

Centenary of South Africans on the Somme & the Battle of Delville Wood Memorial Service



Thiepval Memorial
France
10 July 2016

SOMME 100



Background



REMEMBER

The Battle of Delville Wood
14 – 20 July 1916

- South Africa moved the official date to commemorate the centenary of the Battle of Delville Wood on the Somme from Sunday 10th July to Tuesday 12th July with two months notice.
- Reason - the Presidential diary for President Jacob Zuma to attend and unveil a new memorial.
- This left 400 + South African Pilgrims, mostly touring High Schools, Veteran Associations, families of the combatants and Regimental Associations on the Somme with no service and pre-booked return agendas.
- Delville Wood site closed for Presidential security.
- Solution: The Royal British Legion
 - – South African Branch
- Solution: Thiepval Memorial



Why is Thiepval Memorial relevant to South Africans?



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- Surprise to many in The Royal British Legion (and South African circles), the official designation of the Thiepval is the “Memorial to the 72, 195 British and South African servicemen, who died in the Battle of the Somme of the First World War between 1915 – 1918, with no known grave”.
- Thiepval Memorial records the names of 858 South Africans.
- There is also one Irish born South African Victoria Cross recipient recorded - Captain Alexander Young, awarded the VC during the Boer War, served with the South African Scottish KIA in October 1916.
- Thiepval records missing South Africans serving in all Somme battles – not just Delville Wood
- Thiepval also records South Africans of British Heritage called to fight in Pals Battalions and British regiments.



Preparation



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- Commonwealth War Graves Commission contacted permission to use the memorial.
- CWGC brought in The Royal British Legion events division to assist.
- TRBL events blocked their daily Somme Parade for a specific South African event to be held on Sunday 10th July.
- TRBL Somme 100 marketing campaign compliant invitation for the “South Africans on the Somme” Memorial Service sent to all South African Pilgrims going to France, veteran organisations, government bodies and TRBL National and local branches.
- RSVP sent to the South African Branch.
- Accreditations completed.
- Parade order finalised.
- Piper, Bugler, Keynote speaker and Chaplains finalised.

SOMME 100 THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION

South Africans on the Somme Memorial Service

The Royal British Legion in conjunction with its South African Branch and the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, will be holding a service dedicated to South African sacrifice during WW1 on the Somme.

The South Africans on the Somme Memorial Service will be held at:
The Thiepval Memorial on Sunday 10th July 2016 starting at 11:30am

The Thiepval Memorial to the Missing on the Somme is especially important to South Africans, as it is officially designated as the “Memorial to the 72, 195 British and South African servicemen, who died in the Battle of the Somme of the First World War between 1915 – 1918, with no known grave”.

Open to the public, but RSVP essential to participate in proceedings and to access the enclosure,
e-mail karen.dickens@gmail.com



Order of Service



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11:30 Service starts

WELCOME – Rod Bedford, Membership Council Representative for overseas branches and districts: The Royal British Legion

INTRODUCTION – Peter Dickens, Chairman: The Royal British Legion - South African Branch

CALL TO WORSHIP – Pastor John McCabe

HYMN – Psalm 23

READING and EXHORTATION - Canon Fred Pitout

PRAYER OF COMMEMORATION – Canon Fred Pitout

HYMN – Abide by me

PRAYERS - Canon Fred Pitout

11:58 ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

Bidding Prayer – Pastor John McCabe

Exhortation – Read by Lgr. Lawrie Poorter, South African Legion

Last Post

2 Minutes Silence

Reveille

Kohima Epitaph – Read by David Gush, Memorable Order of Tin Hats

KEYNOTE ADDRESS - Family member of Lt. Colonel E. F. Thackeray, the Commander of the 3rd South African Regiment at Delville Wood

POEM - In Flanders Fields – Read by Karen Dickens

WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

PIPERS LAMENT

FINAL PRAYER and BLESSING – Pastor John McCabe

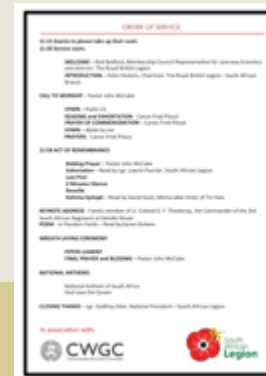
NATIONAL ANTHEMS

National Anthem of South Africa

God save the Queen

CLOSING THANKS – Lgr. Godfrey Giles, National President – South African Legion

400 copies of TRBL Somme 100 compliant Order of Service Brochures printed, in conjunction with input from The South African Legion NHQ National President to ramp up the association values of The Battle of Delville Wood.



SOMME 100
THE BATTLE OF DELVILLE WOOD
LEGION



SOMME 100



Standards



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The South African Council of Veterans Organisations (CMVO) South Africa and Department of Veterans Affairs agreed to bring CMVO affiliated statutory forces regimental standards to the Thiepval parade, and they were accommodated last minute.

Standards on Parade

- British Union National Flag
- South African National Flag
- Royal British Legion – South African Branch
- Royal British Legion – St Clears Branch (Wales)
- South African Legion - Europe Region
- South African Legion - UK Region
- South African Legion - Scotland Branch
- Rhodesian Army Association
- Council of Military Veterans Organisations – SA
- South African Legion – SA NHQ
- Memorable Order of Tin Hats – SA NHQ
- Gunners Association – SA
- Armour Association – SA
- Infantry Association – SA
- Airbourne Association - SA
- Caledonian Regiments Association – SA
- 61 Mech Veterans Association – SA
- SADF Veterans Association – SA
- Pretoria Boys High



Welcome



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Welcome and outline of the importance of the Battle of the Somme given by Rod Bedford, Membership Council Representative for overseas branches and districts: The Royal British Legion



Introduction



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Introduction and outline of the importance of the Thieval Memorial, the Battle of the Somme, The Battle of Delville Wood and the Veterans Bond as the bearer of the flame of Remembrance - given by Peter Dickens: The Royal British Legion – South African Branch.



Call to Worship



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Call to worship conducted by Pastor John McCabe and Canon Fred Pitout



Act of Remembrance



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Exhortation - Read by David Gush – No.2 MOTh of The Memorable Order of Tin Hats

Kohima Epitath – Read by Lawrie Poorter from the South African Legion – South Africa NHQ

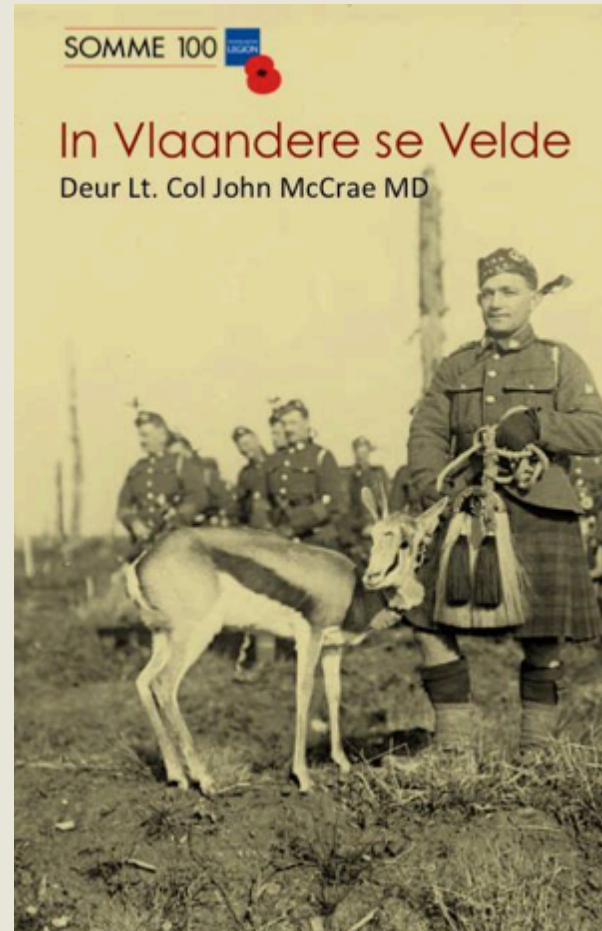




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“In Flanders Fields” was especially translated into Afrikaans for this memorial service by a team of poets and language experts and read by Karen Dickens.



In Vlaand're wieg papawers sag
Tussen kruise, grag op grag,
As bakens; en deur dit alles deur
Die lewerikke tjiipend in dapper vlug,
Skaars hoorbaar bo die grofgeskut van bomme.

Ons is die Dooies.
Dae gelede het ons geleef
die dagbreek en sonsondergloed beleef.
Was bemind en was verlief,
nou lê ons in Vlaandere se velde.

Veg voort my Kind met alle mag;
neem uit my hand die lig,
met krag moet jul die fakkeldra, met eer.
Wie durf Ons dood verloën, onteer –
ons sal steeds dwaal, ons sal nie slaap,
solank papawers groei in Vlaandere se velde.

Translated into Afrikaans by Hendrik Neethling and Walter E. Vice as a collaboration on behalf of the Legion, as arranged and read by Karen Dickens at the Centenary Service of South Africans on the Somme and the Battle of Delville Wood, held at Thiepval Memorial in France on 10th July 2016.



Wreath Laying



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On behalf of The Royal British Legion:
Adrian Smyth – Grandson of Quentin
Smyth VC

On behalf of the Royal British Legion
Youth:
Daniel and Duncan McArdle



Wreath Laying



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Other associations and individuals laying wreaths:

- Commonwealth War Graves Commission - TBA
- Royal British Legion – St Clears
- South African Legion – NHQ - Godfrey Giles
- South African Legion – EU Branch – Andrew Bergman
- South African Legion – England – Paul Duncan
- South African Legion – Scotland – Cary Hendricks
- Memorable Order of Tin Hats – David Gush
- Gunners Association – Dominick Hoole
- 1 SA Field Ambulance – Mrs McIntosh
- Cape Town Highlanders - Robin Douglas
- Sappers Association - Kevin Bolton
- Kafferian Rifles Association - Tony Step
- Lt Col Dave Temple – Army Gym
- South African Veterans Signals Association – Theo Thernandes
- Rhodesian Army Association – Lt Col Hobson MMM JCD, representing the Rhodesian component of the 3rd South Infantry Regiment at Delville Wood.
- John Jenkins – National War Fund
- Michealhouse – Gerald Ralfe
- Pretoria Boys High – Andrew de Kock
- Christian Brothers College – Barry Jessop
- Maritzburg College - Matthew Marwick
- Wynberg Boys High - Keith Richardson
- Bishops – Warwick Richer
- JW Watt (Survivor of Delville Wood) – Professor MacIntosh
- Personal - Paul Voight
- Nancy – Daughter of the donor of the South African Springbok as national mascot for Delville Wood.

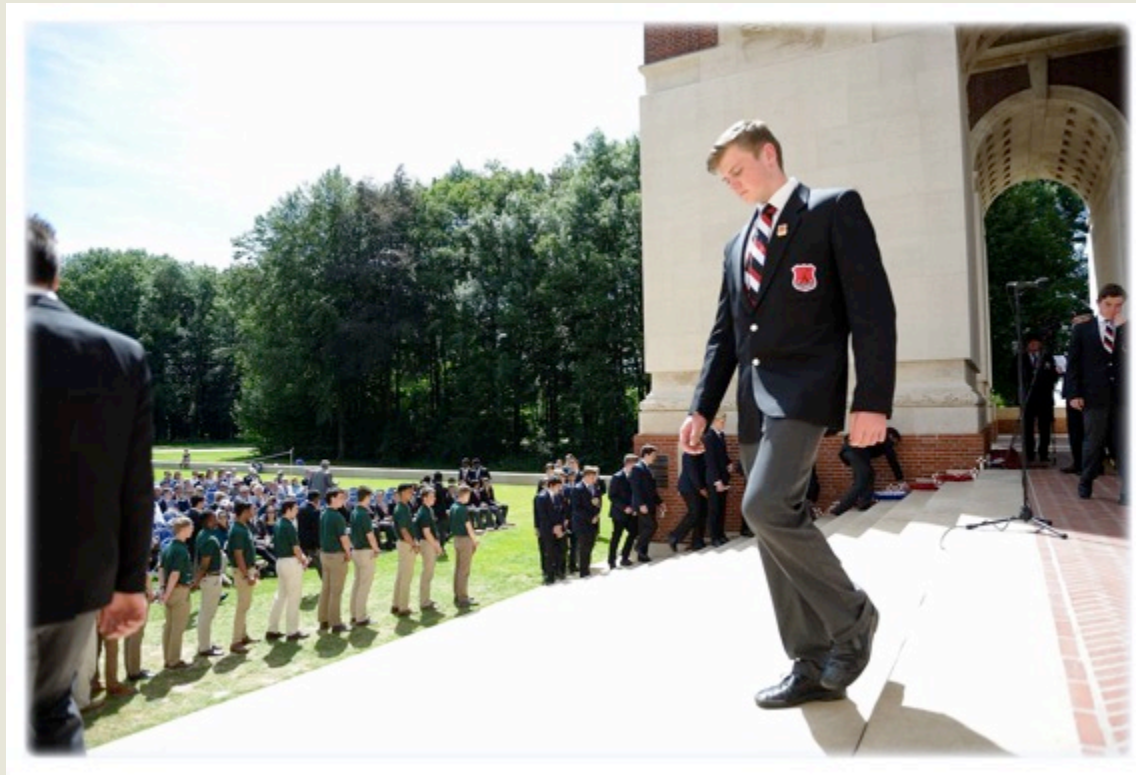


Cross Laying by South African High School students



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Individual Crosses laid by South African High Schools on Pilgrimage:



Closing Thanks



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Thank you to the Royal British Legion delivered by Lt Col. Godfrey Giles, National President of The South African Legion



Lament and Parade march past



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Parade was drilled off the memorial to a standing applause



Post Service Function



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After PR photo shots the Royal British Legion South African Branch hosted sandwiches and a cold drink (or beer) to all who attended at The Tommy Bar (sponsored kindly by a donation from a branch member).





Media links included TRBL Live feed on Youtube and resultant social media and website pick-ups.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yxw0BeAw1N0>

