

King Island's ANZAC Day tribute to

At 5.45 am last Thursday a small contingent of veterans, under the command of RSL sub branch president Tom Shaw, started their march to the Cenotaph. They wondered how many would be waiting for their arrival, following the outstanding support for last year's Remembrance Day.

Clearly, very different thoughts to those of their comrades 104 years ago on the Gallipoli Peninsula.

The contingent was not to be disappointed, as, despite the bleak weather conditions, the numbers attending both the dawn and main 11.00am service were estimated to each be over 200. A great tribute to this national day by our community and interstate visitors.

At the Dawn Service, the heroic service of women to the nation during war, was recognised. Anna De La Rue, in her beautiful style, recited the memories of nurses from WWI, a soldier from WWII and a Surgical Team Leader in Afghanistan. The name of the WWII soldier can now be revealed, with permission from her daughter Lorraine Boon. She was Corporal Lorna Cooper, nee Baker, who was laid to rest last Friday. Lorna and her husband Bob were post war soldier settlers on the Pegarah Estate, and now rest alongside each other in the King Island Cemetery.

At the conclusion of the Dawn Service many adjourned to the RSL Clubrooms for coffee with a slight top up of 'medicine' for those who sought relief from the cold.

Many continued on to the King Island Club to continue the fellowship over breakfast, prepared by chef Richard Skeggs, and organised and assisted by Sue Williams.

At 10.00am, Main Street started to fill with people and again the turnout was excellent. Tom Shaw at 10.30 am gave the command, 'Parade by the left, quick march'. Led by a piper and drums, students carrying banners, a Mustang carrying veterans, the veterans, an ex-Army Landrover carrying young children with the RSL bears, soldier settler descendants, family members of ex-servicemen and



women (led by a large contingent of Williams descendants), emergency services and the pony club, commenced the march to the cenotaph.

An officious Regimental Sergeant Major may not have been impressed with the number who were out of step – who cares, this is King Island and we do it our way.

What was important was that the march was well supported with the youthful faces highlighting to veterans that the importance of this day will not be forgotten in the future.

If there is one word which sums up the main service, it is Williams.

For one WWII King Island family to have seven sons go off to war, see active service, and all return, is what makes our nation and King Island in particular, stand out.

Seven wreathes were laid for the seven Williams brothers; Ernest, Cyril (Snow), Malcolm, Lindsay (Splinter), Dave, Allen and Ivan.

Glenn Aldridge, Jarred and Joel Williams, and Luella Aldridge gave heartfelt and moving speeches about the impact on the sons' parents, the boys themselves and the immense pride their descendants have to this day. Around 20 family members travelled from interstate; not an easy or low cost journey, and we as a Sub branch salute you all.

After the Service, the fellowship continued in the Town Hall with refreshments, and for

some it was on to the King Island Club to watch some pennies spin in the air.

While the Sub branch has carriage of organising the ceremonial aspects of Anzac Day, it is our community involvement that makes it truly a national day of remembering all who have served, those who have made the ultimate sacrifice, the mothers, fathers and families at home; and those who continue to suffer. It is not to the glory of war because as any veteran will tell you – there is no such thing.

Our Sub branch has a small number of veterans and we could not operate without the support of our affiliate members, the community and associated organisations.

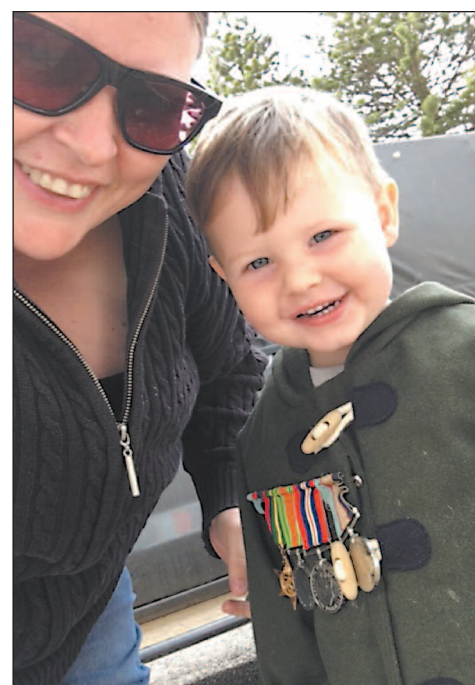
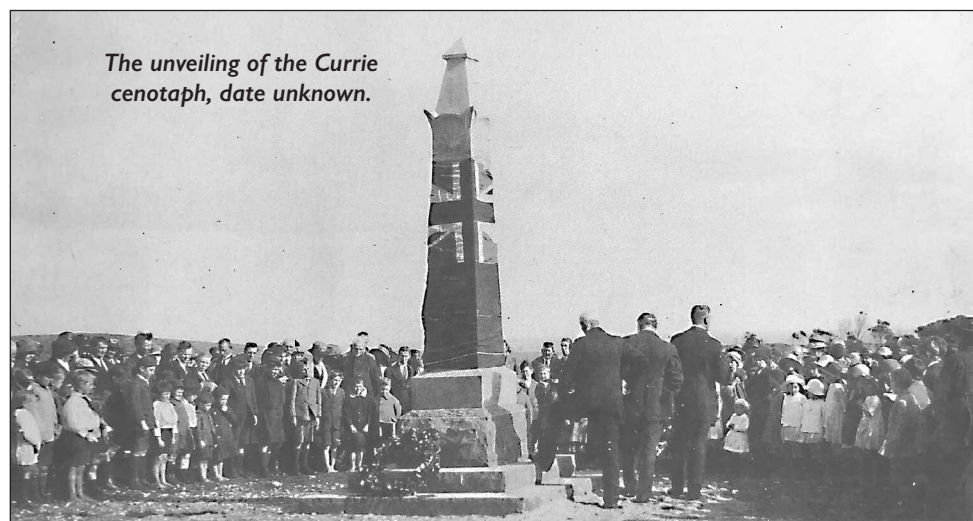
We gratefully acknowledge the support of Reverend Chris Thiele, students of King Island District High School: MC's Charlie Button and Montana Cook and poetry reader Brooke McLachlan; as well as the young and strong flag-bearers: Emerson Conley, Lawson Hoare, Matthew Button, Sam Potter, Lara Hoare, Georgina Raff, Lilly Davis, Molly Ferrier



The Series 2 Army Landrover, owned and, this year, driven by Vaughn O'Connor of Yambacoon, took a special place in the parade carrying children with the RSL bears. The children were Maggie and Logan Shaw, Zara O'Connor, Murphy Williams, Lucy Schuurings, Weston and Lincoln Whiteman, Ella Conley, Lenny McKinley, Poppy Graham and Olivia Raff.



The unveiling of the Currie cenotaph, date unknown.



La'Shay Joslin with her son Tarkwyn Mclean (22 months), wearing his great grandfather Splinter Williams' medals

Milsom daughters tour Timor

As many King Islanders were showing their respect for service and ex-service men and women on ANZAC Day, three members of the Milsom family made a nostalgic trip to a place of conflict during the Second World War.

Robyn, Margaret and Elizabeth, three daughters of George Milsom of the 2/40th Battalion and 2/2 Commandos, who escaped to Portuguese Timor when the Japanese invaded Dutch Timor in 1942. He was considered lost for some months before joining the 2/2nd and was evacuated in December 1942. George Milsom returned as a driver to a military history team, visiting and recording sites where action had taken place, before he took up a soldier settlement farm on King Island.

Several King Islanders had the misfortune of being part of the 2/40th Battalion that were greatly outnumbered and captured by the Japanese: Reg Groom, Owen Scott, Jack Watson and Liz Clemons' father and uncle, Allen and Max Kerkham.