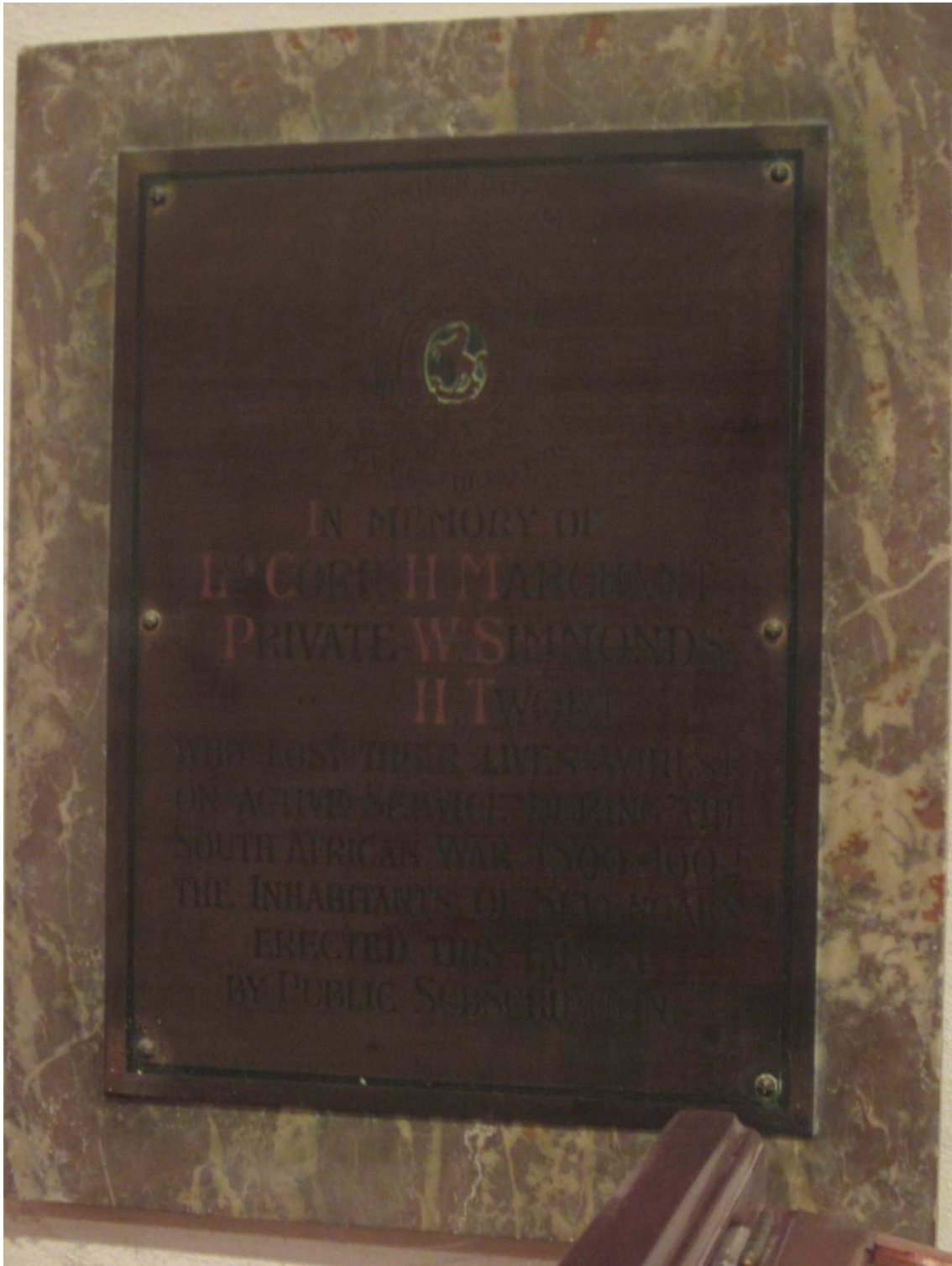


Sevenoaks Second Boer War Memorial



The Memorial plaque shown in the photograph above, which was very kindly provided for inclusion here by Susan F. is located in the parish church of St. Nicholas, Rectory Lane, Sevenoaks, Kent. The memorial plaque is inscribed:-

VOLUNTEER BATTALION SEVENOAKS DETACHMENT.

IN MEMORY OF L^{NC}. CORP. H. MARCHANT.

PRIVATE W. SIMMONDS.

PRIVATE H. TWORT.

WHO LOST THEIR LIVES WHILST ON ACTIVE SERVICE DURING THE
SOUTH AFRICAN WAR 1899~1902

THE INHABITANTS OF SEVENOAKS

ERECTED THIS TABLET BY PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION

As can be seen at their brief commemorations below, the three casualties all served in the 2nd Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment, which was the first time in the records of the Royal West Kent Regiment, that a regular service battalion was augmented by three separate companies from the volunteer battalions of the regiment. The battalion sailed on the Bavarian on Friday 16 March 1900, and arrived at the Cape on Friday 6 April. Along with the 1st Battalion, Worcestershire Regiment, 1st Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment, and 2nd Battalion, Manchester Regiment, the battalion formed the 17th Brigade under former Gordon Highlander, Major-General John Edward Boyes, and were in the 8th Division which was commanded by General Sir Leslie Rundle, K.C.B. During the early phases of the campaign the 8th Division had a very difficult task. In a series of mountainous fastnesses were approximately 9,000 Boers, relics of the Orange Free State army under Prinsloo, De Wet, and other enterprising leaders. With a force hardly more numerous, and often half-starved, General Rundle had the task of keeping them from breaking through to the south of the Colony, the division in which the three casualties below served performed its duty very successfully. Every attempt that the Boers made was foiled, and in the end they were held fast until, with the help of other British columns, General Prinsloo and over of his 4,000 men were forced to surrender as prisoners of war. Being located in the county town of Kent, the parish church of All Saints, Bishops Way, Maidstone contains several forms of remembrance of the victims of war associated with the county. Included amongst the memorials within the church is a stained glass window was erected by the regiment, to the memory of the 114 casualties who lost their lives whilst serving in the regiment during the Second Boer War, and a brass tablet beneath it records their names. Commenting on the exploits of the 8th Division during the Second Boer War, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle said "No soldiers in all that great host deserve better of their country."

MARCHANT, HAROLD. Corporal, 6868.

1st Volunteer Active Service Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment.

Died Tuesday 18 December 1900.

On the memorial plaque in St. Nicholas Church, Sevenoaks, Harold has been commemorated as having been a Lance Corporal at the time of his death, but on all of the other data checked by the transcriber of these brief commemorations, Harold is recorded as having been serving as a Corporal when he died of Enteric at the small village of Norvalspont. The village where Harold died is situated on the junction of the Northern Cape, the Free State and the Eastern Cape borders and is just a short distance from the Gariiep Dam, about 24 miles from Colesberg. Arguably more than anything else, the village is infamous for its Concentration Camp, laid out by the British during the Anglo-Boer War in 1901. The camp was used for refugees and misplaced persons with a separate wired off portion for prisoners of war.

SIMMONDS, W. Private, 6976.

2nd Volunteer Active Service Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment.

Died Saturday 21 December 1901.

Died of Enteric at Heilbron. After Bloemfontien was conquered by the British forces during the Anglo-Boer War on Tuesday 13 March 1900, Heilbron was proclaimed as the capital of the independent Boer Republic of the Orange Free State. A few weeks after the fall of Bloemfontien, Heilbron was also occupied, and President Steyn moved the capital to Frankfurt, another town in the northern Free State. By Friday 18 May 1900, the Orange Free State was defeated, annexed by Britain and renamed the "Orange River Colony." Many Boer fighters refused to surrender and the area surrounding Heilbron was rife with guerilla activity.

TWORT, HERBERT. Private, 6845.

1st Volunteer Active Service Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment.

Died Wednesday 17 April 1901.

Also commemorated on the Tonbridge, Kent Second Boer War Memorial, and on the Second Boer War memorial plaque which is located in the parish church of St. Peter and St. Paul, Church Lane, Tonbridge.

Herbert died at sea of Rem Fever. At the time of the 1891 census, the Twort family resided at 127, Shipbourne Lane, Tonbridge, Kent. Head of the house was 60 year old Bidborough, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent native, Jacob Twort who was a Shoemaker. The then 15 year old Herbert, was recorded by the census enumerator as being employed as a House Boy.