

BOER WAR MEMORIAL SITE DEDICATION

The NSW Boer War Memorial Committee together with the Woollahra Council will conduct a ceremony to rededicate a small memorial on Old South Head Road, Watsons Bay, Sydney, at 3pm on Sunday, May 31 2009.

The memorial was erected in November 1900 as a tribute to a local citizen and part time soldier, Lieutenant Gideon James Grieve, who was killed in action leading a company of the Scottish Black Watch on 18 February 1900.

Today it stands as a reminder that nearly 1,000 of the 23,000 Australians who fought in South Africa paid the supreme sacrifice.

It will be a simple ceremony to bless and rededicate the site on the 107th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Vereeniging that ended the South African war in 1902.

Lt Grieve, a Special Services Officer in the army from the colony of NSW, was among the first Australian troops to arrive in Cape Town in December 1899.

While this small, suburban memorial, and a dozen or so like it scattered throughout New South Wales, recall the men and nurses who volunteered from the suburbs and country towns there is no national

memorial in Canberra that commemorates all Australians who served and records the names of all who died in South Africa.

The Boer War was the first full commitment of troops by all the Australian Colonies to a foreign war and with the formation of the Australian Commonwealth on January 1, 1901 it became our country's first military involvement as a nation.

Our first ever VC was awarded, to Neville Howse. Five more were awarded before the war ended.

More Australians were lost than in the 13 year long involvement in Vietnam, making the Boer War the third most devastating war after the two world wars. It has taken too long for Australia to recognise these sacrifices.

The Member for Wentworth, Leader of the Opposition, Hon Malcolm Turnbull has expressed interest in a national memorial and has signified his intention to attend.

Please find enclosed the NSW Boer War Memorial project committee's second *Monumentally Speaking* and one of the five press releases that have been prepared for our commemoration of the Boer War Peace Declaration. The other press releases are available at the national website:

www.bwm.org.au as “31.5.09 Grieve Dedication” under the heading
Press Room.

Released by the NSW Boer War Memorial Committee.

15 May 2009. Phone - (02) 9427 6161; Web - www.bwm.com.au

Author – Keith Smith, Public Relations Officer, e krasmith@bwm.org.au 389 words