

THE SPIRIT OF ANZAC



APRIL 2014

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
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INDEPENDENT MEMBER
FOR LAKE MACQUARIE





Tradition of courage and service lives on



The centenary of the start of World War I marks a significant milestone in Australian history.

The Great War of 1914-18 was deemed to be the “war to end all wars”. Sadly, history proved that prediction wrong.

This year’s Spirit of Anzac publication honours some of the local WWI soldiers who bravely set forth in defence of their homeland and its allies, and in so doing helped forge a young country’s nationhood.

Anzac Day traditionally provides an opportunity to remember not only those who fought in the nation-defining battle at Gallipoli, but all servicemen and women who have contributed to the defence of Australia.

That observance has never been more relevant than today. Although we are fortunate to live far removed from conflict, we must remain mindful and appreciative of the efforts of Australian troops in Afghanistan and the Middle East area of operations, as well as the work of Australian peacekeepers stationed in trouble spots around the world.

Here in Lake Macquarie, we have a special connection with World War II through the former RAAF flying boat base at Rathmines. It is our direct link to what was, for better or worse, one of history’s most significant events.

Next year will mark 100 years since the landing at Gallipoli and planning for that major event has already begun. Suitably, the official program for the centenary encompasses all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations in which our country has been involved and pays tribute to all of the 102,000 personnel who have died in its defence.

In this special anniversary year of WWI, I invite you to again remember the selfless efforts of Australians in all theatres of war, past and present.

Greg Piper MP
Member for Lake Macquarie

LEST WE FORGET

*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.*

COVER: A composite image of Australian forces during the Battle of Zonnebeke, Belgium in 1918. The image was created by war photographer Captain Frank Hurley from several of his photographs.

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Sunderland crews showed courage, fortitude and initiative

“We knew those men, and we’ll never forget them. Their luck ran out, but the memory didn’t.”

The former RAAF flying boat base at Rathmines is most famously known for its connection to the Catalina, but its two Sunderland squadrons also played an important role in the Allied defence and were responsible for many feats of wartime heroism.

Sunderland Squadrons 10 and 461 saw service in the war in Europe, patrolling the Bay of Biscay in support of troops below. The two squadrons destroyed 13 German U-boats and lost 39 aircraft on operation.

Significantly, two of these men – 10 Squadron’s John Bell and Charles Harris – became Australia’s first casualties in the war. They had been sent to England with a small group of squadron personnel in 1939 for training, and were rushed into active service when war broke out.

461 Squadron was formed on Anzac Day in 1942, while 10 Squadron was the only Australian squadron to serve continuously for the duration of the war in Europe.

The dedication of a special memorial wall at Rathmines Memorial Park in April last year honours the memory of 253 men from the two squadrons who never returned home.

RAAF Commanding Officer, Wing Commander David Hombsch, told those who gathered for the unveiling of the wall that the men of 461 and 10 Squadrons displayed “courage, fortitude and initiative”.

“The finest values and traditions and achievements of the RAAF Sunderland squadrons have not been lost on those who carry the torch today,” he said.

“We knew those men, and we’ll never forget them,” said Peter Jensen, President of the RAAF Association NSW Sunderland Squadrons branch and a 461 Squadron veteran.

“Their luck ran out, but the memory didn’t.”

Greg Piper, left, at the commemoration with former 461 Squadron airman Peter Jensen, centre, and Air Commodore Stephen Osborne CSC, Commander Surveillance and Response Group.



THE GRI

World War I, also called The Great War, was a conflict of unprecedented extent and ferocity.

For Australia, the World War of 1914-18 remains the most costly conflict in terms of deaths and casualties.

From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 men enlisted, of which more than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed or taken prisoner*.

Listed here are some of the major events of the war, with particular relevance to Australian troops.

28 JUNE 1914 Assassinations of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary (Germany's close ally) and his wife Sophie, by 19-year-old nationalist Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo. This triggers a diplomatic crisis which soon spreads around the world.

4 AUGUST 1914 Great Britain declares war on Germany. Australia pledges a force of 20,000.

5 AUGUST 1914 A gun crew stationed at Fort Nepean on the Mornington Peninsula in Victoria, Australia, fires across the bow of German cargo steamer *SS Pfalz*. This is the first shot fired by British forces in WWI.

10 AUGUST 1914 Voluntary recruitment for Australian Imperial Force (AIF) begins.

11 SEPTEMBER 1914 German New Guinea and nearby German-ruled island territories seized by Australian Navy.

1 NOVEMBER 1914 The First Division of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) sails from Albany, Western Australia, for Egypt.

9 NOVEMBER 1914 *HMAS Sydney* sinks the German cruiser, *Emden*, at the Cocos Islands, Indian Ocean.

25 APRIL 1915 Australian forces in dawn landing at Anzac Cove on the Gallipoli

Peninsula, Turkey. A defining moment in Australia's character and development as a nation. This day becomes a national holiday known as Anzac Day.

19 MAY 1915 Private John Simpson Kirkpatrick of 'Simpson and his Donkey' fame killed at Gallipoli.

19-20 MAY 1915 Lance Corporal Albert Jacka, 14th Battalion, AIF, becomes the first Australian to win the Victoria Cross in WWI for his action at Gallipoli.

6-9 AUGUST 1915 Battle of Lone Pine, Gallipoli – Australians awarded seven Victoria Crosses.

7 AUGUST 1915 Charge of Australian Light Horse Brigade at the Nek, Gallipoli.

19-20 DECEMBER 1915 Evacuation of Anzac Cove and Suvla at Gallipoli. By the time of evacuation close to 46,000 Allied troops had been killed from a total of 250,000 casualties. Evacuation of Helles takes place on 9 January 1916.

7 APRIL 1916 Australian soldiers on the Western Front at Armentieres, France.

25 APRIL 1916 First commemoration of Anzac Day.

19-20 JULY 1916 Battle of Fromelles, France.

23 JULY 1916 Australians in action in the Battle of the Somme at Pozieres and Mouquet Farm, France, until 3 September.

3-4 AUGUST 1916 Australian Light Horse in Battle of Romani, Egypt.

18 NOVEMBER 1916 Somme campaign ends. Australian troops endured trench warfare in a severe winter on the Western Front.

20 MARCH 1917 Lieutenant F H McNamara, No. 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps, becomes only member of the AFC to be awarded the Victoria Cross.



EAT WAR

1914-
1918

AT WAR

The Entente Powers or Allies: French Republic, British Empire (including Australia, New Zealand, Canada and India), Russian Empire. Also Japan, Belgium, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania, Greece, Czechoslovakia. Later, USA and Italy.

The Central Powers: Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Empire, Bulgaria and Italy.

CASUALTIES

Allies: 5,712,000 military dead, 12,809,000 wounded.

Central Powers: 4,010,000 military dead, 8,419,000 wounded.

Civilians deaths (on both sides): 6,841,000

Total deaths: 16,563,000
(all figures approximate)



- 11 APRIL 1917** First Battle of Bullecourt, France.
- 3 MAY 1917** Second Battle of Bullecourt, France.
- 7 JUNE 1917** Battle of Messines, Belgium.
- 1 AUGUST 1917** Third Battle of Ypres – Australian soldiers in action most notably at Menin Road, Glencorse Wood, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde Ridge and Passchendaele (until November 14).
- 31 OCTOBER 1917** Australian Light Horse in the famous charge on Turkish positions at Beersheba, Palestine.

- 25 APRIL 1918** Australians win Villers-Bretonneux, France.
- 29 SEPTEMBER 1918** Australians storm the Hindenburg Line, France.
- 1 OCTOBER 1918** Australian Light Horse take Damascus, Syria.
- 11 NOVEMBER 1918** Germany signs an armistice to cease fighting. The war is over.
- 28 JUNE 1919** Representatives of Allied powers and Germany sign the Treaty of Versailles, at Versailles, France, officially ending World War I.

**Australian War Memorial*





Young son accepts DFC for brave dad



The fate of Catalina IB279 and its captain and crew remains one of the many mysteries of World War II.

Flight Lieutenant Peter Marsh (pictured left) was in charge of the Catalina seaplane during a ferry flight from Suva back to its base at Rathmines in 1944.

Records indicate the last radio contact with Flt Lt Marsh was five hours after leaving Suva.

An air and sea search operation was soon launched but no trace of plane or crew were ever found. At

first, there was some hope the men had survived and been taken by the Japanese as prisoners of war.

It was reported Japanese submarines were operating in the area where IB279 would most likely have gone down. The crew was therefore listed as “missing” until after the war when Prisoner of War records were processed and there was no listing for the five Rathmines airmen.

They were then deemed to have been “accidentally killed” in the South West Pacific area on the night of 4 February 1944 – 70 years ago this year. Flt Lt Marsh was just 27. He was a model leader for his crew and those flying with No.3 Operational Training Unit at Rathmines. He was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross (DFC) for “exceptional skill and courage on numerous flying sorties”, on 30 May 1946. The medal was presented to Flt Lt Marsh’s young son, Peter, in the presence of his widow Valerie.

Flt Lt Marsh and his crew – Flying Officer (FO) Geoffrey Ireland (pictured right), FO Austin Durst, FO Robert Hamilton and Sergeant William Drew – are remembered at the Rathmines Memorial and also the Port Moresby Memorial in Papua New Guinea.

Perhaps no-one will ever know exactly what happened on that fateful night, but the memories of these brave airmen and their contribution will long be remembered.



Family honoured Digger's memory



Honouring their son, Lance Corporal Eldred Belford, in death was important to John and Priscilla Belford.

The Fassifern family desperately wanted their son back home after news he was “dangerously ill” after being wounded in action on the Western Front in France during The Great War of 1914-18.

Local family loses trio in WWI

The loss of three young men on the battlefields of The Great War was an enormous tragedy for one Killingworth family.

The death of Private Albert Greenfield just days before Christmas 1916 was shocking news for his parents Samuel and Isabella, who were still grieving over the loss of another family member.

Albert was killed in France on the Western Front on 16 December. It was only on 2 May earlier that year that he had embarked overseas. But Albert knew the risks, as he had been at home when his brother-in-law fell at Gallipoli.

Private Thomas Wood was killed in action on the Turkish peninsula on 21 September 1915, aged just 23. It was crushing news for the Greenfield family.

The family received more bad news with the death of older son Private Stephen Greenfield in action while fighting at Pozieres, France, on 22 July 1916.

The loss of Albert – the third family member to die in a 15-month period – left the Greenfields bereft.

In a letter to Defence Base Records, Mrs Greenfield said she was keen to have her sons' belongings returned as a keepsake of their service to their country.

She said in the letter that the loss of her two sons and her daughter's husband was taking a personal toll: "It is a sad blow to any mother," she wrote.

Lest we forget the selfless contribution of these men and their family.



Albert Greenfield



Stephen Greenfield



Thomas Wood

Sadly, LCpl Belford survived just one day after being injured in a bomb blast near Fromelles on 18 June 1916 while fighting with the 1st Battalion.

"If he is alive I most earnestly desire his return home," John Belford wrote after receiving a telegram. But it was not to be. Eldred was a 21-year-old working as a cleaner with the NSW Railways when he sailed abroad from Sydney on 5 October 1915 – just

weeks before the evacuation of Gallipoli started. He died and was buried at Estaires Communal Military Cemetery, in Northern France.

John and Priscilla then requested the following words be placed on their son's headstone: "*He died the noblest death that man may die*". Indeed Eldred, like so many before him, had made the ultimate sacrifice for his country.



Corporal Cameron Stewart Baird VC MG



A Special Forces soldier who died as he led an assault on an enemy-held building in Afghanistan last year has become the 100th recipient of The Victoria Cross –

Australia's highest military honour.

The award was presented posthumously to the parents of Corporal Cameron Stewart Baird in February this year. It recognises the bravery of his actions on 22 June 2013, when he drew fire upon himself in order to help his fellow soldiers advance on insurgents. He was the 40th Australian soldier to die in Afghanistan. Cpl Baird, serving with the 2nd Commando Regiment, was on his fifth tour of Afghanistan. He was awarded the Medal for Gallantry in 2007 on his second tour. It is symbolic that the 100th VC winner was awarded in the centenary year of the start of WWI. There were 64 VC medals awarded to Australians in WWI.

2014 ANZAC Day activities in the region

BOOLAROO-SPEERS POINT

- 5.15am: Assemble cnr Main Rd and Park St for march to Speers Point Cenotaph.
- 6.00am: Dawn Service at Speers Point Cenotaph.

CARDIFF

- 5.15am: Dawn Service at Cardiff RSL Sub-branch. Breakfast afterwards.
- Pre-purchase tickets at club for \$5.

DOYALSON-WYEE

- 5.00am: Dawn Service at the Doyalson-Wyee RSL Club. Breakfast afterwards.
- 8.30am: March steps off from the Baptist Church in Wyee Rd for the War Memorial at the RSL Club. Form up at 8am.
- 9.00am: ANZAC Commemoration Service at the War Memorial. Service will be inside the club if inclement weather.

MORISSET

- 6.00am: Dawn Service at the Morisset Country Club. Breakfast afterwards.
- 10.00am: March from the railway station to the Morisset Country Club. Form up at 9.40am.
- 10.15am (approx): ANZAC Service at the Country Club.

RATHMINES

- 2.00pm: ANZAC Service at the Rathmines Catalina Memorial.

RYHOPE

- 9.00am: ANZAC Service at Lake Macquarie Memorial Park, Ryhope.

TERALBA

- 7.40am: Assemble in ANZAC Parade for march to the War Memorial.
- 8.00am: Service at the Teralba War Memorial in ANZAC Park.

TORONTO

- 6.00am: Dawn Service in Goffet Park. Breakfast available afterwards at Toronto Diggers Club – gold coin donation.
- 11.10am: March steps off from Toronto Post Office to the War Memorial in Goffet Park. Form up 10.55am outside the Toronto Diggers Club.
- 11.30am: ANZAC Service at the War Memorial in Goffet Park, Brighton Ave. March back to Toronto Diggers Club after service.

WANGI WANGI

- 5.30am: Dawn Service at the War Memorial at Wangi RSL Club. Breakfast afterwards – gold coin donation.
- 10.00am: March steps off in Puna Rd for the War Memorial. Assemble and form up at 9.30am. ANZAC Service at the Memorial to follow march. A range of military vehicles will be on display.

WYONG

- 5.45am: Dawn Service at Wyong RSL Sub-branch, Hely St, Wyong. Breakfast afterwards.
- 9.15am: Morning Service starting at the Cenotaph, Wyong Town Centre Park, followed by march back to Wyong RSL.

PLEASE NOTE: All times and venues have been supplied by various RSL Sub-branch officials. Care has been taken to ensure as many services as possible have been included and were correct at the time of publication. For verification of other services please contact your local RSL Sub-branch.