



The South African Military History Society

Die Suid-Afrikaanse Krygshistoriese Vereniging

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NEWSLETTER - JULY 2025

Past JOHANNESBURG ZOOM Meeting

Ian Binnie told a fascinating story about a less well-known British General whose exploits, had he been in a more prominent theatre of WWII, might have given him much more prestige and recognition. William “Bill” Slim was a teacher whose participation in WWI included getting wounded in Gallipoli, fighting in Mesopotamia and Syria and being awarded an MC for his efforts.

Later Slim was sent to the Indian Army and continued to hop between the British and Indian armies for the in-between war years; gaining experience at staff level and teaching at staff colleges.

The start of WWII saw him in Ethiopia and Eritrea where Italian forces were forced out with relative ease. His greatest challenge would be in Burma where a mix of Indian, African and British soldiers had been hammered into cowering terror by the invading Japanese. The latter were aiming at taking over India and Burma was a step along the way. It took 2 000 Japanese to subdue Burma but - mainly due to Slim’s strategy and tactics - they lost 48 000 trying to keep it.

Slim managed to train, discipline and motivate the “Forgotten 14th” Army so that the second battle of Arakan, that of Imphal and Kohima, all became Allied victories - and the Japanese stranded in Mandalay after it was taken back were basically starved to death.

In all Slim was wounded four times, knighted and elevated to the peerage. After the war he was head of the Army (despite Montgomery’s preference for someone else) and even Governor of Australia. Possibly not appreciated by his peers, his reputation seems well earned and continues to grow.

His lecture is recorded in the Society’s Video Library on the website.

FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS - ZOOMINARS

Eastern Cape Branch (SAMHSEC) Zoominars

Monday **14th July 2025** at 19h30 and then at 20h15:
Speaker **Helmoed Romer Heitman**
Subject *German special operations in World War 2.*

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SAMHSEC RPC

The next RPC (Request the Pleasure of your Company) Zoominar will be on **Monday 28th July 2025**.

Session 1 at 19h30

Speaker **Robin Smith**
Subject *Part 3 of the story of Britain and the Boers. Parts 1 and 2 covered the period between Britain's Annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 and Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897*

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Johannesburg

Thursday **17th July 2025** at 19h30 and then 20h15
Speaker: **Prof Jan Myburgh from Onderstepoort**
Subject: *Animal Suffering and Sacrifices during the Anglo-Boer War -
Veterinary Aspects and Animal Stories*

The focus will be mostly on animal intelligence and self recognition; animal health and welfare (veterinary aspects) and some specific animal stories - where animals did something unbelievable during conflict situations, or behaved as if they correctly understood what was happening.

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Next KwaZulu-Natal Branch Meeting

Saturday 12th July 2025.

The meeting will feature a presentation by registered battlefield tour guide Warwick Baker on the Zulu Civil Wars, especially, the slaughter at Ndongakasuka near Tugela mouth, which preceded Cetewayo's rise to power.

The venue remains the St.Cyprians Church Hall, off Umbilo Rd, with secure parking and liquid refreshments available for cash.

Entry is free and open to all. A donation of R10 for the raffle and R10 for the car guard are requested from all attendees.

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You Tube Video The Boer War and its Boy Hero

E-mail received from "philipmajor@sky.com"

I want to bring to your members' attention a new YouTube video I have just published on the Boer War. It features in particular the role of a boy-solider, John Francis Dunne, of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. The video is British-focused but I hope I have done some justice to the Boer side also.

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BRANCH CONTACT DETAILS

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