

The JOINT COMMITTEE for the COMMEMORATION of the ANNIVERSARY of the BATTLE OF CRETE and the GREEK CAMPAIGN

## 115 YEARS of the GREEK-AUSTRALIAN ALLIANCE 1899-2014



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**1899-1902** – Greek Australians Frank Manusu (above), Constantine Alexander, Thomas Haraknoss, Elias Lukas and George Challis served with the colonial forces in the South African Boer War.

1912-1913 – Australian volunteers served in the Royal Hellenic Forces in the Balkans Wars. At the outbreak of the Second Balkan War in 1913, John Thomas Woods of the St John Ambulance volunteered for service with the Red Cross, assisting the Greek Medical Corps at Salonika, a service for which he was recognised with a Greek medal by King Constantine of Greece.

1914-1918 – Nearly 90 Greek Australians served on Gallipoli and the Western Front. Some were born in Athens, Crete, Castellorizo, Kythera, Ithaca, Peloponnesus, Samos, and Cephalonia, Lefkada and Cyprus and others in Australia. They were joined by Greek Australian nurses, most of them Australian born, including Cleopatra Johnson (Ioanou), daughter of Antoni Ioanou, gold miner of Moonan Brook, NSW. Nearly 450 Australian servicemen and nurses served on the Macedonian Front in northern Greece against a German-Bulgarian invasion. Sister Gertrude Evelyn Munro is the sole Australian nurse to perish in Macedonia. She now lies in the Mikra British Cemetery, Thessaloniki.





One of 13 Greek Australian Gallipoli veterans, George Cretan (Bikouvarakis) was born in Kefalas, Crete in 1888 and migrated to Sydney in 1912. On the left in Crete, 1910 and on the right in Sydney 1918 wearing his Gallipoli Campaign medals.

1915, 4th March – The first Anzacs landed on Lemnos island, in Moudros Harbour and were part of the largest armada ever assembled at that time. The island served as the main base of operations for the Gallipoli Campaign, including hospitals. In the waters around Lemnos and the island's soil now rest over 220 Anzacs. The most famous Lemnian on Gallipoli was the donkey used by Simpson to rescue wounded Anzacs.

**1915, 24th April** – The Anzacs left on the 24th April from Mudros Harbour, Lemnos for the Gallipoli peninsula.



Australian Matron Grace Wilson on Lemnos island during the Gallipoli Campaign (AWM A05332)





**1915 August** – 300 guerrillas from the island of Crete under the Command of **Pavlos Gyparis** (above) attacked the Gulf of Saros on Gallipoli as a diversion to lure the Ottomans and coincided with the Australian's 1st Brigade assault on Lone Pine.

**1918, 30th October** – The Armistice with the Ottoman Empire was signed on the HMAS Agamemnon in Moudros Harbour, Lemnos.

**Dual ANZAC Constantine Aroney** born on the island of Kythera in 1894 served Australia in both World Wars, in Gallipoli, the Western Front and in 1941 the Battle of Crete and The Greek Campaign. Other Greek Australian families such as Manusu, Aroney, Vafiopoulos, Procopis, Gunellas, Crocos, Jannese and Casos provided more than one member to the Australian Armed Forces. **The Manusu family** of regional NSW (originally from Lesvos island) contributed ten members to the South African Boer War and the two World Wars, of which four were killed.

**Seargent Nicholas Rodakis** MM,DSC (US) ,AIF who fought on the Western Front was born in Athens in 1880 and enlisted in the First AIF in February 1916. In the last year of the war he was attached to a United States army unit, and in September 1918, Rodakis' platoon was cut off behind enemy lines. As they fought to survive, Rodakis rescued an American officer in no-man's-land before capturing a German machine gun. He then defended his position for hours, before returning to the allied lines under cover of darkness, picking up wounded as he went. For his actions, Rodakis was awarded the **United States Distinguished Service Cross - the American equivalent of the Victoria Cross**. Rodakis was fortunate for he survived the war and returned to his wife in Warrnambool, Victoria in 1919.

1915, 19th May – Australian records reveal that nearly ninety diggers in the First World War had either been born in Greece or were of Greek background. Thirteen of these sailed to Lemnos and served at Gallipoli. One of these diggers would sadly die during the campaign - Private No. 170, Anzac Peter Rados at the age of only 23. He had migrated from Asia Minor and enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces and was killed in action and buried just a few miles away from his birthplace of Artake.

1918, 9th June – Hector Vasyli, an eleven year old newspaper boy of Greek Cypriot descent was killed in a traffic accident during a welcome home parade in Brisbane. Vasyli did patriotic work for returned soldiers during the war, and gave gifts of cigarettes to them. He participated in many of the welcome home parades in the city. A memorial plaque was erected on the Victoria Bridge by the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League (today known as RSL), Hellenic (Greek) Association and citizens of Brisbane. It was removed when the Victoria Bridge was demolished in 1966 but restored to its original spot on the southern arch of the Victoria Bridge in 1970 and still remains to this day.



Hector Vasyli, memorial plaque, Brisbane.



Seargent Nicholas Rodakis MM,DSC(US) AIF

1915-1918 – During World War One, almost 300 ANZACs were captured by the Ottoman Empire. Held in Christian churches, monasteries, schools and homes across Anatolia, they witnessed the deportations and death marches of the Greek, Armenian and Assyrian Genocides. Some worked as slave labourers on the Berlin-Baghdad Railway or elsewhere. Following the surrender of the Ottoman Turkish Empire, the surviving ANZAC prisoners-of-war were released. Some 67 of them did not survive captivity, a death rate far higher than their counterparts in Germany and Austria.

**1922-1926** – Western Front veteran **Major George Devine Treloar** was appointed by the League of Nations as Commissioner for Refugees in north-eastern Greece in October 1922. Over the next four years, he was instrumental in humanitarian and reconstruction efforts on behalf of survivors of Greek, Armenian and Assyrian Genocides. This included founding at least twelve new villages around the cities of Komotene, Xanthe, Alexandroupolis and Drama, one of which now bears his name, **Thrylorio** (outside Komotene). The Greek government recognised his efforts, presenting him with *Order of the Phoenix* (Greece 1926).

1927 – The locality of Lemnos Victoria, on the outskirts of the regional city of Shepparton was established in 1927 as a soldier settlement zone after the First World War. It was named by Anzac Ernest Hill a returned soldier after the Greek island of Lemnos on which he landed and was the main base of operations for the Gallipoli Campaign. There are many other streets named after Lemnos throughout Australia.

1922-1982 – Australia's most decorated heroine Joice NanKivell-Loch and her husband, Gallipoli veteran Sydney Loch (both below) and Ethel Cooper, answered the call for aid from the survivors of Greek, Armenian and Assyrian Genocides. At first at the American Farm School, on the outskirts of Thessaloniki and then at Ouranoupolis, near Mount Athos. Sydney passed away in 1955, while Joice remained at Ouranoupolis until her passing in 1982. Both were awarded medals by the Greek and Australian governments for their efforts, including the Order Of The Phoenix (Greece 1926); Order Of The Redeemer (Two Awards Of This Order) (Greece); Gold Medal - National Academy Of The Arts (Greece); Medal Of The Order Of The British Empire (M.B.E.) (United Kingdom 1933); Order Of Beneficence (Two Awards Of This Order) (Greece).



Joice NanKivell-Loch and her husband, Gallipoli veteran Sydney Loch

**1939-1945** – About **2,500 Greek Australians** served in the Australian Defence Forces during World War Two, including 35 women who served in various roles at home and abroad. They served in Greece/Crete, Tobruk, El Alemein, Egypt, Palestine, New Guinea, Singapore, Thailand and other parts of the Asia Pacific region.





Left: Anzacs on the Acropolis of Athens, April 1941 (AWM 006795). Right: The 1941 Greek Campaign

**1941, 12th April** – **The Second Anzac Corps** was formed out of the Australian and New Zealand units strung out across western Macedonia to resist the Nazi invasion. They fought courageously at **Vevi, Florina, Tempe, Volos, Brallos Pass, Thermopylae, Megara and Corinth**. Evacuated across the Aegean Sea to the island of Crete, they fought again in the Battle of Crete in May 1941. In the course of the world, over 17,000 Australian soldiers, airmen and sailors served, with 1,001 being wounded, 5,174 taken prisoners and 646 now resting in the **Commonwealth War Graves at Phaleron (Athens), Rhodes and Suda Bay, Crete.** 

Anzac Captain Reginald Saunders, Australia's highest decorated Aboriginal serviceman, was supported by the Zacharakis family and evaded capture on Crete for almost one year until he finally escaped to Egypt. Captain Saunders later served Australia again in the Korean War.

**1942** – **The Greek RSL Sub Branch** was formed in Castlereagh Street Sydney. It was officially chartered in 1950 and commemorates Greek and Australian servicemen and women and the battle in which they fought. The current president is Mr Bill Kotsovolos who was an Olympian representing Greece in the Melbourne Olympics of 1956.

1942 – At least 625 Australians were killed along the **Kokoda Trail** in the second half of 1942 and over 1,600 were wounded. There were at least 193 Greek Australians who served in New Guinea in WWII, and a number of those served in the Kokoda campaign In October 1942. Near Eora Creek on the Track, two brothers of the **Manusu family** from NSW - Guy and Perry, who served in the 2/1st Battalion - were killed in action within days of each other. Victorian **Jack Manol** faced the full force of the first Japanese attack. Manol became part of Kokoda folklore, having been immortalised in a 1942 photograph of Diggers, ankle deep in mud, climbing one of the track's steep jungle paths.

1943 – Corporal Angelo Barbouttis, whose parents were from Megisti (Castellorizo) island, stands out for his bravery during the Kokoda Campaign. He destroyed almost a whole boat load of invading Japanese, eventually being killed by a sniper who had swum to shore. He was buried at sea with little fanfare. A Street and some public buildings in Townsville have been named in his honour. An application to award a posthumous Victoria Cross to Angelo Barbouttis has been made and is currently before the Australian Government.





Left: Captain Reginald Saunders (AWM 083166). Right: Corporal Angelo Barbouttis

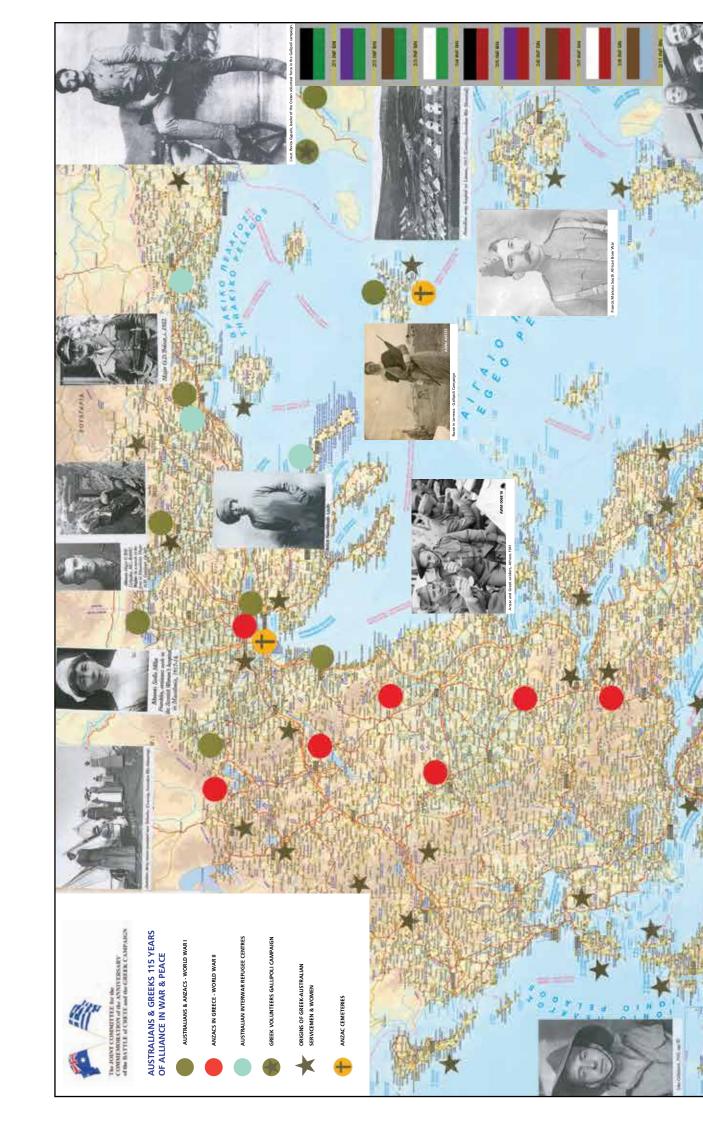
1945 – The memorial at Xinon Neron near Florina, Macedonia was the first memorial erected in Greece to commemorate a World War Two battle. It was erected in 1945 by the Greek residents of the area, commemorating this important Anzac battle. The monument is lined with Australian, New Zealand and Greek flags raised to honour the men who fought here to defend Greece. Another war memorial is located in the town of Vevi commemorating the 2/4th Australian Battalion.

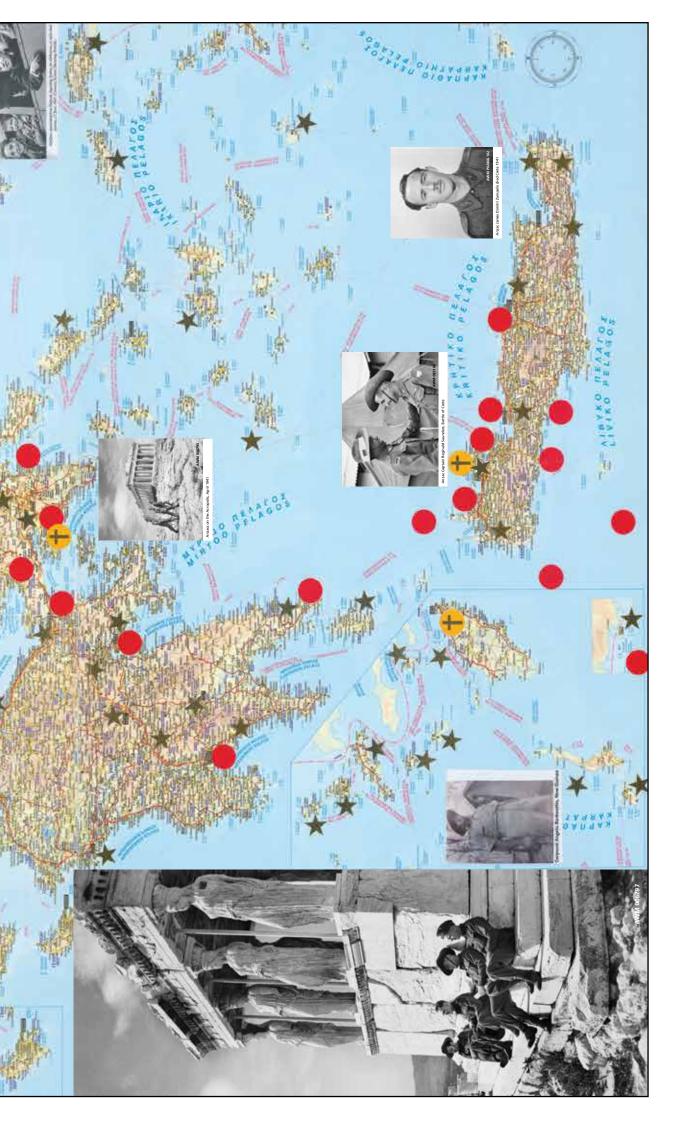
**1947-1948** – Under the auspices of the United Nations' Refugee Relief Agency, a 20-person Australian mission was organised and became active in relief work across western Macedonia, particularly the Kozane, Florina and Grevena districts. Their main role was to transport and return home thousands of predominantly young women whom the Nazis had abducted as slave labourers.

1946-1971 – Australia received hundreds of thousands of Greek migrants, another outcome of World War Two. It is estimated that Greece lost eleven percent of its population including eighty seven percent of its Jewish population during the Nazi occupation due to military activity, crimes against humanity and war-related famine and disease. Migration was necessary to avoid increasing poverty and unemployment.

1950-1952 – The Australian Council of Social Service under the leadership of Aileen Fitzpatrick orchestrated the reunion of children separated from their parents as a result of the Nazi invasion and occupation of Greece, and the Civil War that followed.

1950-1955 – Korean War. In response to the invasion of South Korea and the United Nations Resolution, 17,000 Australians served in the Korean War and they suffered 339 dead, and 1,200 wounded. Greece sent some 10,823 men to Korea and suffered 186 dead and 610 wounded. Anzac Captain Reginald Saunders having fought in Greece and Crete also fought in Korea.





**1962** – **St George Greek Orthodox Church** in Rose Bay NSW was erected as a war memorial and is dedicated to the Anzacs who died in Greece and to Australian Soldiers of Greek heritage. The church is an officially registered war memorial.

**1962-1972** – **Viet Nam War**. 128 Australians of Greek heritage served with the Australian Defence Forces.

1970 – The Joint Committee for the Commemoration of The Battle of Crete and The Greek Campaign was established by the Greek RSL Sub Brach, the 6th Division Association, the Military Police Association and the Cretan Association of NSW to commemorate the anniversary of the The Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign, the Second Anzac Campaign. The joint committee continues to commemorate the Anzacs and Greek people.



Annual Cenotaph Commemorations and wreath laying service for The Battle of Crete and the Greek campaign in Sydney

1975 – St Spyridon Greek Orthodox Church in Kingsford NSW was erected as a war memorial and is dedicated to the Anzacs who died in Greece and to Australian and Greek soldiers who lost their lives in the two World Wars. The church is an officially registered war memorial. The old Colours of the University of New South Wales Regiment were laid-up in the church on Saturday, 3rd March, 2003. They were marched to the Church with the band leading from the University. St Spyridon is the only Greek Orthodox Church in Australia to have received the Colours of an Australian Army Regiment.

1975 -1977 – The Australian Hellenic War Memorial was erected in 1975 at Stavromenos, near Rethymno, on Crete. It was here where Australian and local Greek forces held back the German paratroopers in May 1941 and the local community erected a memorial to commemorate that event. A plaque on the memorial records, with attendant colour patches every major Australian unit that fought the Germans at Stavromenos, at Perivolia and in the Rethymno area in general. In 1977, the Australian Government presented the Stavromenos memorial with two anti-aircraft Bofors guns, the type used by Australian anti-aircraft gunners in May 1941.

1978 May – General Vasilios Kourkafas was the first high ranking officer of the Greek military to visit Australia. Since then a delegation of the highest ranking officers of the Hellenic Military have visited various cities around Australia annually to commemorate the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign. They visit Australian Military establishments such as Lamia Barracks and exchange dialogue with Australian Military personnel as well as visiting schools and many other Australian communities including Anzac families.

1979 – Anzac Geoff Edwards OAM of the 2/11th Battalion's Carrier Platoon remembered the bravery and sacrifice of the Cretan people who helped him avoid capture. In 1979 he built a Greek Orthodox Church on the hill above his seaside community and named his home in Western Australia, Prevelly Park, after the monastery at Preveli, Crete. The Monastery was instrumental in harbouring and assisting Anzacs to evade capture and eventually escape. Today Prevelly Park is known as the town of Prevelly and is an important town of the Margaret River region. There are also many streets throughout Australia and a park named after the island of Crete during the post war period.



Town of Prevelly in Western Australia, St John the Theologian Greek Orthodox Church (centre)

1980 – The Hellenic Sub Branch of the RSL was first formed in Melbourne 1980 following meetings with Victoria's longest-serving RSL president Mr Bruce Ruxton MBE OBE AM and Greek Australian ex-servicemen. The sub branch promotes the contribution of Greeks to the Australian War Effort over the 20th century and beyond. The current President is Mr Steve Kyritsis, a Vietnam War veteran who has written two books highlighting the contribution of Greek Australians that fought as part of the Australian Military forces in WW1, WW2 and the Vietnam War.

1983 – The Royal Australian Corps of Military Police (RACMP) complex adopted the name of Lamia on the 12th June 1983. Lamia is a small town in central Greece through which the 16th Australian Infantry Brigade, 6th Australian Division conducted a fighting withdrawal in April 1941. During this action, Military Police performed their duties under fire with courage and professionalism. During this action, Captain J. W. Grimshaw, Australian Army Provost Corps, was awarded the Military Cross for leadership and bravery.

**1984 – The Australian Hellenic Historical Society** was established in 1984 to collect and research Hellenism in Australia and has been instrumental in discovering the Greek migrant families' contribution to the Australian war effort over the last 115 years.

1985 – The Australian Ambassador to Greece unveiled a memorial at Preveli, Crete on 24th May 1985, recognising the debt the escapers in the Preveli area owed to the local people. On the memorial are these words: "This tablet commemorates the deep gratitude of British, New Zealand and Australian servicemen befriended by the monks of Preveli Monastery and Cretans from surrounding villages, who, at great personal risk, helped them to escape by British submarines, HMS Thresher and Torbay, in July and August 1941."

1988 – Mr Marcos Polioudakis OAM born in Rethymnon, Crete in 1928, acted as a runner between the Anzacs and the Cretan people during the Battle of Rethymnon. He dedicated his entire adult life to research and collecting material that related to the Cretans and Anzacs, producing a three-volume account of the Battle of Crete. Marcos is credited with being instrumental in developing the Greek-Australian relationship and friendship and was president of the committee that oversaw the dedication of the memorial for Greek and Australian soldiers in Rethymno. Marcos's activities brought him to Australia on two occasions, and he was awarded the Order of Australia in 1988 for his efforts. He was immensely proud of this award, and genuinely loved Australia.

**1988** – **The Hellenic Memorial Canberra** beside the Australian War Memorial was dedicated on 21st May 1988. This memorial commemorates those who died and fought in the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign.

**1992-2001** – **The Australian Hellenic Memorial Melbourne** was unveiled on the 2nd September 2001 and was dedicated to the Australians and the Greek people that fought in the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign.



The Australian Hellenic Memorial Melbourne

**1994, 17th May** – **The Kalamata War Memorial** was dedicated by the veterans of the Kalamata campaign with the inscription "In memory of the Allied Forces and the Greeks who fell at the Battle of Kalamata on the 28th of April, 1941, or who were taken prisoner or who escaped to fight again that the world might be free." Surrounding the memorial are native Australian Trees.

**2001** – **The Hellenic-Australian Memorial Park at Rethymno**, commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Battle for Crete was dedicated on 19 May 2001. The design for the memorial symbolically represents the Greek people fighting side by side with Australians during the battle for Crete in 1941.

2007 June – The Hora Sfakion War Memorial in southern Crete was expanded with a bronze plaque donated by The Greek Australian International Legal and Medical Conference and commemorates the largest evacuation of allied soldiers from Crete over three nights in May 1941. About 15,000 retreating soldiers were taken out on British and Australian warships. Still another 5,000 did not manage to escape. On the anniversary of the Battle of Crete, the four flags of Greece, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom are raised over the monument and wreaths are laid to commemorate all those that fought and were evacuated from this location.

**2007** – Following a five year effort of research by Greek Australian historian **Lambis Englezos AM**, the largest unmarked military grave of Australian soldiers was uncovered at Fromelles, France.



The ceremonial re-burial of Australian and British soldiers recovered from mass graves near the site of 1916 Battle of Fromelles in France.

**2008** – **Dr Michael Bendon**, a Sydney archaeologist working in the ancient site of Phalasarna, in North Western Crete begins the research and documenting of the remains of the sunken Landing Craft Tank (LCT) A6 and LCT A20 the type of that saved thousands of ANZAC lives in the evacuation from The Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign.

2010 – Dr Maria Hill, a military historian with Honours, Masters and a PhD in History spent eight years researching and writing about the Australian campaigns in Greece and Crete. Her aim in writing Diggers and Greeks was to highlight the human relations between Anzacs and Greeks in the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign making her book a unique contribution.

**2011 – The Lemnos Gallipoli Commemorative Committee** was formed in Melbourne committed to ensuring that the Anzac connection to the northern Aegean island of Lemnos is appropriately commemorated. It will erect a memorial in 2015 in Albert Park, Melbourne as part of the Anzac Centenary.

**2013** – Australia and Greece contributed 110 and 63 personnel to United Nations Peacekeeping Missions.

**2013** May – Anthropologist Dr Ian Frazer, along with 50 Australians and New Zealanders (Anzac Descendents) erected a memorial at the Tripiti Gorge in southern Crete, as a tribute to the Greek people and the Anzacs who managed to evade capture some two years after the Nazi occupation until rescue in 1943. It is estimated between 1000 and 1500 Anzacs evaded the Nazis with the help of the Cretan people. Along with Dr Frazer and the Anzac families, private donors from the Greek Australian community have been instrumental in the creation of this memorial.





Tripiti Gorge Monument

Anzac James Zampelis

**2013** June – Work by Keith Rossi, Victoria's RSL historian, Melbourne military historian Carl Johnson, amateur historian Maria Cameron and Newcastle schoolteacher Tom Tsamouras has provided enough evidence that there are approximately 20 Anzacs that are buried in unmarked graves near the town of Vevi in northern Greece. The Greek government announced it plans to fund a dig at a site near where the 20 Anzacs are believed to have been buried anonymously in 1941.

2013, 6th December – Dr Maria Hill and the Joint Committee for the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign convened a symposium in honour of the 70th anniversary of the Greek and Crete campaigns in WWII. It was sponsored and held at the State Parliament of NSW exploring aspects of Australia's wartime relationship with Greece and its repercussions. The eminent speakers included Dr Ian Frazer - author of On the run - Anzac Escape and Evasion in Enemy-occupied Crete ,Archaeologist Dr Michael Bendon who gave a presentation on the two landing craft wrecks at Phalasarna in western Crete, Dr Brian Taaffe talking about The Gate Keepers of Galatas, author and art historian Susanna De Vries who talked on the extraordinary life and refugee aid work of Joice Nan Kivell (1887-1982) and Professor Joy Damousi, gave the keynote speech "The Greek Civil War, the United Nations and Australia: an Untold History".

2014 May – The 42nd Street Memorial plaque was unveiled in Chania, Crete, to commemorate the Battle of 42nd Street. Captain Reginald Saunders fought in this battle along with the Maori Battalion, who performed a haka before the onslaught against the Nazis. The Saunders family along with journalist Michael Sweet and private donors from the Greek Australian community have been instrumental in the creation of this memorial.

**2014 September – Anzac James Zampelis** is the only ANZAC of Greek heritage who was killed in The Battle of Crete in 1941. He is buried in an unmarked grave near Chania which has never been found. There are moves underway to locate his grave.



The 42nd Street Memorial plaque.

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Australian War Memorial www.awm.gov.au

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"We left the beautiful rugged island of Crete richer in feelings and memories of those indomitable Cretan people. We had been defeated in the field of Battle and had nothing to offer them yet they risked their all, their very lives to help us when we badly needed help. They had so little yet gave so willingly. For this the men, women and children were to pay a terrible price in savage reprisals by the enemy. Men like interpreter Vassilakis who, facing the firing squad, refused to be blindfolded and went to his death singing the Greek National Anthem - no wonder the island was never completely subdued.

And now with the building of the white chapel on the hill overlooking the ocean and the village of Prevelly in the south west corner of Western Australia, we can pay tribute to these courageous Greek people, making sure their sacrifice was not in vain and their heroic deeds will live forever more."

Anzac Geoff Edwards OAM, 1979