

SELECTED MEMORIALS

FREEDOM PARK



Freedom Park is situated on Salvokop in Pretoria. It includes a memorial with a list of the names of those killed in the South African Wars, World War I, World War II as well as the names of those who died during the struggle for freedom.

NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL DELVILLE WOOD, FRANCE

The Battle of Delville Wood on the Somme in France occurred between 14 and 20 July 1916. The 1st SA Infantry Brigade was ordered to attack and hold the Wood at all costs. The South Africans held the Wood for six days and five nights until they were relieved. Of the 121 officers and 3 032 other ranks which entered the Wood, only 2 officers and 140 other ranks walked out.

South Africa's National Memorial, designed by Sir Herbert Baker, was opened in 1926, in Delville Wood. This is a memorial to all South Africans who died in armed conflict and in support of Freedom and thus is not limited to World War I.

South Africa, with the full support of the SANDF, organises Memorial Services in Delville Wood each year in July in accordance with the following categories:

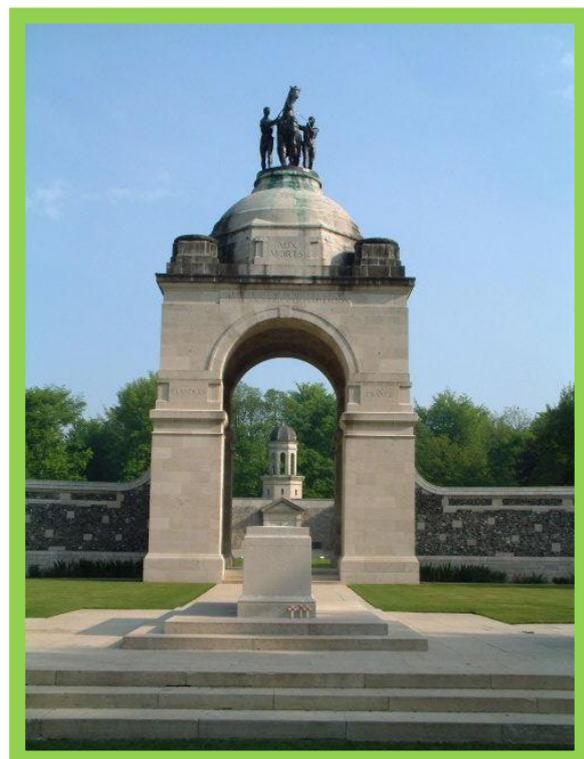
- Full Key – on each tenth anniversary of the Battle eg the 100th anniversary.
- Medium Key – on each 5th anniversary of the Battle – eg 95th anniversary.
- Low Key – in between years.

These services are well supported by the French Government, Army and Veterans as well as by Commonwealth Military Attachés.

The Memorial in Delville Wood is supported by a Museum and an Information Centre.

In addition to WWI, WWII, the Berlin Airlift and the Korean War, the roles of honour of the following are on display :

- The Struggle for Freedom.
- The sinking of the SS Mendi.
- The soldiers buried at Arques-la-Bataille, France.



UNION BUILDINGS



In the grounds of the Union Buildings in Pretoria, is a Delville Wood Memorial in tribute to the troops who died in WWI as well as a plaque for those who died in the Korean War.

FORT KLAPPERKOP

The memorial on Fort Klapperkop, east of Pretoria, was erected by the SADF from funds raised by Military Veterans, mainly the CMVO. The memorial contains the names of SADF deceased from 1961 – 1994. It is well known for its magnificent vista and the statue of “Troepie”, a young soldier with an R1 rifle.



SS MENDI

On the 16th January 1917, the SS Mendi troopship sailed from Cape Town en route to Europe carrying a contingent of the SANLC, comprising 802 Black Soldiers, 5 white officers and 17 NCOs as well as 89 crew members and 56 military passengers. They sailed at noon forming up in convoy with four ships carrying South African and Australian troops and gold. The SS Mendi came safely into Plymouth, UK, 34 days out from Cape Town.

On the afternoon of 20 February 1917, the Mendi sailed from Plymouth and steamed toward Le Havre in France, escorted by the destroyer HMS Brisk. The weather was overcast, threatening mist, with light winds and smooth sea. With the night, the weather had become foggy and the whistle was sounded at one-minute intervals, as required by regulations. Thereafter the fog became thicker and the speed was reduced.

On 21 February 1917, at 4:57, the lookouts of the Mendi heard a vessel coming through the water and sounded the whistle. As the SS Darro was travelling at full speed and making no sound signals, the second officer and the lookouts heard the signal and saw a green light. Orders were given at once to stop the engines and put them full speed astern and the Darro's siren sounded. It was too late. They were about eleven miles south to south west of St Catherine's Point on the Isle of Wight.

The SS Darro struck and sank the SS Mendi. Only 267 soldiers survived.

Somewhere about this time must have occurred the best known legend in the story of the Mendi. It is not confirmed by any survivor or official account, but oral tradition has preserved it. The Reverend Wauchope Dyobha cried out to the men :

"Be quiet and calm, my countrymen, for what is taking place is exactly what you came to do. You are going to die But that is what you came to do ... Brothers, we are drilling the death drill. I, a Xhosa, say you are my brothers, Swazis, Pondis, Basuthos, we die like brothers. We are the sons of Africa. Raise your war cries, brother, for though they made us leave our assegais in the kraal, our voices are left with our bodies."

And they took off their boots and stamped the death dance on the deck of the sinking ship.
There are the following memorials to the deceased :

- Avalon Cemetery, Johannesburg. This is well maintained by the City Council.
- Atteridgeville, Game Thago Resort, Tshwane. The annual memorial service is organized by the Pretoria Branch of the SA Legion and the SANDF provides sentries, flag orderlies, tents and seats.
- Portsmouth Harbour – The role of honour appears on the Memorial. Wreaths were laid by the SANDF in 2007.
- New Brighton, Port Elizabeth.
- Recently, another memorial to the Mendi was unveiled in Cape Town. Located on an embankment on the Mowbray campus of the University of Cape Town, the site was significant to the Mendi, as it is here that troops of the SANLC had billeted before embarking on the ill-fated SS Mendi.

ARQUES-LA-BATAILLE CEMETERY



Arques-la-Bataille, near Dieppe, France is the resting place of 333 Black South Africans who died in 1917 – 1918.

Each year in July, a Memorial Service of equal stature to that in Delville Wood, is held. This service receives strong support from the Prefect of the Region, the Mayor of Dieppe and French veterans. This has occurred for approximately the past ten to fifteen years. This Cemetery is also maintained in impeccable condition by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Some ten years ago the spelling of the names on the gravestones was corrected with the assistance of the Late Lt Gen Masondo.

ETERNAL FLAME OF REMEMBRANCE

The flame is situated in the grounds of Parliament.

RAND REGIMENTS MEMORIAL



This memorial, otherwise known as The South African War Memorial, is to be found in Saxonwold, Johannesburg. The monument is dedicated to the men of the Rand Regiments who fell in the South African War of 1899 to 1902. Edward Lutyens, a British colonial architect, designed the work, which stands 20 metres in height with four arches supporting a massive bronze Angel of Peace.

SQUARE HILL MEMORIAL

This Battle occurred on 20 September 1918 at Megiddo, in Palestine. In July 1918, 1st Bn Cape Corps was assigned to the British Egyptian Expeditionary Force. This force drove the Turkish armies out of Palestine. In this victory, 1st Bn Cape Corps played a major role, specifically at the Battle of Square Hill. The deceased of the Battle are buried in Gaza but there is no memorial. This is seen by many as a major oversight. There is a plaque in Cape Town, at UCT. An annual memorial service is held, often in the Castle, and is generally supported by 9 SA Infantry Bn. Other memorial services are held annually in Kimberley and Johannesburg.

SA AIR FORCE (SAAF) MEMORIAL



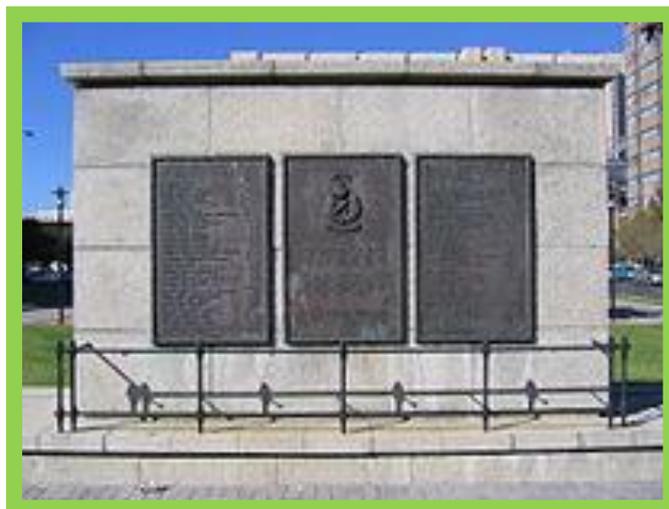
The SAAF Memorial which was opened in September 1963 is situated on Bay Hill Pretoria, within sight of the Air Force Base, Zwartkop.

It is shaped in the form of a star pattern with three wings. The plaque on the Memorial reads: "Erected by the South African Air Force and the Air Force Association in remembrance of all who offered their lives in peace and war".

The Memorial includes a Garden of Remembrance for some 300 members of the SAAF who died in WWII.

SA NAVY MEMORIAL

The SA Navy Memorial is situated in Simon's Town. A memorial service is held annually to coincide with the Navy Festival in April.



SA DEFENCE FORCE (SADF) WALL OF REMEMBRANCE

The SADF Wall of Remembrance – situated in the grounds of the Voortrekker Monument - was inaugurated on 25 October 2009 to commemorate the members of the SADF who perished in their line of duty between the period of 31 May 1961 and 27 April 1994. Built from private funds, it contains the names of more than 2 500 persons who died on duty, of whom +- 800 were killed in action. The name list is updated annually as more losses are uncovered through intensive, ongoing research.

Recent additions on site include the Tree of Honour of 32 Bn, the Needle of Honour of 31 /201 Bn, and a granite plaque erected by the Infantry Association. The site provides seating space for more than 1500 spectators and is flanked on the Northern side by a special wall with 280 nichés for use by members including civilian employees of the Defence Force. Also on site is a special wall erected to honour the SADF recipients of decorations and medals for valour.



SA NATIONAL DEFENCE FORCE (SANDF) MEMORIAL

This memorial to members of the SANDF, who made the supreme sacrifice subsequent to 27 April 1994, is under development.

GUNNERS' NATIONAL MEMORIAL



The Gunners' National Memorial is situated in Potchefstroom on a site originally owned by the government but transferred to the Town Council of Potchefstroom in 1972. The location of the Memorial was selected adjacent to the now closed No 3 Gate of the Military Base through which, over a period of time, all gunners passed on entering or leaving the camp.

The design of the Memorial was conceived by the eminent architect, Dr Gordon Leith, himself a gunner, who served overseas with the SA Artillery during World War I.

The Memorial was unveiled on 10 May 1952 by the Chief of Staff, SA Army, Lt Gen "Matie" C.L. de Wet du Toit and entrusted for safekeeping by the Gunners' Association to the then Officer Commanding Western Transvaal Command. It was consecrated by Chaplain Tom Harvey, war time chaplain of the Transvaal Horse Artillery.

The original plaque on the Memorial reads "To the glory of God and the memory of all Gunners who lost their lives in two World Wars, 1914 – 1918; 1939 – 1945".

At the 47th Annual Gunners' Memorial Service held on 19 April 1998 the Memorial was rededicated with the unveiling of an additional plaque reading "To the glory of God and the memory of all Gunners who laid down their lives for South Africa". Refurbishing of the Memorial took place in the year 2000.

The Memorial is administered by the "Gunners Memorial Trust" in collaboration with the Gunners' Association in terms of a National Deed of Trust dated 25 July 1955.

LADYSMITH MEMORIAL



The eMnambithi / Ladysmith Municipality is very aware of the colourful military history of the town, especially its world famous 118 day Siege during the Anglo-Boer War, which began on the 2nd November 1899 and ended on the 28th February 1900, when General Sir Redvers Buller VC's cavalry entered the town at dusk on that day.

Many famous Imperial and Colonial Regiments participated during the Siege and played a significant role in the relief battles; Colenso (15th December 1899), iNthabamnyama (20th to 22nd January 1900), Spioenkop (24th January 1900), Vaalkrans (5th to 7th February 1900) and finally the Thukela Heights (12th to 28th February 1900). Besides the Colonial Regiments, many Commandos as well as elements of the Staatsartillerie (both from the ZAR and the OFS) played a significant role in the Boers' efforts to force Lt Gen Sir George White's garrison into submission and to prevent General Buller from relieving the town.

Queen Victoria was so impressed with the role played by "...her brave Irish" during this period that she consented to the establishment of the Irish Regiment of Foot Guards on the 1st April 1900, while many of those Irish Regiments were stationed in Ladysmith after the Relief. The eMnambithi / Ladysmith Council acknowledged this on the 1st April 2005, when they granted the Irish Guards the Freedom of Entry into Ladysmith.

They were not the first Regiment to receive this honour; the Natal Carbineers (NC) and the Light Horse Regiment (LHR – previously the Imperial Light Horse (ILH)) and 5 SA Infantry were awarded the Freedom of Ladysmith several years earlier, as were the SA Police Service, the SA Navy and the Royal Navy. To even matters historically, the Harrismith Commando, which played a significant role on the Boer side during the Siege of Ladysmith, was also awarded Freedom of Entry shortly before the Commandos were disbanded.

Since then, 121 Battalion and Reserve Force Regiments that included the Natal Field Artillery, Transvaalse Staatsartillerie, Vrystaatse Artillerie Regiment, Durban Light Infantry, Natal Mounted Rifles, Umvoti Mounted Rifles, 21 Maintenance Unit and 1 Medical Battalion Group were awarded the Freedom of Ladysmith in a massive parade held on the 20th July 2011.

The following year, on the 12th May 2012, the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment was awarded the Freedom of eMnambithi / Ladysmith in recognition of the role played by their antecedent Regiments during the Siege and Relief of Ladysmith.

To commemorate these events in the town's history, a memorial plinth was unveiled on this occasion, by the Deputy Mayor. It lists the Freeman of the town as well as all the Units or Regiments that have been awarded this honour and depicts their Regimental crests.

Many members of these Regiments lost their lives during this era in the town's history and we will have an opportunity to remember them at wreath-laying ceremonies at the Memorial.