

2025 AGM Notice, Agenda, Nominations and Questions NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

OTICE is given of the 2025 Annual General Meeting of FAMILIES and FRIENDS of the First AIF Inc. (FFFAIF Inc) [INC 9878245]

Venue: Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park, Sydney, and Online Zoom Meeting **Date**: Saturday 15th November 2025

Registration	Meeting commences	Time Zone
10:00am	10:15am	Australian Eastern Daylight Time (AEDT)
11:00pm	11:15pm	Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)
12:00midnt	12:15am	Central European Time (CET)

OMINATIONS are hereby called for positions on the 2025-2026 FFFAIF Inc Committee of Management. A separate Nomination/Acceptance form is included with this Notice.

Nominations must reach the Secretary FFFAIF Inc no later than Friday 14th November 2025 by mail or email at:

Secretary FFFAIF Inc or email to agm.rsvp@fffaif.org.au
PO Box 4245
FORSTER NSW 2428

uestions on Notice are invited on the form included with this Notice.

Questions on Notice must reach the Secretary by mail or email **no later than**Friday 14th November 2025 by mail or email at:

Secretary FFFAIF Inc or email to agm.rsvp@fffaif.org.au
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OTING on resolutions can either be on-line in the Zoom Meeting by "raising a hand" or by appointing a proxy with your voting intentions. An Appointment of Proxy form is included with this Notice.

Appointment of Proxy forms must reach the Chairman by mail or email **no later than** Friday 14th November 2025 by mail or email at:

Secretary FFFAIF Inc or email to agm.rsvp@fffaif.org.au
PO Box 4245
FORSTER NSW 2428

Jim Munro President

2025 AGM Notice, Agenda, Nominations and Questions



Families And Friends of the First AIF Inc. (FFFAIF Inc) [ABN 67 473 829 552] [INC 9878245]

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

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FFFAIF OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the FFFAIF is to commemorate the service, sacrifice, courage and suffering of the First Australian Imperial Force of the Great War 1914-1918 and of their families and friends.

The FFFAIF is a non-profit-making charitable organisation dedicated to:

- Preserving for future generations of Australians the sense of national identity and values that the First AIF created, beginning with the ANZAC tradition at Gallipoli.
- o Preserving the memory of the soldiers, sailors, airmen and nurses who served in the Great War 1914-1918.
- O Supporting those serving units entrusted with carrying on the traditions passed on to them by predecessor units of the Great War 1914-1918.
- Helping to bring together the families and friends of those who served in the Great War 1914-1918.
- Helping to educate all Australians seeking knowledge and guidance in understanding the campaigns in which Australians participated.
- Helping Australians to conduct research and publication concerning those who served in the Great War 1914-1918.
- Encouraging and supporting the provision of courses in Australia's participation in the Great War 1914-1918, in primary, secondary and tertiary education.
- o Providing scholarships, principally to support younger Australians, to study Australia's participation in the Great War 1914-1918.
- Working in co-operation with the Department of Veterans' Affairs, Australian War Memorial, Returned & Services League and like-minded organisations to further the objectives of the FFFAIF.
- o Promoting FFFAIF objectives through the media, with particular emphasis on raising the standards of reporting of Great War 1914-1918 history.

FFFAIF is a non-political, non-sectarian and non-racial fellowship of people who are interested in promoting a better understanding of what the AIF did and what it stands for.

22nd June 2002

FFFAIF 2025 Annual Report



DIGGER



September 2024

No. 88

Magazine of the Families and Friends of the First AIF Inc

ISSN 1834-8963



DIGGER



Private 568 Fred Stubbs, 36th Battalion (standing) with two mates, England, 1916.

December 2024

No. 89

Magazine of the Families and Friends of the First AIF Inc

Edited by Graeme Hosken ISSN 1834-8963



DIGGER



Stokes mortar crew of the 7th Light Trench Mortar Battery AIF near Villers-Bretonneux, 10 July 1918.

Colourised photo courtesy of Doug Banks ('DBColour.')

March 202

No. 9

Magazine of the Families and Friends of the First AIF Inc

Edited by Graeme Hosken ISSN 1834-8963



DIGGER



Signaller 2485 George Ross Freeman, 5th and 57th Battalions AIF, whose wartime memoirs commence in this issue. Photo courtesy of Bill Free

June 2025

No. 91

Magazine of the Families and Friends of the First AIF Inc

Edited by Graeme Hosken ISSN 1834-8963

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

FAMILIES and FRIENDS of the First AIF Inc. (FFFAIF Inc) ABN 67 473 829 552 INC 9878245



Dedicated to Digger Heritage
The purpose of the FFFAIF is to commemorate the service, sacrifice, courage and suffering of the First Australian Imperial Force of the Great War 1914-1918 and of their families and friends.

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FFFAIF website: www.fffaif.org.au.
Facebook: Families and Friends of the First AIF
Membership/subscription enquiries: membership@fffaif.org.au or phone 02 6882 6270.
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Send submissions to D/GGER to: The Editor, 2 Colony Crescent, DUBBO, NSW 2830, or by e-mail to digger@ffaif.org.au.



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Regular features

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FFFAIF 2025 Annual Report

Please remember: Only financial members are eligible to nominate &/or vote at the AGM FFFAIF 2025 AGM – Agenda

Date: Saturday 15th November 2025 **Time**: 10:15am AEDT; 11:15pm GMT; 12:15am CET On-line Zoom Meeting **Registration**: 10:00am AEDT; 11:00pm GMT; 12:00midnt CET

Agenda items:

- 1. Recording of members participating and acceptance of Proxy appointments.
- 2. Confirmation of Minutes: 2024 Annual General Meeting.

 NOTICE: Only members who were present at the 2024 Annual General Meeting should vote on the Confirmation of the Minutes at this meeting.
- 3. Business arising from the Minutes.
- 4. Receive the Annual Report by President of the FFFAIF.
- 5. Receive and consider the Financial Statements & Report by Treasurer.
- 6. Receive and consider the Report by the Trustee of the FFFAIF Inc John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize.
- 7. Consider and if thought fit pass any Resolutions:

Resolutions 7.1-7.2 have the support of the Committee of Management and are consistent with Clauses 46 and 47 of the Constitution of the Association.

Resolution 7.1 That the Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia, Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC be elected as Patron-in-Chief having advised her willingness to accept the role of Patron.

Resolution 7.2 That Honorary Member, General (Retd) the Honourable David Hurley AC CVO DSC, former Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and former Chief of the Australian Defence Force, is elected as Honorary Patron following him advising his willingness to accept the role of Patron.

Resolution 7.3 That Member David Perkins be invited to accept honorary membership of the association in recognition of his extraordinary service to Digger Heritage as demonstrated by his development of the *Australian airmen of the Great War* database from the raw data compiled by Wing Commander Barry Videon and others, which is accessed through the *Australian Society of WW1 Aero Historians* at *Airmen database Australian Society of WW1 Aero Historians* and the *Anzac Nurses of the Great War*

database accessed through the <u>Anzac Nurses of the Great War | Families and Friends</u> of the First AIF.

- 8. Election for 2025-26 vacant Committee of Management position/s (if required).
- 9. Declaration of 2025-26 Committee of Management.
- 10. General Business Questions on Notice received by the Secretary on or before the due date (Friday 14th November 2025).

Close of AGM.

2024-25 Committee of Management

Jim Munro (President and Treasurer 2007- present)

Paul Simadas (Vice President 2015- present)

Graeme Hosken (Secretary & Editor of DIGGER & Cobber 2002- present)

Margaret Snodgrass (Committee Member 2006- present)

Chris Bryett (Committee Member 2015- present)

Jill Hayes (Committee Member 2016- present)

Sue Tongue (Committee Member 2016- present)

Geoffrey Benn (Committee Member 2023- present)

John Skene (Committee Member 13 August 2024 - present).

Patron-in-Chief (Subject to Resolution 7.1 being passed)

Her Excellency the Honourable Sam Mostyn AC,

Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia,

Honorary Patron (Subject to Resolution 7.2 being passed)

General (Retd) the Honourable David Hurley AC CVO DSC, immediate past Patron-in-Chief and former Governor-General of Australia, and former Chief of the Australian Defence Force.

Life Members

FFFAIF has given its highest honour of Life Membership to the following members who have devoted much effort to FFFAIF activities over an extended period:

Past president Russell Curley (Committee Member for 13 years, President 2006-2015);

Commemorations Officer, Margaret Snodgrass OAM (Committee Member for 18 years);

Graeme Hosken, Secretary and Editor of DIGGER and COBBER (Committee Member for 22 years);

Maurice Campbell, former Publicity Officer (Committee Member for 20 years); and Jim Munro, current President. (Committee Member for 16 years, President 2015-present).

Honorary Members

FFFAIF recognises as Honorary Members people who have made an extraordinary contribution to Digger heritage. Honorary Members include:

The Honourable Dame Quentin Bryce AD CVO, inaugural FFFAIF Patron-in-Chief and former Governor-General of Australia.

General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK AC(Mil) CVO MC (RETD), past Patron-in-Chief and former Governor-General of Australia and former Chief of the Australian Defence Force.

General (Retd) the Honourable David Hurley AC CVO DSC, immediate past Patron-in-Chief of FFFAIF, former Governor-General of Australia and former Chief of the Australian Defence Force.

Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO, former Governor of New South Wales.

Lieutenant General Ken Gillespie AC DSC CSM (Ret'd), former Chief of Army and former Chair NSW Centenary of Anzac Council.

Mr Kerry Stokes AC, former Chair, Australian War Memorial Council and AWM benefactor.

Dr Brendan Nelson AO, Chair, Australian War Memorial Council, Former Ambassador to Belgium and former Director, Australian War Memorial and former Chair, AWM Council.

Lambis Englezos AM, Fromelles advocate and co-Founder of the Friends of the 15th Brigade.

Professor Richard Wright AM, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at the University of Sydney and Senior Forensic Adviser to Oxford Archaeology for the Fromelles investigation.

Craig Laffin OAM, inaugural President of FFFAIF (2002-2006).

Professor Peter Dennis AM Emeritus Professor of History and former Department of History head at UNSW Canberra and creator of the 'AIF Project' and 'New Zealand's Great War' databases.

Anny de Decker, former Senior FFFAIF representative in Belgium and contributor.

Yves Fohlen, Senior FFFAIF representative in France, historian, author and tour guide.

Carole Laignel, FFFAIF representative in Fromelles and Secretary FWTM 1914-18, liaison with battlefield visitors and contributor to the FFFAIF and Fromelles Association websites.

Dr Ross Bastiaan AM RFD for his design, sculpturing and installation of 289 bronze military history plaques in more than 20 different countries.

Dr Roger Lee, former Australian Army Historian and Head of the Australian Army History Unit from 1996 to 2016, and Historian at the Australian War Memorial.

Dr Ross McMullin, member of FFFAIF and the Friends of the 15th Brigade, historian and biographer and speaker commemorating the First AIF and their families.

Patrick Lindsay AM author, documentary maker and mentor contributing to raising awareness of the Battle of Fromelles as well as raising awareness of the service and sacrifice and contribution of Australian soldiers, sailors, airmen and nurses and their families during and after conflicts.

Mike Goodwin OAM co-ordinator of the Mackay North State High School's Lest We Forget Project since 1998.

Martial Delebarre AM President FWTM 1914-18 and dedicated CWGC employee.



Families And Friends of the First AIF Inc. (FFFAIF Inc) [ABN 67 473 829 552] [INC 9878245]

President's Annual Report

For presentation at FFFAIF's 22nd Annual General Meeting on Saturday 15th November 2025. It is also available in the Members Area of the www.fffaif.org.au website, as are more comprehensive reports referred to in this Report.

Contextual Overview

Australian John Laffin was one of the world's most distinguished military historians. Both of John's parents served with the Australian Imperial Force during WWI. His father was an infantry officer, and his mother a nursing sister. John was a prolific author, something of a poet, and a committed advocate to honouring the memory of those who served in the AIF. John campaigned for 37 years for an Australian Battlefield Memorial Park in Le Hamel and it was on Hamel Day, 4 July 1998, the day of the inauguration of the Australian Corps Memorial Park, that John decided to found the *FFFAIF*. Before his untimely death in September 2000, John Laffin commenced the first steps in forming an association that would be open to the "families and friends of the First AIF". The *FFFAIF* was incorporated in 2002, and in the years since John's death has continued its focus on its founding objectives.

FFFAIF has proficiently organised and presented, sometimes complex, and high standard publications and events for over 2 decades:

- ✓ 21 annual John Laffin Memorial Lectures (or series) since 2003;
- ✓ 4 John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prizes awarded 2005-2008;
- ✓ 17 John Laffin Memorial History Prizes awarded since 2011;
- ✓ 4 Commemorative Tours to the Western Front 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016;
- ✓ 17 annual Sydney Fromelles Day Commemorative Processions and Commemoration Services in conjunction with the Trustees of the Anzac Memorial since 2007 (except for COVID affected 2021);
- ✓ 2 Fromelles Retrospectives in 2010, at Government House (Yarralumla) and at the King's School, Sydney;
- ✓ 2 "Fromelles Family" Days in 2017 and 2024 bringing relatives, researchers, and key people together to share the Fromelles story;
- ✓ 4 Commemorations of the Battles of 3rd Ypres 2017-2020 (until COVID);
- ✓ 92 issues of FFFAIF's flagship quarterly DIGGER magazine in both hard copy and e-form a national resource of about 5,000 pages of soldier stories, many previously unpublished;
- ✓ 18 issues of FFFAIF's periodic COBBeR e-magazine.

In addition, FFFAIF has advocated for:

- o Preservation of war graves at Karrakatta Cemetery (unsuccessfully);
- o Refurbishment of the Bullecourt Museum (successfully);
- o Greater recognition of the Battle of Fromelles (successfully);

- O DNA testing and individual dignified re-interment soldiers whose remains were recovered from near Pheasant Wood at Fromelles (successfully);
- o Development of a network of Headstone Projects (mixed results);
- o Improvement of the Program for marking previously unmarked graves of returned WWI soldiers (unsuccessfully);
- o Facilitating undergraduate history students to develop their interest and aptitude to teacher history (limited success).

FFFAIF in the post COVID-19 pandemic era

The FFFAIF Committee first discussed the potential impacts of the Coronavirus on FFFAIF activities and members on Thursday 12 March 2020 and has continually been reviewing and adapting to the post pandemic circumstances and the following represents an overview of the Committee's perspective:

DIGGER and COBBeR were well positioned for on-line distribution and access, and FFFAIF has its web-site and Facebook pages as platforms for its on-line presence and continues to leverage these to enhance its activities.

Large Commemoration services (100-300 attendees) are unlikely to resume. Smaller Commemorations with physical distancing requirements exclude many members and descendants at the expense of dignitaries, and still require the effort of organising the Commemoration, with the additional challenge to engage with the membership. Consequently, FFFAIF is redirecting its commemorative efforts to increase the role of FFFAIF members in the Commemorations to strengthen its engagement with its constituency, despite the goodwill generated by involvement of dignitaries in public Commemorations.

Lectures, such as the John Laffin Memorial Lecture are likely to continue to be planned to comply with physical distancing requirements while embracing podcasts or live streaming or some other on-line form to be available to members.

FFFAIF advocacy and liaison with kindred organisations is being strengthened. FFFAIF's digital and social media capability enables FFFAIF members and those of kindred organisation to engage in more activities related to the Great War. Webinars and on-line gatherings, hosted singly or jointly by FFFAIF and kindred groups enable greater engagement by FFFAIF members in their areas of interest.

Development of the FFFAIF Honorary and Life Members Council was envisaged to have benefits for both the Honorary and Life Members and FFFAIF activities in attendance for commemorations, headstone dedications, lectures and John Laffin Memorial History Prize presentations and potentially in fundraising activities. Unfortunately, most of these activities are diminished, so the focus has shifted to keeping the Honorary and Life Members informed of FFFAIF activities.

In the post-pandemic era, with military history and family history group meetings being smaller than pre-COVID, there is an opportunity to convince family history groups and kindred groups that it is even more important that their publications become available on-line. Accordingly, this remains a higher priority for FFFAIF and the Centenary of Anzac Bibliography is a key part of this strategy.

Rembrella: With the restrictions on access to the AWM Shop during the reconstruction project, sales through the AWM Shop, which previously represented about 60% of

FFFAIF Rembrella sales, have been severely impacted. In addition, with Rembrella in the UK ceasing to trade due to the impact of the pandemic, FFFAIF ordered a large amount of stock at discounted prices that will be available for sale so FFFAIF will respond to sales requests with no further action required at this stage.

FFFAIF highs and lows in 2024-25

The high points of the 2024-25 year were:

the 19 July Fromelles Day Commemorations in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Fromelles, France (with 7 more named headstones being dedicated) followed 4 weeks later with a "Fromelles Family" Day in Sydney on 17 August;

the greatly expanded reach of the FFFAIF Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/FFFAIF/ has been maintained;

the awarding of another John Laffin Memorial History Prize; and

continued collaboration with kindred organisations, particularly the Western Front Association and the Fromelles Association of Australia, RUSINSW and Military History Society of NSW, the Australian Society of WW1 Aero Historians and with the Australian World War One Descendants have all contributed to the strong focus on preserving Digger Heritage, and Keeping The Memory Alive.

FFFAIF has had a major focus on training undergraduate history students to be able to teach the new Australian Curriculum History Syllabus that will be introduced in all NSW schools in 2027. The new curriculum brings a significant change as it moves from a major focus on Gallipoli to a broader perspective including the Western Front (including Fromelles) and the Middle East. The concept of the First World War History Study Days has been disseminated and socialised. However, as the concept was explored more fully, a dilemma was revealed: most undergraduates studying to become history teachers study a course through the Education Faculty and do not study courses in Australian History with a major emphasis upon the participation of Australians in the Great War 1914-1918; and those students who do study such a course generally do not qualify to become teachers of history in secondary schools. Consequently, what was perceived as a nexus has turned out to be a dilemma, and has provoked a review of the John Laffin Memorial History Prize for undergraduate students.

However, as a consequence of raising awareness of the new Australian Curriculum History the staff of the Anzac Memorial and the History Teachers Association of NSW have conducted a Teacher Professional Development day at the Anzac Memorial focussed on Australia at war – WWII (1939 – c. 1945) and this opens the way to do a similar Teacher Professional Development day with the History Teachers Association of NSW and the staff of the Anzac Memorial on Australia: making a nation – from Federation to WWI (1889 – c. 1919), which is the focus of the Study Days proposed by FFFAIF. This was not something that FFFAIF could have contemplated in 2023 with its limited resources, but as the HTA NSW has the links to the secondary school teachers and the Anzac Memorial has the facilities, and now the capability for live streaming and podcasting is developing, this is now a realistic opportunity for FFFAIF and the kindred military history groups.

A low point has been that the Commonwealth Government's *Marking First World War Private Graves Grants Program* has not significantly improved for its Second Round of grant applications and funding availability has been reduced.

FFFAIF 2025-26 highs and lows to date

Since the start of the 2025-26 year, significant highlights have been the 19 July Fromelles Day Commemoration and Commemorative Procession in Hyde Park, Sydney, and the acquisition of video equipment and the development of a capability for recording and broadcasting commemorations and lectures.

Transfer of management of the *Anzac Nurses of the Great War database* developed by FFFAIF Member David Perkins to FFFAIF and its companion the Airmen's database to the *Australian Society of WW1 Aero Historians* are currently underway as part of enabling David's legacy to be sustained.

Membership

FFFAIF started the 2024-25 year with 323 members after a significant decrease during the COVID pandemic. We welcomed 9 new Australian members and farewelled 4 members during the year and finished the year with 328 members. There were 310 Australian members and 18 Overseas members including 5 Veteran Members, 21 Honorary Members and 5 Life Members. We welcome those members who joined during the year and trust FFFAIF membership will prove mutually beneficial. We also thank those who have finished their FFFAIF experience for their contribution.

	YEJ 2025	YEJ 2024	YEJ 2023	YEJ 2022
Australian	310	304	308	316
Ordinary Members	136	136	142	
Concession Members	148	144	143	
Veteran Members	5	4	4	
Honorary Members	16	15	14	
Life Members	5	5	5	
Total Australian Member	310	304	308	
Overseas	18	19	19	19
Ordinary	7	8	8	
Concession	7	7	7	
Honorary Members	4	4	4	
Total Overseas Members	18	19	19	
Active Members	328	323	327	335

Since the end of the 2024-25 year, a considerable number of members had declined to renew their membership due to changes in interests, ill health or deaths in the family and some due to the financial pressures. Others have taken advantage of the restructured membership fees, in which all members are entitled to an electronic version of DIGGER as well as COBBeR, which means there is little additional benefit in having multiple memberships within the same household and this has resulted in almost 44 members relinquishing their memberships (25 were 3 or more years overdue and 19 were 2 years overdue). In accordance with the Constitution, their membership ceased 3 months after

the end of the financial year, in September. As a consequence, the size of the DIGGER print run is reduced, thereby significantly reducing printing and postage costs. This decline in membership has been partially offset by a number of Family History Groups and kindred organisations that have taken Corporate e-membership, as it entitles them to circulate electronic copies of *DIGGER* and COBBeR to their membership and their members are also entitled to access and download past issues of *DIGGER*. The Committee is satisfied that the greatly expanded reach of the FFFAIF Facebook page has more than offset the decline in membership reflecting the transition to electronic communications.

FFFAIF Membership fees and PLUS supplements

TITIE WEIGHT TEES	PLUS	PLUS	PLUS	e-Member	e-	Total
Membership group	Members	Concession	Honorary, Life & Veteran		Concession	
			Members			
Australian members	73	89	17+4	68	59	310
Membership price and PLUS supplements	\$65	\$60	\$30	\$40	\$35	
Overseas members	1	2	2	8	5	18
Membership price and PLUS supplements	\$95	\$90	\$55	\$40	\$35	
TOTAL	74	91	23	76	64	328

Before members who have not renewed their membership are removed from the Membership Register, the usual practice is for the FFFAIF Committee to invite them to consider renewing their membership or transferring their membership to a family member to help Keep The Memory Alive.

Current members are located as follows:

QLD	NSW	ACT	VIC	TAS	SA	WA	Overseas	Total
31	179	15	55	5	10	15	18	328

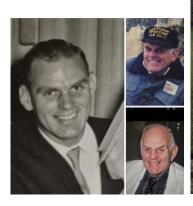
Vale

During the past year, FFFAIF has been saddened by the passing of the following members. However, we are comforted to know that they valued their FFFAIF membership throughout their twilight years:

Barry STEVENSON AUS 0762 of Kingsgrove NSW who had been a member for 7 years when he died in August 2024.

Trevor EDWARDS AUS 0837 of WESTLEIGH NSW who had been a member for 3 years when he died in November 2024.

Alan WARD AUS 0512 of Lugarno NSW, died in mid July 2025. Alan had been a member for 7 years and with Carol AUS 511 and daughter Robyn AUS 329 (and former FFFAIF Treasurer) they travelled on the 2010 FFFAIF Western Front tour. A highlight was to visit the grave of their relative Captain Jefferies VC at Tyne Cot CWGC and to see the display honouring him at the Passchendaele Museum.

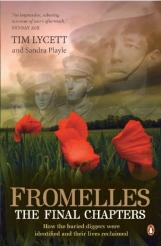






Sandra PLAYLE AUS 208, died in August 2025, aged 78. Sandra had been a member for 11 years (2006-2017) and worked closely with Tim Lycett to establish the Fromelles Descendants Database and was a key person in the development and acceptance of the "Fromelles Working List" with 161 names of soldiers most likely buried by the Germans following the Battle of Fromelles. Sandra co-authored *Fromelles: The Final Chapter* with Tim Lycett. Recently, in May 2025, Sandra delivered presentations at her local library.







FFFAIF members Bruce Scates, Lambis Englezos, Sandra Playle, Tim Lycett, Tim Whitford, Jim Munro at the Australian Fromelles Project Group Historians Round Table November 2008.

Technology and Communications

Electronic communications continue to change the way in which FFFAIF members communicate and how FFFAIF seeks to achieve its objectives. About 95% of members now have email addresses, enabling them to receive communications by email with electronic copies of *DIGGER*, COBBeR, AGM material as well as notification of events of interest to members. The Committee migrated from phone conferences to video conferences for its monthly meeting several years ago with Meeting Agenda and Notes and Minutes circulated electronically. Since 2020 Paul Simadas has also facilitated the AGM using on-line technology with on-line voting enabled and able to reach members across Australia, France, Belgium, UK and Switzerland. Paul has also facilitated the

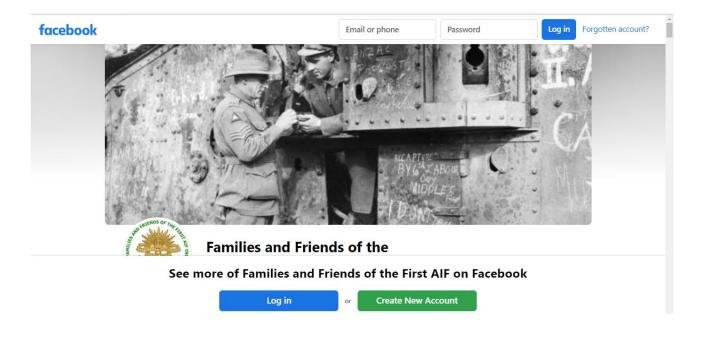
John Laffin Memorial Lectures since 2020 to be delivered online to an international audience as well as enabling FFFAIF members to participate in lectures hosted by kindred organisations.

FFFAIF Facebook pages.

FFFAIF enables members to share information through its Facebook pages https://www.facebook.com/FFFAIF/. During the past year Vice-President Paul Simadas has assisted Editor Graeme Hosken to bring the Facebook page to a broader audience. During the 12 months of 2024-25, Paul has generated most of the 260 items posted to the Open group with about 75,000 individual viewings of the posts and 14,000 engagements with viewers. The group currently has about 2,600 followers. The Facebook page is demonstrably contributing to FFFAIF objectives of preserving the memory of those who served in the Great War as well as helping educate Australians (and others) in understanding the campaigns in which Australians participated.

The reach of the FFFAIF Facebook page to 2,600 followers is more than 8 times the membership of FFFAIF and has supplanted the fffaif.org.au website as the principal means of engagement with people with an interest in The Great War and has raised awareness of FFFAIF and its objectives. The Committee acknowledges and appreciates Paul's contribution of time and effort and his resourcefulness during the past few years.

The posts cover a wide variety of topics including War Memorials, memorabilia, animals, soldiers, battles, medals, photos, battlefield panoramas, soldier photos, graves, submarines, tanks, artwork, places and books. Many comments have been made by readers about their ancestor's service. Most popular were photos of the Laffin-Pike wedding, Fromelles (Pheasant wood) Cemetery, Australian POWs at Fromelles and 'Fromelles Family' Day, War Memorials at Windsor, Richmond, Blacktown and Goodna Cenotaph, Parramatta and Liverpool war trophies, Frank Butterworth of Hay, Shout VC., 44th Bn. and Penrith Roll of Honour.



FFFAIF website.

www.fffaif.org.au has been active for more than 13 years and continues as an informative site for AIF related material with a Members' Area of the website, which is password protected. At its peak, during the Fromelles investigations, exhumations and identification process and dedication of the new Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, the website was averaging 300 hits per day. The website has been updated occasionally during the past year and now holds a vast amount of information with more than 500 web-postings including soldier profiles, reports on Commemorations and Members' Events and hundreds of photographs of interest as well as searchable Tables of Contents for all editions of DIGGER. The Members' Area contains copies and indexes of DIGGER with about than 5,000 pages of Digger stories. The Anzac Nurses of the Great War web page, added in 2022 as a free resource in the public domain, continues to enable families, students and researchers to be able to access this information, thereby honouring the training, dedication and service of these special women.

DIGGER.

As our flagship publication, *DIGGER* continues to provide excellent quality and a consistently high standard of original articles and photos and is a credit to our association, to Graeme Hosken as Editor and the contributors. The 76-page format with an annual colour edition, continues to receive good feedback. With the flexibility of membership fees, about 60% have opted for PLUS membership to receive both a printed version and an electronic version of *DIGGER* with 40% as e-members opting to only receive an electronic file of *DIGGER* that they can read on their computer or tablet. A majority of Overseas members now only receive their *DIGGER* electronically enabling them to avoid paying a surcharge for international postage.

All issues of *DIGGER* from the October 2002 1st edition to the latest issue (Issue 92) are available for downloading from the Members' Area of the website, along with some comprehensive *DIGGER* Indexes that are available to members as pdf files. The *DIGGER* team also includes Russell Curley who proof-reads each edition prior to publication and Jim Munro who updates the mail-out lists for each issue. Aaron at the Colour Copy Shop in Dubbo continues to provide the FFFAIF with personal service and special prices for printing *DIGGER* and its inclusions. Special thanks are due to Graeme Hosken who has been Editor since Issue 8 and who has contributed to, edited and produced about 5,000 pages of *DIGGER* stories that are a significant on-line resource for members, descendants, historians, students in Australia and overseas.

DIGGER is also on-line at the National Library web-site so that the entire collection of 92 issues can be viewed through Trove but is not available for download. <u>Digger: magazines of the Families and Friends of the First AIF Inc. (nla.gov.au)</u>

Significantly, the Australian War Memorial in April 2024 ceased publication of its quarterly *WARTIME* magazine after 106 issues in its printed format. It has been replaced with a biannual digital and print magazine WM, issued in Spring and Autumn. It

includes on-line video, image and sound files This leaves *DIGGER* as the pre-eminent quarterly magazine in Australia relating to the Great War, a testament to Graeme and contributors to *DIGGER*.

COBBeR: Our irregular digital magazine companion to *DIGGER*, contains mostly stories that are too long for *DIGGER* and photo essays with maps and photographs in colour. It continues to receive good feedback from members. COBBeR 18 was issued in 2024-25.

The Pinkstone brothers in the Great War e-book: Graeme Hosken in January 2025 published and circulated to Members the e-book: The Pinkstone brothers in the Great War with Appendices on Lieutenant Colonel David McConaghy, 55th & 54th Battalions and the 1911 Coronation Contingent. It tells the story of the five Pinkstone brothers from Cootamundra, NSW, who volunteered for the AIF. Their story is mainly told via their own words, in the letters they wrote home to their father, who, as owner of the 'Cootamundra Herald,' then published extracts in his paper.

Bibliography of Centenary of the Great War publications

Many books were published for the centenary of the Great War but only a few of these are available on-line. The authors and publishers would have provided manuscripts in an electronic form to the printers that should generally be suitable for being accessed on-line. FFFAIF encourages more of these publications to be converted to electronic publications suitable for lodgement through the e-deposit arrangements of the National and State Libraries. To encourage this process, Committee Member Sue Tongue has compiled a Bibliography of Centenary of the Great War publications for peak family history groups to circulate through their networks encouraging their members to add to the bibliography and contemplate lodging their publications on-line.

The John Laffin Memorial History Prize.

The Prize offers \$500 cash and 5 years e-membership of FFFAIF for an outstanding student in each university offering an appropriate history course to encourage more students to complete their history studies and to develop an on-going interest in the Australian involvement in and the consequences of The Great War. There is also the opportunity to have their research essay published in *DIGGER* and to make a presentation at the John Laffin Memorial Lecture series.

John Laffin Memorial History Prizes were presented at Monash, La Trobe, Deakin and Macquarie Universities for 2017 and at Deakin and Macquarie Universities since 2018.

Deakin University advised that Mia Borowitz is the academically outstanding history major student who has excelled in the unit *AIH238 Australia in the Age of Total War 1914-1945* and has been selected as the recipient of The John Laffin Memorial History Prize for the Year 2024.

Honorary Member Lambis Englezos, who has attended previous Prize Givings, attended the Awards ceremony on 19 February and presented Mia with her Certificate.

Mia's Prize includes \$500 cash plus 5 year's e-membership of FFFAIF plus access to mentoring by Honorary Members plus all of the other benefits of membership.



FFFAIF welcomed Mia and congratulates her on winning the John Laffin Memorial History Prize and wishes her well for her current and future studies.

FFFAIF committed to awarding the John Laffin Memorial History Prizes at Macquarie University for each year until 2026, however a Prize was not awarded for 2024.

During the current financial year, FFFAIF received another generous donation from Honorary Member Kerry Stokes AC that has bolstered the John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize funds. This contribution will enable more undergraduate history students to be assisted with their studies as well as raising awareness of the significance of service and sacrifice of the Australian Imperial Force soldiers and their families during and after The Great War.

2024 Annual General Meeting

The 2024 Annual General Meeting, was the association's 21st annual general meeting, held on Saturday 30 November as a prelude to the John Laffin Memorial Lecture. 15 Members were at the Anzac Memorial with 7 on-line using Zoom technology.







All members of the Committee indicated their willingness to continue on the Committee in their current roles and were returned unopposed.

The unconfirmed Minutes of the 21st AGM were posted on the <u>www.fffaif.org.au</u> website and are included in this booklet following the Treasurer's Report.

The Annual John Laffin Memorial Lectures

The annual John Laffin Memorial Lecture is delivered in memory of the late founder of the FFFAIF. The memorial lecture provides an opportunity to showcase current research in Australian military history of the AIF and an opportunity to share FFFAIF objectives with a broader audience. FFFAIF has similar objectives to the Western Front Association reflecting that John Laffin was an early member of the WFA and instrumental in its growth in the early 1980s.

The 2024 John Laffin Memorial Lecture for the Families and Friends of the First AIF was held following the FFFAIF AGM on Saturday 30 November in the Anzac Memorial Auditorium. Immediately following the 2024 AGM and preceding the 2024 John Laffin Memorial Lecture series, in recognition of the 90th anniversary of the Official opening of the Anzac Memorial, President Jim Munro presented:

Souvenirs and Archives tell the story of the 1934 visit of Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester.

In 1934, Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester visited Australia and New Zealand and during his visit he officially opened the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne on Remembrance Day and the Anzac Memorial in Sydney on 24 November. The Anzac Memorial had mounted an exhibition of 90 artefacts and the State Library has a complimentary exhibition. Jim's presentation focussed on the how the story of the 1934 visit of Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester was revealed from Souvenirs and Archives covering the many other events throughout Australia and his visit to NSW.







The State Library Exhibition in the Amaze Gallery to commemorate the 90th Anniversary of the official opening of the Anzac Memorial by the Duke of Gloucester 24 November 1934

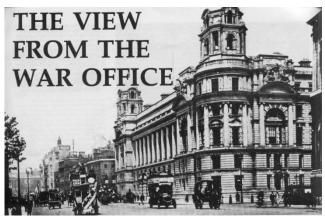


This exhibition will be on display until late 2025. It follows advocacy to the State Librarian by FFFAIF in February 2024. The State Library may mount a more extensive exhibition relating to the Duke of Gloucester's visit to NSW for the centenary in 2034.

The 2024 John Laffin Memorial Lecture series followed the 2024 AGM on 30 November 2024 with two presentations:

The end of peace, the path to war and early moves in the war in 1914, presented by Jim Munro, President, FFFAIF;

2024 was the 110th anniversary of the outbreak of war in Europe, and Jim's presentation focussed on the European context and the preparations for war by the European powers and the development of the plans for mobilisation, particularly in the UK. These plans extended to the secret wireless war that led to the ANMEF recruitment commencing on 10 August 1914, 6 days after the declaration of war, embarking 10 days later and landing in Rabaul on 11 September. Similarly, a New Zealand force occupied Samoa on 30 August. Their objective was the disruption and destruction of the German world-wide wireless network and coincided with ripping up sub-marine cables servicing Germany.





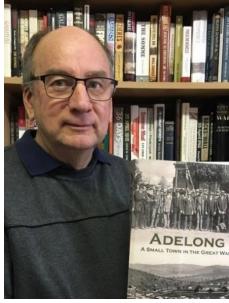


The Home Front in a small town in The Great War,

presented by Graeme Hosken, Secretary, FFFAIF.

Graeme's presentation focussed on the impact of the declaration of war and subsequent events and actions in Adelong, a small country town in southern NSW. Recruitment, fund raising, community organisations, adapting to changed social relationships, and the news of casualties are some of the dimensions of this story, derived from Graeme's book: *Adelong: a small town in The Great War*.





This was followed by a Show and Tell session. There were 32 people in the room and 13 participating by Zoom technology.

Preparing history students for the new Secondary Schools history curriculum

FFFAIF has members with skills and experience in the Primary and Secondary education sectors, with a passion for preserving Digger Heritage, and the capacity and capability to work in conjunction with the requirements of current syllabi for teaching modern history in primary, and secondary education relating to Australia's participation in the Great War 1914-1918.

A number of options were considered, taking into account that in NSW alone, there were over 300,000 secondary students, in more than 700 (Government and non-government) schools. FFFAIF does not have the resources or ability to have a direct

impact in secondary schools nationally, so ways of indirectly impacting upon secondary schools were considered.

This approach brought into focus the new Australian Curriculum History Syllabus that will be introduced in all NSW schools in 2027. The new curriculum brings a significant change as it moves from a major focus on Gallipoli to a broader perspective.

	Version 9.0 Sub-strand: First World War			
Broadened	the causes of the First World War and the reasons why Australians enlisted to fight in the war. AC9HH9K08			
Broadened	the places of significance where Australians fought, their perspectives and experiences, including the Gallipoli campaign, the Western Front and the Middle East. AC9HH9K09			
New	significant events and turning points of the war and the nature of warfare, including the Western Front Battle of the Somme and the Armistice. AC9HH9K10			
Broadened	the effects of the First World War on Australian society, such as the role of women, political debates about conscription, relationships with the British Empire, and the experiences of returned soldiers. AC9HH9K11			
Broadened	the commemoration of the First World War, including different historical interpretations and debates about the nature and significance of the Anzac legend and the war. AC9HH9K12			

The undergraduates of 2025 will be the graduates of 2026 and 2027 when the new history curriculum will be rolled out in NSW with a scope including the Western Front (including Fromelles) and the Middle East. Consequently, there is both a benefit and a necessity for the new graduates to be equipped to teach to the new curriculum, while their older colleagues will need to adapt to the broader perspective.

Accordingly, the FFFAIF Committee meeting of 10 November 2023 requested that a proposal be prepared with the focus on training of undergraduate history teachers rather than high school history students. This proposal, *The participation of Australians in the Great War 1914 - 1918 - an approach for undergraduate history students*, outlined an approach for undergraduates who are wanting to make a career as history teachers, to teach high school history students with the use of a case study. This approach aims to develop skills in historical enquiry consistent with the Curriculum and included analysis of the Australian Curriculum (Version 9): Year 9 History Curriculum Structure and the NSW History Curriculum: Year 9 History Curriculum Structure.

The proposal was conceptualised as 2 Study Days, one in Semester 1 and the other in Semester 2, both with morning sessions focussed on learning and teaching techniques and sources of data, and afternoon sessions focussed on depth study / case study techniques with a different case study each year. The Committee considered the planned Study Days at the Anzac Memorial in Sydney to be a pilot implementation that could be evaluated for replication in other locations. At the end of the 2 Study Days, participants would have:

A memorable experience of visiting the Anzac Memorial and appreciating its historical significance, the architecture and its symbolism and knowledge of the facilities and resources available;

An appreciation of the context and factors shaping Australia prior to, during and following Australia's participation in The First World War and how the Curriculum *Sub-strand: First World War* can be approached;

An appreciation of approaches to enable a huge historic event to be given a context as related to a small group or individual experiences;

An overview of sources and resources available for encouraging students to develop their historical enquiry skills through individual student research, analysis, interpretations and enabling students to select appropriate and effective communication techniques; and

A resource kit that might include collections of relevant articles and images, worksheets, bibliography and a directory of useful on-line sources, etc.

While FFFAIF has its Education Sub-Committee, its role is primarily advisory and, in this case, should be able to assure the Committee that the proposal is educationally sound and aligned with the curricula in each State. Accordingly, for operationalising the Proposal for *The participation of Australians in the Great War 1914 - 1918 - an approach for undergraduate history students*, the Committee formed a FFFAIF Working Group with authority to represent FFFAIF to plan, organise and implement this, initially in Sydney. The FFFAIF Working Group includes all members of the Committee of Management and has authority to co-opt other FFFAIF members with an interest, and the Extended Working Group includes representatives of organisations to represent their interests and liaise with the FFFAIF Working Group. Invitations were progressively issued to:

- Western Front Assn Australia Branch;
- > Fromelles Association of Australia;
- ➤ Military History Society of NSW;
- > RUSI NSW;
- Anzac Memorial staff and NSW Office for Veterans Affairs;
- DVA;
- > RSL NSW;
- ➤ History Teachers Association of NSW (HTA NSW);
- > NSW Department of Education;
- ➤ Macquarie University;
- ➤ Deakin University.

It had been intended to have two study days for undergraduate history students in 2024, with a case study on the Battle of Fromelles, as FFFAIF and the Fromelles Association have a huge amount of this topic that has been explicitly listed in the Curriculum for the first time. However, this had to be deferred as the NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) only released details of the new NSW Human Society and its Environment (HSIE) Syllabus in September 2024. The preparation for the case study on Fromelles has not been wasted as it enabled the 'Fromelles Family' Day to be arranged at short notice (see separate section in this Report) and has seen a compilation of *DIGGER* articles related to Fromelles that will now be held over to the Study Days in 2026.

The case study components can be varied in future years to cover other aspects of The Great War syllabus scope, possibly related to significant anniversaries. e.g.

The end of peace, the path to war in 1914 and 1915, including Gallipoli (for the 110th anniversary) in 2025;

The Battles of the Somme and Fromelles and other battles of 1916 for the 110th anniversary in 2026:

The Battles of 1917 for the 110th anniversary in 2027; and

The Battles of 1918 and the Armistice for the 110th anniversary in 2028.

The concept was shared at the gathering in November 2023 to discuss co-ordination of efforts and events at the Anzac Memorial during 2024. There was generally enthusiastic support for the proposal and kindred military history groups nominated members as liaisons for the FFFAIF Working Group.

There was an perceived synergy between the Study Days and the John Laffin Memorial History Prize awarded to an outstanding student in each university offering a course in Australian History with its major emphasis upon the participation of Australians in the Great War 1914-1918 (WWI) with the aim to encourage more students to complete their history studies and to develop an on-going interest in the Australian involvement in and the consequences of The Great War.

However, as the concept was explored more fully, a dilemma was revealed: most undergraduates aspiring to become history teachers study a course through the Education Faculty and do not study courses in Australian History with their major emphasis upon the participation of Australians in the Great War 1914-1918 (WWI); and those students who do study such a course, generally do not qualify to become teachers of history in secondary schools. So far only one of the 17 John Laffin Memorial History Prize winners has become a history teacher. Consequently, what was perceived as a nexus has turned out to be a dilemma, and has provoked a review of the John Laffin Memorial History Prize for undergraduate students.

Following FFFAIF raising awareness of the new Australian Curriculum History syllabus, in early 2025 discussions between the staff of the Anzac Memorial and the History Teachers Association of NSW (HTA NSW) led to the HTA NSW conducting a Teacher Professional Development day on 12 September at the Anzac Memorial focussed on: Sub-strand 4b Depth study: Australia at war – WWII (1939 – c. 1945):

12 SEP 9:00 AM - 3:30 PM Teacher - Professional Development

2025 Australia at War: WW2 (new curriculum)

\$198 Member Ticket \$385 Regular Ticket Prices include GST

Australians at War PD Day (new curriculum) will be a live event hosted at the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park (Sydney). PROGRAM & REGISTRATION - available Term 2, 2025

Location: Anzac Memorial Hyde Park

12
SEP
9:00 PM - 3:30 PM

Teacher - Professional Development
2025 Australia at War: WW2 (new curriculum)

\$198 \$385
Member Regular
Ticket Ticket
Prices include GST

Australians at War PD Day (new curriculum) will be a live event hosted at the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park (Sydney).

PROGRAM & REGISTRATION - available Term 2, 2025
Location: Anzac Memorial Hyde Park

This does not cover **Sub-strand 4a Depth study** – **Australia: making a nation** – **from Federation to WWI (1889** – **c. 1919),** which is the focus of the Study Days proposed 2025 FFFAIF Annual Report and Financial Statements

by FFFAIF, and opens the way to do a similar Teacher Professional Development day with the HTA NSW and the staff of the Anzac Memorial. This was not something that FFFAIF could have contemplated in 2023 with its limited resources, but as the HTA NSW has the links to the secondary school teachers and the Anzac Memorial has the facilities, and now the capability for live streaming and podcasting is developing, this is now a realistic opportunity for FFFAIF and the kindred military history groups. Consequently, the FFFAIF Committee has resolved to explore the opportunity to have a similar Teacher Professional Development in 2026 focussed on *Australia: making a nation – from Federation to WWI (1889 – c. 1919)*.

Rembrella Poppy Umbrellas

FFFAIF aims to add colour to commemorations of The Great War through the distribution and sale of the Rembrella products, which enable FFFAIF to contribute funds to commemorative activities. FFFAIF has now sold about 5,000 umbrellas during the past 14 years with sales of \$140,000, contributing about \$20-30,000 of funds to the association. The Australian War Memorial remains the largest re-seller, representing 65% of sales turnover, followed by members and non-members 17%, the Queensland Anzac Day Committee with 13%, the National ANZAC Centre in Albany 4%, and the Anzac Memorial, Sydney 1%.

Sales of Rembrellas through all outlets effectively halted on 23 March 2020 when the COVID-19 restrictions closed most public buildings and gatherings were banned and ANZAC Day Marches were cancelled. The Anzac Memorial in Sydney re-opened on 9 June 2020 and the Australian War Memorial in Canberra re-opened on 1 July, both with restrictions on public access. Rembrella sales were severely impacted and total sales slowed to a trickle with 57 sales in the year ending June 2021. Sales increased in the year ending June 2022 to 223 and 162 in the year ending June 2023 and this year to 107, but still well below that of pre-pandemic years.

Rembrella in the UK advised in 2020 that Standard and Golf umbrellas were being discontinued due to low sales volumes relative to the Telescopics. In July 2021 Rembrella advised that their sales had been devastated by the pandemic (total sales of just 22 umbrellas from April 2020 to July 2021) and the business was no longer viable and consequently they would clear their current stock at discounted rates and cease trading by early 2022.

Rembrella products have added significant value to FFFAIF, both in terms of an understated functional and visual statement of remembrance and commemoration as well as providing a significant revenue stream enabling FFFAIF to make financial contributions to discretionary activities that contribute to FFFAIF objectives without putting members funds at risk, including commemorations and the Headstone Project.

Consequently, the FFFAIF Committee resolved to acquire as much Rembrella stock as was financially prudent so as continue this revenue stream for as long as possible. On 14 March 2022, FFFAIF received 1,548 umbrellas. In the post-pandemic period, sales

have picked up to \$5,060 in 2022-23 and \$7,380 in 2023-24 but fell to \$1,760 in 2024-25 reflecting the AWM construction project impacting upon the AWM Shop operations and another supplier entering the market (see below). More financial details are in the Treasurer's Report.

A financial risk associated with this stock has emerged with a rival "poppy umbrella" that is manufactured in China and shipped in bulk directly to Australia becoming available through The Military Shop, owned and operated by BrandNet Pty Ltd and the online Army Shop and Air Force Shop also operated by BrandNet on behalf of The Australian Army and the Royal Australian Air Force. A number of retail outlets have also been stocking the rival "poppy umbrella". The estimated landed costs is about 2/3 of the landed costs of the Rembrella products which were manufactured in China, shipped to the UK and then shipped to Australia in consignments of less than a full pallet. Accordingly, FFFAIF is focussing on sales of Rembrellas to its members and members of kindred groups as an exclusive, quality and meaningful gift.

Development of a network of Headstone Projects

Last year's Annual Report carried a comprehensive review of the history of the development of the network of Headstone Projects since 2010. It noted that in the lead up to the May 2022 Federal election, both major parties committed to fund activities in civilian cemeteries to locate and commemorate those veterans who do not qualify for a Commonwealth funded war grave with \$3.7m to be allocated.

The new Commonwealth Government's 25 October 2022 budget was followed by the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, The Hon Matt Keogh MP, issuing a Media release on 30 October 2022, coinciding with his participation in unveiling 7 headstones in Hobart. The Government **committed \$1.5m for the 3-year period** of the Forward Estimates for the *First World War Unmarked Graves* grants program to be administered by the Office of Australian War Graves commencing in January 2023.

In December 2022, FFFAIF provided some feedback to OAWG staff on the Pilot Program and advocated to OAWG in a letter dated 20 March 2023 on behalf of the network of The Headstone Project (Tasmania), The Headstone Project South Australia, Forgotten Diggers, Friends of Sandgate Cemetery and The Australian Remembrance Army. With up to a decade's experience, plus the benefits of learning from the Pilot Program and a national perspective and representing the recipients of the vast majority of Pilot Program grants, there was no more knowledgeable group than those represented. Copies of the submission were forwarded to DVA Deputy Commissioners in most States and to FFFAIF Honorary Members who previously had some involvement with Headstone project groups.

The submission revealed the "capability gap" between the Government's expectation of \$201,000 grant funding @ \$450 each in the first year implying 447 graves being marked during the year (after deducting Program administration costs) and the need for the Headstone Project groups to raise about \$3,000 in donations and volunteer contributions

per grave which would amount to more than \$1.4m p.a. This amount is far above historical contributions using the well-established community partnership model developed over more than a decade, and would (unreasonably) be expected to be raised by newly established project groups to demonstrate they have the ability to install the headstones. Such a fund-raising effort risks diversion of volunteer resources from researching, liaising with families and cemetery trusts and from installation. Accordingly, FFFAF advised that:

while the currently proposed low grant contribution of \$450 per headstone might be superficially attractive to the Government and OAWG, (implying more money with low grants would enable more graves to be marked), unintentionally there is an inherent risk that the low contribution inhibits the take-up of the Program.

On Friday 21 April 2023 Veterans' Affairs Minister Matt Keogh Media issued a Media Release *Marking First World War Private Graves Grants*. There was no evidence of any of the advocacy of FFFAIF or the network of Headstone Projects being taken into account. FFFAIF and the network of headstone projects has **provided good feedback** to assist OAWG to refine the *Marking First World War Private Graves Grants Program* with little engagement and negligible success.

In June 2023 Andrea Gerrard OAM resigned from the FFFAIF Committee and since then The Headstone Project (Tasmania), The Headstone Project South Australia and Forgotten Diggers have advocated collaboratively and mentored the recently established Headstone Project Victoria. However, other groups involved in identifying unmarked graves of First World War soldiers, including The Australian Remembrance Army and Friends of Balmoral and Friends of Toowong Cemetery in Queensland and groups in WA have not been included in this collaboration.

On 20 December 2023 (just before Christmas) a Media Release from Minister Keogh entitled *First World War veterans grave sites recognised* advised that:

As part of this grant process, the Repatriation Commission assessed all applications and also determined that 44 veterans who had been identified through this program were in fact eligible for official War Grave status and commemoration. This means that their service will be recognised with a Commonwealth War Grave headstone installed at the site of interment. This will be arranged by, paid for and maintained in perpetuity by Government.

Forty-two applications have been approved for funding under the first round of the Marking (First World War) Private Graves Grants Program.

Forgotten Diggers Incorporated, New South Wales (20 graves, \$9,000)

The Headstone Project, South Australia (19 graves, \$8,550)

The Friends of Balmoral, Queensland (1 grave, \$450)

The Waroona Historical Society Incorporates, Western Australia (1 grave, \$450)

The 10th Light Horse Organisation, Western Australia (1 grave, \$450)

FFFAIF's observations and conclusions

- o The 42 First Round grants for YEJ 2024 of \$18,900 represent:
 - ➤ 1.3% of the \$1.5m available for grants in the 3 year Forward Estimates.
 - ➤ about 17% of the historical capability of the network of headstone project groups of about 250 graves marked p.a.

- ▶ less than 10% of the calculated maximum number of 447 grants available from the maximum funding available for 2023-24 as set out in the April 2023 GO6221 Marking First World War Private Graves Grants Program Grant Opportunity Guidelines at #3.1 on p6.
- Only 2 grants have been made to groups not represented in the network of headstone project groups.
- That 44 veterans identified through this program were eligible for official War Grave status and commemoration is a good outcome, but a sad reflection on OAWG / DVA / Repatriation Commission processes.
- o The \$450 grant per grave represents about 15% of the cost for a plinth, headstone and plaque.
- o The small number of grants suggest that OAWG costs per grant would be well above benchmarks.

At some time between May 2023 and February 2024, the Program funding appears to have been **reduced from \$3.5m to \$1.5m** and looks like \$1.134m is allocated over a 5-year period to June 2028. Using the Ministerial *Media Releases, Grants Program Guidelines* and Senate Estimates Committee Hansard documents, the estimated number of grants and amount of grant allocation funds can be calculated. From this the Administrative cost or Service delivery costs per grant for the 5-year period can be estimated as well as comparisons to grant funding benchmark figures.

If the total Program Funding of \$1.134m is expended over 5 years, it is expected to deliver \$638,000 of grant funding during the 5-year period to June 2028 in 705 grants. This gives an estimated cost of administering the grants program of \$678,000 or \$963 cost per \$420 and \$620 grants for the 5-year period or \$1.75 per \$1 of grant.

This is 8 times the grant funding benchmark figure for the Australia Council grants referenced in the ANAO Report No.7 2017–18 Performance Audit of the Efficiency of the Australia Council's Administration of Grants Report of \$0.22 per \$1 of grant.

Applications opened for the second round of grants on 21 April 2024 with a closing date of 5 November, subsequently extended to 3 December 2024. There have been only minor improvements to the Program with some further constraints added and with significantly reduced funding in the forward estimates.

Two days later, *The Australian* newspaper ran a front page story comparing the 1,189 grant allocations in the \$420,000 Pilot Program, known as the *Unmarked First World War Graves Funding Assistance Program* with the 42 grants in Round 1 of the *First World War Unmarked Graves grants program* (from December 2023 referred to as the *Marking (First World War) Private Graves Grants Program* or *MPG*.)



Approxima WWI veter					raves of	
		rison rnmer	nt trial		ALP	
	2019	2020	2021	Total	2023-24*	
Unmarked graves identified	79	151	986	1216	Funding recommended for 42 unmarked graves	
Markers received	79	151	959	1189		

On 16 August 2024 a Media Release was issued by the Minister calling for Applications for (increased) \$650 grant funding per grave that close on 5 November 2024. On 24 October, the closing date was extended by 4 weeks to 3 December.

It appears that the Government's funding commitment has been reduced to 43% of the 2022 commitment and the estimated number of grants has been reduced to 20% of the 2022 forecast.

The 2024 grant Guidelines for the 12 month period were even more restrictive than those for the first round with the earliest start date of grant activity being May 2025 and all work must be completed by 30 November 2025 (6 months window). There must be no above ground infrastructure existing on the grave to be eligible for funding, even though the grant funding can only be used towards funding a plaque.

This makes the *Marking (First World War) Private Graves Grants Program* (MPG) **even less 'fit for purpose'** than the Pilot Program or the 2023 First Round grants.

In the Senate Estimates Committee, Senator Perin Davey on 6 November 2024, asked DVA how the \$3.7m election commitment has turned into expected grant allocations of \$437,000 over 4 years with the inference that there is \$3.2m in administrative costs (Hansard pages 23 and 24)? DVA responded: "A lot of that money was absorbed, in that it's the back office stuff that is being done. The actual program money for the graves is still similar." Tim Bayliss, Director OAWG had previously advised FFFAIF in May 2023 that "The program cost is actually \$3.5 million". On face value, this indicates that \$3.5 m will fund 705 grants over a 5 year period totalling \$437,000 or 12.5% of the Program cost, and (mostly @ \$620 per grant) each grant would cost tax payers \$4,966. The Forward Estimates figures actually appear to show that over a 5 year period, funding appears to have been reduced from \$3.7m to \$1.5m to provide grant funding for grave markers of \$437,000 without any Ministerial announcement. If so, 40% of the \$1.5m Program would be allocated to grants and 60% to administrative costs.

On 12 November 2024 Cate Walker and Katrina Trevethan of the Australian Remembrance Army were interviewed on Brisbane's 4BC radio, followed later by a 14 minute podcast on 4BC radio "Hits you in the heart": family's long lost uncles given military commemoration - 4BC, and Barnaby Joyce commented at Cuts to War Graves funding - Barraba Community News and https://www.facebook.com/australianremembrancearmy/

On 19 February 2025 The Hon Matt Keogh MP, Minister For Veterans' Affairs issued a Media Release: *Recognition and Respect at their final resting place* at Toowong Cemetery in which he announced that the Albanese Government was providing grants of **almost \$107,000** in funding to nine organisations to mark the graves of 182 First World War veterans under the 2024-25 round of the Marking (First World War) Private Graves Grants Program. These were:

Australian Remembrance Army (84)

Friends of Toowong Cemetery (42) (where there are at least 700 unmarked WWI graves)

Forgotten Diggers Inc (21)

The Headstone Project (SA) Inc (21)

The Headstone Project (TAS) Inc (7)

The Headstone Project Victoria Inc (3)

Longreach Archival & Historical Research Group Inc (2)

Individual grantees at Casino (1) & Gympie (1)

In addition, 143 veterans were deemed eligible for official War Grave status and commemoration by the Repatriation Commission and will have a Commonwealth War Grave commemoration installed at the site of interment in perpetuity by the Australian Government. The Australian Remembrance Army were responsible for identifying 108 of these 143 veterans' graves, and also helped the Friends of Toowong Cemetery with research for their grant application. So far, for 226 grants made, an addition 187 veterans' graves will have a Commonwealth War Graves commemoration installed, indicating that the volunteers are spending a lot of time researching veterans' histories that should have been done by DVA and the Repatriation Commission.

FFFAIF will continue to advocate for improvements to the *Marking First World War Private Graves Grants Program*, both in its design and operation. At present it falls short of a commendable program for appropriately honouring the service and sacrifice of the soldiers who voluntarily served Australia during the Great War and returned to Australia, changed by their war experience, and often struggled to maintain family relationships and faced the challenges of a pandemic, the depression and health issues.

Commemorative events and activities

Collaboration with kindred organisations commemorating Australia's contribution to The Great War has been strengthened during the year. With Vice-President Paul Simadas also being Co-Chair of the Australian Branch of the Western Front Association (WFA) and a Committee Member of The Australian Society of World War One Aero Historians, promotion of "kindred" events to FFFAIF members has enabled a number FFFAIF members to attend presentations of interest. Since 2017 the John Laffin Memorial Lectures have been jointly promoted by FFFAIF, the WFA and the Fromelles Association, with invitations to NAJEX, RUSINSW and the Military History Society of NSW. FFFAIF members also include the Friends of the 15th Brigade, the Fromelles Association and Family History and Heritage Groups and RSL Sub-Branches facilitating collaboration and information sharing.

FFFAIF also recognises and supports the RUSINSW Ursula Davidson Library as one of the pre-eminent military history libraries in Australia with its collection of over 30,000 titles including about 10,000 from the John Laffin Collection. The Library also accepts donations of military history books and magazines from private collections and then where these are already in their collection, retains the best copy for the library and makes available for sale the surplus copies with proceeds of sale being used to enhance its collection. FFFAIF has donated a collection of past issues of DIGGER magazine to the Library and is providing a copy of each new issue to keep the collection up to date.

Commemoration of the Battle of Fromelles, 19 July 1916

The Battle of Fromelles in northern France was the first battle involving Australian troops on the Western Front following the withdrawal from Gallipoli. It was and remains the largest loss of Australian life in a 24-hour period with 2,150 Australian soldiers killed and died of wounds in the lead up to the battle and as a consequence of the battle with more than 3,420 Australian soldiers wounded and 482 taken prisoner (42 of whom died of wounds or other causes), totalling more than 5,530 casualties. In 2008, the graves of 250 soldiers buried by the Germans after the battle were located and in 2010, their remains were reinterred in the new *Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery* with full military honours. The graves of 180 of these soldiers now have named headstones.

In 1966, more than 500 veterans of the 5th Division marked the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles with their final Parade from the Archibald Fountain in Hyde Park in Sydney and joined about 300 people unable to march at the Ceremony by the Pool of Reflection at the Anzac Memorial. The Parade carried their request to the Trustees of the Anzac Memorial to always remember on 19 July their 8,100 comrades Killed in Action during the First World War and those who had died since.



1966 5th Division Parade - Reveille announcement in May and September report

The Trustees have honoured this by making available the 5th Division AIF Wreath Stand used in the 1966 Ceremony to enable the laying of a wreath on 19 July each year. The Families and Friends of the First AIF has, since 2006, assisted the Trustees of the Anzac Memorial in Hyde Park, Sydney to host the Commemoration of the Battle of Fromelles.

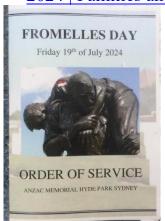
Since 19 July 2016 the Commemoration has been preceded by a Commemorative Procession that re-enacts the final Parade of the veterans of the 5th Division from the Archibald Fountain that commemorates the association of Australia and France in The Great War to the Anzac Memorial. The procession also symbolically represents the "400 yards", the widest part of "No-man's land" on the Fromelles battlefield.

2024 Commemoration of the Battle of Fromelles

Services of Commemoration of the 108^h anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles were conducted on Friday 19 July as follows:

FFFAIF in conjunction with the Anzac Memorial Trustees in Sydney with a Commemorative Procession from the Archibald Memorial Fountain to the Anzac

Memorial and the Commemoration Service at the Memorial. Extracts from the comprehensive photo-essay of the Commemoration that is available for viewing and downloading from the www.fffaif.org.au website at Fromelles Day Sydney 19 July 2024 | Families and Friends of the First AIF follows this overview.







31st Bn Association (Brisbane) at 11 am 19 July at the Ipswich General Cemetery, Ipswich QLD. Photos of the 2023 Commemoration are at <u>31st Infantry Battalion Association (31bnassn.org)</u> and <u>Gallery – 31st Infantry Battalion Association (31bnassn.org)</u>

The Friends of the 15th Brigade the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne, with live streaming on the Shrine's web site Battle of Fromelles | shrine.org.au from 1:30pm;





Photographs of the Melbourne Commemoration were posted on the Facebook page for 19-21 July. See: https://www.facebook.com/FFFAIF and

Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, Fromelles, France.

Geoffrey Benn, as President of the Fromelles Association, along with Vice President Bronwyn Stanley, Secretary Jim Smith, and Director of Genealogy Royce Atkinson were joined by FFFAIF President Jim Munro and Committee Member Jill Hayes who as part of the Official Party for the Commemoration Service at the **Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery** on 19 July. Also in the Official party were the current and former Mayors of Fromelles, Australian Army representatives, Johan Vanderwalle representing "Brothers-in-Arms" and Australian Consular staff. Other FFFAIF

members present included Honorary Members Martial Delebarre AM and Carole Laignel, and Danielle Roubroeks. Staff from the Fromelles Museum and Pierre Sellier and French veterans served as flag bearers from across the Nord of France. The Fromelles Association Facebook page has multiple postings 19-25 July with over 300 photographs. https://www.facebook.com/FromellesAssociationofAustralia





Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery, Fromelles, France.

The annual Fromelles Day Procession and commemorative Service at the Anzac Memorial in Sydney on the 19th of July 2024

The 2024 Fromelles commemoration service was held in fine weather and with an attendance of over 60 invited guests including dignitaries, the relatives of the men who served in the battle, and representatives of Remembrance and Veterans' groups.

A comprehensive photo-essay of the Commemoration is available for viewing and downloading from the www.fffaif.org.au website at Fromelles Day Sydney 19 July 2024 Families and Friends of the First AIF. In this copy, by necessity, many of the photographs have been reduced in size or omitted, however in the photo-essay uploaded to the www.fffaif.org.au website, clicking on most of the images enlarges them to see greater detail such as faces and the flowers in the floral tributes. The Fromelles Day Sydney Commemoration report as a Souvenir can be downloaded from the www.fffaif.org.au website.

A selection of some of the images give a summary of the Commemoration





The Commemorative Procession leaving the Archibald Fountain and in Hyde Park South led by Flag Ensigns - a Lance Corporal of Sydney University Regiment with M. Bernard Fortin French War Veterans of NSW and Colour Bearer Braith Gallard of the 55/53Bn Association.

All images are by Michael Mannington for Community Photography unless otherwise acknowledged
The Procession at







Piper Jim Braid piped the Procession into the Anzac Memorial, Sue Tongue and Margaret Snodgrass and Anzac Memorial staff greeted attendees.

The Flag party led the Participants to the Auditorium and formed up outside the Auditorium to await the to make a formal entry to the Auditorium.







Australian National Flag bearer and French National Flag bearer Bernard Fortin placed the Australian and French National flags for the salute to commence the commemoration service, with Vocalist Firefighter Carolynne Szady leading *O Valiant Hearts* with Accompanist Graeme Press







Master of Ceremonies, Darren Mitchell welcomed guests, Harry Allie BEM AM, Chair of the NSW Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Veterans Commemoration Service Committee led an Acknowledgement of Country and FFFAIF Committee Member John Skene delivered the Prologue which included reference to his ancestor John Ernest Skene of the 30th Battalion.

John Skene also displayed pictures of the seven Australian soldiers recently identified by DNA analysis and recognised at CWGC Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery headstone dedication Service in France on this day. Images from Soldier Stories from the Battle of Fromelles (see the following item in this report.)

John welcomed Josh Graham and children Oscar (11yr old) and Charlotte (9yr old) as relatives of Pte Herbert James GRAHAM, 54Bn, whose named headstone was being unveiled in Fromelles during their commemorative service that evening.

Also present was Helen Bainbrigge, whose grandmother's brother was Ernest Frank Studdon, who served as Welling, 30Bn whose named headstone was being unveiled in Fromelles during their commemorative service that evening.

Padre Andrew Robinson, Deputy Command Chaplain, Headquarters Forces Command led a prayer remembering the soldiers killed, wounded or taken prisoner and those changed by their experiences in the battle and their families and giving thanks that some of those soldiers who were "lost" have now been found and those did not have a final resting place and now do.



Arline Ronsisvalle delivered the Family Reflection for her Great

Uncle, Pte. Albert Jones of the 55th Battalion, who was taken prisoner at Fromelles

and spent the rest of the war in PoW camps.





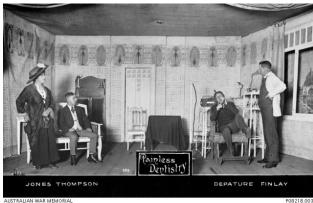
Arline Ronsisvalle

Australian POWs en-route to Lille led by Capt Charles Mills 31Bn and Capt Robert Keay 32Bn

During his time in prison camps, Albert performed in musical and stage performances to entertain his POW colleagues. Fortunately, the AWM has photos featuring Albert.



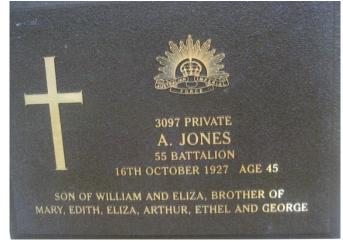




Left: Pte Albert Jones and Pte Matthew Findlay (left) and with Sgt John Trevenion (centre) at Dulmen POW Camp, Germany and in 'Painless Dentistry' theatrical productions at Soltau POW camp near Hanover, Germany (right)

Albert Jones survived the war and Returned to Australia, but died 8 years later, aged 45 years.





Images supplied by Arlene Ronsisvale

The Consul-General for the Republic of France, Mr. Martin Juillard delivered a Message from France, expressing appreciation for Australian support since The Great War and continuing today.





Brigadier Allan Murray provided the Epilogue which included reference to his ancestor Driver Willy Thompson of the 30th Battalion and how Willy's experiences influenced the family and his own life and service.







The singing of the National Anthems of France, New Zealand and the United Kingdom was led by The Fire + Rescue NSW Vocalist Firefighter Carolynne Szadey accompanied by Graeme Press. Carolynne then sang *The Recessional* to close the Service in the Auditorium as participants passed beneath the Ocular as they moved through the Hall of Service and into the Hall of Memory.





The Hall of Memory viewed through the Ocular above the Hall of Service and the sculpture Sacrifice. In acknowledgement of the commitment made in 1966 the Trustees of the Anzac Memorial to honour the men of the Fifth Division AIF and the Battle of Fromelles, a wreath was laid by Peter Dowling, Secretary of the 55/53Bn Association.







Piper Jim Braid, NSW Scottish Regimental Association Pipes and Drums, took up his position to play a Lament during the wreath-laying. Jim Braid is a relative of Sgt James Dodd 53Bn and Pte Downie Dodd 55Bn KIA Fromelles. Master of Ceremonies Darren Mitchell then called forward the following dignitaries to lay their wreaths:

Li Jason Yat-Sen MP, Member for Strathfield representing The Hon. Chris Minns MP, Premier of New South Wales and the Minister for Veterans, The Hon David Harris MP.







Left to right: Piper Jim Braid; Jeff O'Brien, State Secretary, RSL NSW & custodian of the Anzac Memorial laying a wreath for those who served; Consul-General Republic of France M. Martin Juillard, laying a wreath on behalf of the Citizens of France.







Consul-General of New Zealand Mr. Bill Dobbie laying a wreath on behalf of the Citizens of New Zealand and Deputy Consul-General of United Kingdom Mr. Ed Kitt laying a wreath on behalf of the Citizens of United Kingdom; with The Ambassador of Belgium, His Excellency Mr Michel Goffin, laying a wreath on behalf of the Citizens of Belgium.







BRIG Robert Calhoun, representing MAJGEN David Thomae and the 2nd Australian Division Wreath on behalf of The Australian Defence Forces for those who have and currently serve. Ms Sonia Gregory, Deputy Commissioner NSW & ACT, representing the Department of Veterans' Affairs laying a wreath for War Veterans; Queen Dunbar, State President, Families and Veterans Guild, formerly Australian War Widows NSW; and

Sue Tongue, Committee Member, Families and Friends of the First AIF laying a wreath for the Fallen at Fromelles.







BRIG Allan Murray and Arline Ronsisvalle laying a wreath on behalf of World War One descendants; Annette Tebb, descendant of Ernest Jentsch, 53Bn, KIA Fromelles and honouring Ernest and those soldiers now lying in Pheasant Wood Cemetery

Howard Collins OBE, Coordinator General, Transport for NSW with Bill Phippen OAM laying a wreath for the 52 NSW railway and tramway men who died at Fromelles and those who

survived; and Ian Thompson, President, Sydney Legacy.



Images by Community Photography

The Ode was recited by BRIG Robert Calhoun representing Major General David Thomae AM, Commander Second Australian Division. The Last Post was sounded by Terry McCleary of the Fire + Rescue NSW Band followed by The Silence and The Rouse. Terry's wife Leonie is a relative of Captain Archibald Gunter MC, 54th Bn, Wounded at Fromelles.







Contemplation during The Silence was followed by Terry McCleary sounding The Rouse







Each participant in the Commemoration was given a commemorative star bearing the name of a New South Wales soldier killed during or died of wounds following the Battle of Fromelles. They were invited to cast it into the Well of Contemplation following a moment of reflection.

Stars released into the Well are collected and later cremated at Rookwood Cemetery. The ashes are carried on annual pilgrimages by the Premier's Anzac Memorial Scholars to the key battlefield sites of the Western Front, Gallipoli, the Middle East and Asia.



Reflection before casting the Commemorative Stars into the Well of Contemplation.



The sculpture *Sacrifice* in the Hall of Silence and the Commemorative Stars Vocalist Firewoman Carolynne Szady led the singing of the Australian National Anthem to conclude the Commemorative Service.

Following the Commemoration, the wreaths were relocated from the Anzac Memorial to the ANZAC Chapel at RSL Life Care ANZAC Village at Narrabeen for distribution throughout the Village for the benefit of residents and staff.

Special thanks to the Trustees of the Anzac Memorial, their staff, and volunteers for facilitating and assisting in the Commemorative Service, and to the FFFAIF Organising Committee and the Regimental Sergeant Major, Joint Ceremonial NSW of the Australian Army and the NSW Office of Veterans. Also thanks to Michael Mannington, for Community Photography and to the 7 Network News team for the photographic record of the Commemoration and coverage, and to the florists who prepared the wreaths, and to those who relocated the wreaths from the Anzac Memorial following the Commemoration to the RSL Life Care ANZAC Village at Narrabeen.

A copy of the full report with photographs has been posted to the FFFAIF website at www.fffaif.org.au and some photographs are at First AIF - Home | Facebook for viewing.

Lest We Forget

2025 Fromelles Day Commemorations

The 2025 Commemoration Services have been reported on the www.fffaif.org.au website and will be summarised in the 2025-26 Annual Report. The web reports are at: Fromelles Day 2025 — Commemorating the 109th anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles 19 July 1916 | Families and Friends of the First AIF for Melbourne, Brisbane and Fromelles with the Sydney Souvenir report available for viewing and downloading at: Fromelles Day 2025 — Commemorating the 109th anniversary in Sydney of the Battle of Fromelles 19 July 1916 | Families and Friends of the First AIF

Identification of 7 more soldiers in Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery Of the 250 soldiers buried by the German Reserve Bavarian Infantry Regiment soldiers following the Battle of Fromelles in French Flanders on 19 July 1916, 180 soldiers are now identified with their names on their own headstone.

Identifying the 70 currently unidentified soldiers remains the challenge that can only be solved now by matching the soldier's DNA with that of a relative. FFFAIF acknowledges and supports the lead role that the Fromelles Association has been taking in researching and advocating to the Unrecovered War Casualties section of Army to continue to process DNA samples of relatives of soldiers killed in the Battle of Fromelles, which might result in the identification of more Australians. This has significantly contributed to the 2024 Fromelles Identification Board revealing the names of 7 more Australian soldiers who have their names inscribed on individual headstones (with a similar number in 2023). Images from Soldier Stories from the Battle of Fromelles



Pte Alfred William FITCH (ANSELL), No 2825, 5th Pioneer Battalion 1886-1916



Cpl Percy George Archibald BARR, No 3006, 54th Bn. 1896-1916



Pte George Robert BARNATT, No 1062, 29th Bn, D Company 1885-1916



Pte William Brumby
Pte William Christopher
BRUMBY,
No 585, 31st Bn,
C Company
1885-1916



Pte Herbert James GRAHAM, No 3543, 54th Bn 1892-1916



L.Cpl Harold Thomson SMITH, No. 509, 8th Field Company Engineers 1896-1916



Pte Ernest Frank (STUDDON) WELLING, No. 1311, 30th Bn, C Coy 1884-1916

Images from the Fromelles Association website <u>Soldier Stories from the Battle of Fromelles</u> where detailed stories for hundreds of soldiers are presented.

The dedication of the headstones for these soldiers occurred as part of the Commemoration service in Fromelles France on 19 July. Participating in the dedication were representatives of the soldiers' families as well as Officers from the Australian Army Unrecovered War Casualties - Army unit and the executives of the Fromelles Association of Australia.









MAJ David Wilson unveils the named headstone for Pte Herbert James GRAHAM, 54Bn on behalf of the Graham family.







Fromelles Association Director Genealogy, Royce Atkinson on behalf of the Bainbrigge family unveils the named headstone for Ernest Frank Studdon, who served as Welling, 30Bn.

Images from the Fromelles Association website Soldier Stories from the Battle of Fromelles

Special guests included Fromelles Association President Geoffrey Benn (also a FFFAIF Committee member), Vice President Bronwyn Stanley, Secretary Jim Smith, and

Director Genealogy, Royce Atkinson. FFFAIF was also represented by Honorary Members Martial Delebarre AM and Carole Laignel and Danielle Roubroeks and President Jim Munro and Committee Member Jill Hayes.

Fromelles Family Day' on Saturday the 17th of August 2024 at the Anzac Memorial Auditorium in Hyde Park, Sydney.

The Families and Friends of the First AIF and the Fromelles Association of Australia jointly presented a 'Fromelles Family' Day, taking advantage of a visit to Sydney by Fromelles advocate and FFFAIF Honorary Member Lambis Englezos OAM as well as the recent return from the 2024 Fromelles commemoration at Pheasant Wood in France of Jim Munro, the President of the FFFAIF, and Geoffrey Benn, the President of the Fromelles Association and MAJ David Wilson of the Australian Army's *Unrecovered War Casualties - Army* unit.





Jim Munro, President of the FFFAIF, welcomed the 65 attendees and introduced the speakers before giving an overview of the background to the Battle of Fromelles and introducing Lambis Englezos with the 14 minute 60 Minutes video segment from 2006 Don't Forget Me Cobber featuring Ray Martin with Lambis Englezos, Yves Fohlen, Martial Dellebarre and Ross McMullin.

Lambis Englezos then presented "Fromelles, the 'Missing', an update". He outlined how research, advocacy and investigation had located 250 soldiers buried by the Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment soldiers following the Battle of Fromelles in French Flanders on 19 July 1916, seen their remains exhumed, DNA extracted and so far 180 soldiers are now identified with their names on their own headstone.

Jim Munro explained how the German wartime information, which flowed from the battlefield to the military archives in Munich and Berlin, and the Red Cross archives in Geneva and eventually to the AWM and National Archives in Canberra. In particular, the German Death Lists (GDL), *Toten* death vouchers, *Nachenlisten* (personal effects vouchers) have been invaluable in Lambis' quest and Jim explained that CAPT Charles Mills 31Bn Mills was largely responsible for them now being in the archives in Canberra.

Geoffrey Benn outlined how the Fromelles Association of Australia tracks down DNA donors so that the association can then submit them to Unrecovered War Casualties - Army for testing and then,

Major David Wilson from Unrecovered War Casualties - Army explained the DNA testing, and the Identification Board process leading to new identifications being announced.

Geoffrey Benn then returned to give an account of how the post-war 'Battles Nomenclature Committee' tasked with categorising all of the British military actions of the First World War by time, place and extent, had difficulty categorising the Battle of Fromelles (and other military actions) properly, and they recommended their results be used flexibility. However, their work gained greater significance when it was used to award Battle Honours. Australian military leaders requested revisions to the proposed list of Battle Honours, one of which related to Fromelles, and were successful with several, but as a matter of expediency, focussed on a short list and Fromelles was relegated as a lower priority and that is why the soldiers of Fromelles were never awarded a Battle Honour for Fromelles. Based on the research included in his recent book, Fromelles 100 years of Myths and Lies, Geoffrey was able to identify the name and dates of those who made the decision to omit Fromelles from the final list.

An interesting and informative day for those who attended with many complimentary comments at the end of the day.

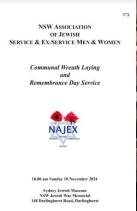
November 2024 Remembrance

FFFAIF was represented at several Commemorations and Events during November.

10 November, Jewish Communal Remembrance Day Commemoration at Sydney Jewish Museum

FFFAIF was again be represented by Committee Member Mrs Margaret Snodgrass OAM, who was accompanied by FFFAIF Vice-President Lt. Col. Paul Simadas RFD. FFFAIF Member Dr. Darren Mitchell OAM also attended representing the Battle for Australia Association. Also present were NAJEX Patron and NSW Governor Her Excellency Margaret Beasley, Honorary Member Sir Peter Cosgrove, NAJEX President Roger Selby and Members Peter and Gloria Allen, RUSI President Kim Turner and Past-President Paul Irving with COL Robert Colhoun DSC of the Australian Army.

Margaret and Paul laid a red rose in remembrance of all those who served during The Great War.









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Remembrance Day banner at Forsyth Real Estate by Margaret Snodgrass

11 November, NSW Government Remembrance Day Commemoration at Sydney Cenotaph

President Jim Munro and Committee Member Jill Hayes represented FFFAIF.



MC WC Peter Overton AM announces guests including NSW Governor Margaret Beasley AC KC, Premier Chris Minns MP. Acknowledgement of Country by Uncle Harrie Allie AM BEM







In Flanders Fields recited by Premier's Anzac Scholars Olivia Wright and Joshua Davidson. Wreath laying led by NSW Governor Margaret Beasley AC KC with Mr Dennis Wilson





Wreath laying by Premier Chris Minns MP, Legacy, Families of Veterans Guild and RSL NSW







Wreath laying Emergency Services, The Ode recited by NSW RSL President Mick Bainbridge and Reflection by Group Captain Rodney Srinivasan

Sunday 24 November Anzac Memorial 90th Anniversary Commemoration Service Paul Simadas attended representing FFFAIF. About 250 people attended the service.

Wednesday 4 December 10:15am Oatley Heritage and Historical Society presentation on *The Battle of Fromelles*: Jim Munro and Emeritus Prof. Richard Wright. The presentation had local relevance as Pte Henry Mayer of Oatley and Cpl Frederick Fletcher of Mortdale were both killed in the battle, buried by the Germans and their remains exhumed and identified and re-interred with full military honours in the Fromelles (Pheasant Wood) Military Cemetery in 2010. Chris Bryett, Geoffrey Benn and Kevin Beard also attended.

Anzac Memorial stakeholder gatherings

The Director of the NSW Office for Veterans and Hon. Secretary for the Trustees of the Anzac Memorial, Caroline Mackaness invited major stakeholders to gather in November 2023 to discuss co-ordination of efforts and events at the Anzac Memorial. Further gatherings were convened in September 2024 and August 2025.

While the Anzac Memorial and Office for Veterans staff expressed an aspiration for the Anzac Memorial to be seen as a centre of excellence for research and as a venue, and there will be some outstanding presentations and speakers attending the Memorial, the Memorial lacks the ability to routinely live stream these presentations or to record them and turn them into podcasts for access remotely by families, students and researchers. The issue was raised by FFFAIF and noted by other representatives in the original gathering, as for most of the kindred military history groups, holding events at the Anzac Memorial means that the majority if their members are unable to participate in the event and live streaming or pod-casting is a key means of enabling membership participation.

Following the meeting at the Anzac Memorial in November 2023, Chris Bryett with Paul Simadas, has been progressing the issue of video recording and equipment and has identified the equipment that will enable video recording and distribution for members and others, related to events at the Anzac Memorial. Chris has tested various video camera and sound recording options.

An outcome of this was that FFFAIF lodged an Anzac Community Grant Application with the NSW Office of Veterans' Affairs (OVA) in November 2024 arguing the case for enhancing the audio-video capability in the Anzac Memorial Auditorium. While this application was unsuccessful, it heralded a successful outcome for FFFAIF's objective as the Assessment Committee determined that this is something that OVA need to facilitate for all groups using the Memorial and committed the Office for Veterans Affairs to work with the Anzac Memorial to ensure that the systems are upgraded and livestreaming of events is available in future. (4 February 2025 Letter from NSW OVA).

In June 2025, after Chris had evaluated alternative approaches and equipment, he submitted a proposal for FFFAIF to acquire a suitable capability for a cost of about \$3,000. The Committee considered the proposal at its June meeting and noted that if the camera set up has a life of say 3 years, it will cost FFFAIF about \$1,000pa, which will represent an additional \$3 p.a. to membership costs per member. If this will enable up to 300 members to view 3 FFFAIF activities p.a. then this would cost approximately \$1 per viewing opportunity per member. The Committee also noted that by the time the equipment needs replacement, the Anzac Memorial would hopefully have its own video capability that FFFAIF may be able to utilise. Accordingly, the Committee resolved that FFFAIF invest up to \$3,000 in the video equipment as a means of better servicing its members, especially those who are currently unable to attend member activities. The equipment was purchased in July and tested by recording the Sydney Fromelles Day Commemoration Service with helpful learning and refinement for future events.

A further gathering of the Anzac Memorial stakeholders group was held in August 2025 at which OVA advised that it was testing and will eventually provide a single portable video camera and mount, two microphones, and a Microsoft Teams 'Townhall' livestreaming capability via a Wi-Fi link to the outside world. Events will also be videorecorded for later use. The system was tested in September at a public talk and may rollout later in the year.

Liaison between OVA and FFFAIF has indicated some similarities between the equipment being used and there is an agreement for the OVA to further explore and test their capability for live streaming and recording at the FFFAIF 2025 John Laffin Memorial Lecture alongside FFFAIF recording the event. Recordings and experiences will be shared during and after the Lecture.

FFFAIF support for The Australian Nurses of the Great War Database

The Australian Nurses of the Great War Database was launched at the Anzac Memorial, Hyde Park Saturday, 30 April, 2022 with a number of presentations and the presence of many of the researchers and developers of the database, to highlight not only aspects and the lives and service of the Nurses, but to also demonstrate the power and flexibility of the Database as a tool for enquiry and research.

The Australian Nurses of the Great War Database was developed by FFFAIF member David Perkins to honour their service and sacrifice of Australian Nurses of the Great War. It is a 'searchable' database that provides access to the service and biographical details of about 2,600 Australian military nurses who served in the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) and other Empire military nursing organisations. It is available online through the www.fffaif.org.au website at Australian War Memorial, National Archives of Australia, and Department of Veterans Affairs 'Discovering Anzacs' group stories.

In December 2024 FFFAIF was advised that David Perkin's health is such that he is unable to maintain or upgrade the *Anzac Nurses of the Great War database*, however he would like to see the database continue. David subsequently nominated Paul Simadas to represent his interests and to transition Administrator rights to the *Anzac Nurses of the Great War database* to Paul and to transfer ownership of the database to FFFAIF.

David previously developed the *Australian airmen of the Great Wa*r database from the raw data compiled by Wing Commander Barry Videon and others, which is accessed through the *Australian Society of WW1 Aero Historians* at <u>Airmen database | Australian Society of WW1 Aero Historians</u>. David is also unable to maintain or upgrade this database and the society is seeking to migrate the database to their administration and control (hosting).

In August 2025 the FFFAIF Committee resolved to establish a Sub-Committee to manage the transition, operation and upgrading of the *Anzac Nurses of the Great War database*. The Committee resolved that:

FFFAIF Inc wholeheartedly thanks David Perkins for his sterling work on the *Anzac Nurses of the Great War* database (the database) and for kindly agreeing to transfer the database to the FFFAIF. The FFFAIF supports the development and maintenance of the database consistent with its purpose to commemorate the service, sacrifice, courage and suffering of the First Australian Imperial Force of the Great War 1914-1918 by any and all means in accordance with FFFAIF Objectives.

Further, a FFFAIF Inc Committee of Management sub-committee, to be known as the *Anzac Nurses of the Great War database* sub-committee, be established to investigate and if appropriate, manage the transfer, operation and maintenance and upgrading of the database which the sub-committee from time to time determines as appropriate in accordance with FFFAIF Objectives.

Furthermore, and for the time being, Paul Simadas, Bernard de Broglio*, Heather Ford, Sue Tongue, Chris Bryett, and President, Jim Munro (Ex-officio), being members of FFFAIF Inc having agreed to be appointed, are appointed in accordance with Clause 21 of the Constitution and may exercise, subject to the terms of the delegation, all functions as described in the letter of authority deemed necessary to preserve the memory of the soldiers, sailors, airmen and nurses who served in the Great War of 1914-1918 in accordance with FFFAIF Objectives.

* Bernard has agreed to assist the Sub-Committee with advice relating to the technical aspects of the database transition and design as required.

Paul has had some training and coaching from David and now has full administrator rights for the Nurses' FileMaker Database and is negotiating take-over of the contract and the related fees to maintain the database via existing arrangements with the LittleMan Server.

In the 2025-26 year the Committee will continue to pursue the following strategic objectives.

- 1. Continue to extend the reach of the FFFAIF Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/FFFAIF/
- 2. FFFAIF will continue to strengthen ties with kindred organisations and develop liaise with its Honorary and Life Members Council to facilitate its advocacy efforts.
- 3. FFFAIF further explore, test and utilise the capability for live streaming and recording commemorations and lectures events at the Anzac Memorial.
- 4. Transfer the management of the Anzac Nurses of the Great War database developed by FFFAIF Member David Perkins to FFFAIF and maintain it as part of enabling David Perkin's legacy to be sustained.
- 5. FFFAIF will explore and hopefully contribute to a Teacher Professional Development day with the History Teachers Association of NSW and the staff of the Anzac Memorial on *Australia: making a nation from Federation to WWI (1889 c. 1919)* to help prepare history teachers for the new Secondary Schools history curriculum to be implemented in 2027.

- 6. Many books were published for the centenary of the Great War and invariably the printers would have been provided with manuscripts in an electronic form that is generally suitable for being accessed on-line. FFFAIF will continue to encourage more of these publications to be converted to electronic publications suitable for lodgement through the e-deposit arrangements of the National and State Libraries.
- 7. There are many primary source databases holding information relating to the soldiers of the AIF, however, there are only a few that integrate information from the primary sources. The AIF Project database created at ADFA includes individual records of more than 330,000 First AIF soldiers. FFFAIF seeks to extend the AIF Project database to link with other databases holding soldier information such as linking to cemetery registers and to including a photograph of the soldier and his grave or memorial and links to e-publications.
- 8. FFFAIF aims to facilitate recognition of the final resting place of all servicemen and women who returned to Australia, and to have their burial places properly commemorated. Consequently, FFFAIF will continue to advocate for refinements to the Commonwealth Government's *Marking First World War Private Graves Grants Program*.

Thanks for the guidance and support of the association's **Honorary and Life Members**. I would also like to thank Past President Russell Curley for his mentoring and support throughout the year.

Special thanks also, to Western Front Representatives Anny De Decker and Johan Durnez in Belgium and Yves Fohlen and Carole Laignel in France and all of our overseas members for assisting to Keep The Memory Alive.

As President, I express my gratitude to the Committee of Management, Vice-President Paul Simadas, Secretary and Editor Graeme Hosken, Committee Members, Margaret Snodgrass, Chris Bryett, Jill Hayes, Sue Tongue and John Skene for their ongoing contributions to the successful management of our association and for their support over the year. The Committee of Management has worked well as a team with roles as follows that are reviewed ongoingly.

Name		Additional roles
Jim Munro	President and Treasurer	Membership Secretary, Treasurer, Chair of Trustees, Public Officer, Rembrella, Web site, Representation at Commemorations, Liaison with Honorary Members
Paul Simadas	Vice President	Liaison with the Headstone Project network, Liaison with kindred organisations, organising FFFAIF events including JLML, AGM, Commemorations, Facebook page
Graeme Hosken	Secretary	Editor <i>DIGGER</i> , COBBeR, Facebook page, Enquiries, Liaison with Overseas members
Margaret Snodgrass	Committee member	Member Welfare, Commemorations
Chris Bryett	Committee member	Constitution, Trust Deeds and legal incl JLTSP, Fromelles liaison, Commemorations
Jill Hayes	Committee member	Liaison with Honorary Members Representation at Commemorations, Assists Membership Secretary,
Sue Tongue	Committee member	JLTSP, Canberra liaison, Belgium liaison, liaison with Family History groups, ANZAC Centenary Bibliography.
Geoffrey Benn	Committee member	Fromelles liaison, Education Sub-Committee
John Skene	Committee member	Assists Membership Secretary

FFFAIF remains focussed on its objectives and has adequate reserves to enable it to adapt and find opportunities for members and other community members to participate in commemorative activities as we honour those who served in the First AIF and *Keep The Memory Alive*. Lest we Forget

Jim Munro,

President

REMBRELLA	TELESCOPIC POPPY UMBRELLA
	A quality statement of Remembrance, while supporting FFFAIF objectives.
	1 @ \$30.00 + \$10 postage = \$40 incl post
	2 @ \$30.00 each + \$10 postage = \$70 incl post
	Fundraising Pack of 12 umbrellas in a pack @
	\$400 Postage included
	Payment by cheque or credit card
	Rembrella Poppy Umbrellas Order Forms
ne Poppy Umbrella	Families and Friends of the First AIF
	Delivery by Parcel Post or
	Pick-up post free on 15 November at
	the AGM or John Laffin Memorial Lecture

Treasurer's Report For the year ended 30 June 2025

The Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025 are set out in full in this booklet. They report a surplus from ordinary activities for the year ended 30 June 2025 of \$194 compared to the surplus of \$2,517 for the year ended 30 June 2024.

The Committee carefully monitors income and expenditure at its monthly meetings. Some key indicators of income and expenditure are shown below:

	2024-25 Total \$	No of Mem- bers	2024-25 \$ per member	2023-24 \$ per member	2022-23 \$ per member	2021-22 \$ per member	% change from last year
Income	14,903	328	\$45.43	\$88.09	\$56.94	\$54.44	-20%
Membership Subscriptions	11,737	328	\$35.78	\$31.83	\$40.29	\$41.25	12%
Net Rembrella contribution	766	328	\$2.33	\$16.52	\$9.72	\$5.57	-86%
Expenses	14,725	328	\$44.89	\$43.14	\$42.62	\$21.66	-9%
Contribution to Headstone Projects	-	328	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	
DIGGER print & post expenses p.a.	9,320	187	\$49.84	\$48.30	\$49.01	\$35.25	16%
DIGGER expenses per issue	2,330	187	\$12.46	\$12.10	\$12.25	\$8.81	
Contributions to Commemorative & Member events & Admin (after entry fees and any grants receivable)	2,236	328	\$6.82	\$3.99	\$3.94	\$1.92	1368%

FFFAIF started the financial year with members' funds of \$58,934 with no funds held for the John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize and Rembrella stocks worth \$22,889. It ended the year with members' funds of \$59,112 of which \$21,889 was Rembrella stocks valued at the Cost of Goods Sold (COGS). As the results are largely based on cash received and paid (cash accounting), and FFFAIF membership subscriptions are largely received in June, July and August, the results inherently reflect more variability than using accrual accounting techniques that reflect subscriptions receivable and invoices payable. The exception to this is that the costs taken into account for Rembrella stock is based on the Cost of Goods Sold, whereas the cash assets reflect the actual cost of stocks. As FFFAIF made an extraordinarily large purchase of Rembrella stock during the 2021-22 year of \$21,800, and the COGS for 2024-25 was \$1,075, there is considerable distortion in the financial position. Over several years, these annual fluctuations are offset and a better impression of the financial viability of FFFAIF is evident. These two distortions (Membership fees for future years treated as cash received for the current year, and only Rembrella COGS being regarded as expenses for the current year), are the main contributors to the fluctuating "Adjustments to prior year results" required to reconcile yearly income and expenses with Retained Members Funds.

Membership numbers have remained fairly steady, with 328 members at the beginning of June, and membership fees remained unchanged and more members have taken out multi-year membership. While membership revenue per member has increased in the past year (up 12% to \$35.80 compared to down 21% in the previous year) the longer term trend reflects the continuing increase in concession memberships within a variability due to multi-year memberships.

In 2018, FFFAIF membership categories and fees were restructured to give all members the benefit of electronic copies of DIGGER and COBBeR and introduced a PLUS membership category for those who wished to receive printed copies of DIGGER by post. At his time FFFAIF had 411 financial members including a significant number of families with multiple memberships. Most importantly, the PLUS membership category aligned the printing and posting costs with those members who wished to receive printed copies of *DIGGER* reducing the cross subsidisation by other members. The benefit of all members being entitled to electronic copies of *DIGGER* and COBBeR meant that there was reduced incentive for multiple members within families and group memberships (corporate, libraries and family history groups) and a reduction in financial memberships was expected, although the "reach" of FFFAIF could well be the same or extended. After a review of forward estimates for revenue and expenditure in June 2020, the Committee revised the membership fee and PLUS supplements for Australian and Overseas members, increasing membership fees by \$5 to \$40 / \$35 pa and increasing the PLUS membership contribution by \$5 pa for Australian members and \$3 pa for Overseas members to reduce the cross subsidy from e-members. This realignment of membership benefits and fees has enabled FFFAIF to be financially robust in the context of an ageing membership, increased access to information related to The Great War via the internet and the impact of the COVID pandemic while maintaining fees at the 2020 level for 5 years.

While membership numbers recorded at mid 2025 were similar to the previous year, they included a considerable number who had not renewed their membership for more than 2 years, yet continued to have the benefits of membership extended to them as a goodwill gesture post pandemic and as they may have been impacted by cost of living pressures. After 2 years of non-renewal, in October 2025, about 40 of these former members have been moved to the Former Australian Members of the Membership Register and membership numbers have dropped by about 10%. The effect of this reduction on membership revenue and expenses will be small as most overdue members were, or had been converted to e-members as a goodwill gesture, for whom expenses are relatively low compared to PLUS members who incur printing and postage expenses.

Expenses per member have continued to fall from a peak of \$91 p.a. in 2018-19 to \$44.85 p.a., similar to last year. The major contributing factors have been the transition of commemorations in Sydney into the Auditorium of the Anzac Memorial, avoiding the costs of hiring infrastructure (marquees, seating, sound systems etc) now partly offset with user hire fees.

While the postal and printing charges are variable, FFFAIF has benefited from printing costs per copy remaining relatively constant, reflecting the strong partnership with the Colour Copy Shop in Dubbo, and the cost of each printed issue of *DIGGER* had been within the range of \$12.00 - \$12.50 per copy for the past 3 years which has been a remarkable result considering a Committee decision to include more colour images to give more benefits to members. This is in the context of the Australian War Memorial replacing its *WARTIME* magazine with an on-line and bi-annual print version.

Rembrella products have added significant value to FFFAIF without putting members funds at risk. In total, about 5,000 Rembrellas have been sold in Australia by FFFAIF in almost 15 years, with about 1,200 held in stock and these sales have contributed about \$40,000 in funds for FFFAIF.

However, as previously advised, Rembrella sales in Europe and the UK had been devastated by the pandemic and the business was no longer viable and they ceased trading by early 2022. FFFAIF acquired as much Rembrella stock as was financially prudent and in March 2022 FFFAIF invested \$21,800 and received 1,548 umbrellas with a landed cost of \$18.18 each (compared to \$24.90 for its previous shipments). At the current wholesale price and Members price of \$30 each, this would generate about \$47,000 in sales revenue over a number of years, generating a contribution to FFFAIF of about \$18,700 representing a return on investment of about 85% compared to the alternative investment of bank interest at about 3%p.a. (in 2024-25 FFFAIF earned \$313 interest on its bank balances averaging about \$30,000 or 1%p.a. and by September 2025 this has dropped to 0.053%p.a. or \$1.35 per month).

The contribution from Rembrella sales to FFFAIF fell to \$500 in 2020-21 but picked up to \$3,177 in 2022-23 and \$5,335 in 2023-24 but dropped last year to \$766. Sales of Rembrellas continue to be heavily impacted by the Australian War Memorial redevelopment project impacting upon the AWM Shop operations. Since the 1st order being despatched on 1 December 2009, to the 41st order despatched in January 2025, 3,200 Rembrellas have been sold to the AWM with invoiced sales of more than \$90,000.

FFFAIF at 30 June held \$21,889 Rembrella stock valued at its Cost of Goods Sold (COGS). A financial risk associated with this stock has emerged with a rival "poppy umbrella" that is manufactured in China and shipped in bulk directly to Australia becoming available through The Military Shop, owned and operated by BrandNet Pty Ltd and the online Army Shop and Air Force Shop also operated by BrandNet on behalf of The Australian Army and the Royal Australian Air Force. A number of retail outlets have also been stocking the rival "poppy umbrella". The estimated landed costs is about 2/3 of the landed costs of the Rembrella products which were manufactured in China, shipped to the UK and then shipped to Australia in consignments of less than a full pallet. No sales orders were received from the Anzac Memorial in Sydney or the National ANZAC Centre in Albany during 2024-25 or since then. Accordingly, FFFAIF is focussing on sales of Rembrellas to its members and members of kindred groups as an exclusive, quality and meaningful gift.

FFFAIF has supported the Headstone Project initiative in Tasmania, and the development of a network of headstone projects across Australia. In February 2019 the

then Minister for Veterans' Affairs Darren Chester announced a two-year pilot program: *The Unmarked Graves of the First World War Program*. To date, FFFAIF's total contribution to The Headstone Project has been \$13,500.

In 2020-21 and 2021-22, the development of a network of Headstone Projects was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions, consequently FFFAIF did not make a financial contribution for the development of a network of Headstone Projects.

The launch of the Commonwealth Government's *Marking First World War Private Graves Grants Program* in April 2023 promised expanded and ongoing grant funding, providing an opportunity for FFFAIF to reassess whether its contribution might be redirected to other FFFAIF activities. As explained elsewhere, the *Marking First World War Private Graves Grants Program* is not considered "fit for purpose" and only 42 grants for \$19,000 in grant funds were awarded from the \$201,000 allocated for the first round of grants and the development of a network of Headstone Projects has stalled. While 182 grants have been announced for \$107,000 of funds for the second round of grants (85% to groups in the network of Headstone Projects) with the grant size increased to \$620 per grant (approximating the increases in the cost of materials since 2019) the *Program* is still not considered "fit for purpose". Consequently, FFFAIF has ceased making a financial contribution for the development of a network of Headstone Projects.

Expenditure on Commemorations and lectures has been greatly reduced from a peak of \$27 per member in 2018-19 to under \$7 per member in 2024-25, without compromising the quality of these, although the Anzac Memorial has introduced hire fees for use of the Auditorium for lectures.

FFFAIF was the beneficiary of another generous donation from Honorary Member Kerry Stokes AC in November 2024. The donation of \$5,000, like his previous donation of \$10,000, has been transferred to the John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize and will support the awarding of John Laffin Memorial History Prizes to outstanding history students. FFFAIF appreciates and acknowledges Mr Stokes generosity.

Overall, another small operating surplus and an increase in Members' Funds is recorded for the financial year and FFFAIF's financial position has remained robust.

This year the President has undertaken the role of Treasurer. Members with the skills and capability and interest in assisting or undertaking the Treasurer's role are invited to contact the Committee.

Jim Munro

President and Treasurer

Jim Munro

This edited version of Minutes of 2024 Annual General Meeting contains extracts of the FFFAIF Treasurer's Report and the Trustees' Report and Questions on Notice to contain the number of pages in this booklet. The President's Report, Financial Statements and the Treasurer's Report and the Trustees' Report are available in the 2024 AGM Booklet and the complete 2024 AGM Minutes (with images) are available for viewing and download in the General Meetings section of the Members Area of www.fffaif.org.au. (4 pages).

Families and Friends of the First AIF Incorporated Minutes of 2024 Annual General Meeting Held on 30 November 2024

Venue: The Auditorium, Anzac Memorial building, Hyde Park, Sydney. The meeting was also broadcast live by Zoom to FFFAIF members who logged in.

Meeting commenced: 10.36 am, after Vice-President Paul Simadas recited 'The Ode of Remembrance' prior to Jim Munro taking the Chair.

Order of business

1. **Members in attendance** (registered): Jim Munro, Paul Simadas, Graeme Hosken, Margaret Snodgrass, Jill Hayes, Geoffrey Benn, John Skene, Craig Laffin, Kath Laffin, Sean McManus, Lynda Ward, Neil Falconer, Lorraine Henshaw, Greg Towner, Sergio Zampatti (15).

Members known to have attended by Zoom: Chris Bryett, Sue Tongue, Kerry Patman, Jacqueline Wilson, Jenny Gardiner, Russell Curley, Anne Carroll (7).

Proxy votes: None were submitted.

Apologies were received from: Stephen Brooks, Trevor Munro (2).

Guests in attendance: NIL.

2. Welcome and housekeeping following 'The Ode of Remembrance'

On behalf of the Committee of Management, Jim welcomed attendees to the 22nd Annual General Meeting of FAMILIES and FRIENDS of the FIRST AIF Inc. Jim outlined the voting procedures for those attending via Zoom, and introduced committee members present with a brief outline of their roles.

3. Reading and confirmation of Minutes of FFFAIF AGM held on 21/10/23 RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 21 October 2023 be taken as read.

MOVED: Neil Falconer SECOND: Lorraine Henshaw Carried.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of 21 October 2023 be confirmed and accepted.

MOVED: Paul Simadas SECOND: Lorraine Henshaw Carried.

Business arising from the 2023 minutes not addressed in the President's Report or elsewhere in the agenda: NIL.

4. President's Annual Report

A copy of the President's Annual Report had been circulated in the AGM booklet sent to members by e-mail. The electronic AGM Report contained hyperlinks to www.fffaif.org.au website and other websites for reports with photographs and further information.

There were no questions regarding the President's annual report.

RESOLVED that the President's Annual Report be received and accepted.

MOVED: Geoffrey Benn SECOND: Sergio Zampatti Carried.

5. Financial Statements and Treasurer's Report

The FFFAIF financial accounts are not required to be audited but will be reviewed to ensure that appropriate accounting techniques have been used and that the accounts are fair and reasonable. When finalised, they will be in the password protected Members area of the www.fffaif.org.au website. Copies of the financial reports are in the 2024 AGM Booklet commencing on page 38.

Jim touched upon some things of note: Surplus from ordinary activities of \$2,517.54 compared to \$4,685.10 previous year; the generous donation by Honorary Member Kerry Stokes AC of \$10,000 in December 2023, with funds transferred to the John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize; membership numbers fallen by 1%; members' funds at end of the financial year were \$58,934 and Rembrella stocks of \$22,889; membership revenue per member has declined to \$31.83; expenses per member were steady at \$43.14; Rembrella sales rose to \$5,335; overall financial position has remained robust.

RESOLVED that the Financial Statements and the Treasurer's Report for the year ended 30 June 2023 prepared by FFFAIF Inc and subject to review be accepted as a fair view of the association's financial position, in accordance with the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act.

MOVED: Neil Falconer SECOND: Sean McManus Carried.

6. Trustee's Report

Receive and consider the FFFAIF John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize (JLTSP) 2023-24 Trustees Report, commencing on page 52 of the AGM Booklet.

The John Laffin Memorial History Prize awards multiple prizes of \$500 and fiveyears' e-membership of FFFAIF for an outstanding student in each university offering an appropriate history course and two Prizes were presented for 2023, at Macquarie and Deakin Universities.

A most generous donation of \$10,000 was received from Honorary Member Kerry Stokes AC and transferred to the John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize. The FFFAIF has taken responsibility for the payment of the Fund's annual audit/review and the Trustees are very grateful for this generous gesture.

The Trustees thank Mr Kerry Stokes AC and those other FFFAIF members who have supported the John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize with donations.

Current Trustees and Account signatories are Jim Munro, Graeme Hosken, Chris Bryett and Sue Tongue.

The financial accounts of the JLTSP will be reviewed and will also be in the password-protected Members area of the www.fffaif.org.au website.

There were Nil questions on the Trustee's Report.

RESOLVED that the Trustee's Report be received and accepted.

MOVED: Paul Simadas SECOND: Kath Laffin. Carried.

7. Resolutions for Consideration

There were TWO Resolutions circulated in the Annual Report booklet. The first of these (7.1) was withdrawn.

Resolution 7.2 was that General the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd) be invited to accept honorary membership of the association in recognition of his extraordinary service to Digger Heritage as demonstrated in his roles as Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia and immediate past Patron-in-Chief of FFFAIF, as Vice Chief and then Chief of the Australian Defence Force and Governor of NSW.

MOVED: Jim Munro SECOND: Neil Falconer. Carried unanimously.

8. Election of 2024-25 Committee of Management

As nominations received by the Secretary by the closing date were insufficient to fill all vacancies on the committee, the candidates nominated were taken to be elected in accordance with the Constitution, and nominations were called for at the AGM for the one vacant position. There were NIL nominations, so one committee position remains to be filled.

Jim welcomed John Skene as the new member on the committee. John assisted in the planning and organising of the Fromelles Day Commemoration and the Fromelles Family Day and was appointed to the committee on 13 August 2024 to fill one of the two vacancies. He will continue to assist in organising member events and will assist the membership secretary.

Nominations were invited from the floor for the one vacant committee position. As there were no nominations, one casual vacancy exists on the committee for 2024-25.

9. Declaration of 2024-25 Committee of Management

In accordance with Clause 15 of the Association's Constitution, the following persons were taken to be elected unopposed to the office nominated, and the 2024-25 FFFAIF Committee of Management has one vacant position that can be filled as a Casual Vacancy.

PRESIDENT: Jim Munro

VICE-PRESIDENT: Paul Simadas

TREASURER: Jim Munro

SECRETARY: Graeme Hosken

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Margaret Snodgrass, Chris Bryett, Jill Hayes, Sue

Tongue, Geoffrey Benn, John Skene.

On behalf of the Committee, Jim thanked members for the vote of confidence given once again.

Jim then outlined some of the priorities for the incoming Committee for the year:

- (1) facilitating recognition of unmarked graves of First AIF servicemen and women
- (2) encouraging an electronic database of Centenary of Great War publications
- (3) preparing undergraduate history students to teach the new Secondary schools history curriculum to be implemented in 2027, conceptualised as 2 study days;
- (4) developing integration of WWI databases; and
- (5) further strengthening ties with kindred associations.

Jim then invited each Committee Member to share some reflections they wished to with the meeting regarding their areas of responsibility.

Graeme Hosken (Editor of DIGGER and COBBeR): advised that there will be a rise in the printing costs of DIGGER issues in 2025; and encouraged members to submit articles for *DIGGER* and COBBeR.

Paul Simadas: thanked the fellow members of the committee for supporting his planning of events in 2023-24.

Geoffrey Benn: Thanked Jim for his work over the year as President and praised the Compilation of Fromelles stories from *DIGGER* as part of the undergraduate study days' planning.

Sue Tongue: Advised that she had begun indexing the Fromelles Compilation file and continued to work in indexing each issue of *DIGGER* as it is released.

Chris Bryett: Thanked the committee for their collegiality and work over the last twelve months.

10. General Business –

Questions on Notice received by the Secretary on or before the due date: NIL. Craig Laffin gave an overview of the formation of the FFFAIF in the period 2000-2002 and expressed his belief that the FFFAIF had taken over the mantle of the 'Digger's Champion' from his late father and FFFAIF founder, John Laffin. Paul advised that David Perkins was no longer able to oversee the Nurses' database and that he (Paul) will take over its administration. The database server is in Newcastle but this may change, and the database will be 'frozen' as is until a volunteer can be found to continue David's work.

11. Close of Meeting: 11.27 am AEDT.

After a short lunch break, most of the members present stayed for the lectures given by Jim Munro (2) and Graeme Hosken. Some members of kindred associations attended. The John Laffin Memorial Lecture afternoon concluded at 4 pm.

Jim Munro, Chairman.



FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE FIRST AIF INCORPORATED

ABN 67 473 829 552

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS for the Year Ended 30 JUNE 2025 Compilation Report to FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE FIRST AIF Inc.

The accompanying special purpose financial statements of Families and Friends of First AIF Inc. comprise the balance sheet as at 30/6/25, the income and expenditure statement for the year then ended, a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory notes. The specific purpose for which the special purpose financial statements have been prepared is set out in Note 1 to the financial statements.

The Responsibility of the Committee of Management of Families and Friends of First AIF Inc.

The Committee of Management of the Families and Friends of First AIF Inc are solely responsible for the information contained in the special purpose financial statements, the reliability, accuracy and completeness of the information and for the determination that the significant accounting policies used are appropriate to meet their needs and the purpose that the financial statements were prepared.

Responsibility

On the basis of the information provided by the Committee of Management of FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE FIRST AIF INC, I have compiled the accompanying special purpose financial statements in accordance with the significant accounting policies adopted as set out in Note 1 to the financial statements and APES 315: Compilation of Financial Information.

The procedures use accounting knowledge to collect, classify and summarise the financial information which the Committee of Management provided, in compiling the financial statements. The procedures do include verification and validation procedures. No audit or review has been performed and accordingly no audit opinion or review conclusion on these financial statements is expressed.

These special purpose financial statements are provided exclusively for the benefit of the Committee of Management and Members of FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE FIRST AIF INC.

I do not accept responsibility to any other person for the contents of the special purpose financial statements.

Jim Munro Treasurer

9 October 2025

Committee's Report For the year ended 30 June 2025

Your committee members submit the financial accounts of the FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE FIRST AIF INC for the financial year ended 30 June 2025.

Committee Members

The names of the committee members at the date of this report are:

James Andrew MUNRO, President and Treasurer Paul Roscoe SIMADAS, Vice-President Graeme Ronald HOSKEN, Secretary Margaret Patricia SNODGRASS, Committee Christopher Garry BRYETT, Committee Jill Jennifer HAYES, Committee Susanne Patricia TONGUE, Committee Geoffrey Vincent BENN, Committee John SKENE, Committee

Principal Activities

The principal activities of the association during the financial year were to commemorate the service, sacrifice, courage and suffering of the First Australian Imperial Force of the Great War 1914-1918 and of their families and friends.

Significant Changes

There were no significant changes in the nature of these activities throughout the financial year, however commemorations and lectures have reached some capacity limitations in the Anzac Memorial Auditorium reflecting greater physical distancing between attendees in the post COVID-19 pandemic era. In addition, the Australian War Memorial construction activities continue to impact upon Rembrella sales. These also impacted upon membership renewals.

Operating Result

The surplus (loss) from ordinary activities after providing for income tax amounted to

Year ended Year ended 30 June 2025 30 June 2024 **2,517.54**

Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Members of the Committee:

Jim MUNRO, President

Graeme HOSKEN, Secretary

Statement by Members of the Committee For the year ended 30 June 2025

The Committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity and that this special purpose financial report should be prepared in accordance with the accounting policies outlined in Note 1 to the financial statements.

In the opinion of the Committee the Income and Expenditure Statement, Statement of Financial Position, and notes to the Financial Statements:

- 1. Present fairly the financial position of FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE FIRST AIF INC as at 30 June 2025 and its performance for the year ended on that date.
- 2. At the date of this statement, there are reasonable grounds to believe that the association will be able to pay its debts as and when they fall due.

This statement is made in accordance with a resolution of the Committee and is signed for and on behalf of the Committee by:

Jim Munro

Jim Munro, President

Graeme HOSKEN, Secretary

9 October 2025

Balance Sheet as at 30 June 2025

	Note	2025 \$	2024 \$
Current Assets			
Cash Assets	3	37,223.13	36,045.96
Member Sub's Receivable			
Receivable from JLTSP		<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
Rembrella sales receivables		<u> </u>	
Rembrella Stock – At Cost		\$21,888.72	22,888.62
Total Current Assets		59,111.85	58,934.58
Non-Current Assets Property, plant and equipment Total Non-Current Assets	_		
Total Assets		59,111.85	58,934.58
Current Liabilities			
Funds held on Trust	4		
Creditors			
Total Current Liabilities		0.00	0.00
Total Liabilities		0.00	0.00
Total Liabilities		0.00	0.00
		0.00	0.00
Net Assets		59,111.85	58,934.58
		<u></u>	
Members' Funds			
Retained Surplus		59,111.85	58,934.58
Total Members' Funds		59,111.85	58,934.58
	·		

Income and Expenditure Statement For the year ended 30 June 2025

	2025 \$	2024 \$
Income		·
Interest	312.73	327.09
Members subscriptions & Donations	11,737.13	20,497.52
'DIGGER' Magazine sales	90.00	96.50
Rembrella Sales	1,762.80	7,380.46
Event & Function Income	1,000.00	-
Other Income	-	150.00
Total Income	14,902.66	28,451.57
	-	-
Expenses		(0.00
Association Administration	404.88	68.00
Donations & Subscriptions	-	10,000.00
Commemorative & Member Events &	0.005.00	150.00
Marketing	2,235.88	150.00
Adjustment to prior year results	997.08	4,954.81
John Laffin Memorial Fund expenses Western Front Tour costs		-
Write off Plant & Equipment	-	-
Postage	- 2,253.49	1,529.96
Printing and stationery	7,066.90	7,186.00
Rembrella Costs of Sales	1,074.90	2,045.26
Telephone & Website	692.27	2,043.20
Total expenses	14,725.40	25,934.03
Total expenses	14,725.40	23,734.03
Surplus/(loss) from ordinary activities		2,517.54
before Income Tax	177.26	
Income Tax relating to ordinary activities		-
Net surplus/(loss) attributable to the		2,517.54
association	177.26	
Total changes in equity of the association	177.26	2,517.54
Opening retained surplus	58,934.58	56,417.04
Net surplus/(loss) attributable to the	,	2,517.54
association	177.26	,
Closing retained surplus	59,111.85	58,934.58

Notes to the FFFAIF Inc Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2025

Note 1: Statement of Significant Accounting Policies

This financial report is a special purpose financial report prepared in order to satisfy the financial reporting requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act. The committee has determined that the association is not a reporting entity.

The report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Associations Incorporation Act and the following Australian Accounting Standards:

AASB 1031: Materiality

AASB 110: Events after the Balance Sheet Date

No other Australian Accounting Standards or other authoritative pronouncements of the Australian Accounting Standards Board have been applied.

The financial report has been prepared on an accruals basis and is based on historic costs and does not take into account changing money values or, except where specifically stated, current valuations of non-current assets.

The following specific accounting policies, which are consistent with the previous period unless otherwise stated, have been adopted in the preparation of this financial report:

(a) Income Tax

The Association has received endorsement from the ATO as an income tax exempt charity. As such, the Association is not liable to income tax.

Note 2: Revenue	2025	2024
Operating Activities		_
Interest revenue	312.73	327.09
Members subscriptions & Donations	11,737.13	20,497.52
'DIGGER' Magazine sales	90.00	96.50
Rembrella Sales	1,762.80	7,380.46
Event & Function Income	1,000.00	-
Other Income		150.00
	14,902.66	28,451.57
Note 3: Cash Assets		
ANZ Cheque Account 368	6,720.03	5,323.05
ANZ Sav Account 232	30,503.10	30,183.37
ANZ Credit Cards 505	0.00	0.00
PayPal account	0.00	539.54
	37,223.13	36,045.96
Note 4: Funds held on Trust		
Funds held on Trust:		
John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize	41.09	215

There were 0 employees at the end of the year.

John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize (JLTSP) Trustee's Report

The John Laffin Memorial History Prize awards multiple prizes of \$500 and 5 year's emembership of FFFAIF for an outstanding student in each university offering an appropriate history course and one Prize was awarded for 2024. Mia Borowitz at Deakin University was the John Laffin Memorial History Prize for 2024.

The most recent Prize payments were:

7/12/2021	Deakin University	John Laffin Prize 2019 Emma Johnson	\$500
7/12/2021	Deakin University	John Laffin Prize 2020 Christopher Wheeler	\$500
7/12/2021	Macquarie University	John Laffin Prize 2021 Frank Di Bernardo	\$500
8/12/2021	Deakin University	John Laffin Prize 2021 Sophie Briggs	\$500
19/12/2022	Macquarie University	John Laffin Prize 2022 Jeremy Valsamis	\$500
19/12/2022	Deakin University	John Laffin Prize 2022 Mandy Grant	\$500
30/11/2023	Macquarie University	John Laffin Prize 2023 Joel Fochesato	\$500
12/2/2024	Deakin University	John Laffin Prize 2023 Peta Segbedzi	\$500
30/11/2023	Macquarie University	John Laffin Prize 2024, 2025 and 2026	\$1,500
12/2/2024	Deakin University	John Laffin Prize 2024 Mia Borowitz	\$500

FFFAIF has not as yet been advised of a Prize winner at Macquarie University for 2024.

Total opening JLTSP account balances at 1/7/2024 were \$20,985.95. Another most generous donation was received from Honorary Member Kerry Stokes AC for the John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize. This contribution will enable more history students to be assisted with their studies as well as raising awareness of the significance of service and sacrifice of the AIF soldiers and their families during and after The Great War.

Cash Management Acct #		Business Online Saver Acct	
012402 395506208		# 012402 395506232	
Opening balance 1/7/2024	\$0.00	Opening balance 1/7/2024	\$20,985.95
Transfers IN from Saver A/C	\$0.00	Transfers IN from Benefactor	\$5,000.00
Credits	\$0.00	Credit interest	\$243.89
Subtotal	\$0.00	Subtotal	\$26,229.84
Debits	\$0.00	Debits	\$0.00
Balance at 30/6/2025	\$0.00	Balance at 30/6/2025	\$26,229.84

During the year, the Trust Deed for the Fund was updated to reflect the current recent changes of Trustees. Current Trustees are Jim Munro, Graeme Hosken, Chris Bryett and Sue Tongue. The Trustees thank Mr Kerry Stokes AC and those other FFFAIF members who have supported the John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize with donations.

Significant Changes

There are no significant changes in the nature of the Prize, however ANZ Bank undertook a "Know Your Customer" review of the JLTSP during 2025. Although 3 of the original Trustees had relinquished their roles in December 2016 with additional Trustees appointed and appropriate forms authorising them as account signatories lodged with ANZ, the Bank requested an amending Deed be submitted to update the names of the Trustees. This process took 5 months, but in the interim, the ANZ Bank restricted access to the JLTSP account and then closed the account on 1 August 2025. FFFAIF is currently considering alternative banking arrangements for the JLTSP.

2025 FFFAIF Annual General Meeting and John Laffin Memorial Lecture series Anzac Memorial Auditorium, Hyde Park, Sydney, Saturday 15th November, 2025.

Programme:

10.00 am: Arrival and Registration. Refreshments table operating.

10:15 am to 10:55 am: Annual General Meeting. Zoomed live for members.

11:00 am Anzac Memorial Daily Commemoration

11:15 am to 12:15 pm: Tour of the Anzac Memorial Exhibition space including model of HMAS AE2 and RUSI Library.

12.30 to 1.20 pm: AGM Lunch break: sandwiches and refreshments provided for AGM attendees.

1:15 pm: Public arrive and register for the John Laffin Memorial Lecture series. (Raffle, Rembrella and Oxford Archaeology book sales.)

1:30 pm to 2:45 pm: **The 2025 John Laffin Memorial Lecture**, Tribute to John Laffin

Prelude to Lecture presented by Jim Munro, President FFFAIF:

Development of Australian naval forces and their deployment as part of the Imperial Navy during the Great War with a focus on the submarines AE1 and AE2.

2025 John Laffin Memorial Lecture presented by Tim Smith OAM,

Director Assessments, Heritage NSW at

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

Tim will describe the mysteries surrounding the disappearances of the AE1 and AE2, the searches undertaken to locate the wrecks, and the maritime archaeological exploration that followed to study their fate and the condition they are now in. With some behind-the-scenes stories and explaining the highlights of 'Project Beneath Gallipoli', Tim brings his expertise and experiences together to tell a revealing story of Australia's first submarines at war and their rediscovery.





Tim Smith OAM and the AE2 scale model at the Anzac Memorial

2.45 pm to 3:45 pm: Tea & coffee break followed by Show & Tell and Close & depart.





Digital magazine of the Families and Friends of the First AIF Inc

Compiled by Graeme Hosken



The Pinkstone brothers in the Great War

with Appendices

Lieutenant Colonel David McConaghy, 55th & 54th Battalions and the 1911 Coronation Contingent

This e-publication has been produced primarily for members of the Families and Friends of the First AIF Inc. It is based on the letters written by the five Pinkstone brothers from Cootamundra, NSW, who enlisted in the Great War. These letters were mainly printed in the 'Cootamunda' Herald,' which was owned by the Pinkstone brothers' father until 1916, when their half-brother became the editor.

Use has been made of the Pinkstone's service records in the NAA, the ADFA AIF database, AWM Collect and Databases, Unit histories and war diaries, and other newspaper articles found on Trove to

dix on the 1911 Coronation Contingent uses letters from Sidney Pinkstone and several other numbers (unidentified), Photos mainly come from the AWM Collection.

The appendix of Lieutenant Colonel David McConaghy mostly uses letters written back to Cootamundra by McConaghy and other newspaper articles, and NAA and AWM files.

This book will be of particular interest to those with links to the 3rd, 54th and 55th Battalions

eir story is written in chronological sequence, with events beginning in 1914.

-book written by Graeme Hosken. Graeme Hosken

velcome to COBBeR 181 is its is the 18th size of our irregular digital magazine, compiled from material which could not be fitted into IGGER or is better suited to this e-format. Contributions for COBBeR are welcome at any time of the year, olour photographs and maps are particularly suited to inclusion. tricles in COBBeR can have a variety of formats and will not be as thoroughly word-processed or proofread

me Hosken or of *DIGGER* and COBBeR kenaif@bignond.com

Contents of COBBeR Issue 18

Pages	Title and author	Remarks
Cover	Australian stretcher-bearer escorting a German prisoner at Messines.	Thanks to Doug Banks for giving permission for his colourised image to be used as the cover image.
4-8	Sporting celebrities of the Northern Beaches landscape of Sydney in War and Peace, 1912-1924, by Emeritus Prof. John Ramsland.	John looks at some regional sporting history of the Northern Beaches of Sydney, with special reference to Cecil Healey and friends.
9-31	Watsonville Memorial Mango Tree, by Greg Knight.	Greg has identified the WWI servicemen honoured in a small village in Central Queensland. He was able to find photographs of most of the men.
32-43	Appendices to 'The Turners at War,' published in <i>DIGGER</i> 89, by Graeme Hosken.	Graeme has included seven appendices relating to the Turner article in DIGGER. It is advised to read the DIGGER story then these seven Appendices.
44	Comforts Fund, by Peter Bartley.	Peter provides a brief outline of the Comforts fund movement during the war, with special reference to the Armidale Comforts Fund, which supplied items to the 33 rd Battalion. This article should be read in conjunction to Peter's article on Morshead in DIGGER 89.
45-46	Profile of Private 705 Garrett Swanson, 24th Bn and 6th LTMB, by Graeme Hosken.	Garrett was a brother of George Swanson, featured in DIGGER 89.
47-50	The Coe brothers: Driver 1628 William Henry Coe and Private 1627 George Hilton Coe, 36th & 33 rd Battalions, by Graeme Hosken and Bill Durrant.	Profiles produced following a request for information on soldier-ancestors from a member of the public.
51-55	*Bob from Burra with the Brits,* by Graeme Hosken.	Two letters found on Trove written by an Australian serving with the 1 st Coldstream Guards. Bob Woollacott was one of a small group of Australians who were living in Britain when war broke out and served with the British Forces.
56-57	1917 letter: Private 6772 William Lowns, 14th Battalion, by Graeme Hosken.	An unusual letter from a Hillston soldier, in that he couldn't have written it! But who did remains a mystery.
58	Flowers for Ernie Corby, photos from John Payne.	Friendship between John in Kelso, NSW, and Cecile and Jean in Merris, France, sees flowers placed on Ernie's grave every All Saints' Day.
59-72	Where was Edmund Baragry when he was killed? Graeme Hosken, Peter Benson, Yves Fohlen and Steve Callahan	FFFAIF teamwork solves the mystery of where Pte Baragry (Steve's great-uncle) was killed and buried at Bullecourt.
73-83 (App. 1-10)	The Blandfords of Huntly – A family's sacrifice, John Aiken.	John looks at the contribution of one Victorian family to the Great War. This image-rich article suits the COBBeR format.

The Trustee for the John Laffin Travel Scholarship Prize (JLTSP)

ABN 49 207 476 906 is a registered charity, endorsed for Income tax exemption and GST concessions, and endorsed by the ATO as a deductible gift recipient scholarship fund.

If you would like to make a donation, payment may be made by direct bank (ANZ) deposit to BSB 012-402 - Account no 110142368 Account name:

Families and Friends of First AIF Inc Reference: Your surname or your FFFAIF Membership Number or phone or by credit card, -

or by cheque or money order. Mail to:

The Secretary FFFAIF Inc - PO Box 4245 -**FORSTER NSW 2428**

> john.laffin.prize@fffaif.org.au or secretary@fffaif.org.au

2025 AGM Notice, Agenda, Nominations and Questions

APPOINTMENT OF PROXY FFFAIF IDENTIFIED I. "Dedicated to Digger Heritage"			
(full name)			
being a member of FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE FIRST AIF Incorporated hereby appoint James Andrew Munro of 93 Karloo St, FORSTER, NSW 2428 being a member of that incorporated association, as my proxy to vote for me on my behalf at the Annual General Meeting of the association to be held on Saturday 15 th November 2025 and at any adjournment of that meeting. NOTE: A proxy vote may only be given to a person who is a member of the association. Only the chairperson of the meeting may hold more than five (5) proxies. My proxy is authorised to vote in favour of or against resolutions as I have indicated:			
(Signature of member appointing proxy) Date			
Appointment of Proxy forms must reach the Chairman by mail or email no later than Friday 14 th November 2025 by mail or email at: Secretary FFFAIF Inc or email to agm.rsvp@fffaif.org.au PO Box 4245, FORSTER NSW 2428			

2025-2026 membership fees

If you haven't renewed your membership yet, there is still time to do so before the AGM.

Payment may be made by direct bank (ANZ) deposit to

BSB: 012 402 – Account: Families and Friends of First AIF Inc – Account N°: 110142368 Reference: *Your surname* – renewal or *Your FFFAIF Membership Number or phone* or by credit card,

or by cheque or money order. Mail to:

The Secretary FFFAIF Inc - PO Box 4245 - FORSTER NSW 2428

2025 AGM Notice, Agenda, Nominations and Questions



Nomination/Acceptance Form

Nominations are hereby called for the following positions on the Committee of Management of Families and Friends of the First AIF Incorporated (FFFAIF Inc.) for the 2025/2026 year.

President – Vice-President – Treasurer – Secreta	ry – and five Ordinary Committee members.
I,, a n accept nomination/s for the position/s of:	nember of FFFAIF Inc. nominate /
1	2
3	4
Signed	(Nominee) Date
Name	Member No
Proposer	Member No
Seconder	IF Inc no later than
2025 ANNUAL GENI General Busines	· -
Question/s to be placed on Notice for 2025 and Friends of the First AIF Incorporated (FI attach separate sheet.) (Anonymous questions	FFAIF Inc.). (If insufficient space,
Name	
Signed	Secretary by mail or email no later than il.

FORSTER NSW 2428