



Guy Barnett MP

LIBERAL MEMBER FOR LYONS

THE PARLIAMENT OF TASMANIA - HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

ADJOURNMENT SPEECH – LT-COLONEL HARRY MURRAY VC CMG DSO DCM

TUESDAY, 26 May 2015 [6.15pm]

Mr BARNETT (Lyons) - Madam Speaker, I stand here tonight in a state of considerable excitement to advise the medals of Harry Murray VC are returning home to Tasmania to be showcased at Launceston's Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery for a special opening on Saturday 6 June at 10 a.m. I am excited about this because they have been held by the family all this time. For a short time they were on display at Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in 2011. It is appropriate they return home prior to being finally donated to the Australian War Memorial in July.

Australia's most highly decorated soldier, Harry Murray VC, is an iconic figure in this state and across the nation. Already the iconic portrait of Harry Murray VC has been loaned to Tasmania and the QVMAG by the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. This opportunity was made available thanks to the Australian War Memorial and the director, Dr Brendan Nelson. I spoke to him on 30 November last year at Albany where the 100-year anniversary of the departure of Australians to Egypt and then to Gallipoli was commemorated.

Dr Brendan Nelson is an old colleague of mine from the Federal Parliament. He is a wonderful person and keen to advocate for the Centenary of ANZAC and the Australian War Memorial. He offered an item from the Australian War Memorial and following consultations with the Premier and the Premier's Office, I wrote back and requested the portrait of Harry Murray VC. That has been kindly granted and is now in Tasmania for the duration of our centenary commemorations. It is a great credit to the Australian War Memorial and now to Tasmania to host that portrait for the Centenary of ANZAC commemorations over the next four years through to 2018.

Harry Murray grew up on a farm at Evandale. He was part of the first landings in Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 and was in the final 200 soldiers who evacuated in December 1915. He was in the Launceston Artillery for half a dozen years before departing and working in Western Australia and then departing for Gallipoli. He received his Distinguished Conduct Medal in Gallipoli and was then awarded the Distinguished Service Order at the battle of the Somme in France. He was awarded the Victoria Cross at Gueudecourt. He stormed a German trench, captured the position, repulsed three counter attacks, led further bayonet and bombing charges and then rescued the wounded, carrying them to safety and for that he rightfully received the VC.

In 1917 Murray was again awarded the Distinguished Service Order during the assault on the Hindenburg Line. He also received the Croix De Guerre medal from the French Government and at the end of the war, the Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George. He is the most highly decorated soldier in Australia and he is our own Tasmanian.

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I have previously read the book, *Mad Harry* and I am now reading the book, *No Ordinary Determination* about Percy Black and Harry Murray VC. It is riveting reading and I commend it to others.

I note in February 2006, the Governor-General, Major-General Michael Jeffery, unveiled the statue of Harry Murray VC in Evandale. It was a very hot but wonderful day and I specifically thank the Murray family for being so generous in offering up those invaluable medals for us to enjoy in Tasmania before they go to the Australian War Memorial.

I have mentioned the medals he received. He was wounded many times during service in World War I. He enlisted at a somewhat older age for World War II when he was living in Queensland on a farm. He features prominently in my book, *Our Heroes: Tasmania's Victoria Cross Recipients*. The fourth edition will be released in a few months' time, of course including a special chapter on Corporal Cameron Baird from Burnie, Tasmania's fourteenth Victoria Cross winner. It will also have a special chapter on Teddy Sheean, who does not have a VC but in my view deserves one.

Mr Jaensch - Yet.

Mr BARNETT - I note the interjection of 'yet' from Mr Jaensch.

I commend and thank the Harry Murray Memorial Committee, Laurie Wotherspoon, the Northern Midlands RSL, and the late David von Stieglitz. I commend him in particular for the work he did as chairman of the Harry Murray Memorial Committee. I pay tribute to David Von Stieglitz for his wonderful work in extending and promoting the memory of Harry Murray and for all the wonderful work he did in the Northern Midlands and elsewhere for veterans throughout Tasmania.