

The Shuttle



Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle.

Abbotsleigh honours all those who have served our nation in war and conflict

Mrs Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

During the holidays Abbotsleigh girls represented their school beautifully as they commemorated Anzac Day at a number of services in our local area.



We would like to thank Anna Reatti and Amelia Ma (Year 9) who, accompanied by Mrs Victoria Rennie, represented us at the Hornsby RSL Service on Sunday 21 April. Jemma Chamberlain and Nanetta Washaya (Year 12), who accompanied by Mrs Angela Thomas, also represented us at the Wahroonga Park Service on Anzac Day, and Zoe Durbidge and Heidi Chan (Year 6) and Lily Thornthwaite and Sarah Hooper-Mitchell (Year 12) who, accompanied by Mrs Clare Haymen and me, represented Abbotsleigh at the annual Anzac Day Commemorative Service at The Anglican Church of St John the Evangelist at Gordon.

This week, all our Junior and Senior School girls commemorated Anzac Day as they returned from their holiday break on Tuesday. Mrs Alison Soper shared with the Junior School girls some amazing diary entries made by her great grandfather. This was very touching and had



ABBOTSLEIGH

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great impact on our Junior School girls, as seeing and hearing about the very 'real' connection to an Anzac was a perspective that was most meaningful and memorable.

At the same time, our senior girls participated in a very special service where Bessie Todhurst's (AOG 1898) service to Australia as a nurse in a number of theatres of war during the First World War was honoured. Ms Sarah Franks, Honorary President of the Abbotsleigh Old Girls' Union (AOGU) represented the AOGU at the service, and Emily Ellis and Piper Harding (Year 12), who are both daughters of Abbotsleigh Old Girls, laid the wreath that was donated by our AOGU. The Old Girls' Union wreath was given to acknowledge and give reverence to the many Old Girls of Abbotsleigh who have served our country through military service. We honour that we live today in their legacy. We also honour all women and men who have served their country in different theatres of war for over 100 years.



As the Rector of St John's Gordon stated last Sunday:

'It has now been 109 years since the landing on the Gallipoli Peninsula on 25 April, 1915. ... Time has failed to diminish the memory of the sacrifice in 1915, and the Australian Defence Force has followed these traditions throughout successive wars and conflicts. Their actions have forged for the Anzacs a tradition of honour, valour, sacrifice and duty above self that has been adopted as embodying the key values in the Australian national character.'

The following is the story of Bessie Todhurst, as told to our senior students by Anna Morrison and Chloe Davie (Year 12) in our Senior School Anzac Service on Tuesday:

'Through Abbotsleigh Old Girl Bessie Todhunter's wartime experiences we are able to illustrate the crucial role nurses played during World War I and the dangers they endured despite being behind the front line. While the past exists separately, with different values and behaviours to our present day, by considering Bessie's experience we gain a deeper level of understanding that contextualises the importance of Anzac Day.

After finishing school at Abbotsleigh (Parramatta) in 1898, Bessie trained as a nurse. Soon after the war broke out in 1914, Bessie enlisted. Perhaps she'd heard about the challenges and opportunities of wartime nursing from other nurses who served in Africa during the Boer War a few years before.

Like the men that enlisted in 1914, Bessie probably looked forward to travel and adventure, as well as hard work.

Reporting that Bessie was on her way to Egypt as a war nurse, the Dubbo Dispatch newspaper called her a 'ministering angel', evoking the stereotype of the calm and passive nurse who mops her patients' brow. Perhaps it was well meaning, but the image of the angel trivialises the work that nurses performed during wartime.

The Globe and Sunday Times were closer to the truth as they reported that 40 Sydney Hospital nurses (Bessie was one of them) were 'Off to the Danger Zone'.



see these Wonders of the Ancient World. But the present quickly took hold. Within a few weeks, casualties streamed in from nearby Gallipoli and Bessie was faced with the reality of treating horrific injuries.



The influx of war wounded was so large that a second hospital was established nearby in the Ghezireh Palace. The two hospitals had 1,400 beds. Bessie and her colleagues in the 2nd AGH worked until they were 'dog-tired' – and beyond.



After a year in Egypt, the 2nd Australian General Hospital was transferred to France. Bessie first worked in an isolation hospital screening patients transferring from Egypt for infectious diseases. She then moved to a hospital near the front lines at the Somme.

Conditions here were terribly difficult as the war dragged on – nurses (and doctors) had to dig deep, drawing on their



OFF TO THE DANGER ZONE - FCKY NURSES FAREWELLID.

An official photo of the 40 nurses of the Sydney Hospital left week, when the first cases of the Australian No. 1 General Hospital in France were photographed. Nurses listed in alphabetical order of their names: Miss M. G. ... (The Army History gallery are: Misses Patricia ...)

With 160 other nurses, Bessie left Australia in November 1914 bound for Egypt on board the hospital ship Kyarra. Bessie was stationed at the 2nd Australian General Hospital, which was established in the Mena House Hotel. The hospital had a spectacular view of the nearby pyramids in Giza. In an era when travel was only for the wealthy and adventurous, we can imagine Bessie was thrilled to



reserves of ingenuity and stamina. In France, the hospital was not located in grand buildings like in Egypt – this time patients lay in tents and huts and the nurses' quarters were in sandbag-lined dugouts.

Like the soldiers in the trenches not far away, the hospital staff dealt with bleak weather and disease during summer and winter. Even worse, the hospital was targeted by enemy action during 1917 – Bessie had to shelter from artillery shell fire and aerial bombing. The tents were riddled with shrapnel. What was going through Bessie's mind as she took shelter from the enemy fire? Everyone survived the attack, although sadly two horses were killed.

After the war ended in late 1918, the hospital remained open for a few months treating Spanish Flu cases – the awful aftermath of war. Finally, in March 1919 the hospital closed, and Bessie returned to Australia on board the *Ulysses*.

For her service, Bessie was awarded three medals – the 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Bessie married Allen Henderson in 1922. Did she return to nursing on her return to Australia? If so, she would have been forced to 'retire' from work when she married. Although she never had children, Bessie had many siblings, nieces and nephews. After her wartime service, she settled into civilian life in Sydney amongst her large family. We thank Bessie for her service to Australia.'



Chaplain

A message from our Senior Chaplain

Rev Sarah Hobba
Senior Chaplain and SS Christian Studies Teacher

Sister Bessie Todhunter (AOG 1898) served as a nurse in Egypt and France from 1914, returning to Sydney in 1919, continuing to nurse those with the Spanish Flu after the war. When 40 Sydney Hospital nurses, of which Bessie was one, left Sydney, *The Globe* and *Sunday Times* reported that they were 'Off to the Danger Zone.' Those who served left the beauty, comforts, peace and the safety of home to be in places of ugliness, difficulty, conflict and danger.

Christians, along with many who have served, have found comfort and courage through the words of scripture. Psalm 46 below, reflects on how God is our refuge and strength in the most difficult times. Often

read at Dawn Services around Australia, it highlights how God will create peace, and that wars will not always occur between nations. Safety and peace are restored.

These are reassuring words, especially after a few weeks of repeated news items that have made us not feel safe. As a community, we should continue to be grateful that we live in a relatively safe country (most of the time) and continue to help others feel safe. Ultimately, peace is found in Jesus, whose death and resurrection bring us lasting peace with God. His words from John's gospel are often the words we read on war memorials around our country, My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.
John 15:12-13

Psalm 46:1-2; 9-11

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.
 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea.
 God makes wars cease to the ends of the earth.
 He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire.
 He says, Be still, and know that I am God;
 I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth.
 The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

Upcoming events

WHOLE SCHOOL

Process and Practice: A Sculptor's Eye exhibition opening	Saturday 4 May 2-4 pm	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery
Process and Practice: A Sculptor's Eye exhibition	Until Thursday 25 May	Grace Cossington Smith Gallery

JUNIOR SCHOOL

Year 5 Brainstorm Production incursion	Monday 6 May 9.30-10.30 am	Everett Hall
Year 6 netball and hockey training	Monday 6 May 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
CIS cross country training	Tuesday 7 May 7.15-8am	Junior School
ELC Mothers' Day breakfasts	Tuesday 7 May 7.30-8.30 am	Early Learning Centre
JS Photo Day #2	Tuesday 7 May 8.30 am-3 pm	Junior School
Year 5 netball and minkey training	Wednesday 8 May 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
CIS cross country training	Wednesday 8 May 7.15-8 am	
ELC Mothers' Day breakfasts	Thursday 9 May 7.30-8.30 am	Early Learning Centre
Years 3 and 4 netball and minkey training	Thursday 9 May 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
Walk Safely to School Day	Friday 10 May	
Transition and Years 2, 4 and 6 Mother Daughter Breakfast	Friday 10 May 7-8.15 am	Library Courtyard

Junior School 70th Birthday Assembly	Friday 10 May 1.30-3 pm	Infants Amphitheatre
JS Production rehearsal	Friday 10 May 3.30-5.30 pm	Everett Hall
ISDA Debating Octos 1	Friday 10 May 5-8 pm	Venue TBC
IPSHA Saturday Sport	Saturday 11 May 8 am-12 noon	See Parent app for team sheets and venues
JS Production rehearsal	Saturday 11 May 2-4.30 pm	Everett Hall
Year 6 netball and minkey hockey training	Monday 13 May 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
T-3 Life Education incursions	Tuesday 14 to Friday 17 May	Life Education van on site
CIS cross country training	Tuesday 14 May 7-8.15 am	Junior School
ELC to ACEE	Tuesday 14 May 8.30 am-2.30 pm	ACEE
Year 4 Judith Krause Parent Information Evening	Tuesday 14 May 7-8.30 pm	Auditorium
Year 5 netball and minkey training	Wednesday 15 May 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
CIS cross country training	Thursday 16 May 7.15-8 am	Junior School
da Vinci Decathlon	Thursday 16 May 8.30 am-3 pm	Knox Gramma School
Years 3 and 4 netball and minkey training	Thursday 16 May 3.20-4.30 pm	Junior School
T-3 Life Education Parent Information Session	Friday 17 May 8-9 am	Junior School
Year 3 Harbour Bridge Pylon excursion	Friday 17 May 8.30 am-3 pm	Sydney
Year 5 Nursing Home talk with Emma Cabuil	Friday 17 May 9.30-10.30 am	Auditorium
JS Production rehearsal	Friday 17 May 3.30-5.30 pm	Everett Hall
ISDA Debating Octos 2	Friday 17 May 5-8 pm	Venue TBC
IPSHA Saturday Sport	Saturday 18 May 8 am-12 noon	See Parent app for team sheets and venues
JS Production rehearsal	Saturday 18 May 2-4.30 pm	Everett Hall

SENIOR SCHOOL

Year 9 House Leaders excursion	Monday 6 May	
Plain English Speaking Award – local final competition	Monday 6 May	Senior School

CIS Swimming Carnival – session 1	Monday 6 May	
CIS Swimming Carnival – session 2 and CIS Diving	Tuesday 7 May	
Year 10 Drama excursion to No Pay? No Way!	Wednesday 8 May	Sydney Theatre Company
Year 10 PASS 1 excursion to ELC	Wednesday 8 May	ELC
Year 9 PTI	Wednesday 8 May	
2024 Boarding Expo	Friday 10 May	Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre
Year 7 History Ancient Egypt excursion	Friday 10 May	Australian Museum
Year 9 Elective History Maritime Museum excursion	Friday 10 May	Australian National Maritime Museum
Year 10 PASS 2 excursion to ELC	Friday 10 May	ELC
IGSA basketball and football Round 2	Saturday 11 May	Click here for venues and times
2024 Boarding Expo	Saturday 11 May	Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre
Dubbo Community Event	Saturday 11 May 6-8.30 pm	Down the Lane, Dubbo
Year 9 Challenge Week	Monday 13 to Thursday 16 May	Kangaroo Valley
Year 11 Study Skills session	Monday 13 May	
Year 12 Business Studies incursion	Monday 13 May	
Year 8 Geography Water in the World field trip	Tuesday 14 May	Lake Parramatta
Year 12 Drama incursion	Tuesday 14 May	
Years 9-11 da Vinci Decathlon	Wednesday 15 May	Knox Grammar School
Year 11 EES field trip to The Glade	Thursday 16 May	The Glade, Wahroonga
IGSA Cross Country Carnival	Friday 17 May	Frensham, Mittagong
Lunchtime Futures Talk (Monash University)	Friday 17 May	
Lunchtime Futures Talk (Western Sydney University)	Friday 17 May	
IGSA basketball and football Round 3	Saturday 18 May	Click Here for venues and times