

Walks in Port Phillip

# ON THE HOME FRONT



Remembering World War One



## TRAIL KEY

- |  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. PRINCES PIER                                  | 17. SOUTH MELBOURNE TOWN HALL   |
| 2. HOGAN'S FLAT                                  | 18. SOUTH MELBOURNE HONOR BOARD |
| 3. STATION PIER                                  | 19. VICTORIA WAR MEMORIAL       |
| 4. WOMEN'S WELCOME HOME ROTUNDA                  | 20. ST KILDA TOWN HALL          |
| 5. SWALLOW AND ARIEL                             | 21. JACKA BOULEVARD             |
| 6. EXCELSIOR HALL                                | 22. ST KILDA SOLDIERS' LOUNGE   |
| 7. REMEMBRANCE GARDEN                            | 23. VICTORIA CROSS MEMORIAL     |
| 8. HEATH STREET                                  | 24. CAVELL STREET               |
| 9. PORT MELBOURNE TOWN HALL                      | 25. BENNETT MEMORIAL            |
| 10. NOTT STREET SCHOOL HONOUR BOARD              | 26. ST KILDA MEMORIAL HALL      |
| 11. NAVAL DRILL HALL                             | 27. VICTORY THEATRE             |
| 12. WORLD WAR ONE MEMORIAL DRINKING FOUNTAIN     | 28. ST KILDA TOWN HALL          |
| 13. ANSWERING THE CALL                           | 29. BATTALION COLOURS           |
| 14. LEMNOS CALLIPOLI MEMORIAL                    | 30. VICTORIAN JEWISH MEMORIAL   |
| 15. MEMORIAL TO DR JOHNSON, ST VINCENT GARDENS   | 31. BURNETT GRAY GARDENS        |
| 16. SOUTH MELBOURNE MEMORIAL HALL, ANZAC GARDENS | 32. POZIERES AVENUE, ELWOOD     |
|  | 33. ELWOOD FORESHORE            |

## This trail commemorates the Great War, its impact on our community and its legacy.

World War One (1914-1918) had a deep and long-lasting impact on communities across Australia. The statistics tell the story: 416,809 Australian men enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) between 1914 and 1918, comprising 38.7 per cent of the male population of Australia between the ages of 18 and 44. Of these, a staggering 112,399 Victorians enlisted, with around 7,500 from the former Cities of South Melbourne, St Kilda and Port Melbourne (now City of Port Phillip).

War was not new to our community along this section of the Bay. The Boon Wurrung was the first of the Kulin Nation to be impacted by the invasion of Ngamudji – foreign expeditions, sealers and settlers who are known to have reached Westernport by 1798. And the Boer War (1899-1902) in South Africa was just over a decade past when the war in Europe was declared in August 1914.

The level of optimism that this war would be over quickly, and excitement about serving as a federated nation, was a likely influence in so many young Victorian men enlisting in the AIF soon after war broke out.

Port Melbourne's piers have a unique historical significance as the major point for embarkation and disembarkation of service personnel. **New Railway Pier (1)** (now Princes Pier), although not officially opened until 1915, was the departure point of the first Victorian convoy of sixteen ships in October 1914, which carried troops, nurses, technicians, horses and supplies to Alexandria, Egypt.

Gallipoli veteran Allan Whittaker, who was shot in 1928 during a bitter industrial dispute, is commemorated in a Heritage Recognition Program plaque marking **Hogan's Flat (2)** at Pier Street. He died of his wounds on 26 January 1929.

Troop ships also left from **Railway Pier (3)** (now Station Pier) and the former Town Pier. Huge crowds gathered along the piers to farewell each departing ship, creating iconic images of long curling streamers and waving hands.



Women workers pose with Councillor H F Barnet and soldiers at the Soldiers Lounge, St Kilda Beach, 1917. sk0147

Women of the Cities of Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and St Kilda began mobilising as soon as war was declared. Their dedicated efforts were fundamental to the home front.

The Women's Welcoming Committee (WWC) was established in Port Melbourne in August 1915 to welcome home every troop ship that arrived at the piers of Port Melbourne with banners, food and gifts. Each Port Melbourne Mayoress took on the role of WWC President. Seeing these men, damaged in body and mind, was a terrible shock to the women who thought they were welcoming back the same bright young men whom they had farewelled.

In 1918, the WWC organised the building of a **Band Rotunda (4)** on Beach Street, Port Melbourne – one of the earliest Great War memorials in Australia.

Around 1,500 men enlisted in Port Melbourne. Female workers from the **Swallow & Ariell Biscuit Factory (5)** formed the 'Busy Bees' – a group that knitted and sewed clothing, and put together care packages, to send overseas to soldiers serving on the front-lines.

The Port Melbourne Council gave the former **Excelsior Hall (6)**, on the corner of Princes, Station and Bridge Streets, to the local branch of the Returned Soldiers' League for a club house in 1919.

In 2018, this **Remembrance Garden (7)** was created as an initiative of the City of Port Phillip's World War One Centenary Commemorative Committee as a place for reflection and commemoration.

In **Heath St (8)**, a typical Port Melbourne street, thirty-five men in a street of fewer than ninety homes enlisted. Only one returned unharmed. More information about the local impact of World War One is available on the Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society's website.



Reception given by the Mayor, Councillors and citizens of Port Melbourne on the afternoon of Thursday 5 December 1918 in honour of the local men of the Navy and soldiers of the AIF, returned from war. pm0335

The **Port Melbourne Town Hall (9)** played a significant role in activities related to the war effort, and in opposition to it. It was the venue for meetings, recruitment, events and a base for fundraising committees including the impressive Women's Welcoming Committee (WWC). The Town Hall was the repository for public donations of food and goods for distribution to soldiers, and held welcoming receptions for returned soldiers. It was also a venue for anti-conscription sentiment. Vida Goldstein, originally of St Kilda, was an outspoken campaigner and distributed 'Vote No' leaflets in Port Melbourne with her friend, British suffragist Adela Pankhurst.

The **Nott Street Old Boy's Honour Board (10)** commemorates past students who served during the war. A hidden drawer was found to contain handwritten notes by their families with service details for inclusion on the Board. Beside it hangs an honour board listing names of Port Melbourne soldiers. This was one of many memorial boards created by local schools, religious organisations and sporting clubs to honour and acknowledge their former students and members.

Built in 1912, and designed by J S Murdoch, the former **Naval Drill Hall (11)** was a major recruiting centre in both world wars. This building remains today as one of the last tangible connections to Port Melbourne's naval past. It previously housed Circus Oz and is now part of Albert Park College.

A community organised Anzac Day service, attended by a growing number of people, is held each year at the **World War One Memorial Drinking Fountain (12)** which was built in 1925.

Port Melbourne's significant naval heritage and the service

of naval personnel are recognised in the sculpture **Answering the Call (13)** by artist Louis Laumen. Located on Beach Street near Dow Street, it was commissioned by the Naval Heritage Foundation and unveiled in November 2015.

The **Lemnos Gallipoli Memorial (14)** was also unveiled in 2015. This sculpture by artist Peter Corlett OAM, recognises the important role played by Australian nurses and the essential role of the island of Lemnos in Australia's Anzac story. It is dedicated to the Australian nurses and soldiers who served there during the Gallipoli campaign in 1915, to the 148 Australian soldiers who remain buried there, and to the local Lemnian community who supported them. In 2018 this reserve was named Lemnos Square.

A Red Cross rest house for soldiers was opened in Nelson Road, South Melbourne in 1915.

A **Memorial Shelter (15)** in St Vincent Gardens to honour local doctor Captain Frederick Miller Johnson, killed at Gallipoli on 29 November 1915, was donated by his family. This is one of few individual memorials to those who lost their lives in our City during the War. Many of the community memorials were erected through the generosity of public subscriptions.

The local branch of the Returned Sailors & Soldiers Imperial League urged the South Melbourne Council to establish a **Memorial Hall (16)**, which was constructed in 1923 and opened on Anzac Day 1925. The Hall, in Anzac Gardens, is now home to the Hellenic RSL Sub Branch.

Within a fortnight of war being declared, the South Melbourne Council established the Patriotic Fund with £500. **South**

**Melbourne Town Hall (17)** became a hub of home front activity. A Red Cross branch was established in September 1914.

In 1921 South Melbourne Council unveiled a handsome **Honor Board (18)** in the eastern entrance to the Town Hall honouring the 2,973 local men who had enlisted.

Around 3,000 men from St Kilda enlisted. The **St Kilda War Memorial (19)** at the end of Fitzroy Street, St Kilda, was erected in 1925 as a cenotaph to those who served and did not return.

**Vice-Admiral Sir William Creswell (20)** is considered the founder of the Australian Navy. He commanded the new Commonwealth Naval Forces in 1904, and prepared the navy for war. A memorial was created in 1938, and this bust was recast in 2011 from the original mould by artist Wallis Anderson.

In 1982 **Jacka Boulevard (21)** was named after Albert Jacka VC MC and Bar in recognition of his military achievement and his significant civic contributions as Mayor of St Kilda. As a member of the 14th Battalion and the first Australian to be awarded the Victoria Cross in World War One, Albert Jacka was so well-known and celebrated that the 14th Battalion came to be referred to as 'Jacka's Mob'. He was Mayor of St Kilda from 1930-1931. He died in 1932 of his war injuries and was buried with full military honours at St Kilda Cemetery. An annual commemoration of his life and service is held at St Kilda Cemetery and St Kilda Town Hall each January. A panel detailing his military and civic achievements is located on the beach side of the boulevard.

On Boxing Day 1919, General Sir John Monash landed at St Kilda pier, and was welcomed home with a grand celebration,

with returned soldiers present in large numbers to honour their military chief.

The former **St Kilda Soldiers' Lounge (22)** was opened by the St Kilda Patriotic League and the YMCA in 1915, and run by Mrs Lucie Hallenstein. Located in the refreshment rooms of the former Comedy Theatre, Lower Esplanade, it provided a place for returned soldiers to relax and socialise. By mid-1916 the average weekly attendance had reached eight hundred servicemen. The lounge remained popular until it closed in 1920.

The **Victoria Cross Memorial (23)** by artist Peter Schipperheyn was created in 1984 to honour all Australians who have lost their lives in conflicts, and acknowledges local Victoria Cross recipients. The St Kilda RSL Sub Branch holds annual Anzac Day and Remembrance Day services here.

In 1927 **Cavell Street (24)** was named in honour of British nurse Edith Cavell, who saved the lives of many soldiers regardless of nationality, and whose death in 1915 shocked the world.

St Kilda's Lieutenant James Mallett Bennett had a distinguished service in the war as an air mechanic and was mentioned in dispatches. After the war, Bennett was one of two mechanics accompanying brothers Keith and Ross Smith on the world's first ever flight from England to Australia. He was tragically killed in 1922 with Ross Smith on a test flight in England. This **Memorial (25)** was established in 1926.

**St Kilda Memorial Hall (26)** opened in 1924 to support returned soldiers and their families, with residential apartments, a grand hall and shops. Events were held to raise funds for the building and

furnishing of the hall, including a raffle at Luna Park and a carnival at the Town Hall. Today the Memorial Hall is home to the St Kilda Army and Navy Club Returned and Services League Sub-Branch and the Memo Music Hall which is run in partnership with the RSL.

The **Victory Theatre (27)** (now the National Theatre), was another St Kilda landmark whose name acknowledged the Great War. Designed by Cecil F Keeley, it was constructed in 1920-1921. It was one of the first of the grand 1920s picture palaces in Melbourne. Renovated and refurbished over the years, it has been in continuous use as a cultural venue.

As in Port Melbourne and South Melbourne, **St Kilda Town Hall (28)** formed the civic heart of this community. People thronged to listen, learn, mourn, debate, honour and commemorate the Great War. The **14th Battalion Colours (29)** were formally returned to the municipality at an Anzac Day commemoration service in 1930 and today hang in the foyer of the St Kilda Town Hall. The Colours had been presented to the Battalion by the Governor-General in an impressive ceremony in December 1914 witnessed by 8,000 citizens on the St Kilda foreshore.

A **Victorian Jewish Memorial (30)** for those who served in World War One and Two was unveiled at **Burnett Gray Gardens (31)**, Ripponlea, on 15 November 2015. It honours locals who lost their lives, such as Dalbert Hallenstein of *Woonsocket* in Barkly Street, his Michaelis cousins of *Linden* in Acland Street, and others such as Dr Keith Levi, son of St Kilda Councillor Joseph Levi.

Burnett Gray MLA was the first serving Councillor in Victoria to enlist in World War One. He was invalided back to Australia in 1920 and, while still in hospital, was re-elected to the St Kilda

Council. He served on the St Kilda Council for 30 years and was Mayor four times.

**Poizieres Avenue (32)** in Elwood is named for the small village in the Somme Valley, France, which saw some of the bloodiest battles in the war in July and August 1916. The 14th Battalion was one of many involved in the conflict and Albert Jacka was awarded a Military Cross for his actions on 7 August 1916. Charles Bean, the Australian official historian, said that Pozières Ridge “is more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any other place on earth.” A bayonet recovered from the battlefields was donated to the City of Port Phillip in 2014 by the Pozières Remembrance Association and the Mayor of Pozières.

Head towards the **Elwood Foreshore (33)**. Along here, from Port Melbourne to St Kilda to Elwood, annual Anzac Day services are held in view of the sea, over which 914\* men from our municipality sailed and never returned.

A centenary on from World War One, walking in the footsteps of our local men and women through enlistment, embarkation, recruitment, patriotic events, conscription and protest, support for soldiers, homecoming, repatriation, loss and memorialisation, we can reflect on the enormous dedication, hard work, generosity, sacrifice and support of our community.

(\* This number has been sourced from the Australian War Memorial and represents men whose “Place of Association”, as recorded in the Roll of Honour circular sent to next of kin, lists the suburbs in our municipality. This full list is available at [heritage@portphillip.vic.gov.au](mailto:heritage@portphillip.vic.gov.au))

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**START**

Princes Pier

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**FINISH**

Elwood Foreshore

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**LENGTH**

Fifteen kilometres (approximately)

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**TIME**

3.5 hours (approximately)

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**REFRESHMENTS**

There are numerous cafes on the route

Visit [heritage.portphillip.vic.gov.au](http://heritage.portphillip.vic.gov.au) for more information about cultural heritage programs and activities in the City of Port Phillip.

Cover: *Swallow and Ariell's Busy Bees*. Port Phillip City Collection pm1099.

You can also contact us by phone via our ASSIST centre on **03 9209 6777**.

Images are from the Port Phillip City Collection unless otherwise indicated.

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Council respectfully acknowledges the Yaluk-ut Weelam Clan of the Boon Wurrung. We pay our respects to their Elders, both past and present. We acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

