

THE LAST POST

KEEPING THE ANZAC SPIRIT ALIVE FOR AUSTRALIA'S
VETERANS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS

ISSUE 33

NEW COLUMN:
BATTLEWALKS WITH
MAT MCLACHLAN

THE BRAVERY
TRUST EDITION



The Last Post Story

Through bloodlines, The Last Post magazine started at Gallipoli. Its acorn then fought with the 2/10th in Milne Bay, Buna and Balikpapan and trekked the Kokoda in WW2. By the late-sixties, The Last Post magazine was ready to be born.

Raymond Thorsby Ross, who had fought in PNG and the son of Joseph Thorsby Ross, who had fought at Gallipoli, leased a small office in George Street, Sydney. Raymond had decided that a small magazine, designed to help RSLs and their members, should be introduced in New South Wales. To do this he would need advertising to help pay printing and distribution costs. Daily, Raymond would take the train from suburban Chatswood to the city and phone local businesses and sporting clubs, asking for their support. This ex-digger and RSL member worked long hours to get each edition out and was effectively the magazine's editor, graphic designer and distributor.

In 1974, Raymond and his partner moved to Scarborough in suburban Perth and continued The Last Post in Western Australia until his death in 1983.

Twenty-eight years later, Raymond's son and Joseph's grandson, Gregory Thorsby Ross brought his father's magazine back to life. Greg had lived with his father as a 15-year old, when he started working as a copy-boy and cadet journalist at The Sydney Morning Herald. The teenager became a first-hand observer of the early days of the ex-servicemen and women's publication. By 2011 he had put everything in place to re-introduce The Last Post to a public in desperate need of a modern, quality magazine to assist the veteran community. Only this time it would be a national. And this time, it would be for all Australians.

With this humble background, and from a history steeped in the Anzac tradition, the new national TLP was born and is now respected and read by not only Australian veterans but the wider global community.

Featuring profiles on contemporary and historical veteran issues as well as honourable Australians, organisations, institutions and companies, TLP has matured to be Australia's most recognised independent online and print veteran magazine.

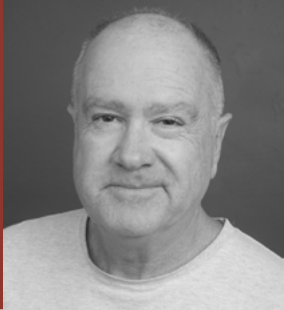
Acclaimed for its quality and journalism The Last Post is unlike any veteran's magazine seen before.

The reason?

It speaks to all Australians as a reminder that the legacy of the Anzac Spirit is relevant to us all.

With editor Greg T Ross' up-close interviews with famous Australians, stunning layout and production and input from great writers covering relevant topics in history, music, arts, entertainment, sport, travel, gardening, this magazine is so well received by a wide audience that reaches far beyond the veteran community.

Pte Raymond Thorsby Ross, founder of the original The Last Post, left, during his time with the 2/10th in Papua New Guinea during WW2.



GREG T ROSS

Diary of an independent publisher

Since I started The Last Post in 2011, I have had the privilege of meeting and working with some amazing people. None more so than Bravery Trust.

Bravery Trust is a national military charity which provides current and ex-serving members of the Australian Defence Force with financial aid, financial education and financial counselling. Their service is free, confidential and independent of the ADF.

On the 8th of September, Bravery Trust's Bravery Trek 2024 gets underway. As a resource to the event, we present The Last Post's Special Edition for 2024, The Bravery Trust Edition.

On The Bravery Trek, you can challenge yourself to run, walk, ride, roll or swim the Bravery Trek annual distance targets to raise funds for Aussie veterans and awareness of the support services available.

We encourage you to take part in this event.

It's easy. Entry is free. Go to The Bravery Trust website and sign up to honour the service and sacrifice of Defence personnel across the 5 domains of the Australian Defence Force.

We'll leave the rest up to you.

After 13 years, The Last Post remains committed to bringing the veteran and general community together. In that, the strength to find solutions and an easier path to all.

Welcome to The Last Post Bravery Trust Special Edition 2024.

Greg T Ross

#thelastpostmagazine
#diaryofanindependentpublisher

8 Sep - 12 Oct 2024

Go the distance for Aussie veterans



SUPPORTING VETERANS

BRAVERY TREK

- A virtual trek raising funds for Aussie veterans experiencing financial hardship
- Challenge yourself to run, walk, roll or swim 10km or 50km each week for 5 weeks
- Trek your way or join one of our events in Melbourne, Ipswich or Canberra
- Share your progress to your socials to raise awareness of the financial support available to veterans and their families



Find out more
braverytrek.com.au



foreword

Garth Callender

Bravery Trust
CEO

Every day, my work with Bravery Trust reinforces the vital importance of collaboration. It is with great pleasure that I provide the Foreword for this significant edition of The Last Post, a magazine that, like us, thrives on the principles of cooperation and collective effort.

Collaboration at Bravery Trust is so much more than a word listed on our Strategic Plan, it is an ethos we live out every day and one I was proud to showcase at a unique event in Darwin earlier this month.

Over 130 military personnel from 10 different nations, including the Philippines, the UK, the US, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, France and India, participated in an overnight charity run, collectively covering more than 4000km around the Darwin Esplanade.

It was a truly remarkable event - not just notable for the impressive international military participation or timing aligned to Air Force Exercise Pitch Black. What set it apart was the collaborative nature—a unique partnership between the veteran charity Bravery Trust and the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).

Combining a charity with the military offers unparalleled strength, especially in supporting veterans. Bravery Trust, a leading financial support organisation for military personnel and veterans, exemplifies this strength. This collaboration highlights the military's commitment to caring for its own, recognising that service does not end when the uniform is hung up for the last time.

Veterans can face unique challenges, from financial instability to physical and mental health issues. Charities like Bravery Trust offer a lifeline, helping veterans navigate these challenges. The partnership with Air Force amplifies this support, creating a network of care that is both comprehensive and far-reaching. The recent event in Darwin is a testament to this synergy, demonstrating how military and charitable organisations can work together to achieve remarkable outcomes for those who have served.

Air Force's involvement in this initiative highlights its leadership in innovation. The RAAF has long been at the forefront of adopting new technologies and approaches to enhance its capabilities. This extends beyond the battlefield, reflecting a holistic approach to service that includes the well-being of its personnel. By collaborating with Bravery Trust, the RAAF is pioneering new ways to support its members, showcasing an innovative spirit that sets a benchmark for other branches of the military.

Air Force Exercise Pitch Black, an intensive multinational air combat training event, brings together air forces from around the world to share tactics, techniques, and procedures, fostering interoperability and mutual understanding. The charity event in Darwin, timed to coincide with the conclusion of Exercise Pitch Black,

highlights the RAAF's ability to integrate benevolent efforts with its operational objectives seamlessly.

The military's understanding of the link between supporting veterans and the positive impact this has on recruitment cannot be overstated. By ensuring that veterans receive the care and support they deserve, the military sends a powerful message to current and prospective service members: "We take care of our own." This assurance is crucial in attracting and retaining talent, as it demonstrates a commitment to the holistic well-being of personnel.

Supporting veterans through initiatives like the Bravery Trust partnership also enhances the military's reputation within the broader community. It fosters a sense of trust and respect, essential elements in building a strong recruitment pipeline. Prospective recruits are more likely to join an organisation that visibly values its members and provides robust support systems for life beyond active service.

At the heart of this successful partnership is Bravery Trust, an organisation dedicated to providing financial assistance to current and former military personnel.

Bravery Trust stands out as a leader in supporting veterans, offering tailored financial aid that addresses a wide range of needs, from emergency relief to long-term impacts. Their work ensures that no veteran falls through the cracks, embodying a commitment to honouring the service and sacrifice of Australia's military members.

The charity event in Darwin, with its diverse international participation and high-profile supporters, shines a spotlight on Bravery Trust's crucial role.

The involvement of key figures such as the Deputy Prime Minister, the Northern Territory's Administrator, the Chief of the Australian Air Force, and the German Chief of Defence underscores the significance of this initiative. It highlights how Bravery Trust, in partnership with Air Force, is leading the charge in providing comprehensive support to veterans.

The recent event in Darwin stands as a powerful testament to what can be achieved when the military and charitable organisations unite for a common cause.

It's equally important for us to bring the broader community together, showing all current and former ADF members that their contributions are valued and their service matters. Through Bravery Trek, we're providing that opportunity, and I ask for your support in the Bravery Trust mission.

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A tourist has found an original First World War letter in Tyne Cot Cemetery in Flanders, Belgium.

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Bravery Trek.

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The Last Post Magazine has been praised nationally and internationally since it was launched in 2011 and is designed by Kirstie Wyatt from Wyatt Creative. Kirstie is a freelance graphic and web designer and can enhance your marketing to get the results you want in your business.

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INNOVATION IN ACTION: AIR FORCE AND BRAVERY TRUST SUPPORT VETERANS



Over 130 military personnel from 10 nations including the Philippines, UK, US, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, France and India united for an overnight charity run collectively covering more than 4000km around the Darwin Esplanade. We all have an opportunity to support our serving men and women. Bravery Trek is a national virtual challenge starting 8 September to raise awareness and funds for veterans facing tough times.



GOING THE DISTANCE FOR OUR VETERANS

Next week we're at the starting line to make a real difference in the lives of veterans who face hardship.

Financial circumstances can be complex, especially when income is limited by injury or illness.

Bravery Trek is an opportunity to raise funds for those facing hardship and raise awareness of the support that is available to veterans, encouraging people to reach out for help if they need it.

The Trek starts 8 September. Joining Bravery Trek is as simple choosing a target of 10km or 50km each week for 5 weeks and joining the online Trek community to share your progress and promote the amazing people who serve and have served our nation. It's a virtual challenge, meaning participants can trek anywhere, any way.

"Veterans are by nature proud people, who can find it hard to ask for help when needed, and finances have long been a hard conversation to start," said Bravery Trust CEO Garth Callender.

"Getting people together and raising awareness through Bravery Trek, is a way we can initiate and normalise some of those hard conversations and encourage people to reach out for help as soon as their financial circumstances change.

We know there is an intrinsic link between financial fitness and strong mental health, and through financial counselling and financial support, we can help keep people strong ..."

Complete the distance challenge by yourself, walk at lunchtime with friends or workmates, or join a social running group like Park Run or Running 4 Resilience. There are also in-person events in Ipswich and Canberra open to all those who register for Bravery Trek.

"It doesn't matter how fast you run or walk, or if you ride or swim the distance - Bravery Trek is all about supporting the national effort to assist veterans in need, with an emphasis on community, empowerment and well-being," Mr Callender said.

Bravery Trek is a five-week challenge, with virtual achievements badges awarded each week themed around the 5 Domains of Defence until 12 October.

Funds raised support the work of national military charity, Bravery Trust, to provide a financial safety net for veterans and their families faced with hardship, and for longer term financial counselling to rebuild lives.

Bravery Trek is an official Veterans' Health Week event, supported by the Federal Government, Service Chiefs and most importantly the current and ex-serving community. Thanks to corporate support from Leidos, Wilson Security, Defence Bank and Birdon all funds raised can go directly to program delivery

This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the amazing people who serve and have served in the Australian Defence Force and show support for those who fall on hard times.

1. Registration is free:
www.braverytrek.com.au
2. Choose your Trek distance
10km per week or an ultra-marathon 50km each week.
 - 10km is less than 2km per day!
 - The ultra-marathon is a tough physical challenge to push yourself in support of veterans.
3. Keep up the challenge for 5 weeks and collect your virtual achievement badges along the way.
4. Share your achievements with family and friends and seek their support to make sure veterans can access the help they need when facing financial hardship.

Together we will always achieve more.



BATTLEWALKS WITH MAT MCLACHLAN



Mat McLachlan will be leading an exclusive 10-day tour of Gallipoli in May 2025, accompanied by renowned historian Peter Hart. Visit www.battlefields.com.au for details.

Mat's latest book, *Krithia: The Forgotten Anzac Battle of Gallipoli*, is available now in bookshops Australia-wide.

Walking with the Ghosts of Gallipoli

By June 1915, the Gallipoli campaign had descended into stalemate. In an effort to steal a few hundred yards of extra ground from the Turks, the Anzacs began tunnelling under a ridge known as Silt Spur, next to Lone Pine.

Before long, they had constructed a veritable underground city of trenches and tunnels and Silt Spur became one of the deadliest places at Anzac – it took a unique combination of guile and nerves to hold onto it. In December 1915 the Anzacs abandoned Gallipoli, nature reclaimed the battlefield, and rough scrub grew over the ground where so many men had died.

Silt Spur remained that way for over a century. Then, in 2019, Turkish authorities began a far-sighted program of clearing small sections of the battlefield, and Silt Spur was one of their first targets. As the brush cutters and hatchets did their work, and the rough gorse was stripped away, the network of Anzac positions at Silt Spur began to reappear. And because the area had not been exposed to the elements in a hundred years, the trenches were remarkably intact. When I walked the ground a few weeks after it had been cleared, I carried a map of Silt Spur that had been drawn by the 10th Battalion when it had occupied the position in 1915, and I was astonished by what I found: a complete First World War trench system, unaltered by weather or maintenance work, just as the Anzacs had left it. I could plot every tunnel and listening post, every dugout and machine gun pit. Cleverly the authorities had cut off the scrub at ground level, but left the roots in place, and so the trenches held their form. Over time, the scrub will return and nature will reclaim the battlefield but, for the time being, the secrets of Silt Spur are revealed.

That's the special thing about walking a battlefield. I could have read dozens of books about Gallipoli, or spent hours in the archives poring over diaries and reports about what it was like to face the guns at Silt Spur. But there's nothing like walking the ground. With map in hand I was able to trace the footsteps of the Anzacs who had built this position, who had fought here through the hell of the Gallipoli campaign and who, for many, never left. To visit a battlefield like this, to walk in the footsteps of the Anzacs, to see a place like Silt Spur for yourself, really is a chance to walk with ghosts. I can't wait to get back there.





OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP:
Mat McLachlan at Lone Pine, Gallipoli.
THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Mat McLachlan at Lone Pine, Gallipoli.
Mat McLachlan WWI shrapnel and artefacts discovered at Gallipoli.
Mat McLachlan in Gallipoli exploring newly exposed trenches.
Mat McLachlan Battlefield Tours group at Gallipoli.



Renewed focus on pancreatic cancer research will spearhead new treatment options



Members of the Putoczki Lab (L–R) Trinity Peachey, Azalea Robaizam, Suyu Shen, Ka Yee Fung, Clara Kosasih, Associate Professor Tracy Putoczki, alongside Jane Hemstritch AO and clinician–scientist Dr Belinda Lee.

Pancreatic cancer is a major contributor to cancer-related mortality in Australia, claiming the lives of 3,600 people every year. By 2030, it is expected to be Australia's second most lethal cancer.

Due to a lack of specific symptoms in the early stages, most patients are diagnosed with advanced stage cancer affecting nearby organs. More than half of people with pancreatic cancer die within six months of diagnosis and just 11.5% will survive five years.

A generous gift

Australian business leader and WEHI President Jane Hemstritch AO understands the devastating impact of pancreatic cancer. Her late husband, Philip, died of the disease two-and-a-half years after diagnosis. Years earlier Philip's father, Reg, died of the disease on the day he was diagnosed.

The experience of watching Philip's treatment led Jane to become a strong advocate for personalised medicine. Driven by this experience, Jane has pledged a generous gift to establish the Hemstritch Centre of Excellence for Pancreatic Cancer Research at WEHI.

"WEHI is a world-class medical research institute, and like all others, requires funding from a range of sources to do its work, and I'm pleased to be in the privileged position of being able to provide support," Jane said.

Jane envisions the centre as a beacon of hope for pancreatic cancer patients, facilitating rapid access to cutting-edge personalised treatments that hold the potential to extend and enhance their quality of life.

Game-changing treatments

The Centre aims to help close the significant survival gap between pancreatic cancer and other cancers. It will provide a leading team of scientists and clinicians with long-term funding to ask big research questions.

Associate Professor Tracy Putoczki, a laboratory head in WEHI's Personalised Oncology division, is collecting patient tumour samples that will be used to help personalise treatment by determining which therapies are most likely to work for each patient.

"Time and money have allowed scientists to make exceptional gains in treating other cancers, like melanoma, which until recently was as devastating as pancreatic cancer, until the game-changing discovery of immune therapies," said Assoc Prof Putoczki.

WEHI director Professor Ken Smith said research investment was critical, given the growing number of people being diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and the poor survival rates.

While Jane's generosity marks a significant milestone in the fight against pancreatic cancer, sustained financial support will be essential to realise the centre's ambitious objectives and bring hope to countless individuals affected by this devastating disease.

FIND OUT MORE





COMMUNITY HOUSING: Securing Safe Futures for Veterans

In today's economic landscape, conversations about the economy, the rising cost of living, and Australia's housing crisis are unavoidable.

The Federal Government has highlighted a significant 'historic underinvestment' in housing, attributing the severe supply shortage to an inability to build enough stock to keep pace with the country's rapidly growing population. High interest rates, a staggering 8.5% increase in rents over the past year, and historically low vacancy rates have created a perfect storm in the housing market.

While this crisis impacts the broader population, its effects are particularly devastating for already vulnerable groups, such as the homeless and those teetering on the edge. As more Australians find themselves without a home, the urgency for solutions grows. Veteran Housing Australia (VHA) steps in to provide crisis accommodation and community housing specifically for vulnerable members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) community. Although crisis accommodation offers an immediate respite, it is a short-term solution at best, struggling under the current pressures.

This is why community housing is crucial. Defined by Housing Victoria as "secure, affordable, long-term rental housing managed by not-for-profit organisations for people on low incomes or with special needs," community housing is a lifeline. Tragically, veterans often fall into the 'special needs' category and have been disproportionately represented in Australia's homeless population. Research shows that over 5% of recently transitioned ADF personnel experienced homelessness within a 12-month period, nearly three times the rate of the general population.

Take the story of Paul, a veteran who served with the Australian Army for 13 years in the Royal Australian Artillery (RAA) and the Royal Australian Corps of Transport (RACT). Facing homelessness with his wife eight months pregnant, and after being rejected for 300 rental properties, Paul was on the brink of living out of their car. It was a referral from RSL Victoria to VHA that turned their situation around.

VHA fortunately had a two-bedroom home available in Noble Park, close to where Paul's family previously lived, ensuring a smooth transition into community housing. "My family feels fortunate to have found a safe and secure place that provides us with stability," Paul shares with emotion.

VHA remains steadfast in its mission to provide age-appropriate and suitable accommodations for veterans who have given so much.

By supporting community housing, we are not just providing shelter but securing safe futures for those who have served our nation.

To support the fight against veteran homelessness, consider donating at
www.veteranhousing.org.au

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
Jim Burrowes (left) and Ron 'Dixie' Lee (right).
Jim Burrowes in 1942.
Ron 'Dixie' Lee aged 17.



END OF AN ERA: The last two Coastwatchers Pass Away within A Day

BY PETER JONES

The courageous deeds of the legendary World War II Coastwatchers represent one of the most illustrious chapters in Australia's military history. The last two Coastwatchers, Jim Burrowes, aged 101 and Ron 'Dixie' Lee aged 100 passed away in Melbourne on Sunday and Monday respectively.

Prior to World War II the Royal Australian Navy detailed a former New Guinea District Officer, Lieutenant Commander Eric Feldt to establish a network of expatriates who could covertly report on enemy movements around the coastline of New Guinea and the Solomons in time of war. In short order he recruited planters, patrol officers, and even priests for this potentially dangerous assignment.

When the Japanese invaded the islands in 1942 these Coastwatchers undertook their mission with great courage and at great personal cost. Some were beheaded, others simply disappeared while others continued their clandestine task for months on end with the help of local villagers.

Despite their losses, the Coastwatchers' contribution in reporting on Japanese shipping and air movements had a real strategic impact. The Coastwatchers finest hour was in the Guadalcanal campaign where they reported on incoming waves of enemy aircraft, rescuing the future President John F Kennedy and launching lethal guerilla raids on the Japanese with the assistance of fearless Solomon Islanders. It led Admiral 'Bull' Halsey to say, 'The Coastwatchers saved Guadalcanal, and Guadalcanal saved the South Pacific.'

As the value of the Coastwatcher network became fully appreciated, servicemen from the three Services joined for this most dangerous of assignments. Signalman Jim Burrowes and Able Seaman Coder 'Dixie' Lee were among a cohort of radio operators who provided that crucial communications link using the cumbersome AWA Teleradio that was still portable with the help of half a dozen local native men who also risked their lives.

Jim Burrowes served both on the north coast of New Guinea and then on the island of New Britain where he and two fellow coastwatchers reported on the Japanese stronghold of Rabaul. That town had a special meaning for him as his older brother Bob had been in the Army and captured there in 1942. Bob lost his life when the Japanese prison ship, the Montevideo Maru was sunk later that year by the submarine USS Sturgeon with the loss of over 1,000 prisoners of war and civilians. Fatefully, Jim's twin brother Tom was a wireless air gunner in a Beaufort bomber that was lost off Rabaul in 1943.

For his part 'Dixie' Lee served in the Treasury Group of islands and the nearby Stirling Island and then Finschhafen, Milne Bay and Bougainville. At the later location he served with one of the most famous Coastwatchers, Lieutenant 'Snowy' Rhodes and provided some of those valuable reports of Japanese aircraft approaching Guadalcanal.

After the war Jim Burrowes qualified as a Chartered Accountant, a Chartered Secretary and a Licensed Companies Auditor. He joined the then largest house-building company in Australia, A.V. Jennings Industries as assistant to the Company Secretary. He was to work at Jennings for 33 years, progressively becoming Treasurer, Company Secretary, Finance Director and Executive Director of the Jennings Mining and Manufacturing Groups.

After nearly five years in the RAN, over half of which was as a Coastwatcher, 'Dixie' Lee was discharged in early 1946. He became a successful land surveyor. In the 1970s he first hand-built a 30 ft wooden ketch, but gave her up after forever chasing leaks occurring after rough weather. He next had a larger, and dryer, steel-hulled 45 ft ketch custom built, and sailed in her for three years through much of the South Pacific retracing some of his wartime adventures. He was especially anxious to reach the Treasury Islands and Bougainville and for a time gained work there as a surveyor. Here it was like stepping back in time and 'Masta Dix' was reunited with many of his wartime local friends.

In 2015 'Dixie' Lee was one of a small number of World War II veterans who was chosen to visit PNG as part of a commemoration marking the 70th anniversary of the Victory in the Pacific. Jim Burrowes with the assistance of his son Robert created an outstanding website, thelastcoastwatcher.wordpress.com that chronicles the exploits of the Coastwatchers.

Jim Burrowes is survived by his wife Beryl, four children, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren. While 'Dixie' Lee is survived by his wife Mem, ten children, seventeen grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

The Coastwatchers invariably deployed to an enemy held island as a pair and it is fitting that Australia's last two Coastwatchers would join their comrades together.

The exploits of the Coastwatchers are chronicled in Jim's website:
thelastcoastwatcher.wordpress.com

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Pastries, posies and a pink mohawk this spring!

Celebrity chef and dessert powerhouse Anna Polyviou brings rockstar status to the 75th Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers.

The 75th Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers will come alive for four blooming weeks, from September 13-October 7, opening with three days of Festival of Food and Wine, from September 13-15.

You can toss the keto and low-carb diets out this Spring when TV's powerhouse pastry chef Anna Polyviou drops into the famous Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers with her JAW-DROPPING sugary creations.

The punk-pastry powerhouse, and former Creative Director of Pastry at Sydney's Shangri-La Hotel, is the PERFECT FIT for the Festival of Food and Wine, with her distinctive hot pink mohawk, quirky urban street style, and vibrant personality. She will lead Farm to Fork demonstrations when Queens Park becomes home to many taste sensations during the three-day Festival.

Fans will be able to watch the pastry queen as she prepares a Basque Cheesecake, Cheese & Charcuterie Baguette, and some mouth-watering Cookie Dough Pies.



TOOWOOMBA CARNIVAL of FLOWERS

Celebrating 75 years of spring plantings in 2024!

Fri 13 Sept to Mon 7 Oct

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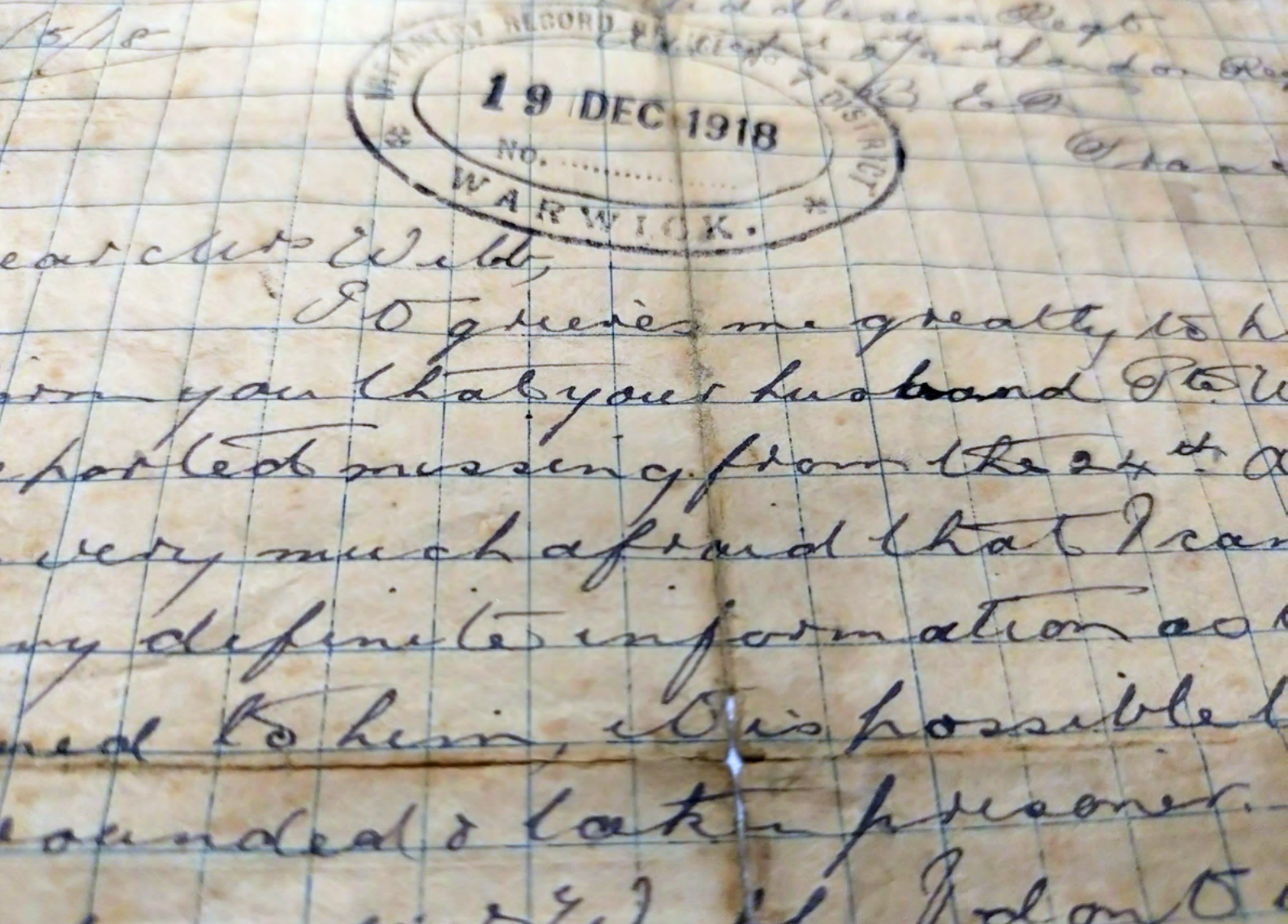
Kate Ceberano, Thirsty Merc, Pete Murray and James Reyne set to rock Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers!

Australian music faves bring the soundtrack to the Festival of Food & Wine.

Joining sugar goddess Chef Anna Polyviou is a knockout line-up from some of the country's best in music for the Festival of Food & Wine, from September 13-15.

Kate Ceberano, Thirsty Merc, Pete Murray and James Reyne will join other leading and local sound-makers at Queens Park's sumptuous celebration for all things food and wine.

TICKETS ON SALE NOW: www.tcof.com.au



An original WWI letter has been found in Tyne Cot Cemetery, sparking a search for its owner

A tourist has found an original First World War letter in Tyne Cot Cemetery in Flanders, Belgium, and an appeal has been launched to reconnect this historic letter with its owner.

Written on 9 May 1918 by Lieutenant C.E. Prebble, the historic letter is addressed to the wife of Private S. Webb, informing her that her husband had been missing since 24 April: "It grieves me greatly to have to inform you that your husband Pte. Webb is reported missing from the 24th of April. I am very much afraid that I cannot give you any definite information as to what happened to him, it is possible that he was wounded and taken prisoner."

Tyne Cot Cemetery is the largest cemetery for Commonwealth forces in the world, for any war. More than 11,900 British Empire soldiers are buried at Tyne Cot, including over 1300 Australians. This cemetery was the site of fierce fighting during the Third Battle of Ypres (Passchendaele), and today with its beautifully kept headstones and gardens commemorating the thousands who served and lost their lives here, it is a must-visit site on the battlefields for visitors from Australia, the UK and around the world.

In July 2024, Britt-Marie Beard of Taddington (UK) found an original letter in Tyne Cot Cemetery. Written on 9 May 1918 by Lieutenant C.E. Prebble, addressed to the wife of Private S. Webb, informing her that her husband was missing.

After failing to find the owner at the cemetery, Britt-Marie Beard took the letter to the In Flanders Fields Museum. Research by the museum team revealed that Lieutenant

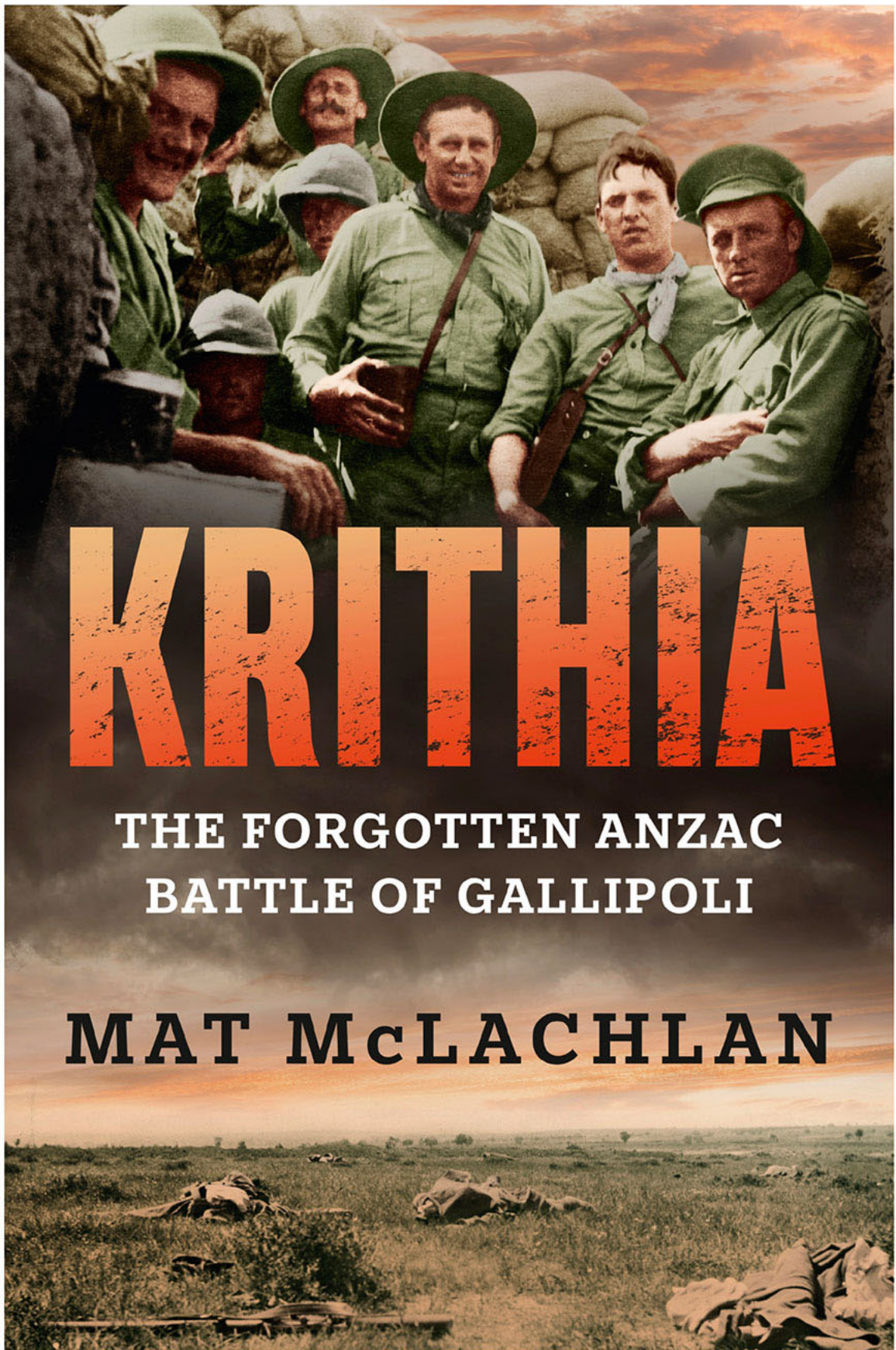
C.E. Prebble died in Halloy-lès-Pernois (France) on 8 August 1918. The regiment to which they both belonged saw action in the Westhoek area in Flanders, Belgium. The letter was presumably lost during a trip to the battlefield in the Westhoek. The In Flanders Fields Museum, which is located in the historic medieval Cloth Hall in Ypres, has now launched an appeal to find the owner of this historic letter.

Annick Vandenbilcke, member of the staff of the In Flanders Fields Museum: "Documents like this have emotional significance for relatives. We believe that someone is missing this letter. Also, we and Britt-Marie would like to find out more about private Webb."

Australian battlefield historian Mat McLachlan said "Original WWI letters such as this provide an incredible historic connection and insight into the past. It would be wonderful to see this letter reconnected with its owner. The little we know at this stage about C.E. Prebble indicate he was second lieutenant of the Middlesex Regiment and then transferred to the 2nd Battalion, The London Regiment – but one hundred years on, the owner of this letter could live anywhere in the world, including in Australia."

Thousands of Australians each year visit the Western Front to follow in the footsteps of the Anzacs and Commonwealth troops on the battlefields of Flanders and the Somme, with many visiting these significant battlefields by joining a Mat McLachlan Battlefields Tour.

If you have any information about this missing letter please contact the museum In Flanders Fields at kenniscentrum@inlandersfieldsmuseum.be.



The next edition of The Last Post Magazine will feature an extract from Mat McLachlan's amazing new book, *Krithia, The Forgotten Anzac Battle of Gallipoli*.

An interview with Greg T Ross and Mat McLachlan will be available soon on The Last Post Radio Show Podcast.

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