you all there.

HELPERS WANTED

Most of our Victorian Committee have been working for you for over a decade now and are worn out and in need of a rest. Now that the big Memorial job will be completed on 31 May this year they are looking to take a back seat, We will still have one big job to do each year and that is organising the Boer War Day Service. If you can see your way clear to join up and offer a hand it will be gratefully received. Please ring Peter Wilmot on

SIX VICTORIA CROSSES WERE AWARDED TO AUSTRALIANS IN THE BOER WAR. TASMANIANS RECEIVED TWO OF THESE

Troopers Bisdee and Wylly from Tasmania both received the VC. Here is Bisdee's story:

On September 1st 1900 Trooper Bisdee was of an advanced scouting party passing through a rocky defile near Warmbad, Transvaal. The enemy, who were in ambush, opened a sudden fire at close range, and six out of the party of eight were hit, including two officers. The horse of one of the wounded officers broke away and bolted. Trooper Bisdee gave the officer his stirrup leather to help him out of action, but finding that the officer was too badly wounded to go on, he dismounted, placed him on his horse, mounted behind him, and conveyed him out of range. This act was performed under a very hot fire, and in a very exposed place. [L.G. 13th November 1900] (Honours & Awards).

1st September – Warned last night that we should be called at 2 a.m. to repeat the day before's movement, but this was countermanded during the night. I expect Boers were lying in ambush for us. 20 of us sent on patrol in the afternoon under Captain E.W. Brooke and Lieutenant Wylly to secure some cattle. Had a terrible experience which I shall never forget. We were led through a narrow neck into a veritable death trap. I cannot understand how the officers did not realise the danger. This neck led into a sort of basin with steep rocky hills rising in front. They opened fire on our five advance guardsmen at short range, and then upon all of us, and how we got away at all is most wonderful. As it was we had four wounded, Wylly slightly, and Sergeant G. Shaw and Willoughby and Corporal E.S. Brown very seriously, and the guide also severely wounded. The two latter fell into the hands of the Boers....The bullets came round us thick as hail, and exploded with loud reports as they struck. Captain Brooke was unhorsed. I gave him mine, running alongside myself, as he also received a slight wound in the leg. Corporal Brown's horse was shot, and Wylly gave him his horse, as he was badly wounded in the foot. Groom then picked up Wylly on his horse, and we rode for our lives. Two men (Clark and Blackaby) lost their horses (Clark gave his to Willoughby) but managed to evade the Boers, and arrived in camp late. Walter's horse was short, and he, stopping with G.H. Brown, was captured by the Boers who let him go to report on Brown's case, and send an ambulance in. Altogether it has been a terrible experience, and seems so utterly foolhardy to go into such a place without scouts well out in front and good supports behind. All for the sake of a few cattle! [Diary extract Trooper Bisdee, in Hobart Mercury.]

BOER WAR DAY SERVICES TASMANIA

BOER WAR REMEMBRANCE DAY HOBART

At 12 noon on Sunday 4th June a Commemoration Service will be held at the Boer War Memorial in the Domain, Hobart. All are welcome.

In the event of bad weather there will be a wet weather alternative. Please contact Reg Watson for further information. 0409975587

BOER WAR REMEMBRANCE DAY LAUNCESTON

The Boer War Commemoration Service for Launceston will commence at 12 noon on Sunday 18th June at the Boer War Memorial, City Park, Launceston. A wet weather alternative is also being planned here so please contact Reg Watson for further information. 0409 975 587

ANZAC DAY 25 April 2017

Reg Watson will be giving the ANZAC Address at the 11am service, Brighton War Memorial, Midlands Highway, Brighton. Afterwards he will be attending the Polish Club lunch, Hobart in honour of the Rats of Tobruk.

SOME OF THE KEY CONTACTS ON THE VICTORIAN COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL BOER WAR MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

Chairman:	Peter Wilmot	97640314 0408137874
Dep.Chair	LTCOL Ian George	0439717375
Secretary:	Bill Woolmore	98902465 0425788517
Treasurer:	George Ward	97252916
Data Base:	Lynette Bassin	97555896

Merchandise

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AND COMPLETE ALL DETAILS



ABOVE: Reverse of Medallion with provision to have the name and unit of your Boer War Veteran ancestor engraved.

This magnificent Memorial Medallion comes ready to have the particulars of your ancestor engraved on it to create a most worthy memorial to your family's Boer War heritage. A great birthday present.

The beautifully enamelled Medallions are a full 50mm diameter X 4mm thick and are available in a fitted jewel case. The front face has the Queen's and King's South Africa campaign ribbons faithfully enamelled on the lower circumference.

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The Australians at the **BOER WAR** R.L.WALLACE



**NATIONAL BOER
WAR MEMORIAL
EDITION**

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SOUTH AFRICAN WAR
1899 to 1902*



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Memorial Association nicely embossed on the
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New BWMA badge \$8 each	\$.....
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(uncased) \$38	\$.....
CAPS \$25 (post \$5 included)	\$.....

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BOOK (up to 2) \$12
em Medallion (cased) \$8
uncased) \$2
Sub-total \$.

(if purchasing multiple items contact
03 98902465 for P&P savings)

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Other

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Mobile:

Email:

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P O Box 2006, Blackburn South, 3130.

Please do NOT send cash in the mail

THE AUSTRALIANS AT THE BOER WAR

by **R.L.WALLACE**

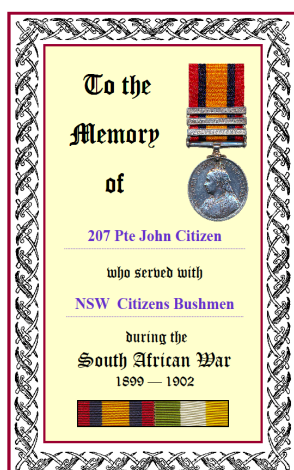
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FREE CERTIFICATE To those who have or can register with us a Boer War veteran from their family tree, a free certificate as shown below will be included which will make your copy of "The Australians at the Boer War" a permanent memorial to your relative who served. All proceeds from this Memorial Edition go towards the National Boer War Memorial. Please order on the form below.



To NBWMA(Vic), PO Box 2006, Blackburn South, VIC. 3130

Please send me a copy of **'The Australians at the Boer War'** Enclosed is a cheque / postal order for \$60 for the book and postage. My postal address is:

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I will require the FREE Memorial Certificate:

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Unit served in.....

Be There!

Dedication of Australia's First National Boer War Memorial in Canberra

Anzac Parade Canberra ACT at 10.00 am for 10.30 am Wednesday 31 May 2017

Construction and landscaping work on the first National Boer War Memorial site in Canberra is now well under way, and its official Dedication to the memory of all those affected by the Boer War of 1899-1902 is scheduled for the morning of Boer War Day -- Wednesday 31 May.

On behalf of the National Boer War Association I would like to express our sincere thanks to our many supporters in every State and Territory of Australia who have raised funds or made donations enabling us to complete a Memorial of impressive quality in our National Capital.

It is anticipated that the short Dedication Ceremony on 31 May will be presided over by the Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK MC (Retd), and any of our supporters or well-wishers will be most welcome to witness the Dedication.

If you or your family or friends may wish to be present, I would like to suggest you send us an application for reserved seating at the Memorial site, using the form overleaf. It would be best to make your application as early as convenient, as space at the site is naturally limited.

Yours faithfully



Colonel John Haynes OAM (Retd)

President

National Boer War Memorial Association Inc.

