

Reassuring Vibe on Remembrance Day Hearts Switched On

End of World War 1 Centenary Commemoration Scotch College, 11 November 2018

By DR MARLENE RYZMAN

Daughter of GNR Dov Ryzman VX123381 (AIF)
16th Aust. Field Artillery Regiment
Attached to the 1st Australian Armoured Division

On Sunday 11 November, the **Remembrance Day Centenary Service** (marking the Armistice) was held at Memorial Hall, Scotch College “to honour great Australians in taking the world from war to peace”. This event imbued us with a wonderful sense of camaraderie and mateship, especially in the light of difficult challenges our society faces; and also because it was a combined service which brought together Australians – Christian, Jewish and Indigenous – all of whom share common values and a common bond, having ancestors who enlisted in the AIF, many of whom lost their lives in W.W.1 (& W.W.2 and ensuing conflicts).

With phones switched off, our hearts switched on. We felt completely connected and unified with each other as we commemorated the purpose for which they “put themselves in harm’s way”. **John Pessuto** (Member for Hawthorn) emphasized ‘freedom’ and ‘humanity’.

Amongst the dignitaries, we were graced with the presence of Lady Anna Cowen and Michael Bennett, great grandson of General Sir John Monash GCMG KCB VD. Facilitated admirably by organizer **Peter Kentley (President, Beersheba Vision)**, General Monash (who laid the foundation stone of this Memorial Hall on 5

March, 1920) was acknowledged as the greatest collegian, equal dux of the school.

Our attention was rivetted to eminent **Major General Prof. Jeffrey V Rosenfeld AC OBE AM KStJ** who described Monash as one of Australia’s greatest citizens in times of peace, as well as a

brilliant humanitarian General whose compassion for his men was evident both during conflict and after the war ended. General Monash proved a courageous master strategist who would not compromise the safety and

wellbeing of his troops. Shocked by senseless loss of life in W.W.1, he wrote (in 1917) : “I hate the business of war, the horror of it, the waste, the destruction, and the inefficiency...”.

Many, including Field Marshall Montgomery, believed that if Monash had been appointed Commander over the British & Allied Forces on the Western Front in France in W.W.1, “the war would probably have ended a year earlier.”

As a caring Director-General of Repatriation and Demobilisation of the AIF, he would not return home until he had repatriated every soldier and retrained them to a profession or trade in civilian life.

General Sir John Monash represents the staunch loyalty and patriotism of Australian Jewry. In 1914 thousands voluntarily enlisted in W.W.1,



John Pessuto MP welcomes guests to the Centenary Commemoration of the end of World War 1. in the Scotch College Memorial Hall

including Nurses. It is estimated between 160 and 200 were KIA. W.W.2 saw a large enlistment and support for all military missions to the present day.

Major General Rosenfeld, a direct descendant of General Sir John Monash, was himself recognised as an outstanding leader. An elite Australian Neurosurgeon, he is a Maj Gen in the ADF and former Surgeon

General of the Defence Force Reserves, providing invaluable medical support to our troops on deployment.

Together with **Professor Roland Perry (OAM B.Ec F. Monash)** and **Michael Headbury (Saluting Monash Council)**, all extolled the virtues of upgrading Monash's rank to Field Marshall for his outstanding qualities, leadership, ingenuity and service to our country. – A drive spear-headed by **The Hon Tim Fischer AC.**

Neville Clark (MC OAM CM B.A. Dip Ed M.A.), who was awarded the Military Cross (1968) for selfless conduct in Vietnam, dramatically outlined the heroic role of **Sir Harry Chauvel** at Beersheba. Once again, the values of

courage, endurance, sacrifice and mateship bubbled to the surface. **Colonel Harry Chauvel** commanded the 1st Light Horse Brigade of the AIF, which became the Infantry in Gallipoli.

Monash remained to fortify the valley . Following Gallipoli, Chauvel's Division successfully halted the Turks' attempt to control the Suez Canal.



Dr Esme Bamblett CEO Aboriginal Advancement League watches her son in law Darren Atkinson play the didgeridoo

His victorious battle against the Turks and Germans in October 1917 is immortalized in our memories: The famous charge of the heavily outnumbered ANZAC Light Horsemen. His outstanding success in the battle for

Beersheba spurred on further success for the Allies in the Middle East. This precipitated the Balfour Declaration of 1917.

Chauvel continued to make his mark, enhancing his reputation by courageously leading five Brigades of Light Horse Cavalry (the Desert Mounted Corps) in 1918, executing General Allenby's battle plan.

In 1929 (a decade after Armistice Day 11 November, 1919) both Chauvel and Monash were

appointed full Generals.

Prior to hearing from **Dr Esme Bamblett**, her son-in-law Darren Atkinson emotionally explained he was playing the didgeridoo in remembrance of his 2 'uncles' (from WW.1) – his



L to R: MC Peter Kentley, Major Gen. Prof. Jeffrey V Rosenfeld AC OBE KStJ and Neville Clark MC, OAM

first opportunity to acknowledge them. **Dr Bamblett** (from the Bangerang and Wiradjuri people) is CEO of the Aboriginal Advancement League & Senior Pastor of Barak Christian

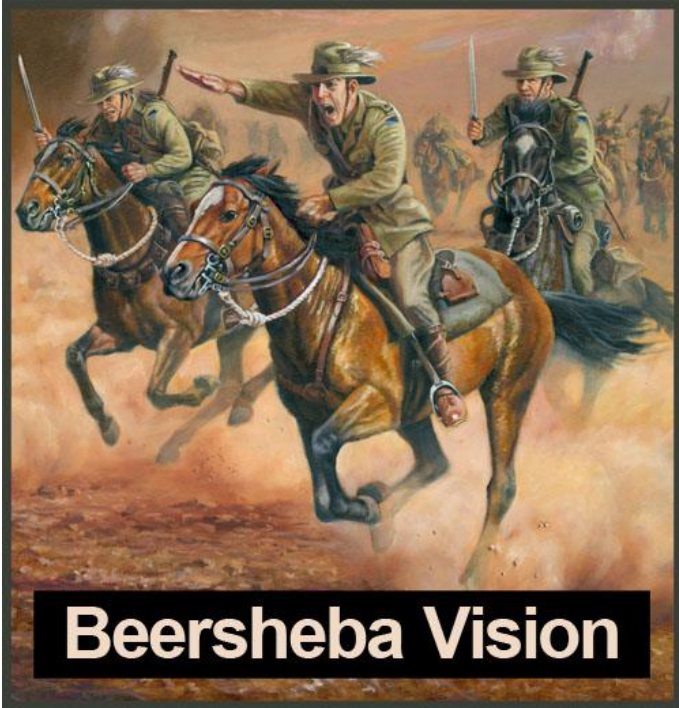
Ministries, among other roles. She gave a heart-felt talk about indigenous troops who fought in W.W.1 even though officially they were not permitted to enlist. The Lovett Family (Gunditjmara nation in Western Victoria) was singled out, as a unique instance in which 21 members in total through the generations served in the Army in various periods since W.W.1. We have many tools of understanding at our disposal, one of which appears to be the power of music. The Choir Master of the 'Open Door Singers' highlighted a memorable event that occurred in W.W.1. On Christmas Day, one side began singing "Silent Night, Holy Night..." in the trenches. As the words and melody wafted out, the other side joined in with gusto. Hostilities ceased during a 48 hour truce, in which gifts and drinks were exchanged. While I'm not suggesting you can sing your way out of anything, let's focus on the pathways that bring us together.

All speakers acknowledged the role that all Australians played, and they evoked all manner of emotions.

These feelings speak louder than words, touching a chord deep within, stirring our souls.

As Maj Gen Rosenfeld earnestly stated, "let's celebrate Australia by always being prepared to stand up and protect it. That is why I serve in the Australian Army". It is through our spirit of caring that we reach out to these souls who gave their lives for our freedom and future.

This is how we walked the honourable path of Remembrance together as thankful Australians. Our hearts and minds were truly opened as we affirmed our humanity and connection with each other. The over-riding emotions evoked on this Sunday in this Memorial Hall were of sanctity and respect, piercing all barriers. Our red poppies and medals were worn with pride of remembrance. The sky was blue and I, along with hundreds of others, felt the warmth of the sun's rays shining through the beautiful stained glass windows – rays of hope beaming out strongly.



Beersheba Vision

For more information contact peter@airborne.org

A DVD documentary of the Commemoration
can be purchased from:
www.muralstudio.com.au/store

Painting "Chaaaarrge" by Jennifer and Ron Marshall
www.lighthorseart.com.au