

"Sitrep, Over!"



OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE ROYAL SOUTH AUSTRALIA REGIMENT ASSOCIATION INC

Patron: MAJGEN Neil Wilson AM RFD

Secretary / Editor David Laing

MAY
2024

OUR MOST SACRED DAY

ANZAC Day, 25 April, 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.

When war broke out in 1914 Australia had been a federated nation for only 13 years, and its government was eager to establish a reputation among the nations of the world. When Britain declared war in August 1914 Australia was automatically placed on the side of the Commonwealth. In 1915 Australian and New Zealand soldiers formed part of the expedition that set out to capture the Gallipoli peninsula in order to open the Dardanelles to the allied navies. The ultimate objective was to capture Constantinople (now Istanbul), the capital of the Ottoman Empire, an ally of Germany.

The Australian and New Zealand forces landed on Gallipoli on 25 April, meeting fierce resistance from the Ottoman Turkish defenders. What had been planned as a bold stroke to knock Turkey out of the war quickly became a stalemate, and the campaign dragged on for eight months.

At the end of 1915 the allied forces were evacuated from the peninsula, with both sides having suffered heavy casualties and endured great hardships. More than 8,000 Australian soldiers had died in the campaign. Gallipoli had a profound impact on Australians at home, and 25 April soon became the day on which Australians remembered the sacrifice of those who died in the war.

Although the Gallipoli campaign failed in its military objectives, the actions of Australian and New Zealand forces during the campaign left a powerful legacy. What became known as the "ANZAC legend" became an important part of the identity of both nations, shaping the ways in which they viewed both their past and their future.

LEST WE FORGET.

Things I've learned!

Anyone remember the good old days before Facebook, Instagram and Twitter? When you had to take a photo of your dinner? Then get the film developed at the Chemist. Then go around to all your friend's houses and show them a photo of your dinner? No? Me neither.

Stop it!



INSIDE THIS EDITION

Page 2	Editorial
Page 3,4	Willie Apiata VC
Page 5-7	ANZAC Day
Page 8-10	Humour
Page 11	Padres Ponderings
Page 12	Merchandise
Page 13	Book Review
Page 14-18	The Colensos
Page 19	Members List
Page 20	2024 AGM

EDITORIAL

A few years ago I visited relatives in New Zealand and was loaned a book on the first recipient of the Victoria Cross for New Zealand, CPL Willie Apiata. When I returned to Oz I purchased my own copy, and read the story of an ordinary, but very brave man who did what he was trained to do, and more. "Willie Apiata VC - The Reluctant Hero." His story is on Pages 3 & 4.

The 25th April has once again come and gone, and we have again paid homage to those who have fallen in the name of our freedom. On Pages 5, 6 & 7 you'll find some photos of the RSAR Association and its members on ANZAC Day this year. Thank you to Rod Beames daughters Narelle and Kim for the majority of the pics.

It's only taken 16 years but our numbers have finally reached 200 active members. We welcome former serving member of 10/27 RSAR Assault Pioneers at Broken Hill, Anthony New as our 200th member. Anthony is a serving member of NSW Police and we thank him for his past and continued service. Welcome Anthony.

Every now and then I pick up a book to read, usually of a military flavour, and if I find it worthwhile I'll review it in this newsletter. My latest book review is called "Sons Of War" by Paul Byrnes. It's the history of our youngest soldiers who lied about their age to get into the armed forces, in order to serve their country. Some got caught before they'd even left these shores, but others served, some with distinction during our darkest days. Their ages range from as young as 12 years up to just under the official recruiting age of 18 years. Young boys who went to war as men. Most came home but some didn't. "Sons Of War" is on Page 13.

Following on from our previous story (book review) is the story of the Colenso brothers, Ray, Frank, Ted and William, who all enlisted on 1st July 1940 in 2nd/18th Battalion AIF. In a first for this country, the brothers were given consecutive service numbers, NX55832, NX55833, NX55834 and NX55835. The four brothers coincidentally served in the same battalion, the 18th Battalion, that their father Bill Snr had served with in 1914. Their story is one of patriotism, honour, heroism and sadness, but I'll let you read about it on Pages 14 to 18. Again, Lest We Forget.

And finally, GREEN on Page 19 is a list of Financial Members. Those marked in are our serving ADF members, and they now number 75, over 1/3 of our total strength. This indicates the faith our serving members have in our goals to support their own battalion, and this trend will continue until nearly ALL our membership is made up of Serving Members. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your service.

Enjoy the read.

David Laing

Editor/Secretary

0407 791 822



Contact Us

The Secretary
David Laing
Royal South Australia
Regiment Association Inc.
PO Box 5218 Murray Bridge
South SA 5253

0407 791 822



davidlaing49@outlook.com

Visit us on the web at
www.rsara.asn.au

**PAYMENTS FOR SUBS &
MERCHANDISE**

**Fees and Merchandise can be
paid by EFT through the follow-
ing Bendigo Bank account**

RSAR Association Inc

BSB 633 000

Acc. 1616 585 88

Cheques etc can be mailed to

The Treasurer

Christian Bennett

RSAR Association

PO Box 1133

Kensington Gardens

SA 5068

christianbennett95@gmail.com

Willie Apiata - VC for New Zealand

Bill Henry "Willie" Apiata, VC (born 28 June 1972) is a former corporal in the New Zealand Special Air Service, who became the first recipient of the Victoria Cross for New Zealand. He received the award on 2 July 2007 for bravery under fire during the War in Afghanistan in 2004, in which he carried a gravely wounded comrade across a battlefield, under fire, to safety.

Apiata is the only recipient of the Victoria Cross for New Zealand, which replaced the Imperial Victoria Cross in 1999. There are no living New Zealand recipients of the Victoria Cross, which was last awarded to a New Zealander for actions in the Second World War. Apiata is the second Māori recipient of the VC after Second Lieutenant Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa Ngarimu (also of Te Whanau a Apanui). Apiata has donated all of his medals, including his VC, to New Zealand. In 2008 he succeeded Sir Edmund Hillary as the "most trusted New Zealander".

Early life

Apiata was born in Mangakino, New Zealand. His father is Māori and his mother is Pākehā. His parents separated, and he has not had contact with his father for several years. His early childhood was spent at Waima in Northland before the family moved to Te Kaha when he was seven. He attended Te Whanau-a-Apanui Area School in Te Kaha, which he left at the age of 15

Apiata affiliates to the Ngāpuhi iwi (tribe) through his father, but also has a very strong affiliation to Te Whānau-ā-Apanui from his time in the eastern Bay of Plenty. Apiata's home marae is Ngati Kawa Marae at Oromahoe, just south of Kerikeri. The ceremony where he received the Victoria Cross was held at Tukaki Marae in Te Kaha; due to being raised there when younger. In September 2011 Apiata was married to Sade, a chef in the army, but they have since divorced. They have two sons together, and he has a son from an earlier relationship.

Military career

He enlisted in the New Zealand Army on 6 October 1989 in the Territorial Force Hauraki Regiment of the Royal New Zealand Infantry Regiment. He unsuccessfully attempted to join the Special Air Service (SAS) in 1996. From July 2000 to April 2001 he served in East Timor as a member of New Zealand's third Battalion Group as part of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor. On his return he became a full-time soldier. His second attempt to join the SAS in November 2001 was successful.

Apiata was re-deployed to Afghanistan with the NZSAS in 2009 when the New Zealand government opted to return troops to that country. Responding in the aftermath of the January 2010 attacks in Kabul, Apiata was photographed by French photojournalist Philip Poupin. Poupin, who did not know Apiata, photographed Apiata and two companions as they were leaving the "thick of the fight" because "They looked like foreign troops and they were tall and had a specific face, they looked tough and strong". One photo was widely reproduced in New Zealand newspapers, prompting Prime Minister John Key to publicly acknowledge that Apiata was one of the soldiers depicted. The publication has also reopened the debate on the publication of images identifying New Zealand Special Forces personnel with some concerns that in doing so Apiata could become a target for insurgents.

Around 18 July 2012, Apiata left full-time military service to teach adventure skills to young people at the High Wire Charitable Trust. He did not resign from the Army and remains with the NZSAS Reserve Forces.



Willie Apiata - VC for New Zealand

Victoria Cross Citation

Apiata (then a lance corporal) was part of a New Zealand Special Air Service (NZSAS) Troop in Afghanistan in 2004 that was attacked by about 20 enemy fighters while holed-up for the night in a rocky rural area. Enemy rocket propelled grenades destroyed one of the troop's vehicles and immobilised another. This was followed by sustained machine gun and automatic rifle fire from close range.

A grenade explosion blew Apiata off the bonnet of his vehicle, where he had been sleeping. Two other soldiers in or near the vehicle were wounded by shrapnel, one of them seriously (Corporal D). After finding cover, it was seen that Corporal D had life-threatening arterial bleeding and was deteriorating rapidly.

Apiata assumed command of the situation, deciding all three would need to rejoin the troop which was about 70 metres to the rear. Apiata decided his only option was to carry Corporal D to safety, and none of the three were hit during the retreat. After getting Corporal D to shelter, Apiata rejoined the firefight.



He became one of the very few living holders of the Victoria Cross. In part the citation reads:

In total disregard of his own safety, Lance Corporal Apiata stood up and lifted his comrade bodily. He then carried him across the seventy metres of broken, rocky and fire swept ground, fully exposed in the glare of battle to heavy enemy fire and into the face of returning fire from the main Troop position. That neither he nor his colleague were hit is scarcely possible. Having delivered his wounded companion to relative shelter with the remainder of the patrol, Lance Corporal Apiata re-armed himself and rejoined the fight in counter-attack.

Three other SAS soldiers also received bravery awards for actions during the same mission. Two received the New Zealand Gallantry Decoration and one the New Zealand Gallantry Medal.

Ceremonies

The investiture took place on 26 July 2007 at Government House, Wellington. The ceremony was presided over by Sir Anand Satyanand, the Governor-General of New Zealand, with the Prime Minister Helen Clark, and Apiata's army colleagues, in attendance. A separate homecoming ceremony was held in his home town of Te Kaha.

As per her request, Apiata (alongside other Victoria Cross recipients) attended the funeral of Queen Elizabeth II on Sept 19, 2022. He also represented recipients of the Cross at

the Coronation of Charles III and Camilla.

VC gifted to nation

In April 2008, Apiata donated his Victoria Cross of New Zealand medal to the NZSAS Trust, so that "the medal is protected for future generations". The medal remains available to Apiata and his family to wear.

A total of 23 VCs have been awarded to New Zealand military personnel, including two won by Charles Upham. The most recent recipient was Willie Apiata in 2007. He is the first, and so far only, recipient of the Victoria Cross for New Zealand, which was instituted in 1999 to replace the British Victoria Cross.



ANZAC Day 2024

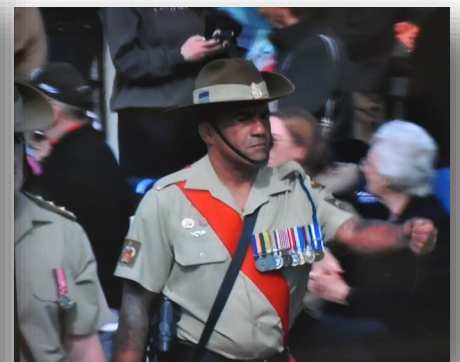


RSAR Association President Rodney Beames gives member Max Hill the “thumbs up” as he passes by



The Association carries out an “Eyes Right” at the official Saluting Dias on King William Street. About 30 members made the march followed up by Rodney Beames in the “official company car!” Rod always said “a 2nd class ride is better than a 1st class walk!”

ANZAC Day 2024



ABOVE: There's that man with the Red Sash again! Here's here, he's there, he's everywhere!

ANZAC Day 2024



TOP. The RSAR Association marches proudly down King William St. **RIGHT.** RSAR Association Secretary David Laing and wife June attended the Keswick Barracks Dawn Service. **BOTTOM.** Vice President Des Hawkins leads the RSAR Association along North Tce to the King William St turn. All downhill from here lads!



Digger Wombats' Humour



My tolerance for idiots is extremely low these days. I used to have some immunity built up, but obviously, there's a new strain out there.

In the beginning was the Plan. And then came the Assumptions. And the Assumptions were without form. And the Plan was without substance.

And darkness was upon the face of the Rank and File. And they spoke amongst themselves, saying, "It is a crock of shit, and it stinketh."

And the Corporals went unto their Sergeants and said, "It is a pail of dung, and none may abide the odour thereof."

And the Sergeants went unto their RSM, saying, "It is a container of excrement, and it is very strong, such that none may abide it."

And the RSM went unto the Adjutant, saying, "It is a vessel of fertilizer, and none may abide its strength."

And the Adjutant spoke amongst his fellows, agreeing, "It contains that which aids growth, and it is very strong."

And the Officers went unto their 2IC, saying unto him, "It promotes growth, and it is very powerful."

And the 2IC went unto his CO, saying unto him, "This new plan will actively promote the growth and vigour of the Regiment, with powerful effects."

And the CO looked upon the Plan, and saw that it was good.

And the Plan became Policy.

And THAT..... is how Shit happens....

My wife wanted to disgrace me in the presence of her friends, she said I wasn't good in bed. She was shocked when they all disagreed with her.

If you ever feel like your brain is inadequate... Think of this guy!



made with mematic



It's not my age that bothers me - it's the side effects.

I just ordered a life alert bracelet so if I get a life, I'll be notified immediately.

If you think you are smarter than the previous generation...50 years ago the owners manual of a car showed you how to adjust the valves. Today it warns you not to drink the contents of the battery.

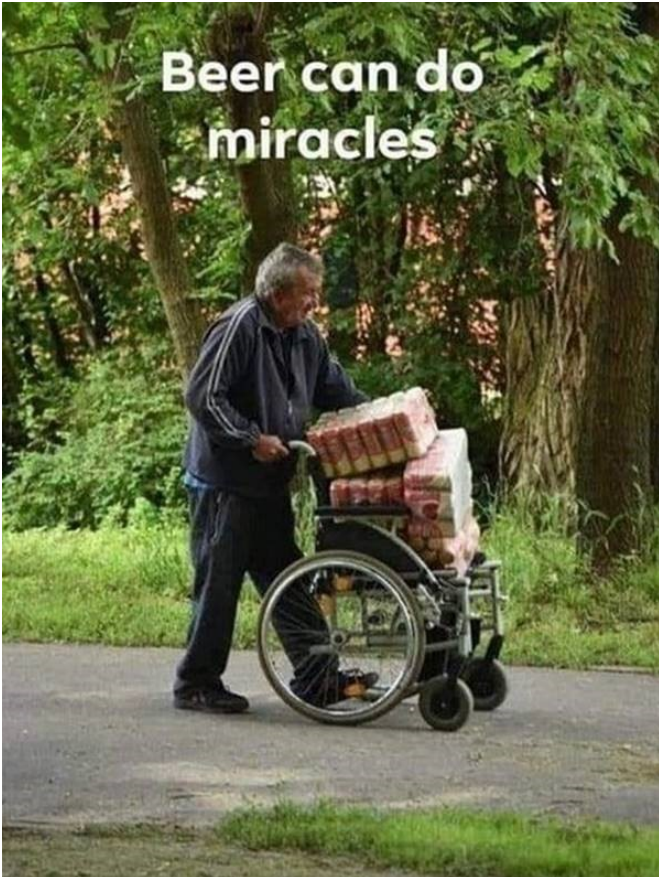


Some call it multi-tasking, I call it doing something else while I try to remember what I was doing in the first place



As I watch this generation try and rewrite our history, I'm sure of one thing: it will be misspelled and have no punctuation.

Beer can do miracles

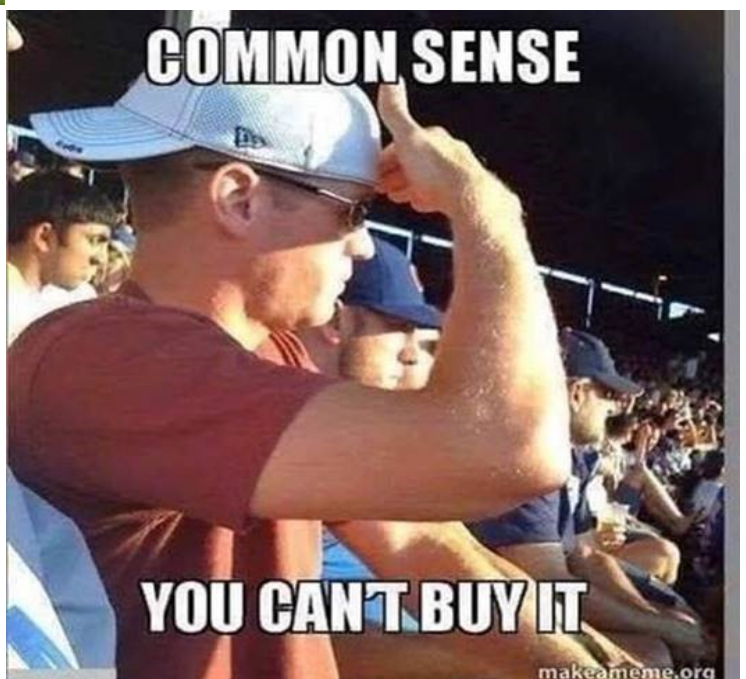


After 10 years a wife started to think their child looks kinda strange so she did a DNA test and found out the child is not theirs, she told her husband what she found out, the husband replied, u don't remember do you?? When we were leaving the hospital the baby pooped and u told me go and change him so I went inside got a clean one and left the dirty one there. The wife fainted.... 🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔

Parking lot in front of the Laser Eye Surgery Center.



COMMON SENSE



YOU CAN'T BUY IT

makeameme.org

Padres' Ponderings

From Padre Stephen Albrecht Chaplain 10/27 Battalion RSAR

Throughout history, not all events have or wish to be documented. Not all acts of heroism are recorded, not all acts of sacrifice are recognised. But the bravery, the valour, the loyalty... are known among your comrades in arms.

Such acts may not be numbered, but they are never forgotten. From the beaches of Gallipoli to the trails of Kokoda. From the dust of Afghanistan to the Jungles of Vietnam. We are only privy to the details they have chosen to share. Danger unified them. Hope sustained them. Love and mateship galvanised them of the unspeakable horrors in those desperate moments.

Over Australia's military history, the costs have been high. For 103,021 have given their lives, and over 226,000 have been wounded, not to mention the scars that can't be seen. All for what, you may ask?

It was all... for their hope and their aspirations of freedom. Their hearts bore the ideals of democracy and they fell, so that we might still stand and experience a brighter tomorrow. Hence, liberty should be guarded carefully and gratitude for their sacrifice must be passed on to the next generation.

How can this be done?

Through storytelling, listening, encouraging, forgiving and remembering.

Wars and conflicts may never cease. Human strength has its limits, and there will always be striving, there will always be failings, but there will also always be hope.

The Bible tells us, that Jesus came to this world, to set the oppressed and captives free. For He said, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends."

He knows the scars of warriors and He knows the scars of the Nations. He knows the cost... He even knows those scars that are hidden and never disclosed. He understands... for He bears the scars of a story of death, life and freedom. Freedom that was won at a great price. So, this ANZAC Day let us remember, lest we forget.

Chaplain Stephen Albrecht



ASSOCIATION MERCHANDISE

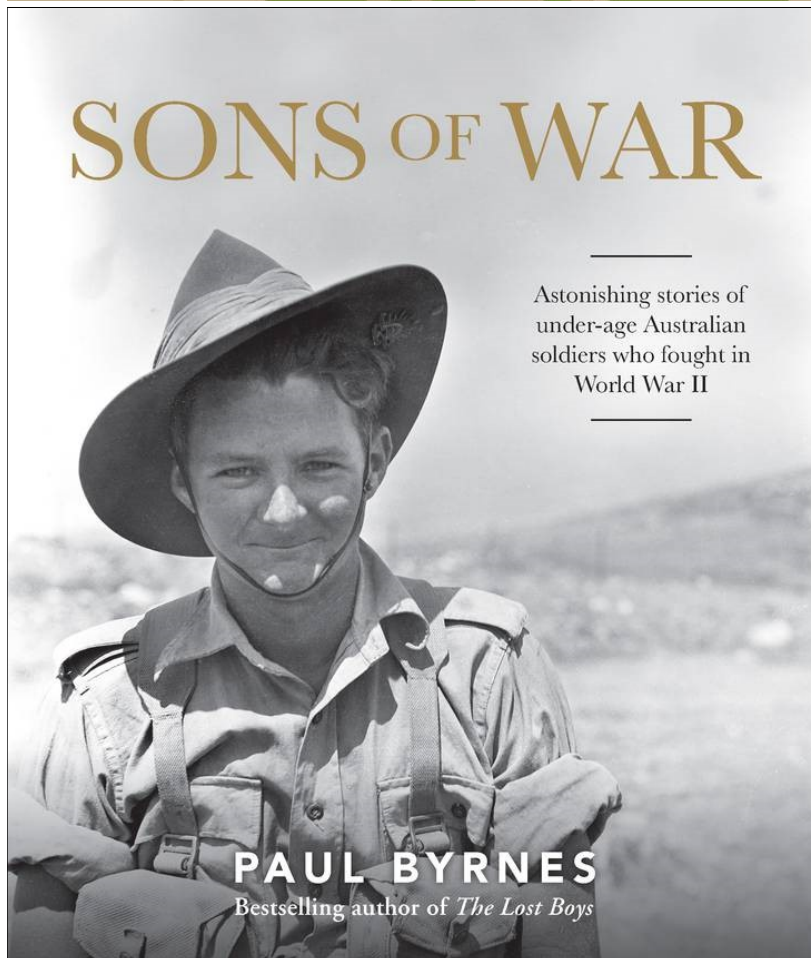


- A. Regimental Tie \$25
- B. Stubby Holders \$6 each or 6 for \$30
- C. RSARA Nameplate \$25
- D. RSARA Lapel Badge \$15
- E. Laser-engraved timber shield w/- brass look plaque \$45
- F. **NEW** Vinyl RSAR Sticker 70mm x 100mm Only \$2 or **6 for \$10** FREE Postage.
- G. Hoodie w/- LOGO \$50
- H. Wine Cooler Bag \$25 plus postage

Allow \$10 postage for each item
Unless collected by member



BOOK REVIEW



SONS OF WAR by Paul Byrnes.

Astonishing stories of Under-age Australian soldiers who fought in the Second World War.

I heard about this book from a mate, and sought it out very quickly. In the Second World War, thousands of Australian boys lied about their age and volunteered for a war the scale of which they could never have imagined. Like many of their fathers in the Great War, they went with their eyes wide shut: under-trained, under-equipped and under-age. Some were as young as thirteen - too young even to shave. Many did not grow old; others came back broken. A handful are still alive to tell their tales and relive their actions.

This extraordinary book captures the bold and untold stories of forty Australian children who fought in the deadliest war in history. Follow these boys through Libya and Palestine, Greece and Crete to the jungles of Malaya, Papua New Guinea and Borneo,

fighting for their lives, their country, their mates. Many of the photographs have never been seen. Haunting images of youths in training camps and behind the lines stand beside moving portraits of old men who have lived with their memories but never forgotten.

Sons of War is a deeply personal military history: an homage to youthful bravery, a eulogy for those who fell, a tribute to those still standing. The book is packed with detail, including the various theatres of war across the globe that these young men, some still only boys, fought and died.

About the Author

Paul Byrnes joined *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 1976, reporting from various corners of the world for a decade, before specialising as a feature writer and film critic. He was director of the Sydney Film Festival for ten years, until 1998. In 2007, he won the Pascall Prize, Australia's highest award for critical writing in the arts. This book is the result of a lifelong interest in the First World War. He lives in Australia and France.

Where you can buy it.

This publication is available through most good book sellers, from libraries and online. Prices range from \$45 down to \$20, but a really good bargain is to get your copy from Big W, who retail it for only \$19. It's hard bound and will give you hours of reading pleasure, just like it did for me.

Enjoy.

David Laing

Remembering the Colenso Brothers

By Claire Hunter

AUGUST 2019



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P09222.002

Informal portrait of the Colenso family of Kingsford, NSW. All four brothers, Ray, Frank, Ted and William, enlisted on 1 July 1940 in 2/18 Battalion. They are pictured with their parents, William and Winifred Colenso.

The Colenso family's lives have been shaped by war. "The whole thing has been etched into our DNA," said Bill Colenso, whose father was one of four brothers who enlisted together during the Second World War.

"There was a big photo of the four boys above the mantelpiece my whole life, and there were always photos of my dad. It's been burnt into our brains; we've been brought up with it."

Bill's father, William (also known as Bill), was the eldest of the four Colenso brothers — William, 30, Frank, 28, Ted, 26, and Ray, 20 — who enlisted together to look after one another.

Bill was born after the brothers sailed for Singapore and never met his father.

His father and Ray were killed within days of one another as Singapore fell to the Japanese. Their stories were told in two Last Post Ceremonies at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

But the Colenso family's story begins more than two decades earlier with their father William Sr and the outbreak of the First World War. It was a throwaway line overheard by his wife, Winifred, in line at a grocery store in the eastern suburbs of Sydney that led to the family's involvement in two world wars.

"She heard two ladies talking about how her husband had resigned from the NSW Irish Rifles," said Bill's cousin, Dianne Mullin, whose father Frank was the second eldest of the Colenso brothers.

"They said he must have been scared to go to war. She went straight home and told William he had to en-

Remembering the Colenso Brothers



Members of the Colenso family at a Last Post Ceremony at the Memorial.

list because she wasn't going to hear anyone calling her husband a coward."

William Sr joined the 18th Infantry Battalion in October 1916 and was sent to England where he remained until he was medically discharged in 1918, never seeing active service. But the family wasn't spared from tragedy.

Winifred's brother, William Moloney, was wounded on the Western Front in 1917 and died in a French military hospital.

Her other brother, Edward, returned from the war, but was severely wounded, and remained an invalid for the rest of his life.

So when her 19-year-old son Ray first came to her with enlistment documents during the Second World War, she refused.

"Ray was only 20 when he enlisted," Dianne said. "He couldn't go until he was 21 without his parents' permission, so the brothers decided they wouldn't go to war until they could all go together, and she said, 'I'm not signing the papers.'

"They said, 'It'll be over by Christmas,' and she said, 'I've heard that before.' She'd had one brother killed at Fromelles, and the other one came home gassed and couldn't breathe properly for the rest of his life.

"But they pestered and pestered and pestered her, and finally, when he turned 20, she let him go, and Ray celebrated his 21st birthday over there."

The four brothers enlisted together on 15 June 1940 and were assigned consecutive service numbers. Their younger brother, Les, was too young to enlist.

"Ray was the one who wanted to be a soldier," Bill said. "The others went to look after him; it was one in, all in, as far as enlisting, and they all stuck together. They were like peas in a pod."

Remembering the Colenso Brothers



The brothers joined the 2/18th Battalion together, following in their father's footsteps.

On 1 February 1941, they set sail from Sydney Harbour and disembarked at Singapore 17 days later, moving north to spend 1941 training in the steamy tropical conditions of the Malay Peninsula.

Ray would often write poems for other soldiers in exchange for paper, and would write love letters for soldiers to send home to their sweethearts. He wrote the following poem the year before his death:

*In dreams I often travel to the land I know so well,
In sleep I find much comfort despite the shot and shell,
Pleasant dream, old cobber, on watch I'll take my turn,
Though while awake we quell it, our hearts for home do yearn.*

Ray would never return to Australia. By the following year, British forces had withdrawn from the Malay Peninsula onto Singapore Island, and on the morning of 8 February 1942, the Japanese launched their attack to take Singapore.

The four Colenso brothers were helping to defend a sector of Singapore's north-west coast when the outnumbered and overstretched Australians came under an intense mortar and artillery barrage.

"They were holed up in front of the causeway and they were shelled for 24 hours," Dianne said. "They just had to cop it and then the shelling stopped, and Dad said that the silence and the dark was even more frightening – the shelling had been bad enough, but the silence was awful."

Concerned, Ray asked his corporal if he could go ahead and see what was happening.

"Uncle Ray came flying back through the bush, and he said, 'There's Japanese, 200 yards ahead of us,'" Dianne said. "They said, 'Spike your guns, and run,' so they took the firing pins out, threw them into the

Remembering the Colenso Brothers



Ray wrote poetry instead of letters. He would write love letters for other soldiers to send home to their sweethearts in exchange for paper.

bush, and Bill said to my dad, 'Frank, you haven't got a weapon,' and he grabbed his bayonet out, and said, 'Take this, and put it in your belt.' Dad said, 'No, no, Bill,' but he insisted. He said, 'You need a weapon,' so Dad shoved it in his belt and ran.

"That was the last time they saw Ray, and I owe my life to him because he actually had the common sense to go and see what was happening; otherwise they all would have been killed." The bombardment had been followed by a major Japanese landing and the Australian forces were completely overrun.

"Dad was running through the rice paddy and the ground went from under him. He said, 'I was trying to get out and the mud just kept coming ... He thought, 'I'm going to drown; that's how I'll finish up; and no one will know where I am,' and then he remembered the bayonet, and he used the bayonet to cut his way out.

"After the war, Dad worked as the general assistant at a school and that was the story that he always told the kids on Anzac Day; how someone's kindness saved his life.

"When Dad got back to Singapore, he gave the family whistle, and Bill – big boofy Bill; he was a real man's man – came racing out, threw his arms around Dad, and kissed him all over," Dianne said.

"In those days, men didn't do that, but they thought Dad had gone too. He said, 'Have you seen the kid?' When Dad said, 'No, isn't he back,' he said, 'Ted's back, but the kid isn't,' so Bill signed up to go out and look for him."

Remembering the Colenso Brothers

Bill and Ray never made it back. In the initial confusion of the attack and the subsequent loss of Singapore, they were reported as missing together with Frank and Ted, but were later confirmed to have been killed in action, Ray on the 9th of February and Bill two days later.

Bill left behind his wife Hilda, and four young children – Hilda, Pat, Elaine, and Bill.

His name is listed on the Singapore Memorial, which commemorates over 24,000 Commonwealth servicemen of the Second World War who have no known grave.

“Ray was buried at Kranji [War Cemetery], but Dad was never found,” Bill said. “Every knock on the door, my mum thought, ‘Well this could be him coming home,’ and for years she half expected that the doorbell would ring and he would walk through the door. And we lived with all that for all our lives. There was no closure.”

Every time the family celebrated a birthday or wedding, Bill’s mother Hilda would add that they had “two up in heaven”.

Today, Bill still has the last letter that his father wrote to her, saying, “I can only write four pages today Hilda because Ray’s writing love poems for paper.”

“I’ve even got the envelopes,” Bill said. “She kept them in a box and had them all neatly folded in it.” Bill’s mother never remarried and treasured the letters for the rest of her life.

As the brothers were initially reported missing along with thousands of others, she did not learn of her husband’s fate until after the war when he was declared presumed dead in 1946.

The family’s story was told in an article in *The Australian Women’s Weekly* in July 1942.

“Yes, the waiting is terrible,” their mother Winifred said. “But I am quite confident my boys are safe and they will be coming back to us. I am sure all the other mothers feel the same.

“My four boys all going away together; it was a terrible blow, but I am so proud of them.”

When the family finally received letters from the two surviving brothers, now prisoners of war, in September 1943, their mother said, “I’m just praying for the next mail about the other two boys. I never gave up hope.”

Ted and Frank had been captured by the Japanese and were now prisoners of war together.

“It was horror on horror on horror,” Dianne said. “They used to go out to work every day, and if the Japanese caught you stealing it was head off and on to a stake by the side of the road. They’d pass the rotting heads every day and they weren’t game to look because it might have been the Chinese fellow who had given them food the day before and risked his life at the fence for them...”

“Ted got very sick and couldn’t work so Dad persuaded the doctor not to put him on sick call and he volunteered them both for woodcutting so that they would still get rice. Dad was a footballer, so although he wasn’t all that big, he was very strong, and he figured that he could put Uncle Ted in a hole, and he could do twice the work, and the Japanese wouldn’t know; that way Uncle Ted could still get food and no one would have to share.

“When they were sent back, they were sent on the work party to Blakang Mati – the island of the dead – and they were there for nearly two years. When Uncle Ted got sick again, the doctor said to Dad, ‘You don’t want to stay here; we can’t pretend here,’ because they were loading stuff onto the wharfs, so Dad said, ‘Put me onto sick corps too.’ If they haven’t been at Blakang Mati, they would have gone to Sandakan.”

They were finally released in 1945, after four long years of captivity.

“My earliest recollection is going down to the boat to see the other boys come home,” Bill said. “It was imprinted into my brain. My grandparents were very family orientated – we had to call in every afternoon after school and every Sunday we had to have dinner or lunch; it was the 11th Commandment – and I can remember going down to the boat and seeing the boys disembarking. It was a happy day because two boys were home, but it was also really sad because two weren’t.”

The Colenso family would never be the same again.

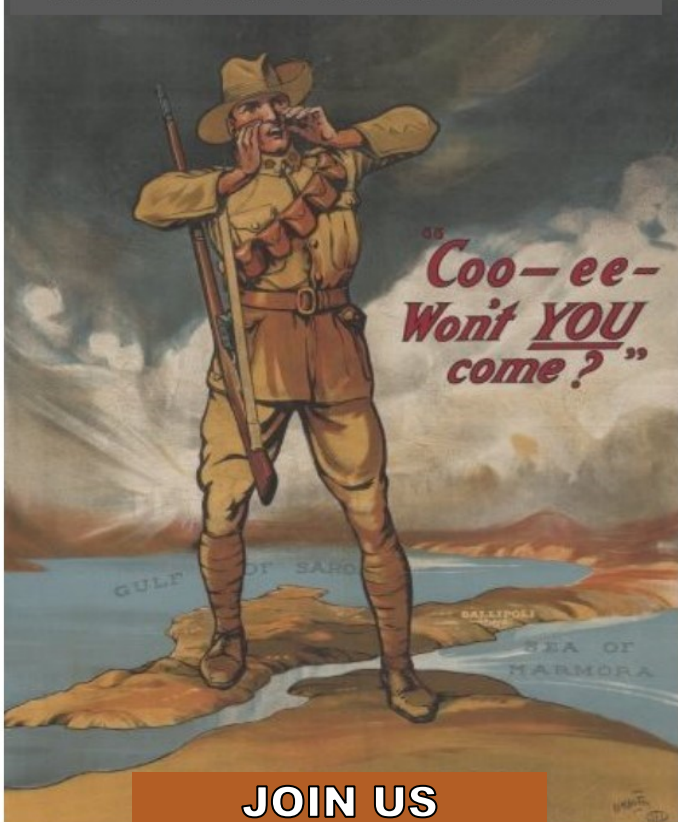
Source AWM.

Life Members		Members	A - M	Members	N - Z
Acton	Chris	Abel	Colin	New	Anthony
Beckett	David	Abraham	Michael	Normandale	Zachary
Benveniste	Sam	Albrecht	Stephen	Oakley	Andrew
Blackmore	Bill	Allison	Robert	O'Daly	Ryan
Boscence	Bob	Angus	Sebastian	Orrock	Alan
Brookes	Phil	Attenborough	Geoff	Parslow	Howard
Burnard	Trent	Baker	Craig	Parsonage	James
Burns	Wayne	Bampton	Michael	Pascoe	Michael
Carnachan	Ian	Barry-Orcales	Dianever	Payne	Bob
Carpenter	Ian	Beames	Paul	Pearce	Philip
Cotton	Bob	Bedford	Travis	Pexton	Timothy
Dart	John	Bennett	Christian	Phillips	Colin Rex
Davey	Trevor	Blondell	Mark	Portakiewicz	Anthony
Elliott	Graham	Bras	Riley	Portakiewicz	David
Gaborit	Lyndon	Brophy	Ryan	Powell	Gary
Goodwin	Graham	Brown	Bruce	Preece	Brian
Harris	Lachlan	Burnard	Saxon	Pritchard	Chantel
Hawking	Don	Burton	Ray	Rado	Steven
Haynes	Malcolm	Buttars	Erik	Ramm	Hank
Higgins	Jonathan	Carlisle	Lesley-Anne	Ranger	Denis
Hogan	Mark	Chamberlain	David	Rijgen	Paul
Hook	Alan	Cooke	Nat	Robertson	James
Hope	David	Cram	Kevin	Sailes	Adrian
Horseman	Ian	Dale	Andy	Sanders	Ashley
Hudson	Mick	Demosani	Tony	Sandhu	Zorawar
Jackson	Aaron	Denis	Emily	Schuh	Simon
James	Grant	Dew	Trevor	Scott	Rhys
Jeffrey	Scott	Domanski	Glenn	Sexton	Mark
Johnson	Paul	Donald	Thomas	Shephard	Daniel
Johnson	Barry	Duncan	Coen	Skapin	Corey
Klopf	Alex	Dunn	Bob	Slater	Ian
Laing	David	Dunn	Peter	Smith	Ryan
Lakin	Bruce	Eva	Keith	Sniedze	Julie
Marlin	Robin	Ewens	Mimi	Tasker	David
Meredith	Mike	Faquiri	Reshad	Tattersall	Geoff
Miller	Nick	Faunt	Joshua	Thomas	David
Moore	Peter	Flynn	Adrian	Thomas	Travis
Moore	Terry	Fortune	Nigel	Thomson	Jim
Moore	Thomas	Foy	Erin	Threlfall	Kev
Paul	John	Gatley	Graham	Tran	Andy
Pollard	Barry	Genovese	John	Treize	George
Richter	Sean	Ghanem	Paul	Tsoulakis	Christos
Salamon	Piotr	Gibson	Lindsay	Tucker	Belinda
Stewart	Robin	Gill	Graham	Turner	Garry
Stewien	Peter	Gordon	Frank	Vozelj	Blaz
Vella	Joe	Groffen	Renee	Weepers	Nicole
Waters	Ian	Harrington	Malcolm	Wheeler	Chris
Watters	Matthew	Harrison	John	Williams	Reg
Westover	Rhys	Harrison	Keith	Williams	Janelle
Wilson	Graham	Harrison	Nigel	Zuromski	Paul
Yorke-Simpkin	Reg	Hartshorne	Anthony		
		Hawkins	Des	Honorary Members	
Associate Life Members		Heath	Jonathon	Wilson MAJGEN	Neil
Elliott	Julie	Higgins	Kevin	Jackson LTCOL	Aaron
Field	Shirley	Hill	Max	Hannan WO1	Scott
Johnson	Sally	Hudson	Rick		
Laing	June	Hume	Matthew	Hon Member for Life	
Parkin	Audrey	Humphrys	Jesse	Beames	Rodney
Phillips	Heather	Jones	Brett	Associate Members	
Sanderson	Lorraine	Justin	Trent	Abel	Karen
Tregenza	Lyn	Koop	Joshua	Brown	Jenni
		Kovacs	Philip	Carnachan	Dom
		Laing	Selina	Dunn	Trish
		Leach	Thomas	Eva	Gail
Denotes	Serving Members	Lewis	James	Hawkins	Lynn
Denotes	Life Members	Loveder	Peter	Hook	Philippa
		Matchett	William	Hudson	Margaret
		McCulloch	Don	Johnson	Margaret
		Mclver	Bill	Parsonage	Yvonne
		McKenzie	Kain	Pollard	Kay
		Migali	Michael	Toy	Jill
		Mitchell	Barry	Winger	Kathleen
		Morony	Frank		
		Mulroney	Dennis		

EARLY WARNING

2024 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A CALL FROM YOUR ASSOCIATION



WHEN:

SUNDAY 4TH AUGUST @ 1100 HRS

WHERE:

AVOCA HOTEL SOUTH ROAD
CLARENCE GARDENS

AGM:

1100 HRS - 1200 HRS

LUNCH:

1200 HRS - 1330 HRS

DRESS:

NEAT, CASUAL

All Members, wives & partners are invited to attend the AGM and mix with friends whilst voting on changes to the Constitution.

All Committee positions will be declared vacant.

This is the MAIN event for the year so it is imperative for all members to attend and vote.

Please join us after the AGM for a meal, a couple of drinks and a chat.

Get to know the other members.

**SUNDAY 4th August 1100 hrs Avoca Hotel, South Rd
Clarence Gardens**

Reservations Required for Seating & Catering Purposes

NLT 30 July to

davidlaing49@outlook.com or 0407 791822

PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY NOW!