

Mpumalanga – Mid Month Visit

With the 'cross-border' restrictions lifted we were offered a couple of days in the Kruger National Park (Kruger) which we accepted without hesitation. A visit to Kruger features in one of the itineraries on the website, so, being able to check up on accommodation and other facilities made it a useful exercise. A reference book that I am working my way through – 'Anglo-Boer War – Historical Guide to Memorials and Sites' by Jackie Grobler, helped us plan our trip home, not part of the above mentioned Itinerary. The book lists graves of soldiers who fought in the Boer-War and are buried in the cemeteries at Kaapschehoop and Waterval Onder, so this is where we headed.

Kaapschehoop originally gained fame as a gold mining town when traces of gold were discovered in 1882 in a small creek running through the town. With limited discoveries over the next few years the town went into steady decline. Today it is a quaint little town which offers beautiful views and hikes. The town is renowned for its wild horses, with the story that they are survivors of the Boer-War, having been left to survive when troops in the area were withdrawn. During the Boer-War, due to the altitude of the town, a signalling station was established in the town, on Signal Hill. Grobler's book indicates that there are three soldiers buried in the town's cemetery – we found two of the three graves

- Pte. W. Cooke – Liverpool Regiment, who died of disease on 22 April 1901
- Pte. J. Lydon – Northumberland Fusiliers who also died of disease on 7 July 1901

The grave we didn't find was to

- Sapper H.G. Baskerville – Royal Engineers, who died of disease on 2 May 1901.





Our next stop was the cemetery at **Waterval Onder** which is a small settlement at the base of the escarpment. It was established in 1895 at the time of the building of the Pretoria-Delagoa Bay railway line. President Paul Kruger lived in Waterval Onder before he left South Africa via Mozambique during the Anglo-Boer War. His Krugerhof house is a national monument. We were unable to visit the house as it was locked and no-one was in attendance. Grobler's book states that there are 41 graves of Imperial soldiers – we could only find 40. Of the 40 we found, two casualties died of wounds received, one was 'killed' by accident, one was killed in a railway accident, and the others all died from disease. What I am now trying to establish was whether there was a British hospital at Waterval Onder as the earliest date of a death through disease was 15 September 1900 which was after the Battle of Bergendal, and the Boers had by this date 'vacated' the area.



After spending a number of hours at Waterval Onder we then had to find the cemetery at **Dalmanutha**. I had first visited the cemetery in 2000 and had since that date tried in vain, on a number of occasions, to relocate it – on one occasion with a registered Tour Guide. Well, this time we weren't giving up, and after some 'bundu' bashing and a few 'U' turns we found it.

Nine soldiers are buried at the cemetery, adjacent to the railway line at the Dalmanutha Station, which is about 7 km east of the Bergendal Monument. Of the nine, six were killed in action at the farm Geluk on 13 October 1900. For the other three, Steve Watts book 'In Memoriam' indicates the following:



- Private J. Rixton of 19th Hussars died at Dalmanutha on 16 September 1900. Could he have died of injuries received at the Battle of Bergendal – just three weeks earlier?
- Private J. Bayston of 2nd Royal Berkshire Regiment was killed in action, with the location being Dalmanutha, on 8 January 1901. On 7 January the Boers launched simultaneous attacks on a number of railway stations in the Belfast District, and I think one can safely assume that Bayston was killed in one of these attacks, probably on the Dalmanutha Station.
- Shooing Smith R. Sergant died of wounds, at Dalmanutha, on 13 October 1900. Was he injured at Geluk and transported to Dalmanutha?



Action at Geluk – October 1900

On 12 October 1900 Brigadier-General Mahon's Brigade left Machadadorp for Belfast, and as they approached the farm Geluk they were fired upon by Boers in the area. Mahon decided to bivouac for the night and early the next morning, his force was attacked by Boers under the command of Commandant T. Smuts. For acts of bravery Major Brown of the 14th Hussars was awarded the Victoria Cross.

The six casualties buried at Dalmanutha from this action are:

- Lieutenant P.A.T. Jones – 8th Hussars
- Lieutenant F.H. Wylam – 8th Hussars
- Private F. Chubb – 8th Hussars



- Private A. Langstone – 8th Hussars
- Lance Corporal C.J. Moore – 16th Hussars
- Private Bagnall – 16th Hussars

At the far corner of the cemetery is a large headstone/tablet which (in summary) states:
"In memory of Jackson who was the faithful servant of the Kershaw's who died on 20 April 1907."

And so ended a wonderful trip to Kruger. For those wondering whether we had any good sightings, following are a few photographs taken whilst up there ...



REMEMBER to keep an eye on our website (www.battletoursza.com) - our blog has regular posts on Anniversaries / Battles / Activities / Births & Deaths / etc.

Allan Gordon