

## Friends of Soldiers Walk Inc: Newsletter

Issue 17 March 2005

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Fundraising Launch April 16<sup>th</sup>  
Mercury supplement April 23<sup>rd</sup>  
Plaque installation April 24<sup>th</sup>  
ANZAC day on the Avenue April 25<sup>th</sup>



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## Our New Patron Visits the Avenue

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His Excellency William Cox AC RFD EC Governor of Tasmania has kindly accepted the position of patron of FOSW. His first act as our patron was to conduct an inspection of the Avenue on February 1<sup>st</sup>. His Excellency noted that he remembered the Avenue as a boy walking with his father and distinctly remembered both the old tree guards and the metal plaques on the trees. Now he resides at Government House, the First Dog also gets walked on the Domain and along the Avenue. His Excellency noting that he had observed the changes and the appearance of numbers under the trees. The weather was wonderful, the pace was brisk and His Excellency demonstrated a keen interest in all we were doing on the Avenue. He also took time to chat with members of Project Hahn, currently doing the heavy work of removing trees and brush cutting sections of the Avenue.

The Governor's father William Ellis Cox served as a lieutenant in the 17th Battery, 6th Brigade Australian Field Artillery during the Great War. The Governor himself is also a former artilleryman and served as Colonel Commandant for the Royal Australian Artillery Tasmania. A total of 47 artillerymen are commemorated on the Avenue including three who served with the 17th Battery. Adrian Howard presented the Governor with a file containing details of all the gunners on the Avenue. The 17th Battery men are Gnr Albert (Reg) Escott (#500), Bombardier John Kilmartin (#257) and Cpl Phillip Turner (#162).

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## The Fundraising Campaign

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**Our big fundraising campaign is about to kick off. A cocktail party is planned at Huon Quays on April 16<sup>th</sup> with our patron, The Governor of Tasmania, in attendance. Invitations are being sent to businesses, unions, government departments and professional associations around Hobart, outlining our work and requesting they become Friends and Sponsors of the Avenue. Time is set for 6:30 pm and tickets will cost \$35. Contact FOSW 11 Franklin St West Hobart for your tickets or phone (03) 6234 4396**

The Mercury will be publishing a special 90<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Landing supplement on April 23<sup>rd</sup> and this will include a short paragraph on all the soldiers on the Avenue plus a photograph where available. A map of the Avenue will be printed along with details of the history and basic facts about the Avenue.

On April 24<sup>th</sup> we are planning to install plaques in a small 'exhibition' section of the Avenue. This will make the first major installation of replacement plaques and show the people of Hobart what the Avenue will look like into the future.

In August we are planning a Descendant's Gathering, to which all descendants will naturally be invited, along with the installation of more plaques. More details on that and a planned dinner later.

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## The Roma and District's Heroes Avenue

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One of our Queensland members, Margaret Waddell-Wood, last year sent us a fine brochure for Roma and District's Heroes Avenue produced for Roma Remembers Week in September 2003. A group has been working on researching these soldiers for many years and not all Avenue trees have been identified and some have been lost to storms (bottle trees don't have a big root system). The brochure provides a snapshot of the history of this Avenue.

"On 20 September 1918 the people of Roma town and Bungil Shire gathered on Wyndham Street to plant the first memorial bottletrees in Heroes' Avenue. The Mayor, Alderman Miscamble, explained that since the start of the war in 1914 some 1200 men from the Roma region had enlisted to fight the enemies of Empire. Of these about 76 had been killed.

Alderman Miscamble spoke of the mutual admiration and thanks felt by the people of Roma, for these men *whose souls were big enough to go to volunteer to fight the enemy of humanity and civilisation.*

The first 27 trees were to be planted in honour of the men who had attended Roma State School – Private Frank Bartlem was the first to pay the supreme penalty, at Gallipoli.

A bottle tree known as Roma's Tree of Knowledge was planted outside the Post Office in honour of Corporal Norman Saunders killed in France during 1916.

Heroes' Avenue was extended to include all men from the Roma District who died in the 1914-1918 conflict and each bottletree was marked with a plaque bearing the name of a soldier. The Avenue soon extended and, before long, plaques occupied both sides of several streets.

In 1994, Rebecca Kupfer implemented the Adopt-a-Tree program. Married to a nephew of Private Ernest Kupfer, who had been killed in France on October 4 1917, Rebecca has spent 9 years gathering information on the soldiers honoured and called for volunteers to adopt a tree. The response has been overwhelming.

Recently her research has extended to cover about 34 additional soldiers to be honoured in the avenue and every soldier from this district who has served their country in wartime and welcomes additional information.

Many Roma district individuals and organisations such as Air Cadets, Girl Guides, the Endeavour Foundation, the Salvation Army, the Returned Services League, church groups and groups of school children answered the call.

On Anzac Day sponsors lay their floral tribute at their bottletrees and join the march through Roma, ensuring the living legacy of World War I endures."

The brochure provides a Roll of Honour of over 100 men from the district who were killed as well as more detail on those from Roma itself. The following section is of great interest to us, given the author of the quote.

"The soldiers remembered with reverence in the avenues of Roma characterised the people of south west Queensland and Australia. An AIF Lieutenant, Norman Meagher of the 40<sup>th</sup> Battalion, himself killed on 4 October 1917, wrote of the men:

*These Australian soldiers of a year or so, most of them are great men. Brought from the plough, the mine, behind the counter, from the counting house, and such-like civil occupations they took over the front line when they came to France like steady seasoned soldiers, and held their positions in a cool, confident, and plucky manner."*

Norman Meagher was the son of Alderman Richard James Meagher of the City of Hobart (a former Lord Mayor). He had been educated at St Mary's Convent School and then Hutchins and was studying law, working in the chambers of a future Justice of the Supreme Court. He was 22 when he died. Before enlistment he lived with his parents in Russell Crescent Sandy Bay. In 1918, his parents published a collection of his articles and letters plus obituary comments, into a book called *With the Fortieth*, now very rare. Norman Meagher is commemorated by tree #300. Unfortunately this tree is missing having been cut down some years ago: the top was left near the base having been carefully sawn off.

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## What's in A Medal?

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Much is rightly made of servicemen who were awarded medals for gallantry, with most of the recent focus on winners of the Victoria Cross.

The Military Medal was the most common award for valour with over 11,000 awarded. Our first patron Frank MacDonald won his MM during the Passchendaele offensives of 1917. 14 of the men on the Avenue were awarded the MM with one, W O Jeffrey (#387), also winning the Croix de Guerre. 4 received the much less common Distinguished Conduct Medal (DCM), with one of these men also receiving the Military Cross, the officer's MM. 3 others also received MCs.

We should not forget that many who deserved a medal did not get one due to the death of witnesses and/or the men concerned so no corroborated recommendation could be made. The following letter to the Mercury on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1918 provides additional light on the matter of awards.

*Sir*

*In receiving a letter from my brother, who is with the AIF in the Artillery in France, I was astounded to learn how the Military Medals appear to be given out. He says that, after a big fight, there were only three and himself left at the gun, and they put up a good go. After the action, they were informed that one MM would be given between the four, and owing to the fact that four gunners could not take one medal, they decided between themselves that the gunner with the longest record would take it. With all due respect to the soldier who got it, don't you think that if the military authorities though their action good enough for a distinction they would have each got one or else none at all? Your, etc*

*Soldiers Brother.*

### **Men on the Avenue awarded medals for gallantry**

#### **Distinguished Conduct Medal**

Sgt Hector Charles Long	40 <sup>th</sup> Bn
L/Cpl Spencer Pedder	6 <sup>th</sup> Bn
CSM Charles Edward Wilkie	26 <sup>th</sup> Bn

#### **Military Cross**

Lt Jack Valentine Cook	11 <sup>th</sup> Bn Queens Royal West Surrey Regt (ex-12 <sup>th</sup> Bn)
Cpt Keith Heritage	19 <sup>th</sup> Bn

#### **Military Cross and Mention in Despatches**

T/Major Augustus Oliver Woods	26 <sup>th</sup> Bn
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#### **Military Cross and Distinguished Conduct Medal**

Cpt Richard William Dewson	3 <sup>rd</sup> Divisional Train AASC
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#### **Military Medal and Croix de Guerre**

Sgt William Oakford Jeffrey	13 <sup>th</sup> Bde Aust Field Artillery
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#### **Military Medal**

L/Cpl Norman Wilfred Allison	Field Ambulance
Lt Harry Russell Beamish Bruford	26 <sup>th</sup> Bn
Sgt Wynfred Cleary	1 <sup>st</sup> Bde Aust Field artillery
Pte William George Copcutt	12 <sup>th</sup> Bn
Pte William Charles Delaney	33 <sup>rd</sup> Bn
2/Lt William George Drew	47 <sup>th</sup> Bn
Dvr William John Dwyer	10 <sup>th</sup> Bde Aust Field Artillery
Pte Oswald Hobson	26 <sup>th</sup> Bn
Pte John (Jack) Henry Lewis	12 <sup>th</sup> Bn
L/Cpl Harry Havelock Morey	4 <sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance
Pte Albert Arthur Reader	12 <sup>th</sup> Bn
Pte Albert James Taylor	47 <sup>th</sup> Bn
Gnr George Thomas Clyde Williams	2 <sup>nd</sup> Bde Aust Field Artillery

#### **Mention in Despatches**

Cpt Guy Brooke Bailey	52 <sup>nd</sup> Bn
Cpt Ivo Stephen Margetts	12 <sup>th</sup> Bn
Pte Harold John Ward	12 <sup>th</sup> Bn

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## **Work on the Avenue**

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Work on the Avenue by members of Project Hahn continues. There have been a few changes in personnel but no change in the levels of enthusiasm and commitment to the project. Brush cutting now extends along nearly half the Avenue from in line with tree#156 in the southern section to tree#358 above the Magazine on the lower side and tree#333 on the upper side. The whole Avenue is really opening up and once again can be seen as a formal entity. From conversations with users of the path, this change is very well received with the comments 'about time' and 'wonderful' pretty much summing up reactions,

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## **Next Working Bee: March 20th 10am**

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Our next working bee is coming up. The usual arrangements will apply with a meeting at the car park at the northern end of the old TCA ground. Work will focus on protection for trees suffering from soil compaction due to paths, minor weeding, removal of light woody vegetation and replacing missing numbers. A barbeque will follow so bring a gold coin.

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## **Donations and Fundraising**

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We are now seeking donations from descendants and members of the community to go into the plaque fund. Our first set of plaques to be unveiled on April 24th will be costing \$250 a piece and installation will be covered by project Hahn. This will not be the case in the future. We will also need funds for interpretation panels along the Avenue and other works such as placing seats along the way.

Funds will be committed to the overall completion of the project with priority being installing plaques. The Committee has yet to decide on the order of sections to follow though our thinking is to complete the Avenue section-by-section first focussing on key entry and exit points. If a family wishes to make application for a plaque to be installed 'out-of-order' due to the advanced age or infirmity of a close descendant, then you are free to do so and we will work to accommodate your request. We will also ensure that every family that requests a plaque will see one installed.

Why do it this way? It will be easier to ensure proper co-ordination with the HCC, prepare sites and actually install them if it is done in groups close together. It will also ensure that none are overlooked or that the Avenue ends up looking like a patchwork. The first priority will be to create an exhibition section just north of the Powder magazine of 20 trees adjacent to the path with plaques installed. Plaques will carry details of full name, unit, date and cause of death, age, occupation, address and so on. Each plaque will carry the unit colour patch.

All funds from descendants will go into our Gift Account and will only be used to fund plaques and their installation. Additional funding is being sought from the Department of Veteran's Affairs *Saluting their Service* program, the State government and the Tasmanian Community Fund. Our fundraising efforts will also be seeking contributions from business and corporate sponsors as well as sporting and community groups and citizens of Hobart.

Our rough estimate is that the total project will require c\$250,000 to cover plaques, installation with the remainder being available for other work on the Avenue. The Hobart City Council has committed \$20,000 per year for the next decade towards tree propagation and maintenance along the Avenue. Project Hahn activities are funded through the Federal Government *Work for the Dole* program.

*Please send you donations to Friends of Soldiers Walk Inc (cheques from descendants should be made out to FOSW Gift Account). Please attach the name of the soldier you are related to. If you wish to make a small donation now and further donations in the future feel free to do so. No one is bound to pay any given amount at any particular time and it is understood that financial circumstances vary considerably. Names of all donors will be acknowledged in the newsletter and on the website.*

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## Bellerive

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The Bellerive Rifle Club, one of many around the State in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century planted its own Avenue in 1918. The Avenue was in the Rifle club grounds now part of Mornington Hill along Quarry Road. This is one of a number on the eastern shore; Rokeby's Avenue planted in 1919 and another municipal Avenue about which little is confirmed but may have been next to what is now the outdoor practice wickets at the TCA.

*The Mercury 9 September 1918 p7*

### **Bellerive Soldiers Avenue Tree Planting Ceremony**

There was a large gathering on Saturday afternoon at the Bellerive rifle range to witness the planting of trees to form an avenue of honour of those members of the club who have volunteered for active service during the present war. The Inspector of rifle Clubs (Lieut. Sanders) and Mrs Sanders were amongst those who went over from Hobart, and evinced a lively interest in the proceedings. Mr H H Facy, captain of the club, asked Major A Morrisby to address the gathering before the actual work began. Major Morrisby said the trees to be planted would represent the members of the club who were now or had been at the front in this great war, and now numbered 23 men out of a total of 60 members. This constituted more than a third of the membership, a percentage, he believed that had not been exceeded by any country rifle club in Tasmania. Of the 23, two Private Herbert Lazenby and Private A Edwards, had made the supreme sacrifice. In planting the avenue they were helping to mark an event that would form no mean portion of the history of Tasmania, and show to future generations the part their boys had taken in the affairs of the Empire, and in assisting to vindicate the rights of the weak and small nations. He urged them to continue to do all they could to assist in the prosecution of the war, which they could do in many ways.

The visitors were then invited to the entrance of the rifle range, where the first tree was planted. All the holes had been previously prepared, and the trees (*Macrocarpa*) placed beside them. The trees were marked with the names of the soldiers in whose honour they were planted. Many of the relatives of the men were present and themselves planted the trees. Other trees were planted by the president of the club (Dr Haywood), the captain (Mr H Facy), members of the club, and visitors.



The members of the club (who turned out well) set to work with a will, and while the planting was going on others put up guards, a quantity of sawn timber having been provided, while others fastened wire around the guards, the more effectively to protect the trees. Splendid work was done by Mr James O'May and his son, Mr E W O'May (secretary of the club). The former was the practical man, and

mainly attended to all the details of the tree-planting, while the latter was everywhere when there was work to be done.



. After the trees had been planted, the ladies, who had mustered in great force, dispensed afternoon tea. Work was then resumed, and all the trees were guarded and wired, and the names added. In the evening an entertainment was given in the Bellerive Institute, when the trophies won during the past year were presented by the president (Dr Haywood) and Major Morrisby. The room was crowded. Several songs and recitations were given by Messrs McVilly, N Ford and others, after which dancing was indulged in. Supper was provided by the ladies. The proceeds of the entertainment were in aid of the funds of the Miniature Rifle Club range, which is in course of construction. The photos were published in the *Tasmanian Mail* on 12<sup>th</sup> September 1918 p18 as part of full-page coverage.

**Recent presentations**

Rosny Seniors group, Hobart Probus, Project Hahn

**Planned**

Vaucluse Village, Friends of the Botanical Gardens, War Widows Guild

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**Coming up**

**More details on the April 24<sup>th</sup> installation with a full list of trees.**

**Bream Creek and Ellendale Avenues**

**Another soldier feature**

**Report on the fundraising effort**

**Arrangements for making a bequest**



A big thanks to Duncan Kerr's office for photocopying.

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