



Shire of Mt Marshall

— THE SANDALWOOD SHIRE —

6 May 2019

ANZAC Day 2019

Bencubbin Service held at the War Memorial, Bencubbin

The Bencubbin ANZAC Day service, held at the memorial garden at the Bencubbin Multipurpose Complex at 9.30am, was attended by 43 adults and 18 children (i.e. 61 people). The service was organised and led by Len Cargeeg. The Address was given by Shire President, Tony Sachse, the Prayer was read by Donna Cooper and in a first, the Mt Marshall Singing Group (formed in October 2018) led the singing of the national anthems of both Australia & New Zealand. Morning tea was held afterwards, with food kindly bought along by people attending the service.

Address By Tony Sachse

Firstly I would acknowledge veterans and the men and women of the Australian Defence Force, and distinguished guests here with us today. And welcome to all of you who have taken the time to attend this ANZAC day service. I would also thank Sergeant Len Cargeeg, 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment and President of the Bencubbin Sub Branch, Returned and Services League, for running today's service. I would also congratulate Len on receiving Unit Citation of Gallantry, Battle of Balmoral recently.

Anzac Day is one of Australia's most important national occasions. It marks the anniversary of the first major military action fought by Australian and New Zealand forces during the First World War. Every year, thousands of people join together to pay tribute to, and remember those who have served. Today at the Bencubbin War Memorial, Anzac Day 2019, 104 years since the landing at Gallipoli, Turkey, we remember all those who have served, those who have fallen, those who have been injured and suffered, and their loved ones that have been left behind.

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DIARY DATES

14 May 2019

Recycling Collection

21 May 2019

Ordinary Meeting of Council @
3:00pm in Council Chambers,
Monger St, Bencubbin

COUNCILLORS

Cr Tony Sachse

President

P: 9685 1257

crsachse@mtmarshall.wa.gov.au

Cr Nick Gillett

Deputy President

P: 9686 2007

crgillett@mtmarshall.wa.gov.au

Cr Stuart Faulkner

P: 9686 1050

crfaulkner@mtmarshall.wa.gov.au

Cr Leeanne Gobbart

P: 9684 8042

crgobbart@mtmarshall.wa.gov.au

Cr Rachel Kirby

P: 9686 1160

crkirby@mtmarshall.wa.gov.au

Cr Stuart Putt

P: 9686 2078

crputt@mtmarshall.wa.gov.au

Cr Ian Sanders

P: 9685 1213

crsanders@mtmarshall.wa.gov.au

CONTACT US



80 Monger Street, Bencubbin WA 6477 | Phone: 08 9685 1202 | Fax: 08 9685 1299
Email: admin@mtmarshall.wa.gov.au | www.mtmarshall.wa.gov.au



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We also remember those who are currently serving, and their courage, discipline and self-sacrifice in choosing a life of service to their country.

This year we would like to reflect on another of the fallen from World War One at the Bencubbin War Memorial.

Private Robert Arthur Foster 2088

Robert Arthur Foster was born on 25th June 1888, son of Ralph and Elizabeth Jane Foster in Lancashire, England. At the time of his enlistment, he was farming and doing carpentry work in this district. His postal address was Waddouring, Mt Marshall. Waddouring is a farming area and water catchment south of the town of Bencubbin in the Shire of Mt Marshall, Western Australia, Australia.

Private Robert Arthur Foster 2088 enlisted on Wednesday 26/4/1916 at Fremantle at the age of 27 years and 10 months and joined the 44th Battalion, Australian Infantry, Australian Imperial Force. Private Robert Arthur Foster 2088 was described as having a fresh complexion, dark brown eyes, black hair and a scar on his right thumb. His height was 5ft 5" and weight was 141lbs. He belonged to the Church of England and completed his training at Blackboy Hill.

Private Robert Arthur Foster 2088 sailed aboard "Suffolk" from Fremantle on 10th October 1916 to Plymouth in England, arriving on 2nd December 1916. He was sent to France on 10th December 1916.

Private Robert Arthur Foster 2088 was killed in action on 24th June 1917 at Messines, near Ypres, West Flanders, Belgium, on the battle field. The battle of Messines 1917 included Australian, British, Canadian and New Zealand forces. Messines was the first time Australians and New Zealanders had fought side by side since the Gallipoli campaign of 1915. An extract from the Australian Army Record of the battle states:

The attack, codenamed 'Magnum Opus', was set for 7 June 1917 with 'Zero' hour at 3:10am. *"Every German gun seemed to be pouring gas shells over, and the air was full of the whine peculiar to the aerial flight of a gas-shell. They burst all round the columns, and a number of men were killed or wounded by flying nose-caps. Occasionally the monotonous whine and pop of impact was relieved by a high explosive or an incendiary shell, and the casualties were fairly heavy. The remainder of the approach march was like a nightmare. The actual wearing of a small box-respirator is a physical discomfort at any time, but on a hot dark night for men loaded with ammunition, arms, and equipment, it is a severe strain."*

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Wounded and gassed men were falling out, and officers and non-commissioned officers were continually removing their respirators to give orders and to keep their platoons together. A shell would burst in a platoon, the dead and wounded would fall, and the rest of the platoon would pull themselves together and move on, for above everything was the fixed determination to be in position at the Zero hour, and the realisation that this terrible gassing, if it prevented our arrival on time, might easily result in the failure of the whole operation."

At 3:09am, eyes peered nervously through the darkness at watches as the final seconds ticked down. Along the front line, men waited anxiously for the subterranean cataclysm that signalled battle had commenced. At 3:10am on 7 June 1917, the detonator switches were triggered. The earth erupted into pillars of fire and earth, instantly obliterating the thousands of German troops above them. Records of this battle indicate combined casualties of around 26,000.

After the death of Private Robert Arthur Foster 2088, his parents Ralph and Elizabeth Jane Foster would have been notified, most likely by telegram. Families feared receiving telegrams, and the arrival of a uniformed junior postal worker on a bicycle, or the clergy, was often a devastating sign. We can only begin to imagine the terrible grief of what the delivery of this fateful message, the dreaded pink telegram, meant to family members at this time.

Private Robert Arthur Foster 2088 received the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Private Robert Arthur Foster 2088 is honoured at the Menin Gate Memorial, which is located at the town of Ypres, West Flanders, Belgium. This is a Commonwealth Memorial to the missing. There were 55,000 Commonwealth soldiers who died in the vicinity and have no known grave, including 6,000 Australians. There were a large number of tunnels and trenches in the area, and this, combined with bombing and mines meant that the bodies of many of the fallen were never recovered. The 55,000 names are inscribed in unit order on tablets that form the walls of the gate structure. Private Robert Arthur Foster's name and reference information and is on tablet 27. Every evening at 8pm the fire brigade buglers sound the Last Post and a wreath laying ceremony is conducted by visitors who pass through the town.

So in keeping with those graves in the Flanders area near Ypres, I would conclude with a poem that was written in World War One by Canadian physician Lieutenant General John McCrae. It references the red poppies that grew over the graves of fallen soldiers, including Private Robert Arthur Foster 2088, that died in conflict.

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In Flanders Fields

By John McCrae

In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

We will remember them. Lest we Forget.



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Beacon Service held at the Beacon Men's Shed

A wonderful crowd of approximately 120 men, women and children gathered at the Beacon Men's Shed for an Anzac Day service organised by Mr John Cashmore.

John served with the Royal Australian Navy for a period of 12 years from 1945-57. He served in HMAS Hobart (sister ship to HMAS Sydney) as an Able Seaman and later in HMAS Sydney III where he worked his way to the ranks of Chief Petty Officer.

Address by Michelle Miguel

We are gathered here today to honour the memory of those gallant men and women who sacrificed their lives in service to their country. By your presence here we know there is no doubt in your hearts and your minds that today is especially significant. In cities and towns throughout Australia and overseas, ceremonies like this are a permanent reminder that our ANZAC's thought this wonderful country of ours was worth fighting and dying for.

Today we are going to focus on the HMAS Sydney II, a Royal Australian Navy light cruiser that came to grief in Western Australia. HMAS Sydney II was purchased by the Australian Government from the Royal Navy in 1935. It was a 6 inch light cruiser which meant it was equipped with 6 inch, 4 inch and anti aircraft armament.

At the beginning of World war II HMAS Sydney was assigned to escort convoys and patrol duties. In May 1940 Sydney joined the British Mediterranean Fleet for an 8 month deployment. During this time she sank 2 Italian war ships, participated in multiple shore bombardments and provided support to the Malta convoys.

On her return to Australia in February 1941 she resumed escort and patrol duties in home waters. She would escort convoys between Fremantle and Singapore. She would take the convoys as far as the Sundae Straits and hand over to Royal Navy ships.

On her return to Fremantle on the 19th November 1941 she received a radio message that there was an unidentified ship off the coast of WA in an area between Carnarvon and Dirk Hartog Island. Sydney went to the area and spotted a merchant ship flying the Dutch flag. Sydney requested her to identify herself, but messages were not clear. Sydney then asked for the secret code which Cormoran did not know. The Cormoran, a German auxillary cruiser was camouflaged as a Dutch Merchant Ship. Cormoran dropped her camouflage and opened fire. A fierce battle took place and both ships were sunk. A large percentage of the crew of Cormoran survived. There were no survivors from the Sydney. Her compliment of 645 lost their lives.

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A foundation was set up to find the wreck of the HMAS Sydney and it was not discovered until 16 March 2008, approximately 207 kms from the west coast of Western Australia at Steep Point. It was at a depth of approximately 2468m.

A large commemorative memorial has since been erected in Geraldton where ANZAC services are now held.

Future generations need to be reminded that happiness has a price. For surely if happiness is the product of freedom, then freedom is the reward of courage. We should be grateful to those that have helped preserve our nation and way of life through their sacrifice. In doing so, we keep bright the memory of those lives. It is in the remembrance of events such as this that communities across the nation come together on this day.

FEDERAL ELECTION 2019

The 2019 federal election is on Saturday 18 May. Mt Marshall electors can vote on the day at:

Bencubbin Community Resource Centre
283 Monger St
BENCUBBIN WA 6477



Can't make it on polling day? Information on early voting options including postal voting are available at www.aec.gov.au

EARLY OFFICE CLOSURE - FRIDAY 10 MAY 2019

Due to staffing shortages, please be advised that the Shire Office will be **CLOSED** on



Friday
10 May 2019
from
3.00pm

Office hours will return to normal at 9am, Monday 13 May.