

FLYING SPIRIT



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The Official National Newsletter of the SAAF Association

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

The year 2018 is soon to be history and we are now at that time of the year when we should reflect on the events over the last year.

The membership of the SAAF Association did me much honour by ratifying my appointment as National President at our Congress in May 2018. It is a great privilege and one I will execute to the very best of my abilities.

I subscribe unequivocally to the four overarching principles of our Association, our *raison d'être* one might say, and will be guided by them.

The most evident of these, hopefully most frequently encountered, is that of Camaraderie. While there might be other aspects of our operations that are of more critical importance, the reality is that we, the members of the SAAF Association, engage in our activities, of whatever nature, as comrades; friends with a common purpose. It is so, that were we not to engage in camaraderie, we would not accomplish much, if anything at all. We are all joined by the common bond of having been members of our Air Force and having a passion for both the SAAF and aviation. It is hoped that apart from the SAAF and aviation, there exists also affection and respect between us all.

It is, I believe, incumbent on every SAAFA member to introduce as many past, and present, members of the SAAF to our wonderful Association. We are as a matter of fact only as strong and effective as our membership makes it possible for us to be, and I appeal to everyone to engage with past and present SAAF members and invite them to visit us. To keep SAAFA to ourselves would really not be fair to all those currently missing out!

It is not necessary I'm sure to mention in any detail the woes in which our country currently finds itself. One of the consequences of this is that there are an ever increasing number of our members who are not finding life as easy as would be ideal. Being SAAF 'types', the likelihood of them volunteering the details of their situation is most unlikely, but there are usually tell-tale signs that all is not well. These unfavourable circumstances, while usually financial of nature, are not of necessity so. I ask that we all take special care of one another

and only by doing this will we notice something amiss. It is also important to note that one does not have to be a member of SAAFA to receive assistance. In terms of absolutes, our benevolence and assistance programme is indisputably the most critical of our activities.

As we all know, the SAAF Association was formed to perpetuate a tradition of comradeship, knowing no distinction of race, language, gender, or creed, which was developed over the years among members of the South African Air Force. Much of our efforts are directed at maintaining and fostering friendship, comradeship and good fellowship among all members and persons eligible for membership, to render assistance to members in need, to perpetuate the memory of those who have given their lives in the service of their country, to support the safeguarding of the Heritage of the South African Air Force and to promote interest and competence in aviation.

I can proudly state that the SAAF Association is continuing to live up to the ideals and objectives as envisioned by its forefathers and founders so many years ago. Recently NEC took cognisance of a meeting held between the management of the Cape Town Branch and a few individual SAAFA members residing in the Hermanus area. NEC is excited at the prospect of a new satellite Branch being established in the Hermanus area, with the Cape Town Branch then providing the administrative support. Even though the concept of satellite branches was approved at Congress 2018, it was agreed that such branches should retain their own identity. On 13 December 2018 I will thus be attending the launch luncheon of the newly formed Whale Coast Branch in Hermanus.

During the year 2020, the SA Air Force will be commemorating its 100th year of existence which coincides with the 75th year of existence of the SAAF Association. As an Association we will be duty bound to celebrate in best possible spirit this auspicious occasion for both the SAAF and the SAAF Association. I have no doubt that we will do so with all splendour and gusto.

Those who attended Congress in Cape Town will have witnessed the current Chief of the Air Force, Lt Gen Zakes Msimang, being appointed a Patron of the SAAF Association. This is a first for SAAFA that a serving Chief of the Air Force is appointed Patron and it is done with good reason. Gen Msimang is a member and enthusiastic supporter of our Association and the appointment of CAF as Patron is well placed. It is worthy of note that internal SANDF politics on occasion create impressions or perceptions that are not a reflection of prevailing SAAF sentiment and I urge every SAAFA member to support our Air Force whenever and wherever possible, we owe them that and they are deserving of all the support we can give. On this note may I request that as members of SAAFA, we be more sensitive with our comments on our SAAFA Facebook pages and any other Social Media platforms please? As an Association, we as SAAFA are totally apolitical and even though as individuals we are entitled to our many differing opinions, let us steer away from anything that can be construed as being politically insensitive or biased or racist or offensive, or prejudice, or whatever else.

To all members of the National Executive Committee, Patrons, Country Vice-Presidents, all Branch Chairpersons, and SAAFA members, I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for your efforts and support during the past year. I do believe that your sterling efforts have contributed immensely to the Association having succeeded in achieving its set goals.

To all those persons that have made donations throughout the year towards the various projects at Branch and National level, I wish to extend our most heartfelt

gratitude and appreciation.

On behalf of the National Executive Committee I would like to wish each and every SAAFA member and their loved ones a Blessed and Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year. If you are travelling, please drive carefully and rather arrive at your destination a little late than dead on time!

God bless.

Mike Louw

National President: South African Air Force Association

ZEPPELINS, MARLENE DIETRICH AND ROMANY CREAMS!

Acknowledgement: Adapted from an article written and researched by Lgr Peter Dickens.¹

Grab your packet of Romany Creams from the pantry; bite into South Africa's top-selling chocolate biscuit and then settle down and to read some very rich South African World War I history. History is often connected by remarkable 'golden threads' and this one takes you on a wonderful journey – all the way from shooting down Zeppelins bombing England to your favourite tea time 'choccy biccy'.

Our story starts with a young South African, Ian Vernon Pyott. Ian was the son of a Scotsman named John Pyott who was born in Dundee, Scotland and was apprenticed to a baker at the age of 10 years. Due to ill-health, John was advised to move to a better climate – so he packed off to Cape Town, South Africa. In 1880 he moved to Port Elizabeth where he manufactured sweets, cakes and jams before later moving into the economics of bread and biscuits. On 1 December 1900, Pyott converted his business into a limited liability company and named it "Pyott Limited". The company proved to be highly successful and between 1898 and 1924, the Company was to receive no fewer than 70 medals at various exhibitions across the country.

Captain Ian Vernon Pyott DSO



Capt Ian Pyott DSO

Ian Pyott was born in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, on August 31, 1895. He grew up in Port Elizabeth and was educated at Grey High School, and later Watson's College in Edinburgh, Scotland. He returned to South Africa after completing his education and trained as a miller in the family owned 'Pyott Limited' business.

At the outbreak of hostilities which was to become World War I, Ian Pyott returned to England in February 1916, where he enlisted in the Machine Gun Corps 'MGC (Tanks)'. Three months later in June he later transferred into the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), and after attending flying school, was posted to 36 Squadron's 'A' Flight, based at Seaton Carew and assigned to fly a two-seater Royal Aircraft Factory BE 2c, No 2738 biplane.

Little did he know that in a couple of months he was about to become one of the heroes of the war when on 27 November 1916 he crossed paths with a German Zeppelin airship, L-34, on a high altitude night bombing raid.

¹ Further acknowledgements to Sandy Evan Hanes for pointing out this interesting golden thread. References: Wikipedia, Shooting Down of Zeppelin L-34 by Ivor Markman. On-line discussion forums. South African Legion Facebook group forum.

Two groups of Zeppelin airships set out from Germany to bomb England that fateful night. The first group of five ships crossed into England near Scarborough while the second group of four flew toward the Tyne River mouth.

Zeppelin L-34 was massive - 148 metres long, with an average diameter of about 15 meters.

Lt Ian Pyott was flying out of Seaton Carew aerodrome and he was on his second patrol of the night. Tasked with looking for Zeppelin airships and destroying them, he took off at 22:30 and, although his BE 2C normally carried an observer he flew solo this time. This weight saving measure allowed him to take on more fuel and therefore gave him more flying time.

L-34 crossed the coastline into England in the neighbourhood of Blackhalls, a handful of miles north of Hartlepool. Turning southwards towards Tees it was spotted and searchlights were brought to bear on it. Once spotted, L-34 immediately started dropping bombs in an attempt to neutralise the search-lights. In all it dropped 13 bombs near Elwick – a little village just west from West Hartlepool. The bombing proved ineffectual with minimum damage on the ground (two cows were injured).

Now under attack from anti-aircraft fire, L-34 turned seawards passing over the thickly populated area of West Hartlepool. At this stage Lt Pyott had been in the air for an hour when he saw the Zeppelin heading in his direction.



L34 caught in search-lights

He reported that he was at 9 800 feet and the Zeppelin was a couple of hundred feet below him, he attacked the Zeppelin at right angles to the centreline of the airship, firing all the way and then flying underneath it. The airship turned east and Pyott and the Zeppelin's machine gunners fought a moving duel for about 5 more miles. Eventually Pyott got some tracer a round into the left side of the Zeppelin's envelope and suddenly the Zeppelin was engulfed in flames. Burning furiously, it continued east over Hartlepool, broke in half, and plunged nose first into the Trees river mouth.



Death of L 34

The virtually instantaneous combustion of 45 000 cubic metres of hydrogen on board used to inflate the airship ensured there were no survivors. Only two bodies were found, the rest sadly incinerated or lost.

The shooting down of a Zeppelin in World War I was a great achievement. The Zeppelins were heavily armed, flew at very high altitudes for that era and were very formidable. When Pyott landed, all the members of his base ran out to cheer him, he promptly collapsed, not due to injury, but because he

was frozen stiff from flying at such a high altitude. They took him from the cockpit and carried him aloft on their shoulders in victory, taking him off to warm up, no doubt.

Following the victory, Ian Pyott was to become a national hero, to be wined and dined by the British elite.

Just over a week later, on 15 December 1916, it was announced in the press that Pyott had been awarded a 'Companion of the Distinguished Service Order' (DSO), in part his citation read *"in recognition of conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty connection with the destruction of an Enemy Airship"*.

Pyott was also promptly promoted to Captain. His proud father, the Bakery owner of Pyotts Limited in Port Elizabeth, sailed from South Africa to be present when King George V presented Capt I.V. Pyott his DSO at Buckingham Palace.



Such a big deal was made of this victory, that a special commemorative coin was even stamped to celebrate Capt Pyott's actions and resultant DSO. The bombing of civilians carried with it such a public outrage that Zeppelins were branded 'Baby Killers' by the British public. The commemorative medal carried Capt Ian Pyott's profile, the year and the letters DSO. It was presented to him at Hendon Aerodrome in England by none other than General Jan Smuts.

But there was more to come from this very brave South African. He was again 'Mentioned in Despatches' (London Gazette 25 January 1917), whilst subsequently serving with No 55 Squadron on the Western Front. He also claimed another air victory on 23 April 1917. While returning from a bombing raid, a formation from No 55 Squadron was attacked by nine hostile aircraft. Pyott and his observer, 2Lt A.D. Taylor, in DH4 A2147, claimed a German Albatross scout plane over Boue.

Marlene Dietrich



Marlene Dietrich

So between biscuits and Zeppelins where does the Hollywood Superstar actress and singer, Marlene Dietrich, fit into all of this? Simply put, the Commander of Zeppelin L-34 on that fateful night in September 1916, was Marlene's uncle.

Kapitanleutnant Max Dietrich commanded Zeppelins in his short career, and was regarded as a particularly experienced commander. In all, he had a total of 41 sorties in Zeppelins. Because only two bodies were recovered from L-34, Marlene and her family lived for a little time in the hope that Max Dietrich could somehow have survived.

She said of the incident, *"We knew the Zeppelins had gone out on an errand of war, but we did not know their destination. My uncle never came back. My aunt was broken-hearted, but she would not believe her husband had really gone. She insisted that he*

would come back. But the years passed, and there was no news. At last she lost hope and bowed to the hand of fate. It is very sad, but of course, in Germany my Uncle Max was mourned as a hero. He gave his life for his country".

Marlene Dietrich, was born in Berlin and came from a strong military family. She was a Hollywood superstar actress and singer who held both German and American citizenship. Her performance as Lola-Lola in *The Blue Angel* (1930) brought her international fame. She starred in many Hollywood films, significantly *Morocco* (1930), *Shanghai Express* (1932), and *Desire* (1936).

During World War II, she became the 'darling' of both British and German troops. Whilst holding this rather unique position, she



Max Dietrich

recorded a popular German love song by Lale Andersen called 'Lili Marleen' in English. It was done as a morale boost for American, British and Commonwealth troops and it became an instant hit.

Especially for the South Africans, the song was published in South Africa in a wartime leaflet, with an anonymous English translation, as 'Lili Marleen: The Theme Song of the Eighth Army and the South African 6th Armoured Division' (quite ironically).

In a wonderful turn of fate, it was not unusual in WW II for British, American and South African troops to be heard singing along to the English version of Lili Marleen on a record player and for German troops to be singing along to her German version on the opposite lines within hearing distance of one another.

Romany Creams

Now what about the biscuits? Well, after the war, our hero Capt Ian Pyott returned to South Africa and took up a position in his Dad's bakery business.

John Pyott died in 1947. His other son, Robert, became Chairman and held this position until his death in 1964. During this period, the decision was made to concentrate solely on biscuits and from October 1949, Pyott Limited thus specialised, enabling it to increase its biscuit range even further. Following Robert Pyott's death, his brother, our Zeppelin shooting hero, Ian Pyott, was appointed to the position of Chairman and Managing Director.



The early 1950s saw the beginning of the fight for market share between the three major competitors in the biscuit industry – Bakers, Baumanns and Pyotts. Under Ian Pyott, in mid-1965, Pyott Limited collaborated with Cadbury's Chocolates in Port Elizabeth to produce a chocolate variation of a traditional English treat known as "Gypsy creams", which consisted of two round-topped biscuits sandwiched together with a creamy white filling. Gypsy Creams were not a very big seller for any of the British manufacturers.

Innovative as ever, the biscuit part was shaped the same as for "Gypsy Creams", but (referred to as the shell) was improved and it was sandwiched with a chocolate filling instead, no doubt provided by Cadbury's Chocolates.

The line immediately proved a winner. They chose the name "Romany" to carry the 'Gypsy' connotation across from Gypsy Creams (named after the Romany travelling community). Bakers Ltd then made a competitive product and called it Tuscany Creams, but it was Pyott's Romany Creams that really held the market.



In 1969, Ian Pyott, was now getting on in years resigned from the position of Managing Director of Pyott Limited. He died shortly afterwards, in 1972, whilst the company was being sold to Nabisco Inc. Many buy-outs and takeovers later, what was Pyott Limited found itself part of the Anglovaal Industries Group.

In 1994, Bakers, Pyotts and Baumanns were regrouped under the collective title of "Associated Biscuits". In 1996, the member companies of National Brands Ltd (NBL) were combined into a single company. This transformation included combining Willards with Associated Biscuits to form the Biscuit and Snack Division of National Brands.

Today, the familiar Pyott's logo on Romany Creams has been replaced with their old competitor's logo – the Baker's logo. The range of flavours has expanded and the packaging design has changed, but the 'original' flavour chocolate Romany Creams developed by one dapper, Zeppelin shooting South African fighter pilot and war hero, Capt. Ian Pyott DSO, are still a best seller.

The Last Bite

I'll bet the modern Marketing Managers at National Brands have little to no idea of the heritage of this product. Wouldn't it be nice, if in the centenary of the end of WW I, that a special commemorative packaging be designed to Capt Ian Pyott DSO and his legacy represented to a South African public largely unaware of the WW I heroes this country has produced, and what they have given to the country.

I hope you have munched your way through the entire packet of Romany Creams by now and are richer in chocolate and sugar, no doubt, but you also are much richer in the knowledge that you have bitten into the type of fantastic journey South African military history has to offer. History that often lies so hidden away because seismic political events in South Africa have over-taken it. Think of it as a 'secret filling' that will make for an interesting titbit to impress your friends with, next time the Romany Creams appear on a coffee table.

LEST WE FORGET

The phrase "**Lest we forget**" is commonly used in War Remembrance Services and commemorative occasions in English speaking countries, in particular Remembrance Day and during SAAFA dedications. But where does the term come from? Before the term was used in reference to soldiers and war, it was first used in an 1897 Christian poem written by Rudyard Kipling called "Recessional". The phrase occurs 8 times; and is repeated at the end of the first 4 stanzas in order to add particular emphasis regarding the dangers of failing to remember.

'God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle line,
Beneath whose awful hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

SAAFA REMEMBERS THE FALLEN.



The SAAFA remembers the fallen at the wreath laying ceremony on Remembrance Sunday. The Memorial Service was held at the Union Buildings in Pretoria. *FLTR: Hugh Paine (Immediate Past President of the SA Air Force Association), Mike Louw (National President of the SA Air Force Association), and Kevin de Beer (SA Air Force Association Standard Bearer).*

Lest we forget.

REMEMBERING “THE FLOSSIE”. - ANOTHER BEAUTIFUL STORY.

For those of you that ever spent time in “The Bush” during the SWA conflict I feel sure you will all have fond memories of “The Flossie”. The Flossie was the nickname given to the C130 that arrived regularly from South Africa and was always something that everyone looked forward to. With the Flossie came letters and parcels from home, Scope Magazines, spares for equipment, bush pay and most important of all, it was your ride home if your tour had ended and your replacement had arrived.

This story, as told by Terence Weyer, on his Face Book page puts another piece of history into place. This story is told by Terence and I have no reason to doubt its accuracy.

“As promised to Tony Jones, here is the story of where the name "FLOSSIE" came from. Not many years after the arrival of the C130B's onto the SAAF register, South Africa became embroiled in a Border War along the South West African/Angolan border. There has been much good and bad written about that conflict and I am not going to add further to that issue, other than to point out that the C130's were used on a daily basis to convey troops and material to and from the border. In later years SAFAIR, operating L100's were contracted to assist in the air transport effort. To the casual observer the C130 and L100 look so much alike that one could be forgiven for thinking they were the same. Having said that I can now get on with story.

At 28 Squadron, the operators of the SAAF C130's, was a Flight Engineer named Phil or "Flippie". He was a most dedicated man who ate, slept and dreamed C130. In his private life he was a most disciplined man (real old school, soldier), who never did a half job of anything. You all know the type, "if it's worth doing, do it properly or don't do it at all". Phil was married to a lady with the real oldie English name of Florence. In her family she was called Flo, and among her siblings she was called Flossie. (By now you can see where this is going).

Being the consummate professional Phil would ALWAYS walk out, long before the rest of the crew, to the aircraft he was scheduled to fly and do a proper pre-flight inspection. A few of his fellow flight engineers would pull his leg and tell him the aircraft was only due for a major technical inspection at a future date. His standard reply was "Chaps, if you treat and look after your aircraft like you look after your wife, she will never let you down". This comment always gave his Squadron mates a smile. Over the months, whenever his crew were due to walk out to the aircraft they would ask "Where is Flippie, is he at Flossie? or Come guys we shouldn't keep Flossie waiting" or comments along those lines. In time the reference to Flossie was made more often at the movement control section at Air Force Base Waterkloof and more and more people became attuned to this reference and thus all troop transport later, became known as "FLOSSIE". You may ask how I know this bit of history. The simple answer is that Phil was my father and "FLOSSIE: was my mother."

DELVILLE WOOD

This year, being the centenary of the ending of The Great War or World War I, brings us to a time when we should focus upon the sacrifices made by so many men so that we could live today in a better world. Because of this I thought that I would bring to you this wonderful story that is truly South African. Ed

THE “LAST TREE” OF DELVILLE WOOD

By Herman Labuschagne

Here is the story of two trees and a forest, and the circles of history that are so beautiful that they deserve to be remembered in song and poetry.

During the climactic Battle of the Somme, it was determined that one of the key positions held by the Germans, was the small patch of land that would later become known as Delville Wood. Only 63 hectares in size, it was covered with a verdant² forest where 7,000 Germans had entrenched themselves.

In overall command was an old veteran of the Anglo-Boer War, Sir Douglas Haig. “The Butcher,” as his own men sometimes called him, must have remembered how tough the South Africans had been during the years when he spent his days orchestrating the burning of farms and trying in vain to catch the famous General De Wet.

He selected the 1st Infantry Brigade of South Africa, with a small number of Rhodesians for the tough task ahead.

This force of only 3,155 men would be marching against more than 7,000 determined Germans who knew full well that to lose this forest might mean to lose the front. It would be their first major action on the Western Front for the sons of South Africa, but the young men from a different world were willing to show their courage.

The battle that followed lasted an entire week and was bloody beyond description. Up to 400 artillery shells rained down upon their small position per minute. The bombardment almost never stopped as the battle raged between successive attacks and counter-attacks.

Over the days that followed, the small rain-drenched forest became shredded to nothing but a ploughed-over field of splintered matchsticks and fragments of red hot steel. The blood and the mud mixed with tears, and slowly soaked into the unwilling clay of the French countryside.



Hornbeam Foliage

The South Africans took the forest, although in the end there was no forest left anymore. Of the forest of young men who represented the best of a nation, 2,536 (or about 80%) died in that week. There were four dead men for every wounded. In places the bodies lay four layers deep and were mixed so thoroughly with the soil that some would never be found.

When they were finally recalled, the staggering survivors with their shredded limbs and uniforms could not believe their eyes. They could not even believe that they were alive for around them it looked like the very surface of the moon. Where once everything had been green and lush, nothing was left alive except for one thing, which was one single Hornbeam³ tree.

When the war was over, General Jan Smuts and Sir Percy FitzPatrick, wanted to preserve this acre of death as something sacred to the honour of their country. And so FitzPatrick, who lost his own son in the War, bought the little patch of land for South Africa.

Some years later a beautiful memorial in the shape of the Castle of Cape Town would be built there. It was unveiled by the widow of General Louis Botha, Prime Minister Barry Hertzog and Field Marshal Douglas Haig himself.

² Green with vegetation; covered with growing plants or grass

³ Hornbeams are hardwood trees in the flowering genus in the Birch family. The 30-40 species occur across much of the temperate regions of the Northern Hemisphere.

Note by Nikki de Villiers Gray and Barry Gray

I thought you'd find this story interesting. (I'm a descendant of Gardiol/de Villiers (paternal), and my maternal great grandfather survived the battle of Delville Wood - Nikki de Villiers Gray.

With the entire forest destroyed, the South Africans wanted to replant Delville Wood. The Department of Forestry was given the task of restoring the forest. To this end, a certain M. Hockelden at La Motte near Franschoek, had a beautiful idea.

At the historical Huguenot farm of La Cotte, he asked the 9 year old Koos Hugo to collect a bag of acorns for him on this old farm which had been in the Hugo family for generations. Honoured by this request, little Koos collected the acorns from the great-grandfather of all European trees in South Africa so that it could be sent back to France.

The tree at La Cotte was a tree with a dramatic history. It was one of the oldest planted trees in the country. According to popular legend, this was the last surviving tree from six acorns which the Waldensian Jean Gardiol had brought with him from France. Gardiol, who is reckoned among the French Huguenots of South Africa, sailed to the land of freedom in 1688. He himself had been fortunate in surviving not only the deadly persecutions in France, but also the dreadful storms, diseases and ravages which decimated the passengers on the ill-fated ship "China".

On this same ship were Jean Mesnard and Paul Roux – two of my own direct ancestors – along with the ancestors of many other well-known South African families of today, such as the families Malan, Le Grange, Roux and Jordaan.

Although the Gardiol name later became extinct in South Africa, the family's genes live on in thousands of us who still number among his descendants today. And so did the Gardiol tree on the old Hugo farm. From the bag of acorns were grown the trees with which Delville Wood was re-planted. They can be seen today as a double row of oak trees that line the broad avenue which connects 5,493 graves with the South African memorial. Of those graves, almost three quarters belong to unidentified heroes.

Of the German heroes, more than 9,000 died to defend a patch of forest. It is therefore an avenue that leads across some of the most expensively-bought ground known to history.

At Delville Wood, two forests were destroyed in 1916. One was a forest of young men from South Africa. The other was a forest of the trees of France. That forest was replaced from a South African tree which had been harvested in France, nearly 250 years before. As for Gardiol's old tree, it was blown over by a storm in 1984 and lives no more. Yet, its children continue to live on in the dark soils of France where its roots are nourished by the blood of the best of the sons of our country.

The lone survivor of Delville Wood, on the other hand, continued to grow. It is known as "The Last Tree." It is still standing to this day. Its trunk is knotted and gnarled – heavily studded with many fragments of shrapnel that are still studded in its trunk. It is a sad and lonely reminder of how even that which survives war, never walks away from it unscathed.



Foliage of the French Oak

All the young men who survived Delville Wood are dead now. Only the old Hornbeam continues to live from year to year. From it came cuttings that were brought back to South

Africa. One of them was planted in the garden of General Jan Smuts near Pretoria. Another grows in the Garden of Remembrance in Pietermaritzburg.

If you should ever visit Delville Wood one day – I would appreciate it if you would bring me back one thing only. I would appreciate an acorn from the trees of Gardiol's old avenue. I would like to plant it back into South African soil. I would like to see it grow in some peaceful spot where I could one day sit and think about the men who gave everything they had so that others such as I might know the joy of freedom.

I would like it to cast a shade where children would play and linger, and perhaps spare a moment to listen to the voice of an old man who would try to teach them not to start another war when they are old enough to make decisions one day.

A grandson from old Gardiol's tree would be my treasured reminder of all the beautiful young trees that have been harvested long the blood-soaked footsteps of our country's history.

TAIL PIECE

LEXOPHILIA

I thought that for a change I would introduce 'lexophilia' to our readers. For the uninitiated a Lexophile practices lexophilia which is simply "A lover of words, especially in word games, puzzles, anagrams, palindromes, etc." An annual competition is held by the New York Times to see who can create the best original plays on words. Here are a few examples.

Venison for dinner again? Oh deer!

How does Moses make tea? Hebrews it.

The batteries were given out free of charge.

A dentist and a manicurist married. They fought tooth and nail.

A will is a dead giveaway.

When you've seen one shopping centre you've seen a mall.

A bicycle can't stand alone; it's just two tired.

He had a photographic memory which was never developed.

No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.

I'm reading a book about anti-gravity. I just can't put it down.

I didn't like my beard at first. Then it grew on me.

England has no kidney bank, but it does have a Liverpool.

This girl today said she recognised me from the Vegetarians Club, but I'd swear I've never met herbivore.

I know a guy who's addicted to drinking brake fluid, but he says he can stop any time.

Acupuncture is a jab well done. That's the point of it.

Please send any contributions to the Editor:

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