



# NAVY LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA

## VIC-TAS DIVISION

### NOVEMBER 2019

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“Keeping Watch over the Maritime Wellbeing of Australia”

## CONTENTS

SEAFARERS SERVICE 20 OCT 2019 .....	2
FEDERAL COUNCIL AGM & CONFERENCE .....	4
REMEMBRANCE SERVICE.....	5
11 NOVEMBER 2019 AT MENTONE RSL .....	5
UNKNOWN WARRIOR.....	6
NUSHIP SYDNEY.....	7
816 SQUADRON ENHANCES RFS AIR ATTACK CAPABILITY.....	8
ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY DIVERS & THE SNOWY MOUNTAIN SCHEME .....	9
SHRINE OF REMEMBRANCE REPORT.....	12



RAN Leading  
Seaman  
Aircraftman  
Benjamin Nixon  
maintains a  
lookout during a  
search and  
rescue flight in  
fire-stricken  
NSW, November  
2019.

Image by ABIS Shane Cameron

# SEAFARERS SERVICE 20 OCT 2019



As in previous years, the Seafarers Service was well attended by over 800 people in St Paul's Cathedral. The service was organized by the Mission to Seafarers, Company of Master Mariners and the Naval Commemoration Committee of Victoria. The Colour and Flag parties made a spectacular display as usual, with the Navy League Flag at the forefront of the procession. A small contingent of the Royal Australian Navy band played before and during the service.



Senior Naval Officer Victoria Commodore Greg Yorke, laid a Wreath in remembrance of all those who lost their lives at sea.

The Rev John Sanderson, Vicar at St Georges East Ivanhoe, gave a wonderfully moving sermon. The focus was on doing our duty, giving service and sacrifice and not seeking reward or recognition. The freedoms we hold dear, such as democracy, freedom of speech and our melting pot of cultures comes at a cost. Service on the sea in times of peace and conflict ensure that we continue to enjoy those freedoms. There are three sets of people: those who are alive, those who are dead and those who are at sea. Let's commit once more to do our duty. "Right makes might".







# FEDERAL COUNCIL AGM & CONFERENCE



The Federal Council of the Navy League of Australia met in Canberra at the Hotel Realm on 25 & 26 October 2019. The current Council was re-elected, along with the Secretary, Adrian Borwick. The Divisions provided reports on their activities and plans for the future. There were discussions on Community Awards, the Maritime essay awards, defence issues and the League Statement of Policy was reviewed.

Guest speakers included Commodore MP Buckley CSC RAN and Captain Chris Skinner RAN (Rtd).

Commodore Buckley, who is the Director General Maritime Operations, gave us an insight into the employment and operations of the Fleet. He discussed local exercises off the coast of Australia, including Talisman Sabre, Pacific Vanguard, Exercise La Perouse, as well as defence engagement in Antarctica, development of our relationships with India and current deployments in the North China and South China seas. Border protection is still a vital part of the Navy's work - 20 ships are being used and over 2000 crew from the South West Pacific to Hokkaido. In the future, we can expect to see more US ships and airforce personnel in Australia.

Captain Skinner spoke of issues around the use of nuclear powered submarines. There is a need for a regulatory framework to deal with the burying of nuclear waste, radiation, the provision of nuclear fuel. Nuclear submarines provide superior speed and endurance, but we need a skilled workforce, a regulatory authority and maintenance facilities, a plan for decommissioning and defuelling. A Working Group needs to be formed comprising scientists, engineers, strategists and government agencies.

Next year's AGM and conference will be held in Canberra on 23 and 24 October 2020 at the Hotel Realm.

# REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

## 11 NOVEMBER 2019 AT MENTONE RSL



Remembrance Services were held at RSLs all over Victoria. Ken and Lynda attended the service at the Mentone RSL, a grand old building. Over 400 children and around 100 adults at the service. It was short, but very moving. All attendees were invited to a wonderful morning tea after the service.





# UNKNOWN WARRIOR



On November 7th, 1920, in strictest secrecy, four unidentified British bodies were exhumed from temporary battlefield cemeteries at Ypres, Arras, the Asine and the Somme. None of the soldiers who did the digging were told why. The bodies were taken by field ambulance to GHQ at St-Pol-Sur-Ter Noise. Once there, the bodies were draped with the union flag.

Sentries were posted and Brigadier-General Wyatt and a Colonel Gell selected one body at random. The other three were reburied.

A French Honour Guard was selected and stood by the coffin of the chosen soldier overnight. On the morning of the 8th November, a specially designed coffin made of oak from the grounds of Hampton Court arrived and the Unknown Warrior was placed inside.

On top was placed a crusaders sword and a shield on which was inscribed: "A British Warrior who fell in the GREAT WAR 1914-1918 for King and Country".

On the 9th of November, the Unknown Warrior was taken by horse-drawn carriage through Guards of Honour and the sound of tolling bells and bugle calls to the quayside. There, he was saluted by Marechal Foch and loaded onto HMS Vernon bound for Dover. The coffin stood on the deck covered in wreaths, surrounded by the French Honour Guard. Upon arrival at Dover, the Unknown Warrior was met with a nineteen-gun salute - something that was normally only reserved for Field Marshals. A special train had been arranged and he was then conveyed to Victoria Station, London. He remained there overnight, and, on the morning of the 11th of November, he was finally taken to Westminster Abbey.

The idea of the unknown warrior was thought of by a Padre called David Railton who had served on the front line during the Great War the union flag he had used as an altar cloth whilst at the front, was the one that had been draped over the coffin. It was his intention that all of the relatives of the 517,773 combatants whose bodies had not been identified could believe that the Unknown Warrior could very well be their lost husband, father, brother or son...

THIS is the reason we wear poppies. We do not glorify war. We remember - with humility - the great and the ultimate sacrifices that were made, not just in this war, but in every war and conflict where our service personnel have fought - to ensure the liberty and freedoms that we now take for granted.

Every year, on the 11th of November, we remember the Unknown Warrior. At the going down of the sun, and in the morning, we will remember them.

*Frank McCarthy, Honorary Vice-President*

# NUSHIP SYDNEY



*Published on 15 November 2019 Department of Defence (author), Russell Millard Photography (photographer)*

The Australian Defence Force's third [Air Warfare Destroyer](#) (AWD), [NUSHIP Sydney](#), is on track to be delivered to the Navy in February 2020 after completing sea trials.

*Sydney* is the third and final ship being delivered by the Air Warfare Destroyer Alliance which includes the Department of Defence, Raytheon Australia, and ASC Shipbuilding supported by Navantia Australia.

Minister for Defence, Senator the Hon Linda Reynolds CSC said the success of *Sydney*'s sea trials represents a significant step towards its delivery.

"Today's milestone is another example of the Liberal and National Government's successful initiative to reform the AWD program, setting the scene for the Naval Shipbuilding Plan," Minister Reynolds said.

"*Sydney* will enter into service early next year, and with her sister ships HMA Ships [Hobart \(III\)](#) and [Brisbane \(III\)](#), they will be the most potent warships to date.

"By using a combination of Australian and globally proven technologies, these highly capable warships are truly world-class and will allow us to work even closer with our allies."

Following *Sydney*'s sea trials, final production work including the integration of the [MH60-R helicopter](#), will be completed ahead of the ship's provisional acceptance into service in February 2020.

# 816 SQUADRON ENHANCES RFS AIR ATTACK CAPABILITY



 Published on 14 November 2019 LCDR Helen Ward (author), ABIS Shane Cameron (photographer)

The Royal Australian Navy's [MH-60R Seahawk helicopters](#)' superior Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) cameras and sensors have been working throughout the nights to support firefighting efforts across New South Wales.

Each night, soon after dusk, the aircrew are joined by RFS specialists flying over fire grounds to assess and map current fire movements.

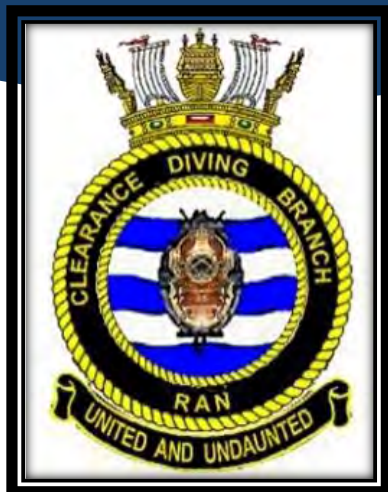
The two aircraft have been flying from 7pm each night until 5am the next morning.

RFS Air Attack Supervisors Mr Peter Sergeant from Cameron Park Brigade, near Newcastle and Mr Jason Conn from Orana District, near Dubbo recently joined [816 Squadron](#) aircrew for night flying operations.

The MH-60R, affectionately known as the Romeo, is the Navy's next generation submarine hunter and anti-surface warfare helicopter but readily adapts to support a variety of missions including Search and Rescue, Utility and Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief operations.



# ROYAL AUSTRALIAN NAVY DIVERS & THE SNOWY MOUNTAIN SCHEME



In 1961, RAN Divers were involved in solving a major problem at Lake Eucumbene.

It took the divers four months to complete Australia's most ambitious civil engineering project in 1961 when a leak was found in Lake Eucumbene's key sluice gates. The gates managed the year-round water flow from Lake Eucumbene to low lying irrigation districts in Southern Inland New South Wales and Victoria.

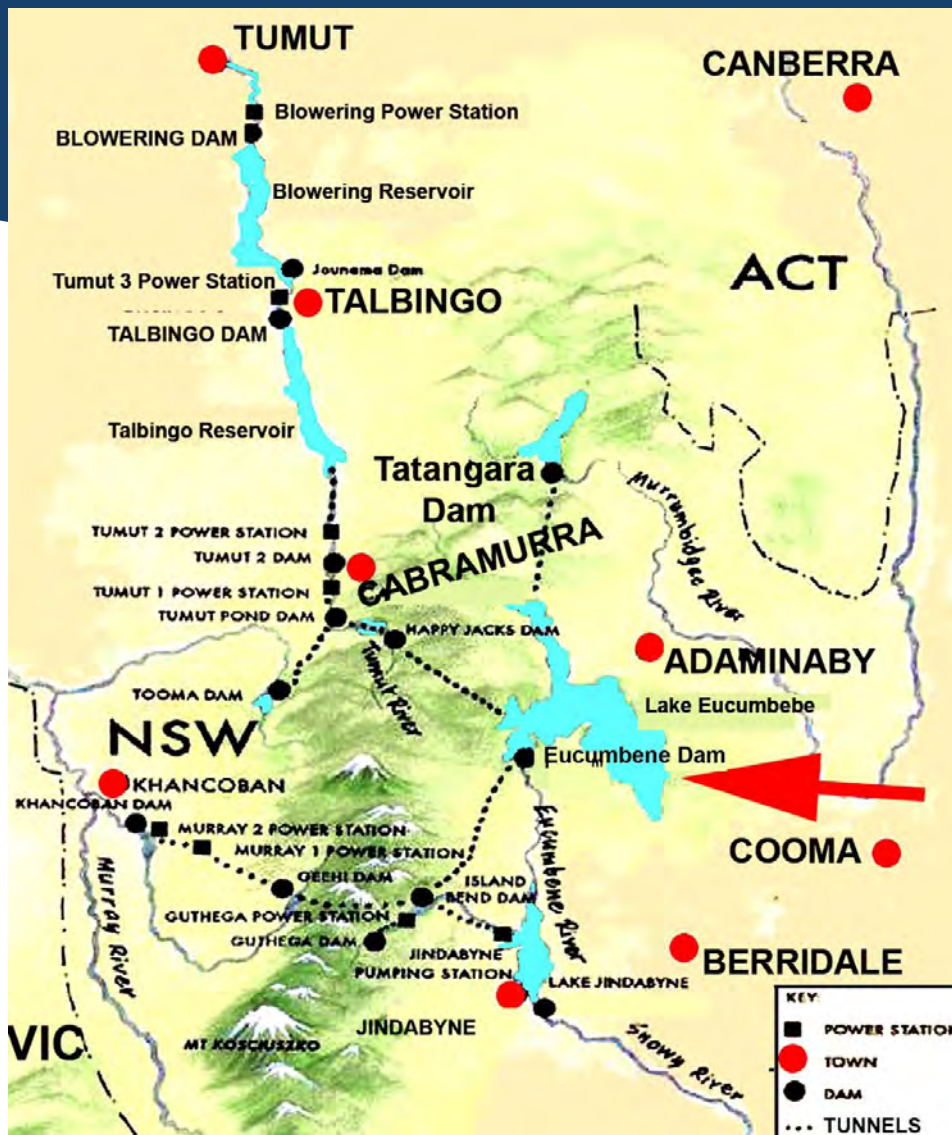
The RAN Diving Team comprised:

Commander Maurice (Batts) Batterham, OBE RANVR; [See Ian Pfennigwerth's Vol 1 "Bravo Zulu" p406 for details of his outstanding war & post war service], Lieut. R.M Titcombe, MBE RAN OIC Diving School, (See Ian Pfennigwerth's Vol 1 "Bravo Zulu" p435 for details), Chief Petty Officer W. T. Fitzgerald, Surgeon LCDR R. Gray RAN, Petty Officer Edward Jake Linton BEM, Leading Seaman E. Douglas Moore BEM, Able Seamen Norman Jeffress BEM. [See Ian Pfennigwerth's Vol 1 "Bravo Zulu" p462 for details re the 3 BEMs), Leading Seamen Ingram, Leading Seaman Gregson, Able Seamen Creasey, Able Seaman Hills.

PO Edward Douglas Moore RAN received the BEM, for his part in a hazardous diving operation undertaken by the RAN Divers for the Snowy Mountains Scheme at Lake Eucumbene ACT in 1961. Three years later, he was awarded the George Medal for his actions during the HMAS Voyager Disaster.







**Problem** - Lake Eucumbene was 4,000 feet above sea-level and with winter approaching, water temperatures falling below freezing point and large rain falls filling Eucumbene.

An accumulation of construction material was littering the inlet tower's base at a depth of 260-feet and had to be removed.

**Possible Solutions** - Drain the lake, wait 15 years for Eucumbene to refill or obtain RAN clearance divers to remove the debris asap. The RAN's Clearance Commander M. Batterham, OBE, Assistant Director of Underwater Activities for Australia and the LEUT Titcombe RAN, OIC Naval Diving School came with Navy's Divers.

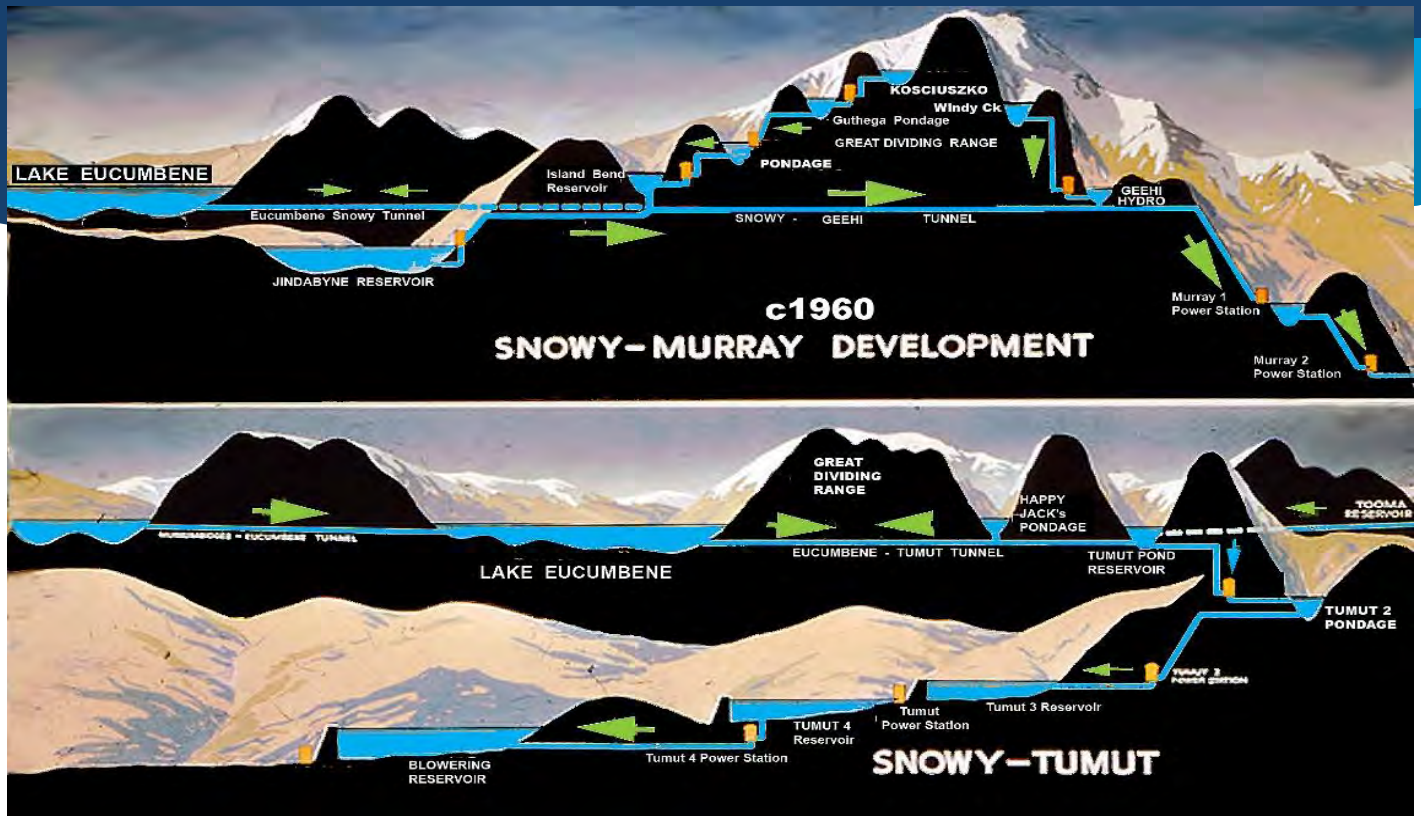
**Work started** - A pontoon was placed over the diversion

tunnel's 230-feet high intake tower whose top was 30-feet beneath the surface. RAN Divers had to dismantle one of its sides and remove twenty 3½ ton trash racks to reach the sluice gates at the tower's base. Divers lifted the heavy trash racks with a floating crane and progressively worked down the tower to the fifteenth trash rack. The next three at 200 feet were jammed into the tower frame and needed plastic explosives to free them.

The Navy divers were soon faced with diver's physiological and psychological troubles as freezing cold numbed them and decomposing vegetable matter suspended in the lake's water resulted in zero visibility at 200 feet. Surface powered, 1,000 candle power underwater lights, provided a few inches of visibility.







At this depth nitrogen narcosis arose as a diver was tasked to attach the crane to the next rack, but an unsuccessful hoist resulted and another diver descended to investigate and he reported the first diver had not attached the chains correctly. A second hoisting failed and another diver went down and reported both previous divers had been under a narcosis illusion causing them to have memory lapses in the middle of the job, leaving it partially completed. Finally, the rack was prepared for lifting, but the crane cable broke.

The RAN Diving team started again until all trash racks were finally removed

RAN divers then concentrated on checking and repairing the leaking sealing device comprising 28 five-ton 'stop-logs'. Navy acquired new French "Cousteau Constant Volume, continual voice communication" to provide surface contact. These dry suits protected divers from the freezing cold.

The intense cold saw divers finally wear heavy duty neoprene wet suits under the French dry-suits, a precaution that allowed the diver, while working at depth, to be quickly brought up to a higher level at the first sign of irrational comment brought on by narcosis.

Limited by decompression considerations the divers effective bottom time was a few minutes on each dive at maximum depth. After 15 minutes at 260 feet it took nearly an hour-and-a-half of staged decompression to bring the diver back to the surface.

The RAN gained valuable experience in reducing diver underwater time by feeding him pure oxygen through his air hose during shallower decompression stages. After 15 minutes on the lake's bottom, this reduced the diver's decompression to thirty-six minutes.

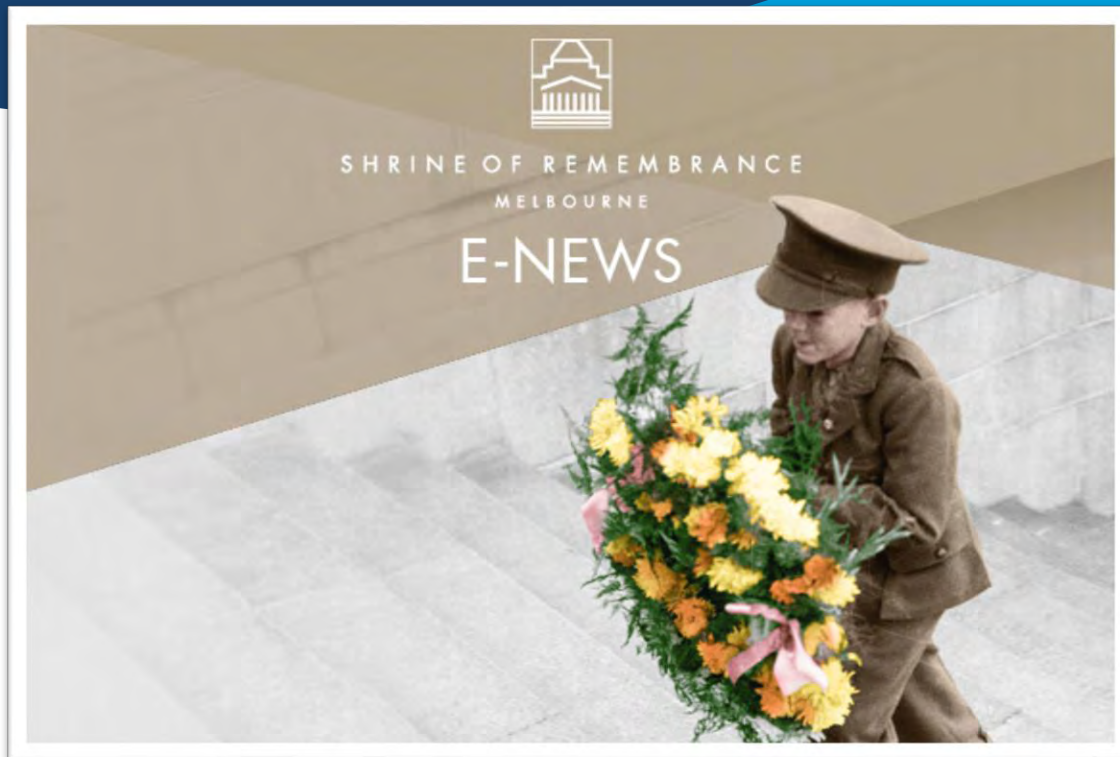
Navy's Submersible Decompression Chamber (SDC) was used as an underwater 'elevator', giving divers a rapid transit back to the surface whilst decompression was being completed in comparative comfort. However, the need for the crane to also lift trash racks and stop logs as well as the SDC saw the divers restricted to one dive in 24 hours.

For over eighty days this small RAN Diver Team maintained a gruelling pace working at depths close to 270 feet, a quite outstanding feat performed by these RAN diving team personnel who brought international attention and credit on their professionalism, Australia and its Royal Australian Navy. **BZ.**

**22nd March 1961 - job completed. Lest We Forget**

*This is an extract from CMDR John M Wilkins OAM RFD\* RAN publication "Australian Navy Honours and Awards 1939 - 1945+" with two additional photos one of crew and the other the dam's Tower.*

# Shrine of Remembrance Report



Bookings required for talks and events. Cost \$5.

Shrine podcasts are available at <http://www.shrine.org.au/Whats-On/Video-and-Podcasts>

Website: <http://www.shrine.org.au> Telephone 9661 8100

## SERVICES



### Gurkha/Nepalese Regiments

Sunday 17 November, 10.30am  
Wreath Laying at Memorial Tree G55

Each year the service and sacrifice of the Gurkha/Nepalese Regiments is honoured at their memorial plaque. The plaque was dedicated on Remembrance Day 2007 and is located near the Legacy Garden



### HMAS Sydney

and Vietnam Logistic Support Unit, Incorporating a Plaque Relocation and Dedication 2019

Sunday 17 November 2019, 1:00pm  
Wreath Laying at Memorial Tree F24  
Shrine Representative:  
Shrine Governor Group Captain Annette Holian



## Shrine Monthly Remembrance Service

Sunday 17 November 2019, 2:00pm

Wreath Laying in the Sanctuary

Shrine Representatives:

Shrine Trustee Mr. Graeme Plumridge

Shrine Governor Group Captain Annette Holian

## Last Post Service November 2019

Sunday 17 & 24 November 2019, 4:30pm

Wreath Laying and Flag Lowering on the Forecourt

The Service will be conducted by Shrine Staff and the Shrine Guard. *Note:* The Shrine invites current service men and women and veterans to participate in the wreath laying and read the Ode as a representative of the collective service of all who have served. If you wish to take part, please contact Naia Mingo, Director, Visitor Experience on [nmingo@shrine.org.au](mailto:nmingo@shrine.org.au) or 0414 588 403.

## EXHIBITIONS



displayed.

### Through the Eyes of the Son

Until October 2020

East Gallery

Photographer, John Williams (1933-2016), left an impressive intellectual and creative legacy that reflected his passion and preoccupation with the impact of the First World War on Australian culture and society. Inspired by his father's service, this exhibition features some images that have never before been publicly

# FROM THE SHRINE SHOP



## Remembrance Magazine

November 2019

\$5.00

This latest edition explores the aftermath of war, the rise of civil conflict in Europe and the involved process of relocating and burying those who gave the ultimate sacrifice. Discover how service has inspired entrepreneurial pursuits in more recent times.



## Poppy Teapot

\$64.99

A fine bone china teapot and metal infuser designed in Australia and illustrated by Jenny Phillips, Australia's leading botanical artist. A beautiful gift or addition to your tea collection. Microwave and dishwasher safe.



## Poppy Recollections Brooch

\$20.00

Rich red petals float over gold plate, giving the traditional poppy a modern update. This range includes brooches, earrings and pendants.



## Poppy & Dove Resin Necklace

\$49.99

This handmade necklace features a design of two doves - black and white respectively - and two poppies. Designed in Melbourne and handmade in Malaysia from high-quality resin, with sterling silver fastenings and chain, this is sure to make the perfect gift.

*All profits from the Shrine of Remembrance retail shop are channeled into the Education Centre to teach school children about Australian history. (77,000 students have visited the Shrine in the last 12 months.)*