

ANZAC Day 2015

Rosemary Phillis

2015 marked the centenary of the landing at Gallipoli. There was considerable interest within the community and events were held to commemorate the landing. The Riverstone Schofields RSL Sub-Branch spent several years preparing for a special Dawn Service at the Cenotaph.

Images of War

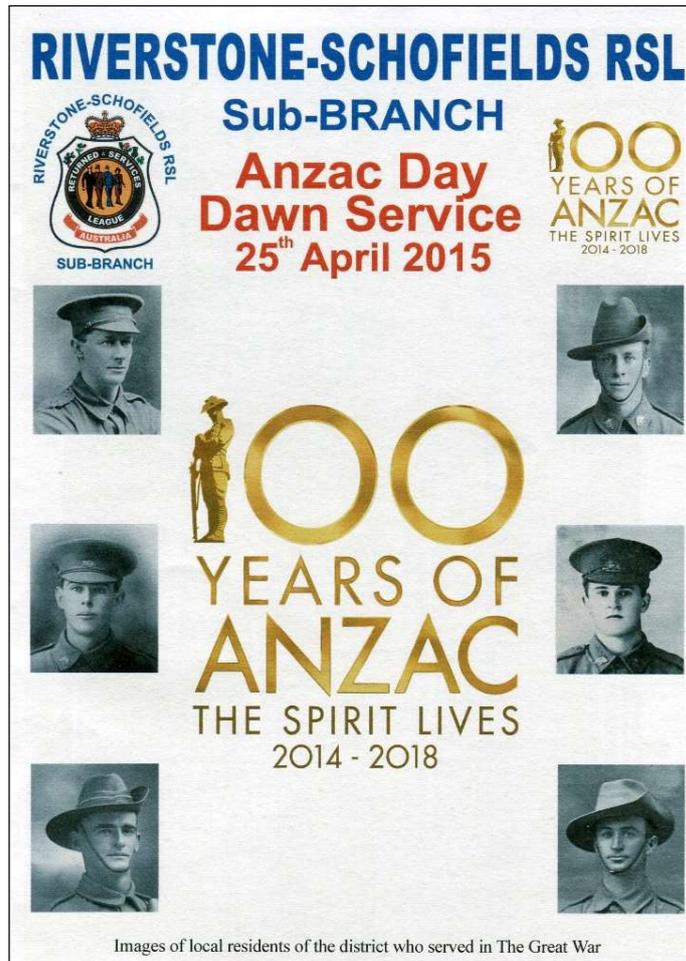
As a prelude to ANZAC Day I developed a PowerPoint presentation based on the Historical Society publication *Riverstone and the First World War*. On the night before ANZAC Day, using a laptop and data projector, we projected the images onto the side of the Museum building. At the time of the First World War the Museum building operated as the Riverstone Public School. The PowerPoint display ran on a loop for an hour and people watched from the Lions Park next to the Museum.

The photo below shows an image of Ambrose Mason who was killed during the war. One of his great nephews on seeing the photo wrote - *It is particularly poignant because I was told by my uncle Brian that the school was the last place that Ambrose visited as he walked from Crown Road down to catch a train back to Camp.*



Image of Ambrose Mason projected on the side wall of the Museum .

Photo" Rosemary Phillis



The cover of the Order of Service for the Ceremony.

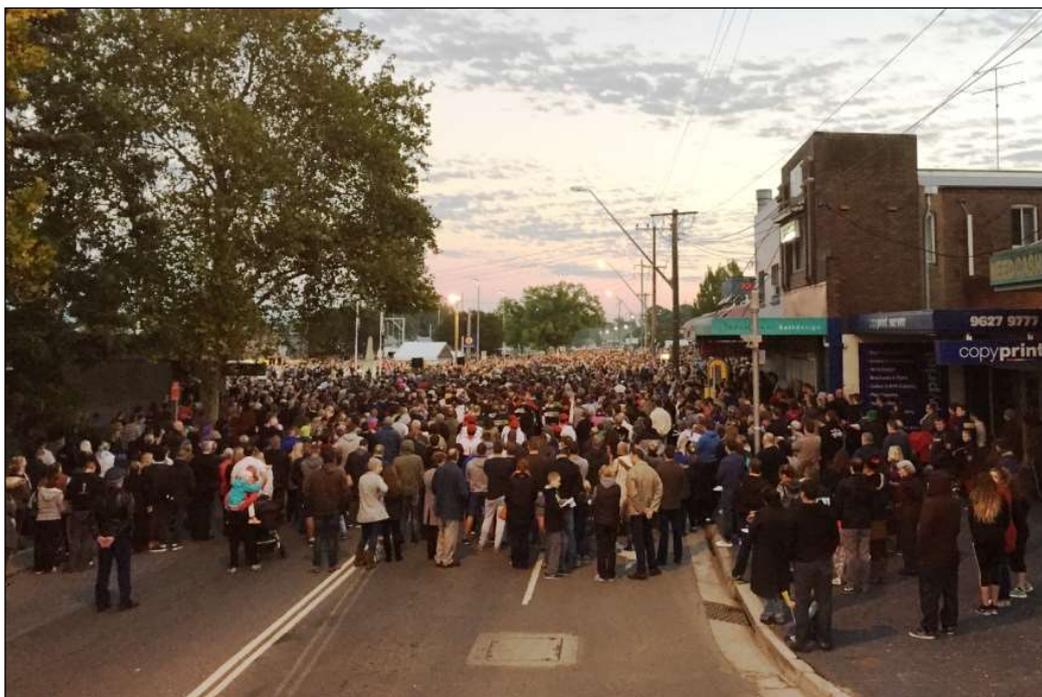


Photo of crowd at Service taken from the back of a SES vehicle.

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The Dawn Service

I wonder if the men from the district who served during the First World War could have imagined that 100 years after the landing at Gallipoli an estimated two thousand people from the district would have gathered around the Cenotaph to remember them.

I don't believe that we will see another gathering of the size which assembled at the Dawn Service. Hundreds of people assembled out the front of the RSL Sub-Branch in Market Street then marched up Pitt Street, down Garfield Road and around into Riverstone Parade and on to the Cenotaph outside of the Railway Station. There they stood, along with over a thousand other people, to pay their respects.

Robin Young, Secretary of the Riverstone-Schofields RSL Sub-Branch had ultimate responsibility for the event. He co-ordinated a myriad of things. A number of people and groups were involved in the ceremony itself:-

MC: David King

Catafalque Party: 176 Air Dispatch Squadron

"The Lord's Prayer": Father Zakaria Gayed

Prayer For The Nation: Reverend Steve Grose

Choir: John XXII Catholic Primary School Senior Choir

Epilogue - "In Flanders Fields": David King

"The Last Post" & "Reveille": Dane Laboyrie

"The Lament": Hawkesbury Nepean Pipe Band

"Ode": Richard Lawford

A multitude of wreaths were laid by representatives of local schools, sports teams and organisations.

There were people of a variety of ages and from different walks of life, all standing together. One thing that stood out during the service was the respectful silence. In an era where the sound of a mobile phone ringing is commonplace, not a ringtone broke the silence.

After the service the former Bowling Club premises became the focus. Breakfast was served in the club for ex-servicemen and members of the community. Families with children took part in a BBQ and activities on one of the former bowling greens.



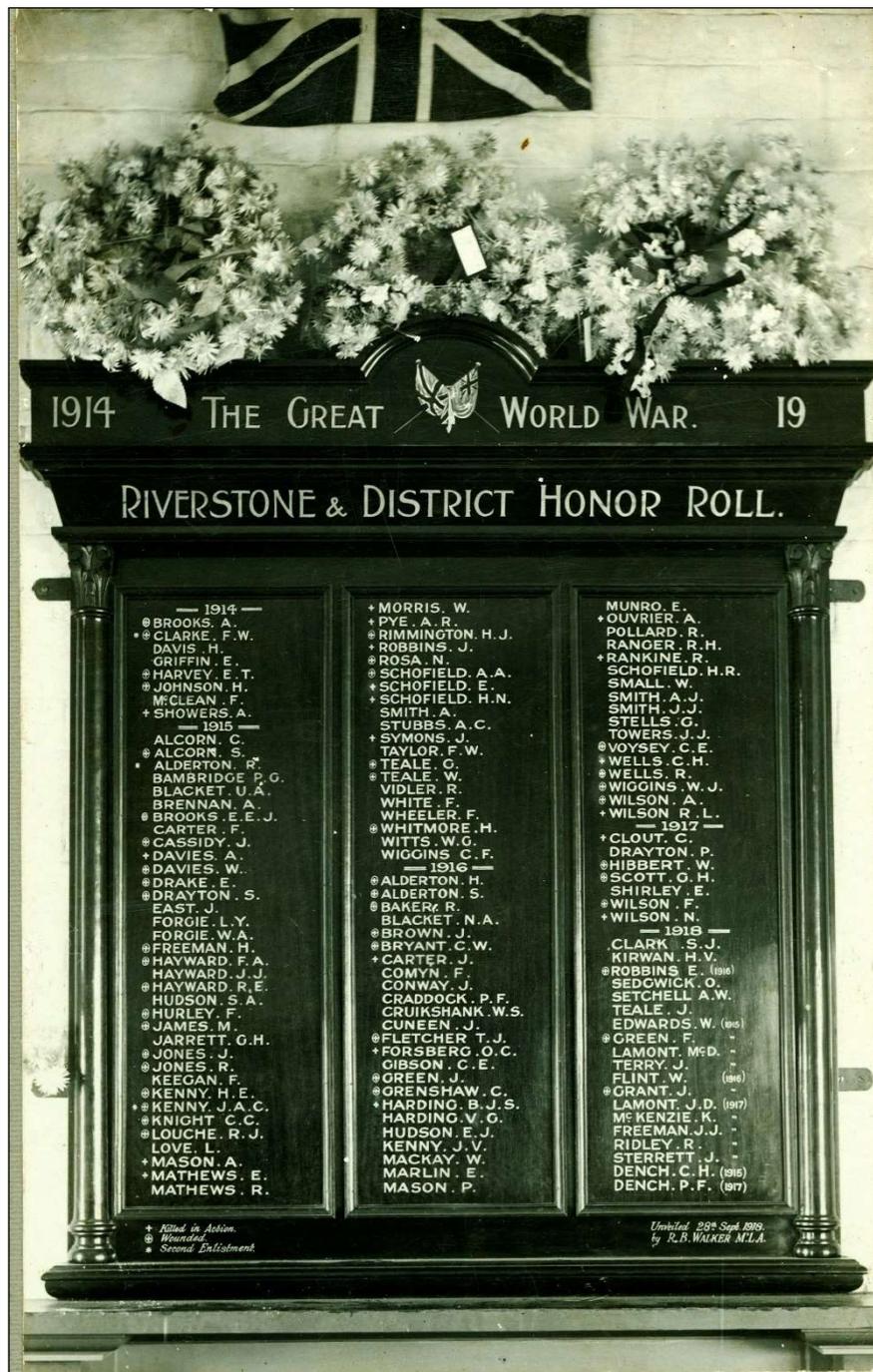
Riverstone Chamber of Commerce Centenary wreath.



Some of the many wreaths which surrounded the Cenotaph.



The Piper and Bugler were elevated above the crowd.



Riverstone Railway Station Honour Roll.

This Roll was mounted above the fireplace in the Riverstone Railway Station waiting room. The memorial was taken down in the late 1980s after being vandalised and its whereabouts are not known. Photo taken by EW Griffin. (R&DHS)