

ANZAC DAY, KANGAROO FLAT, 2026.

Thank you for the invitation to join you today.

As we meet here today, there is a lot of tension between the countries in Europe and in the Middle East. It is not so different to 1879 when Germany formed an alliance with Austria-Hungary, with Italy joining three years later. The fear of Germany's growing strength led to Russia and France entering into an alliance in 1893. Britain joined them in 1904.

By 1914, relations between Austria-Hungary and neighbouring Serbia were tense and on 28 June 1914 a Bosnian-Serb terrorist shot dead Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Austrian throne, and his wife. That first shot caused a war that would last four and a half years.

Australia then was a part of the British Empire and when Britain declared war on 5 August 1914, Australian time, under the 1839 Treaty of London, which guaranteed the independence and neutrality of Belgium, Australia, Canada, India, New Zealand and South Africa were also at war.

That day, a German merchant ship SS Pfalz tried to escape from Port Phillip Bay. However, in the earlier colonial days, the Colony of Victoria had set up artillery emplacements around the entry to Port Phillip Bay. The Point Nepean Artillery Battery, controlled from Queenscliff, opened fire on the Pfalz causing it to turn around, return to Melbourne and surrender. Consequently, Australia had fired the first shot by the British Empire forces in the war.

The 1903 Australian Defence Act would not allow the Australian Army to serve overseas, so any military force sent overseas would need to be a specially raised force. The first such specially raised force was the Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force or ANMEF. The force left Sydney on 19 August 1914, just two weeks

after war had been declared. This force captured the German wireless station near Rabaul on the east coast of New Britain with the German forces on New Britain finally surrendering on 17 September.

The major force recruited for overseas service in 1914 was known as the Australian Imperial Force, or AIF. Recruiting commenced on 10 August. By 1 November, when the first convoy left Albany in Western Australia, some 21,500 Australians had been recruited, issued with their uniforms, weapons and equipment, undertook some initial training and were onboard 38 troopships. The men thought that they were going to England, but they would have arrived there in the middle of winter and where they would not have had sufficient accommodation, so they were diverted to Egypt to complete their training.

While the AIF and their 8,500 New Zealand companions were training in Egypt, plans were being made to use these 'colonial forces' to participate with the British and French forces in a daring amphibious landing on the Gallipoli Peninsular with the aim of rolling up that peninsular and taking the Turkish Army out of the war.

When the force was announced, the Australian and New Zealand forces were to be combined into one Corps. A Clerk became a bit sick of writing the words Australian and New Zealand Army Corps and had a rubber stamp made with the letters ANZAC. Thus, the history of ANZAC began.

We are all aware of the landing at Gallipoli early on the morning of 25 April 1915. Some 16,000 Australians were landed in a little over 24 hours. Many rushed inland up to about one and a half kilometres until the Turkish reinforcements arrived to bolster the relatively small number of defenders. The advance was stopped. Before the landing at Gallipoli, the AIF had already recruited more men.

Two brothers, sons of William and Harriet Maddams of Kangaroo Flat, had already enlisted in 1915. Thomas enlisted on 9 January in Bendigo. He was soon in Broadmeadows and was allocated to the 5th Reinforcements for the 6th Battalion, one of the four Victorian battalions that made up the 2nd Brigade of the Australian Division in Egypt. Little did he know when he boarded the Troopship Hororata in Melbourne on 17 April 1915 that the battalion he was to join was just 8 days away from landing at Gallipoli as a part of the largest amphibious landing that had ever been undertaken. Thomas joined the 6th Battalion at Gallipoli on 5 August.

Like many of his fellow ANZACs, Thomas fell ill while on Gallipoli. On 17 November he was admitted to his brigade's Field Ambulance diagnosed with Jaundice, but it was worse than that. A week later he found himself in a hospital in Malta being treated for appendicitis. By the time Thomas arrived back in Egypt, the doubling of the AIF had commenced. Each of the original sixteen battalions were split in half and another sixteen battalions, each boasting a wealth of Gallipoli experience, were formed. Thomas was initially allocated to the 58th Battalion but was subsequently transferred to the 57th Battalion. The 57th, 58th, 59th and 60th Battalions, formed from the 5th, 6th, 7th & 8th Battalions of the 2nd Brigade became the Victorian 15th Brigade.

While his younger brother was in Egypt, George Maddams went to Bendigo and on 10 July 1915 enlisted. He embarked in Melbourne on the RMS Osterley on 29 September as a part of the 10th Reinforcements of the 7th Battalion. When he arrived in Egypt the 7th Battalion was resting on the island of Lemnos, so George and his fellow reinforcements remained in Egypt.

After the evacuation from Gallipoli, mainly caused by the deteriorating weather conditions, the 7th Battalion arrived at Tel El Kebir in Egypt on 7 January 1916 to be greeted by its 10th Reinforcements, including George.

On 26 March, the 7th Battalion embarked at Alexandria for France, disembarking a week later at Marseilles. George's battalion travelled through the French countryside for almost a week, before reaching its first French battlefield near the border with Belgium. However, from their 'cattle trucks' the soldiers did not see a lot of the countryside. On 17 June Thomas followed George to France.

Thomas and George obviously had different temperaments. George's records do not record any misdemeanours, while Thomas's records show several.

Thomas was promoted to Lance Corporal - a leadership role - on 2 August 1916. He obviously didn't like the job and at his own request reverted to a Private again on 4 September. A fortnight later, Thomas went Absent without Leave or AWOL for about 12 hours. However, there must have been more to just being AWOL for 12 hours as his punishment was 28 days Field Punishment No 2. Field Punishment No. 2 saw the offender placed in handcuffs and leg fetters and given hard labour. He also lost his pay for the days of the punishment! A short time after his punishment ended, Thomas was in hospital suffering, not surprisingly, with 'sore feet'.

On 1 March 1917 Thomas was promoted to Lance Corporal again. On 31 March he was reported as 'Wounded in Action'. His battalion was not in action at the time so what how this wound occurred is a mystery! He was not admitted to a hospital for treatment.

In April and May 1917, the Allies twice tried to take the Hindenberg Line east of the town of Bullecourt. Thomas was in the thick of it. His gun team took over a section of trench and suffered heavily from artillery fire. In the end Thomas was the only man still capable of firing the Section's light Machine Gun, the Lewis Gun. He did so for 12 hours until relief got through to him. On 2 July notification came through that Thomas had been awarded the Military Medal for

‘showing great courage and devotion to duty’. Shortly after Bullecourt, Thomas had a fortnight’s leave in the UK.

Later, George was wounded with a gunshot wound to the right thigh on 20 September. He would be sent to England and did not rejoin the 7th Battalion until early December 1917.

The award of the Military Medal did not stop Thomas from his misdemeanours. He went AWOL again, this time for 8 days. With time under arrest awaiting a Field Court Martial, this misdemeanour cost him 60 days loss of pay!

Twelve months after his heroics at Bullecourt Thomas was wounded a second time, a shell fragment to his left knee. This effectively ended his war. He was sent to England and various hospitals, convalescent depots and command depots. His third recorded misdemeanour was for violently resisting arrest while drunk. This time he was awarded 21 days Field Punishment No. 2 and its consequent loss of pay. Thomas returned to France in October 1918 but was immediately put into hospital. He did not return to the fighting before the war was over on 11 November 1918.

George left England on 18 January 1919 and disembarked in Melbourne on 10 March. He was discharged on 2 May, classified as Medically Unit.

In the meantime, Thomas left England for Return to Australia on 25 January 1919. With influenza raging across the world, he spent a short time in Quarantine at Portsea before reaching Melbourne. He was discharged on 15 May 1919 at the Termination of his Period of Enlistment.

There is that expression that ‘It takes all types’. This was definitely the case with the Maddams brothers. George the ‘placid one’, who came home as Medically Unfit, and Thomas, the ‘wild one’ who had

three charges against him, was wounded twice, but came home with a Military Medal and a clean bill of health.

There are 59 names on the Kangaroo Flat list of World War One soldiers. The Maddams brothers are two contrasting stories from that list.

Today, along with Australians everywhere, we gather to remember those who have served to defend Australia. We do this today because it is the anniversary of the day when Australian and New Zealand soldiers, the ANZACs, landed on a beach on the Gallipoli Peninsular in Turkey on 25 April 1915. But it is also a day to remember all those who have fought under Australian flags, whether they be Army, Navy or Air Force, or the Nurses who supported them, in all theatres of conflict. We especially remember today George and Thomas Maddams, who 'did their bit' in different ways.

Lest we forget!

Neil Leckie

Regimental number	1996
Place of birth	Kangaroo Flat Victoria
Religion	Church of England
Occupation	Miner
Address	Kangaroo Flat, Victoria
Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	21
Next of kin	Father, W G Maddams, Kangaroo Flat, Victoria
Enlistment date	9 January 1915
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	6th Battalion, 5th Reinforcement
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/23/2
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board HMAT A20 <i>Hororata</i> on 17 April 1915
Rank from Nominal Roll	Lance Corporal
Unit from Nominal Roll	57th Battalion
Fate	Returned to Australia 25 January 1919
Medals	Military Medal Source: 'Commonwealth Gazette' No. 189 Date: 8 November 1917
Other details	Medals: Military Medal, 1914-15 Star, British War Medal, Victory Medal

From the Virtual War Memorial, Australia:

Thomas MADDAMS

Military Medal

Recommendation:-

'East of Bullecourt on 11th May, 1917 L/Corp Maddams showed great courage and devotion to duty under fire. After an attack made by the Battalion on our left it was necessary for his Battalion to take over portion of the front line. L/Corp Maddam's Lewis Gun team was moved over and posted in a position vacated by the other Battalion. The portion of trench taken over suffered very heavily from shell fire, and although all the crew had become casualties, L/Cpl Maddams kept his gun in action alone for 12 hours until relief could be sent him. The conduct was of the very highest order.'

Military Medal Source: 'Commonwealth Gazette' No. 189
Date: 8 November 1917

Thomas Maddams enlisted in January 1915, his elder brother George would enlist 6 months later. The Maddam's family had been in the Bendigo district since 1855 when they came in search of gold. Like their forebears, both Thomas and George Maddams were miners, and the family appears to have an interest in a mine at Big Hill at the turn of the 20th century.

Thomas would embark in mid April 1915, which means he missed the landing on the Gallipoli peninsula that claimed so many AIF lives. He would be taken on strength into the 6th Battalion for the attack for disastrous battle at Lone Pine in August 8 1915.

A Kangaroo Flat neighbour would describe the conditions at Gallipoli in a letter home published in the Bendigonian newspaper on November 25, 1915.



'Lance-Corporal F. A. McGregor, of Kangaroo Flat, in the course of a letter to his mother, says that life in the trenches is very rough. The men live on biscuits, bully beef, jam and tea. They receive bacon now and then, and sometimes rice. Their sleep is always broken, as they never have more than four hours off duty at one time when they are in the trenches. Up to the time of writing he had not felt it very cold at night, but it was summer time then. He had not had a wash since he had been there, and did not see the smallest chance of getting one, as they barely got enough water to drink, let alone wash with. He had had one close shave -a bullet just grazed his forehead and took a little skin off, but he had a feeling that he would pull through safely. Tom Maddams was in the same trench, and was quite well. The flies were a terrible pest to the men in the trenches, as they could not be kept off the food.'

Thomas would get off Gallipoli in late November via Hospital ship and be admitted to hospital in Valetta, Malta. This was just three weeks before all the Australian and Allied troops are evacuated off the Dardanelles.

Back in Egypt in early 1916, the AIF reorganised dividing experienced soldiers from established Battalions into new battalions with newly arrived recruits fresh from Australia. Thomas would find himself in the new 57th battalion, part of the 15th Brigade and also gain a promotion to Lance Corporal.

Fighting in France with the 57th, Thomas would be wounded in action at the end of March 1917, but appears to stay in the field. A month later on May 11 he would be recommended for the action listed above.

He would be awarded his medal in July 2nd, 1917 yet just four months later face Court Marshall in the field for being AWL for 6 days and is punished by forfeiting 60 days pay.

He would be wounded twice more in 1918 with the most serious injury being a Gun Shot Wound to the knee. He would face more discipline issues but eventually survived the war and his 4 years in the military. He would arrive home to Australia on March 23, 1919. His brother George would also return just six days earlier than Thomas.

Second Bullecourt - The action where Thomas Maddams would be recommended for a bravery award.

As part of the final throes of the British Army's Arras offensive, a renewed attempt was made to secure the fortified village of Bullecourt in the period 3-17 May. The Australian 2nd Division (5th and 6th Brigades) and the British 62nd Division attacked at 3.45 am on 3 May 1917. The Australians penetrated the German line but met determined opposition which frustrated the envelopment plan. Drawing more and more forces in, renewed efforts on 7 May succeeded in linking British and Australian forces, but inspired a series of ferocious and costly German counter-attacks over the next week and a half. Following the repulse of the counter-attack of 15 May, the Germans withdrew from the remnants of the village. Although the locality was of little or no strategic importance, the actions were nevertheless extremely costly: AIF casualties totalled 7,482 from three Australian Divisions.

[1] Bendigonian newspaper, November 25, 1915 Page 2

[2] <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E84360>

3086 MADDAMS, George	Kangaroo Flat, Bendigo, Victoria	7th Battalion, 10th Reinforcement
Regimental number	3086	
Place of birth	Bendigo Victoria	
Religion	Church of England	
Occupation	Railway employee	
Address	Kangaroo Flat, Bendigo, Victoria	

Marital status	Single
Age at embarkation	22
Next of kin	Father, W G Maddams, Kangaroo Flat, Bendigo, Victoria
Enlistment date	10 July 1915
Date of enlistment from Nominal Roll	19 July 1915
Rank on enlistment	Private
Unit name	7th Battalion, 10th Reinforcement
AWM Embarkation Roll number	23/24/3
Embarkation details	Unit embarked from Melbourne, Victoria, on board HMAT RMS <i>Osterley</i> on 29 September 1915
Rank from Nominal Roll	Private
Unit from Nominal Roll	7th Battalion
Fate	Returned to Australia 18 January 1919

/ Thu 30 Sep 1915 / Page 3 / BENDIGONIANS AT BROADMEADOWS.

BENDIGONIANS AT BROADMEADOWS.



READING FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: PTE. G. MADDAMS, BENDIGO; PTE. G. SULLIVAN, BENDIGO; PTE. F. ELLSON, BENDIGO; CPL. B. GAY, COLLINGWOOD; PTE. R. GROOM, COLLINGWOOD; PTE. W. CARTER, BENDIGO; PTE. G. LANGRELL, CAMBERWELL; BUGLER B. PATTERSON, BENDIGO.

1921 Dec 28, The Ballarat Star

MILITARY MEDALLIST KILLED - FALL FROM MOVING TRAIN. Bendigo, Tuesday. While climbing from one truck to another when travelling by special train from Echuca to Bendigo, Thomas Maddams, a single man, who resided at Kangaroo Flat, was killed early this morning. He fell to the permanent way, and sustained shocking head injuries, which quickly brought about his death. He had won the Military Medal (in the) late war.

1921 Dec 29, The Argus. Coroner not Satisfactory

BENDIGO, Wednesday - To enable the police to make further inquiries, Mr J. H. Curnow, the Deputy Coroner, to day adjourned for a week the inquiry into the death of Thomas Maddams aged 26 years, a single man, who was killed by a fall from a covered railway truck while returning from the Echuca sporting carnival early on Tuesday morning. Evidence was given by two passengers that they saw Maddams's legs disappear over the back of the truck. No one could have pushed him. Maddams was perfectly sober. No one was moving about in the truck, nor was there any quarrelling during the journey. The truck was in darkness. One witness added that it appeared to him that Maddams was endeavouring to climb from one truck to another while the tram was in motion.

Mr Curnow said that it was incredible that a man travelling with comrades should fall over the back of a truck and his comrades not wish to see if he were caught on the couplings or buffers. The evidence was unsatisfactory. Sub inspector Gleeson expressed the opinion that great callousness had been shown.

1922 Jan 5 The Ballarat Star - COUNTRY NEWS – BEER AND SAUCE YOUNG MAN'S DEATH

Bendigo, Wednesday.

"I saw Thomas Maddams drink half a bottle of beer. He poured a bottle of Worcester sauce into the ale bottle, and drank the mixture," said Percy James Tyson, a driver, in the Coroner's Court this morning, when

Mr J. H. Curnow, J.P., continued his inquiry into the death of Thomas Maddams, Military Medallist, 26, who fell from a covered truck of the special train returning from Echuca to Bendigo at 1.45 a.m. on Dec. 27.

One of the witnesses was severely reprimanded by the Coroner.

A finding of misadventure, with no blame attachable to anyone, was recorded.

When the inquiry was opened two witnesses deposed that there were 30 to 40 men in the truck, most of whom were asleep, and said that they did not see any trouble in the truck.

The Coroner was not satisfied, and for this morning 17 occupants of the truck were subpoenaed. Evidence was given that ale was drunk in the truck; that two men fought early in the night; that during the journey the hurricane lamp of the truck was kicked to pieces by Maddams. At Epsom, the station near which the fatality occurred, Maddams was the worse for drink, and was seen to fall from the railing which supports the canopy at the rear of the truck.

James Tyson, a carter, of Long Gully, said that Maddams was drinking on the journey. The light was put out three or four times. He stated that William Henry Swalwell, who gave evidence on the first day, told witness he should say as little as he could about the matter.

William Henry Swalwell was recalled, in answer to the Coroner, said that he did not hear any bad language, or see any fighting in the truck. He denied having spoken to Tyson as stated.

Mr Curnow— I don't believe you, and I feel like committing you for trial for perjury, and to gaol you for contempt of court. You came here and deliberately misled me. Get out of the box. I warn you to be careful in future. You have had a narrow escape.