



The South African Military History Society

Die Suid-Afrikaanse Krygshistoriese Vereniging

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NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2024

Past JOHANNESBURG ZOOMeeting

Mid-March found us listening to *Dr Anne Samson* talking from the East Rand about **Pretoria at War 1914-1918**. She was in South Africa to set up an exhibition which includes a 3D-immersive display about Pretoria/Tshwane which is currently on at the Javet Gallery at the University of Pretoria.

The exhibition is called **We the Purple** - a nod to the jacaranda trees - and some snippets from her lecture follow:

Pretoria was at this time, according to van der Spuy, a “Sleepy Hollow”. There were 4 primary and 2 high schools in the town - it only became a city in 1932! But was modern enough for a motor dealership - Haaks - to thrive. The speed limit around Church Square was 12 miles per hour... Haaks also provided trucks to the Army which were used in the campaign in German South West Africa (see articles in the Military History Journal about crossing the Kalahari desert).

Pretoria being the administrative capital of the Union - then not even ten years old - it was to be expected that some citizens would be unhappy about South Africa supporting England and her Empire against Germany in 1914. Prime Minister Louis Botha used the threat of Australian and Indian soldiers being brought in to deal with South West Africa to persuade his colleagues to agree to the country supporting the British. The death of Gen de la Rey at a roadblock for the Foster gang led to such unhappiness amongst the Boers, that even though he was given a State Funeral in Pretoria on 20 September before being buried in Lichtenburg, Martial Law was declared on 12 October 1914. For a while there was even conscription - so, not all SA soldiers serving in World War I were volunteers after all.

Citizens were required to hand in all the weapons they had to the police. Generals Kemp and Beyers resigned their commissions in the Army but others did not. Jopie Fourie planned to capture Pretoria but was arrested on 16 December and executed for treason four days later. His brother apologised - and was pardoned.

Foreign national women were held in a camp in Princess Park - many men e.g. the German internees had been sent to Fort Napier in Pietermaritzburg.

There were a few incidents of vandalism following the sinking of the *Lusitania* but Pretoria

got off lightly compared to other centres. There were no strikes in the town until after the war - again, unlike other places.

The second State Funeral in Pretoria during this period took place when Louis Botha, suffering from influenza in 1918, had a heart attack at the age of 57. He was buried in Heroes Acre in the town's cemetery.

The recording of the Zoominar is on the website in the Video Library.

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FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS - ZOOMINARS

Eastern Cape Branch (SAMHSEC) Zoominars

Monday **8th April 2024** at 19h30 and then at 20h15:

Speaker: *Andrew van Wyk*

Subject: **Rand Revolt and Constable FJHD van Wijk.**

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Johannesburg Branch

Thursday **25th April 2024** at 19h30 and then 20h15

Speaker: *Robin Smith*

Subject: **The British Officer and the Johannesburg Gentleman.**

The lecture concerns the campaign of Maj-Gen Bruce Hamilton (the British officer) and Sir Aubrey Woolls-Sampson (the Johannesburg gentleman). The partnership of an energetic younger Major General and the effective intelligence officer who knew the area, spoke both Afrikaans and the local African languages, caused the Boer commandos to leave the eastern Transvaal (as it then was) and seek safety in the rugged terrain around Vryheid in Natal.

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SAMHSEC field trip 13 April 2024

SAMHSEC's return same day field trip on 13 April 2024 to the Mount Ingwe Anglo-Boer War Relics Museum in the Elands River Valley is on course. It is possible to use sedan cars if you travel via Rocklands. There will not be a convoy of vehicles; participants must meet at Mount Ingwe at 09h45.

The Museum is about 64km (1h 10 min) from St Albans and the guided visit (from 10h00 to 12h00) will be followed by a live firing demonstration of black powder.

Braai fires are scheduled to be ready by 13h00 when the last part of the trip, the "kuier" starts. This is a 'bring your own' trip so remember the chairs, brollies, food, cutlery and anything you feel you need for a successful braai.

Further correspondence regarding will be sent to those who indicated interest in attending.

SAMHSEC RPC

The RPC (Request the Pleasure of your Company) Zoominar will be held on Monday 29th April at 19h30 and then 20h15.

Speakers and topics to be confirmed by invitations.

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Members of all Branches are always Welcome to Attend all ZOOM Meetings

Let scribe@samilitaryhistory.org know in order to be sent an invitation to the next ZOOMinar

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Time to join the Zoominars

For those members still anxious about Zoom lectures, please give them a try! Go onto the internet and find www.zoom.us then download the program. If using a cellphone visit the app store. Once you have it on your device - computer or cellphone - choose to join a meeting. Either use the link which is provided in the invitation or type in the meeting code and then the password, also from the invitation, as requested.

You do NOT need to have a camera - unless you are the speaker or a chairman- although it is always interesting to match faces to voices. As in the auditorium, you do not HAVE to ask the speaker any questions, but there are ways in which you can draw the chair's attention so you can do so.

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KwaZulu-Natal Branch Meetings

Lectures are held on a Saturday afternoon, usually the second of each month. The starting time is 1.30 for 2.00pm. The venue is the St Cyprians Church Hall off Umbilo Rd, with secure parking and liquid refreshments available for cash from The Vicar's Alms.

Saturday April 13th Lecture

Speaker: *Robin Smith*

Subject: **AGM** followed by **the second "Great Siege of Malta"**,

Further details are available from:

Prof Phil Everitt

Cell: 084-437-1636

Chairman

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or

Charles Whiteing

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Vice-Chair

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Stories wanted about Harley-Davidson and BMW motorcycles in WWII

Marku Vickers writes:

I am a retired British army officer of 33 years' service now living in Taiwan. I enjoy writing, although I have sold very few books, it is a harmless hobby! A few years ago I wrote a book of stories relating to Victory motorcycles (another US brand, now no longer in production) called "Victory Motorcycle tales from Around the World:". Last year I bought a Harley Davidson, albeit nothing like as interesting as a WW2 model, and so now I have started to collect some stories together to put into another book relating to Harleys. I am therefore starting to research the part Harleys played in SA during the war.

Any member who might want to share information or anecdotes about these motorcycles (and sidecars!) in South Africa, or anybody with a period photograph, please contact Marku at A1MDV@hotmail.co.uk

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Krupp 75mm field gun (1897)

Peter Edmonds <peter.edmonds39@gmail.com> writes:

I have become supportive of an OFS Boer War Krupp 75 mm field gun, now displayed in Kings Park, Perth WA. I would greatly appreciate contact with anyone in your organisation with knowledge of these guns. I am addressing the replacement of one spoke, part weathered away.

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Subscriptions for 2024

Thank you to those members who have renewed already. A new round of invoices will be sent out later this week (1-7 April)

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WWII PoW account Johnnie Bosman

Walter Barker recalls a PoW account written by Johnnie Bosman who was captured at Tobruk. Does anyone know of a copy - please contact scribe@samilitaryhistory.org if you do.

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BRANCH CONTACT DETAILS

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