

Springbok

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Lgr Brian Smith, National President, and Lgr Mark Louw, Chairman Johannesburg – Central Witwatersrand Branch, saluting having laid wreaths on behalf of the South African Legion at the Katyn Memorial at the 78th Commemoration of the Warsaw Commemoration Service.

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



It is with great pride that I present to the readers this edition of Springbok, the Newsletter of the South African Legion. Once again the edition is filled with news from our branches and their activities. The activities cover a wide range of events where the Legion are represented. These include attending commemoration services, supporting sports events and of course assisting those in need. Living up to our motto "Not For Ourselves, But For Others". Well done to everyone involved. In good old Naval terms "BZ".

The Royal Commonwealth Ex-service League recently held its conference in the United Kingdom. The South African Legion was represented and we will cover the event in the December edition of Springbok.

We are once again heading for another important month on the calendar for all members of the Legion, the month of remembrance. Branches will again host and/or attend Remembrance Day Services while some branches will precede Remembrance Sunday with the placing of Poppies on the graves of those who have passed to Higher service. It is also a time of marketing the Legion with Poppy Day. Good luck to all those branches. Remember that we need your reports and photos for the December edition of Springbok.

Then we head to December and Christmas. A time of giving, a time of family get-togethers, and a time to remember what Christmas is all about. Let us think of those less fortunate than us. I know some branches make an effort to provide parcels to some less fortunate organisations. The true meaning of Christmas is that of giving. Let us never forget John 3: 16 " For God loved the World that He gave his one and only Son". It is also time to reflect and a time to look back at the year 2022. It is also a time of giving. Wishing all the readers a Blessed Christmas.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

A little of Legion's History was discovered at NHQ on 2 September 2022. Here are a few historical pictures discovered at NHQ on 2 October 2022. This frame contains the photograph of the Poppy factory in England. In the middle is a dried Haig poppy dated January 1934, as written on the card next to the poppy. This is very appropriate with us going into yet another poppy month with yet some more challenges and interesting times. As per the title – The First Conference of the "The British Empire Service League" that was held in Cape Town from the 28th of February, until the 4th of March.

Wow, talk of history, all our SA Legion members, must pat themselves on their back – over 100 years, and the SA Legion is still going.



The frame with the photo of the Poppy factory in England recently found at NHQ.

REGION NEWS

KWAZULU-NATAL

KZN Regional Conference Sat, 29 Oct. This year the annual Conference will be hosted by the Lower South Coast Branch at the Blue Marlin Hotel in Scottburgh. *More in the December edition - Ed*

BRANCH NEWS

CAPE TOWN

On Saturday 3 September Rosedale was the venue at which local crafters displayed and sold their wares. Originally planned for outside, the inclement weather called for a change in thinking and instead stallholders and their customers rubbed shoulders in an informal but convivial setting.

The Cape Town branch visits 4 establishments monthly when gift parcels are handed out to veterans living there. These include Valkenberg (The Welcome Club), The Salvation Army Beth Rogelim Men's Home, Happy Valley in Simon's Town, and The Nest in Fish Hoek. The parcels, funded through the Legion's Poppy Day initiative, contain personal items such as toothpaste, deodorant and soap and, of course, the ever-welcome bar of chocolate.

This month Peter Napier, who holds the portfolio of Welfare on exco, and Pamela Poole also visited The Welcome Club where he explained the Legion's commitment to its veterans and answered questions raised.

On Friday 7 October there was also the opportunity to visit Robertson House where Ian the son of Rosedale resident, Lynn Hele, lives. This establishment caters to the needs of people who have suffered spinal injuries. Again, it gave Peter Napier the chance to elaborate on what the Legion is doing to address the needs of the veterans that benefit from its largesse.

Saturday, October 8 saw 3 teams competing in a Fun Quiz, organised by nonagenarian Rosedale resident Ralph Kelly.

Earlier this year exco chair Ray Nasset and branch manager David Holmes hosted a cocktail party to which representatives of various military associations had been invited at which the many facilities offered at Rosedale were highlighted. Several organisations such as the Signals' Association have taken advantage of this opportunity and, following on from this, the Transvaal Scottish Regimental Association (Western Cape) took up the offer using Rosedale to hold its monthly meeting on October 12.

Military vets at The Net in Fish Hoek are on the receiving end of the Legion's largesse. Here exco (Welfare) member Peter Napier hands social welfare worker Phumlani Mtshawali and house mother Debbie Cox their October gift parcels.



Scenes from the Rosedale market held recently.





Here parcels coordinator George Jewell and Poppy Day convenor Pamela Poole are ably assisted by Sharon Maurer-Jewell and her husband, George.

Darren Broskie and Benjamin Coetzer from The Welcome Club listen from intently to Lgr Peter Napire during his recent visit.



Peter Napier also visited Robertson House where Ian (right), the son of Rosedale resident, Lynn Hele, lives. Peter Napier (left) elaborated on what the Legion is doing to address the needs of the veterans that benefit from its largesse.



Scenes from the recent Fun Quiz held at Rosedale.





The Western Cape Branch of the Transvaal Scottish Regimental Association having lunch at Rosedale.

During his recent visit to The Net, Fish Hoek, Peter Napier handed social welfare worker Phumlani Mtshawali and house mother Debbie Cox their October gift parcels.



DURBAN

Staff Changes. We are pleased to confirm that Bradley Fourie has been appointed as the Administration Officer and will be available normally from 08:00 to 13:00 every weekday. Jeanette Geel will work on a part-time basis as Administration Clerk on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Ina Odendaal will be retiring after 13 years as Caretaker, as she's moving to Gauteng.

Recruiting. Legionnaires one and all, please make a special effort to encourage people (yes, anybody may join - even if they haven't worn a uniform). That's why we need to get friends, wives and even adult children to join as associate members - and they, too, only pay R150 per annum. So work on this, please!

Delville Wood Service 17 July. What a wonderful turnout we had! Many thanks to our members who made the effort to attend. We're certain that you found it worthwhile and trust that you'll join us again at the Cenotaph for our Remembrance Service at 10:30 on Sunday, 13 November.

Comrades Marathon 28 August. Once again, the good and faithful volunteers were wonderful and we truly appreciate your kind support at the refreshment table at Inchanga, near the halfway mark of this amazing race. Many, many thanks.

Gunners' Memorial Service 4 Sept. Attended by Lgrs Bryan Doré (who laid a wreath for the SA Legion), Obie Oberholzer, Brad Fourie and Jeanette Geel. Thanks to all.

Fort Nottingham Highland Gathering: 10 September. The Durban Branch had a successful and interesting stand at the Highland Games, kindly manned by Lgrs Obie and Lynn Oberholzer, Ina Odendaal and Brad Fourie, to whom we owe a great sense of gratitude, thank you. Whilst we didn't succeed in recruiting, we sold several items of regalia and even received a few donations. Furthermore, as a result of a small sponsorship on our part, we managed to get additional kudos in the form of publicity from the gold, silver and bronze medals presented in the various events - see pics, above. Well done to all involved! Also in attendance were our Branch Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Amashova Cycle Race: Sunday, 23 Oct. Once again members of the branch manned the refreshment station at Camperdown for the race.

Branch AGM: Saturday, 5 November. Please do your very best to attend our Annual General Meeting, being held at the Provincial Grand Lodge (Irish Constitution), 17 Folkstone Road, Rosburgh - only a few kilometres away from our Branch headquarters in Umbilo. We will start at 11:00 and probably end about an hour later, followed by refreshments. Full details with the Agenda and Minutes of the previous AGM will follow shortly.

Veterans' Day, Saturday, 5 November. On this day, it is traditional that we visit the graves of known military veterans in the Durban areas and pause briefly in their honour before placing a poppy (with Prestik) on their headstones. However, with our AGM on this day, we will visit the local cemeteries on



The refreshment station manned by members from the Durban Branch during the Amashova cycle race.



Sunday, 6 November instead. If you would like to assist us - and we do need help! - please notify Brad Fourie on 031 205 0578, who will provide details. Thank you.

Service Of Remembrance, Sun, 13 Nov. I know it's a busy weekend but this is the one event of the year that you cannot miss! It takes place at the +Durban Cenotaph, alongside the City Hall, starting at 10:30. Make sure that you & your family - yes, bring the kids - are there in good time and join the dignitaries, wreath layers and members of the public in the Mayor's Parlour for refreshments afterwards. We hope to see you there.

JOHANNESBURG – CENTRAL WITWATERSRAND

Tarentaal Fete. The CWB attended the annual spring fete on 3 September, and we extend a Thank You to Legionnaires Mavis, Ruben, Eddie, and Joanne for attending and raising awareness of the SA Legion. Legion members from the SA Legion JHB Central Wits Branch collected at the Tarentaal Estate fete selling poppies for the appeal. Hard work adhering to their mission of raising funds for veterans. It was a hot day working in the blazer all day. Well done Legionnaires. "Not for ourselves but for others"

MAG Picnic at Dickie Fritz. This is an event arranged by MAG, intending to keep all the various veteran and military associations an opportunity to meet and get to know each other, with an opportunity to do a bit of networking. This year the Johannes branch shared a gazebo with the Transvaal Scottish Regimental association. It was a great day, with live music, and the massed pipe bands from the Transvaal Scottish, the SA Irish, and a few other great pipe bands from the Gauteng region.

PORT ELIZABETH

As well as the usual "meet and greet" held at the Maritime Club on the first Wednesday of the month which was attended by +- 20 members, Port Elizabeth Branch attended 2 outside events during September.

On Sunday the 18 September the branch had the sad honour of hosting the Remembrance Service in Port Elizabeth for our late Patron HM The Queen. St. Paul's Anglican church was packed with several hundred people in attendance representing such diverse organizations as SAAFA, MOTH, Order of St. John, Caledonian Society etc. Our Chairman Lgr. Terry Pattison MMM, JCD read the Eulogy and various wreaths were laid in Remembrance. For those who are interested the Eulogy is available on the PE Branch Web Site www.salegionpe.co.za. I think we did the right and proper thing in organizing the service and the branch has received many notes of thanks and appreciation since the event. A picture of the floral centrepiece with its white Protea & Rose display is attached.

Friday, 22 September was the designated day of the Grey High School Annual Cadet Day which the SA Legion is always invited to attend. A full retreat ceremony was held complete with 60 piece Military Band, the Cadets did themselves and their school proud. Even the old RSM's present were seen to show a small smile of satisfaction for a parade well executed!

Members from the Johannesburg-Central Witwatersrand Branch at the Tarentaal Fete left to right: Lgrs: Mavis Knight, Ruben Ezekowitz, Eddie Welkin, Joanne Welkin.



Members of the Johannesburg-Central Witwatersrand Branch that attended the Military Association of Gauteng (MAG) picnic.



EUROPE

Greetings from the Chair. As the leaves begin to turn, and the Season of Remembrance is once again upon us, I send you warm veteran greetings from the Netherlands. Over the last two years or so, the South African Legion has, like most organisations, suffered from a measure of inertia as lockdowns, quarantines, and travel restrictions limited most interaction to Zoom meetings and Facebook groups, and our routine annual events were necessarily either scaled down or cancelled. A special thanks to those Legionnaires who paid respects and laid wreaths and flowers at war graves near their homes, thus ensuring a thread of continuity, lest we forget. *Lgr. Andrew Bergman Europe Chair*

New forum. On the positive side, some people who previously didn't own a webcam have joined the exciting world of online conferencing, which for the future – especially for SA Legion branches with members as far-flung as ours – will add a new place to meet and interact, even as the possibilities for us to interact face-to-face after this period of inertia reopen. So let's consider regular Zoom meetings. Suggestions of days and times are most welcome.

Ukraine. While Covid restrictions may have been dropped across Europe, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which has only underlined how thin the lines are between war and peace in our historically restive continent, presents new challenges. Not only does Europe face yet another generation of soldiers fallen fighting for freedom, but in the aftermath, many people will have to tighten their purse strings as the cost of living rises, along with travel.

Looking ahead. I'm pleased to report that the SA Legion Europe Branch has begun to rekindle our activities. Thus far this year, our first official 'showing' was at the Last Post Ceremony at the Menin Gate at Ypres in May, where we laid a wreath with a delegation of three Legionnaires.

Flagpole. The rest of this year also looks hopeful. Long delayed by Covid, our project to present the SA Embassy in The Hague with a new flagpole (to replace a rather decrepit one) has finally come together. The flagpole will be installed in mid-October, and we plan to hold an official ceremony to hand it over to the Ambassador. We will also present him with two maritime grade SA flags (one full size and one 'storm flag'), in a presentation case. So watch this space for details.

Ypres. I will be attending the annual November 11th remembrance programme in Ypres, Belgium, which culminates in the Last Post Ceremony under the Menin Gate, where the SA Legion has again been invited to lay a wreath. I hope that some of you can join me.

Remembrance Sunday. Forward to November 14th, the SA Legion has been asked by the South African Embassy to attend the annual Nov 14th Commonwealth 'Remembrance Sunday' Service and Wreath Laying in The Hague. It is due to be South Africa's turn to host the event, which alternates between the UK, Australia, New Zealand, and India, however, following the passing of HM Queen Elizabeth II, there is a proposal pending that it would be more appropriate for the UK to take over this year. We will attend whatever the outcome. We also are joined on the day by a delegation of Dutch veterans from Noordwijk, who has always taken a close interest in the SS *Mendi* graves there. It would be wonderful if we could put up a good showing with a good clutch of green berets, so please let me know if you are available.

SS Mendi. Looking ahead to 2023, one of our main formal annual events, which Covid put on hold for three years, is the [South African Armed Forces Day / SS Mendi Remembrance](#) at Noordwijk in Zuid Holland on or around 21 February. This will again be planned in conjunction with the Embassy, so watch this space.

Admin. As the administrative wheels begin to roll again, it is the intention (and as been approved by the SA Legion UK Regional AGM), that SA Legion Europe will soon, for administrative purposes, be established as a non-profit foundation (*Stichting*) in the Netherlands. This has been deemed prudent, especially post-Brexit, to facilitate logistics (of insignia, membership cards, etc.) as well as collecting subs within Europe by working under our EU-based registration, instead of the UK charity numbers that cover Legionnaires across the Channel. You will not notice much change as this is chiefly an administrative adjustment, although once it has been finalised, Legionnaires in Europe will be able to pay their subs into a European account in Euros, thus avoiding various bank and forex charges.

Initiative While our membership is indeed far-flung across Europe, I hope to resuscitate plans for a get-together somewhere central, that isn't too far for anyone to travel. Any suggestions in this regard are very welcome. It would be a bonus if the place is near any South African war graves, which will allow us to perform an Act of Remembrance.

Local is lekker. As some Legionnaires did during this year, I encourage all of you to 'show the flag' at any local veterans' or remembrance events in your vicinity, or in your country. Should you require any letters of introduction, please let me know.

Recruitment. We are always keen to swell our numbers, and if the Netherlands is anything to go by, there seems to be a new surge of South Africans moving to Europe. So if you happen to meet any 'new arrivals' or old hands, who served in the SA forces, please ask them to visit www.salegion.org.uk/membership/ and encourage them to join our ranks. It will also help us to establish more of a presence in Europe. So try to keep warm this winter, as we all hope for a more stable world.

COMMEMORATIONS

WARSAW FLIGHT MEMORIAL DAY

CWB attended a very special Remembrance Day on 3 September - that for the brave young men of the South African Air Force who flew to the aid of Polish citizens in Warsaw during World War II. The Katyn Memorial stands on a rise in an attractive park setting, in good view from the nearby Atholl Oaklands Road. The structure is constructed of bush-hammered reinforced concrete with a set of three plaques in red granite. The sculpture theme is derived from ancient Slavic forms assembled to create an interplay of open and solid spatial forms creating the image of the non-existing cross.

Thank you to National President Brian Smith, JHB Central Wits Chairman Mark & Vice Chairman Maurice for attending the Memorial Day that commemorated the heroic South African Air Force and Allied airmen who participated in the military mission to support the Warsaw Uprising in 1944.

Members of the Legion with members of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission South Africa at the Warsaw Flight Commemoration Service.



Wreaths laid during the centenary commemoration of the first fatal air crash of the SA Air Force.

YATI REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE, BENONI.

The YATI was the one-kilometre-wide strip of land between the Timo Line and the Angolan border and was patrolled daily by members of the SADF. Thank you to Legionnaires Gerald, Mark, and Craig for attending.

CENTENARY COMMEMORATION OF THE FIRST FATAL AIR CRASH OF THE SAAF

In a poignant ceremony on Sunday this week, the South African Air Force (SAAF) and the SAAF Association paid tribute to all South African air personnel who died in service of their country. That date, 18 September, marked the centenary of the first fatal military aviation accident in South Africa, which occurred on a farm at Irene outside Pretoria. At the time, the nascent air force was just two years old.

On that day in 1922 the young Captain Albert Lawrence Montagu van der Byl (29) was piloting a South African Air Force two-seater trainer Avro 450K biplane – with tail number H9699 – from his base at Robert's Heights, now called Thaba Tshwane. Lawrence had a passenger, Lieutenant Edward Armstrong Stuart of the 1st SA Mounted Rifles on board, and was heading to the family farm at Irene, where he executed an aerobatic sequence. Sadly, witnesses said the aircraft's wing broke, causing the aircraft to crash near the farmhouse. Both occupants succumbed to their injuries. Despite an extensive investigation, the exact cause of the accident remained undetermined.

BATTLE OF SQUARE HILL – CAPE TOWN

The Annual Battle of Square Hill took place at the Castle of Good Hope on Sunday 25 September 2022. The service was well attended by various veteran organisations which included the South African Legion. A wreath was laid on behalf of the South African Legion.

BATTLE OF SQUARE HILL – KIMBERLEY

Kimberley Branch is happy to report that we were able to hold the Battle of Square Hill Ceremony again this year after a two-year absence due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Service was held on Sunday, 25 September, at the Cenotaph Site where the Canon is located. It was well attended by veteran organisations and several members of the South African Cape Corps Military Veterans Association. Mr William Peter Van Wyk, a resident in Kimberley, is the only surviving member, at the age of 99 years, of SACCRA and was able to attend and lay a wreath on behalf of the organisation. Kimberley Regiment provided Memorial Sentries and the Pipe Band was also in attendance. Refreshments were served, hosted by the Kimberley Branch of S A Legion, at the Drill Hall after the Service.

SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN LEGION COMMEMORATION SERVICE

The SA Indian Legion hosted a Wreath laying Service on 8 October at the Cenotaph Ditsong Military museum in Johannesburg. Members from the SA Legion Johannesburg - Central Witwatersrand



Wreaths laid during the Battle of Square Hill commemoration service at the Castle of Good Hope.

Lgr Van Wyk, a Second World War, survivor with the Chaplain during the Battle of Square Hill commemoration service in Kimberley.



Sentries at the gun at the Battle of Square Hill commemoration service in Kimberley.



Wreaths laid during the Battle of Square Hill commemoration service in Kimberley.

Lgrs: Mark Louw, Fernando Alves & Eddie Welkin from the Johannesburg-Central Witwatersrand Branch that attended the SA Indian Legion commemoration service.



Branch were present to honour the fallen particularly from the South African Indian community. After a moving service which was well attended the parade enjoyed refreshments under the trees after a walk around the cenotaph in memory of the men & women who paid the supreme sacrifice.

UVA BARBERSPAN WREATH SERVICE

On 3 October our vice chairman, Lgr Maurice Paoli attended the unveiling of a memorial dedicated to the veterans who lost their lives during the Angola border war campaign combined with the memories of all the farmers brutally murdered. This was followed by a wreath-laying ceremony. General (retired) Roland de Vries, remembered the fallen soldiers, the sacrifices of the soldiers, their families, and their loved ones doing their ultimate services protecting our country.

OTHER STORIES

A MARITIME CENTENARY CELEBRATION YEAR FOR S. A. by Chaplain(Rev)Ralph Thornley SAN retired.
Honorary Chaplain South African Legion(Cape Town Branch)

While the past 100 years of history and the legend of the S.A.T.S. General Botha is being celebrated, and its heritage sustained through the General Botha Old Boys' Association and Bursary Fund, so too the S.A. Navy 100th anniversary of its founding on 1 April 1922 has also been recognised this past month. However, sadly that occasion was not deemed to deserve the ceremony that it did so fittingly receive on the occasion of its 75th in 1997 when there was a grand Fleet Review and salute received by the then President Nelson Mandela, and many festivities in Simon's Town and Cape Town. This year's centenary occasion, sadly, was marked by only a small group of retired members of the S. A. N., a number of them have begun their careers on the S.A.T.S. General Botha, who showed appreciation for the history and foundations of the present Navy.

The Naval Heritage Trust held a fitting Service of Remembrance and Wreath Laying Ceremony in the Dockyard Chapel and Museum in Simon's Town on Sunday 3 April led by Rev. Ralph Thornley SAN Chaplain (Ret). This was in honour of "all those members who died on service and while serving in the SA Naval Service, SATS General Botha (wreath laid by our Chairman Tony Nicholas), the Seaward Defence Force, the South African Naval Forces and the South African Navy." In his address, the Rev. Thornley highlighted the following interesting history about the founding and development of the Navy (with the appreciation and permission of Rev. Thornley). The 1st of April 1922 marks the official birth of the South African Navy – although the title South African Navy only came much later. Also, on that date, which happened to be a wet and miserable Saturday morning, the official naming ceremony of SATS General Botha was carried out by Mrs Smuts on behalf of the widow of General Botha who happened to be ill at the time. So, 1st April remains a significant date in our maritime history. 10 The very beginnings of the South African Navy can be traced back to 1861 with the formation of the Port Elizabeth Naval Volunteer Brigade but they merged with a voluntary artillery unit the following year. 1861 was also the date when the Roman Rock lighthouse gave light for the first time and has done so ever since.

In 1885 a part-time voluntary unit known as the Natal Naval Volunteers (NNV) was formed in Durban. There were no ships, but men were taken to sea on weekends when Royal Navy ships visited the port.



A group photo of the representatives of the various veteran organisations that attended the UVA Barberspan Wreath laying service.



The new memorial at Barberspan.

Lgr Maurice Paoli, Deputy Chairman, of the Johannesburg-Central Witwatersrand Branch at the new memorial at Barberspan during the UVA Barberspan wreath laying.



These men manned the six-inch guns that were to defend Durban from Russia in her programme of expansionism. A similar unit was formed in Cape Town in 1905 known as the Cape Naval Volunteers (CNV). The two units would later become SAS *Inkonkoni* and SAS *Unitie* respectively. In 1913 these units formed the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve (South African Division). There were no ships but when the first world war broke out there was manpower that went to supplement the Royal Navy.

After the war, the government decided to form its naval service. Quoting from "South Africa's Navy-the first 50 years" compiled by Commodore J.C. Goosen SM. "Wednesday, January 11, 1922, passed as an ordinary day in the harbour of Simon's Town but late in the evening something happened. Out of the summer's night three ships drew in, reported themselves and dropped anchor for the night." They had left England more than a month before and apart from the duty staff no one took much notice of them until a report in the Cape Times gave as a heading "Nucleus of Navy". The three ships were HMS *Crozier* originally a Hunt class minesweeper and renamed HMSAS *Protea*. The two smaller ships were Admiralty class trawlers HMS *Foyle* renamed HMSAS *Sonneblom* and HMS *Eden* renamed HMSAS *Immortelle*. On the 1st of April 1922 the SANS – South African Naval Service - came into being alongside the RNVR (SA Division) and was tasked with the protection of territorial waters, minesweeping and hydrography.

By 1929 there was a worldwide depression and by 1934 *Protea* was sold off and the two trawlers returned to Britain. The SANS disappeared as a seagoing force and all that was left was an office with a very small staff. That's how it stayed until 1939 - the outbreak of the second world war. There were no ships but there was the RNVR (SA Div) which had grown in numbers. So, there was manpower. With this manpower and the requisitioning of trawlers and whale catchers, the Seaward Defence Force came into being. An unfortunate name as it was often referred to as the Seaweed Defence Force. These little ships were converted into minesweepers and anti-submarine vessels. South Africa built up a fleet of more than 80 ships doing stout work off our coast and in the Mediterranean. When the ships in the Mediterranean had completed their deployment and were due to come home, it was Admiral of the Fleet Andrew Browne Cunningham RN also known by his initials as ABC who asked General Smuts if the ships could stay a little longer because they were doing such fine work. By 1942 having amalgamated with the RNVR (SA Div) the name was changed to SANF South African Naval Forces. The SANF grew to more than 10000 personnel including 280 SWANS. Some 3000 men served in RN ships and were always referred to as Springboks. The number of war casualties is given as 338 men killed and 5 ships sunk. It is not possible in these few pages to give any detail of the action and dangers these Springbok sailors faced nor to give all the decorations and medals these men won. One might say that if it had not been for the war the navy may never have come into being.

At the end of the war, South Africa received three Loch class frigates. HMSAS *Good Hope*, HMSAS *Natal* and HMSAS *Transvaal*. *Natal* achieved a war record when she sank the German u boat U714. She was straight out of the builder's yard enroute for workup when she encountered the u boat which had just sunk a vessel. The action took place off St Abbs Head Scotland on 14th March 1945. The captain of the u boat was Hans[1]Joachim Schwebke aged 27. It was the late Lt George Heard SANF who mysteriously disappeared at the end of 1945 who wrote these words shortly before his disappearance. "Let us remember in our salutations the men of our little navy, so young in years so worthy in seafaring achievements. To that little navy, we already owe so much. But it is not enough that we should honour it for what it has done in the past. Rather let us keep and preserve it for what



Scenes from the Navy 100 service held on 1 April 2022.



it may do in the future." On 1st July 1951, the SANF was reconstituted as the South African Navy. In his address, the Rev. Thornley spoke of his prayers and concerns for our sailors (present and past) on watch, especially during the night hours. What of the men in the engine room when a torpedo could come crashing through the side of the ship at any moment? What of the bridge staff, the prime target in a surface engagement? Looking at the Roll of Honour at the back of the church I wonder what pain, suffering and fear these men must have gone through.

I am reminded again of the verse in the hymn we sang earlier. " In the darkest watch of night time may we feel Thy presence near". We must never forget our need of God or the power of God. These are selected verses from Psalm 33. Let all the earth fear the Lord, let all people of the earth revere Him. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. No king is saved by the size of his army, no warrior escapes by his great strength. A horse is a vain hope for deliverance despite all its great strength it cannot save. Why God allows wars I cannot answer that. But the ancient philosopher Plato has this to say. "Wars and faction and fighting have no other service than to the body and its lusts, for it is in getting of wealth that all our wars arise."

(GBOBA Scribe - Why, indeed, do we have to endure the pain of war as is happening presently in Ukraine and 39 other centres of conflict? Seafarers, a number of our Obies and some of our Bursary Fund students included, have endured the uncertainty and suffering as they go about their work at sea around the world. The past two years of COVID -19 and right now the Russian invasion of Ukraine have impacted many of their lives. I heard the other day of one of our Captains whose Ukraine Chief Mate had been conscripted into the forces to defend his country and another shipmate who had died. Oh for the wisdom of Plato and peace, and let us not forget all of those merchant and naval seafarers in our prayers.) The memory of Yesteryear -Ted Fisher Meeting all at the 2014 Weekend of the 1954/55 Group showed how much "The Legend Lives

THE SAAF AND WARSAW

(This article was first published on 24 September 2008, by Anne Lehmkuhl, and updated by Cameron Kirk Kinnear on 14th July 2019. Cameron Kirk Kinnear permitted the CWB to republish parts of the article in September 2022)

Earlier this month, I was blessed to attend a very special Remembrance Day - for the brave young men of the South African Air Force who flew to the aid of Polish citizens in Warsaw during World War II. For five years after Hitler invaded Poland in 1939, Warsaw remained a Nazi-occupied city. Yet the underground Polish Home Army (AK) never stopped preparing for the day when it could rise against the Germans. This day arrived at 5 pm on 01 August 1944 and for the next 63 days, the men, women and children of the AK fought against the Germans. The AK believed the Russian Army would come to its aid, but it didn't. Within the first five days, the AK had re-taken most of the city, but without reinforcements and more arms and ammunition, they could not hold out. The Polish government in exile in Britain appealed to Winston Churchill for help.

The quickest way to help would be to drop supplies in, but the most direct route would take the Royal Air Force (RAF) over the most heavily defended parts of the Third Reich. Avoiding these areas would mean a round trip of 3520km. The only other alternative was over northern Italy but this too would involve avoiding most of the heavily defended German cities and a round trip of 3200km. Churchill

was advised by his senior RAF officers that the task would achieve little militarily but cost high in life and equipment. The 205 Group RAF at Foggia, Italy, was under the command of Major-General James (Jimmy) Thom Durrant, a South African. The Group consisted of four Wings, three of which were RAF and the fourth was No. 2 Wing SAAF made up of 31 and 34 Squadrons equipped with Liberators.

On Sunday 13 August 1944, 10 crew of 31 Squadron were ordered to Brindisi for briefing and loading of special cargo. When they arrived in the Operations Room at Brindisi, they were greeted with a large wall map of Europe, marked with a thick black 3200 km route zig-zagging from Foggia to Warsaw. They were told that their mission was to fly at rooftop height over a heavily defended city and drop much-needed supplies. The flight route was long and zigzagged over a sea, high mountains and six enemy countries. Navigation aides were poor or non-existent, and the weather was usually foul. The four-engined Liberators would be heavily-laden. The supplies were packed in 12 canisters, each weighing 150 kg, on the bomb racks. Each canister was filled with light machine guns, ammunition, hand grenades, radio equipment, food and medical supplies. Each canister had a small parachute to break the fall. The first South African flight included Bob Klette (pilot), Lt. Alf Faul (co-pilot), Lt. Bryan Jones (navigator), WO Eric Winchester (radio operator), WO Herbert Brown (air gunner), WO Henry Upton (air gunner) and Smiler Davis.

There were 196 11-hour night flights from Brindisi and Foggia in Italy, to and from Warsaw from 04 August to early September. The aircraft crossed the Adriatic to occupied Yugoslavia before traversing Hungary, Czechoslovakia and the Carpathian mountains. The low-altitude flights dropped light machine guns, ammunition, medical supplies, radios and food. The pilots flew in almost every night. Along the way, anti-aircraft batteries and German night fighters made it difficult for the heavily-laden Liberators. The most dangerous part of the flight was when the bombers made the drops by flying at rooftop level and near stalling speed. The aircraft and crew came from two South African Air Force (SAAF) squadrons, 31 and 34; two RAF squadrons, 148 and 178; US Air Force bombers; and the Polish Special Duties Flight 1586. The cost was high - 168 airmen are buried in the Allied Airmen's cemetery in Krakow, southern Poland, all killed in the six weeks of the airlift.

Eighty of the graves are of South Africans. Of the 80 aircraft involved, 31 were shot down - 17 during the weekend of 13-16 August. Sixty-nine South Africans never returned. Twenty-five SAAF Liberators were shot down. Fifty per cent of the aircraft were from the RAF, and 36% of the total force was South African. Squadron 31 had 28 Liberators in the Airlift, the largest component. Eight were lost, and 25 reached Warsaw dropping 228 canisters - the highest number of any squadron involved. Squadron 34 had three aircraft involved, one of which was lost. Many aircraft were so damaged that they had to force-land. The price was high. Air Marshal Sir John Slessors, the Allied air commander in the Mediterranean, later put the losses at one bomber lost for every ton of supplies dropped.

The uprising was over by 02 October, when the remainder of the AK surrendered. Seventeen thousand members of the underground, 3500 Polish soldiers and 5000 civilians had been killed. Six months later, the war in Europe was over. A Soviet regime took over and the Warsaw Uprising disappeared from Polish history. Many AK leaders vanished into the gulag and prisons.

In 1992 the Polish ambassador in South Africa, Stanislaw Cieniuch, presented the Warsaw Insurrectionary Cross to the 61 South Africans who took part in the Airlift. The presentation was at a parade held at Voortrekkerhoogte. Descendants of 37 of these brave young men who died during the war or afterwards, received the medal on behalf of their family member. One hundred and twenty South African pilots and aircrew were part of the Airlift. In 1992, only 67 of them, of whom 28 were still alive, could be traced. The Polish government in exile, already in 1945, wanted to honour the South Africans and others who helped. The South African government turned down the honour in 1945 and again in 1953, as it did not recognise the Polish government.

In South Africa, many Poles had fought for the Allies and were invalided to South Africa to be treated for tuberculosis at Baragwanath Hospital. They formed the founding group of what became the South African Polish Association. In 1947, the first annual flypast and commemoration service commemorating the Warsaw Airlift was held at the Johannesburg Cenotaph. The Polish community in South Africa commemorated the Uprising and the Airlift every year with a Mass at the cathedral in Johannesburg, laying a wreath at the Cenotaph and holding a reception at the Polish Club. In 1981 the Katyn Memorial was erected at the James and Ethel Gray Park in Melrose, Johannesburg, and the annual commemoration moved there. The Uprising and Airlift, as well as the massacre of thousands of Polish professionals, intelligentsia, academics and military in the Katyn Forest in the spring of 1940, are commemorated here each year and organised by the South African Warsaw Flights Commemoration Organising Committee.

It was only in the 1980s that Poland saw some commemoration of the Uprising when the memorial in Krasinski Square was erected. The bronze tableau shows a charge by the AK, and fighters disappearing into the sewers. It stands in the square which was Lieutenant BURGESS' target drop zone on the night he won the DSO. A statue of a little boy in an oversized helmet with a carbine in his hands pays tribute to the children who took part in defending their city. There is an Uprising Museum next door. In 1997 a plaque was unveiled at Okęcie Airport in memory of the South Africans. A replica is in the SAAF Museum at Swartkop. There are seven memorials in Poland where Allied aircraft that took part in the Airlift were shot down.

Bronislaw Kowalski, on his initiative and over several years, erected a shrine in the forest near the village of Michalin. The shrine marks the spot where a SAAF Liberator crashed on 14/15 August 1944. It honours the memory of Second Lieutenant R.G. (Bob) Hamilton, and Sergeants Leslie Mayes and Herbert Hudson. In his garden, Bronislaw built another shrine in which a light burns day and night and has done so for many years.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PEACE CHURCH SERVICE

The International Day of Peace (21 September) was commemorated with a bilingual church service in the Dutch Reform Church Raslouw, Centurion, on Sunday 25 September 2022. The service was jointly organised by the Council of Military Veterans Organisations, Pretoria Memorial Services Council, the Pretoria Branch of the South African Legion, and the church. The service was conducted by Colonel (Rev) Ronnie Stanton of the SANDF and was attended by various veteran organisations.



Scenes from the International Day of Peace Church Service.



The services started with the placing of the standards of the various veteran organisations in the front of the church. During the singing of a hymn after the sermon, the standard bearers recovered their standards and took up their place in front of the pulpit. This was followed by the playing of the Last Post, Lament during the two-minute silence and the Reveille. During the singing of the last Hymn, A Plea for Africa, the standard bearers left the church.

The service can be watched at the following link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AF6bmMqmj2I>

THE OLD FORT, DURBAN

There, in practically the centre of Durban, is a park which has a history not many people know about. Ask any of the modern generations about it and they will stare at you blankly. In 1823 the first settlers, namely Mr Farewell and Mrs Thomson arrived at Port Natal in the brig *Salisbury*, commanded by a Lieutenant King. Their main object was to carry out trade with the natives. The port, where a small vessel could lie perfectly safe, attracted them and after a short stay, they were satisfied. In 1824 the *Julia* and *Ann* arrived from Cape Town with about forty persons to establish commercial intercourse, and to civilise the inhabitants of that part of Africa. This was the object of the Cape Governor when he granted permission to Mr Farewell who hoisted the Union Jack at the Point on 24 August 1824, fired a Royal Salute, and proclaimed the territory a British possession. This was unique in that officers of the Royal Navy proclaimed a new colony. Farewell held a commission as a naval lieutenant and King, who was associated with him and should not be confused with Richard "Dick" King of a later date, who was a lieutenant in the Marines. Later these two fell out and fought with many casualties on each side. The next day the dead and wounded were handed over and buried outside the camp, where the military cemetery still stands (on Wyatt Road).

Seeing that a siege was inevitable, Captain Smith wrote a dispatch to the Governor on the frontier of the Cape, at Graham's Town. Mr Cato, a prominent local citizen, offered to bear the dispatch himself, but Capt Smith did not wish to lose his services and, eventually, Dick King volunteered for the mission. The distance was reckoned at about 600 miles (1 000 Km) or a 17- day ride in the ordinary way, yet King reached his destination on the 10th day, notwithstanding delays due to sickness.

The buildings of the Old Fort have been transformed from the original barracks housing British troops into comfortable two-bedroom cottages housing old age and war veteran pensioners, who are happy to have such comfortable homes at a nominal rent. At one time, when anyone passed on, the surviving spouse had to make way for another couple, but that rule has been waived. Now, widows whose husbands, old soldiers, have been called to higher service are assured of comfortable homes in which to end their days. The chapel is hired out for weddings, together with a minister and organist, if required.

Besides the two-bedroomed cottages mentioned, there is a semi-detached cottage situated on KE Masinga (Old Fort) Road near the corner of Masabalala Yengwa (was NMR) Avenue and the adjoining MOTH Shrine and Museum, known as Warriors' Gate. These cottages are not part of the Old Fort itself. The cottages were donated to the Durban Light Infantry (DLI) Regiment, who maintain them to this day, by an important local businessman, Mr Meyerick Bennett in 1932, and are named after him. *Adapted from a contribution by Mr Howard Toole.*



Lgr's André Le Grange (Jnr), Debra De Bilott and Jaco Lötter, from the Pretoria Branch, assisted with the wight in and keeping the record at the Ramcat Fishing Competition.

DIE BURGER

**BIELIE VAN 'N
BOEREWORSROL
VAN 50 METER!**

netwerk24.com

This how the newspaper "Die Burger" announced the 50 meter "boerewors" roll done at the Ramcat Fishing Competition.

Maandag 26 September 2022

RAMCAT FISHING COMPETITION

The Annual Ramcat Fishing Competition for disabled anglers took place at the African Pride Irene Country Lodge on Sunday 25 September 2022. The event is organised by Lgr Gerard Smal and attracts numerous disabled anglers. Lgr's André Le Grange (Jnr), Debra De Bilott and Jaco Lötter, from the Pretoria Branch, assisted with the wight in and keeping the record. During the event, a 50-metre lang "boerewors" roll was prepared. This made headlines across the country.

EULOGY HM QUEEN ELIZABETH II

It falls on me as Chairman of the Port Elizabeth Branch South African Legion to attempt to speak about the Patron of the Royal Commonwealth Ex Serviceman's League, of which the SA Legion is part of, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

How do you eulogize a woman of her stature? She had the wisdom of Solomon, the dedication to duty of Lord Nelson and the sense of humor of both Eric Morcombe & Ernie Wise combined. (If the younger members of the Congregation don't know who that is ask your parents they surely will!). It is perhaps fitting on this "Battle of Britain Sunday" to paraphrase the words of Sir Winston Churchill when talking of the brave pilots who fought in the Battle of Britain, "The Few", Never in the history of the English Nation or of its Commonwealth has so much been owed by so many to one great Lady.

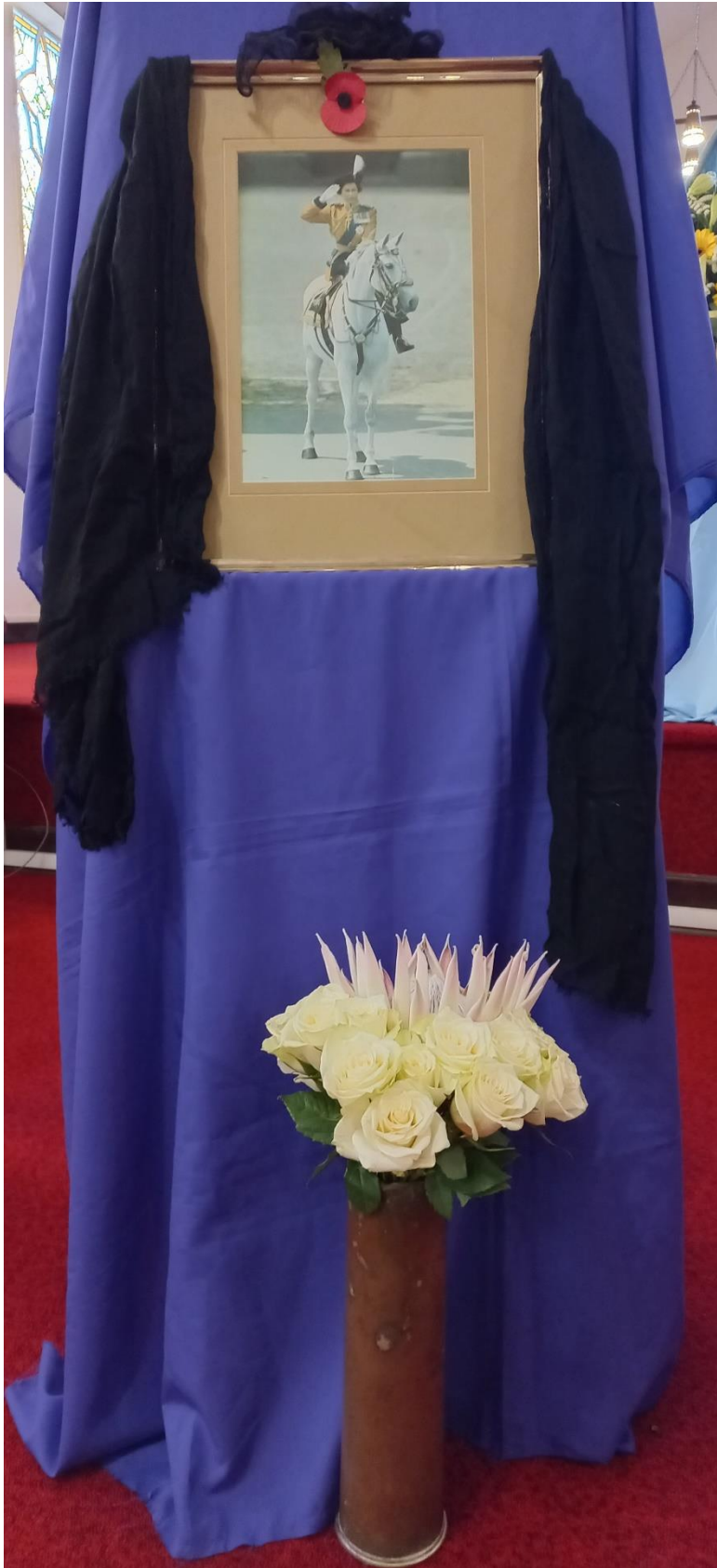
In an early speech she spoke of "dedicating her life to her peoples and the Commonwealth". At the time I am sure many people accepted this as just words from yet another member of the establishment. How wrong they were. 70+ years later she was still working tirelessly on behalf of the people she had made her original pledge to. As a young 3 year old child, probably my earliest memory was of a Street party in London celebrating the Coronation. I am now 73 years old and have known no other Monarch until last Thursday week. She was what my grandchildren would call "Legend"!

Queen Elizabeth II was born less than 23 years after the Wright Brothers carried out the first ever powered flight. Four of Queen Victoria's children were still alive when she was born. The last one of them died in 1944 when Elizabeth was already 18.

She lived more than a third of the entire age of the United States (founded 1776)- a nation which is only 246 years old. Well over half the age of Canada (founded 1867), and all but 25 years of the nation of Australia (founded 1901).

She became Queen at the age of just 25 when the Arch Demon Stalin was the Dictator in Russia and Truman was President in the U.S.A. It was just 7 years after the end of WW2. Her first Prime Minister was born in 18 yes 18 74. Her last PM was born only 2 years before her Silver Jubilee in 1975- so her first and last PM's were born over 100 years apart!

She was already 51 when she celebrated her first Jubilee in 1977 She lived through three kings herself before she even took the throne- George V, Edward VIII, and her father George VI.



She saw the jet age arrive, the birth of electronic computing, and the space age, - all before she was 35 years old.

She witnessed South Africa's transition from Union to Republic to Democracy and counted Nelson Mandela as a personal friend.

She ruled for 76 years until the age of 96, more than 35 years after the age at which most people retire. She was the longest reigning monarch in her own right in world history.

Her reign is over 7% of the entire history of England since William the Conqueror in 1066 – 956 years ago. She has completed the equivalent of three tours of duty if you average out the time the throne was occupied by her 41 predecessors.

Her selfless service to her Country and the Commonwealth was simply astonishing, when she could have retired from the job years ago and taken a well-earned rest.

She is now a huge part of British History, there is no "was" about it anymore. She "is" and will remain an integral component of her Country, having overseen an amazing 2nd Elizabethan Age. (Perhaps it is time to coin the phrase "Elizabeth the Great")

I am glad to have lived in her reign and witnessed it, in spite of the Country's broken heart.

As she said herself “Grief is the price you pay for love”. There have been countless stories and anecdotes about Her Majesty since the day of her passing to higher service and if I may I would like to recite one which I think has relevance to all Military Personnel both Serving and Veteran and sums up the type of Woman she was.

The planning of Operation London Bridge, the Queens State Funeral, started a considerable time prior to the death of Her Majesty; she even had the final say in all things ceremonial. The Royal Air Force had a problem. The only aircraft they had that were capable of carrying the state coffin were the C130 Hercules (of SA flossy fame), and the Globemaster Heavy Lift Transport. Both of these were more used to transporting Battle Tanks and large numbers of soldiers than carrying a single coffin. But the Gargantuan Globemaster had been used in the past to repatriate military personnel who had fallen in service while overseas.(You will recall the sad sight of funeral corteges leaving RAF Brize Norton on their way to the families of the fallen). C130 Hercules was thought to be too noisy and not suited to such a solemn occasion. So Globemaster it was to be.

Her Majesty was asked if she thought this was in order, her reply. “If it’s good enough for my boys I`m sure it will be just fine for me”

Rest in peace Ma’am along with your beloved Phillip, your duty has been done, multiple times over.

Legionnaire Terry Pattison
Chairman – Port Elizabeth Branch
Sunday 18th September 2022
Annual Battle of Britain Commemoratives Service
St Paul’s Church

POST-MODERN

Telephone to make a call,
Surely makes the world feel small.
A luxury our fathers could never have dreamed,
Now taken for granted and lightly esteemed.

The above poem was submitted by Brian Keith Mino, former US Coast Guardsman. Currently with the North-western Connecticut Communal College, USA.

OBITUARIES

ALEXANDRIA

Lgr. Oliver Davis.

BRAKPAN

Lgr [Ms] Antoinette Brewer.

EAST LONDON

Lgr Graeme Bell.

PIETERMARITZBURG

Lgr A Lloyd.

Lgr T Kitchen.

Lgr A Burrows.

PORT ALFRED

Lgr Marion Koning.

PORT ELIZABETH

Lgr Lorna Els.

SOUTH AFRICAN LEGION



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- Lgr Jurie Van der Merwe.

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

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