



SOUTH AFRICAN LEGION

(CAPE TOWN BRANCH)

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CAPE TOWN BRANCH NEWS DECEMBER 2019

A Christmas message from Padre Ralph Thornley

Dear Legionnaires and friends, did you know that no fact in history is so well attested as the birth, life and death of Jesus Christ. The Encyclopedia Britannica devotes more words to Jesus than to Aristotle, Cicero, Julius Caesar or Napoleon. No life has been more carefully examined and no life has had so great an impact on so many millions of people all down the centuries. So, when we look at Christmas, we see that it is not a myth, not some fantastic fairy story that is commemorated every year. We know that Jesus was not born on the 25th December that was just an arbitrary date to celebrate the historical fact of His birth. The babe in the manger became a man who not only taught us a new way of life but brought us into a new relationship with God. As with each returning annual Remembrance Day Service so Christmas is a time to look beyond Father Christmas, the decorations and the general noise of the season and to remember again the words of **John 3:16. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.** That's what Christmas is really all about and that's we are celebrating – God's great gift of Salvation. If Christ is not part of the season, then God's great gift of Salvation is missed and our celebration meaningless. **Acts 4:12** tells us: **And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.** Take this gift with both hands it is for you and it is free.

Wishing you all a Christ filled Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

Chaplain (Rev)Ralph R. Thornley SAN (retired)
Chaplain South African Legion (Cape Town Branch)

New members

Welcome to Fred Albrecht, Ben Booyens, Kevin Brown, Eddie Gleeson, James Hart, Ian Hele, Jenny Jewell, Barry Riddle, Chris Roed, Bruce Taylor and Anna Vorster.

Poppy Day 2019

A big thank you to all who assisted with the Poppy Day collection on 9 November. Tins and donations are still coming in, so it is too early to advise the total collected.

In addition to the collection, a successful golf day was held on 18 October at Parow Golf Club and we look forward to this becoming an annual event to supplement the income from the street collection.

Military Christmas traditions that boost morale

Christmas is traditionally a time for getting together with family and friends to eat, drink and fall asleep in front of the Christmas special on TV. But for the British Armed Forces, things are often a little different.

For thousands of UK servicemen and women, Christmas will be spent away from home – but that doesn't mean they won't be celebrating. Throughout history, the Armed Forces have found ways to spread Christmas cheer no matter how far away from loved ones they are.

Here's a look at some of the military traditions and activities, past and present, that help to give the Armed Forces a festive morale boost.

Gunfire

Members of the British Army often kick off Christmas Day with a cuppa – but with a festive twist. 'Gunfire' is a cocktail made of black tea laced with rum, traditionally served to soldiers in bed by their officers on Christmas Day.

The drink dates to at least the 1890s and is also served by officers to lower ranks to give them Dutch courage before morning attacks. Cheers!

Christmas feast

Even though deployed troops must stay vigilant and maintain their duties over Christmas, an effort is always made to make the day special. Troops will sit down to a festive lunch together and, as is tradition, the officers will often serve the soldiers. 94-year-old Bob Bloomfield who served in the Army for five years during World War II describes how in 1942 the officers waited on them on Christmas Day, serving a fabulous lunch of turkey, goose, chicken, Christmas pudding, trifle, mince pies and beer. This was followed in the evening by a buffet and dancing.

Sounds like some Christmas and not like any SANDF experience – my guess is that Bob wasn't at the frontline.

Recreating a classic

During World War I, British and German soldiers famously held an unofficial truce at Christmas time in 1914, singing carols, exchanging gifts and playing football in no man's land.

In 2014, on the 100th anniversary of the Christmas Truce, British and German soldiers deployed in Afghanistan gathered in a dusty field for a commemorative game of football. Brigadier James Stopford said: "A hundred years on to see German soldiers and British soldiers again on operations do this is just symbolic of progress and what can be achieved."

Accommodation at Rosedale

Is your name on the waiting list for accommodation at Rosedale or do you know of a veteran looking for accommodation? To view the accommodation or for application forms contact David Holmes on 0216899771 or david@salegion.co.za

Gents hairdresser needed

Bruno, who has been visiting Rosedale once a month to cut hair, has indicated that he intends retiring at the end of this year. If you know of a hairdresser (male or female) prepared to visit Rosedale once a month and cut hair for a nominal charge, please ask them to contact David Holmes.

Christmas Greetings

The Chairman and committee wish all members, residents of Rosedale and staff an enjoyable and safe Christmas and a wonderful 2020.