NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2021

Past ZOOMeetings

"No Grave but the Sea" by Charles Ross.

This Zoom lecture, hosted by Johannesburg Branch, was given from his home in Pretoria on 16 January 2021.

Charles Ross first spoke to the Johannesburg branch of the Society in 2012 in his then capacity of Secretary of the South African Agency of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. This ZOOMeeting allowed him to show photographs of many of the memorials erected in many countries to honour the victims of war on the high seas.

Memorials that were detailed were Thiepval, Menin Gate, Chatham Naval, Plymouth Naval, Portsmouth Naval, Bombay (Mumbai), Chittagong, Bombay 1939-45, Halifax, Victoria, New Zealand Naval, Tower Hill, Liverpool Naval, Lee-on-Solent, Lowestoft, Runnymede - the Air Force Memorial, Malta, Hollybrook, Brookwood, Maseru, Attridgeville, Avalon, El Alamein, and Seaforth.

Perhaps the best known South African loss was that of the Mendi where over 700 men of the Native Labour Corps lost their lives (Atteridgeville and Avalon cemeteries). Then there was the SS Nova Scotia carrying over 700 Italian PoWs from Italian East Africa to SA, which was torpedoed off the coast of KZN with many casualties.

Post Script - Charles e-mailed this answer because the ZOOM session was abruptly truncated during question time:

A large number of Troopships were lost during both wars with the loss of a large number of lives. Here are some:

· Italian Troopship Principe Umberto was torpedoed on 8 June 1916 with the loss of 1 926 lives
· The United Kingdom. HMS Queen Mary sank during the Battle of Jutland on 31 May 1916 with the loss of 1 245 lives.
· The German Troopship Wilhelm Gustloff torpedoed on 30 January 1945 with the loss of an estimated 9,343 lives.

· The United Kingdom HMT Lancastria sunk during June 1940 with the loss of an estimated 4,000 to 6,500 lives.

In Cape Town there is a memorial to the Royal Navy sailors close to the Seaforth Old Burial ground on the opposite side of Main Road. The SA Navy memorials are at the Headquarters of the Flag Officer Fleet.

Both parts of Charles’ presentation are accessible from the ZOOM library on the Society’s website.

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ZOOMeetings and ROOMeetings

The four venues which used to host our monthly lectures - ROOMeetings - have as yet been unable to accommodate the Society due to Covid-19 restrictions. The dates for the Ditsong Museum auditorium have been provisionally reserved for 2021 but there is no indication as to when this might start.

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FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS
AT THIS STAGE ZOOMMEETINGS ONLY!

SAMHSEC - Eastern Cape Branch’s next ZOOMeeting will be at 19h30 on 8th February 2021

Speaker:  Mac Alexander
Subject:  The Siege of the Alcázar during the Spanish Civil War.

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SAMHSEC’s next Request the Pleasure of your Company will be at 19h30 on 22nd February 2021
The first session topic is tbc while in the second session Jaco Pretorius is to review the book Anglo-Boer War Blockhouses – a Military Engineer’s Perspective by Simon C Green

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Johannesburg’s next ZOOMeeting will be at 19h30 on 18th February 2021 (Third Thursday)

Speaker:  John Myburgh
Subject:  Why is there a statue of Jan Christiaan Smuts in Parliament Square near the Houses of Parliament in Central London?’

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Details of the ZOOM lectures will be sent to all on the master list as usual. There are currently 159 ZOOMINATI from all over the world on this list

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MEMBERS OF ALL BRANCHES ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND ALL ZOOMETINGS
Just let scribe@samilitaryhistory.org know in order to be sent an invitation.

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ZOOM LECTURERS WANTED
Members with an interesting presentation on any aspect of military history are sought for ZOOMETINGS. A nominal 30 minute lecture supported by Power Point or similar slides, but not video, is required.

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THE DECEMBER 2020 MILITARY HISTORY JOURNAL

The nominal December 2020 Military History Journal is under construction.

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2021 SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2021 will remain as R265 for single and R285 for family memberships.
Thank you to the many members who have already renewed for 2021.
There are 3 deposits which cannot be allocated because there is no name identified on the bank statement - Payments were on 5 January (SAMHS), 13 January (SA Mil Hist Soc) and 27 January (Yearly sub). Please check if you might have been one of those willing people ...

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Restored Harley-Davidson
jared smith <smythro@hotmail.com> e-mailed as follows:
“Tm bringing a 100% correct original 1942 10/12 to the market. I have its full extensive history and restoration information. This is a Museum quality vehicle. Tm wondering if you know of any collectors that might be interested? It’s located in the United States.”
[My reply was that the Rand/Dollar rate would probably make it too costly for our Museums.]
Branch contact details

Branch
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The Second Watercourse History Festival in Plettenberg Bay is scheduled to take place on Thursday 25th and Friday 26th February 2021

If you are interested in this festival please Whatsap Mike Kantey at 072 628 5131. He is also the contact person for booking - limitations on audience size at the venue indicate it would be an idea to contact him soon. Sessions cost R150 apiece and Thursday’s speakers include

Prof R Richards on early resistance to colonisation by Khoikhoi;
David Bristow on War of Peace - From Free Burghers to Trekboers;
David Hilton-Barber - the 1820 Settlers and conflict in the Eastern Cape;
Fatima Swartz will lead a workshop on “Finding Each Other Again”;
Mike Kantey will talk about the history of the SA Nuclear Bomb Programme.

Friday’s talks are:
Kevin Vos: “Salute the Eagle - Paratrooper during Operation Savannah, Angola 1975-76.
Ian Uys: Citations and honours among SADF combatants in Angola.
Dr Anthony Turton: Understanding the Battle of Cuito Canavale in its Strategic Context”
Dialogue between Piers Pigou and Zenzile Khoisan reflecting on the TRC.
Mike de Jongh - “The Human the Humane and even the Humorous - Untold stories from the Anglo-Boer War in the Karoo

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