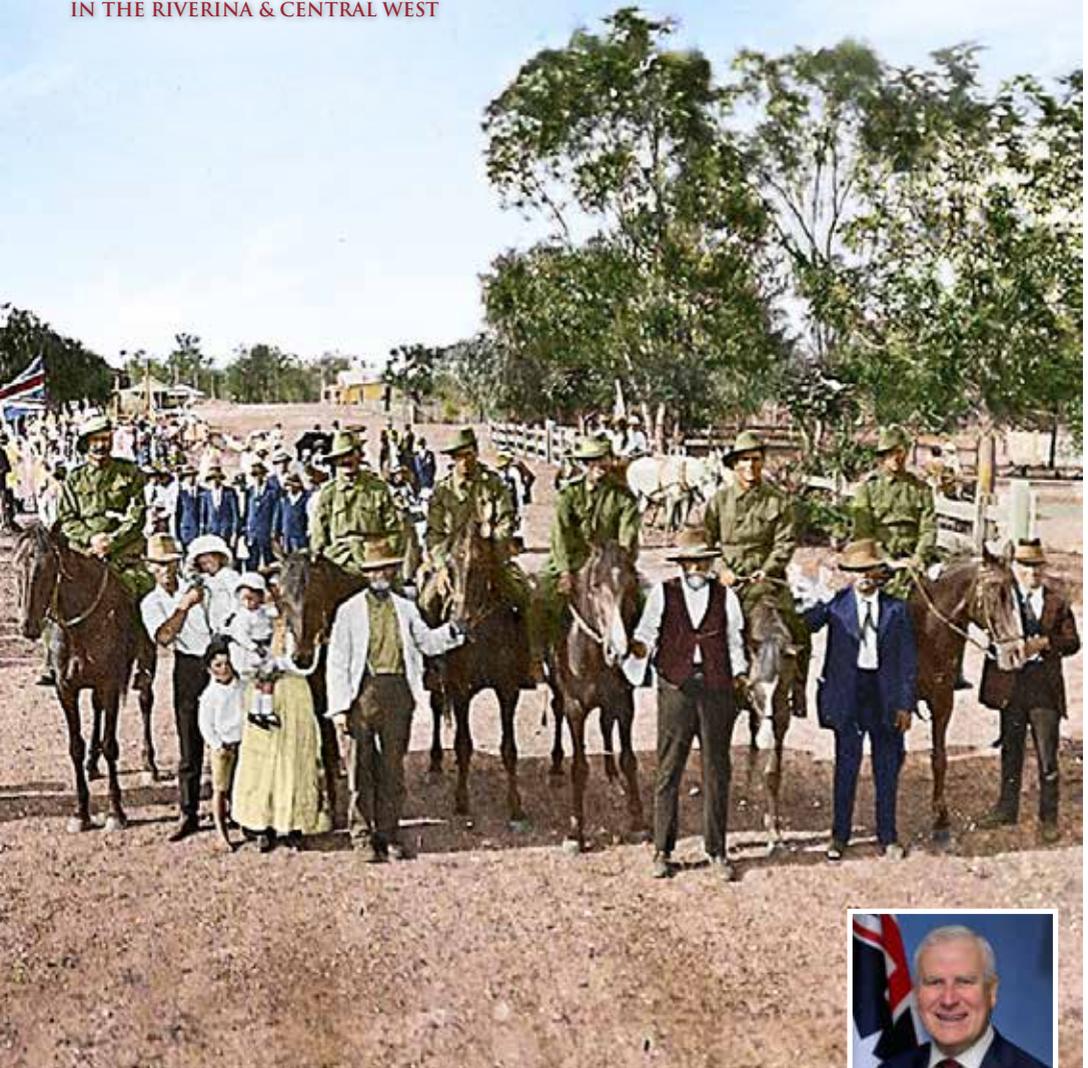


# ANZAC DAY

IN THE RIVERINA & CENTRAL WEST



25TH APRIL 2023



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



*PANORAMA: The full-width, original version of the photograph used and specially colourised for this ANZAC commemorative booklet. The complete black and white image, reproduced on this page and the one opposite, shows an additional vehicle (left) and a person holding an umbrella on a horse (right). The back of the picture has "Returned soldier parade, country town?" pencilled on it. It shows so much depth of field as well as all the character and charm of the times.*

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*This booklet may contain names and images of deceased Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

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## COUNTRY PEOPLE DID THEIR DUTY

**WHEN the guns fell silent to end The Great War and news reached Australian country towns that the horrors of the past four years were over, the relief was truly palpable.**

Rural communities, in particular, keenly felt the devastating loss of life of the 1914-18 conflict. Many of the best and bravest from regional areas did not return.

For those who managed to make it back, life would never be the same. Most carried mental and physical scars. Some were tortured by the effects of shellshock or horrendous wounds suffered on battlefields far from the peaceful paddocks, rolling hills and dusty streets of the Riverina, Central Western New South Wales and elsewhere.

Indeed, addressing the National Press Club in 2018, then Australian War Memorial Director Dr Brendan Nelson AO told the tragic tale in a couple of sentences.

“We emerged victorious, but inconsolably mourning 62,000 dead,” he said.

“The nation would live with another 60,000 who would die over the following decade.”

Of Australia’s 272,000 World War I Veterans, 170,000 had wounds or illnesses.

The wrap-around front and back cover photograph, specially colourised for this publication, the 13th annual edition, magnificently depicts a typical returned soldier parade in what is almost assuredly a country setting, albeit unidentified, circa 1919-20.

It is reproduced in its entirety and in its original black and white above.

The bush location could be anywhere ... it is representative of them all.

Locals are dressed in their finest attire. Flags are proudly unfurled. Red Cross nurses – angels of mercy – are in a four-in-hand, the horses draped in appropriate rugs. Early model cars, real rarities, are suitably decorated. It is a fabulous Australian scene.

Such a town no doubt gave mightily to the Empire’s cause.

This commemorative booklet once again honours the service and sacrifice of all those, past and present, who have nobly worn an Australian military uniform, as well as their families.

We give thanks to the duty willingly given so we may now enjoy the relative freedoms, hard fought and hard won, in the best country in the world.

Lest We Forget.

*Michael McCormack*

THE HON.

MICHAEL McCORMACK MP

Federal Member for Riverina  
Shadow Minister for International  
Development and the Pacific





*BOY SOLDIER: Austin Kelly*



*SUPREME SACRIFICE: Leo Kelly*



*ARCHWAY: Wagga Wagga's Memorial Arch, the front of which includes the names of 1,141 district men and three nurses who served in World War I. This splendid and imposing structure, pictured in its early days, cost £1,700 to construct and was officially unveiled amidst much fanfare on ANZAC Day 1927 by hero of both the Second Boer and Great Wars, Major-General Charles Cox (1863-1944).*

# TALL TALE OR TRUE ... KELLYS WERE HEROES

**STIRRING** tales of daring, defiance and derring-do leapt from the pages of *The Empire Annual for Australian Boys* to grip the imaginations of youngsters during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Inspiring stories of heroism and pluck – from the battlefield to the sporting field – encouraged boys to always be their best selves and that anything was possible.

Similar yearly tomes were published as a guide for girls.

The story on the following pages is as audacious and remarkable as any told over the years in this Riverina ANZAC Day publication and something which reads as though it were straight from the famous *Boy's Own* volumes.

They say truth trumps fiction and this may certainly be the case with Wagga Wagga World War I Digger Austin Kelly – who lied about his age so he could go to war.

Austin was a mere 15 years young when he enlisted to fight.

Indeed, his attestation papers went as far as to describe his complexion as “fresh”!

His war-time adventures are akin to a novelist’s flight of fancy but, in reality, exemplify the true gallantry and guts of this intrepid son of the Riverina.

This is a tale of triumph yet tragedy ... and is a quintessentially Australian story ... a remarkable account of bravery, spontaneity and survival yet also one of profound sorrow and loss.

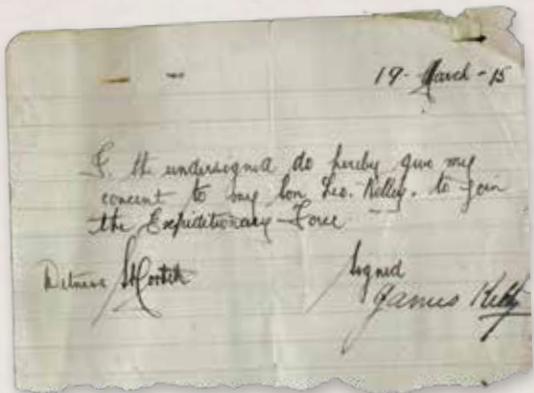
Austin Kelly was the youngest son and middle child of well-known and highly respected local drover James Patrick Kelly and his wife Isabella Susan Marion (née Donnelly) who married at Cootamundra in 1896. James was 28 and Isabella 16 at the time.

Austin was born on 27 November 1899 and baptised in Saint Michael’s Church, Wagga Wagga, on 5 April 1900.

Older brother Leo was not quite two when Austin arrived and the Kellys would add a daughter, Mona Maria, in 1904.

In December 1907, when Leo was in (Lower) Third Class, he was awarded a prize for word building and composition, yet Austin, by his own admission, was not very scholarly.

Both boys were educated by the Christian Brothers and would enlist at a young age; Leo aged 18 years and a month and Austin at just 15 years and eight months even though he signed his attestation papers to say he was 21 years and a month. *continued ...*



*CONSENT* (above): James Kelly gave permission for his under-age son Leo to fight for God, King and Country.

*ATTESTATION* (below): Leo Kelly’s signed oath to serve his country at war.



# FATHER NEVER SAW

Leo answered his country's call on 23 March 1915; Austin later the same year on 30 July.

Interestingly, members of the Australian Imperial Force had to be at least 19 when Leo joined but his father gave consent to allow him to go to war. The age restriction was reduced to 18 in June 1915. Heartbreakingly, James Kelly would never again see his boys once they set off for the war.

Before detailing Austin's exciting life and times, Leo's military service is also worthy of the highest praise and remembrance.

He paid the ultimate price for doing his duty and belongs in the pantheon of Australia's greatest ANZACs.

Upon enlistment at Liverpool, Leo was 177.8 centimetres (5 feet, 10 inches) tall, 73 kilograms (11 stone, 7½ pounds) in weight, with a dark complexion, brown eyes and brown hair.

Like his father, who he listed as his next-of-kin, Leo put down his occupation as drover.

Leo sailed out of Sydney with 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade, 20<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, "C" Company on 25 June 1915 aboard the 11,137-ton His Majesty's Australian Transport (HMAT) *Berrima* A35.

He was one of 203 New South Wales members of a 241-strong contingent which included a number of brave Riverina lads ... locals who, when their duty was done, made it home to the country and people they loved. They included Private Arthur Crisp of West Wyalong who returned to Australia on 16 December 1917, Lieutenant Victor Edmund Douglas Crisp of Grenfell (RTA 7 February 1919), Captain Arnold Stratfall Evans of Narrandera (RTA 13 February 1917), Pte Clifford Apollinarius Flinn of Germanton (now Holbrook) (RTA 10 March 1918) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt Frederick Hamilton (alias John Arnott) of Juneec (RTA 3 January 1918).

Then there was Lance-Corporal Charles Mathieson Boysen of Oxley, near Hay, who was not so fortunate.

LCpl Boysen was killed in action at Bullecourt, France, on 3 May 1917, aged 33, and has no known grave.

Leo Kelly joined the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force at Gallipoli on 16 August 1915, remaining on the ill-fated peninsula until the end of the campaign and then transferring to Alexandria, Egypt, via the Greek port of Mudros on 9 January 1916.

No doubt relieved to be off Gallipoli, where so much heartache and hurt befell so many of his mates, a week



*TROOP SHIP: HMAT Berrima A35 on which Leo Kelly travelled to war with the 20th Battalion in mid-1915. This photograph was taken at Cockatoo Island, Sydney Harbour, on 18 August 1914 and shows the view of the stern.*

# HIS TWO BOYS AGAIN

after arriving at Alexandria, Leo went absent without leave for three days and three hours.

Upon his return to camp, Leo was given a “four-day field punishment No. 2”, comprising heavy labouring duties, but without the inconvenience of the “No. 1” penalty, which meant possibly being restrained in handcuffs or fetters and being tied to a post or wheel!

On 18 March 1916, Leo departed Alexandria aboard HMT *Ingoma* as part of the British Expeditionary Force sent to the Western Front.

A week later he was amongst the troops who disembarked at Marseilles.

Sadly, four months later Leo went missing in action.

Tragic confirmation of his death came in a statement made nearly 13 months after Leo went missing.

It was made by Pte John Evans at Perham Downs, colloquially nicknamed “Perishing Downs” – one of four Australian command depots in the United Kingdom dealing with soldiers who had been discharged from hospital and needing training before being sent back to France.

On 23 August 1917, Pte Evans wrote he had been informed about Leo’s death from his mate, Pte Joe Reynolds, who was there.

It is hard, in this day and age of instantaneous communication and technology, to contemplate the sheer carnage – the blood and mud of the trenches and no man’s land between the lines at Gallipoli and on the Western Front during the First World War – let alone the difficulties of disseminating information from the



*DEATH KNOCK: Wagga Wagga Catholic Monsignor Michael Buckley (1850–1920) had the awful task of telling James Kelly his missing son Leo had been killed in action in 1916.*

war front back to anxious loved ones at home.

Soldiers were buried where they fell. If at all. Many bodies were never retrieved. Even now, more than a century on, remnants are occasionally unearthed and exhaustive DNA and other research is undertaken to identify any human remains to ensure a dignified and proper burial. *continued ...*



*GALLIPOLI: Leo Kelly served at Gallipoli from mid-August 1915 until the evacuation in January 1916.*

Then, when details were presented during military hearings, sometimes months after a Digger went missing or had died, such evidence did not always make it to all the necessary authorities in time for them to be able to advise and update families desperate for news on the other side of the world.

Hence, Mr Kelly received notice dated 15 September 1917 – weeks and weeks after Pte Evans’s testimony in England – from Major James Malcolm Lean, Officer in Charge of Base Records, Melbourne, that “I regret to have to inform you that no further official news has yet been received of No. 906 Pte. L. Kelly, 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion who was reported missing on 26<sup>th</sup> July, 1916.” Maj. Lean’s 2017 biography, by Carol Rosenhain, was appropriately titled *The Man Who Carried the Nation’s Grief*.

On 26 September 1917, Mr Kelly was given the news no parent ever wanted to hear.

Vicar-General of the newly established Catholic Diocese of Wagga Wagga, Monsignor Michael Buckley, received a telegram from Colonel Sandford, Victoria Barracks, Sydney, requesting him to convey the sad intelligence to Mr Kelly that his missing son had, in fact, been killed in action.

On the morning of the day it turns out he was killed, Leo wrote to his father more than 16,700 kilometres away in Wagga Wagga and his closing words were:

“Whatever happens I am satisfied. We have been through a rough time for 19 months, but everyone has treated me well, and I face the future contented.”

Word of Leo’s death was passed on to family three days before a Court of Inquiry made his fate official.

More details later emerged about Leo’s death.



*BRAVE: Cecil Wamsley*



*ARIAH PARK BOY: Henry Berry*

Pte Leslie James Hallett, a farmhand of Dungoo who sailed with Leo and who would also serve in World War II, made a statement on 7 November 1916 from 32 Stationary Hospital at Boulogne, France, saying: “Kelly was killed at Bois-Grenier on a bombing stunt on I think May 5<sup>th</sup>. I saw him buried. There were two dozen or more buried in one trench. Kelly was in X platoon 3 section. ... I recognise his number.”

On 22 January 1917, Pte Hallett – from his Harefield Hospital bed in England – provided more information which was placed in the Australian Red Cross Society Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau files.

“I saw them both (Ptes Kelly and Albert Kelsey) killed instantaneously by the same shell as we were advancing in the open at Pozières, on 26<sup>th</sup> July. I knew them both well. We were all in C Co. We left Australia together. They were blown to pieces.”

Cpl William Henry Beauchamp, a well driller of Rozelle, told Pte Hallett he saw both Leo and Pte Kelsey (whose Service No. was 907, the one after Leo’s) killed at Pozières.

Uralla grazier, LCpl Charles William Lind-Taylor, said he last saw Leo on 26 July at Pozières.

“They were going to the trenches that night,” he wrote. “The action was very severe with casualties.”

So many dead. So many families left to grieve.

Pte Alan Michael Roberts, an 18-year-old farmhand from Ireland who gave his address as the People’s Palace – The Salvation Army-run affordable accommodation on Pitt Street, Sydney – when he enlisted the day before Leo, gave a detailed and graphic account from Étaples in northern France on 10 March 1917.

Little more than six months later, Pte Roberts, just 21, would also lose his life at Westhoek Ridge, Flanders Fields, in Belgium.



*BEARER OF BAD NEWS: Major James Malcolm Lean (1878–1931), who had the unenviable job of updating families as to the fate of their soldier sons, often in tragic circumstances.*

Pte Roberts listed Pte William Henry Alexander, 19, Pte William Bennis, 41, Pte Henry Harold Berry, a 23-year-old bricklayer from Aria Park who went to war on HMAT *Ballarat A75* with the 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements on 6 September 1915, Pte Ronald Peter Downie, 23, Pte Kelsey, 28, Pte William George Lavers, 19, LCpl Harold Quainton, 26, Sergeant Alexander Robertson, 27, Pte Frederick Keith James Spinks, 20, Pte Cecil Carrington Wamsley, 25, and Pte Edward Ernest Woollett, 38. Courage was personified in all of them.

“These men,” Pte Roberts noted, “all went over in the charge at Pozieres on 26<sup>th</sup> July with me.

“We got across into the German 1<sup>st</sup> line at about 3am on the morning of 27<sup>th</sup> July. About ¾ hour later we had to retire on account of want of support and lack of bombs. At mid-day we had roll-call and they were all missing. They must either be killed or Prisoners Of War and there is little hope of their being prisoners. The majority of the casualties were caused on the way across by M.G. fire, since we had to go about 150 yards under intense M.G. fire in a dawning light. I know them all well. ... I saw most of them on the way across. Berry was a signaller. Quainton was a L/C. Robertson was a Sgt.”

Pte Roberts was dreadfully right ... not one of them made it. All apart from LCpl Quainton and Sgt Robertson were killed in action on 26 July with those two listed as having died on the 30<sup>th</sup>.

Pte Reynolds, writing from Mont Dore Hospital, Bournemouth in Dorset, England, stated: “Kelly was killed on the same night as Alexander in the German trench. We were taking a ridge and got into the German trench. About 11.30pm word was passed along that Kelly was killed. It was dark and I did not see it myself. We had to retire at daylight and left his body there.”

Leo was, according to Pte Reynolds, a “short nuggetty chap, very thickset”.

James Kelly was a big man – nearly 108kg (17st) – and

he wore a heavy burden in the final months of his life with Leo being reported missing in action and then confirmed as having died and also the anxiety caused by Austin going missing in action.

He died suddenly on 7 July 1918 after a heavy fall at the old Tattersall's Hotel which was located on the river side of Fitzmaurice Street about midway between Crampton and Kincaid streets.

This was the hotel Austin and Leo used as the address when listing their father as next-of-kin.

A subsequent inquiry, before District Coroner Charles Joseph Bohun Helm, conducted the following day and concluding on 13 July, found Mr Kelly's death resulted from natural causes, a cerebral haemorrhage. He was 50.

“He seemed very despondent as one of his sons had been killed at the war, while another had been reported missing,” read *The Daily Advertiser* newspaper's report of the coronial inquiry.

“He had had word, however, about ten days ago, that the missing son was on the water on his way back to Australia.

“The deceased never complained about being in ill health.

“On account of his legs being weak deceased had fallen on several occasions.”

Mr Kelly's daughter Mona, then 13, gave evidence to the hearing, mentioning Austin was due home from the war that week.

Mr Kelly's 9 July funeral procession from the Wagga Wagga District Hospital was “a large and representative one, containing prominent residents of Carabost, Wagga and other parts”, according to the *Advertiser*.

Monsignor Buckley officiated at the graveside service in the Catholic portion of the Wagga Wagga (Monumental) Cemetery. *continued ...*

*EARLY DAYS: A bullock team passes Tattersall's Hotel on a dusty Fitzmaurice Street circa 1886-90 when John Adolphus Manton had the hotel in which James Kelly would collapse and die in 1918 when the licensee was James Foster. Picture courtesy: State Library of NSW.*



KAYE J. J. M.  
KEANE H. S.  
KEARNS E. P.  
KEATH C. J.  
KEATING T. P.  
KEEVERS W. M.  
KELLY H. A.  
KELLY J.  
KELLY L.  
KELSEY A.  
KEMP F. A.  
KENDALL E. D.  
KENDALL W.  
KENNEDY S. E.  
KENNY A. V.  
KENNY E. J.  
KERFOOT A.  
KERMOND H. J.  
KERR A. G.

*REMEMBERED: Leo Kelly's name  
amongst the 885 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion fallen on  
the Roll of Honour at the Australian War  
Memorial, Canberra.*

Pall-bearers were brother-in-law Percy William Cole, Denis Frances Coyne, Rupert Granville Kiddle of Carabost, the Raleigh brothers Alfred Herbert "Mick" and Arthur Ryder and fellow drover Richard Stanley Williams who would die later that very year, aged 45.

Mona Kelly, Leo and Austin's sister, would live a long and full life, marrying Robert Michael Cullen (1896-1979) in 1924 and having four children: Robert, Esmac (Mrs Maurice Salmon of Currawarna), Bryan and Valmai (Mrs John Bowen of Wagga Wagga).

By the time she passed away in Wagga Wagga in 1987, Mona's family had grown to 20 grandchildren and a dozen great-grandchildren.

Her son Robert (1924-2003) was a gunner with 139 Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery in the Second World War and served in New Guinea, as did son-in-law Maurice Salmon (1923-2011), a sapper with 4 Field Company.

Isabella Kelly, Leo, Austin and Mona's mother, remarried in 1919 to George Arthur Frederics and moved to Sydney.

She had to convince Army authorities she was entitled to her late son's effects after receiving a letter dated 27 January 1921 in response to her request for Leo's memorial plaque (Dead Man's Penny) and scroll.

The bronze plaque, issued to the next-of-kin of all



*TRADITION: Leo and Austin Kelly's sister Mona with her son Robert Cullen who continued the family's military representation by serving with the Army in World War II.*

Commonwealth war dead, was signed for by Isabella on 10 September 1921 but it would not be until eight days before Christmas 1924 before she would be advised as to his final resting place, Leo having been exhumed and reinterred in Pozières British Cemetery.

"God remembers when the world forgets" is the inscription chiselled into his white marble headstone over grave 12, plot 3, row O.

Austin Kelly was very young when he left school. He described himself as "not a very good scholar" in his Repatriation Department File, MX3251, document titled "Personal History".

He stated on his enlistment papers he was a labourer who worked on the railways "for a while" after leaving school.

Enlisting in Melbourne, Austin was 165cm (5'5¼") tall (he would not have made the cut two months earlier as the minimum height had been 168cm, or 5'6") and weighed just 52.6kg (8st, 4lb), with dark brown hair and brown eyes.

Austin steamed out of Melbourne aboard HMAT *Ceramic* A40 on 23 November 1915 with the 4<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment.

*Ceramic* weighed 18,481 tons and was owned by the Oceanic Navigation Co. Ltd of Liverpool (White Star Line) which also had the ill-fated *Titanic*, which notoriously sank on her maiden voyage in 1912.

Amongst the 156 12<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements on Commonwealth-leased *Ceramic* that trip were just six New South Welshmen, including 27-year-old plate-layer Allan Younie of Ardlethan who returned to Australia in 1919 having been twice wounded in action in France.

Austin Kelly had an eventful war.

He hadn't arrived in Heliopolis long before he was suffering pains in the chest necessitating admission to No. 3 Auxiliary Hospital for a 19-day stay.

On 11 March 1916, Austin was transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division Ammunition Column and taken on strength into that unit at Zeitoun in Cairo, Egypt. *continued ...*



*SISTER: Mona Kelly, photographed possibly at the back of Hunter Bros, circa 1923. Mona was employed there prior to her marriage to Robert Cullen, who worked at the famous Wagga Wagga newsagency for 55 years. When Mona married, she had to leave her work. Their son Robert was born in 1924 when Mona was 19.*



*SCHOOL TRIBUTE: Austin (inset) and Leo Kelly's names are on the Christian Brothers High School Roll of Honour, unveiled by Bishop Joseph Wilfrid Dwyer DD (1869-1939) on 15 December 1920. The board is now in the entrance to the St Michael's Parish Centre. Pro Deo et Patria is Latin "for God and Country".*

After another trip to hospital for some treatment in Abassia, Austin was mustered as a driver in May and proceeded to join the 5<sup>th</sup> Division Artillery at Moascar for Tel-el-Kebir.

The Moascar camp was eloquently described by Australia's World War I artist George Lambert in 1919 as: "Miles and miles of tents and desert, thousands of sweating, sun-bronzed men and beautiful horses."

The Russian-born painter wrote to his wife Amy: "... the well-appointed camp that two years ago spread out from here to the Desert for miles and umpteen miles, a white city of tents.

"There are still tents, a mile or so ... but the tents are slowly coming down, the incinerators are throwing off long, low lines of blue smoke ... Outside this bit of shade, 111 Fahrenheit (43.8° Celsius), there is a blaze of almost colourless light, and it takes even for an experienced savage like myself, a few seconds to locate the difference

between sand, tents and sky. In this blaze work still goes on – Army work ..."

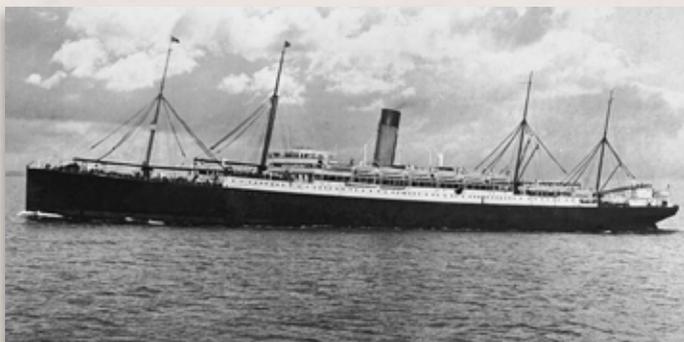
Lambert knew about military life and soldiers. His superb painting *Anzac, the landing 1915* depicting that first fateful morning at Gallipoli, at 190.5cm x 350.5cm (75in x 138in), is the largest painting in the Australian War Memorial collection.

Austin was then posted to the Brigade Ammunition Column at Ferry Post, Suez Canal, Ismailia – the Camel Corps base and the gateway to the eastern desert.

Austin's brother Leo had encountered the Turks on the Suez Canal and it was here the two brothers met up.

Austin unsuccessfully endeavoured to arrange a transfer to his elder brother's unit.

Leo went off to France and within weeks would be dead whilst in June, Austin fell ill again, this time with a bout of diarrhoea.



*VESSEL: HMT Ceramic A40, which took Austin Kelly to war.*

Once he was well, Austin joined the Australian Army Training Depot in England via HMT *Lake Manitoba*.

Whilst there, he transferred to the 21<sup>st</sup> Field Artillery Brigade at Boyton before marching in from Parkhouse and joining the 116<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery (Howitzer) Battery in early February 1917.

The following month, Austin went absent without leave from 2<sup>nd</sup> Training Battalion, Larkhill Camp, Durrington, and was given 120 hours of detention by Lieutenant-



*MEASURING UP: Austin Kelly's official papers in which he bumped up his age by six years in order to join the Australian Imperial Force in 1915.*

Colonel John Walstab, who had been a bank accountant from Casterton, Victoria, before the war.

Austin was also forced to forfeit nine days of pay: £2.5.0.

On 14 June, he proceeded to Le Havre, a port city in the Seine-Maritime department in the Normandy region of northern France.

Sick again in late August, Austin was soon on the mend and rejoined the 5<sup>th</sup> Battalion in the field.

It was during 1917 that Austin had his bold and miraculous escape, best summarised by the *Advertiser* that year.

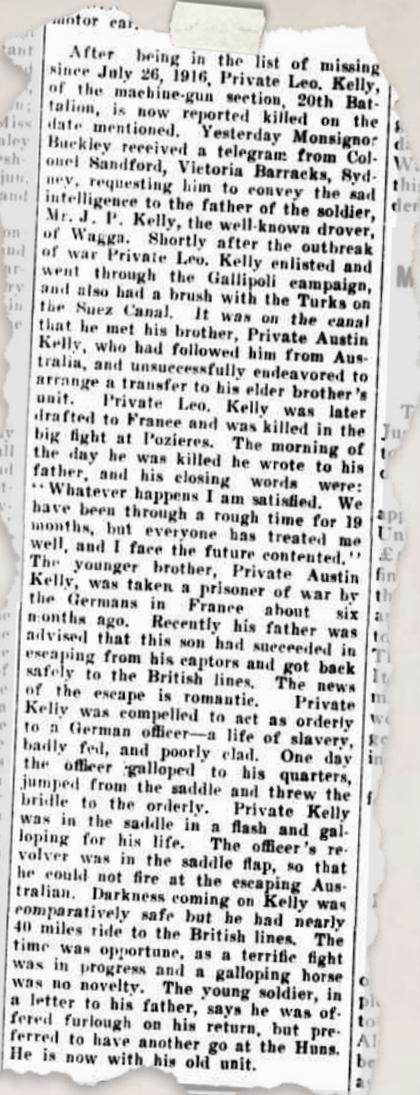
There is an old saying in journalism – never let the facts get in the way of a good story.

Historian and first-time author Dr Ian Hodges, Department of Veterans' Affairs Senior Historian, cast some doubt on the authenticity of Austin's tall tale in his 2017 thesis and later published the book *He Belonged To Wagga* sub-titled "The Great War, the AIF and returned soldiers in an Australian country town".

As Dr Hodges, who grew up in Sydney, settled in Canberra and had worked at the Australian War Memorial and the Department of Veterans' Affairs for 25 years at the time of publication, correctly pointed out: "Nothing in his service record or his Repatriation Department files confirms that Kelly was ever a Prisoner Of War." The dates given in the *Advertiser's* 27 September 1917 piece, the fifth and final item in a column headed PERSONAL, also do not match with Austin's war record.

However, as indicated earlier in this feature, the war in Europe was utter mayhem and the chaotic nature of reporting everyone's whereabouts at every particular time and place must have been, on occasion, difficult if not impossible.

Dr Hodges writes: "The truth or otherwise of Kelly's letter matters less than the fact that it could be accepted by the same readers who, twelve months earlier, were confronted with George Burns' mournful recollections



*CLIPPING: An extract from The Daily Advertiser of 27 September 1917 in which Leo Kelly's death is detailed as well as Austin's great escape.*

of Pozières; 'I try to forget what I have seen, to get away from the awful mental tortures I have endured'.

"People knew," Dr Hodges added, "that the war had many dimensions, and in far-off Wagga Kelly's story was as credible as any other, particularly at a time when people at home, even those like Maurice McKeown at the Experiment Farm who were well aware of the number of dead and wounded, could write almost flippantly of a volunteer, 'If he makes things as lively for the enemy as he used to do for the Lake footballers he will leave many victims in his track.'" *continued...*



*DIGGERS: Studio portrait of Austin Kelly (right) and an unidentified soldier. This was taken circa 25 September 1915 by the Darge Photographic Company which had a permit to take photographs at the Broadmeadows and Seymour Army camps during the First World War. In the 1930s, the Australian War Memorial purchased the original glass negatives from Algernon Darge, as well as the photographers' notebooks.*

Let us, for a moment, hark back to Wagga Wagga 106 years ago and put ourselves in the armchair of the reader of the *Advertiser* and take in what unfolded in that Page 3 article:

“The younger brother, Private Austin Kelly, was taken a Prisoner Of War by the Germans in France about six months ago,” the report read.

“Recently his father was advised that his son had succeeded in escaping from his captors and got back safely to the British lines.

“The news of the escape is romantic.

“Private Kelly was compelled to act as orderly to a German officer – a life of slavery, badly fed, and poorly clad.

“One day the officer galloped to his quarters, jumped from the saddle and threw the bridle to the orderly.

“Private Kelly was in the saddle in a flash and galloping for his life.

“The officer’s revolver was in

the saddle flap, so that he could not fire at the escaping Australian.

“Darkness coming on Kelly was comparatively safe but he had nearly 40 miles ride to the British lines.

“The time was opportune, as a terrific fight was in progress and a galloping horse was no novelty.



*CONVALESCING: AIF Group Hospital ward at the 3rd Training Brigade, Hurdcott, in Wiltshire, England, during World War I. Austin Kelly recovered here in 1917 before returning to the battle lines.*

“The young soldier, in a letter to his father, says he was offered furlough on his return, but preferred to have another go at the Huns.

“He is now with his old unit.”

Whether it is 100 per cent factual, embellished or completely untrue is not for us, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, to judge.

It makes for riveting reading and, importantly, no-one at the time doubted its veracity.

What we do know is on 30 September 1917 Austin was wounded in action in France, sustaining facial gunshot wounds as well as to his left arm which was fractured as was his right leg.

Once he was stabilised, Austin was taken to England on HMAT *Warilda* A69, built by William Beardmore and Company in Glasgow as the SS *Warilda* for the Adelaide Steamship Company.

This 7,713-ton vessel was designed for the East-West Australian coastal services but, following the start of World War I, was requisitioned by the Commonwealth and fitted out as a troop ship, making two trips to Egypt and one to England.

Later, in 1916, *Warilda* was put into service as a hospital ship and made more than 180 trips from Le Havre to Southampton, carrying about 80,000 patients, of whom Austin Kelly was one.

It was on one of these voyages, in the early hours of 3 August 1918, *Warilda* was hit by a torpedo fired from the German submarine UC-49 which took out *Warilda*'s starboard propeller.

Of the 801 people on board that night, 123 lost their lives as *Warilda* sunk a little over 2½ hours after being hit. The 15 Australians who died in the sinking of the *Warilda* are commemorated on the Australian War Memorial's Roll of Honour.

Austin recovered and was discharged for a fortnight's furlough until 20 December after which he was to report to the depot at Hurdcott (No. 3 Group).

Hurdcott was a large camp at Compton Chamberlayne, an extension of those near Fovant.

It took its name because it was on land that was part of two farms, with one called Hurdcott.

During the Gallipoli Campaign (officially from 17 February 1915 to 9 January 1916), thousands of wounded Australian soldiers were sent to English hospitals, but then the question came as to where to send them to convalesce as they could not be sent home.

Command Depots were established to solve this problem – a place where soldiers discharged from military hospitals could recuperate and get fighting fit again.

The AIF had four Command Depots based in Wiltshire and Dorset, in England's south west. *continued ...*



*VESSEL: HMAT Warilda A69, pictured on 8 February 1916, which carried Austin Kelly from France to England for hospital treatment after he was wounded in action in 1917.*

In March 1917, Hurdcott House became the headquarters of the AIF's No. 3 Command Depot and was considered as ideal for a convalescent base with well laid-out huts and splendidly equipped kitchens capable of feeding 4,000 men.

Huts were of corrugated iron, lined and floored with wood; each accommodating 30 men, with ample window space.

The lighting of the camps was electric, supplied from a central power house, which served the whole of the area; with heating by coal fires, each building having one or more stoves, according to its size.

Having regained sufficient health to be put back into the firing line, Austin reported to Longbridge Deverill, headquarters of the AIF Overseas Training Brigade, on 31 January 1918.

Then it was on to the Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery at Heytesbury, a village in Wiltshire, on 10 February before proceeding eight days later back to France and the deadly Western Front.

Taken on strength as a gunner, Austin was posted to the Australian Field Artillery 17<sup>th</sup> Battery of the 6<sup>th</sup> (Army) Brigade on 9 March 1918 – the very day he fell victim to gas poisoning.

Austin's fighting was finished ... at least in this war.

Treatment followed at the 15<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Ambulance, 11<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station, the 30<sup>th</sup> General Hospital, His Majesty's Hospital Ship *Stad Antwerpen*, Connaught Hospital at Aldershot, England, then Harefield Park House – the No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital.

After that he was given a fortnight's furlough in London.

He boarded HT *Essex* on 7 June 1918 and sailed home, his papers stating his gunshot wound to his left arm had caused a partial loss of his elbow.

Interestingly, by the time Austin arrived back in Wagga Wagga he was still only 17½ years of age ... not old enough even then to be eligible to enlist.

Yet Austin had experienced, as you've read, an action-packed two years of close shaves, painful direct hits and escapades and had been extremely lucky to live to tell the tale.

But he was not done yet.

He presented himself at Paddington on 24 October 1941 to serve in World War II and signed up, listing Mary Duffy as his next-of-kin.

At least this time he did not have to fabricate his age, using his real birthdate.

He did not serve for long – only until 23 January 1942 – but the fact is he did put his name forward at a time when our nation was in grave peril.

Austin, Service No. NX49606, was a Corporal attached to the Ship's Staff Transport "KK" upon his discharge.

Austin was at Dee Why at the time and would then spend his final years in Lawson in the Blue Mountains, passing away on 14 May 1969, aged 69.

Family say he only managed to meet up with Mona at the very end of his life.

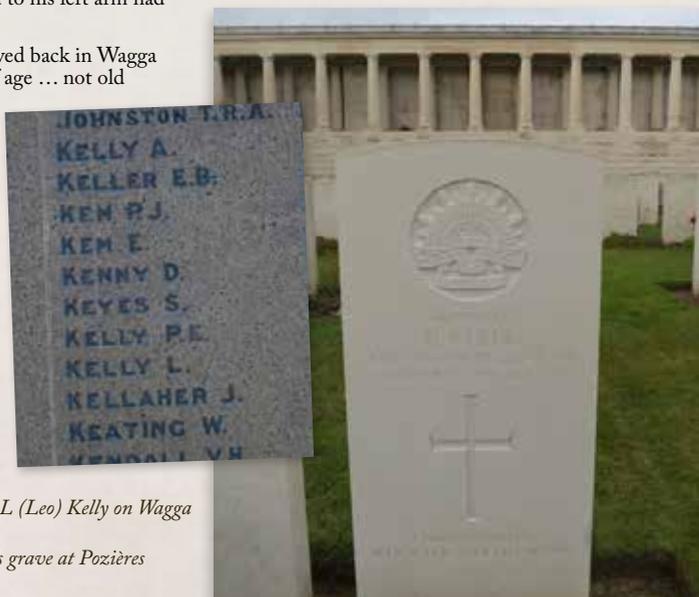
Austin's death notice in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 17 May 1969 simply stated he was of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> AIF, that he died suddenly at Lawson and that he had been privately cremated.

The Kellys are immortalised on the magnificent sandstone Memorial Arch, opened in Wagga Wagga's Victory Memorial Gardens on ANZAC Day 1927, by Major-General Charles Frederick Cox, known by his men as "Fighting Charlie".

Leo's name was also one of the original 204 – "The Heroic Dead" – on the Wagga Wagga Cenotaph, unveiled by the Lake Albert-born Gallipoli, Egypt and Western Front leader, Brigadier General Thomas Blamey, on 17 September 1922.

Leo is also listed with the 20<sup>th</sup> Battalion fallen on Panel 91 on the Roll of Honour at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra.

One thing we know about the Kelly boys is that they gave their all for the cause and, as a country and community, we can be thankful we had volunteers with their get up and go when it mattered most.



*BROTHERS (above): A (Austin) and L (Leo) Kelly on Wagga Wagga's Memorial Arch.*

*RESTING PLACE (right): Leo Kelly's grave at Pozieres British Cemetery.*

*FLORAL TRIBUTE: Flowers cover Wagga Wagga's Cenotaph memorialising locals killed in the World Wars and Vietnam including (inset) Leo Kelly in 1916.*

JONES, M. J.  
 JACOBS, C. G.  
 JAMIESON, P. D.  
 JOWITT, J.  
 JACKSON, A. R.  
 JACKSON, F. J.  
 KELAHER, J.  
 KELLER, E. B.  
 KEM, M. E.  
 KELLY, L.  
 KELLY, C. W.  
 KENNEDY, K.  
 KEYS, S.



# BEWLEYS BROTHERS IN

**THEY may not have been brothers by blood but Albert and Sidney Bewley were certainly brothers in arms.**

From working as labourers in Cowra to their untimely deaths on the battlefield, Albert Henry Bewley and Sidney George Birch Bewley's lives ran somewhat parallel, despite an age difference of 15 years.

Albert Henry Bewley was born into the large family of William and Caroline Agnes Bewley (née Birch) at Blakney Creek, about 26 kilometres north-east of Yass, on 12 March 1879.

Sidney George Birch Bewley was born in early July 1894 at Jerrara, near Crookwell, to parents William Edwin Bewley and Mary Jane (née George) – the eldest of 11 children.

They both attended the now-closed Mullengrove Public School at Narrawa, which was located about half-way between Boorowa and Crookwell as the crow flies.

The embarkation roll states both Albert and Sidney, his nephew, lived at "Maryamma" near Mount McDonald, just south of the yet-to-be-built Wyangala Dam wall, at the time of their enlistment, with Albert's older brother and Sidney's father William listed as both men's next of kin. Albert weighed 70.7 kilograms (11 stone, 1½ pounds), had blue eyes and dark brown hair. Sidney weighed 71.6kg (11st, 3½lb), had grey eyes and light brown hair.

The two men enlisted within days of each other at Lithgow, with Albert's attestation papers saying he joined the Australian Imperial Force on 7 August 1915,



*CALL OF DUTY: Sidney Bewley and his name as it appears on the Cowra War Memorial Arch.*

with Sidney joining on 10 August. It is said they told authorities they were brothers in an attempt to be kept together. Albert (Service Number 1673) was 36 years old and Sidney (Service No. 1687) just 21.

The embellishment worked – for a while – with the pair leaving Australia together with the 30<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 2<sup>nd</sup> Reinforcements on 17 December 1915 aboard HMAT *Berrima* A35 and arriving at Suez, Egypt, on 23 January 1916.

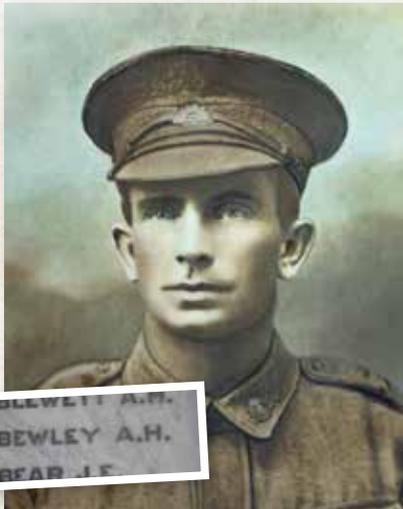
It was not a smooth start for the Bewleys, with both suffering from a bout of the mumps soon after disembarking, which led to stints in hospital for both men. Albert being admitted on 25 January to the 4<sup>th</sup> Auxiliary Hospital, Cairo, and Sidney was admitted on 11 February.

It was during this stint in the hospital ward that the Bewleys's plan to serve alongside each other unravelled, with Albert being transferred on 6 March to the newly raised 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion – a part of the doubling of the AIF with Gallipoli Veterans from the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion joining fresh reinforcements – with Sidney remaining with the 30<sup>th</sup> Battalion. The two would never serve together again.

## ALBERT'S JOURNEY

On 2 June 1916 at Alexandria, Egypt, Private Albert boarded RMS *Kinfauns Castle* with the 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion arriving at Marseilles, France, on 8 June 1916, bound for the Western Front.

The 164.47-centimetre-tall (5 feet, 4¾ inches) soldier



*SELFELESS SERVICE: Albert Bewley was described as a brave soldier who proved himself time and again.*

# ARMS, NOT BY BLOOD

was involved in the battalion's first major battle at the Battle for Pozières in August and suffered shell wounds to his back and spine in the field on 8 August, leading to Albert being evacuated to England to recover. He rejoined the battalion on 7 September.

The 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion was engaged rotating in and out of the front line around Ypres, Belgium, and in the Somme Valley, France, over the next several months, including the particularly severe European winter of 1916-17, with Albert, also known as Jack, earning a promotion to Lance-Corporal on 3 March 1917.

Any elation from his elevation in rank would be short-lived; Albert's nephew was killed in action only 20 days later.

The 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion continued to train and hold the front line until its next major offensive at the Battle of Messines.

In the dead of night, just after 3am on 7 June 1917, the relatively quiet ambience was promptly pierced by the deafening sound of 19 mines detonating under German trenches – at the time it was the largest anthropogenic explosion in history.

The 38-year-old LCpl Bewley led his troops to battle where they were met with heavy opposition. Whilst the section he led captured its objectives, Albert paid the ultimate price. His body has never been recovered, with records saying he was buried "at a spot 800 yards (731 metres) East of Messines, Belgium".

## SIDNEY'S FATE

On 18 June 1916 at Alexandria, Private Sidney embarked with the 30<sup>th</sup> Battalion aboard HMAT *Hororata* arriving at Marseilles on 23 June – 15 days after his uncle.

The battalion's first major battle was at Fromelles, France, on 19 July 1916, where it provided supplies and ammunition to the front line but was also drawn into the intense battle.

The The 173.35-centimetre-tall (5 feet, 8¼ inches) Pte Bewley came through the skirmishes unscathed and, like his uncle, spent the remarkably cold 1916-17 winter months rotating in and out of the front line.

The German Army strategically withdrew to a strong defensive position, the Hindenburg Line, in early 1917. This allowed the 30<sup>th</sup> Battalion to advance its position which led to it capturing, with little resistance, the French town of Bapaume, on 17 March.

Only days later, 22-year-old Pte Bewley's life was cut short on the front line near Beaumetz, some 60 kilometres west of Bapaume, during a German counter-attack.

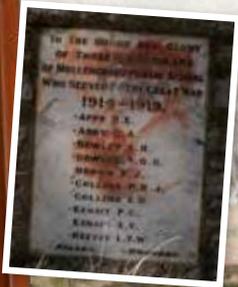
Lieutenant Camden Gunning recalled the tragic event via a letter written to Sidney's father, published in the *Cowra Free Press* on Saturday 28 July 1917.

"He belonged to my platoon and was one of a Lewis gun crew who were placed in a very important position in our line on the night of 22/23<sup>rd</sup> March," Lt Gunning wrote.

"The post was attacked by a very strong enemy raiding party at 4.20am on 23<sup>rd</sup> March." A shell burst amongst them, killing Sidney instantly.

In the same publication another colleague, Pte Bewley's Platoon Sergeant Albert William Chivers, wrote to Sidney's father: "He was in my Platoon ever since he joined up with the Battalion so I am able to tell you I knew him well. Also coming from Cowra, or close to it, we had more than one good talk together, as that is my home in Australia."

*LASTING HONOUR: LCpl Albert Bewley and Pte Sidney Bewley's names are on several memorials, including the site of the school they attended, Mullengrove Public School (main pic); the Darbys Falls Honour Roll located in the village's Rural Fire Service station; and the Cowra and District Great War Honour Roll on Cowra's Brisbane Street as well as the Australian War Memorial's Roll of Honour. Sidney's name also appears on the Villers Bretonneaux Memorial and war memorials at Crookwell and Penrith.*



# MIRACLE SURVIVAL AT SEA AFTER SINKING

**GANMAIN-BORN Mervyn Robert (Bob) Farrands clung for life to a makeshift raft wallowing in the South China Sea with his mate from Hay, Clifford Leslie Farlow, their bodies already weakened from more than two years of mistreatment as Prisoners Of War now completely covered in toxic marine oil.**

For three days – just like the flotsam and jetsam of the torpedoed ship in which they had been incarcerated – Bob and Cliff floated on the sea, their chances of survival dimming with every hour in the water as many other survivors of the sinking perished around them.

But, miraculously, the pair lasted long enough to be plucked to safety by the crew of USS *Pampanito*, an American submarine which had been part of a sub pack that had sunk the Japanese passenger-cargo ship *Rakuyo Maru* which had been transporting Bob, Cliff and another 1,316 POWs from Singapore bound for Japan.

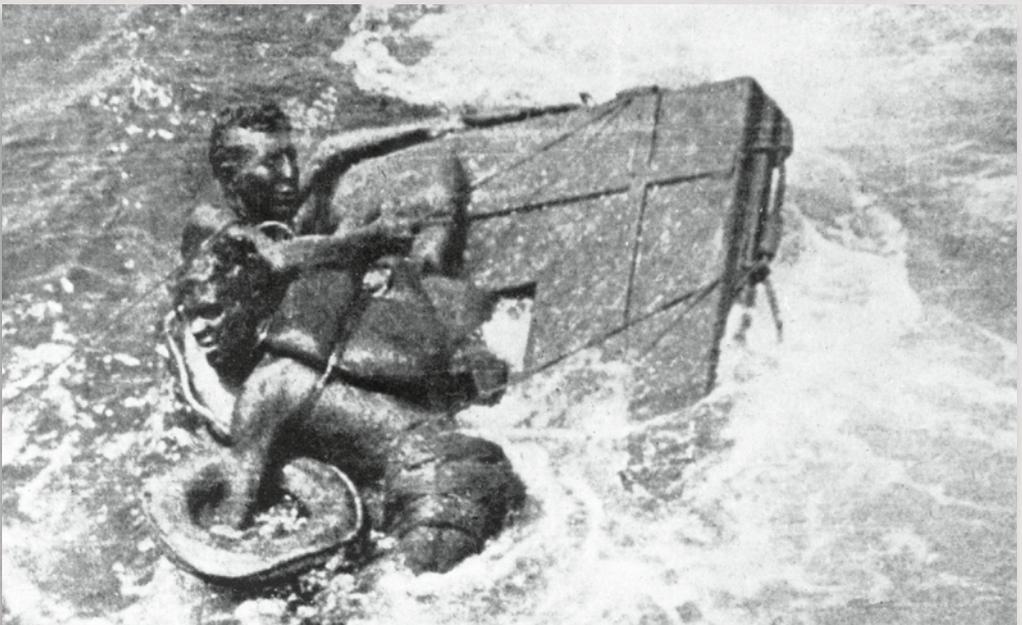
A photograph of Bob and Cliff hanging onto their raft was snapped by a *Pampanito* crew member and is part of the Australian War Memorial collection.

The photo was also used by Melbourne artist Matt Adnate in December 2020 to paint a mural on a 30-metre-high water tower at Hay as part of the Riverina town's tribute to district men and women who served in World War II.

Bob Farrands was born at Ganmain on 27 July 1920, the only son of Les and Glad Farrands, who also had three daughters – Winifred, Sheila and Jeanette.

He enlisted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Infantry Force at Wagga Wagga on 1 July 1940, about four weeks before he turned 20, and became a member of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division's 2/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion with the Service Number NX36050.

The newly formed 2/19<sup>th</sup> opened its headquarters at Walgrove Camp, west of Sydney, just two weeks after Bob enlisted. Most of its recruits were from the Riverina and the Monaro.



*RESCUED: Bob Farrands and Cliff Farlow hanging on for dear life just before being rescued by the crew of USS Pampanito.*

The ill-fated Division was sent to Singapore in February 1941 and first saw action in January 1942 as the Japanese threat materialised following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941.

On 15 February 1942, Bob, by then holding the rank of Lance-Corporal, was in the hands of the Japanese with the surrender of Singapore and was initially imprisoned in the infamous Changi POW camp before being sent to work on the Burma-Thailand Railway.

## PITIFUL CONDITIONS

Conditions on the railway were pitiful, with Cliff – who enlisted at Wagga Wagga five days before Bob at the age of 18 and held the rank of Corporal at the time of capture – describing meals at their camp as 99 per cent rice and not much of it. Work included cutting down trees, digging into the hills to make railway cuttings and carting away soil in cane baskets. Disease was rampant, with men dying from beriberi, dysentery and malaria and suffering from flesh-decaying tropical ulcers.

Bob and Cliff were amongst captives who were chosen to be sent to Japan to work and on 4 September 1944, they and other POWs were herded onto the *Rakuyo Maru*, a 9,418-ton vessel loaded with bauxite and rubber as well as 1,318 prisoners who included the commander of the 8<sup>th</sup> Division's 2/18<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Brigadier Arthur Varley, and a United States Air Force Colonel, Harry Melton.

Brig. Varley, who was awarded a Military Cross and had been Mentioned in Despatches on the Western Front in World War I, was popular with the men he commanded.



*TRIBUTE: An image of Cliff Farlow sits above artist Matt Adnate's depiction of Cliff and Bob Farrands on the 30-metre-high Hay water tower mural.*

In captivity after the Fall of Singapore, he was in charge of what was known as "A Force", a work party that was relocated from Changi to Burma in May 1941 to work on the Burma-Thailand Railway.

Brig. Varley had a powerful personality and used that and his position to fight for better treatment and conditions for the slave workforce of about 9,000 POWs he commanded.

The *Rakuyo Maru* was part of a convoy of seven passenger-cargo vessels accompanied by about half a dozen warships, including the destroyer *Shikinam*, which sailed from Singapore on 6 September 1944.

The flagship, *Kachidoki Maru*, carried 900 British POWs, 6,000 tons of bauxite and the ashes of 582 Japanese war dead.

Conditions for POWs aboard the *Rakuyo Maru* were as bad as they were on land, with the vessels carrying captives to Japan often described as "hell ships". More than 1,000 POWs were sometimes pressed into spaces suitable for a few hundred and sufficient food and fresh water were not a consideration.

The 2,218 POWs aboard the *Rakuyo Maru* and the *Kachidoki Maru* were kept in the hot holds of the ships for 36 hours before their departure. The Australians rebelled against the inhumane conditions. To avoid bloodshed the *Rakuyo Maru's* captain allowed about 200 prisoners up on deck at a time. *continued ...*



*SAD END: There are suggestions World War I hero Brigadier Arthur Varley may have been machine-gunned to death after he survived the sinking of the Rakuyo Maru.*



*A COMPANY: A photograph of the 2/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion's A Company taken by Captain Reginald Newton in Malaya in August 1941. The photo was taken in front of St Paul's College where part of the 2/19<sup>th</sup> was quartered. Bob Farrands is pictured second from the right of the back row. Cliff Farlow was a member of B Company. Most of the men in this photo were either killed in action or held as POWs. Four members of A Company died at sea with the sinking of the Rakuyo Maru.*

## PROWLING SUBS

As the convoy headed north to Japan, three US submarines – the *Pampanito*, USS *Growler* and USS *Sealion II*, were prowling the South China Sea near Hainan. The Americans had been tipped off that an important convoy would leave Singapore on 6 September for Japan. It is believed the Operations Officer of the ComSubPac (Commander Submarine Forces Pacific) was not aware POWs were on the ships, although there are suggestions the JICPOA (Joint Intelligence Centre Pacific Operation Area) knew yet tragically did not pass on the information.

At 1.55am on 12 September, *Growler* struck first, sinking the warship *Hirado* with the escort fleet commander aboard. *Sealion II* torpedoed the cargo ship *Nankai Maru* then turned its deadly attentions to the *Rakuyo Maru*, whilst the *Pampanito* claimed the *Kachidoki Maru*.

At 5.31am, a *Sealion II* torpedo hit the *Rakuyo Maru*'s bow and penetrated Number 1 hold, filled with rubber, whilst a second torpedo slammed into the engine room, abruptly stopping the ship.

There was chaos on the stricken *Rakuyo Maru*, with reports POWs murdering some of their captors and some Japanese killing prisoners, whilst the enemies competed for whatever they could find to stay afloat in the sea as the ship slid below the waves, eventually sinking at 6.20pm. The subs claimed several other ships in the frenzy.

About 40 minutes after the *Rakuyo Maru* sunk, the Japanese escorts had picked up some Japanese survivors and departed. About 1,200 Australian and British POWs were left in the water.

The next day, warships were sent from Hainan to search for more Japanese survivors and a ship called *CDV 10* commanded by Lieutenant Commander Shiro Ichinose – despite the risk of being torpedoed by the lurking American subs – also rescued 157 POWs from the *Rakuyo Maru*, including an Australian medical officer, Captain Roland Richards. Capt. Richards later made a statement that before being rescued, POWs heard gunfire believed to be from other ships in the vicinity of seven other boats containing, amongst others, Brig. Varley and Col. Melton. The men were never seen or heard of again.

Some 1,559 Australian and British POWs died as a result of the submarine attack – 1,159 from the *Rakuyo Maru* and 400 from the *Kachidoki Maru*. Of those, 543 were Australians.

What Bob and Cliff endured and how they survived until they were rescued with 71 others by the *Pampanito* can only be imagined, but somehow they summoned the will to live. *Sealion II* rescued another 54 men, whilst two other subs – USS *Barb* and USS *Queenfish* – picked up another 32 survivors before the search was called off on 19 September.

The Australian survivors were first taken to Saipan and then were repatriated home in October 1944.

## RETURN TO AUSTRALIA

After returning to Australia and whilst recovering from his ordeal, Bob met Joan Wensley. They married in July 1946 and had three daughters – Lynette, Jenni and Robyn.

Bob first worked for the Customs Service in Sydney and then joined the Fire Brigade. The family lived at Putney and Bob worked at the Ryde Fire Station for 37 years, retiring on 24 July 1982, three days before his 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday.

Despite the rigours of his war-time deprivations and bouts of malaria, Bob enjoyed playing tennis, riding a pushbike, lawn bowls and spending time with his family. He died on 1 July 2002, just shy of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday and seven weeks after Joan passed away.

Cliff Farlow married Dorothy Smith on 26 March 1946 and they had three children – Anne, Jenny and Bryce. Cliff worked a dairy property “Belleville” after his discharge from the Army. He died aged 84 on 12 September 2006, 62 years to the day the *Rakuyo Maru* was sunk.

Both Bob and Cliff recalled their war experiences in recorded interviews which are held by the Australian War Memorial.

In the recordings, Bob talks about how faith and mateship were essential to their survival in the sea.

The month after Bob Farrands returned to Australia, *The Narrandera Argus* on the front page of its 21 November

1944 edition reported Bob had received a 238-word message from “their Majesties the King and Queen, coupled with the names of the acting Governor-General, Sir Winston Duggan, and Lady Duggan”.

The newspaper said the message congratulated Cpl Farrands on his successful rescue and mourned the loss of his gallant comrades who were missing as a result of the sinking. The message also congratulated Cpl Farrands on the service he had rendered to his country.

The report added a sad end note to the miraculous survival of Bob Farrands and Cliff Farlow, saying that half an hour before being rescued, Bob’s best friend – not named in the article – “went over the side” of the makeshift raft.

The incredible luck of Bob, Cliff and the other Allied survivors of the *Rakuyo Maru* continued as the *Pampanito* surfaced and saw the ragged mob floating on the sea. Initially thinking the men were Japanese, the sub’s captain reportedly shouted: “Anyone who wants to shoot Japs, get yourselves a Tommy gun and come out on deck”. But as they got closer, the Americans recognised the Digger hats worn by some of those in the water.

*The Narrandera Argus* had another, similar, take on the rescue.

“It has been indicated from official sources that the Allied soldiers might never have been rescued had it not been for the presence of a curly-headed soldier among the party ... as none of the Japanese are curly-headed, the actual position was then realised.”



*BETTER DAYS: Five survivors of the 2/19<sup>th</sup> Battalion meet again in 1945. From left: Sergeant James Oliviant Smith (from Mosman), Corporal Clifford Leslie Farlow, Corporal Mervyn Robert Farrands, Private Stanley Bede Bowhay (from Orange) and Private Patrick Smith (from Narrandera). Image H98 103/4730 Argus Newspaper Collection of Photographs, State Library of Victoria.*

# LOCKHART AIRMAN AS BRAVE AS THE BEST

**KENNETH** George Wolkenhaar never engaged in World War II dog fights over the skies of Europe nor flew sorties in the Pacific theatre of war.

This recently married airman, who was living on Drummond Street, Lockhart, upon enlistment, did not leave Australia during his two years and four months in the Royal Australian Air Force.

Yet his service ... and ultimate sacrifice ... was every bit as important and meaningful as those who fought overseas.

Throughout regional Australia and particularly the Riverina and Central West where Empire Air Training Scheme units were operational, there are memorials to those who lost their lives practising dangerous flying manoeuvres.

In some places, such as Deniliquin, Narrandera, Parkes and Wagga Wagga, there are dedicated military cemeteries where airmen who died whilst training, even bit as brave as those who flew operationally, are buried.

A total of 57 Royal Australian Air Force personnel died serving at No. 2 Operational Training Unit (2OTU) at Mildura, Victoria, including Flight Sergeant Wolkenhaar.

A clerk with the Rural Bank for 3½ years prior to signing up for duty on 15 August 1941, he was given the Service No. 413063. He was 172.7 centimetres (5 feet, 8 inches) tall and weighed 69.8 kilograms (11 stone).

After completing his initial training, he progressed to the Advanced Training Course for pilots at No. 7 Service Flying Training School, RAAF Station, Deniliquin,



*GONE TOO SOON: Flight Sergeant Kenneth Wolkenhaar.*

before being stationed at Mildura.

Wagga Wagga-born FSgt Wolkenhaar died on 21 December 1943 when his Spitfire aircraft crashed into the bank of Lake Victoria, Wentworth, New South Wales.

Married only nine months, FSgt Wolkenhaar was aged just 23.

He arrived at 2OTU Mildura on 14 November 1943 from 2 Bombing and Gunnery School (BAGS), Port Pirie, South Australia, for the No. 26 course.

FSgt Wolkenhaar was described as “steady and reliable” by Squadron Leader Colin Rankin Strickland, whilst Group Captain Commanding No. 2 BAGS, London-born Charles Eaton, said: “This NCO (Non-Commissioned Officer) has done a consistently sound job of work in the air and on the ground ...”

It was agreed by both that FSgt Wolkenhaar needed to undertake more training in order to be suitable for a commission.

On the day he died, FSgt Wolkenhaar was in a Spitfire, A. 58-241, carrying out shadow shooting adjoining Lake



*MILDURA MEMORIAL: A plaque honouring those killed in flight training nearby.*

Victoria, accompanied by FSgt Arthur Henry Bruce Morton as his No. 2 for the exercise.

FSgt Morton saw his colleague peel off from about 1,200 feet altitude in a steep dive for a front quarter attack on the shadow target some 800 yards from the edge of the lake.

FSgt Wolkenhaar's aircraft was flying very low when it struck the top of a sandbank in a range of sand hills 40 feet high.

The aircraft caught fire on impact.

The pilot was still alive when the ambulance arrived but sadly died on the way back to the Mildura aerodrome.

Reports said he misjudged the height of the sand dunes and crashed at 418 kilometres per hour (260 miles per hour) whilst attempting evasive actions.

FSgt Wolkenhaar had survived the initial impact, which occurred at 11.35am, but died nearly four hours later as a result of the serious injuries he suffered.

The official RAAF report, signed by Director of Training A. Stewart, said the probable cause of the crash was an "error of judgment".

FSgt Wolkenhaar was buried at the Mildura War Cemetery two days later, RAAF Chaplain Gordon Cornish officiating.

The aircraft was so badly damaged and destroyed by fire it was buried where it crashed, 96 kilometres (60 miles) from his unit.

"Beautiful memories" was the simple, yet heart-rending, last line of his Roll of Honour notice in *The Sydney Morning Herald* of 5 January 1944.

He was, as the notice observed, the dearly loved husband of Doris, younger brother of Eunice and beloved only son of Theodore William George Wolkenhaar and Elizabeth (née Kinnane).

Educated at Wagga Wagga High School, Kenneth had married Doris Adelaide Hartwig (1919-80), daughter of Victor Albert and Adelaide, of Lockhart, at Saint Andrew's Church, Summer Hill, on 10 March 1943, honeymooning in Melbourne and South Australia.

They hardly had the opportunity to even get to know each other. Such is the tragedy of war.

It was the first war in which aviation played a decisive factor.

The RAAF was unprepared for war. Formed in 1921, it was the youngest and smallest of Australia's armed services.

At the beginning of World War II, it had just 3,489 personnel and lacked modern combat aircraft.

The Australian-built Wirraway, based on an American trainer, entered squadron service in September 1939.

By December 1941, the RAAF was 10 times larger but many men were committed to service with the Royal Air Force in Europe and the Middle East, most having enlisted and trained under the Empire Scheme.

At its peak in 1944, the RAAF had more than 182,000 members and 6,200 aircraft, comprising a total of 61 squadrons.

During the Second World War, the RAAF took part in campaigns in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East; the North Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans and the Mediterranean; Borneo, Burma, China, Dutch East Indies, India, Malaya, New Guinea, Philippines, Singapore, Solomon Islands and Thailand.

During the war, 9,870 members of the RAAF lost their lives including as many as 927 in training.

A total of 216,900 men and women served in the RAAF in World War II.

At war's end, a total of 53 RAAF squadrons were serving in the Pacific and a further 17 in Europe.

With more than 152,000 personnel operating nearly 6,000 aircraft, it was the world's fourth largest air force, after those of the United States of America, Soviet Union and the United Kingdom.

*REST IN PEACE (right):  
FSgt Kenneth Wolkenhaar's  
headstone.*

*DEDICATION (below):  
FSgt Kenneth Wolkenhaar  
lives forevermore on the  
Lockhart War Memorial in  
a small yet lovely park on the  
corner of Day and Hebden  
streets.*



# SO MANY GA FOR VICTORY

**THE Sandakan Death March monument in Wagga Wagga's Victory Memorial Gardens and the many World War II rolls of honour across the Riverina and Central West bear tragic testimony to the War in the Pacific.**

The local region paid a heavy price from Japan's aggression yet the ultimate victory by Australia and its Allies meant the planned invasion, takeover of our nation, subjugation and possible annihilation never took place.

We have those brave men and women to thank for the democracy and freedom we enjoy today.

Australian Prime Minister John Curtin's decision to bring our troops (the 7<sup>th</sup> Division returning from the Middle East) home rather than redeploy them to Burma as British war-time leader Winston Churchill wanted, was also decisive.

Soldiers from the 7<sup>th</sup> Division were crucial in turning the tide against the Japanese advance, fighting in the first battles that halted the Japanese progress in the Pacific at Milne Bay and on the bloody and protracted Kokoda Trail campaign in what was then the Australian territory of Papua.

Mr Curtin's insistence on returning troops to Australia to fight in our own backyard and protect the country rather than in a distant part of the British Empire combined with his New Year's speech in December 1941 and his American address in March 1942 were pivotal in moving Australia's primary foreign policy allegiances from Britain to the United States of America.

In his New Year's message delivered on the radio on 26 December 1941 and published in Melbourne's *The Herald* the next day, Mr Curtin announced: "Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom."

On 15 February 1942, Singapore fell to Japanese forces and the defensive strategy Australia had invested so much into over the previous 15 years was in tatters. A portion of the Australian 8<sup>th</sup> Division had been integral in Singapore's defences. More than 15,000 of these soldiers were captured, more than 7,000 of whom would die as Prisoners Of War.

Two days after the Fall of Singapore, the Pacific War Council (the inter-governmental body controlling the Allied war effort in the Pacific) met.

Earle Page, Australia's representative, reported to Mr Curtin that: "The Australian Government should be asked to agree that the 7<sup>th</sup> Australian Division already on the water should go to the most urgent spot at the moment, which is Burma."

Mr Curtin replied the next day: "Government has decided that it cannot agree to the proposal that the 7<sup>th</sup> AIF Division should be diverted to Burma."

This led to furious communications between Canberra



*DEFEATED (above): The signing ceremony was held aboard battleship USS Missouri BB-63 on 2 September 1945 in Tokyo Bay, Japan. The Japanese surrender signatories can be seen arriving aboard the ship.*

*MONUMENT: (right) The Wagga Wagga memorial to lost Sandakan souls, opened in 1994.*



# AVE SO MUCH IN THE PACIFIC

and London with Mr Curtin emphatically stating on 22 February 1942 that the troops should immediately return to Australia.

Just three days earlier, Japan had mounted the largest ever attack by a foreign power in Australia, pulverising Darwin.

Japan dropped more bombs on Darwin on 19 February 1942 than it did on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941.

Senior Historian with the Australian War Memorial, Steven Bullard, writing in the *Wartime* magazine in 2012, put the number of Darwin bombs inflicted at 681 and Pearl Harbor at 457.

The Japanese used 205 bombers at Darwin and 273 at Pearl Harbor, with 114,100 tons of explosives used against Darwin and 133,560 in the air raid in Hawaii.

In the Battle of Darwin, 239 people were killed and as many as 400 injured.

Between February 1942 and November 1943, the Australian mainland, domestic airspace, offshore islands and coastal shipping were attacked at least 111 times by aircraft from the Imperial Japanese Navy Air Force and Imperial Japanese Army Air Force.

More than 22,000 Australians became POWs of the Japanese in south-east Asia. The wave of Japanese victories, ending with the capture of the Netherlands East Indies in March 1942, left in its wake a mass of Allied POWs, including many Australians.

Most of the Australians (14,972) were captured in Singapore; other principal Australian POW groups were captured in Java (2,736), Timor (1,137), Ambon (1,075), and New Britain (1,049).

At the end of the war, Australian POWs were scattered far and wide: 5,549 on Singapore Island and in Johore (Malaya); 4,830 in Burma and Thailand; 265 in French-Indo China; 385 on Java; 243 on Sumatra; 100 on Ambon; two on Macassar; seven on Bali; 150 at Kuching (British North Borneo); 2,700 distributed between Japan, Korea, and Manchuria; and 200 on Hainan Island.

Victory in the Pacific Day, also referred to as Victory over Japan Day, is celebrated on 15 August. This date commemorates Japan's acceptance of the Allied demand for unconditional surrender on 14 August 1945.

For Australians, it meant that the Second World War was over at long last.



*SURRENDER (above): General Yoshijiro Umezu signs on behalf of the Japanese Imperial General Headquarters during the surrender ceremony aboard USS Missouri BB-63. On the left is US Army General Douglas MacArthur. In the centre is Gen MacArthur's Chief of Staff, Lt Gen. Richard K Sutherland. Commander in Chief of the Allied Land Forces in the South West Pacific Area, Gen. Thomas Blamey from Wagga Wagga, was at the surrender.*

*DECLARATION (below): Australian Prime Minister John Curtin details the challenges for Australians in 1942 in a hard-hitting address published in Melbourne's The Herald.*



# FATAL THREE FROM PARKES

FOR a town of its size in the 1960s, Parkes (population 8,442 in 1966) paid a higher price than many for Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War, losing three young men born or raised in the Central West town.

They were 24-year-old Captain Anatoly (Tony) Danilenko, 22-year-old Private Douglas Powter and 21-year-old Corporal Denis Donnelly.

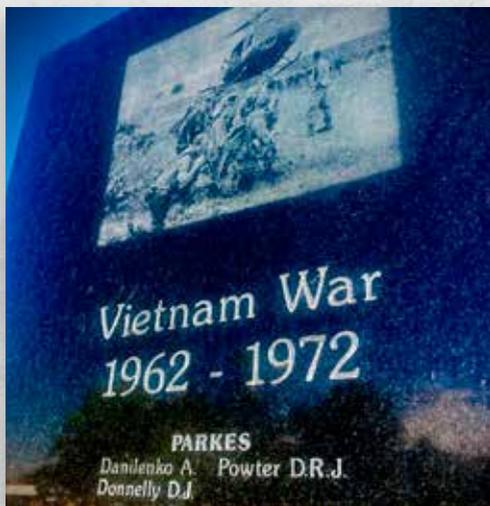
By the time Governor-General Sir John Kerr declared an end to Australia's participation in the Vietnam War on 11 January 1973, the three Parkes boys were amongst 523 Australians who had laid down their lives in the service of their country in the longest military conflict in our history, whilst another 2,400 had been wounded.

More than 60,000 Australians served in Vietnam and their involvement changed the lives of many of them forever.

As the nation this year marks 50 years since the Governor-General's declaration, communities right across the nation are remembering and honouring those who served, particularly those who made the supreme sacrifice.

Capt. Danilenko and Pte Powter are buried in the Parkes General Cemetery, whilst Pte Donnelly is buried at Mudgee.

Born in Germany to Russian immigrant parents, Tony



*HONOURED: A Vietnam War Memorial in Cooke Park, Parkes, pays tribute to the supreme sacrifice made by Anatoly Danilenko, Douglas Powter and Denis Donnelly.*

Danilenko was nine years old when his family moved to Parkes in 1952. He enlisted in the Australian Army in 1960 and graduated from the Royal Military Academy at Duntroon three years later with the rank of Second Lieutenant.

He served in Borneo with No. 2 Squadron Special Air Service during the Indonesian Confrontation in 1966 and was posted to Vietnam with the squadron in November 1967 before joining the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam the following February and being promoted to Captain.

In April 1968, his company was sent to Dak Pek in Kontum Province where it was tasked with patrolling and observing the North Vietnamese enemy forces in an extremely hilly jungle area.

It was on ANZAC Day, a day on which Australians honour their war dead, that Capt. Danilenko gave his life for his country and his name was added to that long and sad list.

About lunchtime, Capt. Danilenko's company was ambushed by the enemy. He attempted to lead a counter attack but he then became isolated and was shot dead as he prepared to move from another position. Capt. Danilenko's body was recovered by his American colleagues the next day and then later taken back to Parkes for burial.

Capt. Danilenko was posthumously Mentioned in Despatches for his leadership and personal courage on that day.



*MENTIONED IN DESPATCHES: Capt. Anatoly Danilenko was Mentioned in Despatches for his actions the day he died in Vietnam.*

# FELL IN THE VIETNAM WAR

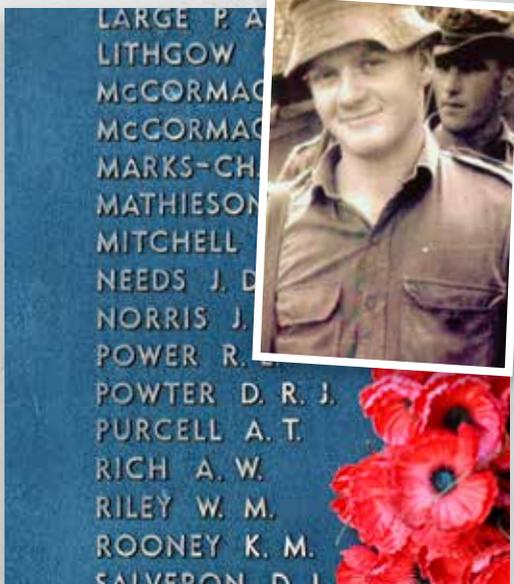
Parkes High School, where Capt. Danilenko received his secondary education, honours and remembers him to this day with the Tony Danilenko Memorial Prize, provided by the Duntroon Class of 1963.

## PRIVATE DOUGLAS POWTER

Private Powter, also a Parkes High School student, was working as a railway signman when called up for National Service on 29 September 1965. He undertook recruit training at Kapooka, near Wagga Wagga, with 23 Platoon E Company. He excelled in his training and was named best soldier in his company and classified as a marksman.

Volunteering for service in Vietnam, Pte Powter was serving with Delta Company 6th Battalion Royal Australian Regiment (RAR) when a horrible mistake robbed him and three others of their young lives.

Described in a contemporary report in *The Canberra Times* as one of the grimmest tragedies to hit Australian troops in Vietnam, the four were killed as a result of New Zealand artillery shelling their position as they were on the offensive in ricelands near the village of Dat Do in South Vietnam on 6 February 1967. The artillery fire was called in after a shot was heard behind the Australians, but, tragically, some shells landed off target. Pte Powter suffered fatal injuries and died the next day. Another 13 soldiers were wounded in the disaster, including Pte Gregory Flack, of Narrandera.



*BEST SOLDIER IN HIS COMPANY: Pte Douglas Powter excelled in training at Kapooka and volunteered for military service in Vietnam. Pte Powter, Cpt Donnelly and Capt. Danilenko's names are immortalised on the Australian War Memorial's Roll of Honour, as shown in the three pictures on these pages.*

## CORPORAL DENIS DONNELLY

Corporal Donnelly's life was also taken far too early by another tragic mistake.

He was born in Parkes on 6 December 1945, barely three months after the end of WWII, and was just four months shy of his 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday when he died.

Cpl Donnelly was serving with 104 Signal Squadron Royal Australian Corps of Signals at the Nui Dat base in Phuoc Toy province, the main region of operations for the 1st Australian Task Forces, at the time.

He had been with 104 Signal Squadron in South Vietnam about a month when he died after the firearm he was cleaning at the base on 9 August 1967 discharged.

Cpl Donnelly is buried at Mudgee.

Leading different lives and dying under different circumstances, all three men will share the same honour on the same day – April 25 – when their names are expected to be projected onto the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial – Pte Powter at 4.26am, Cpl Donnelly at 4.43am and Capt. Danilenko at 7.38pm.



*TRAGIC ACCIDENT: Cpl Denis Donnelly died from a wound suffered when a firearm discharged when he was cleaning the weapon.*

# TEMORA TEACHER'S SON A HERO OF TWO WORLD WARS

**WRIGHT** Smith's final months as headmaster of Temora's Superior Public School were tinged with both concern and pride after his eldest son sailed to serve Australia in The Great War.

Mr Smith was a popular and active principal and Temora community member and the first of his three boys, Rupert Frank, proved a fine soldier in two World Wars.

From England, Wright Smith was born on 29 March 1860 in Stalybridge, Lancashire. He married Lillian Cordingley in Bolton in April 1883, seven months before emigrating to New South Wales.

They had six children: Muriel (born 1884 at Waterloo), Rupert Frank (14 August 1886 at Candelo near Bega), Herbert (1888, Bega), David (1894, Candelo), Edna (1896, Candelo) and Maida (1901, Katoomba).

Wright took up the teaching position at Temora in July 1908 from Kiama.

*The Cootamundra Herald* reported on 23 January 1912 that Wright, of the local cadet force, had been appointed Scout Master at Temora.

Rupert, a mechanical engineer, was 28 when he enlisted at Paddington on 26 October 1914, leaving Australia on 22 December 1914 on HMAT *Borda* A30 with 2 Light Horse Brigade, 2 Signal Troop.

He was 169½ centimetres (5 feet, 6¾ inches) tall and weighed 62½ kilograms (9 stone, 12 pounds) with a fair complexion, greyish eyes and fair hair.

On 6 June 1916, a letter was sent to Temora Public School advising Mr Smith that Rupert had suffered a wounded hand. His injury, a bullet wound, happened during an aerial raid whilst he was at Hill 40.

By this stage, however, Mr Smith had moved to Windsor. Further correspondence, also received at Temora, was more positive!

The 20 November 1917 letter acknowledged Lieutenant Smith had been Mentioned in Despatches "for gallant or distinguished conduct in the field".

In a confidential document in Rupert's war records, Major General Edward Walter Clervaux Chaytor described Rupert thus: "A very keen and energetic officer with a thorough knowledge of his duties. A good disciplinarian. Has done exceedingly well all through and especially since taking over command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Signal Squadron which is now the best disciplined unit in this division."

High praise indeed!



*WWI ERA (above): Rupert Smith, Officer Commanding Transport Division, pictured in Hobart.*

*SCHOOL (below): Temora Public circa 1910 when Wright Smith was Principal.*



Rupert, promoted to the rank of Corporal before he embarked from Australia on 11 November 1914, came home as a Major aboard the HT *Malta* from Kantara, Algeria, on 3 July 1919.

He received a Military Cross on New Year's Day 1918 for his work as a signals officer in the Middle East.

Awaiting his return was Myra May Woods and they married that year.

Rupert donned a uniform again in World War II, enlisting at age 52 on 13 May 1940 with Service No. V159880.

He was awarded an Order of the British Empire and an Efficiency Decoration.

Tragically, both father Wright and son Rupert died from

fatal falls within a matter of months in 1949.

Wright, 89, slipped on steps at Wynyard Railway Station on 13 August, fracturing his skull and subsequently passing away.

Rupert, 63, was washed from rocks and drowned at Birdie Beach, near Catherine Hill Bay on the Central Coast on 3 December.

A man dived in and brought the hero of two World Wars ashore but Rupert failed to respond to artificial resuscitation attempts.

Rupert was Superintendent of Railway Motor Vehicles and lived at Manly at the time.

He was survived by wife Myra, daughter Loris (Mrs F P Griffiths) and grandchildren David and Clive.

*DECORATED: A World War II portrait of Rupert Frank Smith OBE ED with his medal ribbon for a Military Cross, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal and Mentioned in Despatches emblem.*





TRIO (above): (from left) Edgar, Albert and John Wright. Edgar displays the Australian Imperial Force Administration Headquarters Colour Patch and Signaller's badge on his right arm whilst John, from Young, has his Artillery Colour Patch on his left arm.

PERMISSION (picture break-out): John Wright agreed to allow his teenage son, also named John, to go to war in 1915.

# HE WAS YOUNG, FROM YOUNG AND ANSWERED COUNTRY'S CALL

**JOHN Thomas Wright spent much of his First World War service grievously ill in a military hospital bed.**

Eventually, in the final year of the war, he returned home and was discharged medically unfit.

Whilst sickness dogged him, this lad who enlisted from Young saw action on the Western Front, did his part to serve his country and helped the Allied Powers win the worst conflict in history.

He was, as John Schumann's haunting 1983 Redgum war song suggested, "only 19" when he signed on in 1915, requiring his father John's consent.

It was such a young age to be pitching these men – mere boys some of them, including John – into some of the fiercest and bloodiest battles the world had ever known.

Private Wright, an assistant at the Court of Petty Sessions, left Sydney with 5 Field Artillery Brigade, 14<sup>th</sup> Battery, on 18 November 1915 on HMAT *Persic* A34.

Amongst the 143-strong unit, mostly from NSW, were four others from this region: Bombardier Alleyne Thomas Edols, 27, station overseer from Burrawang Estate, Yarrabandi, near Forbes; Shoemith Harold Henry Grady, 21, blacksmith from Adelong; Gunner James McLaurin, 27, grazier from Holbrook; and Driver Eric Robinson, 21, farmer from Bimbi, near Grenfell.

All, except Bdr Edols, returned to Australia in 1919, with Gnr McLaurin having earned a Military Medal and Bar.

Bdr Edols was killed in action at Zonnebeke, Flanders, in Belgium on 21 October 1917.

Pte Wright changed ranks to a Gunner then a Driver before his 7 January 1916 admission to No. 2 Australian General Hospital, Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, with colitis and a month later with serious enteric fever.

It was a six-month hospital stint after which he was taken on strength of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Divisional Ammunition Column from 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Divisional Base Depot, ending up back in France with the unit with which he left Australia.

However, on 31 October 1917, coincidentally the day of the famous Battle of Beersheba elsewhere in the war, Dvr Wright was admitted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Southern General Hospital with neurasthenia, a condition which dogged him for the remainder of his service and no doubt thereafter.

He went to England aboard Hospital Ship *Warilda* for treatment before heading home on HMAT *Karoola* A63, via Capetown, in early 1918.

Dvr Wright was discharged medically unfit on 25 June 1918.

An original, 105-year-old photograph (opposite page) shows three Wrights: our local boy John with Albert Leslie and Edgar Sidney, who signed the image.

Albert Wright (1895-1973) was a 22-year-old audit clerk when he signed up for duty at the Sydney Showground on 26 June 1916 and embarked overseas with the 5<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company, 8<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements, on HMAT *Horovata* A20 on 23 November 1916.

Arriving in Plymouth, England, on 29 January 1917, Albert received additional training, including a stint of "bombing instruction", before heading to the Western Front in September by which time he held the rank of Temporary Corporal. Shortly after arriving in France, he was promoted to Sergeant in the field.

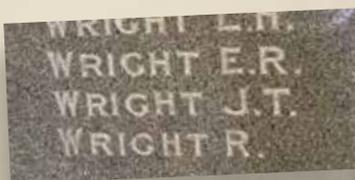
Albert was wounded in action on 5 May 1918, suffering severe gunshot wounds to his head and left arm and shoulder, resulting in being invalided to hospital in England and his return to Australia in June for discharge, medically unfit.

Edgar Wright (1892-1949) originally enlisted at Liverpool on 22 February 1915 into A Company of the newly formed 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

He was a 23-year-old mechanic. When he arrived in Egypt he was transferred to the newly created 4<sup>th</sup> Field Company Engineers and it was with this unit he went to Gallipoli in September 1915, remaining there until the evacuation.

This transfer may well have saved his life, since as soon as the 17<sup>th</sup> Battalion reached the peninsula it was heavily involved in the last major battle by Australian forces at Gallipoli on Hill 60 from 21-29 August, which resulted in a terrible loss of life and no ground gained.

Edgar served in France, suffered from mustard gassing, recuperated and made it home in March 1919.



*TOWN TRIBUTE: Local John Thomas Wright's name is chiselled into a large marble tablet (above) honouring the 777 from the town and district who served in The Great War of 1914-18. The roll is in the foyer of the Hilltops Regional Council, incorporating the Young Soldiers' Memorial Tower (right), which was unveiled by General Charles "Fighting Charlie" Cox on 29 May 1924.*



# UKRAINE'S FREEDOM FIGHT ENDURES

**WHEN His Excellency Vasyl Myroshnychenko pitched to be Ukraine's Ambassador to Australia he felt, given his background, it would be a role all about commerce, economic development and trade.**

Building business links between his nation and ours was to be a priority for this Chevening Scholar who is a Master of Sciences in Politics of the World Economy from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Mr Myroshnychenko arrived in Australia directly from the Ukraine capital Kyiv on 26 March 2022.

Russia had invaded his homeland little more than a month earlier.

As Mr Myroshnychenko told the National Press Club in Canberra on 24 February 2023, marking 12 months since the invasion began, his work here has been chiefly military matters, not enhancing trade opportunities as originally intended.

In fact, he's had to be more of an arms dealer than ambassador.

So much so, Mr Myroshnychenko has earned the nickname "Vasyl the Bushmaster" for his advocacy to obtain the world-renowned, Bendigo-built, infantry mobility vehicle.

Australia has delivered upwards of 90 Bushmasters to Ukraine to help in the fight against Russia.

Describing the Bushmaster as "handy and hardy", Mr Myroshnychenko went even further, saying: "It is the ANZAC spirit on wheels."

He added: "Ukraine is lucky Australia is in our blue-and-gold corner."



*FLAG BEARERS: With (from left) Gary Roberts of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga, Ukraine Embassy Chargé d'Affaires Volodymyr Shalkivskiy, Veteran Damien Nye and Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga President-Elect John Heazlewood at the Pro Patria Centre.*

That said, 140 other countries are also on Ukraine's side.

Mr Myroshnychenko said Russia's actions were "not only a war on Ukraine but a war on democracy".

He said Ukraine was being hit with 20,000 Russian bombs a day, or about 15 per minute.

"The goal for Ukraine is to win in 2023 for the world's sake," he told the Press Club.

"It will be won by all on the side of democracy being beyond brave."

Earlier in his address, Mr Myroshnychenko said thousands of Ukrainian citizens had been killed during the "illegal and immoral" invasion.

Ukraine is a major supplier of grain and food for countries in the Horn of Africa which are now facing starvation because of disruption to supplies and supply chains.

"Russia has compromised the food and energy security of so many countries," Mr Myroshnychenko said.

"Australia has been a real mate to Ukraine, standing up to a bully."

Closer to home, Wagga Wagga-based Ukrainian musician Larissa Burack continues to raise funds and awareness through concerts and speaking at events about the plight of her beloved country.

She said she believed Ukraine would ultimately prevail ... "But we need a lot of help."

Ukrainian Embassy's Chargé d'Affaires Volodymyr Shalkivskiy was given a Civic Reception by Wagga Wagga City Council on 16 September last year and returned to town on 21 December to catch up with Uranquinty Veteran Damien Nye, who is doing fantastic work to help provide humanitarian aid to those in Ukraine, as are members of Wagga Wagga Rotary.



*STIRRING SPEECH: With Ukraine Ambassador Vasyl Myroshnychenko before his National Press Club address.*

# JUNEE'S KIWI HERO TO BE A BRONZED AUSSIE

**PLANS to erect a life-sized bronze monument to commemorate Junee's unique role in the ANZAC legend are in full swing.**

Fund-raising for the statue of Junee enlistee Wilfred Victor Knight, the first New Zealander reported killed at Gallipoli, are now proceeding.

The Junee RSL Sub-Branch agreed to support the proposal at an extraordinary meeting of members before its annual general meeting at the Junee Ex-Services Memorial Club on 19 February.

"This is a remarkable opportunity to honour someone at the very heart of the ANZAC story," re-elected Junee RSL Sub-Branch President Greg Zakharoff said.

"The feature piece in last year's Riverina ANZAC book and the subsequent interest it generated, both here and across the Tasman, convinced us we had to support this idea.

"There were some who had other suggestions for a memorial but in the end we came to a consensus that Wilf Knight was a figure who forged the ANZAC identity like no other and he should be remembered and honoured in this way."

Wilf Knight was working on the railways and living at Junee when the First World War broke out in August 1914.



*HERO: Wilf Knight*

That same month, he signed up to serve in the Australian Imperial Force.

He sailed out of Sydney in October in the historic convoy of ships heading to the war and disembarked for training in Egypt before the Gallipoli campaign began.

Private Knight was amongst the original landing force at what would later locally become Anzak Koyu (ANZAC Cove), Türkiye (Turkey), on the date etched in history – 25 April 1915 – and was severely wounded that same day.

Reports differ as to the date and nature of his death but it was later confirmed Pte Knight, 25 years young, was the first Kiwi reported to have fallen at Gallipoli.

As such, he solidifies the ANZAC bonds between Australia and New Zealand in a noble yet tragic way, hence the push to immortalise him in Junee's main street, Broadway, near the Memorial Clock Tower which also bears his name and those of the other 76 from the district who made the ultimate sacrifice in The Great War.

Murrumburrah sculptor Carl Valerius, renowned for many wonderful works including war horse Bill The Bastard and cricketer Donald Bradman, has been in discussions with proponents about the project.

The sub-branch and Junee Shire Council have communicated, with Junee Mayor Councillor Neil Smith and General Manager James Davis supportive of the idea.

"This would be a great thing for our town, recognising the remarkable part Junee played in helping to shape the ANZAC tradition," Cr Smith said.

Funds will be sought from the Commonwealth Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants program and other avenues.



*MEETING: With Junee RSL Sub-Branch members (from left) Nicholas Pyer, Greg Zakharoff, Peter Hogarth, Lenny Robertson, Bruce Warburton, Ross Field and Shane Logan after agreeing to promulgate the Wilf Knight statue concept.*

# ILLABO GAVE SO OTHERS MIGHT LIVE



THIS publication has, since 2015, published important speeches given at significant military occasions held in the region, so current and future generations can read and re-read what was said at the time and what it meant for local communities going forward. Here is the address written and delivered by Illabo's own Gerard Pratt (pictured), a Lieutenant in the Royal Australian Navy and Manager, Visitor Services, at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, at the 14 August 2022 unveiling of a new plaque on Illabo's Cenotaph to recognise those who served in World War II and post 1945 conflicts and operations. The plaque was Federally funded through the Saluting Their Service Commemorative Grants program.

**TODAY we pause to remember and pay tribute to all those from Illabo and surrounding districts who have served our nation in uniform from the Second World War through to more recent conflicts and operations. In particular, we acknowledge those recorded on the new Honour Roll which has been added to the Cenotaph.**

One doesn't need to look too hard to see that the vast majority of those recorded served during the Second World War. The Australia of today, whilst very different to the Australia of 83 years ago, owes a great debt to that generation. They were a generation that willingly put country before self. They were a generation that accepted the responsibility passed down to them from the original ANZACs of not only standing up for a mate when he is down, but for standing up for our beliefs, our nation and our future.

The opportunities and freedoms we enjoy today are in no small way a consequence of the events that brought the Second World War to an end, but also the events that occurred prior to that.

It was at 9.30pm on 3 September 1939, when Prime Minister Robert Menzies announced on every radio station across Australia that it was his "melancholy duty" to officially inform the nation that as a consequence of Germany's invasion of Poland, Great Britain had declared war on Germany and as a result of that, Australia was also at war, the Second World War.

At the time of that announcement, hundreds of thousands of Australians would have been huddled around radios listening anxiously to the broadcast.

It is most probable that Illabo locals Eric Belling on "Braeside", David Warren on "Elwood", Norman Pratt on "Dundoo Hills" or Swiss-born stationhand Wener Glauser on "Englefield" were listening when Menzies performed his "melancholy duty" that evening.

It's hard to imagine what these men may have all been thinking or feeling on hearing the news Australia was back at war. It was only 20 short years earlier that we were involved in another war that was supposed to end all wars – The Great War, the First World War. A war that ended leaving almost 62,000 Australians dead. Recorded within those numbers, were locals George Cowled, Oliver Harris, Allan Hillam and John Moore, to name a few.

Regardless of what they felt that evening, in the years that followed, these men, along with one million other Australians, mobilised for war.

Amongst that number were almost 70,000 women. Ladies just like Addie Carter, Phyllis Feidler, Zetta Handsaker, Edythe Hamilton, Jean Warren and Mary Truelove. All stepping up to do their bit in our nation's time of need.

Another local who answered the call was James Chattaway. James was a station boundary rider, most likely on "Merribindinyah" where his mother Clara lived. James joined the Army in July 1940 and was allotted to the newly formed 2/13<sup>th</sup> Battalion. After undertaking initial training at Ingleburn near Liverpool, he sailed for the Middle East in October of that year. In March 1941 the 2/13<sup>th</sup> Battalion covered the British withdrawal from the Libyan city of Benghazi, and on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April took part in the Battle of Er Regima. This battle was the first time a complete Australian unit fought German troops during the Second World War.

Shortly after, the Battalion was sent to defend the port city of Tobruk, and it was here on 22 June 1941, James was killed in action.

Shortly after James's death, his brother Frank enlisted, joining the Royal Australian Navy in August 1941. No different to James, Frank recorded his mother Clara as his next of kin and asked that any mail for her be sent to "Merribindinyah" via the Illabo Post Office. Former Australian Defence Force Academy lecturer, Dr Kathryn Spurling, wrote that even though Frank had joined the Navy, he couldn't swim, so hoped that whatever ship he was on didn't sink.

Four months after Frank enlisted, on 7 December 1941,

*SPECIAL DAY: A large and enthusiastic local crowd attended the historic plaque unveiling and dedication ceremony at Illabo.*

"a date which will live in infamy", Japan entered the war after they attacked the United States Navy Pacific Fleet in Pearl Harbor.

Five days after that, on 12 December, Frank was posted to the RAN's light Cruiser HMAS *Perth* as a member of one of her six-inch gun crews.

In the days and months that followed, the Japanese war machine quickly engulfed the Malaya peninsula. Then on 15 February 1942, Singapore, an island fortress thought to be impregnable, fell, seeing 15,000 Australian soldiers enter into a brutal and inhumane captivity as Prisoners Of War.

HMAS *Perth* had by that time been tasked with trying to slow the Japanese advance through south-east Asia. Late on 28 February, just two weeks after the Fall of Singapore, the crews of HMAS *Perth*, including Frank, and the American cruiser USS *Houston*, were making for the southern coast of Java.

It was here they encountered the Japanese "western invasion convoy" at the northern entrance to the Sunda Strait. The convoy was escorted by a large Japanese flotilla of light cruisers, destroyers, a minelayer and an aircraft carrier. Heavily outnumbered, the end was inevitable and *Perth* was sunk at 25 minutes after midnight on 1 March. The USS *Houston* sank just 20 minutes later.

Of the 686 men on *Perth*, more than half – over 350 officers and ratings – perished in her last action. Of the 320 survivors captured by the Japanese, one-third died during their long ordeal as POWs. Frank was the only member of his six-inch gun crew to survive not just the battle but the many years that followed as a prisoner of the Japanese. Another local who enlisted around the same time as James Chattaway was Hugh Main.

*continued ...*



Hugh's parents, George and Mary, owned the property "Retreat" out near Dirnaseer. Hugh joined in May 1940 and was allotted to the 2/17<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Following a few months training, he left Australia aboard the *Queen Mary* bound for the Mediterranean. His first action was at Benghazi and then the Siege of Tobruk fighting the Germans, where he was wounded. Whilst recuperating in Cairo, he attended Officer Cadet Training and it was during this time he met his future wife Nancy Liston. Hugh proposed to Nancy in the Beersheba Cemetery, as at the time he felt it was "the only sacred and peaceful place". The pair returned to Australia in late 1942 and married in Sydney at the All Saints' Church, Woollahra, on 6 March 1943. After a short leave, Hugh returned to his battalion and deployed to New Guinea to face the Japanese.

It was during the Finschhafen Campaign, Hugh was awarded a Military Cross for bravery. The citation noted that he consistently displayed notable qualities of leadership and devotion to duty during operations at Lau and Finschhafen when holding a position against the Japanese on the Sattelberg Road.

Following the war, Hugh and Nancy moved back to Illabo and set up home on "Sarafan" but relocated to Glen Innes in the 1960s.

Coincidentally, Hugh's sister, Jean, married Clive Caldwell in April 1940. The wedding took place in the tiny Dirnaseer chapel, following a pre-wedding reception in Cootamundra. The following month, Clive enlisted into the Royal Australian Air Force. By the time the war ended, Clive had shot down 28 German, Italian and Japanese aircraft, making him Australia's highest scoring fighter ace of the Second World War.

The couple remained at Illabo until 1947 after which they relocated to Sydney.

As the war drew on, more and more men and women from Illabo and surrounds enlisted. Edward Boyton and his brother Frank, Robert Cowled, Don McLean, whose father was the local stock and station agent, Charles Harris and Don Truelove joined the Army, as did Massey Harris, Dennis Byrne and Harold Heritage. Massey would serve in New Guinea and Bougainville, Dennis in the Middle East and New Guinea and Harold in

the Torres Strait. Thomas Boxsell, Francis Carter, Fred Truelove, Henry Whitton and Gordon Handsaker served in the RAAF. Henry's Dad owned the pub and Gordon's father was the station master at the Illabo Railway Station.

Hostilities in Europe came to an end on 7 May 1945, when Germany signed an unconditional surrender.

And it was finally on the afternoon of 15 August 1945, 77 years ago tomorrow, that Japan's Emperor Hirohito announced his nation's acceptance of the Allies' terms of surrender. Shortly afterwards, Australia's Prime Minister Ben Chifley addressed the nation announcing: "Fellow citizens, the war is over."

News of Japan's surrender saw public celebrations across Australia with thousands spilling into streets in towns and cities across the nation. The Second World War had finally come to an end. The headline on the front page of *The Daily Advertiser* on 16 August 1945 was "End of war announced by Mr Chifley". The following day *The Cootamundra Herald* reported that the Minister for Customs had approved the equivalent of two weeks' additional rations – four ounces – of tea being made available to ensure every home had extra liquid refreshment for the peace celebrations.

I was more interested to read the *Advertiser's* front page story a few days earlier on 14 August titled, "Threat of Beer-less Holidays". It was reported that the Liquor Trading Employees Union had noted their members didn't want to work on the peace holiday as they wanted to enjoy themselves as well. The article went on to note that it was also hoped the Federal Government would increase supplies of beer in time for the peace celebration.

In the six years since Menzies committed Australia to war, half a million Australians had served overseas. They fought in campaigns against Germany and Italy in Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa, and against Japan in south-east Asia and other parts of the Pacific.

The Australian mainland had also come under direct attack when Japanese aircraft bombed towns in northern parts of Australia and midget submarines attacked Sydney Harbour.



*DEDICATION: Anglican Church Chaplain David Hilliard dedicates the new plaque at Illabo.*



*BUGLER: Stephen Belling sounds the Last Post and Rouse at the ceremony.*



*STIRRING SONG: Father and son Tim and Harry Pratt perform Eric Bogle's 1971 war classic And the Band Played Waltzing Matilda.*

The Second World War was truly a global war and remains the most destructive conflict in human history, claiming an estimated 70 million lives. Menzies foreshadowed in his 1939 address that the war would come at a great "cost" to the nation ... not just from a monetary perspective, but more so in lives lost.

Almost 40,000 Australian servicemen and servicewomen had died during the war, more than 100,000 had been wounded and a further 30,000 were POWs.

Amongst those dead were locals James Chattaway and James O'Mealy (James drowned in a training accident near Wagga Wagga).

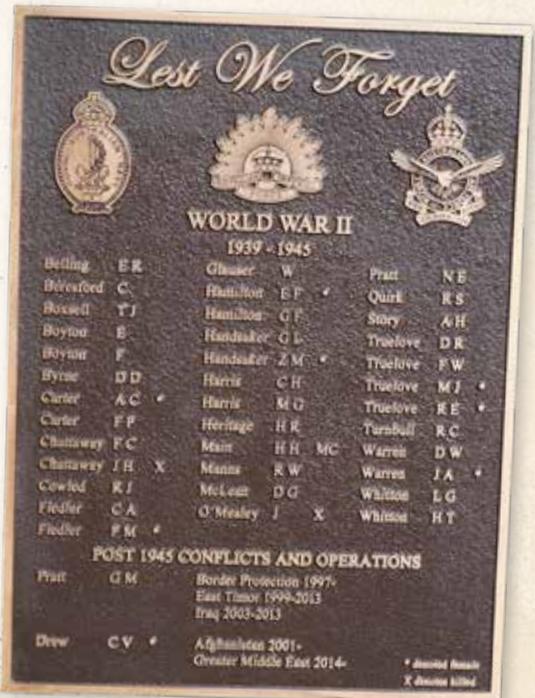
Just as our First and Second World War generations did, the current generation of locals also continue to serve, carrying on the tradition of service before self.

Christine Drew served in the Army for four years as a cargo specialist. In early 2019, she deployed on Operation North Queensland Flood Assist and then later in the year deployed to the Middle East for six months, serving in both Dubai and Afghanistan.

And I have served in the RAN in both a permanent and reserve capacity for the past 33 years. During that time I deployed in a peacekeeping capacity to East Timor, to Christmas Island on Border Protection and to the Middle East as part of the International Coalition against Terrorism and later in the war against Iraq.

Today we remember all those who have served and who have called Illabo or its surrounds home at some point. We commemorate those who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the protection of our freedoms, we thank those who returned home and we acknowledge the families that loved and supported them when they were deployed and for the many years after they returned home.

Lest We Forget.



*BRONZED AUSSIES: The new plaque contains the names of 39 brave Illabo district men and women who served in World War II or since.*



# THE HUMAN SIDE OF

**WE GATHER** here today to recognise the service and sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of Australian Defence Force men and women, and the families left behind.

Australian military history is rich and for this we are indebted. Teenagers sent to war, exploits that were heroic, tragic and which defined our culture. Each is a story, so many stories, stories which make us cry, make us laugh but most of all inspire us.

Our military history is very human, it is about the fear of a 17-year-old under fire; about the triumph over adversity when a Prisoner Of War; of a young woman whose fiancé never returns, and she never marries; of a mother who insisted that rather than her son's gravestone in a cemetery a world away be engraved "For the glory of King and country", it be engraved simply with two words – "My Son". It is about an 80-year-old man who laments that no-one ever asked him how much he had missed his big brother.

Heroes come in numerous forms. It is about a teenager who kept diving into his sinking ship to save his mates. It is about nuns in Rabaul, New Guinea, who



*SALUTE: Able Seaman Miranda McLaughlin (and inset), daughter of Troy and Megan McLaughlin of Junee, salutes the raising of the Australian flag. The national ensign is hoisted to end a moving service at Junee to mark the 104th anniversary of the signing of the First World War Armistice.*

KEYNOTE speaker on Remembrance Day 2022 at Junee was Dr Kathryn Spurling who captivated her audience with her delivery and her words. It was a fine speech and worthy of printing here for posterity. Dr Spurling served with the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service. She completed an Honours Degree in History at the Australian National University and a Masters Degree with Honours and a PhD in military history at University of New South Wales. Between 1996 and 2011 she was attached to School of History, and then the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, UNSW, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, where Dr Spurling tutored history and strategic studies. She has lectured and published extensively within Australia and internationally on military history, peacekeepers and women in the military.

refused to be intimidated by an occupying enemy and fought to save the indigenous population and wounded Australians. It is about families who refused to accept their sons, brothers and husbands were lost in Australia's first submarine, *AE1*, until it was found, more than 100 years later. It is about Ruby Boye-Jones who remained in the Solomon Islands and became a Coastwatcher to relay valuable information on enemy movements, regardless of the inherent danger.

Incarcerated POW Sister Jessie Simons found her broken spectacles no longer stayed together. She found spectacles whose POW owner had died. Her heart rose, she would fit her own lenses. Her lenses were too small for the frames.

She wrote:

"I tapped a rubber tree and using the latex and some strips of cloth I wedged the lenses into place. I was fitted out in such comfort again that when a doctor



*SILENT: Paying the fallen respect with a minute silence at Junee on 11 November 2022.*

# SERVICE AND SACRIFICE

in Singapore asked me during my liberation medical overhaul: 'I suppose you will be wanting some new glasses?' I was surprised and answered: 'Do you think so?'"

Australian Army Nurses demonstrated the term the weaker sex was a fallacy.

They were brothers and not just brothers-in-arms: Private Frederick Beale and his brother Pte George Beale were with the 2/20<sup>th</sup> Battalion. The Beale brothers were Indigenous Australians. War does not discriminate. When caught up in the Singapore surrender, they were sent to Japan with C Force and made to work as steel mill labourers. Pte George Beale died on the operating table, from injuries sustained in an accident after working a 24-hour shift. His brother Frederick was released just four months later.

There are countless heroes, like Junee's own. Fireman, Sergeant Leslie Malcolm Black of the 1<sup>st</sup> infantry Battalion, who was killed by a sniper's bullet on the Western Front on 1 January 1917; Pte Thomas Alfred Bertram Hamilton, a farm labourer, was killed in action in France on 3 May 1917; Pte Edric Newman, a blacksmith striker, enlisted in the 55<sup>th</sup> Battalion from Junee in December 1915, was killed in action in April 1917 and buried in a French grave too far away. Able Seaman (AB) William Leonard Edward Danswan was 23 when he was killed by a mine explosion on 14 July 1941 and Pte George Anderson Rootos was killed in action on 30 June 1953, in yet another war, the Korean War. Your own Long Tan Memorial standing on Broadway Street is dedicated to all those who served in the war in South Vietnam.

The strength to endure is highlighted in the letter scribbled by an Australian soldier on the Owen Stanley Range:

"Some of the old unit are so thin now you would be shocked to see them. This is a physical nightmare. We have been overloaded all the way, climbing 2,000 feet, climbing day after day. You keep going because you have to, somewhere over these ridges is Kokoda and the enemy. Men dying in this jungle and Fuzzy Wuzzies scaling greasy precipices bearing haggard, wounded Aussies."

The human spirit is wonderfully exemplified in men like AB Ernie Toovey. A promising cricketer, he survived the sinking of his ship HMAS *Perth* only to become a POW on the Burma-Thai Railway. He developed a leg ulcer and the camp surgeons declared the leg must go. Ernie refused, saying he needed two good legs to play cricket. He painfully cleaned out the ulcer himself and kept the leg. On his return home, he did indeed play cricket for his State and was also selected in the Australian baseball team. Each time the team left Australia on tour he withdrew. He explained with conviction:

"I went overseas once and it took me three-and-a-half bloody years to get home, I will not risk it again."

Our military history celebrates precious love stories such as that of Albert and Noelle Stobart. They were engaged before he entered WWII. Bert Stobart was sent into the dangerous European night skies in a Lancaster Bomber in the most perilous position, that of rear gunner. His crew were shot out of the sky. He and the middle upper gunner the only two to survive. Fate is fickle. Bert needed to survive years in a POW camp. He found an artist in the camp and asked if he could paint a portrait of his fiancée Noelle, from the small, grainy, black and white photo he carried. The rolled-up canvas was all that he returned to Australia with and took pride of place in their home during their long and happy marriage and, both aged 94, Bert and Noelle died within months of each other.

The service and sacrifice continues. On 5 May 1998 HMAS *Westralia*, carrying a crew of 98, departed for overseas exercises. Approximately 20 kilometres off the West Australian coast the engines were brought to full power. A fire broke out. The crew fought bravely to save their ship, but Midshipman Megan Pelly aged 22, Petty Officer Shaun Smith, 29, Leading Seaman Bradley Meek, 25, and AB Phillip Carroll, 23, were killed in that engine room. It was found that the incorrect hoses recently fitted to the engines by unqualified civilian contractors had burst. Four young Australians with bright futures lost their lives. No-one was held criminally responsible ... someone should have.

The stories are endless, human and inspiring. These men and women have left a powerful legacy, one that shows us, brotherhood, purpose, loyalty, the sense of never giving up even against great adversity, and the power of love. We should never forget their names, their service and sacrifice and the richness they have added to our lives.

Thank you.



*ADDRESS: Dr Kathryn Spurling delivers her speech as Regimental Sergeant Major (Ret.) Maurice Goldstraw (left) and Junee RSL Sub-Branch President Greg Zakharoff listen in the background.*

# 2023 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CENTRAL WEST

## *Service Times and Venues*

### **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, Ariaiah Street.
- 11am Service begins at cenotaph.
- 11.45am Bobby Chard Memorial Service at Ardlethan Cemetery, followed by a community lunch with light entertainment.

### **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.

### **BARELLAN**

- 2.50pm Assemble for march at Barellan War Memorial Club. March along Bendee and Boree streets. Leeton Town Band in attendance.
- 3pm Service and wreath-laying ceremony at cenotaph, Mulga Street. Afternoon tea served at the Barellan and District War Memorial Club following the service.

### **BARMEDMAN**

- 10.30am Assemble and march along Queen Street to Soldiers' Memorial Park.
- 11am Service at Soldiers' Memorial Park.

### **BENDICK MURRELL**

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

### **BETHUNGRA**

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

### **BIMBI**

- 2pm Wreath-laying at cenotaph.

### **BOGAN GATE**

- 5.30am Dawn Service at the Monument, Hutton Street.

### **BRIBBAREE**

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

- 4pm Memorial service at Bribbaree Hall.

### **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 Royal Hotel, Caragabal.

### **COLLINGULLIE**

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

### **COOLAMON (includes Marrar)**

- 6am Dawn Service at cenotaph, Cowabbie Street.
- 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 Commemoration service at the cenotaph, Albert Park.

### **COWRA**

- 5.50am Dawn Service at cenotaph, Brisbane Street.
- 9.30am Ceremony at Cowra War Cemetery.
- 10.20am March form up prior to community wreath-laying service on Brisbane Street.
- 11am Community service at River Park.
- 12.30pm Service at the Cowra Locomotive Depot.

### **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.

### **EUGOWRA**

- 5.45am Dawn Service at Memorial Park cenotaph.
- 10.45am March from the corner of Broad and North streets to the cenotaph, Memorial Park.
- 11am Main service at cenotaph, Memorial Park.

# 2023 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CENTRAL WEST SERVICE TIMES AND VENUES

## FORBES (includes Bedgerabong, Corinella)

- 5.15am Assemble at Forbes Services Memorial Club, Templar Street, and march to cenotaph, Harold Street, followed by Dawn Service.
- 10am Assemble on Cross Street and march to cenotaph, Harold Street.
- 10.30am Main service.

## FOREST HILL

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

## GALONG

- 6am Dawn Service, Galong Memorial Hall, McMahan 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 Clubrooms. Gunfire breakfast to follow.
- 9.45am Assemble for march at Memorial Clubrooms.
- 10am Commence march, followed by ANZAC service at cenotaph in Recreation Memorial Park.

## GREENETHORPE

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

## GRENFELL

- 5.45am Dawn Service at cenotaph,

corner of Burrangong Street and Mid-Western Highway.

- 8am Pilgrimage to cemetery, depart from the Railway Hotel.

- 10.30am Assemble for march, western end of George Street.

- 10.45am March commences and proceeds to cenotaph, Memorial Park.

- 11am Main service at cenotaph, Memorial Park, corner of Burrangong Street and Mid-Western Highway.

- 29 April Dining-in night at the Grenfell Country Club, Gooloogong Road.

## GUNDAGAI (includes Coolac, Mount Horeb)

- 6am Dawn Service at ANZAC Grove.
- 10.15am Assemble outside Lott's Family Hotel, Sheridan Street.
- 10.30am March will be led by the 7<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Troop followed by the Vintage Car Club vehicles carrying RSL members. Proceed east along Sheridan Street to cenotaph.

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

## HARDEN-MURRUMBURRAH

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

## HUMULA

- 10.15am Assemble for march at

Humula Citizens' Sports Club.

- 10.30am March to Humula Community Hall. Service to follow outside hall, followed by morning tea.

## JUGIONG

- 3pm Assemble for march adjacent to Police Station and march to Memorial Gates, Riverside Drive, where the memorial service will be conducted. 7<sup>th</sup> 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. Afternoon tea afterwards.

## 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 Commemoration 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.

*continued ...*

# 2023 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CENTRAL WEST SERVICE TIMES AND VENUES

## MANDURAMA

10am March from Memorial Hall, Gold Street, to World War II gates where service will be held.

## MIRROOL

9am Service at cenotaph on Aria Street, followed by morning tea.

## MONTEAGLE

2pm Wreath-laying ceremony at Monteagle Memorial Hall.

## MURRINGO

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

## NANGUS

28 April 10.30am - Community service at Public School, Tenandra Street.

## PARKES

5.30am Dawn Service at Memorial Hill followed by breakfast at Parkes Services and Citizens' Club, Short Street.

8.15am Assemble for march in front of Parkes Services and Citizens' Club.

8.35am March commences.

9am ANZAC civic service at cenotaph, Cooke Park.

10.45am Pilgrimage and wreath-laying ceremony at war graves at Parkes Cemetery.

Noon Luncheon at Parkes Services and Citizens' Club.

5pm Retreat at cenotaph, Cooke Park.

## PLEASANT HILLS

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

## QUANDIALLA

10.45am School assembly at Blamey Park, Second Street. March to Memorial Hall.

11am Service at Memorial Hall, Second Street.

## RAND

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

10.45am Assemble and march to the cenotaph, Kindra Street.

11am Service

## SPRINGDALE

9am Prayer and laying of wreaths at Springdale Memorial cenotaph on Burley Griffin Way. Introduction by Colonel Pat Thorne AM (Ret.).

9.15am Fly-over by Warbirds.

9.20am Springdale ANZAC Memorial Scholarship Oration: Tribute to a Springdale local - Private Harold Kenneth Walsh, presented by Jess Walsh. Musical interlude by the Springdale singers. Temora Band plays the Recessional including the Last Post. Concluding poem written by Earl Kotzur, a local farmer. Service to follow. Refreshments in the Springdale Hall afterwards.

## STOCKINBINGAL

3pm Commemoration service at Memorial Site.

## TALLIMBA

3pm March followed by commemorative service in the Tallimba Park. Afternoon tea will be available after the service.

## 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.

11am Service at cenotaph, Callaghan Park.

## THE ROCK

6am Dawn Service at Soldier Memorial, Urana Street.

10.30am Service at cenotaph, Urana Street.

## TRUNDLE

10.30am Commemorative march, Forbes Street.

11am Commemorative service at Trundle Memorial Hall.

## TULLAMORE

10.45am Commemorative service at Tullamore Memorial Park.

## TUMBLONG

9am Service at memorial, Saint James's Anglican Church, Adelong Road. 7<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Gundagai Troop in attendance.

## UNGARIE

6am Dawn Service, RSL Park, Ungarie Street.

11am ANZAC Day march and service at Memorial Park. If inclement weather, march to Memorial Hall. Light lunch to follow.

6pm Retreat at cenotaph.

## URANQUINTY

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

## WAGGA WAGGA

5am Dawn Service at the cenotaph, Victory Memorial Gardens, corner of Baylis and Morrow streets (conducted by Legacy).

6am War Cemetery Service, Koorngal Road.

7am ANZAC Day Breakfast, Wagga RSL Club, Bistro and Lounge area.

9am Mass at Saint Michael's Cathedral, Johnston Street, Wagga Wagga. No catafalque party in attendance.

10am Participants assemble for ANZAC Day Parade at the corner Baylis and Morgan streets from where the march begins.

# 2023 ANZAC DAY RIVERINA AND CENTRAL WEST SERVICE TIMES AND VENUES

- 11.15am Commemorative service in the Victory Memorial Gardens.
- Noon ANZAC Day lunch at the RSL Club. Ticket sales cease Monday, 17 April.

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

## WALLENDREEN

- 8.30am Assemble at Wallendbeen Public School and walk to cenotaph.

- 9am Main service followed by morning tea at Wallendbeen Memorial Hall.

## WEST WYALONG (includes North Yalgogrin, Wamboyne, Weethalle)

- 6am Dawn Service at Services and Citizens' Club cenotaph.

- 10.15am Assemble for march on corner of Church and Main streets.

- 10.30am March to cenotaph at Services and Citizens' Club.

- 11am Main service with a wreath-laying ceremony.

## WIRIMAH

- 8.15am Memorial service at Wirimah Memorial Park, Smiths Road.

## WOMBAT

- 6am Dawn Service followed by breakfast at the Wombat Hotel. Harden-Murrumburrah Light Horse in attendance, as well as the Young Cadet Unit.

## WOODSTOCK

- 2.15pm Assemble for march across from Woodstock Public School, corner of Parkes and Carrington streets.

- 2.30pm March to Sister Jenny Kerr's Park to lay wreath and then to Arnold H. Bennett's Gates to lay wreath, then into Soldiers' Memorial Hall for ANZAC service. Refreshments after service.

## WYALONG

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

## WYANGALA DAM

- 5.45am Dawn Service at Memorial outside of the Wyangala Country Club, Sixth Avenue.

## YERONG CREEK

- 11am Service at cenotaph in Stanley Galvin Memorial Park.

## YOUNG

- 5.45am Dawn Service at Memorial Town Hall, Boorowa Street.

- 10.45am Assemble and march from Town Hall.

- 11am Main service at Anderson Park.

## CAPITAL CITY SERVICES:

### CANBERRA

- 4.30am Armed forces representatives to read excerpts from letter and diaries of Australians who have experienced war first-hand.

- 5.30am Dawn Service in the Captain Reg Saunders Courtyard and Sculpture Garden.

- 7.30am Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ceremony, For Our Country Memorial, Sculpture Gardens, Australian War Memorial Grounds.

- 9.30am Veterans march through the western grounds of the Australian War Memorial.

- 10.30am National ceremony at the Australian War Memorial commences.

- 4.45pm ANZAC Day Last Post Ceremony, Commemorative Area.

## 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. A Commemorative Service to be held at conclusion of march.

## SYDNEY

- 4.15am Dawn Service at the cenotaph on 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 Commemoration 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 War Memorial, Cowra RSL Sub-Branch, Wagga Wagga hotel historian Geoff Burch, Paul Cullen, *He belonged to Wagga: The Great War, the AIF and returned soldiers in an Australian country town*, by Dr Ian Hodges (2017), Paul Mensch of the Mildura RSL, Lieutenant Gerard Pratt Royal Australian Navy, RAN website, Sue Salmon, Temora Rural Museum Manager Bill Speirs, Dr Kathryn Spurling and *Neath the Mantle of Saint Michael* by Sylvia Walsh (1987).



## RIVERINA & CENTRAL WEST WRITING AWARDS

### GOOD MATE

*HIGHLY COMMENDED:*  
Samara Wood, 11, Year 5, Parkes East Public School

I wake up on another gloomy morning feeling miserable. I'm in World War I right now. My kelpie is by my side. He makes me feel better. He's a good mate.

We're travelling to Gallipoli today, but my kelpie won't let me go. If I try to get past him, he'll bite me. It's like he knows something bad will happen. He's a good mate.

We are at Gallipoli and the enemy is waiting for us. I can see them. I warn our troops, they didn't listen. Many of them died. We retreated back to the trenches. I see my dog and give him a big hug. He licks me. My dog's a good mate.

People are dying of sickness. I get scared. Will I be next?

It's storming. The thunder and lightning are loud and scary. Storms really give me a big scare. I can tell my dog is scared but he still comforts me. He's a good mate.

As I sleep through the storm with him, I dream about when we first got him. I was 15 and only a year later we went to war together. We have grown older with each other since then.

The next morning, I wake up to gunshots. The enemy has invaded. It's chaos. They all intrude our trenches. One goes to shoot at me. He pulls the trigger.

My kelpie jumps in front. He takes my shot. All the other soldiers get the enemy's team out. My dog had died. I lay crying over his

dead body. I remember all the good times with him.

My kelpie was the world's loyalest dog. He wasn't a good mate. He was and always will be a great mate.

OUR ANZAC heroes in the Riverina and Central West – the theme for the 13<sup>th</sup> annual writing competition – have been respectfully honoured by the more than 650 entries received from Primary and Secondary schools across the electorate.

From paying tribute to World War I Diggers to more recent operations, to imagining putting on the uniform and gearing up for battle, to conveying the raw emotion of a family waiting anxiously for word of their loved ones only to receive the dreaded death knock announcing another person gone too soon.

I had a tough task to narrow down the entries to the following 16 students, who all thoroughly deserve book prizes from the Australian War Memorial, which are pictured above, for their winning and highly commended efforts. Thank you to the wonderful teachers who have incorporated the competition into their lessons.

Every student who submitted an entry will receive a personally signed commemorative certificate featuring a watermark image of the front page of this year's booklet. Entries were categorised into Primary and Secondary schools with the Riverina electorate divided into North, South, East and West divisions.



### NORTH

#### PRIVATE NATHANAE GALAGHER

*WINNER: Lexie Finn, 10, Year 5, Forbes North Public School*

ONCE upon a time there was a boy who grew up in Forbes in the Central West of New South Wales.

He dreamed of becoming a Digger. He was a country boy at heart who loved riding horses, pigging, cray fishing and playing footy.

He was kind, loyal, selfless and determined; all qualities a Digger possesses.

His dream of becoming a Digger came true on 22 October 2007 when he took an oath to serve Australia and its peoples in their defence as a soldier.

He had his first deployment to Afghanistan in 2009 and loved it, he was proud to serve his country.

He loved his family and friends and also dreamed of one day having a son. A few weeks before his second deployment to Afghanistan he found

out his partner was pregnant. He was proud to be serving and protecting his country once again but also nervous to be leaving his partner and unborn baby behind in Australia well aware of the risks of fighting in the war and even planning his own funeral, just in case.

On the morning of 30 August 2012, on his second mission of the night, the US Marine Corp helicopter he was in crashed while trying to land. He was sadly killed in the crash.

His dream of having a son came true 12 weeks after he passed away.

I was three months old when I attended his funeral in Pilliga on 13 September

2012 and, while I didn't get the chance to know him, he has taught me to chase my dreams, do what I love and to not be afraid to pay the price.



## FRANCIS (FRANK) 2023, AGE 12

*WINNER: Frank McMahon, 12, Year 7, Red Bend Catholic College, Forbes*

MY name's Frank and I live near Grenfell.

I am in Year 7 this year, but I still like to read *Diary of a Wimpy Kid*.

In my free time, I jump on the trampoline, shoot some hoops, swim and play video games with my mates. I am responsible for feeding the dog and making my bed.

I went to the same school as my Dad – he liked it there.

I'm going on excursion. I board the bus. I'm going to miss my family. I have never been away from home before.

I grasp my football. I don't see the opposition till it's too late. I crash into the mud.

I walk through the front door. I am tired and dirty.

I give Mum a hug and a kiss.

## FRANCIS (FRANK) 1914, AGE 12

MY name's Frank and I live near Grenfell.

I don't go to school anymore.

I left without learning how to read.

I don't get much free time.

I haven't seen my mates since I left school.

I am responsible for milking the cows, feeding and caring for the horses, ploughing and chopping wood.

I went to war in place of my Dad.

My family needed him.

I'm going to war. I board the ship.

I'm going to miss my family.

I have never been away from home before.

I grasp my trigger.

I don't see the enemy till it's too late. I fall into the trench.



## STRENGTH OF HUMAN SPIRIT

*HIGHLY COMMENDED: Charles Best, 15, Year 10, Red Bend Catholic College, Forbes*

IN Australia's Riverina and Central West a group of ANZACs, weary from their battles, sought respite from the strains of war by venturing on a fishing trip to the Murrumbidgee River. This allowed these brave soldiers to disentangle from the trauma of their war-time experiences, as they relished in the peace and beauty of the natural world while in the company of each other. Conversations and laughter flowed alongside the river, and as the Sun set, a sense of tranquillity and joy enveloped their hearts.

Upon their return, the ANZAC heroes were greeted with admiration and esteem for their courage and sacrifice. With a sense of pride and honour, they continued with their lives, mindful of the magnitude of their service and the connections

forged in the military.

As they aged, these heroes became mentors, imparting their knowledge and wisdom to future generations.

The memory of their fishing trip endured a reminder of the importance of companionship and solidarity in times of need. They served their country with courage and left an indelible imprint on the nation's collective memory. These heroes were lauded for their service and heroism, and their legacy remains a beacon of inspiration for present and future generations.

The story of these ANZAC heroes resonates with the people of Australia, reminding us of the true essence of friendship, compassion and resilience.

Their journey is a testament to the strength of the human spirit, as they triumphed over immense challenges and found solace in each other's company.



## CHILDREN'S WORDS A WAY TO SAY THANK YOU

THERE is a certain innocence in the words children write about war.

Yet through their prose, a strong sense of gratitude and patriotism surfaces.

Today's students might not realise just how lucky they are ... but there is a clear understanding of the futility and horror of war and the youth of those sent to fight all those decades ago.

Some of those given a rifle and a uniform and shipped off to World War I were mere boys, including the lad in the main feature in this commemorative booklet, Wagga Wagga's Austin Kelly.

Memorials to those who served and those who fell stand as silent, solid reminders of the great number from the Riverina and Central West involved in all conflicts.

The least we can now do to honour their memory is attend an ANZAC Day march and say Thank You For Your Service. #TYFYS

It is a simple gesture, but means so much.

Thank you, too, to the young people who took the time and made the effort to participate in this year's ANZAC Day writing competition.

Your efforts are acknowledged and appreciated.



# WE WILL REMEMBER

*HIGHLY COMMENDED:*  
Keira O'Grady, 11, Year 6, Sturt  
Public School, Wagga Wagga

OUR brave, our men,  
Gone today, never returning  
home.  
Tears of despair, memories to  
hold dear.  
We will remember.  
They won't see the next rising  
Sun,  
But we who are left,  
will gaze at the heavenly stars  
And we will remember.  
At the rolling in and out of the  
tides,  
from dawn and dusk  
And season to season  
We will remember.  
From ageing eyes,  
watching our children grow  
Time has not stood still.  
We will remember.



## LIFESAVER

*WINNER:* Ceinwein Milton, 10, Year  
5, North Wagga Public School

THE air was heavy with the smell  
of smoke and fear. All around me I  
heard loud explosions and gunfire, but  
I didn't startle because this was what I  
had been trained for. It was dark and  
rainy, so the ground was muddy and  
difficult to walk on.  
Somehow, I was drawn in a certain  
direction and knew exactly where to  
go. I came to a halt and looked down  
to where a soldier is lying on the  
ground, his left leg is missing from  
below his knee. My rider hops off  
and I instinctively lower myself to the  
ground. Carefully, he wraps up the  
soldier's knee and helps him towards  
me before carefully placing him on my  
back. He secures the wounded soldier  
to my saddle and as slowly and gently

as I can, I get  
back up.  
My rider  
takes my  
reins from  
the ground  
and together  
we make our  
way back,  
stepping over other fallen comrades  
and towards safety.  
Outside the Battalion Aid Station,  
I again lower myself on all fours so  
that the field medics can help the  
wounded soldier onto a stretcher.  
He tugs on the sleeve of one of the  
medics, causing them to stop briefly.  
Then he looks back up at me, and  
ever so slowly, reaches his hand out to  
stroke my muzzle. I nuzzle to his hand  
gently and there are tears in his eyes  
as he whispers, "Thank you for saving  
my life!"

– Lady (the Waler Horse), 14<sup>th</sup>  
Australia Light Horse Regiment



## OUR ANZAC HEROES

*WINNER:* Alannah Smith, 12, Year 7,  
Wagga Wagga High School

AS the bugle sounds,  
And the marching band plays,  
You see them coming  
Just as scarred as back in their day.  
They still step forward.  
Our ANZAC Heroes.  
It must've been brutal,  
It must've been cruel,  
The guns, the fighting  
Only because one wants to rule.  
They knew it was wrong.  
Our ANZAC Heroes.  
I can picture the image,  
The image of war,  
They sacrificed themselves for us  
Not for some silly law.  
They helped the world become better.  
Our ANZAC Heroes.  
I can imagine their faces,  
The terror in their eyes,  
The constant thought of their  
children  
And their sickly wives,  
But they did it anyway.  
Our ANZAC Heroes.

No matter the  
distance,  
No matter the  
years.  
They'll  
remember the  
whole thing  
All of the fears.  
They'll never forget.  
Our ANZAC Heroes.  
Ones who were covert, never seen  
again,  
The taboo now spoken once a  
purpose of death.  
Betrayed by friends, comrades, mates.  
But had to fight on.  
Our ANZAC Heroes.  
Exposed to death,  
The sorrows seep in,  
Hoping, everything counts,  
They will help lead them to freedom.  
Our ANZAC Heroes.  
Those are my heroes,  
For that I'll always know,  
I'll always remember  
And I shall never let go.  
Lest We Forget  
Our ANZAC Heroes.



# THE BURDEN IN OUR HEARTS

*HIGHLY COMMENDED:*  
Angus Tait, 13, Year 7, Wagga Wagga Christian College

I can hear the guns start shooting now, the noise is deafening.  
The war cries fill the air as well, as we charge on for the keep.  
These men I've known, my mates and all, I shall not see again.  
As I hear the shouting growing now with the sweat now on my knees.  
These men I know, falling now, are the ones I knew from home.  
From the Riverina and to the West we've never felt so alone.  
We know we stand for Australia as we pull the triggers hard.  
But we stand tall and charge on with the burden in our hearts.  
As we stagger forward, slowly now, we see movement up ahead.  
The general shouts "Come on Lads!

Let's get them where it's best!"  
We all shout and run on forward with our proud young ANZAC crests.  
As we stand tall and charge on with the burden in our hearts.  
The battle scream has lifted now, no sound now comes by me.  
The enemy has shouted back "you got us where it means!"  
But the death and sorrow that lies before has now just left me weak.  
I feel as though my head will spin 'til the Sun sets on these cheeks.  
Fifty years from now, we gather for our mates.  
The loved ones lost, the friends we miss, the ones who saved our baits.  
And from the Riverina and to the Central West,  
We shall always carry on with these burdens in our hearts.



## EAST

# AWFUL REALITY OF WAR

*WINNER:* Amy Manwaring, 11, Year 6, Jugiong Public School

I remember well that dreaded day I hoped wouldn't come, when the officers knocked on the door of our family home. The sound of my Mum and little sister crying as I grabbed my bag of belongings, said my goodbyes and followed the officers. We all gathered young, scared and not knowing what was in front of us. When we finally arrived, I will never forget the pouring rain. The heaviness of my boots sunk deep into the muddy slosh. The gun shots started quickly, trying to duck for cover as explosions began happening all around. As I lay under a shelter of branches, I hear and see things I will never forget. I close my eyes and dream of being at home but really I'm in World War I.



# WHAT ANZAC MEANS TO ME

*HIGHLY COMMENDED:*  
Jasper Rui, 9, Year 3, St Patrick's Primary School, Gundagai

TODAY is ANZAC Day and we pray for those who sacrificed their lives for us. The war was awful, why do we keep going to war instead of peace?  
We represent people who died in the war with poppies. All of us will honour those who fought for us in war. We might have lost a million people, but they will always be in our hearts.



## THE LAST LETTER

*HIGHLY COMMENDED:*  
*Rylee Robb, 13, Year 8, Gundagai  
High School*

DEAR Mary,  
Give my love to my family and  
friends.  
I hope we can make amends.  
How much longer will I be  
here?  
These gunshots sometimes hurt  
my ear.  
We have to sleep on dirt floors.  
I have to walk on all fours.  
I'm always scared of getting  
hurt.  
Everyone is covered in dirt.  
I haven't had a shower in days.  
These trenches are dug like a  
maze.  
I'm starting to get a sore throat.  
I really hope you get this note.  
I've been away for so long.  
I hope you and the kids are  
staying strong.  
Love from Mark



## EAST

## ODE TO OUR MANY HEROES

*WINNER: Cybele Hewitt, 16, Year 11,  
Hennessy Catholic College, Young*

OUR ANZAC heroes of the  
Riverina and Central West,  
Lay in unmarked graves where they  
were laid to rest.  
In Flanders Fields, with poppies  
galore, they do stir no more;  
As the churning waves try to bring  
them home to shore.  
The miasma of death clings to white  
crosses,  
As we commemorate our sacrifices,  
our losses.  
A bugle blares in a distant timeline,  
What was it like, I wonder, to walk  
that fine line?  
Take a moment ... be still ... stare at  
your hands,  
Be grateful that you never have to  
know the cost of our land,



Lost memories, Christmas lunches  
and sunsets past,  
That's what they gave up ... without  
being asked.  
And so we stand, heads bowed,  
shoulders squared;  
We remember our heroes, for it was  
our country they spared.  
So let us gather, awakened by dawn's  
rising light,  
Hands on hearts, our heroes' spirits  
we invite.  
It was through their bravery that we  
were defined.  
Together we will walk as one, forever  
intertwined.

## WEST

## THEY NEVER GAVE UP

*WINNER: Kbristina Caputo, 11,  
Year 6, Temora Public School*

THE call for Heroes was sent around,  
Aussie and Kiwi boys and men were adventure  
bound.  
They never gave up, they fought for us all,  
They saw their friends and comrades fall.

The trenches were cold and soldiers worn,  
The gunfire was heard from dusk to dawn.  
From the moment they landed in Anzac Cove,  
For peace and happiness they all strove.

In Flanders Fields the poppies grow,  
A reminder of Fallen Friends and foe.  
Soldiers became brothers with those they met,  
Australians and New Zealanders forever say, "Lest We Forget."



# MY ANZAC HERO

*WINNER: Sam Koop, 14, Year 9,  
West Wyalong High School*

I feel your presence in the wind,  
Brushing my young face,  
But you're nothing but a photo,  
In a dusty, old suitcase.  
Then they said you were a hero,  
Fought at Gallipoli,  
Many medals you did win,  
For your bravery.  
Now I see you in the trenches,  
Surrounded by your mates,  
Some smiling, some frowning,  
Awaiting their fate.  
But everyone is shaking,  
Muttering their prayers,  
As the Sun begins to set,



Emitting a soft, orange glare.  
I see you on the battlefield,  
Enduring the noise,  
Helping your mates,  
Mates who are poised.  
I see you charging forward once more,  
To attack the enemy,  
But this time would be your last,  
As you were the casualty.  
They said you tried your hardest,  
Tried to make it home,  
But sadly, it wasn't enough,  
So to Heaven you did roam.  
As I place a poppy near your name,  
I begin to feel ashamed,  
For how much I take for granted,  
Not honouring your pain.  
So now your photo's proudly hung,  
A reminder of your life,  
And never again will I forget,  
Your ultimate sacrifice.  
From hills to plains where poppies  
grow,  
To sandy beaches, white as snow,  
Lest We Forget,  
My ANZAC hero.

# FIGHTING IN THE NIGHT

*HIGHLY COMMENDED:  
Harriet Dowling, 10,  
Year 5, Matong Public School*

Australians fight with all their  
might,  
In the trenches, so wet and  
sad,  
Missing their families, so bad.  
Wishing they didn't go away  
from home,  
In the trenches the soldiers  
roam.  
Across the field the bullets  
flew,  
You've got to dodge them, you  
just have to!  
ANZAC heroes in a fight,  
It's so bad and such a sight,  
ANZAC heroes are fighting  
in the night.  
I only had a few friends left  
fighting with me.  
As everyone was dying I was  
still trying to survive.  
I wanted to see my family.



# THE HORSEMEN

*HIGHLY COMMENDED:  
Isabel Fairman, 13, Year 8, St Anne's  
Central School, Temora*

THE horse's galloping was enough  
to shake the earth. The screams  
of the wounded ran shivers down  
their spines, the Light Horsemen  
were on the march. Their leaders  
were planning to storm the enemy  
out of the land but so many lives  
had already been lost; fathers, sons,  
brothers, friends. Those lives can  
never be brought back. Even if the  
soldiers had survived, the horses were  
not so lucky. Thousands of horses had  
met death in this Great War. The war  
to end all wars. Millions had already  
perished in the tragedy, women and  
children, families bombed in their  
homes and beds. The soldiers sat  
there in utter misery mourning their  
friends and brothers in arms. The  
war felt like it would never end. The

soldiers longed to see their loved  
ones again, they dreamed of a world  
without the sounds of guns and war,  
where the turmoil the world faced  
was over. But even in that darkest  
of times they still managed to laugh  
and love and dream about a world  
without suffering that is war.  
At last, the war had ended and the  
soldiers were coming home. Their  
families had long awaited the news  
that the war had ended and that their  
brothers, fathers, sons and husbands  
could come home.

When the men  
finally come  
home there  
was something  
different, there  
was a particular  
sorrow about  
them as if a light  
had gone out in  
their hearts. They  
would never be  
the same again.





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