

ANZAC DAY

IN THE RIVERINA & CENTRAL WEST



25TH APRIL 2019

Commemorative booklet proudly presented by

Michael McCormack MP

Deputy Prime Minister of Australia
Federal Member for Riverina



AT LAST! This Great War-era postcard celebrates peace and acknowledges Australia's part in achieving it.

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COVER: A hero for the ages ... West Wyalong's Alexander Ignatius O'Connor whose Great War photograph survived a fire and whose amazing story should be a source of inspiration now and for all time.

BACK PAGE: A contemporary postcard, by the famous Fred Spurgin (1882-1968) – renowned for his patriotic and humorous World War I drawings. This one was sent on 26 February 1919 from France, where the Armistice was especially rejoiced, given the death and destruction on the Western Front.

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OUR HERO TYPIFIES ANZAC SPIRIT

ALEXANDER Ignatius O'Connor features prominently in this year's ANZAC in the Riverina and Central West publication and deservedly so.

Like so many other young men of his era, Alec headed off to The Great War to do his duty for God, King and Country.

Every one of those 416,809 Australian Imperial Force enlistees was brave beyond belief and so many enthusiastically, willingly and voluntarily signed on for service from rural and regional areas.

Country families – just like Alec's in the emerging community of West Wyalong – sent so many of their finest to the battlefield ... often never to see them again.

On the following pages you will read of Alec's remarkable yet tragic tale – how he was recommended for a Victoria Cross and how he met his untimely end doing the right thing by his mates and his nation.

Colourful and spirited, Alec was daring when it mattered most – his audacity not dissimilar to that displayed by other plucky soldiers who were awarded VCs.

Our local Digger is long gone yet the re-telling of his stirring actions and deeds here enables a new generation to know and admire the enormous courage he showed under fire at Péronne in northern France in the Second Battle of the Somme in the closing months of that bloody 1914-18 conflict.

IT'S OVER: Australian soldiers marching in the Victory Parade in London, England, in 1918.

Now more than ever heroes such as Alec O'Connor need to be – must be – remembered and exalted by all who care deeply about our nation and where it is headed.

Never before has our history been more important as we commemorate a hundred years since the peace Treaty of Versailles, 80 years since the beginning of World War II and what these milestone military anniversaries mean in a modern context.

Only by ensuring the next generation fully appreciates and understands that yesteryear's sacrifices ensured today's freedoms and that today's preparedness safeguards our tomorrow will we guarantee that the blood shed in the past was not for nought.

Remember to always give gratitude to a Veteran and that the price of peace is eternal vigilance. Lest We Forget.

Michael McCormack

THE HON.
MICHAEL McCORMACK MP
Deputy Prime Minister of Australia
Minister for Infrastructure, Transport
and Regional Development
Federal Member for Riverina



MY DEAR HUSBAND
AND OUR FATHER
ALEXANDER O'CONNOR
DIED 14TH NOV. 1929
AGED 40 YEARS.



NELLIE O'CONNOR
DIED 14TH NOV. 1929
AGED 40 YEARS
R.I.P.

WHERE A HERO LIES (main picture): The headstone over Alexander Ignatius O'Connor's final resting place in the Catholic section in Rookwood Cemetery.

TEARSHEET (right): Local coverage in the 15 November 1929 edition of The West Wyalong Advocate of Alec O'Connor's tragic work accident death four days earlier.

ELECTROCUTED

On Armistice Day

Ex-West Wyalong Resident

Alex. O'Connor, who for many years resided at West Wyalong, and was in the employ of Messrs Wright Ileson & Co. prior to the war, met his death under tragic circumstances on Tuesday last. The following appeared in "The Daily Guardian":

Fate took a bigger's life yesterday—Armistice Day—in the saddest possible circumstances.

After surviving four years of war, including the Gallipoli campaign, Sergeant Major Alexander O'Connor, D.C.M., of the 56th Battalion, met swift and sudden death a minute after he had paused at 11 o'clock to pay tribute to his fallen comrades.

Today his widow and three children have but memories of their soldier.

Working on the wires for the electric trains at Enfield, Sergt. Major O'Connor stopped, bareheaded, to remember the comrades he had left on the heights of Gallipoli and the muddy French battlefields, when his hand came in contact with a live wire carrying 2000 volts.

He was hurled 30 feet to the ground. Alexander O'Connor had joined his comrades.

He had a distinguished war record. Beginning as a private, he worked his way to warrant rank, being popular with men and officers alike.

He returned after four years' war service, unscathed, proud winner of the D.C.M.

Today his wife, at their neat cottage in White Street, Leichhardt, mourns in the loss of a devoted husband and father.

Three children, John, aged 7, Marie 6, and Patricia 4, play about, too tiny to realise their loss.

Deceased was the son of the late Malachi O'Connor and Mrs O'Connor who for many years were highly respected residents of West Wyalong. We are informed that he was one of few men in Australia who received a Belgian decoration, and that he was one of the chosen decorated men who carried the flag during the recent Sydney

Alexander Ignatius O'Connor ...

THE GREATEST VC THAT NEVER WAS!

A WEST Wyalong soldier overlooked for his country's greatest honour yet highly decorated by another nation returned to Australia and ultimately met his fate in bizarre and somewhat ironic circumstances.

Alexander Ignatius O'Connor was unquestionably one of our battle-hardened finest – someone who fought the good fight and risked his own life whilst saving those of many mates.

"There was no more efficient soldier, none braver and none better liked and respected than O'Connor," eulogised *The Reveille*, the official journal of the New South Wales branch of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League, on 1 May 1932.

"His memory will ever remain with those who were privileged to serve with him."

There are many facets to the tale of this gallant Digger yet perhaps the saddest, apart from his untimely death at age 40, is the state in which his final resting place has fallen due to the ravages of time.

Had Sergeant O'Connor been presented with a Victoria Cross as was recommended, rather than a Distinguished Conduct Medal, his grave in Sydney's Rookwood Cemetery would have been better cared for by authorities as is the case with recipients of this most prestigious of military awards.

His headstone is still legible yet no longer upright and lies, unceremoniously, in a bed of bark, leaves and rubble. You have to know where to look to find it and even then, you have to look hard.

His name is not engraved on the Wyalong Soldiers' Memorial which has two marble tablets comprising the names of 73 locals who made it home from The Great War ... and 22 who did not.

Nor is his name on any of the several wooden honour scrolls contained in the Wyalong Museum across the road.

In death as in life, Alexander O'Connor has largely been forgotten.



MOTHER AND SON: Alec O'Connor and his dear mother, Margaret.

His daughter Patricia Bacon, now in her 94th year, is justifiably proud of a Dad she hardly knew but much of the amazing story which was his life and death had disappeared in the mists of time ... until now.

The telling of his tale in this annual publication is, perhaps, a more fitting memorial than a pristine monument no-one ... or precious few ... will ever visit.

This way, people across the Riverina and Central West will come to know a little about an ordinary man who performed extraordinary deeds in the thick of battle and who later lost his life after dutifully paying his respects on ... of all days ... Armistice Day 1929. *continued...*

GOLD RUSH

Alexander O'Connor was born on 5 May 1889 at Deniliquin, the eighth of 11 children and fifth son of Irish-born Malachi (1835-1917) and his wife Margaret, née McKenzie (1858-1937), born at Howlong who became a well-known and much-loved nurse at West Wyalong.

Their first 10 children were born at either Deniliquin or Jerilderie – the youngest, Kathleen (1891-1993), being born at West Wyalong.

Noting Malachi O'Connor's death at age 82 in its edition of 3 November 1917, *The Wyalong Advocate and Mining, Agricultural and Pastoral Gazette* wrote that he had "resided on this field for the past 24 years".

Malachi, with many thousands of others, had rushed to Wyalong soon after gold was discovered there by Joseph Neeld in September 1893.

By May the following year there were 12,000 miners.

In 1895 West Wyalong was developed five kilometres from Wyalong around the bullock track, without the benefit of town planning, resulting in curious kinks in the road to avoid trees and the crooked course of the main street today still reflects that.

By the end of the 19th Century the Wyalong fields were reported as the most productive in New South Wales with 1264 kilograms extracted in 1899.

Yields declined particularly from 1910 and gold mining had ceased by 1921, by which time more than 12½ tonnes had been uncovered.

Despite the cessation of mining and the fact the twin towns lost many of their best and bravest in The Great War, the area did not die.

Whilst the rush was on, large pastoral parcels of land were being divided up for smaller wheat holdings. Mixed farming developed and the Wyalong district became the largest cereal-growing region in the State.

Eucalyptus oil production began in 1907 with the Vicary brothers Arthur and Frederick – who fought with the Australian Imperial Force's famed 13th Battalion – engaged in that activity, a local industry which is still in operation.

STREET SCENES (right): Early street scenes in Wyalong and West Wyalong.

SIBLING (opposite page): Alec's only younger brother James (seated in front of an unknown comrade), who went to war in 1915 with the 8th Infantry Brigade 30th Battalion as a Driver, was wounded in action in France in 1916 and returned home in 1919. He died in Marrickville on 11 October 1959.



Early Days of Wyalong. Main Street Looking West.



West Wyalong, N. S. W., 1894



Unloading Teams, West Wyalong N. S. W., 1896



EARLY LIFE

Alexander was a mere boy when the family moved to Wyalong.

The children were healthy, lucky and strong ... unlike a number of large families of that era when infant mortality was high.

By the time Australia entered what would become The Great War in August 1914, nine of the O'Connor children had survived. The family had lost the two eldest: John, at age 19 in 1895 at West Wyalong from enteric fever and bronchitis and William, 25, who was tragically lost at sea when the SS *Elingamite*, laden with £17,320 worth of coins and gold (equivalent to AUD\$3.7 million today), was wrecked in thick fog off the coast of New Zealand in 1902 with 45 losing their lives.

The eldest surviving sibling, named Malachi after his father, was sent to bring Bill home but as it turned out the lifeboat on to which his brother had scrambled was never seen again.

Young Malachi remained in NZ, became a waterside worker, married and had one known child, John Alexander. Malachi died in Dunedin in 1950 aged 71.

OFF TO WAR

West Wyalong and Wyalong lads were spirited in their response to the call to arms.

Amongst them were Alexander (known as Alec) and James (Jim) O'Connor (born in 1891).

Both were made from hardy stock ... as tough as nails with an adventurous streak and for whom authority was not always something which necessarily had to be followed!

So it was that Alec found himself – (and so did someone else!) – in an enclosed yard where he should not have been and he was sentenced at the West Wyalong Police Court on 19 May 1915 to three months of hard labour and to be of good behaviour for 12 months.

Family legend has it that Alec had the choice of gaol or the Army – so he decided valour was the better part of discretion and enlisted at Liverpool on 22 July 1915.

A hometown farewell was held on the night of 3 September at which 40 friends gathered at the residence of Ernest Vincent Ottey to see off Alec and Private Francis Morris, a 26-year-old West Wyalong carter.

Mr Ottey presented Alec with a wristlet watch and James Howard gave Pte Morris a “handsome set of pipes on behalf of the Rugby Football League” according to the *Advocate*.

The two left with 4 Infantry Battalion 9th Reinforcements aboard HMAT *Argyllshire* A8 on 30 September – amongst the 1650 to leave Sydney that day, including many from the Riverina.

The 9th Reinforcements included farmer Jack Beazley, 21, butcher George Butler, 23, barber John Hardie, 18, his brother Robert, a 21-year-old butcher's assistant, and farmer Joseph Peacock, 23, all from Wyalong.

Ganmain bushman James Lyon, 28, was aboard as was Gundagai schoolteacher Lancelot Threlkeld, 21.

Farmers George Evans, 24, from Humula and Jugiong's Albert Sharman, 27, were also there; the latter earning a Military Medal but losing his life two months later.

Parkes labourer Thomas Coulston, 21, made the voyage as did Thomas McDonnell, 27, from Tubbul near Young, who was also off the land.

Alec was also joined by Garrard Byrne, 24, carter James Elliot, 37, and clerk Harry Shannon, 24, all from Wagga Wagga.

Local lads full of zest and life ... keenly doing their duty.

Sadly, Robert Hardie, Beazley, Morris and Sharman were all killed in action.

Alec was transferred to the 56th Battalion at Tell El Kebir, Egypt, on 16 February 1916 and promoted from Private to Corporal on 28 May that year.

A month later he arrived at Marseilles, France.

On 9 March 1917 Alec sustained a gunshot wound to his face whilst fighting at Rouen which necessitated him being conveyed to England for treatment at the Reading War Hospital.

He was discharged on 27 April 1917 and attended the School of Signalling at Perham Downs before returning to France on 12 March 1918 for what would be the last year of the war.



AT THE FRONT

To this day The Somme remains one of history's bloodiest battlefields.

An appalling loss of life occurred there during 1916 (a million dead or wounded in just 3½ months of fighting) and in the two major battles of 1918 – Operation Michael, a major German offensive launched from the Hindenburg Line which began the Spring campaign and lasted from 21 March to 5 April and then the decisive Allied counter-offensive from 21 August to 2 September.

The second battle of 1918, in the basin of the River Somme, followed a pause for redeployment and supplies.

It started with the opening of the Second Battle of Bapaume to the north of the river and led to an advance which pushed the German Second Army back over a 55-kilometre front, from south of Douai to La Fère, south of Saint-Quentin, Aisne.

Alec's derring-do which earned him a VC recommendation but not, unfortunately, the actual medal took place on 1 September.

He was, instead, awarded the Romanian Medaille Barbatie si Credinta, Second Class. It is not certain how or why Alec won such an award from Romania, in Eastern Europe, but nonetheless it was a great reward.

Major Henry Cameron commanding the AIF's 56th Battalion, wrote of Alec's amazing nerve. We can only surmise now just how unlucky he was not to be acknowledged in a more appropriate way by his own country.

"At Péronne during period 1st/2nd September Sergeant A I O'Connor showed magnificent gallantry, initiative and leadership in the face of the enemy," penned Maj. Cameron.

"During the attack of the 1st September, when his Battalion was in reserve and under heavy artillery fire, he exhibited very fine judgment in the handling of his Platoon."

"During the attack of the 2nd the first wave of the attack, consisting of three companies, came under a heavy enemy artillery barrage before it had reached its start line and the whole of the Officers became casualties, Sergeant O'Connor took charge and, under a terrific artillery fire, got the men of the three companies on the start line and launched and personally led the attack."

"Later, when the attack was held up by heavy machine fire, he moved from group to group gradually getting his line forward until the flank gaps had been filled."

"The initiative displayed by Sgt O'Connor was responsible for the attack developing, and attacking troops on the flanks were saved very heavy casualties if not disaster."

"He had charge of the line until reserve troops came up, a period of 2½ hours, during which time he continuously exposed himself to terrific fire, and his example and cool judgment gave confidence to all, and provided an example of a critical situation being saved by the resource and dogged courage of one man."

Major-General Joseph John Talbot Hobbs, commanding the 5th Australian Division, was also lavish in his praise for Alec in his VC recommendation for our Bland Shire hero.



FIGHTING MEN: Alec O'Connor (back row, left) and some of his Australian Imperial Force mates ... every one of them a hero.

He wrote, in part:

"As the men assembled, and also during the advance, the enemy barrage became most intense, but Sergt O'Connor displayed splendid leadership, keeping his platoon well under control and averting casualties by directing the men through the gaps in the barrage.

"On the following day there was a further advance. All of the officers of the Company having become casualties whilst moving to the start line, Sergt O'Connor assumed charge.

"The enemy artillery was exceptionally severe, and the whole Battalion was also subjected to enfilading machine gun fire from Péronne ramparts.

"Despite the difficulties, this NCO bravely led his men to a position 400 yards in advance of the start line on the northern ramparts.

"The enemy fire had been so severe that there were many casualties, and the Companies had been reduced to an average of about 30.

"Realising that the remainder of the Battalion was held up on the start line and that the situation was critical, Sergt O'Connor at once engaged enemy machine guns, firing from the right with his Lewis guns.

"In this way he drew the fire of the enemy. He had only 30 men left with him. At great personal risk he reconnoitred the ground on his left and located a Company of 55th Battalion in the vicinity of the Sugar Factory; 350 yards away.

"He returned to the start line, over ground which was being swept with machine gun fire, and issued instructions for the remainder of the Battalion to press forward and fill the gap between 55th Battalion and his Company.

"This was done with comparatively few casualties, as his Company continued to draw most the machine gun fire from the right.

"Sergt. O'Connor personally saw that our left flank was in touch with 55th Battalion. He observed a party of 58th Battalion coming up through the northern portion of Péronne on his right, and he immediately pushed four Lewis guns out to a small trench in front of his position and covered 58th Battalion's advance by engaging the machine guns on the ramparts.

"This enabled the party to advance, and almost immediately a number of Germans were soon making to the rear from the north-eastern side of the town. During the whole of this time Sergt. O'Connor had to expose himself continually under severe artillery and machine gun fire, and he set a fine example of courage and coolness.

"All officers of the Battalion, with the exception of two in the Reserve Company, had become casualties on the way to the start line, and he practically took charge of the Battalion from the commencement of the operation.

"After the Battalion (numbering then only about 90 effective men) had filled the gap between his Company and the 55th Battalion on the left, he repeatedly went up and down the line, re-organising the men into definite posts, re-siting their positions, and cheering them up.



MEDALS: Alec O'Connor's medals: (top) 1914-15 Star; (from left) Distinguished Conduct Medal, Victory Medal, Romanian Medaille Barbatie si Credinta, Second Class and British War Medal.

"His example of cool bravery and skill in great difficulties and at a critical period of the attack, had a most inspiring effect on the others. His leadership and initiative saved an awkward situation, and he was responsible for establishing a defensive line as soon as it was realised that further advance was impossible.

"At the critical stage Sergt. O'Connor took almost complete charge of the situation and rose to the occasion in a manner which won the admiration of all associated with him."

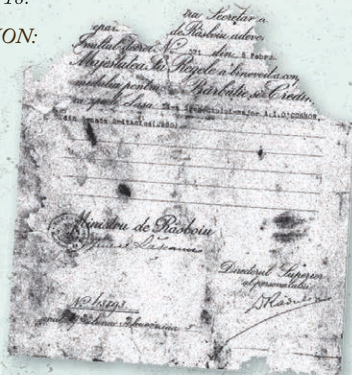
Statements supporting Alec's VC recommendation were also made by Lieutenant-Colonel Austin Claude Selwyn Holland and 2nd Lt William Ernest Nancarrow, both of the 56th Battalion, as well as Military Cross recipients Lt John McFarlane Harvey of the 56th Battalion, Captain Keith Gordon McDonald of the 59th Battalion and Captain Kenneth Robert Wyllie of the 55th Battalion.

Alas, no VC was forthcoming.

Instead, Alec's Australian honour was a Distinguished Conduct Medal and three mentions in Volume VI *The AIF in France 1918* of Australian War Memorial founder Charles Bean's celebrated *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-18*.

CONFIRMATION:

Documentation of 20 September 1919 detailing Alec O'Connor's prestigious Romanian award.



HOME AGAIN

He left Europe for home on 7 July 1919 on HMAT *Chemnitz*, arriving back in Australia in September and being accorded a civic reception, hosted by Mayor Dr FCS Shaw, at West Wyalong on the 8th of that month.

At that function Henry Helyar told the gathering his son Harold, a Private in the 33rd Battalion, had written to him from England declaring “that it was generally stated that Alex O’Connor should have got the VC”.

“He was recommended for it,” Private Helyar wrote, “but got the next best thing.”

The reception was told of the calibre of men from the area who went to war, with Mr Helyar asserting: “It was not surprising, though, that the back-block men had acquitted themselves so creditably – they were often up against difficulties, dangers and hardships in the course of their lives.”



FULL OF PRAISE (above): West Wyalong compatriot, Private Harold Helyar, who was adamant Alec O’Connor deserved a VC ... more or less stating that everyone knew it, too.

HAPPY DAY (top right): The O’Connor boys Alec and Jim in uniform having returned from The Great War ... at youngest sister Kathleen Isabel’s West Wyalong wedding in 1919 at age 18 to John William Fox. (From left) mother of the bride Margaret Hume O’Connor, Alec O’Connor, mother of the groom Mary Patricia Fox, groom John Fox, woman unknown, bride Kathleen Fox née O’Connor, cousin Lucy Botterill, Jim O’Connor, sister Lucy Schwarze and Mary Richardson.



AWFUL TRAGEDY

His duty done, Alec O’Connor moved on with his life.

He married Nellie Burford in Newtown’s historic Saint Joseph’s Catholic Church on 14 May 1921 and one year and a couple of weeks later their first born arrived – a son who they named John Alexander.

Daughter Marie Therese was born at Camperdown on 26 September 1923 and on Christmas Eve 1925 Patricia Margaret completed the family.

Life at the family home on White Street, Leichhardt, was good.

But on Armistice Day 1929 – the day the nation stopped to remember those who served and especially those who died – tragedy struck.

The awful circumstances cast a pall of gloom over all who knew Alec – from Sydney to West Wyalong.

Working as a railway linesman, Alec was electrocuted whilst working on an electric light pole opposite the Enfield South railway signal box.

Just a few minutes earlier, Alec had stood in silence for two minutes as a mark of respect for fallen comrades.

“It appears,” reported *The Sydney Morning Herald*, “that after this tribute he ascended the pole, and commenced his work upon some of the insulators on the standard. He had only been employed in this way for a few minutes, and then, as he grasped one of the cables, he leant against one of the other cables to steady himself. Immediately there was a crackle of electricity, like a fusillade of shots, accompanied by a blinding flash of light.”

Poor Alec was still faintly alive when other workers rushed to his assistance but died before the arrival of the Western Suburbs Ambulance.

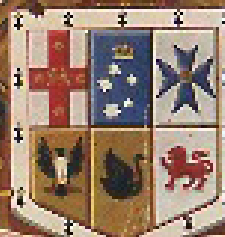
His funeral was held at St Fiacre Catholic Church on Wednesday 13 November and Alec was laid to rest in Rookwood Cemetery.

At the conclusion of the 6 December 1929 inquiry into Alec’s death, Parramatta District Coroner Mr H Richardson Clark found that Alec was accidentally electrocuted through touching a live wire of 2200 volts for which the Railway Department was to blame. Alec left a shocked and grieving 29-year-old widow and three heartbroken children, aged just 7, 6 and 3.



WEDDING: Alec O'Connor on the day of his marriage to Nellie Burford. Also pictured is father of the bride John Alfred Burford (1864-1945).

NEXT PAGE: A splendid presentation to Alec O'Connor on behalf of Bland Shire upon his return from The Great War.



1914

THE GREAT WAR

1919

FREEDOM

Shire of Bland

JUSTICE

Presented to

C. S. M.: A. O'Connor F. C. M.: M. B.
on his Return Home from Active Service 66th Recd Bn
in the Great War of 1914-1919 by the
Residents of the Shire of Bland in
grateful recognition and high appreciation
of his Services for King and Country.

W. Vesey-Bartram
President

Order at West Maitland

Oct. 17. 1919. L. H. M. Smith
Treasurer

HONOUR
TO THE
BRAVE

RECOLLECTIONS

Patricia Bacon has fond, if fleeting, memories of her father.

"I was only young when he died," she said.

"He always carried me on his shoulders."

Alec's beloved Nellie was a widow for the rest of her life, raising their three children in Leichhardt and ensuring his name and legacy lived on.

"Mum used to speak about him so much and told us his stories," Patricia said.

"When we were growing up his photograph was always on display ... in his slouch hat.

"He was always at the forefront of our minds."

Now in her 94th year and living in a nursing home in Teralba, Lake Macquarie, with husband of nearly 70 years Bruce, Patricia remains convinced Alec should have received Australia's highest military honour.

"I think he deserved that VC," she said determinedly but not ruefully.

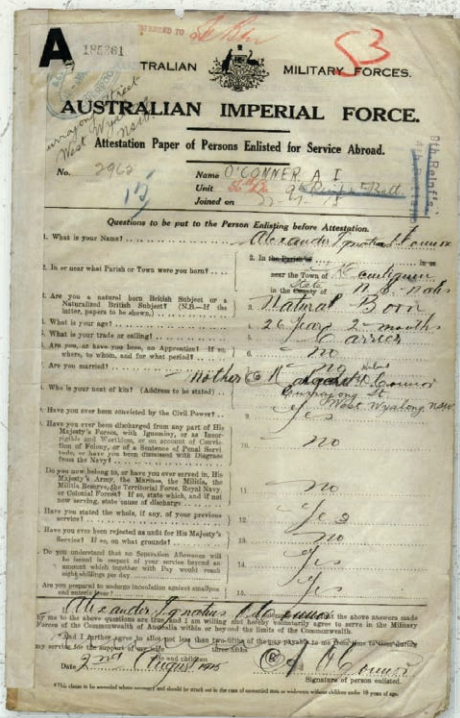
"We've always been very proud of him."

Patricia is the last surviving member of a resilient Australian family which has endured wars, The Great Depression and enormous loss.

Nellie died in Balmain in 1968 aged 78 and her siblings have also passed away; Marie in 2004 aged 80 and John on ANZAC Day 2016 aged 94.



LIFELONG LOVE: Alec O'Connor's daughter Patricia Bacon on her 90th birthday in 2015, with her husband Bruce to whom she will have been married for 70 years on 28 May 2019.



A TRUE ANZAC: The cover of Alexander Ignatius O'Connor's enlistment papers.

ONE OF THE BEST

Whilst a VC eluded Alec, the family does have a connection to Australia's foremost military award.

Alec's niece Aileen Theresa Delaney (1925-2004), the daughter of Ellen Harriett O'Connor and James William Delaney, married Reginald Roy Rattey VC in 1955.

Corporal Rattey, born at Barmedman and now immortalised in bronze at West Wyalong, was decorated for his actions at Bougainville on 22 March 1945.

Alexander Ignatius O'Connor is not glorified in the Australian War Memorial's Hall of Valour where the 100 VC recipients (96 Imperial and four VCs for Australia) are rightly commemorated and respectfully remembered.

There are 82 VC medals on display – 64 of them owned by the AWM and the remainder on long- and short-term loan.

But Alec's story, his absolute disregard for his own safety in the line of fire and his love of and commitment to the things which he held closest to his heart – his country, his family and his mates – puts him up with the very best who have ever worn an Australian military uniform.

He was as good as there ever was.



ACCOMPLISHED: Whilst no doubt a hero, Lieutenant General Henry Gordon Bennett was a divisive figure.

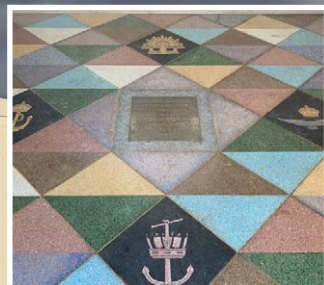


SERVING HER COUNTRY: Joan Bennett rose through the ranks during World War II to become a lieutenant by the end of the war.

WE HONOUR THEM: The Parkes War Memorial - Shrine of Remembrance.



SILVERWARE: The decorative bowl commemorating the laying of the foundation stone of the Tullamore Memorial Hall on 6 October 1956.



A LOOK INSIDE: The inside of the Shrine of Remembrance, where the original stone plaque commemorating the unveiling by Lieutenant General Bennett is laid.

A TREASURE OF LOVE AMONG US

A LONG-TIME resident of Parkes was a shining symbol of love during a tumultuous time in human history.

The only daughter of Lieutenant General Henry Gordon Bennett CB, CMG, DSO, VD and therefore his only living direct descendant, Joan Agnes Gordon Bennett, has been a resident of Parkes for decades – she recently celebrated her 101st birthday in February at the Rosedurnate Aged Care Centre on Orange Street.

Better known as Gordon, his name is bestowed on a plaque marking the opening of the impressive War Memorial – Shrine of Remembrance at Parkes on 22 November 1953 and engraved into a decorative bowl commemorating the laying of the foundation stone of the Tullamore Memorial Hall on 6 October 1956.

Born on 15 April 1887 at Balwyn – then a village on the eastern outskirts of Melbourne – General Bennett's experience in World War I and II is very much a tale of contrast.

Whilst he may be best known for his role in the Pacific War in February 1942 where, as Commander of the 8th Australian Division, he escaped capture while his men became prisoners of war during the Battle of Singapore, ultimately leading to a Royal Commission – Gordon carved out a reputation as a decorated war hero on the famous battlefields of The Great War.

Before departing, Gordon became engaged to Bess Agnes Buchanan, who gave Gordon a small photo of herself in a gold frame. Gordon carried the photo with him on the battlefield and it later stopped a German bullet from killing him on the Western Front.

Gordon was part of the Australian Imperial Force 6th Battalion which stormed ANZAC Cove under cover of darkness on 25 April 1915. He was wounded whilst leading 300 men to an advanced position on Pine Ridge. His brother, Godfrey, died in this battle. He also led the 6th Battalion in the push to capture Pozieres in 1916.

Gordon somehow managed to take some time off in November 1916 to marry Bess, who travelled to England to see her fiancé.

It was certainly through his heroic efforts in numerous campaigns which saw him rise quickly through the ranks and saw him appointed as the youngest general in the Australian Army at the age of 29 on 3 December 1916. He commanded the 3rd Infantry Brigade through many famous battles, including Bullecourt, Menin Road, Passchendaele and the Hindenburg Line in 1917-18.

Bess remained in England whilst Gordon continued to serve his country. He was able to meet with her briefly on a couple of occasions.

Joan was born on 4 February 1918 in England. Bess and Joan, 10 months, returned to Australia shortly after the war ended.

Gordon received the Order of Danilo, was appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath, received a Distinguished Service Order, a Companion of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George and was mentioned in despatches six times for his service on the Western Front and Gallipoli. After World War II, Gordon took up farming and settled in Dural, Sydney, where he died on 1 August 1962.

Joan herself played a part in World War II, serving in the Voluntary Aid Detachments, which saw her enlisted as a nurse. She rose through the ranks and undertook officer training. Joan had become a lieutenant by the end of the war.

Joan had a passion for travel and held many positions, including volunteering with the Commonwealth Occupation Forces in Japan, secretarial work at Cooma on the Snowy Mountains Scheme and nursing at the Royal Edinburgh Infirmary.

It was nursing which would see Joan eventually come to Parkes where she retired to a 170-acre property. She was able to enjoy her other loves: horses and the Girl Guides.



FATHER AND DAUGHTER: Joan Bennett with her father Gordon at their property in the Blue Mountains.

THE NEED TO GO AND HELP.

We are indeed pressed for time. I have written my sisters a hurried postcard, but am doing my utmost to write you a letter. It has come to the most serious point of my life. When I enlisted many things crossed my mind. I did not just rush in and enlist, never using a thought. We will be in action probably on Wednesday, August 15. We are not down-hearted; no, never. I did not do eight months at playing soldiers for that. Whatever is my lot you must not grieve. Take pride that your only son did his best. What if I do fall, mother! I have only to die but once; why not this way? Our boys are being cut to pieces. It is slaughter over here. The Australian papers always give the one side. Probably they do not hear of the other. However, I

APPLICATION (bottom): Sergei's Application for Enrolment as Volunteer for Manufacture of Munitions in Great Britain.

[illegible]

LETTER (above): Sergei Rosenberg's emotional letter to his mother as it appeared in The Daily Advertiser on 23 September 1915.

Sergei's Letter THANKFULLY NOT HIS LAST

WE CAN only imagine the emotions coursing through a soldier as he pens what he believes might be the last letter he ever writes to loved ones at home.

Preparing to go into battle at Gallipoli in August 1915 most probably around the time of the Battle of Lone Pine, Wagga Wagga soldier Private Sergei Rosenberg, was placed in that heart-breaking situation.

In a letter to his mother published in *The Daily Advertiser* on 23 September 1915, Pte Rosenberg is under no illusions as to his chances of survival, writing: "Our boys are being cut to pieces. It is slaughter over here."

The Daily Advertiser story said Pte Rosenberg wrote to his mother, Mrs Anne Jourdain, of Baylis Street, on the eve of going into action.

"We are indeed pressed for time," Pte Rosenberg wrote.

"I have written my sisters a hurried postcard, but am doing my utmost to write you a letter.

"It has come to the most serious point in my life.

"When I enlisted many things crossed my mind.

"I did not rush in and enlist, never using a thought.

"We will be in action probably on Wednesday August 15.

"We are not down-hearted; no, never.

"I did not do eight months of playing soldiers for that.

"Whatever is my lot you must not grieve.

"Take pride that your only son did his best.

"What if I do fall, mother!

"I have only to die but once; why not this way?

"Our boys are being cut to pieces.

"It is slaughter over here.

"The Australian papers always give the one side.

"Probably they do not hear of the other.

"However, hardships and privations have to be met.

"All that is asked of man in this job is that he will give his best – all that a man can give.

"If the boys at home saw what I have seen in hospitals they would not need half a thought to come and help their comrades to keep the flag aloft.

"I can see them coming home from their daily occupations, eagerly looking for their local papers to see any fresh casualties

or fresh movements.

"After reading they perhaps say, 'Brave fellows,' and then go on with the usual indulgences in their usual comforts.

"It is all so different here.

"When we were informed by the commanding-officers of a move to the front, the sky was lifted with cheers, and everyone was in high spirits.

"The Kaiser we have courtmartialled a dozen times.

"If our opponents ask for quarter we have but to think of our fallen comrades.

"Still we must give the Turk his due.

"He is treating us fair enough – better than our other opponents.

"To our delight we received the Australian mail just in time before going to the front.

"It was better than receiving our pay.

"Now there is a link between us.

"Write frequently as letters may go astray.

"Do not be too hard on me because you will probably not hear from me for a considerable time.

"We were packed off hurriedly, after only being in Egypt three weeks."

Born in Hay, Sergei Rosenberg was a 20-year-old porter working at the Wagga Wagga Railway Station when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 9 March 1915 and was assigned to the 19th Battalion.

He embarked on HMAT 40 *Ceramic* on 25 June 1915.

Pte Rosenberg's mother would have held grave fears for her son's life after receiving his letter, but he survived that awful August on Gallipoli.

He suffered the recurrence of a ventral hernia due to the strain of active service and was admitted to hospital on Gallipoli on 30 September before being evacuated back to Australia on 4 November and given a medical discharge back home on 10 April 1916.

For his service, Pte Rosenberg received the 1914-15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

He returned to work at the Wagga Wagga Railway Station but signed up as a munitions worker and sailed to Scotland for the job on 9 November 1917.

He worked as machine hand at Glasgow until 27 March 1919 and sailed back to Australia on 3 April.

COLIN A MODEST WAR HERO

AMONG the attributes which endeared World War II Mosquito navigator Colin Francis Hendry to those who loved or met him was his humility.

Hendry, of Parkes, was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross in 1945 and is one of the town's highest decorated servicemen but always insisted in public comments he didn't do anything special.

Even in an interview with the *Parkes Champion-Post* in 1995 at the age of 75 Hendry was puzzled as to why he was honoured.

"I don't know why," he told the newspaper.

"They told me I was to receive it while I was in England. Mum received a telegram that it would be awarded. When I arrived home I received a letter which said I was to go to Admiralty House. They sent two rail warrants to go to the presentation and I took Mum along."

"I didn't do anything special, it was like an adventure. I was a lot luckier than most but it certainly brought home the fact that never again do I hope people have to go through anything like it again."

Born in Parkes on 13 January 1920, Hendry initially served as a soldier in World War II until he became fed up with Army life and transferred to the Royal Australian Air Force in June 1943.

He qualified as a navigator and was posted to the Royal Air Force's 571 Squadron in England, flying de Havilland Mosquito bombers which carried one bomb

weighing about 1800 kilograms and had no machine guns or cannons for defence.

The wooden Mosquito bomber's greatest defences were its speed and the height at which it could fly – more than 28,000 feet.

Flying Officer Hendry and his pilot, Flight Lieutenant van Bergen, flew 42 missions, 21 of which were to Germany's heavily defended capital city Berlin.

He recalled being part of a 1000-strong bomber raid on Berlin on 3 February 1945.

"We had no real dramas, we were hit by anti-aircraft fire a few times and had an engine catch fire at one time, but otherwise it was an incident-free 17 months tour of duty," Hendry told the *Parkes Champion-Post*.

At war's end, Hendry was in no rush to return to Australia.

"No-one wanted to go home after the war was over," he told the newspaper.

"We were having too good a time."

"If you were not actually hurt, it was actually a great place to be. I was very lucky."

Hendry eventually returned to Parkes, married and had four children.

He died in 2007.

A memorial to Colin Hendry was unveiled in the Parkes Services Club on 30 April 2018.



SQUADRON (left): Colin Hendry (far right) with other members of 571 Squadron and a Mosquito.

HERO (below): Colin Hendry DFC.



MAJOR GENERAL MACKAY'S LIGHT HORSE VISION HONoured

A STATUE to honour the Riverina man who founded the 1st Australian Horse – Major General James Alexander Kenneth Mackay – will be unveiled at the Harden-Murrumburrah Light Horse Memorial on 31 August.

According to the Australian War Memorial, Mackay was a Colonel in the New South Wales Military Forces when he raised the 1st Australian Horse in 1897.

Born at Wallendbeen on 5 June 1859, Colonel Mackay recruited men from all over country NSW for the cavalry regiment.

Detachments of the volunteer militia unit were formed at Murrumburrah, Gundagai, Cootamundra, Wallendbeen, Gundah, Quirindi, Mudgee, Scone and several other centres.

The 1st Australian Horse sent two contingents to South Africa to fight in the Second Boer War, in 1899 and 1900.

Mackay, an outstanding horseman, also fought in the Boer War but with the NSW Imperial Bushmen after he was considered too senior in rank to serve with the 1st Australian Horse.

After the war, Mackay continued his interest in the military and a passionate belief in the Light Horse as a force.

He was given command of the 1st Light Horse Brigade in 1912 and supervised its reorganisation into the 3rd Light Horse Brigade.

After the outbreak of World War I, Mackay raised the Australian Army Reserve and was appointed Director-General from 1916.

He retired from military service in 1920 with the honorary rank of Major General.

"Mackay's vision, horsemanship, military knowledge and political position helped realise his belief that a mounted light horse, capitalising on Australian bush skills and combining the function of infantry and cavalry would create a force to protect a soon-to-be federated Australia," said descendant, Annie Jacobs, of Harden.

The Light Horse Memorial at Murrumburrah is a nationally significant memorial, largely created by the efforts of the Harden-Murrumburrah Historical Society, Mackay Family Association Wallendbeen and Hilltops Council.

It is used to commemorate ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day with support from the Murrumburrah Heritage Light Horse Troop.

Major General Mackay was living on his family's Wallendbeen property "Wallendoon" when he died on 16 November 1935, aged 76.

The public is invited to the statue unveiling.



FAVOURITE MOUNT (above):
Lt Colonel James Alexander Kenneth Mackay holding one of his favourite mounts wearing the 1st Australian Horse uniform at the turn of the century.

FIGURE (right):
Life-sized bronze figure of Maj.-Gen. Kenneth Mackay by sculptor Louis Laumen.



BIMBI PAID A HIGH PRICE

AT THE 2016 Census tiny Bimbi's population was 114 people.

That's just 24 people shy of all the Bimbi men who uprooted their lives – and too often gave their lives – for service to God, King and Country during World War I.

These were sacrifices from which Bimbi – described in the *Grenfell Record* and *Bland and Lachlan Districts Advertiser* in 1911 as a place in the making – never really recovered.

Some Bimbi families were spared the worst, whilst others tragically gave all they had.

Remarkably, several district sets of brothers and cousins took up arms for their country.

Miraculously the four Causer brothers – Bertie, Frederick, Levi and Thomas – survived the war and returned to Australia in 1919.

Charles and Herbert Napier also returned home, but other families were not as fortunate, among them the Downey and Hill families.

Just three days before the start of the Battle of Lone Pine at Gallipoli which claimed 2000 Australian casualties, Downey siblings Alfred and Charles, 29 and 23, enlisted together on 3 August 1915.

They were truly brothers-in-arms.

Alfred joined the Light Horse Training Squadron but did not fire a rifle in anger. He succumbed to epidemic cerebrospinal meningitis at the Liverpool training camp on 7 September.

Charles was assigned to the 6th Reinforcements 12th Australian Light Horse Regiment, serving in the Middle East, and survived the war only to drown whilst being taught to swim by mates in the River Nile at Minia, Egypt, on 29 March 1919.

George Hill, nick-named Podge, was one of the first men from the Bland to enlist for service in World War I when he signed up on 29 August 1914, aged 23.

He was mustered as a gunner and fought at Gallipoli before proceeding to France in March 1916.

George was badly wounded on 10 November 1916 and died from his wounds four days later. He was buried that day at St Sevier Cemetery Extension at Rouen.

His brother Townshend (Townie) enlisted with the 7th Light Horse Regiment in March 1915 aged 24 after measles prevented him from enlisting with the 6th Light Horse Regiment in 1914.

Townshend was on Gallipoli with his brother when on



FOR WAR EFFORT



29 August 1915 he suffered an eye injury from a bomb fragment and was taken off the peninsula.

After recovering from the wound, Townshend returned to Gallipoli in time for the evacuation and was posted to the Middle East where he suffered gunshot wounds to the chest and left arm in June 1916.

Townshend, now a Sergeant, was wounded a third time – gunshot wounds to the right arm – on 5 April 1917.

As tough as they come, Townshend was killed by the Germans in July 1918 at Mussallabeh in Palestine and was buried at a place called Dannech, but his grave could not be found later.

A letter sent to his aunt by Lieutenant TF Humphreys described Townshend as *“a more trustworthy, better or braver soldier I have never known”*.

The bravery of war hero brothers Charles and John Napier was recognised with Charles being awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal in October 1918 for leading an attack against a party of Germans in some small dug-outs in France, killing most of them and taking two prisoners.

Charles and John with the 4th Battalion took part in some of the Western Front’s worst battles, including the

Battle of Pozières, which began in July 1916 and claimed 6800 Australians killed or died of wounds.

Charles was wounded in action a number of times, including on 21 September 1918 when a bullet lodged so close to his spine it could not be removed and he carried it for the rest of his life.

John Napier, better known as Jack, was 30 years old when he signed up with Charles on 18 August 1915.

He was awarded a Military Medal for bravery in the field on 4 October 1917.

Although being shot in the neck, Corporal Napier refused to leave his men until he had completed his task, leading a carrying party while under severe shelling and machine gun fire at Broodseinde Ridge.

Both Charles and Jack returned to Australia and resumed their lives as farmers.

The stories of Bimbi’s World War I soldiers were captured in a book titled *Bimbi And District ANZACs ‘Cobber, remember to tell our story’* written by Bruce Robinson and Margaret Nowlan-Jones in 2016.

CLEANING (below): Roy Robinson cleaning saddlery, Palestine.

BRAVE (middle): Townshend Hill was a brave and trustworthy soldier.

MILITARY MEDAL (right): Courageous John Napier was awarded the Military Medal.



CARRAILL FAMILY'S HEAD



BEFORE pneumonia claimed his life suddenly in August 1917, Young fruit and vegetable shop keeper John (known as Jack) Carraill would have wondered every day what had become of younger brother Stanley, who vanished while fighting on the Western Front nine months earlier.

It was an agonising black hole in Jack's life, but he was spared even worse grief as before another year had passed two more brothers were to fall in France.

In the space of just over two years, four of the five sons of Margaret Carraill – whose husband had died in 1913 – had tragically died before her.

The Carraill soldiers were all nuggety men, all less than five feet six inches and involved in labouring or farming.

Blue-eyed Stanley stood five feet five inches (165 centimetres) in his socks and weighed 128 pounds (58 kilograms) when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force at Cootamundra on 24 July 1915 aged 24 years and five months.

His big brother Jack had moved from South Australia to the Young district in 1907 and later bought the property "Lanark" which he operated as a dairy and a small orchard before buying a fruit and vegetable run and later taking over a fruit and vegetable mart on Burrowa Street.

Stanley came across from South Australia sometime later to work with Jack and could have lived a relatively comfortable and profitable life in Young had he not answered the plea for help that came from the ANZACs who had landed at Gallipoli three months before Stanley enlisted.

Stanley joined the 19th Battalion, 5th Reinforcements and was given the Regimental Number 2374.

His unit embarked from Sydney on 5 October 1915 on board HMAT A32 *Themistocles*.

After a short time in Egypt, Stanley arrived in France as a Private on 25 March 1916.

Like so many others on the Western Front, Stanley was afflicted by scabies, which was spread by lice in the trenches and made life merry hell for soldiers.

He was hospitalised with the condition in September and returned to the trenches on 14 October before falling in the Battle of Flanders on the Somme on 14 November.

Reported missing in the muddy and bloody battlefield on 14 November, Stanley's death was not confirmed until 11 December 1917.

RT-BREAKING SACRIFICES

Even so, Stanley's mother on 10 January 1918 – grieving the death of first-born son Jack at Young five months earlier – was still in the dark about the fate of Stanley.

She wrote to Base Records asking: *"Will you do your best to find out the facts of the case? The suspense & uncertainty is harder to bear than to know the worst. He has two younger brothers on active service and his mother is a widow."*

Mrs Carraill signed off the letter: *"I am his sorrowing mother"*.

A few days later Mrs Carraill received official notification of Stanley's death.

Less than a month after Stanley enlisted, his 22-year-old brother, Alexander Lawrence, joined up in Adelaide and was posted to the 9th Light Horse Regiment.

He was serving as a driver with the 14th Brigade Australian Field Artillery in France when he suffered a fatal lung wound on 8 August 1918 at Amiens.

FELL (top left): Leslie Carraill fell on 3 September 1918.

FLERS (bottom left): Stanley Carraill fell at the Battle of Flers.

BROTHER (below): Alexander Carraill died less than a month before brother Leslie.

ENLISTMENT (right): Stanley Carraill's enlistment papers.



Not possibly knowing the tragedies that were to befall her family, Mrs Carraill signed a letter on 18 May 1916 giving consent for her second-youngest son, 19-year-old Leslie McNeil, *"who is underage to go and fight or serve his King and Country in any way he is called upon"*.

Less than a month after Alexander fell – on 3 September 1918 – young Leslie then serving with 32 Battalion as an infantryman was killed in action and his remains were first buried in an isolated grave near Peronne before being reinterred in the Péronne Communal Cemetery Extension.

The Carraill boys were great uncles to well-known Riverina general practitioner, Dr Bob Byrne, who was born in Cootamundra and practised medicine in the western Riverina for more than 40 years before retiring to Wagga Wagga.

D 40259 AUSTRALIAN MILITARY FORCES. **MISSING AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE**

Attestation Paper of Persons Enlisted for Service Abroad.

No. 2374 Name **CARRAILL, S.T.** Unit **32d BATTALION** Joined on **24.7.18**

Questions to be put to the Person Enlisting before Attestation.

1. What is your name? **CARRAILL, Stanley James**
2. In or near what Parish or Town were you born? **near the Town of Tungkillo, S.A.**
3. Are you a natural born British Subject or a Naturalised British Subject? (If not, of the latter, please to be shown.) **Natural Born**
4. What is your age? **24 years**
5. Are you free and single? **No**
6. Are you or have you been, an Apprentice? If so, where, to whom, and for what period? **No**
7. Are you married? **No**
8. Who is your next of kin? (Address to be stated) **Mother, Margaret Ann Carraill, Tungkillo, S.A.**
9. Have you ever been convicted by the Civil Power?
10. Have you ever been discharged from any part of His Majesty's Forces, with Ignominy, or as Insolvent, or with loss of Honour, or as a Soldier of Peace, or of a Soldier of Peace from the Army?
11. Do you now belong to, or have you ever served in, His Majesty's Army, the Marine, the Militia, the Militia Reserve, the Territorial Force, the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve, or the Royal Naval Reserve?
12. Have you stated the whole, if any, of your previous service?
13. Have you ever been subjected to punishment by His Majesty's Service? If so, in what grounds?
14. Do you understand that no Separation Allowance will be issued in respect of your service beyond an amount which together with Pay would reach eight shillings per day?
15. Are you prepared to undergo inoculation against smallpox and enteric fever?

I, **Stanley James Carraill**, do solemnly declare that the above answers made by me to the above questions are true, and I am willing and ready voluntarily to serve in the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia within or beyond the limits of the Commonwealth.

And I further agree to allow not less than ten shillings of the pay payable to me from time to time during my service for the support of my wife and children.

Date **24.7.18** Signature **S.T. Carraill**

*This clause to be cancelled when necessary and should be struck out the case of married men or widowers without children under 18 years of age.

Our Navy's Baptism of Fire

THE proud early history of the Royal Australian Navy was captured by Lieutenant Michelle Barker when she delivered the keynote address at the Junee Reefs 2018 ANZAC Day service.

She spoke of how the service of those early sailors contributed greatly to Australia's World War I effort and imprinted on the RAN values that continue to this day.

The Honourable Michael McCormack, the Honourable Mayor Neil Smith, Veterans, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentleman, Boys and Girls.

Let me start by thanking the Junee RSL, firstly for the opportunity and great honour to be able to share with you this most special of days for all Australians wherever they are in the world. It is a great privilege to be in my home town, a town that means so much on a day that is very dear to all of our hearts. Thank you also to everyone that worked tirelessly to make today a very memorable ANZAC Day, especially for my family and I.

Secondly, I would like to thank each and every one of you here today, ANZAC Day is special to us all, you may be here to pay respect to a friend or family member, proudly wearing their medals, or you may be here to march again for your dedicated service, for you and your mates.

This year is particularly important as it marks the 100th anniversary of the cessation of hostilities in World War I.

On a bright calm day in October 1913, HMAS *Australia* passed for the first time between Port Jackson Heads as she arrived in Sydney.

Within the year *Australia* had captured German Colonies and driven a German squadron out of the western Pacific.

In November 1914, the Australian Navy won its first sea battle when the cruiser HMAS *Sydney* sought out, engaged and sank the German cruiser *Emden* near the Cocos Islands.

This victory allowed the first convoy of ANZACs – indeed the ANZACs who would eventually land on the beaches of Gallipoli this day 103 years ago – to safely sail across the Indian Ocean.

And only a few months later in February 1915, our Navy was scattered over the world's oceans – *Australia* in the North Sea, *Melbourne* in the North Atlantic, *Sydney* in the South Atlantic, *Encounter* in the Pacific, the destroyers in the waters off New Guinea, the remaining submarine, *AE2*, in the Aegean and *Pioneer* on the coast of East Africa.

Throughout WWI, the Australian Navy fought well, indeed exceptionally, for a navy that at the beginning of

the war was in its infancy and still learning how to fight and win at sea.

The work undertaken by the Australian Navy during WWI thoroughly justified our need for a sovereign navy and demonstrated that it was in all respects ready to render invaluable service in support of this nation and her interests.

And it was during WWI that Australian sailors earned the reputation for being courageous, loyal, disciplined, resourceful, resilient and dedicated.

It is these qualities that have become the hallmarks and inspiration for the Australian sailors that have followed in their forebear's footsteps; whether in WWII, Korea, Vietnam, East Timor, Iraq or Afghanistan.

Today, we come together not to celebrate or glorify war or our military traditions, but to remember those who have fought and sacrificed for our country.

We come together to remind ourselves of the terrible cost of securing our freedoms that we often take for granted today – over 100,000 Australians have given their last full measure of devotion and almost 350,000 have lived on with the scars of battle.

It is a day of great sadness and yet one of justifiable pride.

Pride in the men and women who have displayed great courage, discipline and self-sacrifice in choosing a life of service to their country, their family and their friends.

Today, we thank them for their sacrifice and remember that their sacrifice has not been in vain.

We retain a system of government in which we, the people, choose our leaders and have a voice in our own destiny.

We retain a justice system in which each and every one among us has equal rights before the law.

We retain a society that embraces mutual respect, tolerance, compassion for those in need, and respects the freedom and dignity of the individual.

Those who have sacrificed, believed that those principles were worth defending so that today, and into the future, we all can have a full and satisfying life.

Today, as we remember those who sacrificed so much, we also remember that it is our obligation now, in the peace we have here in Australia, to take our nation, our community, our culture, and our democracy forward – always remembering the hard-learned lessons of the past and those who continue to serve our great nation.

As I look around today, I see many bright futures, please be kind to each other, and in the true spirit of the ANZACs, look after your mates.

Lest We Forget.



SPEAKER (above): With Lieutenant Michelle Barker at the Junee Reefs 2018 ANZAC Day service.

LARGE CROWD (below): There was a large crowd at the 2018 Junee Reefs ANZAC Day service.





QUILT (above): With Kath Grayland and her impressive ANZAC quilt.

TRIBUTE (middle): A small and touching tribute to Barmedman soldier Sidney Frome Stanmore in the Barmedman Bowling Club.

PLAQUE (bottom): Unveiling the Centenary of Armistice plaque on the Barmedman Cenotaph with Keith Maitland.



Centenary of World War I Armistice: BARMEDMAN MARKED ITS SPECIAL PLACE IN HISTORY

THE Centenary of World War I's Armistice on 11 November 2018 was marked across the Riverina and Central West with a mixture of public celebrations and restoration of war memorials.

Given the significance of the Centenary, the Australian Government allocated \$50,000 to each of the 150 Federal electorates to mark the occasion.

Projects funded in the Riverina electorate included a Remembrance Wall and Garden at Bogan Gate, restoration of a World War I Feldkanone (field cannon) at Parkes, an outdoor war memorial at the Greenethorpe Soldiers Memorial Hall, refurbishment of the Uranquinty Cenotaph surrounds, Armistice Day march in Wagga Wagga and a display of memorabilia in the Trundle War Memorial Hall.

It was an honour to deliver the following address at Barmedman's Armistice Centenary Commemorative Service, which was also supported with funding through the Armistice Centenary Grants Program:

BROTHERS, fathers, sons – off they went to fight a war a world away for God, King and Country so we could now live free.

Across the British Empire brave lads enthusiastically volunteered to do their bit for the cause; giving their today for our tomorrow.

Regrettably, tens of thousands of ordinary men who did extraordinary deeds at the front did not return and were buried in foreign fields – many in graves marked "Known unto God".

Mighty warriors they were – heroes all in an era when service, sacrifice, loyalty and mateship were common traits, particularly amongst those from the bush.

Even our enemies were filled with admiration for the fighting spirit of the Australians. Turkey's founding father, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, being moved to say of our fallen at Gallipoli: *"Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives ... You are lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets to us where they lie side by side in this country of ours ... You, the mothers who sent their sons from faraway countries, wipe away your tears, your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. After having lost their lives on this land they here become our sons as well."*

Despite the odds against them and in battles when all seemed lost, our Australian Imperial Force troops magnificently shone through in that dreadful conflict a century ago in what was supposed to be the war to end all wars.

Men from Barmedman and district played their part in The Great War and wars since – including Reg Rattey VC and all from these parts who courageously and selflessly wore a military uniform as part of that long line of khaki.

ANZAC pride is manifest in this town and this Riverina region, especially today – Remembrance Day – the 11th of November – Armistice 100.

Now and always may we – a peace-loving people from a grateful nation remember lives lost, our Veterans and our current servicemen and women who carry on the tradition as we say: "Lest We Forget".



GALLANT GROUP: *The personnel of No. 1 Troop, A Squadron, 2/4th Armoured Regiment. (Back, from left) Corporal William Gordon Cumming Smith of West Ryde, Sergeant John Breadalbane MacLeay of Hay, Trooper Thomas Harold Glazbrook of Minlaton, South Australia, Tpr Thomas Alexander Thompson of Bexley, Tpr Max Reginald Barnes of Bangalow, Tpr Herbert Alexander Finlayson of Inverell, Tpr John Thomas Edgeworth of Murrumburrah. (Front) Tpr Robert Barr Fisher of Lake Cargelligo, Tpr Kevin Albert Povey of Colington, Cpl Ronald Stuart Elliott of North Williamstown, Victoria; Tpr Frederick William John Hill of Kikoira and Tpr James Thomas Hamill of Punchbowl.*

LITTLE KIKOIRA DID THE NATION PROUD

THE smiles are broad and for good reason.

It was 16 October 1945 and World War II was at an end.

All of L Troop, A Squadron, 2/4th Armoured Regiment would be returning home and that, given Australia lost 27,073 uniformed personnel during the 1939-45 conflict, was indeed a relief.

This picture was taken in the Pacific where, only months earlier, Australian troops were engaged in a deadly and desperate struggle against the Japanese.

Indeed, 15,161 soldiers lost their lives in this theatre of war.

Thankfully, these men were not amongst the fallen and in the Riverina, locals at Harden-Murrumburrah and tiny Kikoira would celebrate the homecomings of John Edgeworth and Frederick Hill respectively, whose beaming faces can be seen in the group portrait.

Adorning a special place in the Kikoira Public Hall is a wooden honour board commemorating the 37 brave sons of the district including Trooper Hill who served in WWII; all but one of them making it back.

Private Robert Richard Turnbull, who enlisted at Wagga



HEROES ALL: *Kikoira's honour roll, immortalising the 37 locals who went to World War II.*

Wagga on 1 July 1940, made the supreme sacrifice in the Middle East on 24 October 1942. Aged just 29, he was buried in the El Alamein War Cemetery.

Trooper Hill, Service No. NX81543, enlisted at Paddington on 2 January 1942, aged 26.

Holbrook-born, he was the son of Charles and Annie (née Eades). Having done his duty, Fred Hill came home and lived out his life.

He passed away, in his 82nd year, at Wyalong on 1 August 1997.

For a small and somewhat remote community, Kikoira (86 kilometres north-west of West Wyalong) contributed mightily to WWII, with many families represented on the honour roll.

2019 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CENTRAL WEST

Service Times and Venues

ALECTOWN

6am Dawn service at Memorial Hall.

ARDLETHAN (includes Beckom)

10.45am Assemble and march from Ardlethan Post Office, Yithan Street, to cenotaph, Memorial Hall, Ariaah Street.

11am Service begins at cenotaph.

11.45am Bobby Chard Memorial Service at Ardlethan Cemetery.

ARIAH PARK (includes Quandary)

10.45am Assemble for march at Bowling Club, Coolamon Street and march to cenotaph.

11am Service at cenotaph. Afterwards lunch will be served at the Bowling Club.

BARMEDMAN

10.45am Assemble and march along Queen Street to Soldiers Memorial Park.

11am Service at Soldiers Memorial Park. Lunch to follow at the Bowling Club.

BENDICK MURRELL

9am Wreath-laying ceremony at Bendick Murrell Memorial Hall.

BETHUNGRA (includes Frampton, Illabo)

6.15am Dawn service at Bethungra Memorial Park, Olympic Highway. Catafalque party will be in attendance. In the event of inclement weather the service will move to Saint Augustine's Church.

BIMBI

2pm Wreath-laying at cenotaph.

BOGAN GATE

6am Dawn service at the Monument, Hefton Street, followed by breakfast at Memorial Hall.

BRIBBAREE

3.45pm Assemble at Bowling Club and march to cenotaph (next to Briggaree Fire Shed).

4pm Memorial service at cenotaph.

CANOWINDRA

6am Dawn service held at Memorial Park.

9am Short wreath-laying service at Soldiers' Memorial Hospital.

10.30am Assemble at the Junction Hotel and march to Memorial Park.

11am Main service at cenotaph in Memorial Park.

CARAGABAL

4pm Service at the park in front of the hall.

COLLINGULLIE

8am Service at Memorial Hall, Sturt Highway.

COOLAMON (includes Marrar)

6am Dawn service at cenotaph, Cowabbie Street.

7am Diggers Breakfast, hosted by the RSL, at the Coolamon Sport and Recreation Club.

10.45am Assemble outside RSL Memorial Museum, Loughnan Street and march to cenotaph.

11am Main service.

COOTAMUNDRA

6am Dawn service at cenotaph in Albert Park. *continued...*

2019 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CENTRAL WEST SERVICE TIMES AND VENUES

- 10.15am Assemble for march in front of Ex-Servicemens Club
- 10.30am Ceremonial march beginning at the front of the Ex-Servicemens Club.
- 10.45am Commemoration service at Albert Park.

COWRA

- 5.50am Dawn service at cenotaph, Brisbane Street.
- 9.30am Ceremony at Cowra War Cemetery.
- 10.20am March form up prior to community wreath-laying service in Brisbane Street.
- 11am Community service at River Park.
- 12noon Service at the Cowra Locomotive Depot.

CROWTHER

- 10am Wreath-laying ceremony at Crowther Memorial, Olympic Way.

DARBYS FALLS

- 9.45am Assemble at phone box and march to Memorial.
- 10am Memorial service.

EUGOWRA

- 10.30am March from the corner of North and Broad Streets to the cenotaph, Memorial Park.
- 11am Main service at cenotaph, Memorial Park.

FORBES (includes Bedgerabong, Corinella)

- 5.15am Assemble at Forbes Services Memorial Club, Templar Street, and march to cenotaph, Harold Street, followed by dawn service.
- 10.15am Assemble in Cross Street and march to cenotaph, Harold Street.
- 10.30am Main service.

FOREST HILL

- 5.45am Ceremony begins at front gate RAAF Base Wagga, Sturt Highway. Please be in position by 5.45am.

GALONG

- 5.30am Dawn service, Galong Memorial Hall, McMahon Street.

GANMAIN (includes Matong)

- 6am Dawn service, Memorial Gate in front of Bowling Club, Waterview Street.
- 9.30am Assemble for march on corner of Ford and Waterview Streets.
- 10am March proceeds to Memorial Gate.
- 10.30am Main service. Catafalque party will be in attendance along with a guest speaker.
- 5.30pm Retreat service at the flag pole inside the Memorial Gate.

GOOLOOGONG

- 6am Dawn service at the Memorial Clubrooms. Gunfire breakfast to follow.
- 10am ANZAC service in Maisie Thompson Memorial Park.

GREENETHORPE

- 7.30am Main Service at Soldiers' Memorial Hall including dedication of local serviceman to Wall of Honour.

GRENFELL

- 5.45am Dawn service at cenotaph, corner of Burrangong Street and Mid Western Highway, followed by breakfast at The Railway Hotel, Main Street.
- 8am Pilgrimage to cemetery.
- 10.30am Assemble for march opposite Christian Bookshop.

- 10.45am March commences.
- 11am Main service at cenotaph.
- 2pm Two-up at The Railway Hotel until late.

GUNDAGAI (includes Coolac, Mount Horeb)

- 6am Dawn service at ANZAC Grove.
- 10.15am Assemble outside Lott's Family Hotel, Sheridan Street.
- 10.30am March will be led by the Gundagai Town Band followed by the Vintage Car Club vehicles carrying RSL members. Proceed East along Sheridan Street to cenotaph. 7th Light Horse Gundagai Troop in attendance.
- 11am Wreath-laying ceremony. On completion, the parade will return west along Sheridan Street, dismissing adjacent to Lott's Family Hotel.

HARDEN-MURRUMBURRAH

- 6am Dawn service at cenotaph, Newson Park, corner Station and Albury Streets, Harden.
- 10.30am Assemble in front of Mechanics Institute, Neill Street, Harden.
- 10.45am March to cenotaph.
- 11am Main service. If inclement weather, service to be held in Mechanics Institute.

HUMULA

- 10.15am Assemble for march at Humula Citizens Sports Club.
- 10.30am March to Humula Community Hall. Service to follow outside Hall.

JUGIONG

- 3pm Assemble for march adjacent to police station

2019 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CENTRAL WEST SERVICE TIMES AND VENUES

and march to Memorial Gates, Riverside Drive, where the memorial service will be conducted. 7th Light Horse Gundagai Troop in attendance.

JUNEE (includes Illabo, Old Junee, Wantabadgery)

- 5.45am Dawn service in Broadway.
- 10.30am March from Memorial Park, Peel Street, to Railway Square for two-minute ceremony. March finishes at cenotaph in Broadway.
- 11am Service at cenotaph, Broadway.

JUNEE REEFS

- 3pm Service and wreath-laying at Junee Reefs-Ivor Hall, Junee Reefs Road, conducted by Junee RSL Sub-Branch. Afternoon tea afterwards.

KAPOOKA

- 5.45am Dawn service at the picnic grounds at the front gate of Blamey Barracks, Army Recruit Training Centre.

KOORAWATHA

- 5.30am Dawn service at War Memorial Park Memorial Gates.
- 10.45am Assemble in Boorowa Street adjacent to Koorawatha Regional Rooms. March to Memorial Gates for memorial service.

LOCKHART

- 9am Commemoration service at Lockhart Lawn Cemetery.
- 10.15am Form up at Commercial Hotel, Green Street.
- 10.30am March to cenotaph in Hebden Street.

- 10.45am Wreath-laying ceremony.
- 11am Re-assemble and march to cnr Mathews and Green Streets.
- 11.30am Lunch at Lockhart Ex-Servicemen's Club.

MANDURAMA

- 10am Service at World War II gates.

MIRROOL

- 9am Service at cenotaph in Ariah Street, followed by morning tea.

MONTEAGLE

- 2pm Wreath-laying ceremony at Monteagle Memorial Hall.

MURRINGO

- 8.30am Assemble on Murringo Gap Road adjacent to Murringo Public School. March to Murringo Memorial Hall for service in hall grounds.

NANGUS

- To be commemorated on Thursday, 2 May.
- 10.30am ANZAC Service at Nangus Public School, Tenandra Street. Morning tea will be served following the service.

PARKES

- 5.30am Dawn Service, Memorial Hill followed by breakfast at Parkes Services & Citizens Club, Short Street.
- 7.30am Church service at St Georges Anglican Church.
- 8.15am Assemble for march in front of Parkes Services Club.
- 8.35am March commences lead by Lt Colonel David Heatley.
- 9am ANZAC civic service at cenotaph, Cooke Park.

Dedication of the restored German FK 16 Feldkanone Cannon.

- 10.45am Pilgrimage and wreath-laying ceremony at war graves at Parkes Cemetery.
- 12noon Luncheon at Parkes Services & Citizens Club.
- 5pm Retreat at cenotaph, Cooke Park.

PEAK HILL

- 6am Dawn service at AIF Hall.
- 10.30am March.
- 11am Commemorative service at AIF Hall.

PLEASANT HILLS

- 9am Service at Memorial Hall, Ryan Street, followed by morning tea.

QUANDIALLA

- 10.45am School assembly at Blamey Park, Second Street, march to Memorial Hall.
- 11am Service at Memorial Hall, Second Street.

SPRINGDALE

- 9am Prayer and laying of wreaths at Springdale Memorial cenotaph on Burley Griffin Way. Introduction by Colonel Pat Thorne AM (Retired), Michael Sinclair and Tom Shuttleworth. Address by NZ Maori Officer Major Ross Himona. His topic is 'Putting the NZ back into ANZAC'.
- 9.15am Fly-over by Warbirds.
- 9.20am Lance Corporal Peter Kahlefeldt Scholarship Oration: Tribute to a Springdale local who died in battle – Private Horace John Towers, died of wounds on 11 November 1918. Presented by Jackson Reid, student *continued...*

2019 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CENTRAL WEST SERVICE TIMES AND VENUES

at Temora High School. *The Marseillaise* sung by Madame Jenny Kotzur. Musical interlude by the Springdale singers. Temora Band plays the Recessional including the Last Post. Concluding poem written by Earl Kotzur, a local farmer. Service to follow. Refreshments in the Springdale Hall afterwards.

7pm World premiere of the film *Springdale to the Somme* in the Springdale Hall. Followed by a feature film - *The Water Diviner*. The Springdale film was written and narrated by residents of Springdale and will be entered into world short film competitions. Admission by invitation.

STOCKINBINGAL

2pm Commemorative service.

TALLIMBA

3pm March followed by commemorative service in the Tallimba Hall. Following the service afternoon tea will be available.

TARCUTTA

10.30am March from Tarcutta Rural Supplies to Memorial Hall.

11am Service at Memorial Hall, Sydney Street.

TEMORA (includes Reefton)

6am Dawn service at cenotaph, Callaghan Park, Loftus Street.

10.50am March from opposite Courthouse, De Boos Street to Callaghan Park.

11am Service at cenotaph, Callaghan Park.

THE ROCK

6am Dawn service at Soldier Memorial, Urana Street,

followed by gunfire breakfast at The Rock Memorial Bowling Club.

10.15am Congregate for march in front of The Rock Memorial Bowling Club.

10.30am March to cenotaph, Urana Street.

10.50am Anticipated flyover by Temora Aviation Museum (weather permitting).

12.30pm Luncheon at The Rock Memorial Bowling Club.

TRUNDLE

10.30am Commemorative march.

11am Commemorative service at Memorial Hall.

TULLAMORE

6am Dawn service at Memorial Park.

10.45am March across the street at Memorial Park.

11am Commemorative service at Memorial Park.

TUMBLONG

9am Service at memorial, St James's Anglican Church, Adelong Road. 7th Light Horse Gundagai Troop in attendance.

UNGARIE

6am Dawn service, RSL Park, Ungarie Street.

9am Service at cemetery at graves of ex-servicemen and women.

9.30am Breakfast at Central Hotel, Wollongough Street.

10.45am Assemble at "Pink Shop" Wollongough Street, march to RSL Park.

11am Service at cenotaph. Address by Warrant Officer First Class (Ret.) John Abernethy.

12.30pm Luncheon at Memorial Hall.

6pm Retreat at cenotaph.

URANQUINTY

9am Service at Wirraway Park rest area, Morgan Street.

WAGGA WAGGA

5.30am Dawn service at the cenotaph (conducted by Legacy).

6.45am Service at the war cemetery, to be held outside the gate of the cemetery, to respect the graves, on Koorinal Road. ANZAC Day speeches by Mount Austin High School captains Rhyley McClenahan and Georgia Boyland.

9am ANZAC Day Mass, St Michael's Cathedral, Church Street.

10am Assemble for march at the corner of Baylis and Morgan Streets.

10.30am March along Baylis Street to the cenotaph followed by a wreath-laying service.

11.15am Commemorative service in the Victory Memorial Gardens. Occasional Address by Group Captain Iain Carty – Senior ADF Officer, RAAF Base Wagga Wagga.

5.30pm Sunset service at the Wagga RSL Club Memorial at the entrance of the club, Dobbs Street.

WALLENDREEN

8.45am Assemble at Wallendbeen Public School and walk to cenotaph.

9am Main service followed by morning tea in the Wallendbeen Memorial Hall.

2019 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CENTRAL WEST SERVICE TIMES AND VENUES

WEST WYALONG (includes North Yalgogrin, Wamboyne, Weethalle)

- 6am Dawn service at Services and Citizens' Club cenotaph.
- 10.15am Assemble for march in Main Street.
- 10.30am March to cenotaph at Services and Citizens' Club.
- 11am Main service.

WIRRIMAH

- 8.30am Memorial service at Wirrimah Memorial Park, Smiths Road.

WOMBAT

- 6am Dawn service followed by breakfast at the Wombat Hotel.

WOODSTOCK

- 2.15pm Assemble for march across from Woodstock Public School, corner of Parkes and Carrington Streets.
- 2.30pm March to Sr Jenny Kerr's Park to lay wreath and then to Arnold Bennett's Gates to lay wreath, then into Hall for ANZAC service. Refreshments after service.

WYALONG

- 8.45am March and wreath-laying ceremony at cenotaph at Soldiers' Memorial Hall, Neeld Street.

YERONG CREEK

- 10.45am Form up at Delta Agribusiness, Plunkett Street.
- 11am March to cenotaph in Stanley Galvin Memorial Park followed by service.
- 12noon Lunch at Yerong Creek Bowling Club.

YOUNG

- 6am Dawn service.
- 10.45am Assemble at Young Town

Hall, Boorowa Street and march to Anderson Park Memorial.

- 11am Main service at Anderson Park.

CAPITAL CITY SERVICES: CANBERRA

- 5.30am Dawn service at the Australian War Memorial with readings from 4.30am.
- 6.30am Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ceremony, Aboriginal Memorial Plaque, Mount Ainslie.
- 10.30am National ceremony at the Australian War Memorial and RSL Veterans' march.

MELBOURNE

- 6am Dawn Service. Assemble at the Shrine of Remembrance Forecourt by 4.30am.
- 9am ANZAC Day march starting at intersection of Flinders and Swanston Streets and concluding at the Shrine of Remembrance.

SYDNEY

- 4.15am Dawn service at the cenotaph in Martin Place.
- 9am ANZAC Day march starting at intersection of Elizabeth Street and Martin Place, marching south on Elizabeth Street to Liverpool Street, where Marchers will turn left for dispersal – unless directed to turn right or proceed straight ahead.
- 11am Indigenous ANZAC Day march in Redfern.
- 12.30pm Commemorative service adjacent to The Pool of Remembrance at the ANZAC War Memorial in Hyde Park South.
- 5pm Sunset service at the cenotaph in Martin Place.



PLEASE NOTE:

All times and venues have been supplied in good faith by various RSL Sub-Branch officials and were correct at the time of publication. Every care has been taken to ensure as many services as possible have been included. For verification of other services please contact your local RSL Sub-Branch.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

Dr Bob Byrne, Margaret Nowlan-Jones, Bruce Robinson, *The Daily Advertiser*, Australian War Memorial, Annie Jacobs, Paul Thomas, Discovering Our ANZACS and Christine and Alan Curteis, Joan Bennett.

AUSTRALIA'S HOME

THE sight of home comes nearer and nearer. The good old memories become clearer and clearer. Streets the same just changed with age.

Most of us still filled with rage. Battered and bruised they still love us the same.

After the war there is no one and everyone to blame.

Physical, mental, and emotional wounds.

It's heaven to be away from the deafening booms.

Sons, mothers, fathers and daughters died.

While the rest of us at home we cried.

Voices loud, screaming and crying.

Gallipoli is where my good mate is lying.

Dying.

Door flung open, people screaming.

My biggest smile completely beaming.

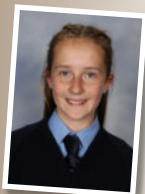
Songs of joy together we sung. Hand-in-hand back in Young.

A pool of happiness drowns out the pain.

Never to go to war again.

Tears enough to start a flood. Poppies red and full of blood.

Many say that they regret. But as Australians we say "Lest We Forget".



WINNER: Zoe McRae, 12, Year 6, St Mary's Primary School, Young.



RIVERINA AND CENTRAL WEST WRITING AWARDS

ONCE again students from across the Riverina and Central West have shown patriotism, pride and exceedingly good creative writing ability by entering the annual ANZAC Day writing competition.

This is the ninth year the competition has been conducted and 783 entries were received.

Every participant will receive a signed certificate which features a watermark image of this year's commemorative cover, Alexander Ignatius O'Connor, who is the subject of this booklet's feature story.

Entries were categorised into primary and secondary schools with the Riverina electorate divided into North, South, East and West divisions.

I would like to thank each student and teacher who worked so hard to produce all the entries and especially congratulate the winners and highly commended.



NORTH

ANZACs COMING HOME

THE ANZACs fought well, Some of them died and a lot of them cried.

Those family and friends fought for us. They fought for our country, Australia.

Some ANZACs they fell, like a bullet shell, they dropped to the ground, With a very sad sound.

Some came home to the Central West and celebrated.

They fought for us on ANZAC Day. And we think to ourselves what brave things they have done for us and our country.

My great-uncle George, he fought in the Light Horse team. George came home, but many of his friends did not. George is my hero. He served and survived in The Great War, but he came home very sore.

George did not talk very much about the war, but I understand why. His friends were his family, and most of

them died. When he tells us this story we all feel sorry for him.

I am writing this story because I want everyone to know my hero – my great-uncle George. When George came home I was not alive but my relatives were. They handed this story down to me. It is so special to me so that is why I listened.

Not that long ago, my poor great-uncle George died. Sadly, he was getting old, but he will always be my hero as he fought in the war.

So I will remember him for as long as I live.

Lest We Forget.



HIGHLY COMMENDED: William Wilson, 12, Year 6, St Joseph's Primary School, Grenfell.

COMING HOME FROM THE GREAT WAR TO THE RIVERINA

IN THE past they were so plenty,
But now the streets seem so empty,
I don't know where I belong,
And my head is spinning like a song.

The hotel on the corner,
Sees me as a foreigner,
Luckily, they took me in,
Forgetting where I'd once been.

In my ears the bombing still rings,
Amidst the sight of flailing limbs,
But I'm loving being dirt free,
Watching the cricket, by all means.

Trees standing tall,
Yet some mates not at all,
Sleeping on a soft pillow,
Whilst the wind gently rocks the willow.

The poppies that I smell,
Remind me of that living hell,
The sun rising in the morning,
No bugle and no call of warning.

I love my town and that community
feeling, Thanks to them, I am healing,
They picked me up when I fell apart,
Made me feel loved and took me to
hearts.

I may be scarred,
But I have travelled far,
I am no longer alone,
I know I am home.



*WINNER: Elisabeth Hall, 13, Year 8
Hennessy Catholic College, Young.*

COMING HOME

SLEEPLESS nights followed by a horrifying morning,
Eardrums burst, soldiers mourning,
The war to end all wars, they said,
But they're not the ones who make the dead.

No horrors await me, in my land,
Peaceful skies, no blood at hand,
But I changed, should've spared that life,
What about that poor soldier's kid and wife?

Patchworks of farmland, now unattended,
A breath of relief, the war has ended,
I'm home, at last, with my wife and kids,
The dogs chasing the cattle, sheep and pigs.

I close my eyes, a vision appears,
The cries, the screams, the blood and tears,
Why am I walking? Why am I here?
When I'm taken back to every loud noise I hear?

I'm not the same, it's clear as day,
But maybe I could change, they say,
I can try my best, but don't expect,
For me to suddenly forgive and forget.

*HIGHLY COMMENDED: Alex
Drewes, 15, Year 9, Red Bend
Catholic College, Forbes.*



LIFE IN THE TRENCHES

IT GOES without saying
that life was much different
in the years around The
Great War.

It is difficult to visualise the
conditions and seemingly
insurmountable tasks these
young men faced in the
trenches daily.

However, it is also hard to
imagine some of the items
which we have come to
take for granted that were
not commonplace – or even
invented yet.

No mobile phones,
dishwashers, microwave
ovens, televisions or internet;
the Model T Ford motor car
was only officially launched
in 1915 and civil aviation
was still years from taking
off (Famous escape artist
Harry Houdini is officially
recognised as the first person
to fly a powered plane in
Australia on 18 March 1910
at Diggers Rest in Victoria,
but others have laid claim
to the feat, including Colin
Defries and Fred Custance).

This makes writing about
World War I that much
more difficult. Most of this
year's writers avoided using
any references to today's
luxuries which are afforded
to us because of the sacrifices
of the people in the pages of
this publication, plus the rest
of the 416,809 Australian
men who enlisted, of which
more than 60,000 were
killed. We owe our freedom
to them and this publication,
especially this writing
competition for students,
ensures their legacy is never
forgotten.

THE GREAT WAR

NO SLEEP

SLEEP... if only it would come. No-one in the trenches got much more than forty winks. The men would often wake up with nightmares.

Toby woke with a start. He'd been dreaming that he was his Dad and a German had shot him. Sweat soaked his pillow.

"Mum!" he called down the hall, "is Dad alright?" His mum appeared and sat beside him. "I don't know, Honey. We haven't heard from him in weeks." She sighed.

"Attention!" The General shouted, "Your service in this war is over, so we are shipping you home, today. Dismissed!"

Arthur climbed the gangway onto the transport ship.

Toby opened the mail and found a note that said his dad was on the way home. "Mum, do you know when Dad will arrive?" he asked. He's due next week!" she exclaimed.

Arthur disembarked from the cramped ship with a heart full of apprehension.

"Dad, Dad!" the voice stirred strong feelings inside him. He looked across and saw his wife and son waving at him. He couldn't get to them fast enough.

"Toby!" he exclaimed, weeping openly. "My son!!"



HIGHLY COMMENDED:
Baden Blanch, 11, Year 6,
Turvey Park Public School,
Wagga Wagga.

I WAS only 10 when Dad went to war. I am 14 years old now. The Great War is over and Dad is returning from war to our family.

As I sit and reflect on how I felt when Dad went to war, I feel sad as I did not know if he would return. Now I feel really happy, as I get to have my dad around again. He is coming home.

WWI had a big effect on our family. Mum became the money earner going to work to pay bills and buy our food. I was the oldest of three children, so it became my job to take care of my two younger brothers. My responsibilities included cooking, cleaning and making sure my brothers were dressed.

When Dad returned, he looked different to how I remember when I said goodbye to him. I was still very excited, and it felt great when he held me in his arms.

As time passed, we noticed Dad was suffering from shell shock. Shell shock is an emotional shock. Dad would have nightmares and flashbacks of what he had seen and heard while he was in the trenches. Mum stayed in the workforce because Dad couldn't hold a job anymore because of the effects of The Great War.

The war known as THE GREAT WAR took its toll on Dad and us as a family and changed our lives and many other families' lives forever.

LEST WE FORGET.



WINNER: Bindi McFarland, 10, Year 5,
North Wagga Public School.

THE WAR

TODAY I come home from the war. My family lives back in the Riverina. I hate the war and it's a hopeless place to be. The war drowned out my emotions. I cannot wait to see my wife and son. He writes letters to me about how I inspire him to help save our country, but I don't want him to be broken. His imagination is wild and if he grows up to be like me, then there is no turning back.

I am now in the Riverina. It is a beautiful place. The grass reads blow in the breeze and the thought of poppies fills my mind. I am now running to my family as I long to see them very much. I miss them and I can't wait to see how my son has grown. As I run, the pale-green grass hits my legs, I just ignore it.

I have been running for a while and I can just see the rooftop of my house amongst the other homes. I keep on running till I can see my little boy running and jumping around in the fields with his friend while his mother watches over him. I catch the eye of my son and he yells and runs. We run faster than ever. We come closer and I swing him up in the air with excitement. He holds me tightly and I grasp him in my hands as I find my wife racing to see me. I wrap my arms around her and kiss my son on his head.

We all walk home together, my son on my shoulders and we laugh about the stories he has to tell me. We walk alongside the river and dip our feet in gently. Then we walked back home.



HIGHLY COMMENDED:
Bianca Staines, 13, Year 8,
Wagga Wagga Christian
College.

THE ANZACS

LAMB and rosemary waft through the windows,
the familiar comfort of home.
Eager for adventure along with my mates,
whilst savouring the last morsels of warm, freshly baked
apple pie.

Dinner table chatter, laughing, taking a shot at those
Huns,
all in defence of the Mother Nation.

The dark, gloomy clouds of uncertainty creep in,
spoil the last moments of home.

The door of death, closer than I'd ever imagined,
the stench of reeking blood and dead bodies never to be forgotten.

At Gallipoli we were led to the beach, lambs to the slaughter.
Lion-like roaring guns deafen my ears, blinding darkness hides my eyes,
Only the fumes of gunpowder, tasteless food and rotting rats remain.

Coming home was worse than going,
The place of crows, same land, same home, unbearably familiar.
The aroma of apple pie no longer of comfort.
Weary, tired and changed,
Young boys aged with graven lines upon their foreheads,
Forced to look to the future, forever marked with the horrors of the past.



*WINNER: Ned Bergmeier,
12, Year 7, Wagga Wagga
Christian College.*

MEMORY THAT WILL LAST TO DEATH

COMING home from The Great War with horrors of the chattering machine guns burning in his ears. He still has blood on his bayonet from killing an enemy soldier that had a family to return to. The memory of his childhood friend dying in his arms a memory that will last to death.

He came home but other people didn't. He told his kids he was lucky, he never wanted them to experience anything like a war. He has the necklace that has a picture of his loved one trapped behind glass never to see the outside world again. The doctors said pneumonia was the reason she died but he always wondered if it was a broken heart. Now he has to stop the whole family from collapsing. He has nightmares of his wife screaming in pain, bombs and guns firing. His kids wake up in the middle of the night screaming NO!

He doesn't sleep sometimes, he comes out for breakfast with bags under his eyes. Sometimes the weight of the past holds him down but then he looks at his kids and he knows he has to go on. Without his wife he may as well be back at the war but he can't leave his kids. That's the reason he fought in the first place.



*WINNER: Abraham Cotterill,
11, Year 6, Gundagai Public
School.*

EAST

KATHLEEN HAS A TALENT

THREE weeks since Kathleen came home, since James was labelled "uncontrollable", three weeks wondering where Pa was.

I pressed my ear closer to the door. I didn't need to, Kathleen was yelling loud enough. Kathleen! What could possibly make her yell like this? She stopped yelling abruptly.

"To do that," Kathleen's words were no more than a breath now. "James. I know what you've been through. We all do. But we can't change that." She paused, choosing her words carefully.

"James." Her voice was perfectly calm. "James, you need to open your eyes to what you have. You have a family, a life, they didn't. Don't take it out on us."

Kathleen was a war nurse at a makeshift hospital in France, and a most successful one at that.

Her best friend has suffered and died, along with her fiancé.

But Kathleen was always positive. She

had suffered, worse than any of us but she had made the decision to move on.

Sometimes James forgot about us. Ever since he'd come home he'd been lost, wounded, helpless.

No one really blamed him, especially since Pa was still missing. Because James has "Been to war, seen things no one will understand."

But James and Kathleen were twins, how could they go through the same thing and yet be so different.

It's funny. James and Kathleen can see the world, the horrors, the misery. But Kathleen had a talent. Because she can see the world, the horrors, the misery and still. Still. She can smile.

Not many people can do that.



*HIGHLY
COMMENDED:
Lillian McDonnell,
11, Year 6 St
Patrick's Primary
School, Gundagai.*

FINALLY SAFE, FINALLY HOME

THE smell of death and dank, long gone but it still haunts me. I see the passing trees and fields, breathing in the scent of Eucalypt on the Autumn breeze as we turn off onto the Tumut and Kunama railway.

It is so hard to remember home, as it has been so long since I have been in Australia let alone the Riverina. I cannot wait to return to my family, especially my darling Mayella. By now my beautiful son would be eight and daughter 12. They will be so grown up when I return, I will surely not recognise them.

The train pulls into the Gundagai station, home. I see the waiting families, all with smiles on their faces, seeing their loved ones return home, finally safe. I get off the train and search for my family, only to feel a tap on my shoulder. I turn around to see a young, recognisably beautiful woman, with a young girl and boy alongside her.

"John Ballard, is that really you?" she exclaims with glee, whilst holding the side of my face steady so she can see me clearly. I smile and Mayella looks down at the children and says: "go give your Pa a hug."

They both leap into a hug around my waist and I stumble back with their strength. "I love you so much," I say, looking at all three of them with compassion, Mayella especially.

It warmed my heart but my soul still lay cold.



HIGHLY COMMENDED:
*Lillian Crane, 14, Year 10,
Gundagai High School.*

EAST

HOME

THE day the news came through I thought "Nothing can beat this." I have been in Gallipoli from the start. Four long years have passed since I have set eyes on my beautiful wife Amy and daughter Audrey. She will be seven in two months and I am just happy that I may be home for this birthday, unlike others.

I haven't got any care for my belongings. The less I take home the fewer memories I have to remind me of this hell. Everyone around me is the same. We all just throw our things in our rucksack not caring if we miss or not.

We were all packed on the ships like tins of sardines. But we were going home. All around were people singing and cock-a-hoop about going home and their contribution to the war. When the boat came within eyesight of Sydney Harbour, even from this far away I could hear people cheering. I have never felt so proud.

The train journey home for me was the final stretch. The journey through the beautiful Riverina was the best I have



WINNER: *Sophie Dunstan, 14, Year 8,
St Anne's Central School, Temora.*

ever experienced. But that couldn't compare to the welcome I got when the train arrived in Temora. As soon as I stepped off the train and onto the platform, my wife embraced me. "Davitt, you're home!" she said between tears. I then went to hug my daughter. "Happy birthday Audrey," I whispered into her ear. "Daddy!" she yelled happily.

Audrey's screams turned to screams of pain, fear and death. I am not at my beautiful home in the Riverina. I am still trapped in Gallipoli.

WEST

DAD WAS COMING HOME

DECEMBER 15th 1919

It was another long, sad, drawn-out day. The war had been going for four long years. Every day was filled with worry and misery. Will our boys come home?

It became a day I will never forget. I heard something from outside and peered up from my dishes to the outside world. Was my day about to change from bad to good?

I was surprised to see my dad. I was shocked to see him standing at the front of my creaky wooden door. I was exultant to see him home from the miserable war.

But when he came back he was different from before. He was always emotional and crying because the war kept replaying in his head. He missed his war friends and all he seemed to want to do is spend time with them.

Will he love me again? Will he love me like before? Only time will tell.



HIGHLY COMMENDED:
*Hunter Rennie, 10, Year 4,
Wyalong Public School.*

THE DAY DAD RETURNED

I TOSSED and turned all night and woke bleary eyed at dawn. Today was the day Dad was coming home from Gallipoli. It has been nearly five years since I last saw him. I was only five years old then. My mind kept wondering if he would be the same good man I knew and loved.

Mum was busy making a welcome-home cake when I looked out and spotted the horse-drawn wagon pulled up out the front.

"He's home! He's home!" I yelled to Mum as I ran excitedly out the front door. Mum came rushing out the door to meet Dad.

Something was not quite the same. Then we both realised he was missing a leg. It was hard not to stare.

"What happened Dad?" I asked.

"Someone wanted a hand, but instead I gave him a leg!" Dad sarcastically said, with a smile on his face. Dad still has his sense of humour.

He told Mum later that he got hit by a Sergeant who threw a grenade into the front line trench. He needed to have his leg amputated and had spent several months in a war hospital in Lemnos.

Dad was the owner of the Ganmain Hotel and he soon realised how hard it was to do a lot of the work there. Mum and I helped him. Over the next few weeks Dad was very quiet. The war had changed him, but I still loved him very much.



WINNER: Joshua Guthrie, 10, Year 5, St Brendan's Primary School, Ganmain.

BORN IN WYALONG

WEDNESDAY January 2nd 1918

Today is the day.

The kids are ecstatic, running around all over the place like headless chooks. The dogs are also running around with the kids with absolutely no idea what's going on.

It's been too long since Gerald's been gone. The nights I would look upon the stars, hoping that my Big G would return safely. I have faith he will return in one piece.

The kids have grown up a bit since he left. Alice will be turning 15 in a couple days, Will is 10 and little Archie is 5. I've seen the kids develop independence over time. Here on the farm, my arthritis is bad. Having Alice and Will help has been wonderful. I couldn't thank them enough. Little Archie has done his bit. I can't forget our little guy lifting those big sticks.

A large black car comes down the driveway. I tell the kids to stay inside,

just so I can see who it is. I know it's Gerald. It must be.

The car pulls up. Two men exit the car. Both in army uniform. One is holding a folded-up flag with an Army hat and some poppies surrounding it.

Silence.

My eyes turn into a river.

"He served the country proud," said one soldier. "Be proud and take care."

They handed over the belongings and took off.

I couldn't believe what my eyes were seeing.

Everything that I've been holding on to. Faith, hope. Just disappeared.

I fear for the future.



WINNER: Frazer Holland, 15, Year 10, West Wyalong High School.

I'LL ALWAYS LOVE YOU

AS THE train arrives people run to see their family whom they haven't seen for years, but where is mine?

As I look, thoughts are running everywhere, what if ... they're gone? Or maybe ... they found happiness without me?

I went back to our old house thinking they would be there, but all I got was: "They moved a year ago."

Waterfalls are running down my eyes, where are they? As I walk away the young lady who is now living in our house asks: "Excuse me, are you Louis?"

I was confused. "Err ... yes, I'm Louis, why?" "Melody asked me to give this letter to Louis before she left."

As she handed me the letter my heart sank. I sat at an old bench, the bench was where I asked Melody to be my wife, the bench where we watched our child run around.

The letter read:

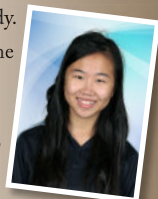
My dear Louis,

I would have never thought that I would have to leave you, but I can no longer see our child suffer, my heart can't take it anymore. I know this is going to hurt you, but we have to think about our little boy. I know you won't forget us that easily but when you miss us just sit on the bench and close your eyes and remember all the happiness we had.

I'll always love you.

Love Melody.

She was gone ... I'm alone now, I have only just myself ... no one else.



HIGHLY COMMENDED: Alethea Hung, 14, Year 10, West Wyalong High School.

