

**ANZAC DAY CEREMONY CONDUCTED BY THE COMMUNITY OF  
ST PATRICKS RIVER DISTRICT  
ADDRESS BY  
HER EXCELLENCY THE HONOURABLE BARBARA BAKER AC  
GOVERNOR OF TASMANIA  
NUNAMARA MEMORIAL HALL, MONDAY 25 APRIL 2022**

Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for the honour to be invited to Nunamara to commemorate ANZAC Day with you all. We remember those from the St Patrick's River District who have served and given their lives to give us the freedom and peace we now enjoy.

I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are gathered, and pay my respects to their Elders, past, and present. I would also like to pay my respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have contributed to the defence of Australia in times of peace and war.

I also acknowledge:

- The Honourable Michael Ferguson, Deputy Premier
- The Honourable Nick Duigan MLC
- Albert van Zetten, Mayor of Launceston
- Lara Alexander and Janie Finlay, Members for Bass
- Bridget Archer, Federal Member for Bass
- Returned service personnel, families, friends and supporters

As we gather here to commemorate our annual Anzac Day service, world peace is threatened by war waged by Russia in Ukraine. Our thoughts are with all of those suffering in the conflict. We hope for a return to peace.

This War Memorial monument 200 metres from here was originally unveiled in 1921. The *Launceston Examiner* of 27 April of that year reported:

In spite of the very inclement weather, a large number of the residents of Nunamara district and of Patersonia, Patricks Rivers and still further afield gathered here on Saturday when Mr J.C Newton M.L.A. performed the ceremony of unveiling the memorial to fallen soldiers of the district. He stressed that the need for remembrance was the debt we owe to our

brave men, which the monument would always stand as a reminder. Lieutenant Colonel R.E. Smith also gave a short address.<sup>1</sup>

The monument was refurbished in 2018 with a grant to the St Patrick's River Progress Association. I am sure we all agree, it has returned to its former glory, ready to last another 100 years as a focal point for commemorations in Nunamara. And I like the wooden replica made by the Longford Men's Shed.

"Lest we forget" is included in our annual commemorations. The words are taken from Rudyard Kipling's English poem "the Recessional," published in the *Times of London* for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. It was originally used as a commemoration of the dead in the South African (Boer) War. It was subsequently adopted both as a hymn and as the basis of commemorations of all who have died in war.<sup>2</sup>

"Lest we forget" evokes the horrors of war and reminds us to strive to avoid armed conflict whenever possible. It also reminds us that ordinary men and women have done extraordinary things in the adversity of the battlefield. There are many stories of conspicuous acts of gallantry, bravery and sacrifice to help mates. Fifteen Tasmanians have been awarded the Victoria Cross, the nation's highest award for valour in the face of the enemy. That is the highest number, per capita of population, of any state or territory.<sup>3</sup>

One award will be well known to residents of northern Tasmania, that of Ordinary Seaman Edward (Teddy) Sheean. He was a sailor on HMAS *Armidale*, which came under air attack on the first of December 1942. As the *Armidale* was sinking, Teddy saw his comrades being fired upon in the water. Despite being wounded, he tied himself to a gun and continued firing as the vessel went under the water. After a long campaign by his family and Tasmanian supporters, Teddy Sheean was awarded the Victoria Cross for his heroism and sacrifice. He became one of our 64 holders of our country's highest decoration for valour in action.<sup>4</sup> Fittingly, a street in his town of Latrobe has been named after him.

A recent recipient of the Victoria Cross was Burnie's Corporal Cameron Baird. On his fourth tour of Afghanistan, Cameron was involved in an assault on a

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<sup>1</sup> <https://monumentaaustralia.org.au/themes/conflict/multiple/display/70675-nunamara-war-memorial> accessed 23 Mar 22

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/recessional> accessed 5 Apr 22

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.centenaryofanzac.tas.gov.au/history/tasmanias\\_victoria\\_cross\\_legacy](https://www.centenaryofanzac.tas.gov.au/history/tasmanias_victoria_cross_legacy) accessed 5 Apr 22

<sup>4</sup> Barnett, G. *Our Heroes: Tasmania's Victoria Cross Recipients*, 2021. Pp40-48

village in Uruzgan province. He led his team against a number of enemy positions. He also went to the aid of another team whose commander had been wounded. He was cited for 'selfless regard for his own safety' as he drew fire, on numerous occasions, to allow his team to manoeuvre and maintain the momentum of the attack.

In some of the heaviest fighting, he entered buildings amid 'intense small-arms fire'. He charged enemy positions three times to draw fire from his mates. On his third charge, Corporal Baird's actions neutralised the enemy, kept his team safe, but ultimately cost his life.<sup>5</sup>

According to the Australian War Memorial, Anzac Day 'commemorates the ANZACS of 1915, and all those who have followed in their footsteps'.<sup>6</sup> The landing and subsequent occupation of Gallipoli was the first experience for our young Nation of the human cost of a major commitment of Australian Soldiers. 8,141 were killed and 26,111 became casualties.<sup>7</sup>

For Australia, the First World War remains our costliest conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 men enlisted, of whom more than 60,000 were killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner.<sup>8</sup> Included in these numbers were 21 Tasmanian Aboriginal men from Cape Barren Island who enlisted and served at Gallipoli, in Flanders, and on the Somme. Six of those men were killed.<sup>9</sup>

Anzac Day now commemorates all those who have given their lives in the service of our nation. In that context, I acknowledge that this is the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of Singapore to Imperial Japanese forces during the Second World War. On February 15 1942<sup>10</sup> more than 130,000 allied soldiers, including 15,000 Australians, were taken prisoner. More than 7,000 of our Australians died during captivity. All suffered appalling deprivation and torment. Winston Churchill declared that the fall of Singapore as the 'worst disaster and largest capitulation in British history'.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P10675639> accessed 5 Apr 22

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.awm.gov.au/commemoration/anzac-day> accessed 25 Feb 22

<sup>7</sup>

<https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/gallipoli#:~:text=The%20whole%20Gallipoli%20operation%2C%20however,the%20course%20of%20the%20war.> accessed 25 Feb 22

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/atwar/first-world-war> accessed 25 Feb 22

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.centenaryofanzac.tas.gov.au/history/tasmanian\\_aboriginal\\_soldiers](https://www.centenaryofanzac.tas.gov.au/history/tasmanian_aboriginal_soldiers) accessed 25 Feb 22

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.nma.gov.au/defining-moments/resources/fall-of-singapore> accessed 25 Feb 22

<sup>11</sup> Loc cit

On Anzac Day, we pause during the playing of the *Last Post* and *Reveille*, to remember our fallen soldiers, servicemen and women. We also remember our nurses and support staff, who paid the ultimate price for their service on behalf of our nation. We remember the toll on our nation and our communities from these conflicts. We affirm our desire and commitment for conflicts in the international arena to be solved peacefully.

Let us not forget our Australian and Tasmanian sailors, soldiers and aviators. They are and have been at the forefront of the defence of our nation.

On behalf of a grateful Nation, we thank all who have served, all who currently serve and all who support them.

Lest we forget.