BROUGHT TO YOU BY
THOMAS GEORGE MP
MEMBER FOR LISMORE
**ANZAC Day … it’s our chance to say ‘thanks’**

AUSTRALIANS are proud people who respect tradition and honour great feats of bravery.

It is this honour and respect that all Australians have for the ANZAC spirit … a legend born on the cliffs of Gallipoli 99 years ago, a legend still relevant to our modern-day soldiers.

Indeed, it was that fateful campaign at Gallipoli in 1915 which helped forge Australia’s nationhood on the back of the ANZACs.

Characteristics such as courage, sacrifice, mateship and good humour were all typical of the Diggers at Gallipoli.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the start of World War One, also known as The Great War of 1914-18, and some even said it was “the war to end all wars”. It was a major world event in which Australia – then such a young and emerging nation – became embroiled when Britain declared war on Germany.

It was a momentous occasion for Australia.

This year the *Spirit of ANZAC* publication pays tribute to some of the brave locals from within the Lismore Electorate area who so willingly went off to war to “do their bit” – some never to return.

The centenary of such a significant and life-changing event for millions across the world is good reason to commemorate those men and women who died standing up for a cause.

ANZAC Day – April 25 – is a chance to pay our respects to those men and women who have served and those who have fallen in the line of duty. The reward for their sacrifice is the freedom we enjoy today. Lest We Forget.

*Cover: Member for Lismore Thomas George with National Serviceman Geoff Smith at the Murwillumbah War Memorial. Mr Smith’s father Rupert served in World War One with the 12th Light Horse. The memorial was unveiled on ANZAC Day 1924 by a wife, a mother and a sister of three of the dead listed on the monument.*

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News of Australian troops fighting hard at Gallipoli filtered back home and young Will, like many others, was inspired. He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on 20 July 1915. Fit and keen and ready for this “great adventure”, William could never have known that exactly one year after signing up he would become a victim in one of the most historic World War One battles involving Australian troops.

Will was firstly reported wounded and missing on 19 July 1916 and not until early 1917 would a court of inquiry declare him killed in action although his body was never recovered.

Private T McBryde gave evidence: “I knew him very well. We were at Fleurbaix. We held the trenches for 14 hours and were bombed out. I saw him killed by a shell on the evening of July 19th.”

This was the Battle of Fromelles which took place on 19-20 July 1916 in France on the Western Front. It was the first time the AIF had fought in France. It was also significant in history that Adolf Hitler, then a 27-year-old Corporal and message runner in the German 16th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment, took part in the battle.

The infantry “went over the top” at 6pm after 11 hours of preliminary bombardment. The men were ordered to cross a 400-metre patch of ground to reach the German lines. The Australians didn’t stand a chance against the firepower and later German troops dug mass burial graves.

These soldiers – along with William Ryan – would become known as the Lost Diggers of Fromelles.

Much later, the Australian War Memorial would describe Fromelles as “the worst 24 hours in Australian history” with casualties numbering a horrendous 5533 dead or wounded in one night.

William Polding Ryan was the 11th of 13 children to parents Patrick and Jane Ryan.

He was born at Dunible in northern NSW and when he was four years old the family moved to Upper Crystal Creek.

William worked as a labourer before answering his country’s call to duty, setting sail overseas with the 31st Battalion 1st Reinforcements.

He was one of three boys Patrick and Jane farewelled on their duty overseas. John and Edmund would return to Australia.

In 2008 a mass burial ground was located at Pheasant Wood, France containing the bodies of 250 British and Australian soldiers including William Ryan.

All of the remains were reburied with full military honours in the newly created Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery.
World War One, also called The Great War, was a conflict of unprecedented extent and ferocity.

For Australia, the First World War of 1914-18 remains the most costly conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 men enlisted, of which more than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner*. Listed here are just some of the major events of the War, with particular relevance to Australian troops.

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

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

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

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

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

1 NOVEMBER 1914 The First Division of the AIF sailed from Albany, Western Australia, for Egypt.

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

25 APRIL 1915 Australian forces in dawn landing at ANZAC Cove on the Gallipoli Peninsula, Turkey. A defining moment in Australia’s character and development as a nation. This day became a national holiday known as ANZAC Day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

25 APRIL 1916 First commemoration of ANZAC Day.

19-20 JULY 1916 Battle of Fromelles, France.

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

3-5 AUGUST 1916 Australian Light Horse in Battle of Romani, Egypt.

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

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

11 APRIL 1917 First Battle of Bullecourt, France.

3 MAY 1917 Second Battle of Bullecourt, France.

Courage and determination were the qualities which earned George Johncock respect on the battlefield. His comrades knew they could depend on this young soldier who had shown on many occasions he was prepared to risk his own life to save others.

Sergeant Johncock’s actions on the night of 5 April 1918 were testament of his standing as a fine Digger, who enlisted at Lismore in September 1915 while the Gallipoli campaign raged. He won a Military Medal for leading an attack which brought injury upon himself but saved other Diggers from capture and even death.

The citation highlights his devotion to
1914-1918

AT WAR

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

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

CASUALTIES

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

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

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

Total deaths: 16,563,000

(All figures approximate)

July 1917 Battle of Messines, Belgium.
1 August 1917 Third Battle of Ypres – Australian soldiers were in action most notably at Menin Road, Glencorse Wood, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde Ridge and Passchendaele (until November 14).
31 October 1917 Australian Light Horse in the famous charge on Turkish positions at Beersheba, Palestine.
25 April 1918 Australians win Villers-Bretonneux, France.

29 September 1918 Australians stormed the Hindenburg Line, France.
1 October 1918 Australian Light Horsemen took Damascus, Syria.

11 November 1918 Germany signed an armistice to cease fighting. The war is over.

28 June 1919 Representatives of Allied powers and Germany signed the Treaty of Versailles, at Versailles, France, officially ending World War I.

*Australian War Memorial

duty, conspicuous bravery and exceptional determination.

This all happened at Dernacourt, south-west of Albert on the Somme in France. He saw a neighbouring night post attacked and overcame by enemy and responded by leading six men in a counter attack. They regained the post and held it until dawn when the wounded were safely removed from the frontline. Sgt Johncock continued firing until he was wounded and his gun destroyed. Four months later Sgt Johncock was still involved in the thick of the Western Front action, however, this time made the ultimate sacrifice.

He was killed in action on 13 August 1918 while serving with the 49th Battalion.

He is buried at Cote 80 French National Cemetery, Etinehem, Somme, France.
Nothing was going to stop Theodore McLean from signing up to fight for Australia in The First World War of 1914-18, even if he had to wait longer for the opportunity.

The young farmer whose parents lived at Chillingham, near Murwillumbah, was first restricted by a severe illness and then when he was well enough he also needed a consent form. Although he was 20 at the time, Theo was given the letter of consent signed by both his parents Lachlan and Mary. As proud as they were of their only son, it was a heartbreaking day when Theo finally embarked with the 8th Reinforcements in February 1917.

In the days leading up to his departure, Lachlan took the chance to have his portrait photograph taken with Theo. The anxious father would treasure this picture for the rest of his days.

Private (Pte) Theodore Carlisle McLean, of the 11th Machine Gun Company, arrived in France for service on the Western Front in June 1917. His relatively short time on the frontline met a tragic end which came in the middle of the night while his unit was sleeping.

The unit’s war diary recorded the events which led to Theo’s death along with 10 other men on the night of 29 September 1917 whilst in camp south of Poperinge: “... an enemy aeroplane dropped two bombs close to

Brothers’ bond

They fought and died together like true Digger mates. The Birney brothers Robert and Charles were never far from each other’s side.

Growing up and working on the family property at Keerrong, they enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force together, were both attached to the 49th Battalion and left to fight in The Great War of 1914-18 on the same ship out of Sydney on 24 January 1917.

It was reassuring for their parents George and Annie, and their sister Alice, that they would look out for each other when times got tough.

And it was tough going for the Birney boys when they finally made it
OF ANZAC to the Western Front in France in March 1917. They survived a torrid 12 months in and out of the frontline but then tragedy would strike. The youngest of the brothers, Charles (left), was killed in action on 10 April 1918 at Corbie in France.

Fifteen days later – on Anzac Day 1918 – Robert (right) also made the ultimate sacrifice. He died in the early hours of 25 April during an attack to dislodge the enemy from Villers-Bretonneux.

It was a devastating blow for the family back home when some time later they received telegrams within days of each other informing the loss of their two boys. Pte Robert Birney was aged 29. He has no known grave and his name is commemorated on the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, France. Pte Charles Birney was buried at La Neuville Communal Cemetery, aged 23.

Lismore Honours Gallipoli Digger

Lismore’s unique connection with the dawn landings at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 has been recognised with a new plaque recently unveiled.

The plaque at Lismore Uniting Church honours the efforts of Lance Sergeant Joseph Henry Stratford – widely reported as the first Australian ashore at the dawn landings.

The efforts of Joseph were highlighted in the Lismore Electorate’s Spirit of ANZAC publication back in 2006.

Joseph grew up in Lismore and attended Goonellabah Public School. The family was known around the district and regularly attended church.

Joseph was held in the highest regard by his comrades.

A quote from a letter written by Private Stu Gahan to Joseph’s parents sums up the feeling: “There was not a man amongst us who did not love and look up to him. He was fair and straight. I felt that when he did not answer the roll call that I had lost an elder brother.”

always strong
Our 100th VC
Corporal Cameron Stewart Baird VC MG

The Victoria Cross – the highest form of recognition that can be bestowed on a soldier for remarkable and unselfish courage in the service of others. There is no greater single honour, award, or accolade.

Cpl Baird became the 100th Australian recipient of this prestigious military award in February this year. It was posthumously awarded to his parents for his actions in Afghanistan on 22 June 2013. His acts of valour and self-sacrifice in battle saved the lives of his comrades. His actions – which cost him his life – were of the highest order and in keeping with the finest traditions of the Australian Army and the Australian Defence Force.

Cpl Baird, serving with the 2nd Commando Regiment, was on his fifth tour of Afghanistan. He was awarded the Medal for Gallantry in 2007 on his second tour. The VC award ceremony was fitting in the year 2014 – the 100th VC winner in the 100th year since the start of World War One. There were 64 VC medals awarded to Australians in WWI.

2014 ANZAC Day activities in the region

**BONALBO**
5.30am: Dawn Service at the Cenotaph. Breakfast afterwards.
9.30am: CWA service at Old Bonalbo Soldiers Memorial Hall.
11.00am: ANZAC Commemoration Service.

**CLUNES**
9.00am: ANZAC Commemoration Service at the Village Park.

**KYOGLE**
5.30am: Dawn Service at the Cenotaph.
10.30am: March steps off from the Memorial Baths to the Kyogle Memorial Institute. Assemble at 10.15am.
11.00am: ANZAC Commemoration at the Memorial Institute.
11.30am: Wreath Laying Service at the Cenotaph.

**LISMORE**
5.00am: Dawn Service at the Lismore Memorial in Molesworth St. Form up at the Old Post Office at 4.45am.
7.00am: Cemetery Parade to gather in foyer Lismore and District Workers' Club.
9.00am: March from Browns Creek Car Park to the Lismore War Memorial at the Memorial Baths for ANZAC Commemoration and Wreath Laying Service. Form up at 8.30am.

**MALLANGANEE**
10.45am: March from Mallanganee Memorial Hall to Memorial Park will be followed by a service.

**MURWILLUMBAH**
5.30am: Dawn Service at the War Memorial. March off to the War Memorial at 5.15am. Service commences at the Memorial at 5.30am. Breakfast to follow.

10.30am: March off to the War Memorial. Assemble at Brisbane St at 10.15am.
10.45am: ANZAC Service commences at the Memorial.

**NIMBIN**
11.00am: ANZAC Commemoration Service at the Cenotaph. March to form up at the Nimbin hospital at 10.40am. Refreshments afterwards at the bowling club.

**UKI**
4.28am: Dawn Service at the Uki War Memorial. Light breakfast and refreshments in Uki School of Arts Hall after ceremony.

**URBENVILLE**
9.30am: Church service at St Mark’s ANZAC Memorial Church.
10.45am: March leaves the main street along Clarence Way to the Memorial Gates.
11.00am: ANZAC Service at Memorial Gates.

**WOODENBONG**
10.30am: March from the NAB to the Woodenbong Public Hall followed by the ANZAC Service. After the service a march will step off from the hall to the Lest We Forget Gates for a Wreath Laying Service. RAAF flyover will take place during the service. Bookings needed for luncheon.

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