

**ANZAC DAY SPEECH**  
New Norfolk  
11am 25 April 2016

The Centenary of ANZAC, which runs from 2014 to 2018, represents one of the most significant commemorative events in Australia's history.

During this period, Australians will commemorate 100 years of sacrifice and service by Australian servicemen and women in all wars, conflicts and peacekeeping operations.

This year, 2016, marks the 101st anniversary of the original Gallipoli landings and the birth of the ANZAC story in 1915. Stories that helped forge the Australian identity and the character of our nation. The attributes demonstrated then—courage, endurance, mateship and sacrifice—are still relevant today.

Many important anniversaries will occur during 2016 including:

- The 100th anniversary of the Battle of Pozieres and Fromelles;
- The 75th anniversaries of the battles of Greece, Crete and the siege of Tobruk and;
- The 50th anniversary of the Battle of Long Tan, in Vietnam.

(In addition July 2016 marks the 100 year anniversary of the formation and embarkation from Tasmania to France of the 40<sup>th</sup> battalion.)

During these and other conflicts, hundreds of thousands of Australian servicemen and women would serve their country.

While the stories of courage and service they created are inspiring, the cost to Australia has been, at times, devastating.

During the Great War, the flower of a generation was lost with over 60 000 killed and 156 000 wounded, gassed or captured.

Two-thirds of those who served overseas were killed or wounded—a casualty rate of 65%, one of the highest of any nation in the war.

Tasmania also suffered with 2 432 servicemen losing their lives out of the 15,485 who enlisted during the war.

In subsequent conflicts in the Second World War, Korea, Malaya, Vietnam and the Middle East, over 40 000 Australians died on active service.

Tasmanians have been active in Australia's operations over the years including today where our men and women are serving in the middle-east in combat roles to thwart the ISIS terrorist threat in Iraq and Syria as well as in peacekeeping and humanitarian roles in the Pacific and Africa.



# Guy Barnett MP

LIBERAL MEMBER FOR LYONS

Tasmanians were among the first to land on the shores of Gallipoli on that first ANZAC Day and have since served in all branches of the Australian Defence Force with courage and distinction.

Of the 100 Victoria Crosses granted to Australians—the highest award for bravery in war time, fourteen have been won by Tasmanians, an amazing statistic—including most recently by Burnie born Corporal Cameron Baird VC MG in Afghanistan, one of only two Australian soldiers to receive both a Medal for Gallantry and a Victoria Cross.

But today I also want to share the story of Corporal Walter Ernest Brown known as ‘Wally’ who was born on 3 July 1885 in New Norfolk. Wally was one of Tasmania’s 14 Victoria Cross recipients. After his schooling in New Norfolk, he became a grocer in Hobart before moving to New South Wales and enlisting with the Australian Infantry Forces on 26 July 1915.

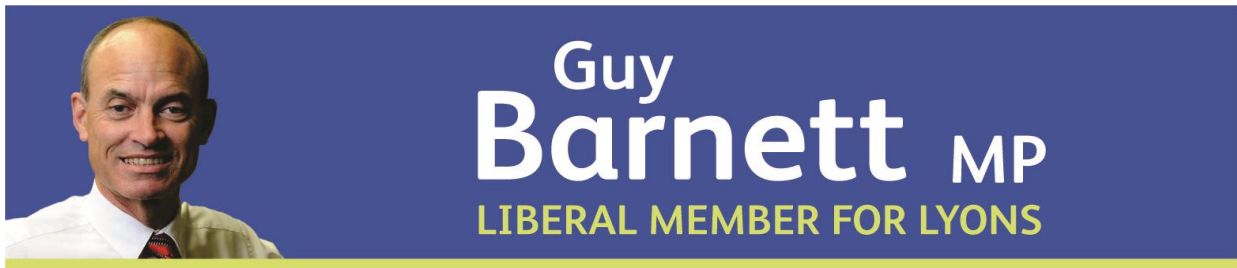
Wally Brown sailed to Egypt in October 1915 joining the First Light Horse Regiment on 14 January 1916. While in Egypt and annoyed by the delays in getting into the ‘action’ in France it is said he made up a story that he had lost his false teeth so that he could be sent to Cairo. Upon arrival in Cairo Wally organised a transfer for himself by ship to the fighting on the western front in France, and this occurred on 30 September 1916.

Wally Brown joined the 20<sup>th</sup> battalion in August 1917 and in September and October 1917 Wally Brown fought at Passchendaele, Belgium which was a brutal and bloody battle where some 245,000 Commonwealth forces and 400,000 German forces were killed over a 5 month period. It was here that Wally was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal for aiding his fellow wounded soldiers under heavy fire and taking charge of his section after his Sergeant was wounded and disabled. In April 1918 Wally Brown was promoted to Corporal and continued to engage in trench warfare for months on end.

On 6 July 1918 during fierce battles at Villers-Bretoneux northern France, Wally Brown was awarded the Victoria Cross. The citation reads:

“Brown was with an advanced party which took over some newly captured trenches near Accroche Wood and, on being told that a sniper’s post was causing trouble he located the enemy strong point, picked up two Mills bombs (grenades) and ran towards it under fire. His first bomb fell short but on reaching the post he knocked one German down with his fist and threatened the others with the remaining Mills bomb. The whole party consisting of one officer and 12 men surrendered and Brown shepherded them back to the Australian lines.”

Wally Brown survived World War 1 and returned to Australia working in various jobs before he re-enlisted in World War 2 in 1940 falsely stating he had no previous military experience and giving his age as 39, instead of 54 years! In Singapore a few hours before



the British officially surrendered the city to the Japanese, it was reported that Wally Brown when hearing of the surrender announcement said 'no surrender for me' collected some hand grenades and walked towards the enemy never to be seen again. His body was never recovered and his official date of death is 28 February 1942. His medals together with the machine gun he captured in France are displayed at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Today, over 11,000 war veterans and ex-service personnel live in Tasmania.

Today we honour and pay respect to all those who have served.

On this ANZAC day I encourage the community to reflect upon the price of freedom, and give thanks to all those prepared to pay that price, on our behalf.