

Guy Barnett MP

Minister for State Development, Construction and Housing
Minister for Energy and Renewables
Minister for Resources
Minister for Veterans Affairs
Liberal Member for Lyons



Tasmanian Government **Media Release**

19 June 2022

Guy Barnett, Minister for Veterans' Affairs

120th anniversary of the end of the Boer War

This year marks the 120th Anniversary of the official end of the Boer War on 31 May 1902.

The Boer War Day commemorates the first war in which Australia fought as a nation.

Between 1899 and 1902, about 16,000 Australians were sent to the Boer War including a group of Tasmanians referred to as a 'Tasmanian contingent', as Australia did not become a Federation until 1901 (during the Boer War).

In total 860 Tasmanians across seven contingents served in the Boer War and 27 of those men lost their lives.

The Tasmanian 1st Imperial Bushmen was the most highly decorated Australian unit in the Boer War. Trooper John Bisdee and Lieutenant Guy Wyllie were the 1st two Tasmanian's to be awarded the Victoria Cross on 1 September 1900.

Conditions for both soldiers and the horses that accompanied them were harsh.

Without time to acclimatise to the severe environment and in an army with a greatly over-strained logistic system, the horses fared badly. Many died, not just in battle but of disease, while others succumbed to exhaustion and starvation on the long treks.

Today I encourage all Tasmanians to take time to reflect on the service and sacrifice Australian soldiers made in the Boer War and the many other conflicts Australia has participated in to protect the freedoms of our nation.