MEDIA RELEASE

Saturday, 18 October 2014

100 YEARS ON: FIRST TROOPS EMBARK FOR GALLIPOLI

Minister for Veterans’ Affairs Victor Dominello today led a ceremony in Sydney to mark 100 years since the first NSW troops who served in Gallipoli embarked for Albany, Western Australia on 18 October 1914.

Mr Dominello joined with NSW Centenary of Anzac Advisory Council Chair Lieutenant-General Ken Gillespie AC DSC GSM and War Widows’ Guild of Australia (NSW) President Wendy Thompson for the event at Embarkation Park, Potts Point.

Descendants of the troops and representatives of RSL NSW, the City of Sydney and the ANZAC Memorial were also on hand for a wreath laying ceremony at the Mothers and Wives’ Memorial, which stands adjacent Woolloomooloo Wharf on Cowper Wharf Road.

“On this day 100 years ago men and women from towns and suburbs across NSW answered the call and left their homes and families to serve Australia,” Mr Dominello said.

“The embarkation, which occurred between 18 and 20 October 1914, marked the definitive starting point of our State’s contribution to the First World War effort.

“Two Members of the NSW Parliament, Member for Armidale George Braund and Member for Willoughby Edward “Teddy” Larkin were part of the embarkation. They were among over 130,000 men and women from NSW who served overseas during the Great War.

“Tragically, both were killed at Gallipoli but I was pleased that George Braund’s grandson Ian Braund, his son Joe and his grandson Beau were able to attend the event.

“Today we should remember those who died in defence of our freedoms and pause to reflect on the extraordinary journey they embarked upon from this site,” he said.

Lt Gen Gillespie said that while the embarkation was a lively event, the centenary was a solemn occasion to remember the sacrifice of those who never came home.

“On 18 October troops from 1st Battalion marched to Fort Macquarie, the current site of the Opera House, and caught the ferry to Woolloomooloo. Other soldiers from the 2nd Battalion marched from Darlington to Woolloomooloo,” Lt Gen Gillespie said.

“They boarded His Majesty’s Transport Ships, the African and the Suffolk at Woolloomooloo, which departed at 2.55pm and 5pm respectively where they sailed to Albany before joining the first convoy to training camps in Egypt and then onto the battlefields of Gallipoli.

“Commissioned in 1921 by the Centre for Soldiers’ Wives and Mothers, the Memorial stands opposite the gates which troops passed through on their way to war. For many of the families who gathered at these docks, it was the last place they saw their loved ones.”

Information about the NSW Government’s Centenary of Anzac events and initiatives can be found at: http://veterans.nsw.gov.au/centenary/

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