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



ANZAC: OUR MOST IMPORTANT DAY

THE emotions of the first ANZACs would have been swirling uncontrollably as those brave soldiers huddled nervously in their boats in the pre-dawn darkness of 25 April 1915.

Courage tinged with fear, eagerness yet dread, excitement clouded by uncertainty.

Each hardy soul would have had a tight knot in his stomach as he waited his turn to wade ashore and headlong into history.

The deeds of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli are forever etched into the consciences of two nations mindful of their role in world peacekeeping.

Appropriately, ANZAC Day is commemorated with as much significance and solemnity across the Tasman Sea as it is in Australia.

The tradition continues today with both countries playing an important role in Afghanistan, ensuring there is no safe haven for terrorist training bases.

Australian and New Zealand troops knew their objective on that epic day 98 years ago – get to shore, take the beach, find cover on the steep, rocky escarpment which lay dauntingly and forebodingly

in the distance ... then dig in. Most made it.

Tragically, many did not, being stopped in their tracks by enemy fire, becoming the first of the 8709 fallen at that famous peninsula during the ill-fated 8½-month campaign which followed.

Australia lost so many of its best and brightest – too many young lives were lost in The Great War of 1914-18 with the final resting place of thousands of those known only to God.

Their actions have been immortalised by annual ANZAC Day services and their names will last the ages – faithfully, reverently and gratefully recorded at such places as Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing near Ypres in Belgium, the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra and for the locals who fell, fittingly chiselled into the many cenotaphs and monuments dotted across the Snowy Mountains – a beautiful part of the Riverina countryside.

Lest we forget.

Michael McCormack

MICHAEL McCORMACK MP
Federal Member for Riverina

'VC' ON SHOW

TUMUT and District Historical Society now has a replica Victoria Cross for its wonderful collection of local significance.

I was able to source a VC medal to commemorate the town's greatest hero, John Ryan, who was awarded the highest military decoration for valour in 1918, little more than six weeks before World War I ended.

Society president Marcia Commins was thrilled to receive the donated medal which will be showcased at the Society's wonderful museum at 63 Capper Street, Tumut.



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TUMBARUMBA DOES ITS DUTY

THE 14 Tumbarumba-born men who served in Vietnam gave their all; their tours of duty comprising a combined total of 3670 days.

Twelve were in the Army, with the Air Force's Leo Lees and Navy's Frederick Vidler the others.

Ronald Hulm and Lindsay Morton, who served together in 110 Signal Squadron, were in Vietnam the longest of all the locals, with 387 and 380 days respectively.

Both were National Servicemen.

Tumbarumba has an impressive monument to its war Veterans (pictured) and a proud military heritage, with 363 who went to World War II listing the town as their birthplace whilst 195 from The Great War called Tumbarumba home.

Eight who were originally from Tumbarumba fought in the Korean War (1950-53) with Alwyn McGrath, a Private with the 3rd Battalion, going twice for a total of 343 days.



COVER: The Gundagai Lighthorse (see story centre pages) with Andrew Kelly (Australian flag) and Peter Beale (red ensign) leading (from left) Lockie Owen, Kevin Meagher, Luke Dorwell, Noel Bridle (partly obscured) and Wal Bradford (observed). Photograph courtesy Malcolm Lloyd.



BRAVE CREW: Group portrait of the Lancaster crew members in front of their aircraft at RAF Station Hemswell, east of Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. (From left) F Sgt John Davis, F Sgt Robert Masters, F Sgt Kevin Kee, FO Phil Morris, F Sgt Harvey Bawden, F Sgt James Griffin and WO Jim Gillies.

FINAL FLIGHT FOR TUMUT AIRMAN

ROBERT Masters of Tumut was desperately lucky to survive when his plane was shot down over Germany in World War II only to lose his life after making it to ground safely.

He was one of four crew members murdered by German nationals after landing.

They were part of the famed 150 Squadron Royal Air Force which, between 11 November 1944 and 25 April 1945, flew 827 operational sorties out of RAF Station Hemswell in England, dropping 3827 tons of bombs while losing eight aircraft and 40 aircrew.

The Squadron's motto was "Always ahead".

Flight Sergeant Masters, a wireless operator, died not long after his 24th birthday.

Six of the seven in the plane that fateful flight belonged to the Royal Australian Air Force, on secondment to the RAF.

These were brave men carrying out a dangerous mission.

They were on a raid to bomb the oil refineries of Harpenerweg near Dortmund and Bochum when their aircraft, Lancaster PB 853 P, was struck by anti-aircraft flak and crashed on 24 March 1945.

The body of F Sgt James Griffin of South Brisbane was found in the wreckage.

The remainder of the crew managed to bail out and make it to ground but four were then murdered: F Sgt John Davis of the RAF - the flight engineer, F Sgt Kevin Kee of West Brunswick - the navigator, Flying Officer Phil Morris of Maroubra - a pilot, as well as our gallant Tumut hero.

Mid upper gunner F Sgt Harvey Bawden of Bendigo fractured his femur getting from his turret to the fuselage, yet managed to leave the aircraft and land, no doubt in terrible pain.

He and bomb aimer, Warrant Officer Jim Gillies of Eastwood, ended up in a camp where they were interrogated.

They were subsequently both moved to a Luftwaffe fighter station where Bawden was hospitalised but received little treatment as most of the medical staff had disappeared with the station under constant bombardment.

Gillies was moved by train and truck through Germany, finishing up at Fallingbosten Prisoner of War camp with Bawden repatriated some weeks later when the United States Army arrived, taking him out on his stretcher wired to the bonnet of a Jeep!

Born at Tumut on 5 March 1921, Robert Lockyer Masters made the ultimate sacrifice for a noble cause - a life so full of promise taken way too soon.

His final resting place is the Reichswald Forest War Cemetery in Germany.

A War Crimes Group later investigated the murders of the four airmen at Bochum with one perpetrator gaoled for 20 years and those who had more involvement sentenced to death by hanging.



LOCAL HERO: F Sgt Robert Masters



FOREVER YOUNG ...

DASHING, handsome and young ... that was Robert Masters when he boarded the Lancaster for the last time.

His life was cut tragically short during a daring German bombing mission.

He is remembered on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra (pictured below) and in his hometown at the ANZAC Day service in Richmond Park (bottom).

For its size, Tumut contributed remarkably to World War II manpower, with 940 of those who served in the Australian forces listing Tumut as their place of birth, 471 as their place of residence upon enlisting and 218 signing up for duty there.



Gundagai's LIGHTHORSEMEN

A SOLEMN pledge made 35 years ago, a deep love of horses, a desire to add more colour and movement to local military services and a rich family heritage were the “spurs” which led Ron Dowell to establish the Gundagai Lighthorse.

After initially seeking the advice of two of the town's World War II Light Horsemen, Rolfe Bridle and George Smart, Ron called a meeting at the Gundagai District Services Club to gauge interest in the idea.

Eleven people turned up and all were keen so an organisation was formed with Ron, a man of determination and drive, elected president and local school bus driver Wayne Carthew his able secretary. The other nine who attended the meeting were quickly “roped in” to make up the committee.

Ron had promised Gundagai's World War II Veterans he would organise a Lighthorse group and 35 years on he has kept his word.

“I told Rolfe Bridle, Ted Daley, Ron Elphick, Reg Hindmarsh, Jack Pollack and George Smart way back then I would do it and it is now a reality,” Ron said.

“Some of them are no longer with us unfortunately but Rolfe and George have been very supportive. Everyone is so pleased. It is good for all of our ex-servicemen, good for the ones involved and certainly good for the town and the district.”

Ron also had family reasons for the initiative with his son Luke's great-grandfathers Bill Crane and Jack Vaughan both associated with the Australian Lighthorse.

Luke also had a big hand in pushing Ron to start a Gundagai troop after riding with the Harden-Murrumburrah Lighthorse when he was living at Harden and then reading Roland Perry's book *Bill the Bastard*, about Australia's greatest war horse.

Fittingly, there is a memorial to the 1st Australian Light Horse at Harden-Murrumburrah featuring a life-sized bronze Corporal of the 1st Australian Horse, a water-trough fountain, memorial wall and a garden.

The twin towns were the site of the first call-up muster to the 1st Australian Horse for the Second Boer War in 1897.

Since its establishment on 8 July last year, the Gundagai Lighthorse troop has had a busy and exciting time.

Its first outing was the Gundagai Remembrance Day service – a special occasion as 52 plaques, each dedicated to a fallen local soldier from The Great War of 1914-18, were unveiled in ANZAC Grove.

The arrival of the troop was indeed memorable, with the well-groomed horses and uniformed riders attracting considerable interest amongst the large crowd in attendance.

Six days later the men remounted for a re-enactment of the 16 November 1864 shoot-out between bushrangers and colonial police near Jugiong when the Ben Hall gang bailed up the Gundagai mail coach resulting in the fatal shooting of Sergeant Edmund Parry.

The thrilling event was staged to commemorate the sesquicentenary of New South Wales policing.

But the main reason for the Gundagai Lighthorse formation was the ANZAC Day parade and they are sure to be a highlight as they make their way along Sheridan Street for this year's commemoration.



MONUMENT: Gundagai's unique Great War memorial in ANZAC Park is an obelisk shaped as a grey-painted tree stump with a green and red laurel wreath hooked over one of its branches sitting upon a concrete base with granite and marble name plaques attached to the base.

LOOKING THE PART: (above left) Bill Crane of Gundagai is dressed to impress. This and the main picture courtesy of Malcolm Lloyd.

THREE GENERATIONS: (above right) Ron Dowell, 62, his son Luke, 33, and grandson Gus, 1, at Gundagai's 2012 Remembrance Day service.

TERRIFIC TROOP: Gundagai's Lighthorsemen (from left) Kevin Meagher of Harden, Lockie Owen (Gundagai), Noel Bridle (Tumut), Luke Dowell (Gundagai), Wal Bradford (Harden), Andrew Kelly (Yass) and Peter Beale (Harden).



RECORD WRITING ENTRIES

BY FAR the most entries for the Riverina school students' ANZAC Day writing competition were received this year. Hundreds of poems and short stories were submitted from right across the region in the third annual competition.

Authors of the best secondary and primary entries received book prizes from the Australian War Memorial with Ross Coulthart's superb *The Lost Diggers* on offer for the senior students and the splendid picture book *A Day to Remember* by Jackie French with illustrations by Mark Wilson presented to the younger winners.



Each student who sent in an entry will receive a commemorative signed certificate. Winning entries from the Snowy Mountains feature below.

HEROES FROM UPPER MURRAY

MATES in life, together in death ... it was the ultimate story of close companionship.

John Patrick Joy from Jingellic and Victorian duo John Leslie Johnson and Alan Clement Kelly from Walwa (pictured below, left to right) were good friends.

Following initial training in Australia they embarked from Port Melbourne on board HMAT *Strathmore* on 17 November 1940, arriving in Egypt on 17 December.

After more training in desert warfare their unit, 2/23 Australian Infantry Battalion, was sent to Tobruk, Libya, arriving on 18 March 1941.

All three were killed in action during a counter attack on 17 May 1941.

Corporal Joy was 27, Cpl Johnson 38 and Private Kelly just 22.

These fine sons of the Upper Murray were buried in Tobruk War Cemetery.



*Molly Baron, 9,
Year 4 Saint Mary's Primary School,
Batlow*

WE REMEMBER

IT'S nearly ANZAC Day again,
When we remember the women and men;
Who bravely fought for you and me,
To keep our country safe and free.

On the 25th of April 1915,
The troops tried to get to Gallipoli shore
unseen;
But the Turks were waiting up in the hill,
With their guns and weapons ready to kill.

As it was early in the morning before
sunrise,
When the Turks took the ANZACs by
surprise;
Many brave men died that day,
Around 8709 they say.

While on the beach many men lay dying,
Along came Simpson and his donkey
trying ...

To take the badly wounded men,
Back to a safe and sound place again.

So 98 years later I will march with
pride,
On ANZAC Day to remember all those
people who died;

From dawn until the Sun begins to set,
I will say in my heart "Lest we forget."

HEROES ALL

MARCHING down
the line
With followers behind
We pay respect
For the troops who
trekked
The guns would scream
In the morning steam
long muddy trenches
The wounded with nurses

As the poppies would bloom
They would be engulfed by the fume
As the shadows lay low
They wished they could go

They cried in pain
Going through this again
Some thought they were strong
But turned out to be wrong

The men were all brave
They fought to save
The families at home
Who were all alone

They will be heroes
For everybody we know
We say thank you
For letting us grow

Standing on the platform
Dressed in uniform
Badges pinned on their chest
Awarded for their best

As the bugle plays
They will be in our hearts always
Old will share the stories
About the glories

We thank you all
The nurses we adore
You helped the men
Continue again.



*Hannah Radford,
13, Year 8
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