



## **SOUTH AFRICAN LEGION**

(CAPE TOWN BRANCH)

PBO 93000796

### **Cape Town Branch News – December 2022**

#### **New members**

We welcome the following new members and look forward to their contributing towards the success of the branch: Robin Douglas, Patrick Jennings, Belinda Liebenberg, Hannes Lombard, Arno van Biljon and Jacques van Wyk.

#### **Christmas Message from the Honorary Chaplain**

##### FROM THE CHAPLAIN'S DESK.

*John 1:1 & 14. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 14. The Word was made flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

##### The Legend of the Poinsettia

A charming story is told of Pepita, a poor Mexican girl who had no gift to present the Christ Child at Christmas Eve Services (Holy Mass). As Pepita walked slowly to the chapel with her cousin Pedro, her heart was filled with sadness rather than joy. *"I am sure, Pepita, that even the humblest gift, if given in love, will be acceptable in His eye."* said Pedro. Not knowing what else to do, Pepita knelt by the roadside and gathered a handful of common weeds, fashioning them into a small bouquet. Looking at the scraggly bunch of weeds, she felt more saddened and embarrassed than ever by the humbleness of her offering. She fought back a tear as she entered the small village chapel. As she approached the altar, she remembered Pedro's kind words: *"Even the humblest gift, if given in love, will be acceptable in His eyes."* She felt her spirit lift as she knelt to lay the bouquet at the foot of the nativity scene. Suddenly, the bouquet of weeds burst into blooms of brilliant red, and all who saw them were certain that they had witnessed a Christmas miracle right before their eyes. From that day on, the bright red flowers were known as the *Flores de Noche Buena*, or Flowers of the Holy Night, for they bloomed each year during the Christmas season. Today, the common name for this plant is the poinsettia!

Of course, that is just a story depicting a great truth. It is important to remember that Christmas is not a legend or a myth. It is a glorious reality. Bethlehem's manger became the link that bound a lost world to a loving God. Christmas has always had its critics and those that wanted to diminish its impact upon this world. We have those that want to celebrate the holidays with no regard to the one the holiday is about. One lady was heard to mumble, "I don't mind celebrating Christmas; but does it have to be so religious". This is the day and age that we live in; we want Christmas but not the Christ that goes with it. Christmas is more than holly, tinsel, sparkling snow, or children's laughter. Christmas is John 3:16. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* Christmas is God's good news greeting of peace to a world of sinners. It's the "good news of great joy that will be for all the people", and that "today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." Now, that's what Christmas is

all about. One last thing, let it be acknowledged that Christmas is more than a date on a calendar. Some organisations lay great stress on the fact that Jesus was not born on December 25<sup>th</sup>. The fact is the He was born, and Christmas is a time of great spiritual significance and power for it commemorates the tremendous truth that God came in Christ Jesus to identify with mankind and to reveal to the world His Glory in human flesh. The time is of secondary importance: the fact that He came is of supreme importance!

May this Christmas be a special time for you and your loved ones.  
Every blessing,  
Chaplain (Rev) Ralph R. Thornley. SAN (retired)

### **John Gandy Walk**

He said he would do it - and he did. Congratulations to John on completing his walk from Simon's Town to Rosedale which took him just over six hours to complete. Through John's efforts, R16099 has been raised for Poppy Day with a couple of contributions still outstanding. Congratulations John, through your idea and effort, you have raised a significant amount of money for the benefit of veterans who are battling.

We are pleased to report that John suffered no ill effects and was spotted in the Rosedale Club afterwards replenishing lost fluids which, from feedback, apparently took some time to do.



John and Lucille Byrnes were interviewed on the Pippa Hudson show on Cape Talk on Friday 11 November, gaining publicity for John's walk, The Legion and Poppy Day.

Why not pick up on John's challenge? It doesn't have to be a walk; think of something else that can raise funds to benefit those less fortunate.



### **Poppy Day**

While the collection is behind us, the counting is ongoing and at this stage R44503 has been collected with 43 tins still to be counted/ returned. Note that this excludes the amount John Gandy raised via his walk.

Thank you to our convenor Pamela Poole and to all those who shook a tin, donated or assisted with the counting.



## Remembrance Day

A successful Remembrance parade was held at Rosedale, with the band of the Chief Langalibalele Rifles (formerly the Cape Town Rifles (Dukes)) in attendance.

Vice Chairman Peter Muirhead represented the branch at the service at the Cenotaph and we were also represented and laid a wreath at the Red Cross War Memorial Children's Hospital service.

## Veterans Aid Fund

At Rosedale on 21 October 2022 members of the Executive Committee met with representatives of the Veterans Aid Fund, an organisation that we were not familiar with. Based in Pretoria, they are a registered NPO with their focus being aiding veterans in need.

After getting to know each other, they were shown around Rosedale and joined the residents for lunch. Impressed with what they saw, they undertook to support the work of the branch and on Wednesday 30 November delivered a generous donation of venison and gift vouchers worth R4000 for use in our fund-raising efforts.



Pictured at the handover above are left to right: Johan Booysen (VAF) Jack de Beer (VAF), Peter Herbert (Kitchen Supervisor), John Gandy (Rosedale resident and intrepid walker), Quintus Smalman (Director VAF), Kevin Ashton (Cape Town Branch Exco Member) and David Holmes (Branch Manager).



## Thank you

Through the generosity of legionnaire Philip Miller of Heidelberg, ± 80 residents, their family and friends enjoyed his donation of 10 snoek done on the braai, soetpatat and salads, washed down with refreshments from the Rosedale Club. Shades of Shadows played Sixties music and got the crowd's feet a-tappin.

Exco member Peter Napier (welfare) identified a group of ex-Rhodesian veterans and, through the kindness of Moth Battledress Shellhole Fish Hoek who allowed us to use their facilities, was able to host a tea party for recipients of gift vouchers on Tuesday December 6. Here the group, vouchers in hand, smile broadly at the camera, with Peter (in navy jersey) at the back:



### **Message from the branch chairman**

Thank you to all our staff and volunteers who have contributed towards the success of our branch this year. To those fortunate enough to be taking a break, enjoy yourselves.

May your Christmas season and the New Year be filled with peace, joy and happiness.

Ray Nasset

