
ANZAC DAY

25 APRIL 2019

**REMEMBERING AND COMMEMORATING LOCAL
SERVICE PERSONNEL WHO HAVE SERVED
OUR COUNTRY**



A BRIEF MESSAGE FROM CLAYTON

There is no doubting the importance of Anzac Day on our annual National calendar. While it is day to remember, reflect and pay respects it is also a day of hope. One of the unspoken themes of the day is the hope that we will never have to add names to the list of soldiers that are sent off to war or that die in battle protecting one of our rights or freedoms.

This year, our Anzac Day will fall in the shadow of a terrible event in Christchurch, New Zealand. Sadly the cause of that tragedy appears to be nestled in the bosom of 2 dangerous ideas: white supremacy and hatred. As we look solemnly at our war memorials on Anzac Day this year we should take the time to reflect on the names of our fallen soldiers that served during World War II. That war had its origins in Europe based on white supremacy and hatred. It is my sincere hope that we, as a global people, can defy the temptation of hatred in all of its forms.

Avoiding war, as always, requires patience and care for our fellow man. Perhaps that is something worth remembering on Anzac Day 2019.

My deep and sincere regards for all that have served and those that have lost someone that has served.

Clayton Barr MP
State Member for the Electorate of Cessnock



FROM THE BUSH TO THE BATTLEFIELD

Weston's Sergeant Daniel Bozza joined the army as he was from a small country town and did not want to "fall into a rut" due to lack of opportunity. So in September 2007 he joined the Royal Australian Armoured CORP- RAAC. Daniel also saw it as a opportunity to become self dependant and travel Australia doing something he has had a passion about since he was little boy. He loved listening to his grandfather's stories about his service in the Navy.

Segeant Bozza was deployed in Mentoring Taskforce 2 during Operation Slipper 2010-2011 to Afghanistan as an 18 year old. He had mixed emotions about his combat experience. Not just for the people who were there and the job the y

they had to do but also as someone who was now in another country for the first time.

Travelling and doing his job at the same time was created much pressure but he had been well trained and tested to perform. Emotions for Daniel varied though the deployment especially when members of his team or task group were killed. "It made you really understand why you were there and how lucky we have it not only as a western country but as Australians."

Sergeant Bozza has also served in th 2nd Cavalry Regiment 2009-2013 and 1st Armoured Regiment 2013-2016 and is currently in the 2nd Cavalry, 1st Recruit Training Battalion 2019 stationed in Townsville with his wife Kate. His next goal after his current posting is to take another instrucional posting in Townsville or potentially Canberra or Melbourne.



Segeant Daniel Bozza has received Australian Defence Medal, Australian Active Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, NATO Medal with Clasp ICAT.

SERGEANT JOHN TRACEY

As World War I brought grief and heartache to families across Australia, the Tracey family of Morpeth were counting their blessings. Their son, John Tracey was too young to enlist. As young men lost their lives on the battlefields of Europe and the Middle East, the young Tracey remained safe in the peaceful and tranquil country side of Morpeth. The teenager had no inkling that within 25 years, he too would see active service in the Middle East during World War II.

In 1940, as Adolf Hitler and the Nazi Party extended their reach across Europe, Tracey enlisted as a Private in the 2/3rd Australian Infantry Battalion. After completing mandatory training in Sydney, Private Tracey arrived in Palestine in early 1941, where he joined other members of the Battalion who had been deployed to the region a year earlier. Over the preceding months, the Battalion had undertaken a period of recovery following successful campaigns in Libya.

In June 1941, the Battalion's focus shifted to Libya and Lebanon. Private Tracey was required to undergo further medical assessments. It was during these assessments that he was informed that he was "fit for duties other than active service". Despite this setback, Private Tracey was still committed to making a contribution and to supporting his fellow Australians. He was transferred to the Australian Army Medical Corps where he was appointed as a nursing orderly.



Photo: Private John Tracey with members of Australian Medical Corps

Remaining in the Middle East, Private Tracey was responsible for assisting Australian nurses as they treated injured troops in makeshift hospitals and medical facilities. Private Tracey was considered an essential part of the treatment and care team of Australian troops.

In fact, while fulfilling his responsibility as an orderly, he was promoted to the rank of Corporal. Corporal Tracey also tended to members of the Polish Armed Forces who were stationed in the Middle East.

In recognition of his care, support and treatment of Polish soldiers, Corporal Tracey received official recognition from the Commanding Officer of the Polish Armed Forces, Lieutenant Imach Roman Leonard. This honour highlighted the significant service and commitment that Corporal Tracey undertook while tending to soldiers in the Middle East as a nursing orderly.

After 18 months service in the Middle East with the Australian Army Medical Corps, Corporal Tracey returned to Australia. He was sent to the Guns Ammunition Factory Rutherford where he was responsible for the manufacture of cartridge cases and shells. In the years that followed, Corporal Tracey was moved around to different camps across NSW where he was responsible for preparing the home front for a possible Japanese invasion. It was during this time that he was promoted to the rank of Sergeant.

Following his discharge from the Australian Army in October 1947, Sergeant Tracey moved to Heddon Greta where he lived with his wife Thelma. Together they had three children, Lynette, Janette and Peter. Sergeant Tracey passed away in 1975.

A PLACE WHERE YOUNG MEN REST

In a quiet place on the outskirts of Villers-Bretonneux in northern France an area that is drenched in Australian military history sits Adelaide Cemetery. A place where heroes rest, it is significant to our local history, as many men from the coalfields can be found there.

The Adelaide Cemetery is importantly associated with the famous Australian counterattack between the 24th and 27th April 1918, ceasing the German advance onto Amiens and re-securing the town of Villers-Bretonneux. On 25th April (Anzac Day) Australian troops fought hand-to-hand to secure the town. From the cemetery, the demarcation line for the attack can be seen, the front line for the counter-attack undertaken by the 13th and 15th Brigades.

The cemetery was built by South Australian troops in June 1918 as a resting place for fallen soldiers in the 2nd and 3rd Australian Division who died between March and September 1918.

Out of a total 864 graves, there are 519 Australians located in Adelaide Cemetery. Many of the Australian dead were killed fighting in the Villers-Bretonneux streets on Anzac Day 1918.

Adelaide cemetery is significant for people of the Hunter, including Private Thomas Fryer and Private Colin McIntyre whom are laid to rest there.

Private Thomas Fryer of Pelaw Main, native of England, served in the 34th Battalion Australian Infantry. Thomas, the son of Mark and Elizabeth Fryer and husband of Mary Fryer, was killed in action at the age of 40, on 2nd June 1918.

“Oh for the touch of a vanished hand and the sound of a voice that is still” reads the inscription on the grave of Private Colin McIntyre of Holmesville. Private McIntyre, son of Colin and Charlotte, was killed in action 15th June 1918 at the age of 19.

Adelaide Cemetery at Villers-Bretonneux, France. The cemetery also importantly contains an empty grave with an inscription: “The remains of an unknown Australian soldier lay in this grave for 75 years.” In 1993, the remains of this unknown Australian Soldier were interred in the Australian War Memorial.



MILLFIELD SOLDIERS GALLENTY

Millfield's Andrew Clarence Mitchell's gallantry and devotion to duty during operations against enemy positions south of the Somme, east of Hammel, during World War 1 saw him awarded the Military Medal. Lance Corporal Mitchell of the 35th Battalion, 5th Reinforcement embarked from Sydney on board HMAT A11 Ascanius on 25 October 1916 when he was 23 years of age. Lance Corporal Mitchell, while leading his Lewis Gun Section on 8 August 1918, was held up by machine gun fire. He pushed forward with his gun, shot the crews and captured the two guns. His behaviour throughout was an example to his men.

Lance Corporal Mitchell returned to Australia on 12 June 1919 and passed away in Cessnock in 1948.

A STORY OF MATESHIP



Adelaide Cemetery at Villers-Bretonneux, France

"Greater love hath no man than this that he lay down his life for his friends"

On 29th April 1918, two mates were catching up behind the line. They were shaking hands when they saw a shell coming; they tried to evade but the shell exploded and killed them both.

The two men now lay to rest side by side in Querrieu Cemetery, France. They were Abernethy's Sapper Cyril Hubert Todman and Sapper Allen Lawson.

Cyril Todman, a 32 year old miner from Abernethy enlisted on 23rd July 1917. He was seconded to Engineer Reinforcements 2nd MD as a Sapper in August 1917 where he was appointed to the Engineer Depot, Sydney before joining the Tunnelling Reinforcements at Bendigo, Victoria in September 1917.

Todman and Lawson boarded troopship Nester which arrived in Suez after 25 days. Arriving in France on 8th March 1918 Todman and Lawson joined the 2nd Tunnelling Company. On the fateful day they were killed by the same shell, the two great mates had finished their guard work on bridges at Treux and were coming off duty.

Cyril Todman received The British War Medal and Victory Medal and was honoured on the Royal Engineers roll of honour in St. Paul's Cathedral.

THE LEGEND OF THE MINERS LAMP

Weston Miner Joseph Henry (Harry) Littlefair's story is one of mateship, courage and legend. Harry as he was affectionally known, was carried along by patriotism following Gallipoli and attempted to enlist for the fifth time. It wasn't until his sixth attempt at the end of August 1915 that he was finally accepted.

Harry was joined by a successful group of 51 coalfield volunteers to enlist following large recruitment meetings at both Weston's Olympia Hall and Cessnock's Hall.



Lance-Corporal Joseph Henry (Harry) Littlefair

The legend begins when Harry on his last shift at the colliery called into Neath Hotel for an after work beverage, beckoned the landlady to him and said to her "Put these upon the top shelf. I'll collect them when I return." He was referring to his small brass miner's lamp and a small brass oil container.

Littlefair was drafted into the 14th Reinforcements to the 3rd Battalion sailing from Sydney aboard the RMS Osterly on January 15, 1916. Undergoing further training in England, it was then onto France, where in August 1916, Harry was wounded with a gunshot to the chest. Littlefair would not be sent home; he told the Army's medical board that "I've got a lot of mates over there (in France) and I'm going back to them."

It was after rejoining the 3rd Battalion that Harry was fatally shot in the head at the battle of Lys and would never return to collect his lamp.

Today Harry Littlefair's miner's lamp and oil container still look down from above the bar at Neath Hotel, as a symbol of those miners who were never to return home.

CESSNOCK'S VILLIS BROTHERS

Lone Pine and the August offensive brought grief for many, but especially for Cessnock parents Edward and Isabella Villis. August 7, 1915 was a day etched in their memory as it was the day that both of their sons Frank and Stanley lost their lives. It took three weeks for news of their deaths to be confirmed and reach home.

Trooper Frank Laird Villis enlisted on August 8, 1914 into the 1st Australian Light Horse Regiment. He sailed from Sydney on October 18, 1914 before going onto Egypt and then to the Dardanelles, arriving there on May 7, 1915. Frank Villis was killed in action only three months later.

After seeing his brother Frank enlist one month earlier Trooper Stanley Villis enlisted during the first week of September 1914. He trained at Liverpool, sailing to Egypt on November 2, 1914. Stanley joined brother Frank in Cairo as part of the 1st Light Horse Regiment, and from there they sailed for the Dardanelles together. It would be their last journey with both being killed in action at Gallipoli.



Trooper Frank Laird Villis and Trooper Stanley Villis

GRETA ARMY CAMP

Greta was the site of one of the Australian Army's largest training camps during the Second World War. In November of 1939, 2,930 acres of land were compulsorily acquired from various farmers in the Allandale-Greta area and building began almost immediately. The camp was initially built for the training of the 6th Division of the Australian Imperial Force, as other military facilities were already occupied by other units.

First to occupy the camp was 2/11th Battalion who arrived in December 1939 and was later joined by the 2/10th Battalion. Citizens, AIF and militia troops were trained at the Greta camp with up to 60,000 Australian soldiers trained during World War II.

The camp had two nicknames - "Chocolate City" and "Silver City". The first was a result of the brown-coloured oiled timber weatherboard buildings that the camp was initially built from and "Silver City" due to the corrugated iron Nissan huts built later on.



Below: Greta Army Camp

After the war many training fields were returned to grazing purposes, however the camp was required for training of troops preparing to join the occupation forces in Japan.

In 1949, Greta Camp was transferred to the Department of Immigration and until 1960 was used as a reception and training centre for European migrants with over 100,000 migrants passing through the centre.

The Army resumed control of the camp in 1962. It was then sold at auction in 1980. 2019 marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Greta Army Camp and the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Greta Migrant Camp.

WESTON'S BILLINGHAM BROTHERS

Private William 'Bill' and Private Richard 'Dick' Billingham were inseparable. Four years apart in age, both had a larrikin spirit and were never far away from each other, so as World War II raged, Richard enlisted on June 4, 1941, William wasn't far behind enlisting July 11, 1941. The Weston brothers, 27 and 23 years old respectively at the time, joined the 2/3rd Pioneer Battalion.



Top left William 'Bill' Billingham,
Top right Richard 'Dick' Billingham.

The brothers first taste of conflict was in their training when stationed in Egypt before being deployed to other areas in the Middle East including Cairo, Palestine, areas West of the Suez Canal and more. The brothers were later deployed to Papua New Guinea.

As sons of a dairy farmer the brothers knew all about hard work but they also had what many would call a spirit of fun and mateship. They created laughter wherever they went.



Above: Richard Billingham behind the gun while training in Egypt.

On October 20, 1943 Richard was on a routine patrol in the jungles of Papua New Guinea when he bent to tie his shoe lace which had come undone. As he straightened back up he was shot by friendly fire and was killed instantly.

On hearing the news back at camp, Bill ran through the jungle to his brother and Bill carried him back to camp.

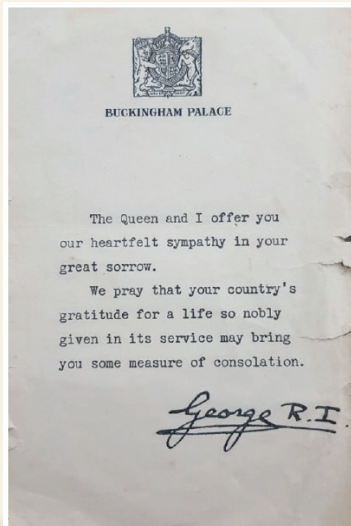
Richard Billingham was buried in Lae War Cemetery, Lae, Papua New Guinea. He was 29 years old.

William Billingham was discharged on 3rd May 1945 after serving 341 days of overseas service. Bill was discharged to work in an essential occupation as a miner where he continued until retirement. He went on to marry Weston local Margaret Grant and had 2 children, 7 grandchildren, 6 great grandchildren at the time of his death in 2003 aged 85.

The brothers received the 1939/45 Star, Africa Star, Pacific Star, Defence Medal, War Medal 1939/46 and Australia Service Medal for their service in World War II.

Left: Letter the Billingham family received from King George I (Buckingham Palace) after the death of Richard October 1943.

Right: Richard 'Dick' and William 'Bill' Billingham



LOCAL ANZAC DAY SERVICES 2019

ABERMAIN

8:30AM - March from the corner of Bathurst Street and Cessnock Road to the Jeffries Park Cenotaph for the Service.

BRANXTON

5:30AM - Dawn Service at the Branxton Rotunda,

John Rose Avenue, Branxton.

Town March

11:30AM - Form up 11:15am in front of old Branxton Inn

11:45AM - Main Service Branxton Rotunda for the Service.

BROKE

5:30AM - Dawn Service at Broke War Memorial, Broke Street, Broke.

Morning Service

10:00AM - Service at Broke War Memorial.

BRUNKERVILLE

3:00PM - Uniting Church in Memorial Garden

BULGA

10:45AM - Gather at Bulga Recreation Ground, The Inlet Road, Bulga

11:00AM - Service at the Recreation Ground.

CAMERON PARK

Closest Service is at West Wallsend.

CESSNOCK

5:30AM - Dawn Service at the Cessnock Cenotaph which is located in the grounds of Cessnock TAFE, North Avenue, Cessnock.

9:30AM - Morning Service at Veteran's Park, Aberdare Road, Aberdare.

11:15AM - March from the former Cessnock Ex-Services Club, along Vincent Street to the Cenotaph for the Service.

EDGEWORTH

Closest Service is at West Wallsend.

GRETA

5:30AM - Dawn Service at Greta War Memorial Cenotaph, New England Highway, Greta.

9:30AM - March from the corner of Nelson Street and the New England Highway to the Cenotaph for the Service.

HOLMESVILLE

Closest Service is at West Wallsend.

KEARSLEY

5:15AM - March from Kearsley Tennis Court to the Cenotaph at Kearsley Community Hall, Allandale Street, Kearsley.

5:30AM - Service at the Cenotaph. Breakfast will follow inside the Hall.

KURRI KURRI

5:00AM - Dawn Service at the Cenotaph in Rotary Park, corner of Lang and Hampden Streets, Kurri Kurri. Breakfast will follow at Kurri Kurri Bowling Club.

9:45AM - March from Mitre 10 to the Cenotaph.

10:00AM - Service at the Cenotaph.

NEATH

10:30AM - Lighting of the Miner's Lamp at Neath Hotel, Cessnock Road, Neath.

MILLFIELD

5:15AM - Gather at St Luke's Anglican Church, Wollombi Road, Millfield and march to Millfield Public School for the Service.

PAXTON

5:10AM - Gather at the corner of McDonald and Anderson Avenues, Paxton and march to Paxton Public School for the Service.

PUTTY

10:00AM - Service at Putty Community Hall, Putty Valley Road, Putty Valley.

WESTON

9:00AM - March from Weston RSL sub-Branch Hall, Cessnock Road, Weston to the Cenotaph in Weston Memorial Park.

9:20AM - Service at the Cenotaph.

WEST WALLSEND

10:00AM - Service at West Wallsend Soldiers Memorial Park, corner of Carrington and Hydes Streets, West Wallsend.

WOLLOMBI

5:45AM - Service at Wollombi Anzac Reserve, corner of Wollombi and Narone Creek Roads, Wollombi.