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LIBERAL MEMBER FOR LYONS

ANZAC DAY SPEECH - WESTBURY 6am 25 April 2017 7 Lonsdale Promenade, Westbury

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, 2017, marks the 102nd 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 2017 including:

- o The 100th anniversary of the Battles of Bullecourt, Polygon Wood and Beersheba; and
- o The 75th anniversaries of the Fall of Singapore, Bombing of Darwin, Battle of the Coral Sea and Battle of El Alamein;

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.

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, other being Ben Roberts-Smith VC MG.

But today I also want to share some remarks with you about the iconic Australian Light Horse.

The exploits of these mounted infantry regiments are among the most well-known and famous in our Anzac story.

It was Light Horsemen who charged at Beersheba, breaking the Ottoman line and paving the way for the wider Allied liberation of Palestine, and ultimately in the eyes of many, the formation of modern Israel.

I had the honour of visiting Beersheba in 2010 and were of course reminded that 800 Light Horsemen galloped across four to five kilometres of open ground in what is known as the Last Great Cavalry Charge in history. The Australians secured Beersheba for Great Britain and her allies on 31 October 1917 and in little more than a week after, Jerusalem was free of Muslim rule for the first time in 800 years.

It was Light Horsemen - without their horses - who charged so courageously at the Battle of the Nek at Gallipoli - a story so movingly told in Peter Weir's iconic 1979 film, *Gallipoli*.

It is Light Horsemen today, now riding armoured vehicles rather than horses, who continue to serve in the Middle East and other regions, writing new chapters in the Anzac story.

But it is the exploits of Tasmanian Light Horsemen during the Great War that I would particularly like to focus on today.

During this conflict, many young men from regional Tasmania, including from the Westbury district, joined Light Horse Regiments.

They joined for a variety of reasons. For adventure, to serve their country, to travel. Perhaps simply because, being country boys, they were familiar with horses.

Many were ultimately assigned to the 3rd Light Horse Regiment, which formed part of the 1st Light Horse Brigade

Whilst the 3rd Light Horse Regiment was primarily a South Australian unit, one of its three squadrons was comprised of Tasmanians, from this district and others across our State.

I am proud to note that my wife Kate's grandfather Oscar George Bramich and great uncle George Henry Bramich were part of that contingent with both training and Mona Vale near Ross and George serving in Palestine from 1916.

But there is a connection closer to home that I would like to explore.

Another two of those Tasmanians were Westbury men: Privates Jack Viney and Norman Harvey.

Viney and Harvey were close friends who joined the Australian Imperial Force together on 18 August 1915.

They were both assigned to the 3rd Light Horse Regiment and embarked on the HMAT Ceramic on 23 November 1915.

Both men would go on to spend almost 4 years in the battlefields of the Middle East, taking part in several battles.

During the Palestinian campaign in 1918, Jack Viney was mentioned in dispatches for two accounts of conspicuous gallantry and courage under fire.

Under heavy enemy fire, he attended to wounded and delivered ammunition to the firing line, showing a great example of courage to his comrades.

Norman also served with courage and endurance during the long conflict.

The heat, sand, sweat and horror of war was a long way from the quiet fields and laneways of Westbury, where we gather this morning.

After serving with distinction during the conflict, both Jack and Norman were discharged in 1919 and returned home to Tasmania.

They both returned to Westbury, resumed life and eventually married two sisters also from the area.

As if his service in the Great War was not already enough, Jack re-enlisted in the Australian Army in May 1942 to be involved in World War 2.

The service and sacrifice of men like Jack Viney and Norman Harvey continues to serve as an example to us today.

To put a face to this courage and sacrifice, I encourage you to simply look at the front cover of your order of service.

There you will see a photo of both Jack and Norman, true Australian heroes.

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.

Thank you.