

INTERNATIONAL

Monument unveiled in effort to end myths

By Daniel J. Wakin

**BLOOD RIVER BATTLEGROUNDS**, South Africa (AP) — In a dramatic challenge to the white man's legacy, thousands of Zulus on last week marked the slaughter of 3,000 of their forebears in a battle that became a mythical underpinning of apartheid rule.

The post-apartheid, black-led government unveiled a new monument here dedicated to the losing side in the 1838 Battle of Blood River, when 468 Boers defeated a force of 10,000 Zulus and suffered only three injuries.

The project is one of the most prominent examples of a concerted effort to correct what most blacks consider to be the imbalances of official history here.

For years, Afrikaner nationalists had held ceremonies at their own monuments across the river to honor the victory by their ancestors. One government leader referred to the Zulus as a "heathen horde."

Afrikaners believe that six days before the battle, the Boer force made a covenant with God, vowing to render him thanks if victory was theirs.

The account gave rise to the holiday known as the Day of the Vow, a reference point for Afrikaner power and entitlement. Since the end of apartheid in 1994, the holiday was renamed the Day of Reconciliation.

Officials estimated some 5,000 people attended under the hot sun of KwaZulu-Natal province, once the heartland of the Zulu kingdom.

Dressed in traditional fur loin coverings and head gear, a regiment of Zulu "warriors" raised fighting sticks and slapped their cowhide shields in mock battle charges.

The 3.5 million-rand (dfls 600,000) monument, a roofless red brick structure about 100 feet (30 meters) long, stood unfinished in a muddy field opposite the Afrikaner memorials — a museum and lifesize metal reconstruction of a circle of covered ox wagons.

Officials pushed the theme of reconciliation.

"Let us consider this the day of a new covenant which binds us to the shared commitments of building a new country," said Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party and Home Affairs minister.

But the monument serves

another purpose for the black majority. With political power won in all-race elections in 1994 and economic power still elusive, culture is another front in molding a new South Africa.

Other projects are planned. The house of Nobel Peace Prize winner Albert Luthuli, an early ANC president, will become a memorial.

The government has also set aside 17 million rand (dfls 3 million) for a museum celebrating the life of Nelson Mandela. A theme park exploring the struggle to overcome apartheid is planned.

"If you look around, all the heritage sites declared in the past were just promoting white history, and all the history of black people has been neglected," Musa Xulu, a deputy director general of the Culture Ministry, said in an interview.

"We are balancing history," he said.

But last Wednesday's events at Blood River, which is about 350 kilometers (200 miles) southeast of Johannesburg, showed that is not easy.

Across the river, as the Zulus danced and chanted, a prim congregation of several

hundred Afrikaners held a prayer and hymn service.

Pastor Chris Jordaan compared the fear of the Boers to the fear of Afrikaners today in post-apartheid South Africa. "But we must maintain our belief in God. The God of our past is the God of our future," he said.

Another group of far-right Afrikaners held their own service. A banner read, "Apartheid is holy."

Farmer Kobus van der Walt, 36, called the Zulu celebration a "political thing."

"It's just to try to diminish the Afrikaner and stomp him into the ground," he said.

The war goes on over history. Some historians have cast doubt on whether the vow was ever taken or whether only three Boers were injured.

"This is not a defeat we are celebrating," said Patrick Mbatha, a 25-year-old Zulu. "We are saying 'Bravo' to the warriors who gave their lives. They didn't defeat us. They tricked us. The history that we know of this battle we got from the Boers."

Provincial ANC official Jacob Zuma compared the Zulu attack to the struggle to defeat apartheid. In both causes, "We didn't surrender."

Park area returned to those evicted by apartheid

**JOHANNESBURG**, South Africa (AP) — A judge last week formalized an agreement made earlier this year to return 67,000 acres of Kruger National Park to people evicted during apartheid.

The land was restored to the Maluleke community, a group kicked off the land by the apartheid government in 1969 to create the park.

"It's dreams that come true today, especially for our elderly people," said Livingstone Maluleke, who was 12 when his family was evicted. Starting in 1966, the apartheid government forced non-whites to move into designated areas that were

often barren and unproductive.

When white rule ended after 1994 all-race elections, the government drafted laws to give the land back. More than 26,000 claims have been made by individuals and communities representing hundreds of thousands of people who want to get their land back.

In September, the government began an effort to restore 45,000 people of mixed race to their homes in a Cape Town neighborhood called District Six.

The 10,000 residents of the Maluleke community plan to remain in their current homes and develop lodges

and eco-tourism on their park land. The agreement calls for joint management by the

community and the South African National Parks Board for the first 25 years.

WORLD BRIEFS

UNEP LAUNCHES GLOBAL CLEAN UP CAMPAIGN

**NAIROBI**, Kenya (PANA) - The United Nations Environmental Program has launched the global clean up campaign in Nairobi. According to Richard Lumbe, the UNEP regional information officer, the event will be celebrated internationally from Friday through Sunday. Kenya will mark the event on Saturday. Lumbe said although the focus of the event is pollution and coastal waste management, in Nairobi priority will be given to restore the lost glory of the city. He said a major clean-up exercise will take place at the city's maternity hospital and the Karura Forest, near the UNEP offices. More than 40 million people from 120 countries participated in clean-up worldwide last year, making it the largest community run event on the globe, Lumbe said.

HEALTH GROUP ALLOCATES \$90 MILLION TO FIGHT DISEASES

**HARARE**, Zimbabwe (PANA) - The World Health Organization has set aside an additional \$90 million to eradicate the spread of diseases in Africa, said Gro Harlem Brundtland, WHO's director-general after the five-day WHO Regional Committee for Africa meeting in Harare, the Zimbabwean capital. She said Africa remained top priority on the WHO agenda because of the prevalence of diseases. "Africa is a priority for the WHO. In May, we made a decision to add money on Africa's budget to assist in the fight against AIDS and malaria which are the most threatening diseases," Brundtland said. She also said research was being conducted in Africa to establish the reasons for the increase in malaria cases and to come up with a proper vaccine. "Malaria is linked to the environment, the way people live and react to disease attack. Tests to come up with a vaccine which is conducive for the African environment are underway," she said.


UNITED STATES CLOSES EMBASSY IN GHANIAN CAPITAL

**ACCRA**, Ghana (PANA) - The United States government announced the indefinite closure of its embassy in Accra and all other official installations in Ghana following "increased threats to its installations." The embassy also said similar threats have been received in Togo. It advised the public to stay clear of all official American facilities unless it is absolutely necessary. However, the embassy will offer services in emergency cases. The US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania were bombed Aug. 7, resulting in the death of more than 250 people with more than 5,000 others injured.

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