

THE FURPHY

ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

March 2025 Edition



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Ph: (08) 9497 1972

email: secretary@armadalersl.com.au

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General Meetings:

Second Sunday of the month at 1030hrs

Annual General Meeting:

Second Sunday of September

Committee Positions

Armada Sub-Branch Committee	
President	Mr Mike Fairweather
Vice President	Mr Geoff Scott
Secretary	Ms Carol King
Treasurer	Mrs Cheryl Cowie
Warden	Mr Graeme Cowie
Warden	Mr Mick Quinn
Membership Officer	Mr Tom Rynn
Committee	Mr Bob Giles
Committee	Mr Keith Northcott
Advocate / Welfare Officer	Mr Brent Errington
Bar Manager	Mr Mike Fairweather

ADVOCATE / WELFARE

Brent Errington “Erro” is available as follows:

At the Armadale RSL Sub-Branch:

Monday: by appointment only

Thursday: between 0900 - 1400hrs

Weekday Contact Details:

Mobile: 0407 449 150

e-mail: welfare2@armadalersl.com.au

Diary Dates for March

<i>Day</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Time</i>
Sunday	2 nd	Social Committee Meeting	1100
Tuesday	4 th	Management Committee Meeting	1100
Sunday	9 th	General Meeting	1030



P-51 Mustang: The Untamed Beast of the Skies

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Hi Members,

To prepare for ANZAC Day we will be holding a BUSY BEE which is advertised elsewhere in this edition. I would like as many volunteers as possible for this busy bee.

The State election is on next weekend so we will be watching with interest as the result (as stated at the GM) will determine if we receive funding for the plumbing repairs and new carpet for the hall.

We've been busy finalising ANZAC Day arrangements. We have had a number of requests from schools for us to supply speakers for their events. If anyone is available to help out in this regard, please let me know as we are desperate for volunteers.

An incident report was raised on Sunday 23rd regarding a small table being "wobbly" which resulted in a near miss. This has been investigated and the matter now closed.

These 750mm square tables are on a single round base and are not as stable as the large ones which have 2 bases. I'd like to remind members to please use the arms of your chairs if you require assistance to stand up rather than the table which is not designed for this purpose.

Cheers for now,

Mike Fairweather

President

Returned Services League Armadale Sub-Branch

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e-mail: president@armadalersl.com.au



Still from camera-gun footage shot from a Hawker Typhoon Mark IB flown by Flying Officer W V Mollett of No. 266 Squadron RAF, showing the shooting down of a Junkers Ju 52/3mg6e minesweeping aircraft of the Minensuchgruppe off Lorient, France. Cannon shells from Mollett's aircraft are striking the sea and the fuselage of the Ju 52, which crashed into the sea shortly afterwards. Mollet shared the destruction of the Ju 52 with Flying Officer N J Lucas, also of 266 Squadron



*The boys and their souvenirs!
unidentified Australian soldiers sporting helmets (Pickelhauben) and caps captured from the Germans in the battle of Pozieres*



Don't be fooled by the friendly smile!

British Gurkha Soldier in Italy - Late 1943 / Early 1944

Gurkha Soldiers were tough little warriors from the mountains of Nepal. He is holding a traditional kukri knife of the type they all carried...and would not hesitate to use on the enemy when engaged in close-quarters fighting! Alongside him is his SMLE .303 Lee-Enfield rifle.

RARE PHOTO



**OF THE FIRST
DODGE RAM**

Secretary's Notes

Hi Everyone,

Another busy month organising all things ANZAC, but everything seems to be going very well.

The roster for our fundraising stalls is now on the board. We still have some spots which require filling for both Armadale Central and Armadale City Shopping Centres if you could help us out. This is a very important part of our Annual Fundraising efforts.

The Midnight Angel Duo will be here on Sunday 2nd March, please try to support us by coming along.

A reminder that the club will be open on Easter Sunday as a trial. Patronage on that day will determine if we continue this next year.

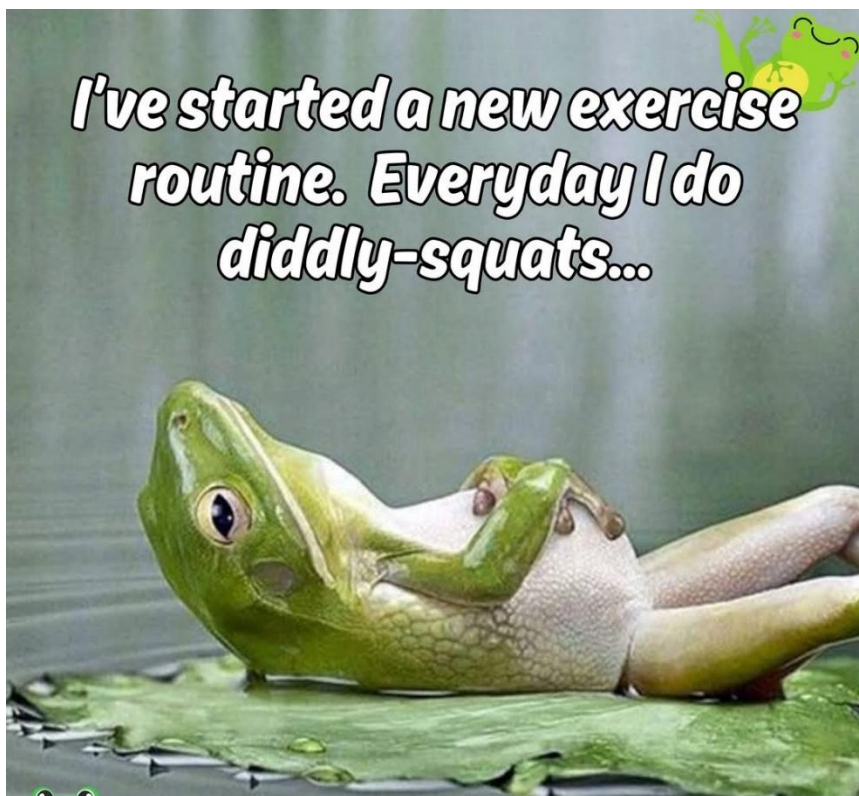
Tickets for the Quiz Night are selling slowly if you wish to join in I suggest you reserve your seats without delay.

That's about all from me for this edition.

Carol King

Sub-Branch Secretary

e-mail: secretary@armadalersl.com.au



BUSY BEE



SATURDAY 12TH APRIL

10:00 – 12 noon

To be followed by a light lunch with drinks

***For catering purposes, please advise the
Secretary if you are able to volunteer for a
couple of hours***

Membership Update

As at 28th February, 2025:

Service Members:	159
Affiliate Members:	52
Social Members:	<u>54</u>
Total:	<u>265</u>

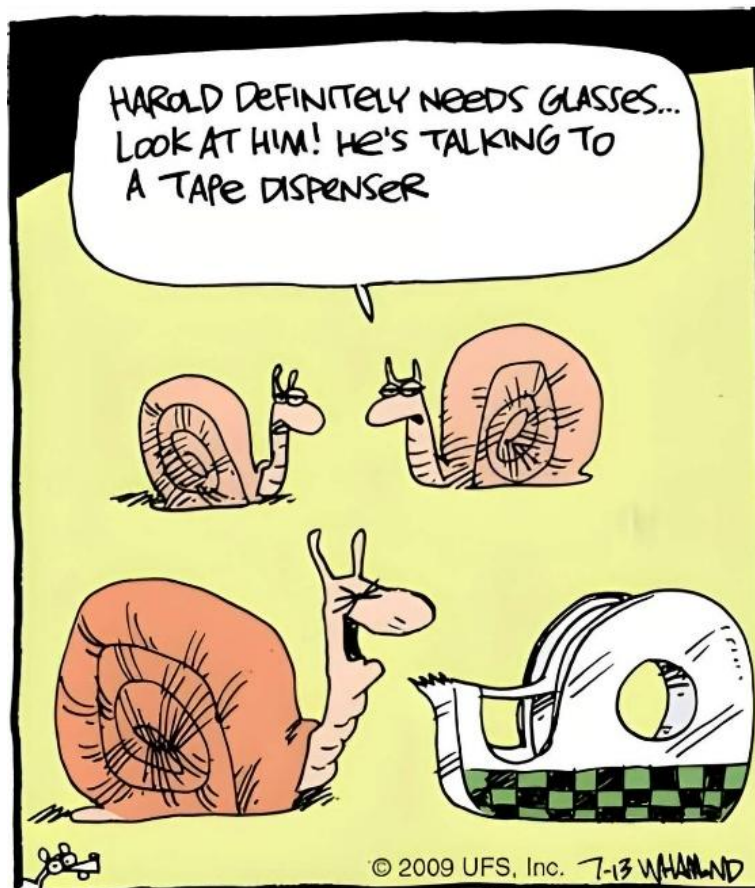
RSLWA still not up to date and have not advised of renewals for this year.

They have refunded a couple of Affiliate Members and referred them back to the Sub-Branch for payment. If this applies to you, please contact me as the Membership Officer.

Tom Rynn

Tel: 0439 934 285

e-mail: tomrynn@bigpond.com





Happy Birthday

March Service Members:

Akaczonck	Mr	Thomas	08/03	Billi	Mr	A	25/03
Corrigan	Ms	Anne	03/03	Dell	Mr	Geoffrey	21/03
Hymus	Ms	Patrice	08/03	Mederic	Mr	Michael	08/03
Millard	Mr	Robert	01/03	Mitton	Mr	Glenn	08/03
Newey	Mr	Graham	23/03	Popelier	Mr	Martinus	20/03
Quinn	Mr	Michael	22/03	Scott	Mr	Geoff	22/03
Stevens	Mr	Peter	21/03	Wilson	Mr	Patrick	24/03
Wood	Mr	Jason	23/03				

March Affiliate Members:

Esslemont	Mr	Robert	12/03	Grogan	Mr	Sean	14/03
Leask	Mr	Gordon	20/03	Stewart	Mrs	Ngaire	14/03
Tozer	Mr	Murray	17/03				

March Social Members:

Bertei	Mr	Craig	29/03	Cook	Mr	Luke	02/03
Kent	Mrs	Mal	01/03	Marsh	Mr	Chad	31/03
Passmore	Mrs	Merette	12/03	Ritson	Mr	Steven	27/03
Russell	Mr	Luke	27/03	Sanders	Mr	Drew	25/03
Van de Velde	Mrs	Linda	10/03				

*If anyone has been missed off the list, please advise
Tom Rynn (Membership Officer)*

*These members may collect a free drink of their
choice during the month*

We hope you have a very special Birthday



Quiz Night

Armadale RSL Sub-Branch

1 Commerce Avenue, Armadale

Tickets - \$10 per Person

(Tables of 6)

Saturday

15th March, 2025

Bar Open at 6:00pm

Heads down at 6:30pm

Tickets on Sale from the Bar

Open from 12 Noon each Friday and Sunday

***Raising Funds to help Veterans and their
Families who are in need***

EASTER TRADING



Good Friday 18th April – Closed

Easter Sunday 20th April

Open from 12 noon

LIFE IS LIKE TOILET PAPER
YOU'RE EITHER ON A ROLL...
OR YOU'RE TAKING SH*T FROM SOME ASSHOLE.



Bar Manager's Report

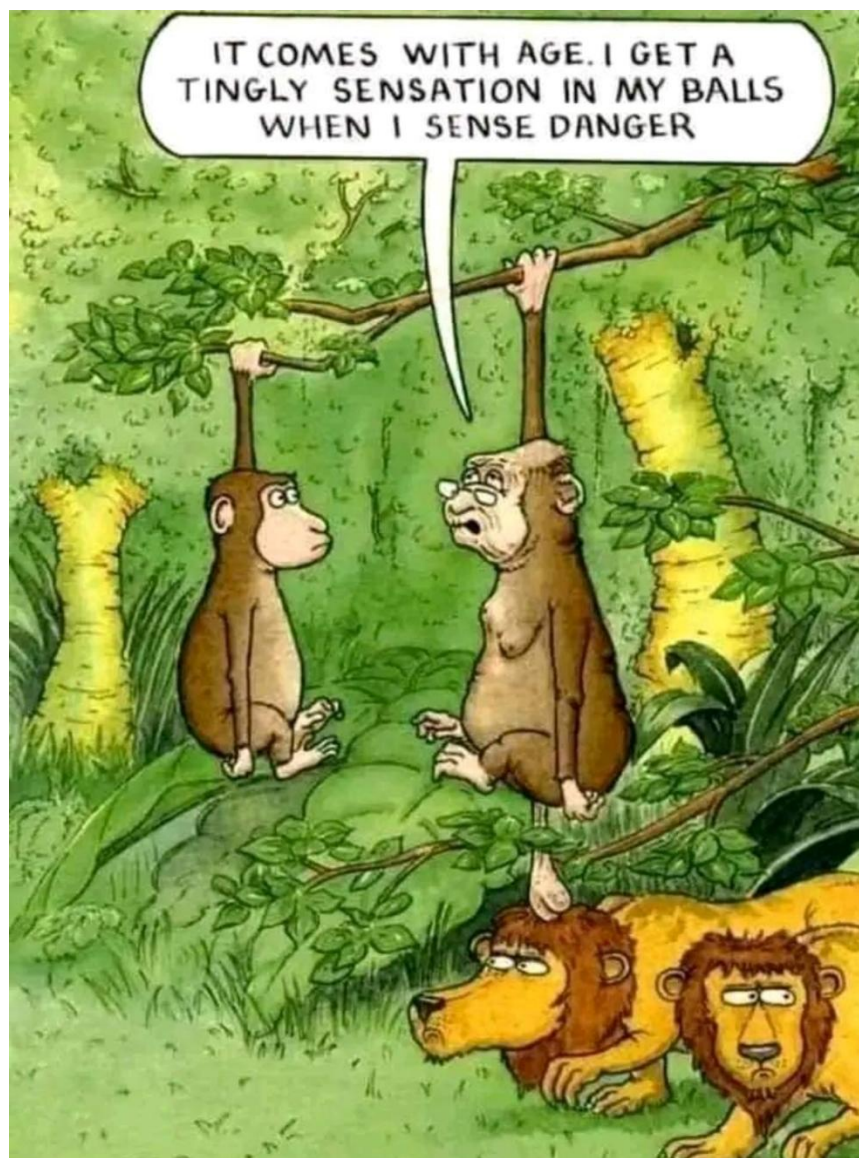
G'day All,

I don't have much to report for the month of February but thanks to those who have now renewed their Memberships – your Loyalty Cards have now been re-activated without a loss of your points !

Bye for now,

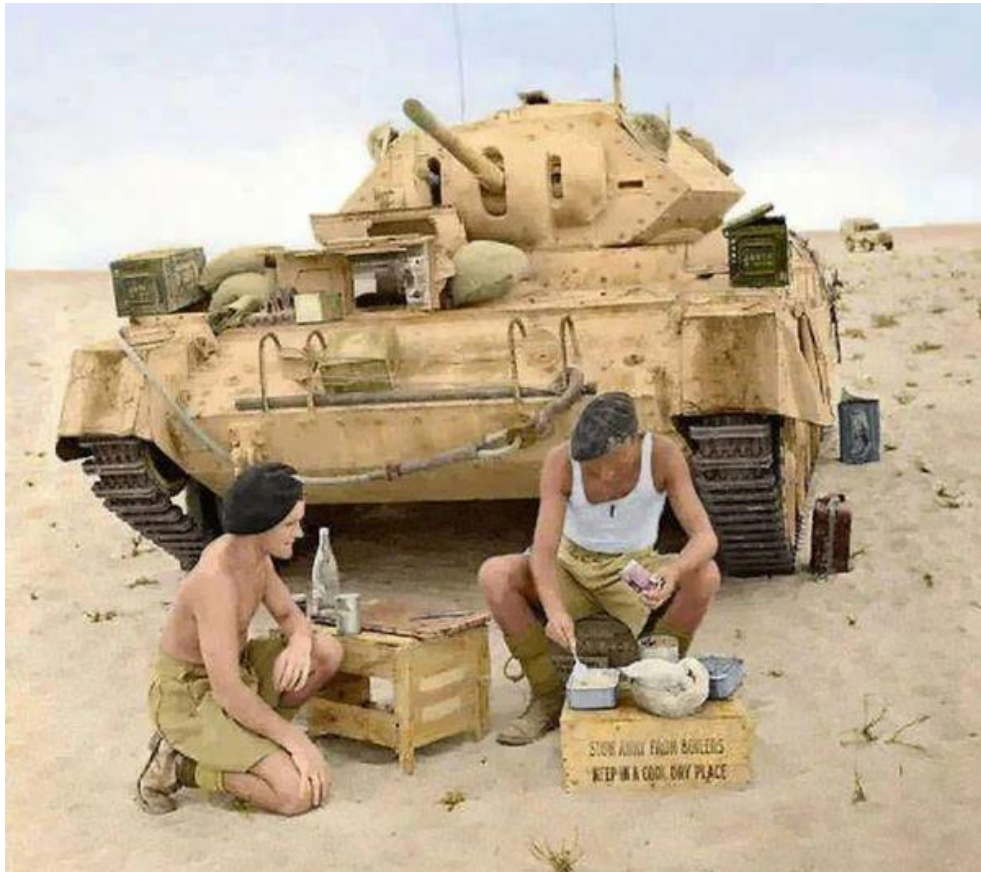
Stormy





Picture of the Beatles
before they got really big.





20 September 1942. The crew of a Crusader tank Mk II prepare a meal in the Western Desert.



A Lewis machine gun post of the Tank Corps near Robecq, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, 17 April 1918. Soldiers cooking their food during a quiet spell

MIDNIGHT ANGEL DUO

***are returning to the
Armadale RSL***



Sunday, 2nd March 12:30pm

***Get a group of friends together and join
us for a great afternoon of musical
entertainment***

Free Entry

I got myself a seniors' GPS. Not only does it tell me how to get to my destination, it tells me why I wanted to go there.





**"YOU STILL COMING
TO WORK RIGHT?"**

Snapshot 2: Australians in War and Conflict

We continue our shared learning by publishing another 6 articles following people's contributions to Australia's war and peacekeeping efforts. We continue to reflect on today's Australian Defence Force values of service, courage, respect, integrity and excellence.

We also continue to remember those who served and those who continue to serve and those who died as a result of their service.
Lest we forget.

7: Little Digger

From the devastation of war comes a story of love, hope and compassion. It is the story of the unexpected friendship between Private Timothy Tovell and a boy named Honore.

On Christmas Day 1918, the men of the Australian Flying Corps No. 4 Squadron sat down to eat a delicious lunch in the airmen's mess at Bickendorf Air Base in Germany. Just as they were about to start their meal, in walked a small, young French boy, clearly cold and hungry, and their lives changed forever.

The boy, Honore, had spent almost 4 years struggling to survive behind the Western Front battlefields. He was unable to recall his age or where he came from. He told the Australians that his father, a French soldier, was killed during the first week of war. Soon after, his mother died in a bombardment. Honore had been rescued by a British artillery officer who was later killed, leaving Honore injured and once more alone.

Taken to a military hospital to recover, Honore was soon discharged and travelled back to the forward area, where he found another British unit. It was with this unit that he travelled to Bickendorf and met the Australians.

The men of No. 4 Squadron took the little boy under their wing, nicknaming him 'Little Digger' or 'Digger'. They looked after him, ensuring he was fed and clothed.

Little Digger quickly became a member of the squadron and was bestowed the title of acting corporal. He spent time boxing, catching rats and hitching rides on planes. He shared jokes with the men and soon found himself a new home.

One particular man, Timothy Tovell, became Little Digger's unofficial carer. He was a husband and father who felt an intense need to protect the young French boy. Timothy gave him the name Henri, and the two became inseparable.

Later, news came that the squadron was scheduled to return to Australia. Timothy was determined to take Henri home with him. In a letter to his wife Gertrude, he stated that he didn't think one extra in the family would make that much difference. The French and British authorities were not pleased with this idea and wanted Henri to be placed in an orphanage.

Timothy was determined to keep Henri safe, so he hatched a plan to smuggle the small French boy back to Australia with him.

The day of departure arrived, and little Henri was placed inside an empty oat bag. Remaining secretly on board the troopship, Henri successfully arrived in England. On 6 May 1919, bound for Australia, Henri was again concealed from the authorities, this time in a basket of sporting equipment. He remained hidden until the ship was too far out to sea to be turned around.

During the journey home, it was discovered that the Premier of Queensland, Tom Ryan, was a passenger onboard the ship. After hearing Henri's story and his friendship with Timothy, the Premier organised the relevant paperwork for Henri to enter Australia.

Together, Timothy and Henri travelled to the Tovell family home in Jandowae, Queensland, where Henri became a much-loved and valued family member.

In 1926, Henri relocated to Melbourne to join the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). However, on 23 May 1928, tragedy struck. Henri was involved in a motor vehicle accident when his motorbike collided with a taxi. He died the following day.

In recognition of his determination, Henri was buried with military honours at Fawkner Cemetery in Melbourne.



French orphan Henri Heremene with Australian soldier Tim Tovell holding an oat sack similar to the one used to smuggle Henri out of France. Hurdcott, United Kingdom, c 8 to 9 March 1919

8: White Feathers

During the First World War, recruiters used a variety of ways to encourage men to enlist. Advertising aimed to attract individuals to service through themes of patriotism, honour, manliness, mateship – even vengeance. They often held an implicit warning that failing to enlist was equal to betrayal, evidence of cowardice and even selfishness.

In England, an ageing and long-retired admiral decided to make that implicit warning explicit. His idea adopted a tactic used by the suffragettes in the decade prior. In August 1914, he directed 30 women to confront and present any young man who was 'idling and loafing', with a white feather. This symbol of cowardice was intended to be a mark on that man. It would publicly humiliate him. They hoped that in receiving a white feather, a man would be shamed into enlisting. The other hope was that the prospect of receiving a white feather might spur other men to enlist.

The confrontational tactic spread. In December 1914, a Wesleyan preacher in Australia called for men who had not enlisted to be given red flannel petticoats and white feathers. This way, they could be distinguished from those 'who had taken up arms in the time of the Empire's need'. It is presumed that the preacher, like many others, wanted all able-bodied men to enlist.

Private Aubrey Campling was serving in Gallipoli as part of the 5th Field Ambulance when he wrote to his father saying 'that petticoats and white feathers were all the cowards deserved'.

Not everyone thought the white feather tactic appropriate. The Minister for Defence at the time, Senator George Pearce, thought it highly inappropriate. The Sydney Morning Herald suggested it impeded the war effort. There is little evidence to suggest the white feathers were successful and much to suggest that it was offensive.

Soldiers on leave, wearing civilian clothes, were indignant when they were accosted and told they were cowards – soldiers recovering from injuries especially so. 'Feeling on the matter', said one soldier who had been wounded in action and given a feather, 'is so strong that several recipients have cleared out of the force in disgust'.

Men who had been rejected for service experienced mixed responses to the campaign. Some believed the tactic to be pointless. 'I received a feather last week, and I am over 56!' wrote one. For others, the public humiliation could be devastating.

In 1915, white feather women taunted a Melbourne taxi driver who had been rejected for service because of a heart condition. The taxi driver took his own life, supposedly on account of the 'misery' they had inflicted.

Advocates of increasing Australia's military commitment saw little to regret, especially if the tactics caused a man to enlist and 'do his duty'. The white feather also became a symbol used to smear those who opposed the introduction of conscription.

The white feather campaign was, however, ultimately ineffective. During this period, Australia voted twice against conscription, and use of the white feather lost favour. By the Second World War, few thought it anything other than unacceptable moral blackmail.

Despite the changed sentiment towards the white feather, shame remained a potent emotion for recruiters, as posters from the period suggest.



Harry Lawrence Oakley, Think! Are you content for him to fight for you? poster from the First World War (1915)

9: Tour de Anzac

Australians have had a long association with cycling. From the 1860s, Australians have embraced bicycles for travel, work and leisure. In the 1890s, with the introduction of the 'safety bicycle', cycling became increasingly popular as more Australians began to ride. Bicycles, or 'bikes' as they are known, became cheaper, safer and more comfortable than earlier models. Many Australians enjoyed the freedom, functionality and independence bike riding brought.

Bikes sometimes replaced the use of horses as a versatile and efficient form of transport that required far less upkeep and attention. Bikes were ideal for personal and commercial transport. They were used to deliver telegrams and postal services and became part of daily rural life.

The First World War saw the humble bike play a pivotal role.

In 1914, Jacob Edwin (Jack) Hindhaugh started the war riding a horse, yet by the war's end in 1918, a bike had replaced it.

Not long into his campaign with the Light Horse Brigade, Jack sustained an injury on the Gallipoli peninsula. He remained on duty but was evacuated 2 months later due to illness.

Whilst convalescing in Heliopolis, Jack was appointed to lead Australia's 1st Division Cyclist Company. He recorded in his diary, 'Went over to the 4th Light Horse, saw Stan, he said that the command of the Cyclist Corps is to be offered to me and I was to see Col. Foott in Cairo. Went in and had a talk to him. Have accepted it and I will leave with the 1st Division for France'.

It was the first time that cyclists were used in Australia's military history. The men were recruited from reinforcements for the 4th Light Horse Regiment. If you could ride a horse, it was assumed that you could also ride a bike. The cyclists first entered the war with the 1st Division south of Armentières, France, in mid-April 1916.

The bikes they rode were made by the Birmingham Small Arms Company and sent from England to the front line. The soldiers were also given a Short Magazine Lee Enfield (SMLE) .303 calibre rifle and were required to wear the standard AIF uniform. The men would attach the rifle to the down tube of their bike or carry it slung across their back.

The soldiers of Australia's cyclist battalions were engaged in a range of duties. The men worked tirelessly, carrying special messages and supplying ammunition, medical supplies and food to the front line.

Another vital role of the cyclist battalion was to conduct reconnaissance missions, identifying the best and safest possible route. They were also called upon to conduct military police work, control traffic and construct light railways. At times, the cyclist soldiers guarded prisoners.

The life of a cyclist soldier was not without risk. The cyclists were often in similarly dangerous situations as their fellow soldiers.

Two Australian soldiers, Private Allan Foster McConnell and Private Charles Robert Richardson, suffered minor injuries, and their bikes minor damage, when a British cavalryman galloped into their riding group, knocking them both from their bikes. Then, on 30 September 1917, whilst laying cable near Zonnebeke in Belgium, Allan suffered a severe injury when he was struck by shrapnel in the face, throat and shoulder. Allan was able to recover from most of his injuries, but the shrapnel caused permanent blindness. He returned to Australia and assisted in the establishment of the Australian Blinded Soldiers' Society.



Members of the 1st Anzac Cyclist Battalion, Henecourt, France, 1917

10: Diversity amongst those who serve

At the time of the First World War, Christianity was the dominant faith in Australia. Almost 95% of the country professed to follow a Christian denomination. A similar proportion of those who enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) also identified themselves as followers of the Christian faith.

The smaller number of service people who were non-Christian had remarkably different experiences to their Christian peers. Usually from other cultural and ethnic backgrounds, they encountered prejudices and obstacles that their fellow Christian soldiers did not.

In 1914, Australia's population was estimated to be about 4.95 million, of which just over half were male. Three-quarters of the population were born in Australia, and most were of English, Scottish or Irish descent.

When the war broke out, there were strict enlistment standards in the Australian armed services. The standards determined whether someone could enlist based on their age, physical characteristics such as height, weight and chest measurements, as well as cultural backgrounds. People of non-European background, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, were prohibited from military service.

Some men changed their names or fabricated documents in an attempt to mislead recruiters. While the enlistment standards were firmly enforced in the early days of the war, recruiters became more relaxed as the war went on and the need for more men increased.

Many German Australians faced discrimination and ridicule and had their loyalty to 'King and Country' questioned. Some people were concerned that the allegiance of soldiers of other faiths or cultural backgrounds might not be to Australia or the British Empire.

General Sir John Monash, a prominent and celebrated soldier, was disdained by some because of his Prussian background and Jewish faith. He rose above the discrimination, and through his actions and leadership at Gallipoli and across the Western Front, he became widely recognised as an exceptional commander.

Dalbert Hallenstein was a German-born Jewish man who worked in a prominent Melbourne tannery before the war. Dalbert had military experience as a member of the Citizens Military Forces and the cadets. In 1915, he enlisted in the AIF as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 5th Battalion. He left Australia after telling his family and friends that he hoped he would do them proud: 'At any rate he would have a good try. He hoped to get away and do what he could and get back again amongst them'.

Dalbert served in Egypt, Gallipoli, and the Western Front. He was wounded in 1917 and was killed in action the following year, in Peronne, France. His superiors mourned his death, praising him as 'a brave man, and a capable officer', and saying they deeply deplored his loss.

The strict enlistment standards, at times, forced inaccurate record-keeping, which means that it can be difficult to identify service people of non-Christian faith in the First World War. Research has shown that at least 19 Sikhs are believed to have served overseas in the AIF and the New Zealand Expeditionary Force (NZEf).

Born in India, Hazara Singh saw military service in Afghanistan before emigrating to Australia. He worked as a storekeeper in Brungle, NSW, before enlisting in the AIF at age 33. During the war, Hazara served in France as part of the 13th Battalion. He initially ate beef whilst on active service, possibly through necessity as there were limited food options for soldiers. Hazara became ill and was discharged in 1917. He sought to re-enlist 6 months later and was accepted at the recommendation of one of his officers: 'He has seen much active service, is very intelligent, and keen. I think it would be a great pity to lose a man of this stamp'. Hazara served for another year in the military before being discharged again.

Cassim 'Cass' Mahomet, meanwhile, was one of a number of Muslims who enlisted and served in the AIF. He was a vaudeville performer with an Indian background, and authorities initially refused to enlist him because they believed he was of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage.

During another attempt, recruiters refused him on the grounds that he was Turkish. It has been suggested that Cass' parents were also opposed to his enlistment plans should he be forced to fight other Muslims during the Gallipoli campaign in Türkiye. Cass successfully enlisted in 1916, when he was 21, this time by stating that he was Catholic. Cass was dispatched overseas as part of the 10th Battalion, where he became well-known for organising concert parties and shows on the Western Front. By the end of the war, he had become a sergeant major and, according to one fellow soldier, had thrown 'aside all barriers of caste and religion, and become a dinkum Aussie'.

The common thread of these stories is that Australians of different religious faiths and cultural backgrounds answered their nation's call and gave faithful service. In doing so, they showed that religion was not an obstacle to patriotism.



Women and men from the First World War celebrate a traditional Seder meal in London. They are drinking the wine, which occurs 4 times throughout the meal.

11: Families who serve

The colonisation of Australia by the British from 1788 onwards was momentous for the First Nations people of the land. The effects of colonisation were many and widespread. In some instances, conflict immediately arose between the settlers and the local Aboriginal people. The warriors of the land fought to ward off the settlers to protect their culture and way of life.

A fierce fighting spirit and an abundance of courage underscored resistance by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

In the 20th century, First Nations people continued to show the fighting spirit and courage of their ancestors through service in Australia's armed forces. Those who served did so despite living with discrimination and inequality in their everyday lives.

First Nations soldiers served with distinction in the First and Second World Wars. Their dedication to fighting for Australia was no less than that of the non-Indigenous soldiers who served with them.

One Aboriginal family, in particular, embodied the warrior spirit in its service history. Five brothers of the Lovett family, Gunditjmara people from south-western Victoria, served across the First and Second World Wars. Alfred, Frederick, Leonard, Edward and Herbert Lovett from Lake Condah served in France and Palestine during the First World War. They defied the odds by all returning home safely at the end of the war. It is a testament to their characters that they chose to put themselves in harm's way for a nation that did not recognise them as citizens.

On 27 July 1915, Alfred Lovett enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force, ready to serve his country. Then aged 35, Alfred was married with 2 children and was a jockey and horse breaker by trade. With much to lose, he embarked for training in the Middle East before participating in fighting at Pozières and Mouquet Farm in France.

Alfred was soon followed into armed service by 4 of his brothers: Edward, Leonard, Herbert, and Frederick. Each enlisted despite news of the dangers that they would face overseas. At the time Frederick enlisted – in May 1917, having already been excused from service – Alfred had been wounded in France and was convalescing in a British hospital, and Leonard and Edward were in France with their battalions.

The 5 Lovett brothers started a family tradition of service. All 5 returned to Australia at the war's end. When war broke out again in 1939, the Lovetts returned to answer their nation's call.

Despite being in their 40s and 50s, Leonard, Edward, Frederick and Herbert re-enlisted alongside their youngest brother, Samuel, who was then aged 36. Leonard's daughter, Alice, served with the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force, while Edward's daughter Sarah served in the Australian Women's Army Service. Samuel's son Murray served as well.

The Lovetts continued to serve in Australia's military in the years that followed. Leonard's son, also named Leonard, served during the Korean War and Alice's son, Mervyn, served in the Vietnam War.

Frederick's grandson, Ricky, served in both East Timor – now Timor-Leste – and Afghanistan as a member of the Australian Army. Nine additional extended Lovett family members are known to have served in Australia's military.

Remarkably, all members of the Lovett family returned home safely after their service.



Portrait of Private Alfred John Henry Lovett, of Hamilton, Victoria, with his wife Sarah and their 2 sons, Alfred Patrick Lovett (left) and Leo Lawrence Lovett (right).

What also reinforces the generosity and courage of the Lovett family's service is the prejudice that its members continued to face in the country for which they had fought so nobly. Under soldier settlement schemes devised after each World War, returned soldiers were eligible for allotments of farmland. But authorities denied Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander soldiers, such as the Lovetts, any access to the scheme. The Lovetts saw their traditional lands in Western Victoria carved up and given away.

The Lovett family's tradition of military service is widely believed to be without parallel. It was in recognition of the family's ongoing and singular service to the country that, in 2000, the Department of Veterans' Affairs premises in Woden, Canberra, was renamed 'Lovett Tower'.



Composite group portrait of Mary and Henry Hutchins, of Woorinen North, Victoria, and 7 enlisted sons. The portrait is a combination of separate photographs taken in the 1940s that was produced by the family after the war.

12: Mail deliveries for the First and Second World Wars

In the 21st century, much of our communication uses digital platforms to send and receive data in ways and speeds not imagined in the early 20th century. This technology is especially important for Australian defence members serving overseas, providing immediate contact with family and friends. The speed of today's digital communication supports contact and connection, a relief when so far from home.

Australians who served overseas during the First and Second World Wars did not have the luxury of real-time communication with their friends and loved ones. News and letters from home were mostly hand-written and delivered via land, air and sea transportation. During the First World War, postal services relied on trucks and ships to transport mail.

Postal services in the Second World War added aircraft to the transport systems. In both wars, the speed of delivery was much slower than today, and service personnel waited weeks or months for their letters.

In the First World War, Australians serving overseas were often frustrated by the waiting times to receive mail. Getting mail to the troops in Europe and the Middle East was a challenging operation, and the delays affected the men. Australian soldier George Leslie Makin said the following in a letter to his mother in January 1915:

I don't know what the authorities are doing with our letters. There must be tens of thousands of them somewhere. If we do not get a mail very shortly, I am afraid there will be a lot of bad feeling among the men.

The delivery of mail to troops overseas during the Second World War improved with the use of aircraft, however, getting mail to the front lines still took substantial time in comparison to today's postal and digital options. Transporting mail was made complex by enemy activity and the ever-changing locations of those on the battlefields. Military personnel also faced geographical challenges to deliver mail to troops in locations such as the deserts of North Africa and the jungles of New Guinea. For the many Australians who served in the United Kingdom, embedded with the Royal Forces, their multiple locations added additional difficulties to the mail delivery service.

The Royal Air Force's Bomber Command, for example, had bases scattered across eastern England and the men flew where needed at short notice.

Enemy spy networks were a constant threat to the Allied forces. Australian service men and women writing to family and friends back home had another challenge to face. Their letters had to be checked and censored, if required.

Censoring the letters aimed to protect sensitive military information. Careless references to operations, plans or military bases had to be avoided. A seemingly innocent remark in a letter to home could have serious consequences.

Australians serving overseas, conscious of the need to maintain military security, had to accept that their letters to home had to be quite plain. The work of the military censors was essential, even if it wasn't always appreciated by some troops.

In today's world, we take digital communication for granted. We can be in touch with friends, family or colleagues in an instant. Enormous amounts of information are carried by digital networks each day. Australians who served in the First and Second World Wars relied upon mail systems that hadn't changed much since the 1800s. The complexities of those wars brought new challenges to sending and receiving mail. Australians at the front line and at home benefited from the men and women who successfully overcame the massive logistical challenges of wartime communication.



Soldiers sorting the mail in Malaya, c January 1942



1966 Helicopters Unloading Soldiers in South Vietnam



A Panzerkampfwagen IV F-1 of Panzer Regiment 24, Pz Div. 24 on the Eastern front in the Summer of 1942.





RETURNED SERVICES LEAGUE ARMADALE SUB-BRANCH

Your RSL