

ANZAC DAY

IN THE RIVERINA, CENTRAL WEST,
SNOWY MOUNTAINS, SOUTH WEST
SLOPES & SOUTHERN TABLELANDS.



25TH APRIL 2026



Commemorative booklet proudly presented by

Michael McCormack MP

Federal Member for Riverina
Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Shadow Minister for Water

"Greater love hath no man than this,
that a man lay down his life for his friends."

WE OWE MUCH TO THE ANZACs

THE phrase "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" is one of the most common and poignant personal messages inscribed on Commonwealth war graves from the First and Second World Wars.

The line is derived from the *Bible*, Saint John: Chapter 15, Verse 13.

Many families chose this to honour the ultimate sacrifice made by their loved ones, depicting death in battle as a final act of devotion.

It appears on individual headstones managed by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and is etched on major monuments, such as the Stone of Remembrance at the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, and also on cenotaphs dotted across the countryside.

This 16th annual Riverina ANZAC Day booklet features a number of brave souls who gave up their lives for their friends, namely Earl "Roley" Mewburn of Rugby, Merlin Kinnear Tarte of Wagga Wagga, Philip Kelly of Old Junee, four airmen killed in an air crash near Gunning and John Brown of Wombat.

Many more who died fighting for flag and country are also mentioned in the pages of this publication.

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We remember them. We honour them. And we say: Thank You For Your Service.

Locals will again respectfully and reverently pause on 25 April to pay tribute to the service and sacrifice of so many for our sake.

I wonder what those more than 103,000 men and women, whose names are immortalised on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, would make of the nation we have become?

Would they be proud of us?

Would those who lost their lives think "For your tomorrow, we gave our today" was, in fact, all worth it?

Founder Charles Bean's famous 1916 vision for the Memorial was: "Here is their spirit, in the heart of the land they loved; and here we guard the record which they themselves made."

And indeed this is true.

Whilst Australia is the greatest country on Earth, it is also true recent events overseas, especially in the Middle East, and the resultant protests in Australia have been unnecessarily divisive and violent.

Philosopher George Santayana's famous quote "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" is as valid today as it was in 1905 when he coined it.

Those who seek to destroy our heritage, way of life, norms, spirit, traditions, the things we hold so near and dear which have been won by the blood shed by our uniformed forebears, here and abroad, might as well pack up and go and live in the foreign lands they wrongheadedly think we should become like.

This is a democratic, fair nation built on the axiom "the price of peace is eternal vigilance" ... so let us keep it that way.

We owe our valiant ANZACs no less.

Let's We Forget.

Michael McCormack

THE HONOURABLE
MICHAEL McCORMACK MP

Federal Member for Riverina
Shadow Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Shadow Minister for Water



COVER: Australian Army artillery training with battlefield guns during The Great War era.



ANDERSON PARK: A peaceful place where the Young district's VC recipient and others are remembered.

CHARLES ANDERSON VC, HERO OF YOUNG

THE indomitable courage of Charles Groves Wright Anderson was recognised with two medals for exemplary gallantry serving two nations in two World Wars.

Born in Cape Town, South Africa, on 12 February 1897, he was commissioned as a Lieutenant in the King's African Rifles on 13 October 1916 and fought with that regiment's 3rd Battalion in East Africa against the German-led Askari, a campaign in which he earned the Military Cross.

His experience in jungle warfare – unusual for a soldier in World War I – held him in good stead for commanding troops in the jungles of Malaya in World War II.



VC AWARDEE: Lt Col. Charles Groves Wright Anderson

He married Edith Tout in February 1931 and, three years later, the couple moved to Australia where Anderson had purchased a grazing property near Crowther.

In March 1939, he joined the Citizen Military Forces, being appointed Captain in the 56th Battalion and then promoted to Major in late October that year. In July 1940 he was seconded to the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) and appointed second-in-command of the 2/19th Battalion, part of the ill-fated 8th Division, embarking for Malaya in February 1941.

Anderson was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel on 1 August 1941 and took command of his battalion. A little over four months later, Japan began the Pacific War by invading Malaya on 8 December (local time) shortly before the infamous attack on Pearl Harbor.

Leading from the front, Anderson's unit was among those conducting defensive operations in the Muar area with a fighting withdrawal to Parit Sulong, during which he and his men were cut off and suffered heavy casualties.

Anderson led them through four days of heavy fighting in a desperate bid to reach Allied lines. For his leadership, protection of his own wounded men, and for repeatedly risking his own life, Anderson was deservedly awarded the Victoria Cross.

The fighting done, Anderson endured more than three years in Japanese captivity before returning to Australia. His appointment in the AIF ended on 21 December 1945 and Anderson returned to his property.

He ran for Federal Parliament in the 1949 General Election and won a seat in the House of Representatives as the Country Party Member for Hume. He lost the seat in 1951, but regained it in 1955, remaining in office until 1961.

He died, aged 91, in Canberra on Remembrance Day, 1988.

A father of four, Charles Anderson VC MC is regarded highly amongst Australia's pantheon of heroes and especially at Young, where there is a park named in his honour which includes a wall of remembrance.



In Loving Memory of
JOHN MEWBURN,
WHO PASSED AWAY MAY 14TH 1918,
AGED 56 YEARS,
BELOVED HUSBAND OF
MARGARET MEWBURN.
Also
Pte. E. R. MEWBURN, A. I. F.
KILLED IN ACTION IN FRANCE
SEPT 26TH 1917, AGED 20 YEARS.
AND **Pte. A. G. E. MEWBURN, A. I. F.**
KILLED IN ACTION IN FRANCE
NOV 5TH 1917, AGED 23 YEARS.
DEARLY LOVED SONS OF
JOHN & MARGARET MEWBURN.

PIONEER: John Mewburn's headstone on his grave in the Rugby Cemetery. His soldier sons Albert and Earl, who have no known graves, are also remembered here.

TINY VILLAGE'S WORLD OF GRIEF

EVERY headstone in every graveyard has a tale to tell, often a tragic one.

In the cemetery at Rugby, a village in the Southern Tablelands, there is a marble marker now lying down, broken in two and stained by the ravages of time.

Before the tombstone fell, or was placed to avoid further damage, it stood over the plot of John "Jack" Mewburn whose ancestors were the pioneering European settlers in the district from the first half of the 19th Century.

Jack was Rugby through and through, having been the very first of the first generation of Mewburns born there. He has a special place in local history ... and so very much do two of his brave sons.

His father was John "Yorkshire Jack" Mewburn and here is the great irony ... this fellow was transported as a convict and his sons ultimately died fighting for an Empire which had banished him to distant shores.

This fascinating tale begins on 20 September 1810 at Hurworth-on-Tees, County Durham, in England, when the wife of weaver Thomas Mewburn (1782-1828), Mary Anne/Anne (née Buck) (1787-1851), brought into the world her second child and first son and called him John.

Baptised on Christmas Day that year, he was a brother to two-year-old Alizah, with whom he coincidentally shared a birthday.

John's younger siblings were Thomas (1811-12), Eleanor (1812-22), another brother named Thomas (1814-15), yet another Thomas (1816-1902), Mary Anne/Anne (1818-96), Edward (1820, who lived just four days) and William (1823-1900).

At age 19, John was brought to trial at Beverley in the East Riding of Yorkshire (possibly why he had the nickname within the family of "Yorkshire Jack") during the Summer of 1830 and was convicted on 12 July of receiving stolen silk.

So the story goes, he found the silks in a field at night and was too afraid to hand them to the authorities because of "singing ballads the day before".

He was sentenced to seven-years' transportation (the standard sentence for most misdemeanours).

After John's conviction, he was first held, as was customary, in a prison hulk, the *Retribution*, at Woolwich, whilst awaiting a ship.

A contemporary note said he had been in custody previously.

He was transported aboard the 1791-built *Lady Harewood* on 15 October 1830, bound for New South Wales, arriving early in 1831.

He was then sent to work for John Thorne at Parramatta.

John gained his Certificate of Freedom on 6 February 1840.

In this, he was described as five feet eight inches (172.7 centimetres) tall, with brown eyes and hair, and of a dark, ruddy, freckled complexion. He had trained as a whitesmith (someone who worked with soft metals such as pewter or tin).

On 5 February 1843, three years after gaining his freedom, he married Mary Ann/Anne Bachelor/Batchelor at Yass before Minister William Lisle.

Mary Ann was born on 23 June 1827 in London and Christened on New Year's Day, 1828, in Saint Sepulchre-without-Newgate Anglican Church.

She landed in Sydney on 12 October 1836 on board *Elizabeth IV* with her convict mother Sarah Batchelor née Crunkhorn (also known as Clackhorn).

John and Mary Ann had 11 children – eight girls and three boys.

They had a hard life trying to sustain themselves and their family, but they managed.

Yorkshire Jack died of influenza aged 81 on 13 November 1891 and Mary Ann, known in the community as "Grannie", died in her 84th year on 28 November 1910. They are buried in the same plot at Rugby.

Three of her daughters pre-deceased her, but at the time of her passing, Mary Ann had 89 grandchildren, as well as 89 great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandchild.

Interestingly, the locality of Rugby was called Mewburn until 1 March 1899, when the Post Office name was changed.

continued ...



MATRLARCH: Mary Ann/Anne Bachelor/Batchelor, grandmother of Albert, Earl and Claude who fought in The Great War.



PROUD PARENTS: John and Margaret Mewburn with their sons Albert (left) and Earl, known as Roley, who were all ready to go and do their noble duty. John was 54 when this photograph was taken and Margaret 52. Albert was aged 22 in this picture and Roley was 19 or 20.



The children of Yorkshire Jack and Mary Ann were Anne “Annie” (1842-1930), Mary Polly (1845-1906), Elizabeth (1846-98), Sarah (1849-1917), Frances “Fanny” (1852-1912), Ellen (1854-1941), Thomas (1857-1946), Caroline (1859-94), John “Jack” (1862-1919), Emma (1864-1959) and William (1868-1965).

Jack Mewburn, father of the two Great War heroes who are the subject of this story, came into this world on 19 May 1862 at Mewburn, as it was then known.

He died, aged 56, in Yass Hospital on the night of 14 May 1919, leaving behind a widow already mourning two sons killed in action a little over six weeks apart in 1917 in The Great War of 1914-18.

“Mr Mewburn has been ailing for some years,” reported *The Burrowa News* two days later.

“Since the death of his two soldier sons, Roley and Albert, on active service, the late Mr Mewburn has been on the downward grade in health.

“He leaves a widow, three sons and four daughters to mourn their loss.”

The names of the Mewburn boys killed on the Western Front are also engraved at their father’s final resting place – a long way from where they fell, serving God, King and Country.

Rugby, a tiny dot on the Riverina electorate map, was originally called Mewburn after those who moved into the area and tried to eke out an existence there a little over 50 years after the First Fleet dropped anchor at Sydney Cove.

Earl Roland “Roley” Mewburn was just 20 when he lost his life fighting in the 55th Battalion at Ypres, on 26 September 1917.

Albert George Ernest Mewburn, 22, made the ultimate sacrifice on 5 November 1917 whilst with the 17th Battalion, in the final days of the Battle of Passchendaele.

The loss of her two boys and husband was a heavy burden to bear for Margaret Mewburn who would also, sadly, outlive one of her daughters.

Margaret was born at Grabben Gullen on 4 February 1864, the second child and eldest daughter of 12 children of Irish immigrant Dennis Walsh, 36, and his wife Elizabeth (née Slaven), 22.

Margaret’s siblings were Thomas (born 1860), Joseph (1865-1947), Annie (1866-1951), John Joseph “Jack” (1871-1958), Mary Ann (1873-1935), Denis (1875-1904), Edward J “Ned” (1876-1955), Bridget Mary (1877-1914), Patrick (1879-82), Henry (1882-84) and an unnamed boy.

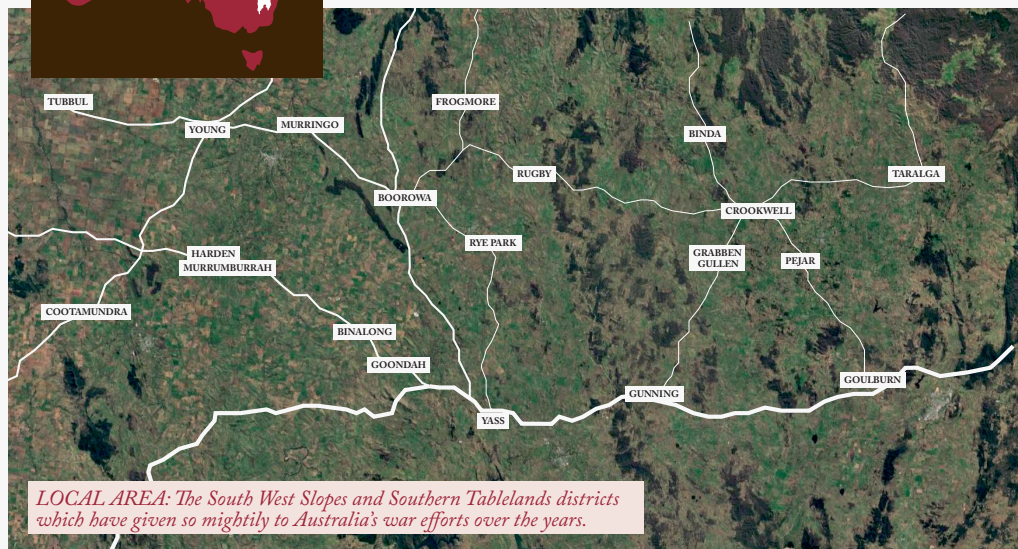
Her parents, who married in Goulburn in 1854, lived long and full lives; Dennis passing away in 1908 aged 80 and being buried at Rugby whilst her Pejar-born mother, also of Irish descent, died and was also buried at Rugby, in 1922, aged 87.

Margaret married Jack Mewburn on 9 February 1887 at Crookwell.

The first of their nine children in 21 years, Thomas James (1887-1983) was born at Five Mile Creek, nine months and a day after their wedding, followed by Gwendoline Florence “Florrie” (1889-1972) at Boorowa, John Donald (1892-1964) at Rugby, Albert (2 March 1894-1917) at Rugby, Earl (22 October 1897-1917) at Rye Park, Emily Lynda/Linda (1899-1986) at Boorowa, Helen/Ellen Amelia “Millie” (1902-72) at Boorowa, Mary Anne Clarice (1905-46) at Rugby and Glenelg Archibald (1909-89) at Rugby or Boorowa.



AUSTRALIA: The South West Slopes and Southern Tablelands districts in relation to Australia.



LOCAL AREA: The South West Slopes and Southern Tablelands districts which have given so mightily to Australia’s war efforts over the years.

Three Rugby locals never returned from the First World War.

As well as the Mewburns, Private Thomas Bell Evans, 27, was killed by a bomb explosion at Lone Pine, Gallipoli, on 8 August 1915.

Those unfortunate three, and Rugby's two World War II dead – Pte Darcy Reginald Perceval (killed in action in Malaya on 19 January 1942, aged 25) and Pte Hilary Guildford Gorham (who died of disease whilst a Prisoner Of War (POW) in Fukuoka, Japan, on 20 June 1945, aged 25) – are remembered on marble plaques on granite posts supporting Rugby's war memorial gates which carry the words *Lest We Forget*.

This is where residents of this patriotic village and district, so very mindful and proud of their rich heritage, conduct their annual ANZAC Day commemoration.



PEACEFUL PLACE: The memorial park on Rugby Road where local heroes are honoured.

ILL-FATED SHIP

The ship Roley Mewburn took in 1916 to do his part in what was supposed to be “The War to End All Wars”, now sits at the bottom of the mid-Atlantic.

HMAT *Ceramic* A40 was an 18,481-ton steamship built at a cost of £436,000 by British shipbuilder Harland & Wolff at Belfast and launched on 11 December 1912.

Leased by the Commonwealth as a troopship in 1914, she was armed with two stern-mounted, quick-firing 4.7-inch (120-millimetre) naval guns which certainly packed some punch.

Ceramic survived a number of attacks during the war, returning in 1919 to the White Star Line (the company that built and owned the infamous RMS *Titanic* which sank on her maiden voyage in 1912).

In February 1940, *Ceramic* was recommissioned as a troopship, carrying World War II Australian soldiers to Europe.

On 3 November 1942, *Ceramic* left Liverpool for Australia via Saint Helena and South Africa, carrying 656 people, 14 defensively equipped merchant ship gunners and 12,362 tons of cargo.

Of those on board, 91 were women and children and 244 were military or naval, including 14 Royal Australian Navy personnel.

Of her British Army passengers, 31 were sisters of the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps.

There were also 133 fare-paying civilians, of whom 43 were women and 14 were children, the youngest being a one-year-old baby girl.

As on her previous departure in January, *Ceramic* first headed west because of the threat of enemy attack.

What happened next was detailed in the 1958 book *We Captured a U-Boat* by Captain Daniel V. Gallery, United States Navy, with excerpts published online by the Naval Historical Society of Australia.

At midnight on 6-7 December, in cold weather and rough seas in the mid-Atlantic and under a pitch black sky, German submarine *U-515*, commanded by Werner Henke (1909-44), hit *Ceramic* with a single torpedo. Two or three minutes later, two more torpedoes thudded into *Ceramic*'s engine room, stopping her engines and her electric lighting.

The sub surfaced and edged slowly forward. Captain Henke thought he had sunk a troopship and was surprised to see women and children in lifeboats and in the water.

Several people managed to clamber on to the sub's afterdeck and Captain Henke ordered a few men to push them over the side, which was done, but some made their way on the deck. Henke unsuccessfully tried to find *Ceramic*'s captain. He saw a man in uniform on one of the rafts. Sapper Eric Munday of the Royal Engineers was taken prisoner, the only one taken.

Henke then ordered “full speed ahead” and then “dive”. One of his crew told him there were people on the afterdeck but the dive order stood and that was the end of them.

Previously, his radio operator had told him *Ceramic* had sent an SOS but he doubted anyone had heard it, due to heavy static and he asked if he could send another one for her. “Nein!” was the response.

When the sub left the scene there must have been nearly 500 people still alive, of whom about 250-300 would have been in the boats, the rest on rafts or clinging to pieces of wreckage.

The mighty *Ceramic* and all but one on board were gone, 640 kilometres (400 miles) west of the Azores (off Portugal).

With reasonable weather, about half may have made it to the Azores or been picked up by passing ships, but early in the following morning the weather deteriorated until the next day it blew a full gale. By the next night probably no-one from the *Ceramic* remained alive (except Spr Munday) for none were ever seen again.

Eventually, Spr Munday was sent to Stalag VIII-B in Upper Silesia, where he remained a POW until 1945.

continued ...

As for Captain Henke, what goes around during wartime, often comes around.

On 9 April 1944, at 3.10pm, *U-515* was sunk in the mid-Atlantic north of Madeira at 34°35'N 19°18'W by bombs from the American escort carrier USS *Guadalcanal* and depth charges from the destroyer escorts USS *Chatelain*, USS *Flaberty*, USS *Pillsbury* and USS *Pope*.

Forty survivors were taken on by the warships.

Captain Henke was interned in the interrogation centre known as at Fort Hunt, Virginia, where his interrogators gave him an ultimatum to co-operate or be extradited to England to face war crime charges.

On 15 June 1944, he dashed to the fence of the facility and began to climb over, against orders to stop, whereupon a guard shot him dead with a sub-machine gun.

Promoted posthumously to Korvettenkapitän, he is interred at The Post Cemetery in Fort George G Meade, Maryland, along with 32 other German POWs and three Italian POWs.

A graveside ceremony is held every year on Volkstrauertag, in November, the German equivalent of ANZAC Day, at which the Naval attaché of the German Embassy in Washington, DC, lays a wreath with a ribbon in the colours of the German flag in commemoration of all those buried at this gravesite. It is not uncommon to see flowers at the foot of the grave.

FULL STEAM AHEAD

That was the fascinating fate of *Ceramic* ... but on 7 October 1916, with Roley Mewburn aboard, it was all plain sailing.

As *Ceramic* departed Sydney on that sunny Spring Saturday, there was a lot going on in the New South Wales capital.

The Sydney Morning Herald somberly noted: “The two Australian casualty lists issued on Saturday – the 229th and 230th – contain in all 1,577 names, approximately a battalion and a half. The number of dead is 181.”

This was the time of the first great debate on mandatory conscription, ahead of the first referendum, which was defeated, on 28 October 1916.

A street parade of 1,500 returning soldiers “with a view to stimulating the movement for compulsory reinforcements ... passed through the city streets”, the *Herald* reported, whilst thousands gathered in The Domain to demonstrate against conscription.

Meanwhile, across the harbour, NSW Premier William Holman was opening Taronga Park Zoo before 2,000 people.

Ceramic left Sydney en route to Durban, South Africa, arriving 25 October and out three days later, then on to Cape Town (arriving 30 October and out on 1 November), eventually landing at Plymouth, England, on 21 November after a 46-day voyage.

Officer Commanding the troops on *Ceramic* was Colonel Major General James William Macarthur-Onslow, a decorated officer of the Second Boer War (1899-1902),



WWII HEROES: Rugby's Hilary Guildford Gorham (left) and Darcy Reginald Perceval, who both died in the Pacific War.

in which his service with the NSW Military Forces in the Orange Free State from February to May 1900, including the actions at Vet River and Zand River, and operations in the Transvaal, resulted in him being Mentioned in Despatches by Field Marshal Lord Frederick Sleigh Roberts.

Although too old (he was born on 17 November 1867) for active service during the First World War, Macarthur-Onslow held the rank of Colonel with the Sea Transport Service of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), commanding troopships travelling between Australia, the Middle East and Britain between 1915-17.

Ceramic offloaded a total of 2,668 troops at Plymouth ... one poor soul unfortunately died at sea.

LOCAL HEROES

Roley Mewburn, Service No. 2693, sailed with the 152-strong 6th Reinforcements of the 55th Infantry Battalion, which had a distinct Riverina, Central West, Snowy Mountains, South West Slopes and Southern Tablelands flavour.

Indeed, amongst those reinforcements on *Ceramic* were 52 fresh-faced Diggers, including Roley, who would be considered these days as “local”, according to the current and recent Federal electorate boundaries.

Amongst them were:

- 2612 Frederick William Albert Alford, 25, grazier, Narandera (Narandera since 1949);
- 2615 Frank Henry Borman, 28, labourer, of Murrumburrah;

- 2620 Charles William Blake, 18, carpenter, of Tumberumba;
- 2621 Aubrey Thomas Raymond Brown, 26, dairy inspector, Experimental Farm, Wagga Wagga;
- 2626 Martin Gregory Davis Bushell, 19, labourer, Gundagai;
- 2630 Charles Edward Chalker, 27, labourer, Taralga;
- 2631 Frederick William Chalker, 25, labourer, Taralga;
- 2632 William Christie, 31, baker, Tumberumba;
- 2635 Edward John Copson, 40, labourer, Cowra;
- 2637 Lawrence Peter Collier, 24, blacksmith, Barmedman;
- 2640 William James Cormack, 34, plasterer, Murrumburrah;
- 2644 William Henry Collier, 18, blacksmith's striker, Barmedman;
- 2645 Harry Porterfield Cooper, 18, carter, Tumut;
- 2656 Albert Graham, 34, labourer, Narandera (Narrandera since 1949);
- 2657 John Greenwood alias John Hopetoun Pascoe, 26, labourer, Cootamundra;
- 2666 William Haley, 18, railway call boy, Harden;
- 2667 Oliver Richard Hinton, 25, farmer, Tubbul;
- 2668 Bertram Deacon Hoare, 18, shop assistant, Harden;
- 2669 Joseph John Hush, 34, labourer, Young;
- 2675 Thomas Hyde, 42, miner, Marengo (Murringo since 1926);
- 2684 Philip Kelly, 25, farmer, Barmedman;
- 2685 Frank Kelly, 21, farmer, Barmedman;
- 2686 Michael James Leonard, 31, baker, Yass;
- 2689 Walter Haynes Manwaring, 24, farmer, Kyron via Cootamundra;
- 2690 Percy Manwaring, 21, miller, Murrumburrah;
- 2698 Sylvester Luke McMahon, 19, labourer, Binda;
- 2706 Horace Robert Nutt, 43, carrier, Wagga Wagga;
- 2707 James Nash, 40, horse-breaker, Young;
- 2711 Gilbert Harding Pratt, 23, farmer, Wallacetown;
- 2718 Sydney Roderick Pratt, 30, barman, Wagga Wagga;
- 2724 John Rodgers, 21, farmer, Temora;
- 2726 Andrew Lorie Reid, 35, labourer, Tumut;
- 2732 Paul Oscar Sticker, 24, machine expert, Grenfell;
- 2736 Frank Sleeman, 28, farmer, Yass;
- 2739B Harold William George Thomas John Shea, 21, printer, Yass;
- 2744 Arthur James Thew, 21, labourer, Goondah;
- 2749 Charles Bede Tunney, 18, labourer, Monteagle;

- 2751 Charles Joseph Williams, 29, farmer, Redbridge;
- 2752 Oscar Sylvester Williams, 26, labourer, Binalong;
- 2753 Benjamin Victor Williams, 23, blacksmith, Binalong;
- 2756 Arthur Richard Wallace, 19, labourer, Binalong;
- 2759 George Alton Young, 23, school teacher, Bomen;
- 2762 John Alfred William Degenhardt, 26, labourer, Barmedman;
- 2763 Patrick Downes, 23, shearer, Frogmore;
- 2764 Leo George Day, 29, motor-driver, Tumut;
- 2766 Francis James, 21, bush worker, Gunning;
- 2770 Arthur Oakes, 21, farmer, Marengo via Young;
- 2773 Mortimer Styles, 21, blacksmith, Rye Park via Boorowa;
- 2776 Harold Ambrose Wales, 21, butcher, Young;
- 2780 Richard Short, 28, labourer, Young; and
- 2784 Frank Herbert Comfort, 19, motor-driver, Leeton, Yanco.

These brave Riverina lads were all ranked Privates ... and brave they were.

BROTHERS IN ARMS

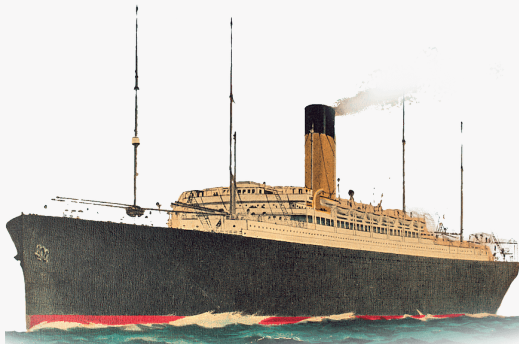
Amongst this cohort on *Ceramic* were four sets of brothers: Charles and Fred Chalker of Taralga, Lawrence and William Collier of Barmedman, Frank and Philip Kelly, also of Barmedman, as well as Benjamin and Oscar Williams of Binalong.

Three of the local men earned decorations for their vim and vigour.

William Haley was barely 18 when he took his enlistment oath at Murrumburrah on 13 May 1916. There was nothing of him, being five feet, three inches (160 centimetres) tall and weighing just nine stone, four pounds (58.9 kilograms).

But what he lacked in size, Pte Haley more than made up for in courage.

continued ...



MIGHTY SHIP: *The great vessel HMAT Ceramic A40, used as a troop ship in two World Wars.*

He was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM) with his citation reading:

“For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty when carrying rations to the front line. The route, which lay across the open, was heavily shelled, and he was severely wounded. He struggled on, however, a distance of half a mile, although heavily laden, and succeeded in delivering the rations before he collapsed. His gallant and devoted action inspired the other men of his party to go forward and deliver their loads in like manner.”

Pte Haley suffered gunshot wounds in his abdomen, back and chest whilst on duty with the 13th Battalion, east of Messines, Belgium, on 27 August 1917 – the night of the actions which earned him his DCM.

He was treated at the front and a month later admitted to Harefield House Hospital (No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital) in England.

Once he was released, he spent time in various depots in England including Weymouth, Codford, Hurdcott, Longbridge Deverill and Southampton before rejoining his unit in France on 3 December 1917, being promoted to Lance Corporal near the end of the war and later Corporal (on 28 January 1919).

Cpl Haley returned home on HMAT *City Of Exeter*, arriving on 12 July 1919.

Philip Kelly was awarded a Military Medal (see story Pages 18 and 19).

The other soldier to win battlefield honours of those Riverina boys who sailed on the *Ceramic* was Crookwell-born Sylvester McMahon, who was wounded in action on three separate occasions but eventually made it home.

His citation read: “For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty during an attack on St Denis Wood, Peronne, on 2nd September 1918. During an attempt to advance our flank beyond St Denis Wood, heavy MG (machine gun) fire was encountered. This man by his initiative and quick judgment brought his Lewis Gun into action disregarding all personal safety and engaged two enemy MGs, which he silenced, and thereby enabled

the flank to go forward and capture an enemy post of 1 Officer, 9 O/Ranks and 2 MGs. When it became necessary for the party to withdraw slightly to a stronger position this man covered the move until the flanks were in position, he himself being exposed to heavy MG fire. Notwithstanding that one of his L Gun team was badly wounded he succeeded in bringing the gun and wounded man back to our line. His courage and coolness throughout the whole operation was very noticeable and he assisted greatly in the success of the attack.”

For this, Pte McMahon received a Military Medal.

Most of the Riverina contingent returned to Australia between 1917-20.

Sadly, six of those who left aboard the *Ceramic*'s October-November 1916 voyage did not make it home.

Killed in action were Frank Borman (died at Polygon Wood, Belgium, 24 September 1917), Lawrence Collier (Doignes, France, 2 April 1917), Gilbert Pratt (Bullecourt, France, 21 May 1917) and Roley Mewburn.

Paul Sticker (Polygon Wood, 27 September 1917) and Harold Shea (Bullecourt, 16 April 1917) both died of wounds.

RUGBY'S MEWBURNS

Roley and Albert Mewburn both enlisted at Goulburn in 1916.

Just a teenager, Roley was four months short of his 20th birthday when he joined, on 21 June.

He required parental consent as he was under 21 years of age.

A farm hand (rabbitier) at Rye Park, he weighed in at 74.8kg (11st11lb) and stood 184cm (6½”) tall, with grey eyes and brown hair.

When Albert signed up on 5 November (a year to the day from his death), he was 22 years and six months, weighing 68kg (10st10lb) and 177.8cm (5'10”) tall, with hazel eyes and dark hair.



BRONZED AUSSIES: Albert (left) and Earl Mewburn's names immortalised on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

“Muscular development good” was noted on Albert’s papers and, interestingly, both boys bore scars on their right kneecaps.

On the last day of 1916, Roley proceeded to France, per SS *Princess Henriette*, via Folkestone, a coastal town on the English Channel, in Kent, in south-east England.

Built for the Belgium Government, *Princess Henriette* was used on the Dover-Ostend fast mail-steamer service. She was the last ship to leave a Belgium port before England declared war on Germany.

During the war she served as a troopship based at Folkestone, sailing back and forth over the English Channel. She survived the war and returned to cross-channel civilian service until being scrapped in 1922.

On 8 February 1917, Roley was taken on strength with his unit in the field but in mid-March became a patient of the 15th Field Ambulance and admitted to the 5th Australian Divisional Base Depot at Étaples with influenza and bronchitis, then transferred to the Casualty Clearing Station.

He was not well at all but war is war and every able-bodied man was needed at the frontline.

Whilst in the convalescent camp, Roley wrote to his mother, his letter being published alongside other correspondence from the front in *The Burrowa News* of 6 July 1917.

His letter, in part, makes fascinating reading: “I have not heard from Albert since he sailed, but I don’t suppose he is in England yet. I wrote a letter to him to-day, on speck of finding him. I have been in the firing line a good bit, and those big shells falling all around you make you think a bit I can tell you. There is no rifle firing at all, because we cannot do much good with them. The first introduction I got to the Germans was when we were going in the trenches. They sent some big shells over, and one lobbed right near me, but it did not explode, or I would not be here now. I was surprised to hear that Albert and Claude (a cousin) had enlisted. I wrote to Albert from England, to try and persuade him not to enlist, as I did not think you could manage without one of us; but he had enlisted before he got my letter. It is a great experience to young people like us. I am not sorry I came, anyhow. I don’t think much of this side of the world.”

Laid up for nearly five months, Roley did not rejoin his unit until 9 August.

The following month Roley was killed.

His Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau files contain graphic evidence from six comrades about the incident which ended his life.

Pte Allen Charles Elliott, a labourer, of Munderoo, near Tumarumba, reported Roley being “killed at Polygon Wood on September 26th by M/G fire. He was a S/B (stretcher bearer) and had gone out over the parapet to get another S/B to help with a wounded man. He fell on the parapet killed outright.”

Pte Elliott said Roley was buried close to where he fell. One of those who helped bury Roley was Frenchman Louis Guillaume, fighting for the AIF, who died of wounds (gas poisoning) on the Somme the following April.



TROOP SHIP: AIF soldiers embarking RMS Osterley whilst she was docked at Cape Town, South Africa.

Of Roley, Pte Elliott said: “They put a little cross on the grave.”

A grieving Margaret Mewburn wrote to the Officer in Charge of Base Records on 29 October, saying she had been notified of her son’s death and requesting information about his death and his last worldly possessions.

With the war still raging in Europe, a package was sent via the ship *Gilgai* to Mrs Mewburn at “Bonny Wood”, Rye Park.

It contained cards, letters, notebook, note-case, photographs, purse, razor in its case, razor strop, souvenir handkerchiefs, two books of views and a wallet.

She signed for it on 6 September 1918.

His Memorial Plaque, or Dead Man’s Penny as it was called, arrived on 9 November 1922 but it was not until 14 April 1928 that Mrs Mewburn received Roley’s Victory Medal.

ALBERT’S STORY

Albert embarked as a Bomber with the 6th Reinforcements of the Light Trench Mortar Battery, leaving Sydney per RMS *Osterley* on 10 February 1917.

On that same vessel was a first cousin of Roley and Albert, Rugby-born farmer Claude Leslie Mewburn (1893-1978), son of Thomas and his wife Caroline, née Johnson (1865-1938).

Albert and Claude had been farewelled at a dinner-dance at Rugby which *The Burrowa News* of 24 November 1916 reported: “Mr Sid Gibbons, the old warrior who returned some months ago from the hardships of the battlefield and the barren wind-swept shores of Gallipoli was invited to make the presentation, which he did in a few well chosen words.”

Whilst fighting in France on 24 August 1918, Claude sustained a gunshot wound which fractured his left arm. He returned to Australia at war’s end.

Albert disembarked the *Osterley* at Plymouth, England, on 11 April and underwent training at Parkhouse, Perham Downs, Windmill Hill and Hurdcott before proceeding, via Southampton, to Le Havre, France.

continued ...

During this time and owing to a duplication of his Service No., he had an A affixed to his number 2013.

In the same 6 July 1917 edition of *The Burrowa News* that Roley's letter appeared, a letter home from Albert reports that his trip over on RMS *Osterley* was "a good, but risky trip".

Albert wrote: "There was a boat sunk to the left of us, about 10 or 15 miles away. There was a fleet of torpedo boats and torpedo destroyers came to meet us. We had about half a dozen of them all round us."

Further down in the letter he penned this: "I wrote to Roley to-night. I will soon be with him. We will be here a month, and then we get a few days leave, and then start to train. We are not doing much now. It is a sort of a spell. So we won't get a hit at the Germans for a while. We have seen two aeroplanes flying over since we landed. We were going to send a cable when we landed. But if we only paid 9d (pence) a word it would not reach you for six weeks. If you want them to go in two days you have to pay 3s (shillings) a word. I think I have told you all for this time, so good bye and remember me to all. I remain your ever loving son – Albert."

In a separate letter to Miss Milly Mewburn, of Rye Park, also in the 6 July paper, Albert wrote: "It will be two months at least before we go into the firing lines. It is always raining or snowing here. Summer here is as bad as winter in Australia. But we have a good fire at night and plenty of nap, and in the day we are on the move all the time, so we don't feel the cold much. It is dreadfully slippery here; if you walk two yards you slip back one. We never have anything to throw away after meals like we did in Australia, but we mostly get enough to eat. I think the war will be over by September; we mostly hear the truth about it; it can't last much longer, anyhow."

Albert's war ... and tragically his life ... was over before he knew it.

Taken on strength with the 17th Battalion on 20 October 1917, Albert was killed in action in Belgium on 5 November.

Unbelievably, Albert was killed the very moment he first stepped on to the frontline.

Albert's Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau files are heart-rending reading.

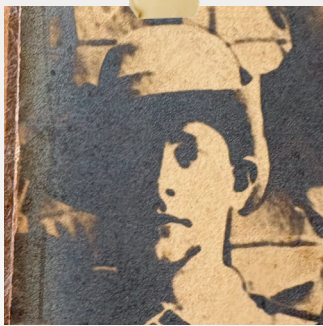
An overseer from Scone before he enlisted, Sergeant Alfred Charters was an eyewitness to Albert's demise and had this to say:

"Mewburn (a Lewis Gunner) was killed by a whizz bang which lobbed right on top of him on an outpost in Passchendaele, the evening before the Canadians took the village. He was not killed outright but had a leg taken off by the shell but only lived a short while, dying before reaching a D/S. (Dressing Station). He was hit about 11pm and died smiling. I saw him wounded being in charge of outpost. We were having a very hot time but he was buried at night I'm pretty sure though I can't say where. The ground was held."

Lance Corporal George Alfred Allen, a carpenter of Narrabri, reported this: "I saw Pte Mewburn hit by a shell on Nov 5/17 at midnight at Passchendaele Ridge. He was a little boy with a Lewis Gun, and was half buried.



BOOROWA MEMORIAL: Three Mewburns are listed on the Boorowa War Memorial on which there are 137 World War I names and 16 from World War II, comprising 14 soldiers and two RAAF personnel. The memorial comprises a red-brick octagonal building with tiled roof, surmounted by a turret housing a four-faced clock. There is a meeting room inside the structure. A large bronze First World War honour roll is inset into the front face of the building. The roll was unveiled on ANZAC Day, 1933, ahead of the building being finished later that year. There are also a number of smaller plaques with dedications and rolls for the Second World War and subsequent conflicts added at later dates. An arched metal gate is in front of the memorial, set within a brick fence.



Albert Mewburn



Claude Mewburn



Earl "Roley" Mewburn

"We tried to get out but the bombardment was so heavy – the stretcher bearers took him ¾ of an hour later. He died in about 2 hours and was buried by his stretcher bearers, half way between the trenches and the dressing station. Pte Mewburn had one leg blown off from the thigh, and the other leg much injured, besides other wounds."

LCpl Allen described Albert thus: "Countrified looking, dark, quiet fellow, about 5'9"."

Pte Alexander Molyson Gardiner, railway worker of Armidale, was with Albert when, in his words: "a howitzer shell burst in our trench". He said Albert was "conscious to the last".

Stretcher bearer Pte Clyde Allan Lloyd was with Albert to the end and buried the poor soul.

Pte Lloyd said Albert's dugout was heavily reinforced by heavy wood but "the enemy obtained a direct hit on the dugout with a 5.9* high explosive shell, and a fragment of shell amputated his left leg about six inches below the thigh. He also had an artery cut in the right leg and had a great amount of debris on his body. During the time we took to extricate him in bad weather and darkness, haemorrhage had set in severely. I endeavoured to stop bleeding but every effort was in vain, and he was being taken to the doctor when he died and was buried by me at the intersection of the communication sap and the frontline of the 17th Battalion on Tokio Ridge. He was unfortunately buried in a shell hole marked by a rifle. He was not in possession of a pay book but had an identification disc which I left on him. What private property he had was handed to Sergeant Major W Murdoch whom was left to dispose of them in the usual military manner."

There was no indication in Albert's official Army files that his personal effects ever made it home.

His bereaved mother did not receive his Memorial Plaque until two days before Armistice Day, 1922 and it was another six months before his Victory Medal arrived at "Bonny Wood".

The fate of the two Mewburn boys' final resting places also ended up being "Known unto God" but they are remembered, rightly, in several places including the Menin Gate Memorial to the Missing in Ypres, Belgium, the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, Boorowa War Memorial, on the wooden scroll which once resided in St Matthew's Church, Rye Park (in which the last

service was held in 2009), at the entrance to Rugby's park, inscribed in gold on a marble tablet in the Rye Park Memorial Hall and, of course, on their father's gravestone in Rugby Cemetery.

Next year it will be 110 years since the Mewburn boys last fearlessly faced their foe ... as Laurence Binyon famously wrote ... "Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow."

That is so long ago.

But may their service and sacrifice never be forgotten ... not by the tiny community initially stunned when the devastating news of their loss became known ... nor by a nation which only has the democracy and freedoms it enjoys today because of people such as Albert and Roley Mewburn.

*A 5.9 was a 150-millimetre (or 149mm) calibre projectile, used by German forces during both World Wars, used for destroying field fortifications, impacting enemy armoured units, and providing long-range fire.



RYE PARK REMEMBERS: The wooden scroll from the former St Matthew's Church now housed in the Rye Park Memorial Hall, a building dedicated on 6 December 1922 to honour local service and sacrifice. The building also contains a marble tablet which commemorates the Mewburns.

MERLIN THE POET SOLDIER: GREAT NAME, EVERLASTING FAME

POET, farmer and soldier, Merlin Kinneir Tarte was certainly one who put his words into action.

This English-born wordsmith who called Wagga Wagga home, gave his all-too-short life for God, King and his adopted country.

Merlin was born in August 1891 at St Albans, Hertfordshire, son of renowned architect and local conservative politician Frederick and his wife Emily née Fursdon.

Seeking a new life, the family emigrated to Australia in 1907 when Merlin was not quite 17.

Purchasing the property "Tallawallen" on the Albury Road just outside Wagga Wagga, Merlin attended the Wagga Wagga Experimental Farm.

Merlin loved the land, was a fervent patriot, a keen reader and a published author.

Wagga Wagga mobilised quickly after Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914 and the first group of volunteers left town by train on the 20th of that month.

Amidst the hustle and bustle as recruitment began, Merlin busied himself writing and on 7 December 1914, *The Daily Advertiser* printed his stinging rebuke entitled "To President Woodrow Wilson" wherein he castigated the United States President for not doing more for the war effort.

He did not miss!



YOUNGSTER: Merlin Kinneir Tarte as a boy in England.

*"Don't appreciate your sitting down and watching,
While Freedom is beneath the Tyrant's heel,
Would sooner have you keep your learned mouth shut,
If you really can do nothing for their weal."*

Fancy that! Someone being openly critical of the policies of the occupant of the White House. It seems the more things change, the more they stay the same!

On 18 January 1915, the *Advertiser* published Merlin's piece called "Private Tommy Atkins", a name for a common soldier in the British Army famously used during the 19th Century and World War I.

He began:

*"Let the Germans come along, in their numbers just
as strong*

As the pebbles on the beach where breezes blow;

Tommy Atkins in the fray, has a healthy, hearty way

Of settling up the odds among the foe."

The events of 25 April 1915 at Gallipoli stirred the new nation's conscience as never before.

Merlin was desperate to do his bit.

Fronting up at Liverpool on 30 June 1915, he was even assigned a Service No. (3121) but became ill in camp and was discharged, medically unfit.

Returning home, his desire to play his part did not waver.

On 5 May 1916, Merlin's "Their Deathless Fame" acrostic poem, reprinted here, was published by the *Advertiser*.

At the age of 24 years and 10 months and engaged to be married to Margaret "Greta" Goode, Merlin again tried to enlist, at the historic Victoria Barracks at Paddington, on 5 July 1917.

This time he was successful and was allocated Service No. 3704.

He was five feet, nine-and-a-half inches (176.5cm) tall and weighed nine stone, eight pounds (60.7kg), with grey eyes and brown hair. Since his last attempt to enlist, Merlin had, by all accounts, grown an inch and lost 6lb!

Private Merlin Tarte was now off to war and he boarded HMAT *Miltiades* A28 with the 53rd Battalion's 10th Reinforcements on 2 August 1917.

He marched into the 14th Training Battalion at Hurdcott, England, and, on 16 January 1918, proceeded to the Western Front in France.

Wounded in action (gunshot wound, right shoulder), Merlin was taken to England for treatment before returning to fight in France on 21 August 1918.

Serving in the 2nd Machine Gun Battalion, Merlin was again wounded in action, this time mortally, on 3 October 1918. He sustained a gunshot wound to his back, which penetrated his chest.

Sadly, he succumbed to his wounds at 1.30pm the next day. He was 27. The war was just a month and a week from ending.

Irish-born Pte William Wallace Gawn, who served with Merlin, said of his lost mate: "Tarte was my cobbler. I met him at Salisbury Plain, England. I saw Tarte after he had been wounded at Bellecourt (sic) Tunnel, Hindenburg Line, in October 1918. He was badly wounded, and was taken to the (50th) Casualty Clearing Station. I heard that he had died. It was posted up in Battalion Orders that he had died. I wrote to his people, and they wrote and told me that he had died. Tarte was a very good fellow, one of the best I ever came across."

Merlin was buried at Tincourt, near Peronne, the inscription on the headstone eventually placed over him poignantly reading: "Till the day breaks".

As Regional Museums Officer Samantha Leah writes in her excellent essay "Looking for Merlin" which forms part of the Museum of the Riverina's exhibition on this intriguing soldier-poet: "The St Albans Hertfordshire Historical Society in England had published a book on local architects that included Merlin's father, Frederick Kinneir-Tarte. As part of their research, they had put together a collection about Frederick, which included archival items about his son. We contacted them, and we learnt something extraordinary – Merlin had a half-sister named Elizabeth, who was still alive and living in Tasmania. We were able to contact her, and she told us one last piece of Merlin's story.

"Following the death of Merlin's mother (in Wagga Wagga) in 1922, Merlin's father Frederick married Margaret 'Greta' Goode – the neighbour Merlin had been engaged to when he set off for war. Elizabeth believes that Frederick and Greta's shared grief and common memories brought them together. There was almost a 40-year age difference between Frederick and Greta, but they remained happily married until Frederick died (in Tumberumba) in 1943 when Elizabeth was 2 years old.

"In 2023, Elizabeth donated Merlin's effects from the field to the Museum of the Riverina, saying they belonged in Wagga Wagga, where he had lived and was most happy.

The things Merlin had with him at the end comprised a damaged cigarette lighter, a devotional book, an exemption certificate, a fountain pen, letters, two notebooks, photographs, pipe, pocket knife, pouch, wallet and a Young Men's Christian Association wallet.

Remarkably, as Samantha reports: "The calico bag of Merlin's effects from the field was sent to the Army Records Unit in Melbourne, and then to Merlin's parents at Tallawallen Farm, on the Albury Road, just out of Wagga Wagga.

"The package reached them in July 1919.

"While Merlin's father Frederick sent a note to the Army Records Unit to acknowledge that he had received

the parcel, he and Merlin's mother did not open it. We don't know why they didn't. The little parcel remained unwrapped, tied with string, for more than a century.

"Until Merlin's half-sister Elizabeth unwrapped it in 2020."

The Merlin Kinneir Tarte collection will be on permanent display in the Museum of the Riverina's Wagga at War gallery at the Botanic Gardens site, 127 Lord Baden Powell Drive, Turvey Park, with the Looking for Merlin digital exhibition launched on 17 April 2026.



POETIC DIGGER: Merlin Kinneir Tarte

POEM:
*Merlin's
acrostic poem
exalting
the glory of
ANZAC. in
The Daily
Advertiser of
5 May 1916.*

THEIR DEATHLESS FAME.
Australians all, whose manhood flew
to arms,
New fame to win for ye, 'mid war's
alarms.
Zealous should he, that time may fade
no whit,
Annals, whose first page was so grandly
writ.
Counting the price that some were
called to pay,
Dare ye let pass this honor's natal
day?
Although ye may not share their
deathless fame,
Your gold, your work, at least, war's
needs may claim.
MERLIN K. TARTE.
"Tallawallen," Albury-road,
Wagga Wagga.

OLD JUNEE FARMER FROM BRAVE FAMILY

RIVERINA'S Kelly family gave more than most for Australia's Great War efforts.

William Parry Kelly married Eliza Morgan in Saint Paul's Church of England, Avenel, Victoria, on 16 February 1886.

Four sons went off to fight the good fight.

One son, a brave Military Medallist hailing from Old Junee, was killed in action.

Another came home missing a leg.

Yet another was twice wounded.

William and Eliza had 11 children: Mary Eliza (1887-1959), John (1888-1972), Philip Parry (1889-1918), William George Avenel (1891-1959), Stanley James (1894-1949), Elizabeth Plenderleith (1896-1979), Samuel Frank Federal Twiner (1897-1955), Frederick Reginald (1899-1953), Fairlie Vida May (1902-71), Arthur Edward (1903-66) and Vera Victoria (1910-75).

*PATRIOTS:
Eliza and
William Parry
and their
four sons who
fought in The
Great War of
1914-18.*



The first 10 children were born at Avenel; Vera came into the world at Barmedman.

The war was a heavy burden to bear for devoted mother Eliza who worried about her boys all through the war and then lost her husband, William, not long after the guns fell silent half a world away.

William Parry Kelly died in Lewisham Private Hospital, Sydney, on 19 February 1920, aged 65.

Fifth son Samuel was the first to present himself at a place of enlistment.

Only 18 and armed with the consent of his father (as he was under 21 years of age), Samuel lined up at Barmedman on 24 January 1916 and at Cootamundra on 3 February but was declared medically unfit.

William George Avenel Kelly enlisted at the Royal Agricultural Society Ground in Sydney on 17 February 1916.

By the time William left Sydney with 1st Infantry Battalion's 10th Reinforcements on HMAT *Wiltshire* A18 on 28 August 1916, both Philip and Samuel (using only his second Christian name of Frank and declaring he was 21 years and three months old) had already signed up, together, at Goulburn on 1 July.

Taken on strength three days before Christmas in 1916, William served gallantly until being severely wounded by gunshot fire on 16 September in France.

He suffered a fractured left femur and wounded knee which necessitated his transfer to England via HM Hospital Ship *Grantully Castle*.

On 9 October, he had his leg above the knee amputated in Beaufort War Hospital, Bristol.

Invalided home on HT *Aradua* on 15 September 1918, William went back to Barmedman, married Mary ("Mollie") Jasprizza there in 1921 and they had two children, Kevin and Rosalie, before his wife tragically died on 20 August 1929, aged just 30.

William lived until 2 May 1959; his final resting place being the Northern Suburbs Memorial Gardens and Crematorium wall.

Philip was every bit a hero ... for his family, community, country and empire.

Farming at Old Junee when he enlisted, Philip was five feet, seven inches (170.1 centimetres) tall and weighed nine stone, seven pounds (60.3 kilograms).

He showed plenty of endeavour and pluck and was appointed a Lance Corporal then a Temporary Corporal in mid-1917 before the action which earned him eternal fame.

The Battle of Polygon Wood was a bloody yet significant British victory during the second part of the Third Battle of Ypres in the First World War.

The battle was waged near Ypres in Belgium, from the Menin road to Polygon Wood and thence north, to the area beyond St Julien.

Much of the woodland had been flattened by the huge bombardments from both sides since 16 July and the area had changed hands several times.

Philip Kelly earned his recognition on the first day of the battle, which lasted until 3 October.

Commanding Officer of the 55th Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Percy William Woods, made the recommendation for Philip's honour, which read: "This N.C.O. displayed great devotion to duty and courage on the occasion of the attack on Polygon Wood on 26th Sept 1917. On one occasion he rushed over to a captured 'pill-box' and took charge of the prisoners, also bringing back a machine gun. On another occasion he attacked an enemy machine gun at close quarters and put it out of action. His conduct throughout the engagement was most exemplary."

After these heroics, with the Military Medal confirmed on 20 November, Philip went to the Bomb School in the field in France and was made a Corporal on 25 January 1918 before heading to England, where on 27 March 1918 he qualified as an Instructor in Bombing First Class at the Bomb School Lyndhurst at Tidworth.

Rejoining his unit in France on 13 September, Philip caught up with his brother Frank and they were together 10 minutes before tragedy struck on 30 September 1918, just weeks before the end of hostilities.

Philip was killed by machine gun fire during an attack on the Hindenburg Line north of Bellicourt.

He was buried in Hesbécourt Military Cemetery where 71 other Australian Diggers were also laid to rest.

Son William wrote to authorities on 19 December 1918 requesting Philip's Military Medal be sent to his mother. It arrived two days before ANZAC Day, 1919.

On 14 July 1919, Philip's father received a sealed parcel via HMAT *Bulla* containing his son's final worldly possessions ... a belt and badges, card, notebook, photographs, pipe, pouch, religious book, two wallets, damaged wrist watch and ribbon signifying he was a Military Medal recipient.

MEMENTOES:
Philip Kelly's Dead Man's Penny, graves book and Military and Victory Medals eventually arrived at his parents' home at "Glencoe", The Avenue, Strathfield ... named after their Barmened man farm.



YOUNGEST (right): Seventh son Arthur Kelly, who served in WWII.

ALMOST HOME (below): Stanley Kelly and members of the 1st Wireless Signal Squadron, Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force, line the rails of the troopship SS Janus to catch their first sight, through a telescope, of Australia on their return from service overseas. E. Keast Burke donated this image to the Australian War Memorial.



A copy of *Where The Australians Rest*, edited by war historian Charles Bean and published in 1920, sent to every next-of-kin whose loved one died on active service, arrived on 29 April 1921.

Philip's Memorial Plaque came on 27 November 1922 and finally, his Victory Medal was received by Registered Post on 5 April 1923.

Frank, or Samuel, did not escape unscathed, being gassed at Nettey (Nantey), France, on 28 April 1918 and then sustaining a bullet wound (right buttock) in action in France on 4 October that year.

He returned to Australia on HT *Lancashire* on 7 February 1919.

Sapper Stanley James Kelly enlisted on 20 March 1917 and left Australia with the 1st Cavalry Division Signal Squadron's 3rd Reinforcements per HMAT *Wiltshire* A18 on 2 February 1918, headed for Basrah, Iraq.

He then went on HT *Varsova* to Bombay, India, where he had a stint in the Australian and New Zealand Pay and Records Office before arriving home in Australia on SS *Janus*, arriving the same day as his brother Philip's Military Medal.

Eliza Kelly, having endured so much heartache in her 68 years, died on 29 June 1931 and was buried with her late husband at Rookwood.

Four Kelly boys also wore a uniform during World War II: Arthur (9 Pioneer Training Battalion, 1942-44), Fred (18 Battalion Volunteer Defence Corps, 1942-45), Samuel/Frank (18 Battalion Volunteer Defence Corps, 1942-45) and Stanley (3 Australian Employment Company, 1940-45).

Such patriotism ... such noble devotion to flag and country.

GUNNING AIR DISASTER CLAIMS 4

FOUR R.A.A.F. KILLED

Crash Near Crookwell

While on Training Flight

With very deep regret we have to record that four were killed on Tuesday in a crash, whilst on a training flight, 15 miles north of the Crookwell-Gunning road. The four were:

Sgt.-Pilot Bruce Edward Walker, 22 years, single, of Gordon.

L.A.C. Ivan Rodway Rojahn, 22, single, of Boonah (Qld.).

Leading Aircraftman Harold Malcolm Sauerbier, 32, married, of Five Dock, Sydney.

Leading Aircraftman Allan Sidorenko, 27, single, of Warwick (Qld.).

Sergeant Walker was a law clerk prior to enlistment. L.A.C. Rojahn was born at Boonah (Qld.) and was a school teacher before he enlisted, being a former student of the Teachers' Training College, Brisbane, and the Queensland University. L.A.C. Sauerbier was born in Sydney, and was educated at Drummoyne. Before enlistment he was employed as a clerk. L.A.C. Sidorenko was born at Toowoomba (Qld.), and was educated at Warwick High School. He was a school teacher before enlistment.

The cause of the accident has not yet been determined, but the aircraft was extensively damaged.

According to the rules of the R.A.A.F., when accidents occur the names of the victims are not released until the next-of-kin are located and informed prior to publication in the press; and in the course of the sad duty of finding the relatives there was delay in one case, hence it will be readily understood, the report could not be officially made available to us in time for inclusion in our Wednesday's issue.

TEARSHEET: News of the crash as reported in The Cootamundra Herald of 17 April 1942.

IT WAS April 1942, just before another commemoration of ANZAC Day and Australia was in the midst of its darkest days of World War II.

There had been brazen Japanese attacks on the mainland with Broome and Darwin bombed and hundreds killed and many more wounded, Singapore had fallen and many Australian troops had been captured, whilst thousands of Australians continued to fight with Allies on the Western Front and in North Africa.

Recruitment and training stepped up as a desperate defence was mounted against imminent invasion with the nation's focus shifting to the Pacific theatre of war.

At Cootamundra, the No. 1 Air Observers' School was abuzz with activity.

Established on 15 April 1940, the first course of 70 air observer trainees began a fortnight later, quartered at the Cootamundra Showground before the erection of new buildings at the airport.

The first Avro Anson aircraft arrived on 25 June 1940.

On the morning of 14 April 1942, one of those planes, piloted by Sergeant Bruce Edmond Walker, took off from Cootamundra in a formation with others for a routine training flight to Blayney and back again.

It was to be a triangular flight over hills. There was light fog and cloud. They were probably following a rail line or the Hume Highway.

Tragically, Sgt Walker and his three passengers, all trainee observers, never made it home.

On the Goulburn to Blayney section of the flight, the aircraft flew into some fog and low cloud.

Sgt Walker opted to turn around and return to Cootamundra.

Fifteen miles (24 kilometres) north of Gunning, the plane, an Avro Anson Mark I Serial No. AX420, lost altitude as Sgt Walker sought to find a break in the clouds to check his location.

At that time (0930 hours) the Anson passed between two high hills into a steep gully, crashing into a hill at the end of the gully and exploding on impact.

The pilot and three trainees were all killed.

The deceased were:

- Sgt Bruce Edmond Walker (Service No. 411414), aged 26, of Gordon, Sydney;
- Leading Aircraftman (LAC) Ivan Rodway "Pat" Rojahn (414263), 22, of Boonah, Queensland;

- LAC Harold Malcolm Sauerbier (413902), 32, of Five Dock, New South Wales; and
- LAC Allan Sidorenko (414297), 28, of Warwick, Queensland.

Sgt Walker, the only son of Horace George Findlay Walker (1880-1941) and his New Zealand-born wife, Ethel Drummond Walker (née Wilson) (1879-1966), was a law clerk prior to enlistment.

He had two older sisters, Nellie (born 1910) and Nancy (1912).

Sgt Walker's final resting place is the Cootamundra General Cemetery, one of 11 RAAF burials there from World War II.

His grave is in a row of six in the Church of England section, alongside LAC Ernest Arthur Piercy, 30, originally from Bundaberg, LAC John Alfred Spencer, 24, of Sydney, LAC Arthur Didrik Kendall, 32, originally from England and remembered on the Childers Isis District Roll of Honour in Queensland, LAC Henry Heath Fisher, 20, of Abbotsford, and Flight Sgt John Evan Jenkins, 28, of Terowie, South Australia.

All so young ... all killed in air crashes.

LAC Fisher, LAC Kendall and LAC Spencer were amongst five killed when an Avro Anson, serial number AW677, came down during a training flight near Ungarie during a massive State-wide storm on 11 February 1942.

Of Sgt Walker's passengers on that fateful flight just two months after the Ungarie tragedy, LAC Sauerbier was a clerk and LACs Rojahn and Sidorenko were school teachers.

Of the four, only Redfern-born LAC Sauerbier was married.

He married Sylvia Adelaide Love at Drummoyne in 1935.

He was laid to rest in the Field of Mars Cemetery, Ryde. His parents Sarah and George, who died in 1946 and 1950 respectively, were later buried alongside him.

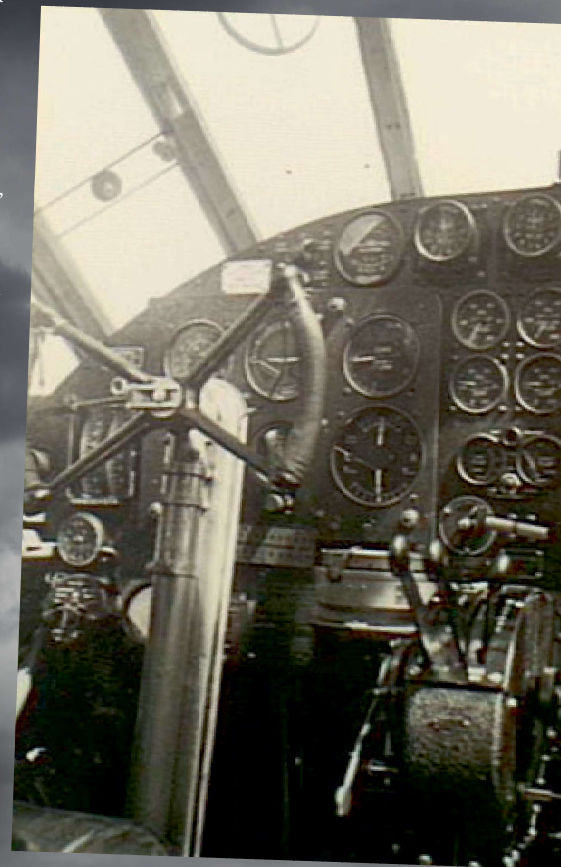
As well as both being teachers, LACs Rojahn and Sidorenko were also talented Queensland country sportsmen.

PILOT'S SEAT: The complex control panel in the interior of the cockpit of an Avro Anson aircraft flown by trainees at the RAAF No. 1 Air Observers' School, Cootamundra, between 1940-45.

LAC Sidorenko won a scholarship from the Warwick East State School, enabling him to go to Warwick State High School (WSHS). During his time at WSHS, Allan secured his colours in Rugby League, cricket and tennis. Football was where he excelled and his skill was recognised when he captained Toowoomba in the prestigious Bulimba Cup series.

He tried his hand in Brisbane but was not able to get regular selection in the forwards so he returned to the Toowoomba club competition in 1934 and turned out for the local Newtown team.

continued ...



Allan studied to become a teacher and was appointed assistant teacher of the East Toowoomba State School before becoming a relief teacher for the Education Department until he enlisted in the Royal Australian Air Force, at Brisbane, on 18 August 1941.

His parents, Andrew and Prascovia Sidorenko, of East Warwick, chose a simple yet powerful epitaph for their beloved son's marble headstone in the Warwick General Cemetery: "His duty nobly done".

Indeed it was ... by someone who had given so much and whose days were cut cruelly short.

On LAC Rojahn's Mount Thompson Memorial Gardens and Crematorium plaque, a touching inscription reads: "His life a beautiful memory".

So it was for his grief-stricken parents Willy and Violet Edith (née Edmonds), who married in 1905 and died just four weeks apart in 1962.

LAC Rojahn was educated at the Boonah State and High Schools, the Teachers' Training College and the Queensland University.

He was appointed to the Beaudesert State School staff and enlisted in Brisbane the day before LAC Sidorenko.

After his death, *The Courier-Mail* reported LAC Rojahn had been "selected to go to Canada but subsequently was sent to Cootamundra".

He was a leading Boonah cricketer (an opening bowler and top-order batsman for Mount Alford) and tennis player.

In a pretty little park, on Copeland Street at Gunning, a monument memorialises the brave quartet.

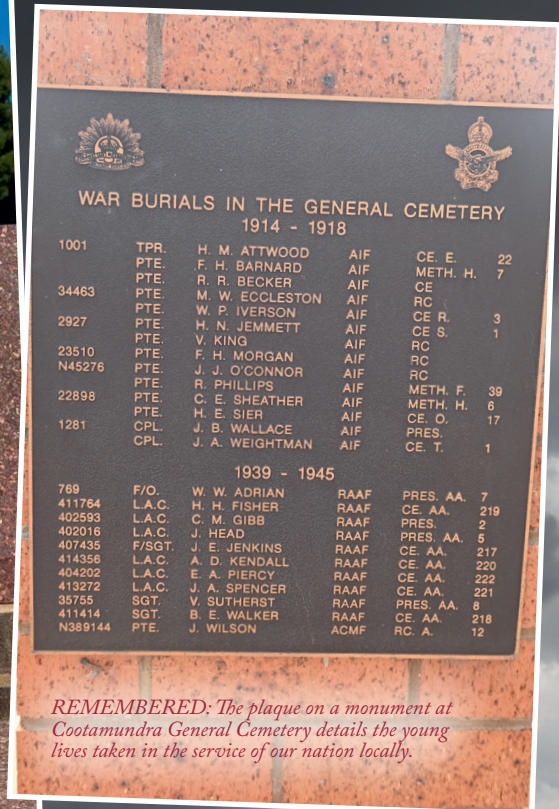
It was opened on Remembrance Day, 1996.

The accompanying plaque includes the names of the four airmen followed by: "Who were killed while training to defend their country during World War Two when an Avro Aircraft Number AX.420 crashed north of Gunning 14.4.1942. Lest We Forget."

As for the Cootamundra unit, No. 1 Air Observers' School ceased to function on 1 June 1945, and was disbanded on 15 August that year – Victory in the Pacific Day or, as it was known at the time, Victory over Japan Day.



GONE TOO SOON: Sgt Bruce Edmond Walker's grave in Cootamundra General Cemetery.



REMEMBERED: The plaque on a monument at Cootamundra General Cemetery details the young lives taken in the service of our nation locally.

WOMBAT TWINS BROTHERS IN ARMS

COMMANDING Officer, Captain Stephen Ernest Hobbs, must have thought he was seeing double.

There before him were two strapping lads, certainly for the times, who had fronted up at the Goulburn Depot Camp to enlist for the Australian Imperial Force, who looked exactly the same.

Wombat's Brown identical twins, James Thomas and John Michael, signed up together, on 4 April 1916, and were given consecutive Service Nos., 28857 and 28858, respectively.

They were the only sons of John Brown and his wife Johanna (née Wood) whose marriage, in 1886, also produced five daughters: Edith, Maggie, Clara, Mary and Jessie.



IDENTICAL: James and John Brown, twins from Wombat, who did their family and village proud in WWI.

James and John's joining papers had them both as labourers, 24 years of age, six feet and half an inch (184cm) tall, with dark complexion, blue eyes and black hair.

The only discernible difference was that James had a birthmark on the front of his left thigh.

Embarking with the 2nd Reinforcements of the Medium Trench Mortar Batteries on the 10,049-ton HMAT *Aeneas* A60 on 30 September 1916, the Browns landed at Plymouth, England, and marched out to Larkhill.

On 31 March 1917, they landed at Étapes, northern France, and were then in the field.

Tragically, John would not make it back to Wombat, dying on 7 June 1918 after being gassed – “dangerous” – and wounded from a shell whilst fighting with the 15th Battery, 5th Brigade, Australian Field Artillery.

His Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau files are extensive.

Driver Bramwell Gordon Barker, a pearler from Perth, reported “heard he (John Brown) was hit by a shell in a dugout in front of Healey (sic, Heilly), north of Bonnay (Somme) ...”



WOMBAT REMEMBERS: Gunner John Brown is one of 11 district men honoured on a marble tablet on the local Soldiers' Memorial Hall, opened in 1923.



FAMILY: Mother Johanna Brown flanked by her beloved twin sons John (left) and James with (back, from left) daughters Jessie, Maggie and Clara.

"I understand he died on the way to the D/S (Dressing Station) and was buried at Healey."

Gunner Bery Rowland, a labourer from Yandina, Queensland, said he saw John Brown buried on the battlefield, between Hamel Wood and Villers-Bretonneux, on ground that was held.

Dvr Henry Christian Dell, a labourer from Carisbrook, Victoria, said John Brown had been "hit by pieces of shell in the head and shoulders and lived about three hours".

John's final resting place is Plot 3, Row D, Grave 12 in Vignacourt British Cemetery, Vignacourt, Picardie, France. He was buried by Reverend L J Causton.

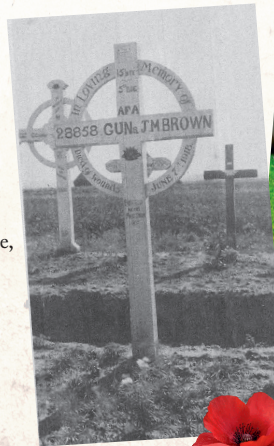
One of Europe's many "silent cities", this cemetery contains 584 First World War burials.

John is also remembered with an inscription on his mother's headstone in the Wombat Cemetery after she died, aged 74, on 28 January 1941.

His service to Australia is recognised on Panel 13 in the Commemorative Area at the Australian War Memorial.

James Brown returned to Australia but life would never be the same.

He steamed home aboard HMAT *Mamari* and disembarked in Melbourne on 4 February 1919 and lived until 7 September 1957.



AT REST: The grave markers for Gunner John Brown ... soon after his death (left) and the permanent headstone at Vignacourt British Cemetery, maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

2026 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CITY

Service Times and Venues

ADELONG

- 9.15am Short service at Grahamstown-Shepardstown monument, Tumut Street. Followed by wreath laying at cemetery gates.
- 10am Contingent including school children, ex-servicemen and women and serving personnel assemble at Adelong Services and Citizens' Club.
- 10.45am March to Memorial Park.
- 11am Wreath laying by officials and residents.
- 11.15am Combined service.
- 11.45am Return to S&C Club.

ARDLETHAN (includes Beckom)

- 6am Dawn Service at the RSL Club Rooms, Deakin Street, Beckom.
- 10.45am Assemble and march from Ardlethan Post Office, Yithan Street, to cenotaph, Memorial Hall, Aria Street.
- 11am Service begins at cenotaph.
- Noon Community lunch, Ardlethan Memorial Hall, Aria Street.

ARIAH PARK (includes Quandary)

- 10.45am Assemble for march at bowling club, Coolamon Street. March to cenotaph.
- 11am Service at cenotaph. Afterwards, lunch will be served at the bowling club.

BATLOW

- 6am Dawn Service at cenotaph, Memorial Park, Park Avenue.
- 10.30am March leaves from Memorial Avenue (beside the CBA Bank), proceeds to cenotaph. Followed by main service.

BENDICK MURRELL

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

BETHUNGRA (includes Frampton)

- 6.15am Dawn Service at Bethungra Memorial Park, Olympic Highway. Catafalque party will be in attendance. Wreath-laying ceremony.

BIGGA

- 6am Dawn Service at Bigga Recreation Ground.
- 10.45am Line up for march at Bigga Recreation Ground gates and march to Memorial Hall, Binda Street.
- 11am Commemorative service at Memorial Hall. Afterwards, light lunch available at the Federal Hotel.

BIMBI

- 1pm Commemorative barbecue at Bimbi Rural Fire Service Fire Shed.
- 2pm Commemorative service at cenotaph. Wreath-laying ceremony. Cadet catafalque party in attendance.

BINALONG

- 10am Assemble for service near Hotel Binalong and march to War Memorial Garden, Fitzroy Street.
- 10.15am Main service.

BOOROWA

- 6am Dawn Service at War Memorial, Marsden Street.
- 10.15am Assemble outside Boorowa Post Office, Marsden Street.
- 10.30am March from Marsden Street to War Memorial.
- 11am Minute silence.

BOWNING

- 5.45am Dawn Service, Bowning Community Hall, 3 Short Street, Bowning.

BREADALBANE

- 8am Service and wreath laying, Breadalbane Hall, Chisholm Park, Breadalbane Road.

BRIBBAREE

- 3.45pm Assemble at bowling club.
- 4pm March to cenotaph (next to Briggaree Fire Shed).
- 4.15pm Memorial service at cenotaph. Wreath-laying ceremony. Cadet catafalque party in attendance. Followed by refreshments, Briggaree Bowling Club.

CANOWINDRA

- 6am Dawn Service at cenotaph, Memorial Park, Gaskill Street.
- 10.45am Assemble at corner of Ryall and Gaskill streets and march to Memorial Park.
- 11am Service at the cenotaph, Memorial Park.

CARAGABAL

- 4pm Service at the cenotaph, Mid Western Highway, conducted by students from Caragabal Public School. Afterwards, refreshments will be available at the Caragabal Pub.

COLLECTOR

Dawn Service at Collector cenotaph, Murray Street. Time will be distributed locally close to ANZAC Day. Please check with organisers to confirm time.

COLLINGULLIE

- 8am Service at Memorial Hall, Sturt Highway. Breakfast afterwards.

COOLAMON (includes Marrar)

- 5.30am Assemble for Dawn Service.
- 6am Dawn Service at cenotaph, Cowabbie Street. Followed by a community breakfast in the park.

continued ...

2026 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CITY SERVICE TIMES AND VENUES

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.

10.15am Assemble for march in front of Cootamundra Ex-Servicemen's and Citizens' Memorial Club.

10.30am Ceremonial march beginning at the front of the Cootamundra Ex-Servicemen's and Citizens' Memorial Club.

10.45am Commemorative service at the cenotaph, Albert Park. If inclement weather, service to be held at Cootamundra Ex-Servicemen's and Citizens' Memorial Club.

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 on Brisbane Street.

11am Community service at River Park.

12.30pm Service at the Cowra Locomotive Depot.

CROOKWELL

5am Gunfire breakfast, Crookwell Services Club, 160 Goulburn Street.

5.30am Assemble at Crookwell Services Club.

5.40am Line up for march and proceed to Memorial Park.

6am Dawn Service, Memorial Park.

11am Commemorative service. CWA will provide refreshments afterwards.

CROWTHER

10.15am Wreath-laying ceremony at Crowther Memorial,

Olympic Highway.

DARBYS FALLS

9.45am Assemble at Memorial, Rural Fire Service Shed.

10am Memorial service. Followed by refreshments.

FOREST HILL

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

GALONG

6am Dawn Service, Galong Memorial Hall, McMahon Street. Breakfast to follow.

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.

5.30pm Retreat service at the flag pole inside the Memorial Gate.

GOOLOONGONG

6am Dawn Service at the Memorial Club Rooms. Gunfire breakfast to follow.

9.45am Assemble for march at Memorial Club Rooms.

10am Commence march, followed by ANZAC service at cenotaph in Recreation Memorial Park.

GRABBen GULLEN

8.45am Assemble at Grabben Gullen Hall, corner of Grabben Gullen Road and Range Road.

9am Commemorative Service.

GREENETHORPE

7.30am Main service at Soldiers' Memorial Hall including dedication of local serviceman to Wall of Honour. Followed by refreshments.

GRENFELL

5am Gunfire Breakfast, Criterion Hotel, Main Street.

5.45am Dawn Service at cenotaph, corner of Burrangong Street and Mid Western Highway. Cadet catafalque party. Student presentations from Grenfell schools. Music by Grenfell Town and District Band. *The ANZAC* to be performed by Belinda Day. Australian National Anthem performed live. Coffee, tea and ANZAC biscuits provided.

7am Wet Breakfast, Criterion Hotel, Main Street.

8am Pilgrimage to Grenfell Cemetery.

10.30am Assemble for march, roadway near Criterion Hotel, Main Street, Grenfell.

10.45am March commences, led by riderless horse, and proceeds to cenotaph, Memorial Park.

11am Commemorative service and wreath-laying ceremony at cenotaph, Memorial Park, corner of Burrangong Street and Mid Western Highway. Cadet catafalque party. Student presentations from Grenfell schools. *Spirit of the ANZACs* to be performed by Belinda Day. Australian, New Zealand and British National Anthems performed by the Grenfell Town and District Band.

1 August Dining-in night at the Grenfell Country Club, Gooloogong Road.

GUNDAGAI (includes Coolac, Mount Horeb)

6am Dawn Service at ANZAC Grove. Federation Guard in attendance.

10.15am Assemble outside Lott's Family Hotel, Sheridan Street.

2026 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CITY SERVICE TIMES AND VENUES

10.30am March will be led by the 7th Light Horse Gundagai Troop followed by the Vintage Car Club vehicles carrying RSL members. Proceed East along Sheridan Street to cenotaph.

11am Wreath-laying ceremony. Federation Guard in attendance. On completion, the parade will return west along Sheridan Street, dismissing adjacent to Lott's Family Hotel.

GUNDAROO

5.30am Dawn Service at the War Memorial, corner of Cork and Harp streets.

GUNNING

5.30am Dawn Service, Memorial Garden, Gunning Showground, 80 Lerida Street, Gunning.

6am Breakfast, Shire Hall.

10.30am March assembles at Pye Cottage, 121 Yass Street, Gunning.

10.40am Veterans march with step off at Pye Cottage.

11am Main service, Gunning cenotaph, outside the Gunning Post Office, 90 Yass Street.

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.

10.40am March to cenotaph.

11am Main service. If inclement weather, service to be held in Mechanics' Institute Hall.

HUMULA

To be commemorated on Friday, 24 April 2026.

10am Community Service at Humula War Memorial Hall. Followed by refreshments provided by the Humula Public School P & C.

JUGIONG

3pm Assemble for march adjacent to Police Station and march to Memorial Gates, Riverside Drive, where the memorial service will be conducted. 7th Light Horse Gundagai Troop in attendance.

JUNEE (includes Illabo, Wantabadgery)

5.45am Dawn Service on Broadway.

10.35am March from Memorial Park, Peel Street, to Railway Square for two-minute ceremony. March finishes at cenotaph on Broadway and will be followed by the memorial service.

JUNEE REEFS

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

KOORAWATHA

6am Form up for Dawn Service at War Memorial Park Memorial Gates.

10.45am Assemble at the top end (highway end) of Boorowa Street. March to Regional Rooms for memorial service.

LOCKHART

9am Commemorative service at Lockhart Lawn Cemetery.

10.15am Form up at Commercial Hotel, Green Street.

10.30am March to cenotaph on Hebben Street.

10.45am Wreath-laying ceremony. Return to the Lockhart Ex-Servicemen's Club afterwards.

MIRROOL

6am Dawn Service at cenotaph, Ariaah Street.

9am Commemorative service at cenotaph on Ariaah 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. Followed by morning tea and a history display in the hall.

MURRUMBATAMAN

9.30am Commemorative service at Jones Park, ANZAC Memorial, Murrumbateman. Followed by morning tea at the Murrumbateman Country Inn, Barton Highway.

NANGUS

To be commemorated on Tuesday, 28 April 2026

10.30am Community service at Public School, Tenandra Street.

PLEASANT HILLS

9am Commemorative service at Memorial Hall, Manson Street, followed by morning tea.

QUANDIALLA

10.30am Assemble at Blamey Park, Second Street.

10.45am March to Memorial Hall.

11am Commemorative service at Memorial Hall, Second Street. Service conducted by Quandialla Hall Committee and Quandialla Public School students. Refreshments and lunch available at the Bland Hotel.

RAND

5.30am Dawn Service followed by breakfast at the RSL Club.

10.45am Assemble and march to the cenotaph.

11am Commemorative Service.

RUGBY

6.30am Service at the ANZAC Memorial, Rugby Road.

continued ...

2026 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CITY SERVICE TIMES AND VENUES

SPRINGDALE

- 9am Prayer and laying of wreaths at Springdale Memorial cenotaph on Burley Griffin Way.
- 9.15am Fly-over by Warbirds.
- 9.20am Springdale ANZAC Memorial Scholarship Oration: Tribute to a Springdale local. Temora Band plays the Recessional including the Last Post. Service to follow. Refreshments in the Springdale Hall afterwards.

STOCKINBINGAL

- 1.30pm Commemorative service at Memorial Site, King George V Park, Britannia Street.

SUTTON

- 5.45am Dawn Service, outside Sutton Public School, Victoria Street, Sutton.

TALBINGO

- 6.30am Dawn Service at Miles Franklin Park, followed by breakfast at the Country Club, Bridle Street.

TARALGA

- 5.30am Assemble for service at the cenotaph opposite Taralga Hotel, 24 Orchard Street.
- 6am Dawn Service. Followed by Gunfire breakfast at the Memorial Hall, 41 Orchard Street.
- 12.30pm Luncheon at the Taralga Sports Club.
- 2.30pm March starting at the Argyle Hotel and finishing at the Taralga Hotel. Followed by Memorial Service at the War Memorial Hall. Followed by refreshments.

TARCUTTA

- 10.30am Assemble for 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.
- 10.30am Assemble at the Police Station, De Boos Street.
- 10.45am March to the cenotaph, Callaghan Park.
- 11am Service at cenotaph, Callaghan Park.

THE ROCK

- 6am Dawn Service at Soldier Memorial, Urana Street.
- 10.30am Service at cenotaph, Urana Street. Followed by lunch at the Memorial Bowling Club.

TUENA

- 11am Service at cenotaph, Bathurst Street. Followed by lunch in the hall.

TUMBARUMBA (includes Khancoban, Rosewood, Tooma)

- 6am Dawn Service at District War Memorial, corner of Bridge and Winton streets.
- 6.30am Gunfire breakfast in the Memorial Hall.
- 7.30am Pilgrimage to cemetery to lay wreaths.
- 10.20am Assemble for march outside Memorial Hall.
- 10.30am March starts at Memorial Hall.
- 11am Main service at cenotaph.

TUMBLONG

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

TUMUT (includes Brungle, Lacomalac)

- 6am Dawn Service at cenotaph in Richmond Park, corner of Russell, Capper and Robertson streets.
- 10.15am Assemble for march in front of Fire Station.
- 10.30am March to Richmond Park followed by main service.

URANQUINTY

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

WAGGA WAGGA

- 5.30am Dawn Service at the cenotaph, Victory Memorial Gardens, Corner Baylis and Morrow streets (conducted by Legacy).
- 7am War Cemetery Service, Koorringal Road.
- 7am ANZAC Gunfire Breakfast, Wagga RSL Club, corner of Kincaid and Dobbs streets.
- 9.30am Participants assemble for ANZAC Day Parade. Corner Baylis and Morgan streets.
- 10am March commences, moving down Baylis Street to the cenotaph at the corner of Baylis and Morrow streets, followed by a commemorative service.
- Noon ANZAC Day lunch at the RSL Club. Ticket sales from Monday, 23 March.
- 5.30pm Sunset service at the Wagga RSL Club Memorial at the entrance of the club, Dobbs Street.

WALLENBEEEN

- 8.30am Assemble at Wallendbeen Public School and walk to cenotaph.
- 9am Main service followed by morning tea at Wallendbeen Memorial Hall.

WALWA, VICTORIA (includes Jingellic, NSW)

- 10am Commemorative service at cenotaph, Walwa Services Memorial Hall, Main Street. Morning tea and two-up to follow.

WEE JASPER

- 7.45am Assemble for march at the Wee Jasper Bridge over the Goodradigbee River.
- 8am March up the street.
- 8.25am Main service at the Wee Jasper Memorial Hall.

2026 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CITY SERVICE TIMES AND VENUES

WIRRIMAH

8.15am Memorial service at Wirrimah Memorial Hall, Smiths Road.

WOMBAT

6am Dawn Service on the corner of Rose and Young streets. Followed by prayers, hymns, bugle and laying of wreaths. Murrumburrah Light Horse will be in attendance, as well as the cadet unit. Refreshments to follow 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 for wreath laying and then to Arnold Bennett's Gates for wreath laying, then into Hall for commemorative service. Refreshments after service.

WYANGALA

5.45am Dawn Service at Memorial outside Wyangala Country Club, Sixth Avenue. Followed by breakfast.

YASS

6am Dawn Service, cenotaph, Yass Soldiers' Memorial Hall, Comur Street, Yass. Followed by a breakfast at the Yass Soldiers' Club, 86 Meehan Street, Yass.

10.45am March will step off from the corner of Comur and Lead streets.

11am Commemorative service and wreath laying, cenotaph, Yass Soldiers' Memorial Hall.

YERONG CREEK

10.45am Assemble outside Delta Agribusiness for march to cenotaph, Stanley Galvin Memorial Park.

YOUNG

5.45am Dawn Service at Memorial Town Hall followed by visits to the old cemetery and then the lawn cemetery. Breakfast at the Young Services Club, 42 Cloete Street, to follow.

10.40am Assemble and march from Town Hall.

11am Main service at Anderson Park.

CAPITAL CITY SERVICES:

CANBERRA

4.30am Readings by Defence personnel, Parade Ground, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial.

5.30am Dawn Service, Parade Ground, Australian War Memorial.

7.30am Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans' Association Commemorative Ceremony, For Our Country Memorial, Sculpture Gardens, Australian War Memorial Grounds.

9.30am National Commemorative Service including RSL ACT Branch Veterans' March, Parade Ground (marching contingents will form up along ANZAC Parade from about 8am).

1-4.30pm Museum galleries open to the public (please note galleries will progressively close from 4pm).

4.30pm ANZAC Day Last Post Ceremony, Commemorative Area, Australian War Memorial.

MELBOURNE

5.30am Dawn Service at the Shrine of Remembrance Forecourt.

8.30am ANZAC Day march starting at intersection of Flinders and Swanston streets and concluding at the Shrine of Remembrance. Commemorative service to be held at conclusion of march.

SYDNEY

4.20am Dawn Service at the cenotaph in Martin Place.

9am ANZAC Day march starting at intersection of Elizabeth Street and Martin Place, walking past the ANZAC Memorial at Hyde Park.

12.30pm ANZAC Day Commemorative Service at the ANZAC Memorial, Hyde Park, adjacent to the Pool of Remembrance.

5pm ANZAC Day 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:

Australian Parliamentary Library, Australian War Memorial, ancestry.com.au, Barbara Dale of Wagga Wagga, niece of featured Wombat twin soldiers James and John Brown, Lieutenant Gerard Pratt Royal Australian Navy, Manager, Visitor Services, AWM and Museum of the Riverina Manager Tim Kurylowicz, Regional Museums Officer Samantha Leah and Education and Public Programs Officer Angus Cawdell-Smith.

HAVE YOUR SERVICE INCLUDED:

If your Riverina electorate community is having an ANZAC Day service next year and you would like to have it included in future ANZAC Day booklets, please contact the office via email: michael.mccormack.mp@aph.gov.au with the relevant contact details and the office will be in touch early next year to confirm times and services.

ANZAC DAY

IN THE RIVERINA, CENTRAL WEST,
SNOWY MOUNTAINS, SOUTH WEST
SLOPES & SOUTHERN TABLELANDS.

RIVERINA ELECTORATE WRITING AWARDS



THIS year's ANZAC Day writing competition, the 16th iteration, is a little different than previous years due to the Australian Electoral Commission's redistribution of the Riverina electorate boundaries.

However, it must be stated that the schools in the newer parts of the electorate have embraced the task. It was pleasing to see students from many new schools enter the competition – with some of those students being judged as winners or highly commended in their section.

With more than 600 entries received from nearly 40 schools, it was a difficult task to choose the best 16 literary pieces.

The theme for this year's competition was "ANZAC Day: Our Past, Present and Future" and was open to primary and secondary students in the Riverina electorate.

It is important to continue the ANZAC legacy into the future and the students who participated have shown a strong affinity with the ANZAC spirit.

All students who entered will receive a signed commemorative Parliamentary certificate acknowledging their participation.

The electorate was divided into four regions. Each student judged as a winner or highly commended will receive a book prize, pictured, from the Australian War Memorial.

Thank you to every student for entering and to the many dedicated and wonderful teachers across the region who continue to support this most worthwhile competition.



NORTH

BRAVE YOUNG MEN



*PRIMARY SCHOOL WINNER:
Jack Fanning, 11, Year 6,
St Joseph's Primary School, Grenfell*

SOLDIERS marching amongst each other,
Between barbed wire and poppies.
Dragged through mud and fear,
Brave young men,
fought to defend and protect our country, our allies
and our family.
Soldiers, standing in their neat uniforms and their
slouch hats.
Soldiers, turned veterans, left with battle scars.
They ventured into battle boys, and returned heroes.
Heroes we commemorate every year on ANZAC
Day.
Marching down Main with medals and rosemary.
Side by side, remembering all of the pain, loss and
tragedy.
Friends trapped in wet trenches.
We remember the ones who served in the war.
On ANZAC Day we gather not just to remember
pain and loss,
But to remember our and celebrate our victories,
our friendships and our ancestors who guide us
along the way.
We remember the joy of those who returned and
the sorrow of those who couldn't.
We remember the sacrifice, the friendship and the
lessons learnt.

ALL THE FEAR IN THEIR EYES

PRIMARY SCHOOL HIGHLY COMMENDED:

Ava Marr, 11, Year 6, Gooloogong Public School

YOU can think now, all the soldiers' thoughts,
They got caught and brought to Gallipoli in
just a blink,

All the fear in their eyes,

At dawn when the sun is just at rise,

They lay and think of hope to come home but
in theory,

That wish only comes true for a few.

Fathers, sons, daughters and mothers are
remembered now and we thank them for what
they did.

On the 25th of April we get up together at
5am for a Dawn Service where the Ode and
the Last Post gets said and sounded.

ANZAC Day means to remember the dead
and alive who fought for our country alone or
together.

Lest We Forget.



UNFINISHED LETTER

SECONDARY SCHOOL WINNER:

*Charles Minchin, 14, Year 8,
St Anne's Catholic College, Temora*

To: Sebastian and Piper McGowen
68 Gregory Way
Mungalup WA 6225

DEAR Mum, Dad + visitors.

Life right now sucks, obviously. Hate being
here, the constant screams and gunshots are
too much.

Something feels off, like the war is eating
away at my soul. At night I can't stop
thinking about the dead bodies and especially ...

Glen. Why did it have to be him? WHY? What's the point of war when
nothing, NOTHING has benefited. Why do these (mostly) innocent
people have to slaughter each other just because one greedy idiot wants
more? My mental health just keeps getting worse, everyone's probably
is. At this point don't want to survive this war, I don't want to put myself
through the trauma of going to sleep every night thinking about ... this.
People aren't the same, they lash out at each other because it's all just too
much. It's been six months and it feels like it's never going to end. I'm not
sure if I can—

"I'm not sure if can." Piper reads out loud, tears pouring down her cheeks.

"What? What happened?" Piper puts down the paper as a moment of
realisation fills the room. Piper buries her head in her hands. "Darling,
it's—" Seb tries to say.

"No, it can't be."

"We don't know for sure," Seb says, putting his hand on her shoulder,
trying to comfort her.

After the war had ended, Doug didn't come back, this was the case for
many families.

Lest We Forget.



GALLIPOLI BOUND

*SECONDARY SCHOOL HIGHLY
COMMENDED:*

*Jack Crawford, 13, Year 7,
St Anne's Catholic College, Temora*

DEAR Family

I was on the boat steaming at the
shore, loading guns and fixing
bayonets to the sound of gunfire.
Landing at the beach was my worst
experience so far, mates dropping
dead, wounded screaming in pain.
Brave men dragging wounded to
safety, soldiers shooting up at the
Turks. I followed, ducking behind a
rock and shooting at the Turks.

Digging trenches was all but fun
and games, people getting shot in
the back. I made it through that
alive though unlike some good
mates. People were constantly
popping up their heads and
shooting so I popped my head up
and opened fire, killing people on
the other end and getting back
down.

Night came and I watched the
shadows move when they stopped.
I saw my mates waking up and
grabbing bayonets and loaded rifles.
I told them my watch was over and
someone else had to watch, they
were all volunteers. Seeking out
and stabbing the commander of the
Turks.

Lest We Forget.



ANZAC DAY

IN THE RIVERINA, CENTRAL WEST,
SNOWY MOUNTAINS, SOUTH WEST
SLOPES & SOUTHERN TABLELANDS.

A DAY TO REFLECT

**PRIMARY SCHOOL HIGHLY
COMMENDED:**

*Cody Burman, 12, Year 6,
Yerong Creek Public School*

A day that we remember soldiers.
None of this should have happened.
Zooming bullets flying in the air.
A lot of soldiers died for us.

Commanding a
lot of soldiers to
fight.

Defending our
land for all of us.

April 25th is the
day they stop this.

Years of fighting
remembered on
this day.



PROUD FOR ALL THEY DID

**SECONDARY SCHOOL HIGHLY
COMMENDED:**

*Miley Ford-Robson, 16, Year 10,
Snowy Valleys School*

POPPIES in the war field,
Blow in the innocence of wind.
Soldiers fight their fight,
Some return home,
Some rest in the poppy fields.
ANZAC Day commemorates
them all,

We show respect.

We are proud
for all they did
for us.

Along with all
they continue
to do for our
country.

Lest We Forget.



SOUTH

THE MAN WHO WENT TO WAR

PRIMARY SCHOOL WINNER:
*Angel Mycroft, 10, Year 5,
Humula Public School*

ANDREW always imagined how good he would do in the army, but sadly his dad passed away whilst he was in the Army, when Andrew was only a little boy, so Andrew was a bit scared. Andrew loved his name because he knew that it meant brave, strong and manly which was exactly what he was, or going to turn into.

Time passed by and Andrew was 20 years old and ready to go off to the Army. He said goodbye to his family. Goodbye to his friends and goodbye to the town. On the way, he had SO many butterflies in his tummy, his hands were sweaty and his heart was beating so fast. The only thing he could think of was his family, especially his Dad.

When Andrew got to training camp, he could see people marching, other people doing the training course and others getting yelled at because they were sleeping when they were not supposed to.

“Oh my, this is going to be tough,” he thought to himself.

Soon, it was the next day, and everyone had to wake up at 5am. Andrew was NOT good at that. He was a really deep sleeper. A siren blasted for 30 seconds to wake him up. When he woke, he got into his clothes and off he went into work and completed training after training, until he got sick and tired. He couldn't train for five days.

Sadly, after that, Andrew passed away. When the family got the bad news, they were devastated. A few days later, they went to the funeral and from then on, they were always going to be sad forever and ever.

Lest We Forget.



WE REMEMBER

**SECONDARY SCHOOL
WINNER:**

*Kaeliesha Leggett, 17, Year 11,
Snowy Valleys School*



WE REMEMBER the lives fallen to war, but we will not forget them at all.

Within the tall trees, sand and rubble they lay, we mustn't forget what they did that day.

The brave souls who left for air, land and sea, with no guarantee. We will remember them, we will greet them and will salute them as what they gave for peace.

Now home and cherished by loved ones, with the bloodshed and shrapnel stuck in their head and bodies. We will help them; we will comfort them before they lay. Their medals passed down to younger, to remember those days like no other, stories told, secrets shared.

We celebrate them everywhere.

SPIRITS OF THE ANZAC

PRIMARY SCHOOL WINNER:
*Chloe Clements, 11, Year 6,
Bigga Public School*

IT'S sometimes hard to connect what we do today with what happened a long time ago, but in my family, we have a real hero. His name is Jack Mayoh, and he served as a soldier in the Second World War.

Every ANZAC Day we travel to the local war memorial to pay our respects to him and all the other soldiers and nurses who served and fought and died, fighting in far off lands for the freedom we experience today.

ANZAC Day is an opportunity to remember the ravishing, brave souls who fought bravely to protect our freedom as a country.

They have impacted my life greatly as an Aussie girl, because without their bravery and courage I wouldn't have the education that I have now, I wouldn't be able to have a say and I

couldn't roam freely in this beautiful country, Australia.

Every year on ANZAC Day we enjoy cooking and eating ANZAC biscuits. ANZAC biscuits were a treat that the soldiers could enjoy, and they had a special impact on the soldiers as they reminded them of home and what they were fighting for and what they were willing to sacrifice to protect freedom and innocence.

ANZAC biscuits also connected mothers with their sons who went off to fight bravely and make her proud. The biscuits reminded him of home.

She never knew if he was coming home but she was praying and hopeful for his safe return.

Lest We Forget.



BEFORE THE BEGINNING

SECONDARY SCHOOL WINNER:
Evangeline Husband, 15, Year 10, Crookwell High School

AS A day we should remember,
What are we all remembering?
Sure, it's the people who fought for our country,
But is that truly everything?
Most of the men who left to fight,
Already missed their wives,
And what happened to these men?
Lots of them lost their lives.
After days of suffering,
And many of them sacrificed,
The remaining men will come back home,
With bodies covered in lice.
Though many won't return home,
These soldiers are still brave,
They wished to come back to a warm bed,
Now they are resting in a grave.
After aches and fails,
And a few little mistakes,
With battles and bruises,

And plenty of headaches,
They stand with their feet,
Flat on the ground,
Standing there quiet,
Not making a sound.
We remember these soldiers,
For what they had done,
Not just what they did,
But what they helped us become,
For bringing back peace,
And making us whole,
We will remember their courage,
Along with their souls.
After all the poppies have bloomed,
And the Sun has finally set,
We will always remember the risks they took,
Lest We Forget.



WORLD WAR I

**PRIMARY SCHOOL
HIGHLY COMMENDED:**
*Ayla Rodway, 7, Year 1,
Binda Public School*

THIS is a story about my great grandad.

One day in 1915, my great grandad went to war. The sun was bright, but the air was cold. Frost covered the ground. Gunfire echoed from the battlefield and smoke filled the air.

We cried as we said goodbye to Great Grandad Tom. He hopped on his horse and rode away.

When the war ended, he came home but sadly he died 12 months later. In the future, I hope to go to a memorial garden to find his name. I will always remember him.



OUR HERO!

SECONDARY SCHOOL HIGHLY COMMENDED:

Lily Books, 14, Year 9, Yass High School

AS SHOTS were ringing out across Asia and Europe, a young man of 20 years from Bathurst, NSW, was thinking about doing his part for his country. Cecil John Ryan, or affectionally known simply as 'CJ' enlisted on 11 June 1941, not knowing how much his life will change in 18 long months.

The Malaya Campaign started on 8 December 1941 where Australia suffered a 73 per cent loss of those killed in action. Malaya was where CJ entered the war with the 2/18th Battalion. He never really spoke about his time in war, only about his mates. Mates were a very important part of his war memories. Doing research on the Malaya Campaign made me realise how hard it would have been with so much loss and no gain. They were never able to hold positions against the Japanese armies and most Australian soldiers had to surrender and were then taken as Prisoners Of War.

Along the beaches, many Australian soldiers lay dead or dying. One soldier was that young fella from Bathurst, CJ. He lay there dying from wounds, living on puddle water, with his ripped off dog tags hidden on his body. I can only imagine the sight as Japanese soldiers walked the beaches looking for soldiers who were alive, when they stumbled across CJ with no dog tags, bleeding and looking like death. They continued walking.

CJ was found, taken to medical hospitals and finally sent back to Sydney where he was given only six months to live. His wounds were extensive. Part of his lung was removed and what was left had a bullet left inside, doctors too worried to remove it. The scars left behind went beyond skin deep. As his family prepared to say goodbye, CJ had other plans and showed everyone what he was truly made of. He went on to become a husband, a father and a grandfather. Living and raising his family in Bathurst to then live out his days with family in Temora. This was well beyond the six months left to live back in 1942!

Growing up, ANZAC Day and stories of my Great-Grandfather were important conversations within



our family. The sacrifices Poppy CJ made, the resilience he showed, and his heroism have always been a true inspiration for me and my Mum. I may not have had the privilege to meet him, but he has always been the cornerstone of our family.

ANZAC Day holds a special part of our life. It is a day where we remember my Great-Grandfather and the mates he had to leave behind on those beaches. My hope for the future is for myself and my sisters to live life to the fullest and to always hold onto the beliefs of CJ. We will remember what is important, remember the sacrifices made by our heroes like CJ and as Poppy CJ always said, "You are a long time dead". So get out there, make memories, live your dreams and, above all, have that ANZAC spirit.

WEST

A DAY TO REMEMBER

PRIMARY SCHOOL WINNER:

*Maeve Ryan, 11, Year 6,
St Patrick's Primary School, Gundagai*

IN THE mud where the iron rain descends,
I feel your flank against my knee,
The only soul who ever pretends,
The only one who stays for me.
"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the Sun and in the

morning, We will remember them."
No bugle calls, no banner waves,
I could teach you while we march to die,
Yet through the smoke, I am brave,
With a steady heart and liquid eye.
"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the Sun and in the morning, We will remember them."
I carry the weight of a weary man,
Across the wire and broken clay,
Doing what a partner can,
Bearing the darkness to find the day.
"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the Sun and in the

morning, We will remember them."
If the shell should find us in the deep,
And my head begins to fall,
Know it's a debt I can never keep,
For you gave your life, though you never asked at all.
"They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old: Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn. At the going down of the Sun and in the morning, We will remember them."



WE WILL STILL REMEMBER

PRIMARY SCHOOL HIGHLY COMMENDED:

*Molly Moy, 11, Year 6,
Gundagai Public School*

TEN-YEAR-OLD Riley watches over a photo of John Clyde, her uncle. He wasn't much older than a child when he left for a beach he'd never heard of. He sent home letters about the dust and the thirst but mostly about his mates. He promised to be home for Christmas but he never came home. I looked at the black and white photo in his hand, a young man with a lopsided smile and slouched hat. I felt sad for someone I've never even met present. Around them the town fell silent, hundreds of people shoulder to

shoulder when the notes of the Last Post started to sound. The song of sorrow reminds us of the sacrifice made. Its haunting melody cuts through the stillness. Signifying the end of a soldier's duty as the notes echo phases into silence. We stand united in a shared promise to never forget the cost of freedom we share today.



OUR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

SECONDARY SCHOOL WINNER:

*Ashton Adams, 13, Year 8,
Mount Austin High School*

BEFORE he wore a uniform, Reg Saunders wore his father's stories. They lived in the quiet between sentences — stories of mud, of loss, of mates who never came home. Service was not about glory. It was about standing when others fell. In 1940, Reg chose to stand.

North Africa burned gold and merciless. Greece fractured. Crete roared with smoke. In New Guinea, the jungle swallowed light and men alike.

War was not heroic. It was heat, hunger, and the sound of your own heartbeat in the dark.

Reg endured.

In 1944, a single word changed everything.

Lieutenant.

The first Aboriginal Australian commissioned officer. A rank stitched onto his sleeve — and into history.

He once said, "I was just one of the boys."

But he carried more than a rifle. He carried expectation. He carried the weight of doors long closed.

He served again in Korea. And when the guns fell silent, he returned home to fight differently — for dignity, for recognition, for a country that would finally see its First Nations people not as shadows, but as equals.

ANZAC Day is not just remembrance.

It is reckoning.

The past is sacrifice.

The present is courage.

The future is justice carried forward.

At dawn, light reaches every name on the stone.

And at last, it reaches his — fully.



SUVLA BAY ON APRIL 25TH, 1915

SECONDARY SCHOOL HIGHLY COMMENDED:

*Angus Worsnop, 13, Year 8,
St Mary Mackillop College,
Wagga Wagga*

"PRIVATE Max, Private Tom,
Private Gerard,
Boldly run, and use your gun.
Private John, Private Will and
Herod.

Rest in please, you have served
me well.

Towards the ammo stalls with
guns!

Squadron B lead the charge like
hell! ...

Take the Turkish, take their bases
On the hilltops and behind!"

Many have fallen with fair faces,
Many are wounded and are blind,
But still we hold strong, fighting
the Turks,

For what holds us on, keeping our
country,

Fighting for Australia against
those Jerks,

Having one nation, for freedom,
for democracy.

Least We Forget.





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