

KANGAROO
MARCH
RE-ENACTMENT

RIVERINA LEG



Commemorative booklet proudly presented by
Michael McCormack MP
Federal Member for Riverina



KANGAROO
MARCH A CENTURY ON

5-11 SEPTEMBER 2015



VC WINNER A BRAVE ROO

JOHN RYAN (pictured) was the most famous of the Wagga Wagga Kangaroos, earning a Victoria Cross not long before World War I ended in 1918.

It is so pleasing he is at long last to be appropriately acknowledged with a life-sized bronze statue in the town of his birth, Tumut.

Kangaroo recruits were awarded two Distinguished Conduct Medals and seven Military Medals, including my great-great-uncle Leslie William Curran (see picture centre pages) of Coolamon. They dared mightily.

BE PART OF HISTORY

KANGAROOS are endemic to Australia and our nation's military, early in its history, recognised the powerful symbolism the famous marsupial evoked.

Australian Imperial Force units had kangaroos as regimental mascots and their image was commonly used on postcards sent to and from the various theatres of war, such as those reproduced on the front and back covers of this keepsake booklet.

Naturally, a recruitment march formed in Wagga Wagga needed a strong identity so the name Kangaroos was adopted for the marchers.

Gallant men with a sense of adventure from Cootamundra, Harden, Harefield, Humula, Marrar, Oura, The Rock, Tumbarumba, Wagga Wagga and elsewhere were amongst the 88 originals who set off on 1 December 1915 amidst much fanfare and patriotism.

Across the Riverina, families were proud to have a representative do their duty ... yet worried about their brave sons marching off to war.

Re-enacting that epic march a century ago has taken remarkable initiative and drive by a dedicated group of Southern Highlanders and credit to them, particularly effervescent committee president Graham Brown, indefatigable vice-president Rhondda Vanzella OAM and the clever and creative O J Rushton,



MARCH ENTHUSIASTS: With (from left) Kangaroo March Re-Enactment committee vice-president Rhondda Vanzella OAM, RSL Rural Commemorative Youth Choir Wagga Wagga and Junee Mobs' Director Marg Davies and music and education co-ordinator O J Rushton.

who is responsible for march music and education.

Over coming weeks all the hard work, planning and preparation will be realised as the 2015 version takes place along the route from Wagga Wagga to Campbelltown.

Our region owes a debt of gratitude to those 1915 Kangaroos who went to fight for what was right ... "by courage and faith" according to the official banner.

So "hop in" and be sure to join the 2015 celebrations and colour of this very special event starting at the Historic Council Chambers on the morning of Saturday 5 September or along the way at the various stop-offs.

Michael McCormack

MICHAEL McCORMACK MP
Federal Member for Riverina

HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES

THE RSL Rural Commemorative Youth Choir was inspired by the Kangaroo March Re-Enactment to engage young Australians with the spirit of ANZAC and to mark the First World War centenary commemorations of 2014-2018.

The choir, made up of primary and secondary students in local communities (Mobs), represents the face of ANZAC Days to come, involving young people through history, leadership and music, to encourage them to learn from the past, live in the present and look to the future.

Over the next few years, the choir will focus on commemorating World War I through music, poetry and storytelling to remember the fallen and honour local heroes.

Its theme song, "Young and Free" is available on the kangaroomarch.org.au website and is also on iTunes with proceeds going to support the growth of the choir.



YOUNG VOICES: Combined choirs at the Australian War Memorial.

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RSL CLUB HONOURS KANGAROO HEROES

THE names of the 88 original Wagga Wagga Kangaroos have long been chiselled in marble in the Victory Memorial Gardens and are now cut into steel in a fitting tribute at the RSL Club.

To honour these daring local heroes, the RSL Club commissioned a special new memorial to stand alongside its granite monument at the entrance.

Opened at a poignant twilight service on 23 April this year, the Kangaroo March centenary memorial, a \$100,000 project, features three rusted steel blades standing on a sandstone base.

Each blade represents the three armed forces in proportionate size, supporting each other.

The blades, rusted to depict the passing of time, rise from a sandstone surface which represents hardships endured.

In recognition of the 88 men who began the Kangaroo March from Wagga Wagga, each of their names accompanies a map of their journey on one of the blades which are then brilliantly backlit each evening.

The official ANZAC Centenary logo and the numeral 100 appear on the other two blades.

A moving speech was given at the opening ceremony by retiring Wagga Wagga RSL Club president John Keyes whose great-uncle Sidney Keyes was a Kangaroo.

IMPRESSIVE: The Kangaroo March centenary monument. Picture: Jo Thomas



John Keyes choked back tears as he told of a mere boy, officially listed as 18 years old, who headed off on the march and never returned.

Wounded in action three times, Sid – a private in the 13th Battalion – finally fell on the Western Front on 1 March 1918 ... a spirited young man who answered his country's call in its time of need and who paid the supreme sacrifice.

He was laid to rest in the Spoilbank Cemetery, Ypres, Flanders, in Belgium.



FALLEN: Sidney Keyes with his mother Edith.



LEST WE FORGET: The illuminated names of the 88 Kangaroos.

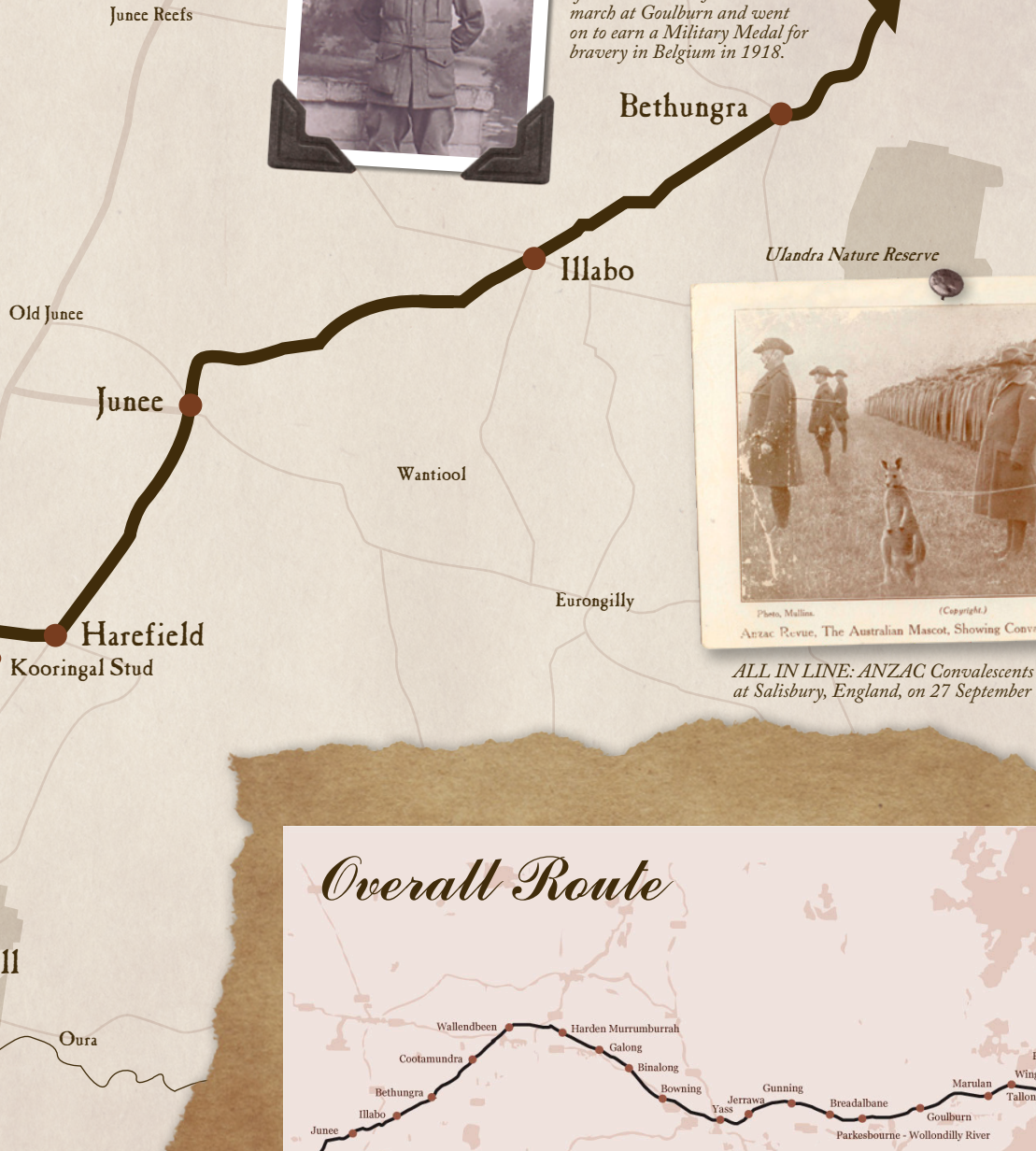
Riverina March



STARTING OFF: The Kangaroos march along Fitzmaurice Street just past the Kincaid Street corner on 1 December 1915. Photograph courtesy The Kangaroo March Souvenir Edition by Sherry Morris.



KANGAROO: Junee-born Les Curran (1894-1958) of Coolamon who joined the march at Goulburn and went on to earn a Military Medal for bravery in Belgium in 1918.



ALL IN LINE: ANZAC Convalescents with their kangaroo mascot at Salisbury, England, on 27 September 1916.



For more information visit kangaroomarch.org.au



THE WAGGA WAGGA DEPARTURE

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 10.30AM

HISTORIC COUNCIL CHAMBERS ENTRANCE AND VICTORY MEMORIAL GARDENS

ORDER OF PROCEEDINGS:

Poem recital: *The Man and the Kangaroo*

Mayor Councillor Rod Kendall welcome

Prayer of Remembrance by Anglican Reverend Canon Harvey Sloane

Master of ceremonies: Brian Watts of the Wagga Wagga RSL Sub-Branch

Song: *Young and Free* by the RSL Rural Commemorative Youth Choir

Introduction: Federal Member for Riverina The Hon. Michael McCormack MHR

Keynote speech: The Hon. Dr Brendan Nelson, Director, Australian War Memorial and Patron, Kangaroo Re-Enactment March

State Member for Wagga Wagga Daryl Maguire MLA

Address: Louisa Fitzgerald, great-granddaughter of Kangaroo Edward Fitzgerald whose brother Charles was also an original marcher

Audience to face eternal flame for wreath-laying ceremony

Song: *Lest We Forget*

Names of original 88 Kangaroos read

The Ode

Last Post played by Kapooka bugler

A minute's silence observed

Rouse

Catholic Reverend Father Paddy Sykes to bless the march

National Anthem

March sets off along Baylis Street into Fitzmaurice Street

PLENTY TO SEE AND DO ON THE WAY...

SATURDAY 5 SEPTEMBER

Wagga Wagga

The re-enactment march will depart from the Victory Memorial Gardens on the corner of Baylis and Morrow Streets after a 10.30am ceremony on the steps of the Historic Council Chambers. The walkers, with accompanying Light Horse and retinue, will set off along Baylis-Fitzmaurice Streets turning right to cross the Wiradjuri Bridge before heading out of Wagga Wagga on their epic journey.

North Wagga

Marchers will enjoy lunch here.

Brucedale

Camp the first night here. The initial daily "At the going down of the Sun" commemorative service will be held at the Downside Hall after which marchers, if they are not too leg weary after day one, will attend a dance there.

SUNDAY 6 SEPTEMBER

Brucedale

Service at Brucedale Church conducted by Anglican Army Chaplain, Major Andrew Osborne, at 10am. All welcome.

Wallacetown

Luncheon location.

Harefield

Camp overnight at Penny and Stuart Lamont's thoroughbred stud "Koorinal" where the evening commemoration will be held. Interestingly, Mrs Lamont's ancestor Lieutenant William Malcolm Chisholm, was the first Australian killed in World War I. A former Sydney Grammar School student, he moved to England and studied to be an officer at Sandhurst. He fought in



the British Army with the 1st Battalion East Lancashire Regiment in France during the Battle of Le Cateau in the first weeks of the war and died on 27 August 1914 having sustained a shrapnel wound the day before.

MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER

Junee

The first of two nights camped at the Showground for a special program of Junee events. Entertainment and supper that night at the historic Athenium Theatre.

TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER

Plenty of activities planned during the day including children's maypole dancing and games from the war era at Memorial Park from 10am. Evening meal and entertainment at the Junee Licorice and Chocolate Factory.

WEDNESDAY 9 SEPTEMBER

Marinna

After setting off from Junee, walkers will enjoy lunch here.

Illabo

Evening meal ("underground mutton" – rabbit stew) in the village hall for a night of interactive theatre.

THURSDAY 10 SEPTEMBER

Bethungra

Dinner at The Olde School T-House and Memorabilia then dancing to the music of the local old bush band.

FRIDAY 11 SEPTEMBER

Walkers will leave the Riverina electorate this morning en route to Cootamundra, eventually arriving at Campbelltown on Saturday 10 October.

FAR LEFT: Rhiannon, Mitch, Coral and Neil Druce of the Junee Licorice and Chocolate Factory who have produced numbered gift gold tins to commemorate the march.

LEFT: Garry Crabtree of The Olde School T-House and Memorabilia with his stained glassed Kangaroo March creation, inspired by Annette Black.





“**B**rave heart upholding Australia’s
fame,

Playing your part in the hero’s game ;

Here’s a prayer in brief expressed

From one who with loving heart doth

yearn,

“God be with you, and a safe

return

To the one that loves you best.”