Past ZOOMetings

Johannesburg’s lecture on 12th November was by Dr Brian Austin talking from the UK about “Radio and the Boer War”.

The early days of radio - when even Marconi was blissfully unaware of some of the basic physics which allowed his apparatus to function - were illuminated by Dr Austin’s lecture.

In 1896, newly arrived Marconi demonstrated his radio equipment to an assembly of British Military personnel on Salisbury Plain. Amongst those present were Captain (later Admiral Sir Henry) Jackson and Captain J N C Kennedy RE. Further trials near the Isle of Wight managed to receive signals over a distance exceeding 20km.

It was decided to take 5 sets of Marconi equipment with support staff from the Marconi company to use for communications when the Army shipped out to South Africa at the start of the Anglo-Boer War late in 1899.

Successful demonstrations in Cape Town led to 3 of the sets being diverted towards the besieged town of Kimberley. The vertical aerials, which had worked well in all demonstrations, were too cumbersome to load onto train or wagon so bamboo poles were substituted. Nobody realised that pole (aerial) lengths needed to be the same for signals to be successfully sent and received. Nor did anybody realise that the surface over which the signals travelled could affect them - water being very good and dry Karroo-type sand very poor in this regard.

Then there was the lightning ... which really caused havoc with the attempted communications.

After three torrid months the Army handed the underperforming equipment back to the Navy. They in turn used the sets to equip ships blockading Lourenço Marques (now Maputo). They tended to use aerial poles of equal length which immediately improved reception. Plus the lightning season had finished for the year. Success was such that the Naval Commander in Simonstown was aware of all that was going on in LM - admittedly most of the distance along which the signals travelled was alongside the railway line, by then under British control.

It was interesting to note at question time how many of the Zoominati of that night had spent time in Signals Corps, some many years previously.

Listen to his ZOOM talk which is accessible from the ZOOM library on the Society’s web-site.

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FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS
AT THIS STAGE ZOOOMETINGS ONLY!

SAMHSEC - Eastern Cape Branch’s next ZOOMeeting
will be at 1930 on 14\textsuperscript{th} December 2020
Speaker: \textit{Stephen Bowker}  
Subject: \textit{The Bowker family in the Eastern Cape}

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\textbf{Johannesburg} hosting:

\textbf{NB THIRD THURSDAY}  
Thursday 17\textsuperscript{th} December at 19h30 and then 20h15:
Speaker will be \textit{Kathie Satchwell} on \textbf{selected WW1 Poetry and Art}

\textbf{NB THIRD THURSDAY}

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Details of the ZOOM lectures will be sent to all on the master list as usual

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PLEASE NOTE THAT MEMBERS OF ALL BRANCHES ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND ALL ZOOOMETINGS - JUST LET \texttt{scribe@samilitaryhistory.org} KNOW

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\textbf{ZOOM LECTURERS WANTED}

Members with an interesting presentation on any aspect of military history are sought for ZOOOMETINGS. A nominal 20 minute lecture supported by Power Point or similar slides, but not video, is required.

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\textbf{New to Zoom?}

Training sessions are not mandatory but are to help those members who are unfamiliar with this new way of accessing the Society's talks while under Covid-19 look-down.

Johannesburg has had five training sessions so far and will hold more sessions as requested. If you would like to attend a training session please e-mail \texttt{scribe@samilitaryhistory.org} or \texttt{joan@trolleyscan.com}

In all cases when you attend a Zoom meeting you need an invitation from the host. Every meeting has its own ID and password. If you are already on SAMHSEC or JNB's lists, you will be sent this information. We are creating a master list of members who have expressed interest, to whom notices of all future Zoom lectures will be sent.

To be added to this existing master list, if you have not yet already done so by e-mail, please e-mail \texttt{scribe@samilitaryhistory.org} or \texttt{joan@trolleyscan.com}
The June 2020 Military History Journal

The promised Journal eventually arrived on the afternoon of Thursday 26 November. With the exception of two still awaiting collection from the Marshes’ home they are all on their way. We have received the one we test-posted to ourselves, as have some of the Johannesburg members.

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Robin Smith’s newsletter

Those who would like to view Robin Smith’s 2020 end of year newsletter will be able to find it on the web-site at www.samilitaryhistory.org under personal newsletters. From the newsletter it was sad to hear of Charles Aikenhead’s passing as a result of his Rorke’s Drift Hotel catching fire.

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WWII information quest

My name is Sandra Doran, author and journalist. Presently I’m writing an illustrated non-fiction book Forgotten Heroes, based on the Italian campaign 1943-45. Forgotten Heroes is told by veterans and family members through letters, regimental war diaries, photos, journals, diagrams and maps. The reason for contacting you is that I am discovering very little on the 6th SA Armoured Military Division. As the 6th SA was involved in the Italian campaign I would like it if they could be included in Forgotten Heroes. If this is something you can possibly help with I would be grateful if you could contact me at sandra.doran50@gmail.com

The book includes detailed events from other military regiments, units and divisions around the world. Countries and Government Offices; including endorsements offering support such as: Australia, America, Britain, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, India, Italy, New Zealand and Poland.

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National WWI Museum in the United States
their web-site is at www.theworldwar.org

Treat yourselves to an internet view of this Kansas City Museum which opened in 1926. SAMHSEC ‘discovered’ this treasure trove which is an amazing window on WWI. A couple of knitters joined the Museum’s “Mrs Wilson’s Knitting Circle” webinar on Saturday just passed.

The speaker told of Belgian lace-makers allowed to produce goods for sale in London and the USA during the conflict - without which many would have been destitute. There were also restorative projects in France, Germany and Belgium where especially rural women were taught to cut patterns and sew garments, some for their families and some for sale, again to keep the wold from the door. Some villages were so badly bombed that 90% of the inhabitants lived in ruins or cellars.

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The Second Watercourse History Festival in Plettenberg Bay
will take place on Thursday 25th and Friday 26th February 2021

Developed on the theme “War and Peace”, we have lined up a fine set of academics and popular historians, as well as experienced peace-workers, to share with us something of their insights and experiences in the field of human conflict in Southern Africa and elsewhere on the African Continent.

Thursday 25th February kicks off with historian June Bam-Hutchinson, who will be speaking on early 18th Century conflict in the South-Western Cape. She will be followed by David Bristow and David Hilton-Barber on conflict among settlers and the amaXhosa in the Eastern Cape in the 19th Century, while David Fig will end the day with a presentation on the history of the South African Nuclear Bomb Programme. In the early afternoon, however, the Institute for the Healing of Memories will present their work in dealing with military veterans.

On Friday 26th February, Kevin Vos will describe his experience as a Parabat in Southern Angola in the 1980s, followed by Ian Uys on citations and honours awarded during that period. Tony Turton will speak on the Angolan War in its geopolitical context, while in the afternoon, Piers Pigou and Zenzile Khoisan will discuss their experience of “Truth and Reconciliation”. Finally, Professor Mike de Jongh will discuss the Anglo-Boer in the Karoo and reflect overall on Humanity in Conflict.

For further information, please Whatsapp Mike Kantey at 072 628 5131

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SEASON'S GREETINGS

Most members cannot wait to see the end of 2020 with its viral passenger Covid-19.

The chairman and committee extend COMPLIMENTS OF THE SEASON, wishes for safe travelling and a well-earned rest to members and their families.

May 2021 be a time of prosperity and GOOD HEALTH health for you all.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for 2021 will remain as R265 for single and R275 for family memberships.

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