

Springbok

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Legionnaires from the Johannesburg-Witwatersrand and Pretoria Branches that attended the Annual Council of Military Veterans Organisations South Africa memorial service at the SADF Wall of Remembrance at the Voortrekker Monument on Sunday 28 May 2023.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



WOW! And here we are halfway through the year 2023. What an interesting year it has been to date. On the broader front, the war in Ukraine is still a focal point. The African effort to bring about peace is still very much a talking point not to mention the sideshow of the aircraft stuck in Poland.

Back home we have experienced some rather strange weather patterns. Yes, we are all aware of the 'Cape of Storms' but this year it has certainly lived up to that name with some heavy downpours and very strong winds. All these caused some damage to infrastructure. Trust that all our members are however fine. This was followed up by a tornado and some heavy downpours in Kwazulu-Natal and Namaqualand. Up here in the North of the country, we have been spared the storms, but have certainly experienced typical winter weather with temperatures dropping close to freezing many mornings. Well, it is winter after all, and the colder months of July and August still lie ahead. On the positive side, Summer has started as the shortest day, 21 June, has passed and at least according to the Hydrographer tables the sunshine increases by around 60 minutes every day.

Once again thank you to the branches that have contributed to this edition of Springbok. What is heartwarming was the involvement of the Durban Branch in the 2023 Comrades Marathon, especially at the prizegiving where the Legion trophy and shield were handed to the winners of the veteran category. It is however sad that the term veteran has a different meaning in the world of athletics than what we are used to.

That's all from me folks, stay warm and safe till next time.

BRANCH NEWS

BLOEMFONTEIN

At the Annual General Meeting of the Bloemfontein Branch on 29 May 2023 the following were elected as office bearers Lgrs. W Janse van Rensburg(Chairman),H Steyn(Bookkeeper), I Coetzer(Vice Chairman), T Lessing(Chaplain), G van Heerden, W Stofberg, K Stofberg. At the meeting Lgr. G. C. Ellis received the 20-year Service Certificate from Chairman Lgr. W Janse van Rensburg.

CAPE TOWN

Dancing Dogs. The Dancing Dogs handlers put their charges through their paces at Rosedale on 2 May and their expertise would have made Barbara Woodhouse envious.

Rummage Sale. The handicraft table proved to be a big draw at the Rummage Sale held at Rosedale on Saturday 6 May.

Vaudeville Companions. The Vaudeville Companions entertained residents and members at Rosedale on Wednesday 7 June. A troupe of lively dancers kick up their heels and strut their stuff to melodies from days gone by.

Fun Quiz. The second Fun Quiz for the year, compared by Rosedale resident Ralph Kelly, took place on Saturday 10 June. Questions – also compiled by Ralph – were challenging and had the teams digging deep into their mental think-tanks.

DURBAN

Due to several challenges the branch was not able to man a refreshment station along the route of the 2023 Comrades Marathon, the branch was present at the prize giving on Monday where the President of the branch, Lgr Pat Acutt, handed over the Legion trophy and shield. *See the report on the Comrades Marathon later in this edition.*

PIETERMARITZBURG

Fund Raising. Our first fundraising function for the year was held at the St. Charles School Old Boy's Day on Saturday 6 May where we held a catering stall. An early start to the day at 6.30 am where many a bacon & egg roll, and pancake was sold ending the day with curry & rice and Prego roll. Late afternoon winds played havoc on the gazebos and gas appliances, but we managed. A big thank you must go to Alan Wilson Shellhole for their great help in assistance with their catering equipment.

Garden of Remembrance. During May, the branch also assisted in the laying of paving at the Garden of Remembrance where the Delville Wood Weeping Cross is situated. This will enable persons in wheelchairs easier access to view the Cross.

Right: Newly elected members of the Bloemfontein Branch Committee.



Left: Lgr. G. C. Ellis received her 20-year Service Certificate from the Chairman of the Bloemfontein Branch, Lgr. W Janse van Rensburg.



Left: The Dancing Dogs handlers put their charges through their paces at Rosedale on 2 May.



Right: This miniature sheepdog was mauled by another dog resulting in a broken back. Not to be outdone, he gets around with the aid of a wheeler and proudly strutted its stuff for the appreciative audience.



Left: They make it look so easy, but it takes hours and months of jolly hard work to prise this kind of behaviour out of these four-footed friends.

Right: The handicraft table proved to be a big draw at the Rummage Sale held at Rosedale on Saturday 6 May. Here Pat Evans, Barbara Vivier, Elma Ross, Lesley Moolman and Sharon Hicken delve through the goods up for sale.



Left: As always, the menswear attracted much interest and items of apparel sold well, filling the Service Centre coffers. Resident Danny Primo made the most of the event and drew many a smile, as well as customers.

Right: Here, a troupe of lively dancers kick up their heels and strut their stuff to melodies from days gone by.



Left: John Moulder and his dancing partner from the Vaudeville Companions get into the groove of things.

Right: Questions were challenging and had the teams digging deep into their mental think-tanks.



Annual General Meeting. The branch held its 102nd AGM on 7 June 2023 at the North Baptist Church Hall. It was decided to have the AGM at 10.00 am this year to encourage more members to attend as against having it in the evening. It was attended by 37 members.

The existing committee all stood for re-election with two new members coming on board.

The committee is:

Lgr. Quentin Gibson – Branch President

Lgr. Peter Willson – Chairman (Re-election)

Lgr. Derrick Gordon – Vice Chairman (Re-election)

Lgr. Johann Du Plessis (Re-election)

Lgr. Brian McGarry (Re-election)

Lgr. Arries Van Der Merwe (Re-election) – Fund Raising Convenor

Lgr. Trevor Bamford – New member

Lgr. Sally Morning – New member

Mrs. Bernadette – Treasurer

Mrs. Joey Pieterse - Secretary

PRETORIA

The Annual General Meeting of the Pretoria Branch took place at the MOTH Evenden House in Lyttelton on Saturday morning, 24 June 2023. At the meeting, the following office bearers were elected:

Chairperson. Lgr Andre Le Grange.

Deputy Chairperson: Lgr Charles Ross.

Secretary: Lgr Debra De Billot.

Treasurer. Lgr Ray Cumming.

Welfare Officer. Lgr Bazil Kriel.

Ceremonial Officer. Lgr Jaco Lotter.

COMMEMORATION SERVICES

CMVO SA MEMORIAL SERVICE

Members from both the Pretoria and JHB Wits branch attended the CMVO Annual Memorial Service on 28 May 2023. This event was held at the SA Defence Force Wall of Remembrance at the Voortrekker Monument Heritage Site. The names of more than 2500 people who died in service appear on the Wall, including the soldiers that died during operations.

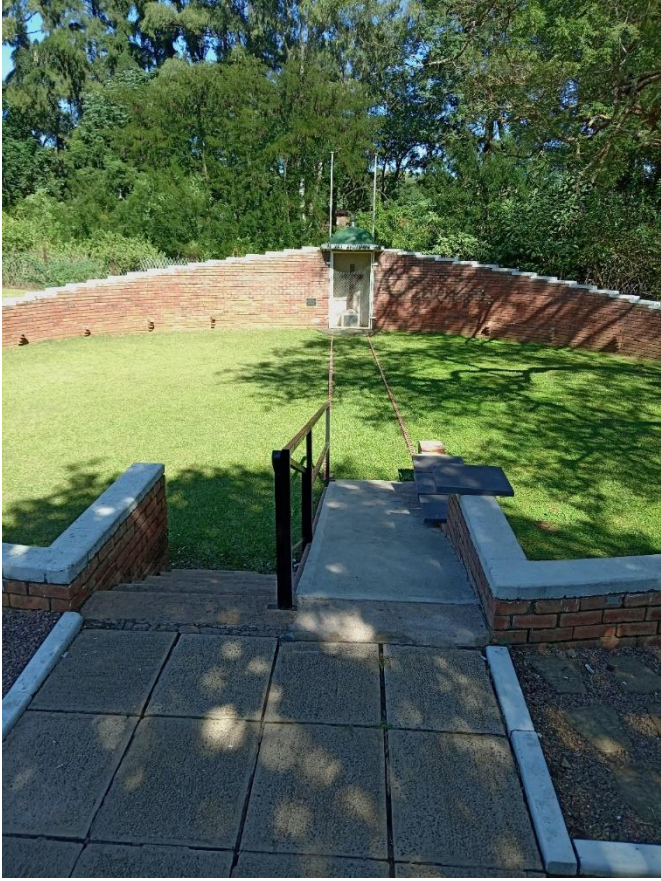
The next of kind of fallen soldiers were the guests of honour at this service. Once again, the resident MC, Arnold Geerds officiated the event. We were crooned by the wonderful voices of Jannie Moolman, Franna Benade and Bernice Mostert. A spectacular fly-past was done by the Bosbok, Alouette and Harvard pilots.



Above: Lgr's Johann Du Plessis and Brian McGarry manning the Pietermaritzburg Branch stand during the fundraising.



Above: The Pietermaritzburg Branch stand during the fundraising.



Left and Below: Before and after the new pathway at the Pietermaritzburg Garden of Remembrance was installed.



Right and below: Before and after the installation of the pathway at the Pietermaritzburg Garden of Remembrance.





Attendees to the Annual General Meeting of the Pretoria Branch.

A special wreath was laid for Markus by his “pawrent”, handler and dog dad, Rouche Vermaak. Markus was known as a military veteran’s assistant dog, trained in patrol and explosive detection. He would have been 4 years in July 2023. A team of horses and their riders also represented the war service/ military working animals.

All photos courtesy of CMVO Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/www.cmvo.org.za/photos>

OTHER STORIES

"THE GREATEST HUMAN RACE"

In the build-up to the running of the 96th running of this grand annual spectacle, our Admin Officer Brad Fourie put in place all the necessary arrangements for various Exco members of SA Legion, Durban Branch to attend. Unfortunately, due to time and manpower constraints, the Durban Branch was not able to establish and man a roadside refreshment station this year. Nevertheless, with our thanks and the kind assistance of Diane Stowell, the VIP Convener for the Comrades Marathon Association, invitations were secured for our President, Lgr Pat Acutt and Chairman, Lgr Bryan Dore to join as guests at the Comrades finish, this year once again returned, with much appreciation by participants, to Kingsmead Cricket Stadium.

As one can see from the attached pictures, the Kingsmead Cricket Stadium was completely transformed to cope with the influx of runners, timekeepers and all sorts of officials running to and fro, medical and other facilities as well as countless spectators watching the finish from the sidelines and from the stands.

And what an exciting finish it was! Winner, Tete Dijane beat off an exciting challenge for the finish line from international Piet Wiersman, coming in a mere *two seconds* ahead of the Dutchman!

Three new best times for the down run from Pietermaritzburg to Durban were recorded, with the men's and women's and the men’s Masters times improved as Tete Dijane, Gerda Steyn and Wayne Spies all broke these records.

Dijana smashed the seven-year-old down run record, clocking a time of 5:13.58, while Steyn clocked a record 5:44.54.

The next morning saw Lgr Pat Acutt attend the Champions' Breakfast and Prize-giving Ceremony, held at the Southern Sun Elangeni Hotel on Durban's beachfront. This event was attended by the KZN MEC for Sports, Arts and Culture, the Presidents of Athletics SA and of Athletics KZN, the Chairperson of the Comrades Marathon Association and the Vice Chairman thereof. The venue was packed and there was a palpable air of excitement as the winners were presented with their various trophies, medals and cheques for rather large sums of well-earned money! The TV cameras and a bunch of photographers vied for position to take the best pics of the podium. As recipients climbed the podium

Right: Attendees at the Annual CMVO Memorial Service at the SANDF Wall of Remembrance.



Left: Lgr Bazil Kriel laid a wreath in remembrance of his brother who died during the Border War.

Right: Lgr Debra De Bilott laid a wreath on behalf of the South African Legion.





The trophy table at the prizegiving of the 2023 Comrades Marathon. The Legion Shield is clearly visible on the right of the table.



Above: Lgr Pat Acutt and Moth Mike Hoffman at the Champions' Breakfast and Prize-Giving on Monday, 12 June.

Right: All the Women's Winners on the podium.



Left: President of the Durban Branch, Lgr Pat Acutt with Comrades Marathon legend and race commentator, Bruce Fordyce at the finish.

steps, there was many a chuckle from the audience as some poor souls staggered or even struggled to walk! Their aches and pains were felt by all.

Vice Chairman of the CMA, Mr Les Burnard joined Lgr Pat Acutt on the podium for the presentations of the Legion's magnificent trophies to the Men's and Women's 40-49, 50-59 and 60+ categories. Lgr Pat also hung a number of medals around the necks of the beaming finishers, all to loud applause.

Our thanks again to the organisers for privilege of the special invitations to the Legion. As you know, the Legion's roots with Comrades harks back to the founding of the Comrades Marathon in Remembrance of the Fallen. The Comrades is an excellent international "shop window" for the Legion. We look forward to participating in this global event again next year.

SAS ASSEGAAI MUSEUM SUBMARINE

Assegai is now almost ready for the new site which is slowly being handed over to the Naval Museum with the office building now occupied by the NHT and the project team about to occupy the second office. Whilst the proposed exhibition centre building is still in use by the Naval Base Transport Section which is awaiting facilities in the Dido Valley Transport Depot, some of the larger exhibits and submarine models will soon be moved in and repairs made to the building.

It would now appear that the next opening for the move of the boat will be in December when the hydraulic lifting equipment will be in the Cape for another major job. In the meantime, the access doors will be cut and completed along with the stairs and secure doors fitted.

A major problem, however, is the lack of sufficient funding in spite of Damen Shipyards saving us R1.5 million by carrying out the fitting of frames and stands as our fundraising effort has only brought in R493 000 of the targeted R960 000 and no donations received since mid-May.

There is, however, some light on the horizon as an ex naval officer and now winemaker supreme, Patrick Pols, has very generously donated 100 boxes of his award winning Seven Oaks white wines to the *Assegai* project for fundraising. As we are not in the liquor business, we cannot sell them and will thus present a box of choice to every donor of R300 to the *Assegai* Fund. The wines, Chenin Blanc (40 boxes), Sauvignon Blanc (10 boxes) and Chardonnay (50 boxes) retail at the winery for R420 or, in the case of the Chardonnay for R450 so are well worth a donation for such a good cause.

Once the delivery has been made we will email details so that donors can book a wine of choice before making the donation. For genuine snail-mail readers, a telephone call to the editor will be considered. *Courtesy July edition of Spindrift NOASA Newsletter.*

WORLD WAR TWO'S GREAT NAVAL SURVIVOR DIES AT 103

World War Two RAN veteran Frank McGovern, the last survivor of HMAS *Perth*, has died in Randwick Rehabilitation Hospital on 24 May aged 103. He was an Able Seaman aboard HMAS *Perth* when she was sunk in the Battle of the Sunda Strait in 1942. Rescued by a Japanese destroyer, he then spent



two years on Thai/Burma railway as a POW where he was starved, beaten, demoralised. In the camps and on the railway, diseases ravaged the prisoners and death remained ever-present.

By 1944, the order came for prisoners to be transported to the coal mines and factories of Japan. Frank was among the over one thousand Australian and British prisoners forced into the cramped hull of the *Rakuyō Maru*. For five days, he endured stifling heat, deprived of clean air, with barely enough room to sit, and was given a mere half a cup of water each day. Dysentery soon spread among the cramped prisoners.

In the early morning hours of September 12, 1944, *Rakuyō Maru*, along with another prisoner transport ship, were struck by American torpedoes from an unknowing US submarine. In one of Australia's worst maritime disasters, 1,559 POWs perished, of which 543 were Australian. Yet in another extraordinary twist of fate, Frank McGovern managed to survive the attack and locate a lifeboat left behind by the Japanese. For three days he and thirty other predominantly Australian soldiers survived in this lifeboat.

By the third day, Frank and his crew were ordered at gunpoint to board a Japanese ship. For the second time, Frank McGovern had survived a torpedo attack only to become a prisoner of war.

They were then entrained to Yokohama near Tokyo where, at Kawasaki camp in Tokyo, the men endured months of arduous work in the factories until, on the night of March 9, 1945, the United States commenced the deadliest air raid in history. It is a night that Frank remembers vividly. Over the course of 48 hours, 2,000 tonnes of incendiary bombs were dropped over just 16 square miles of Tokyo. Frank McGovern again miraculously managed to survive, despite their camp being reduced to ashes. The prisoners were transferred to another camp.

There, mere weeks later a bomb was dropped directly onto the camp in a bombing raid a few weeks before the war ended. It killed thirty POWs and Frank's spine was fractured but as POWs with minor injuries were dying on the operating table, avoided medical care until they were released when the war ended.

A truly remarkable survivor of incredible hardships which certainly did not affect his longevity!
Courtesy July edition of Spindrift NOASA Newsletter.



Quiz No 1: This month we're taking a closer look at some of the logos, including army, navy and air force, of armed forces around the world. One of them, number 7, has been digitally modified because the name is on the logo. How many do you know? The answers are on the next page. *With acknowledgement to Military Despatches Vol 71 May 2023.*

ANSWERS TO QUIZ 1:

1. Israeli Army.
2. French Navy.
3. Indian Air Force.
4. South African Defence Force (SADF).
5. Egyptian Air Force.
6. Russian Armed Forces.
7. Australian Army.
8. Rhodesian Air Force.
9. South African Army.
10. British Armed Forces.
11. Italian Army.
12. People's Liberation Army (China).
13. South African National Defence Force.
14. Armed Forces of the Republic of Argentina.
15. Nigerian Army.

OBITUARIES

KROONSTAD

Lgr Mara Roodt.

PORT ALFRED

Lgr Ronnie Slaughter.

SOUTH AFRICAN LEGION



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SOUTH AFRICAN LEGION STRUCTURE

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Past Presidents for Life

- Lgr Chris PC de B Venter.

Honorary Life Past President

- Lgr Brian Klopper.

Honorary Life Vice Presidents:

- Lgr Arthur Blake.
- Lgr Bazil Kriel.
- Lgr Rick Andriès.
- Lgr Quentin Gibson.

National President: Lgr Brian Smith.

National V/President: Vacant.

National Treasurer: Lgr Johan Johnson.

National Secretary: Izelle Potgieter (Acting).

National Comms and Liaison: Lgr Debra De Billot.

National Wellbeing and Relief: Lgr Rick Andriès.

National Ceremonial/Conduct: Lgr Peter Smit.

National Fundraising: Vacant.

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- Eastern Cape: Lgr Brian Klopper.
- Free State: Lgr Willie Janse Van Rensburg.
- Gauteng: Lgr A. Le Grange (Jnr).
- Kwa-Zulu Natal: Lgr Steve Leahy.
- United Kingdom: Lgr Russel Mattushek.
- Europe: Lgr Andrew Bergman.