



Dedication of the  
headstones and memorials of  
World War 1 veterans

Andrew O'Flaherty

Clifford Victor Price

Leslie Thomas Simpson, MM

Albert Julius Sjostrom

at

Port Pirie Cemetery

on

Saturday 27 July 2019



THE  
**HEADSTONE PROJECT**  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

FOR FORGOTTEN VETERANS

The 30 volunteers of the Headstone Project in South Australia are delighted to be able to acknowledge the service of World War 1 soldiers.

We are South Australians who were inspired by the efforts of people in Tasmania to locate the graves of soldiers and nurses who had served their country, returned to Australia, and had lain in unmarked graves.

The Project in South Australia started in May 2016 with John Brownlie, now our President, assisted by Neil Rossiter, being generously mentored by our Tasmanian friends.

In January 2019 our numbers expanded from two to thirty volunteers, giving us the capacity to research and manage on a wide front what is a lengthy – but extremely rewarding – process.

As an all-volunteer group, we use modern tools for communication, research and management, making us more efficient and more rewarded.

Our first headstone was unveiled in 2017 at Port Pirie; others will follow this unveiling, both in this town and elsewhere in SA. There are 900 cemeteries in the state and we think about 1,000 veterans may be in unmarked graves.

We have been delighted and humbled by the enthusiasm of local communities wherever our searches have taken us. We have worked through true partnerships and made many friends. Port Pirie is no exception.

You can contact us on 0423 279 214.

**They served.  
They deserve  
to be remembered.**



## **Introduction**

Wing Commander (Rtd) Clive Huggan.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests: on behalf of the volunteers of the the Headstone Project, SA, I warmly welcome you to our ceremony to dedicate the memorials of Andrew O’Flaherty, Clifford Price, Leslie Simpson, MM, and Albert Sjostrom, for all of whom we are now able to keep faith in declaring “Lest we forget”. We especially extend a welcome to the Sjostrom family, who are able to be with us today.

Following the dedication we will be marking the veterans’ lives and military service at the Port Pirie RSL Club and Museum, The Terrace, to which we also welcome you.

## **Acknowledgement of country**

Neil Rossiter, Vice President, The Headstone Project SA Inc.

On behalf of everyone present today, I acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting and pay our respects to their elders, past and present.

## **Welcome address**

John Brownlie, President, The Headstone Project SA Inc.



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## Hymn of His Majesty's Armed Forces

Lord of our fathers, known of old,  
Lord of the far flung battle lines  
Whose eye has seen in days gone by  
Our brothers fight in foreign clime.  
Lord, we this day would come to Thee  
And hallow now their memory.

For those who fought in jungles green  
For those who warred on desert sand;  
For those whose planes to battle soared  
For those whose ships guarded our land:  
Today in peace our thanks we raise  
For those who gave to us their days.

For those who paid the final price,  
For those whose suffering lingers still;  
For those who made our country safe,  
For those who fell in vale, on hill;  
Lord God of Hosts be with us yet  
Lest we forget, lest we forget.



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## Prayers

The Most Reverend Dr Greg O’Kelly, AM,  
Bishop of Port Pirie

## Reading

Pastor Mark Broadbridge,  
New Life Christian Community Centre, Port Pirie

## The Lord’s Prayer

(as it was known by Australian soldiers in the war)

Our Father, which art in heaven,  
Hallowed be thy Name;  
Thy kingdom come;  
Thy will be done  
in earth, as it is in heaven:  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive them that trespass against us;  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil:  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory,  
For ever and ever.  
  
Amen.



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## **Unveiling**

## **Ode of Remembrance**

Leading Seaman Michael Blakemore, The Headstone Project SA

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.  
They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.

## **Last post**

Silent remembrance.

## **Reveille**

## **Benediction**

The Most Reverend Dr Greg O'Kelly, AM, Bishop of Port Pirie



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## **The National Anthem**

Australians all let us rejoice,  
For we are young and free;  
We've golden soil and wealth for toil;  
Our home is girt by sea;  
Our land abounds in nature's gifts  
Of beauty rich and rare;  
In history's page, let every stage  
Advance Australia Fair.  
In joyful strains then let us sing,  
Advance Australia Fair.  
Beneath our radiant Southern Cross  
We'll toil with hearts and hands;  
To make this Commonwealth of ours  
Renowned of all the lands;  
For those who've come across the seas  
We've boundless plains to share;  
With courage let us all combine  
To Advance Australia Fair.  
In joyful strains then let us sing,  
Advance Australia Fair.

## **Conclusion**

John Brownlie, President, The Headstone Project SA Inc.

(Guests are invited to gather at the RSL Club & Museum.)

## 2917 Private Andrew O'Flaherty

Andrew was born on 1 July 1882 in Crystal Brook to Dennis O'Flaherty and Annie, née Hayes. He was a tinsmith before enlisting on 13 June 1915 at Keswick; he left Australia on the 26th August 1915 on transport ship A15, *Star of England*.

Andrew served with the 10th Infantry Battalion and was later among the men absorbed into the 50th Bn. He was wounded in action on 16 August 1916 in France. After re-joining his unit in December 1917 he was wounded

again on 30 March 1917, suffering gas poisoning. He was wounded two more times during 1918. His campaign medals were the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medal.

Andrew returned to Australia and was discharged on 13 April 1919. His brother, John Edward O'Flaherty, served in the war as a sailor.

Andrew never married. He lived with his mother in Rodda Street, Pirie Street, and died on 8 September 1950.

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### Andrew's battalions

Andrew first served in the 10th Battalion, raised in South Australia, which was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF.

The battalion was the covering force for the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915 and so was the first ashore at about 4:30 am. It was heavily involved in establishing and defending the front line and served there until the evacuation in December.

In February 1916 Andrew was among the experienced men absorbed into the newly formed 50th Battalion to supplement its recently recruited reinforcements from Australia – part of the reorganisation and expansion following the failed Gallipoli campaign. On moving to Europe the soldiers fought in the

trenches of the Western Front in France and Belgium.

The 50th Battalion took part in the Battle of Mouquet Farm in August-September 1916; then in 1917 it attacked the Hindenburg Line and participated in the battles at Messines and Polygon Wood. In early 1918 it helped to repulse the major German spring offensive launched on the Western Front following the collapse of Russia. In April the battalion took part in the Second Battle of Dernancourt followed by the Allied counter-attack at Villers-Bretonneux. In August, the 50th joined the final Allied offensive of the war around Amiens and continuing until 18 September, when it fought its last battle against the Hindenburg "Outpost Line".

## 3856 Private Clifford Victor Price

Clifford was born on 13 July 1898 to Eleanor Brooks, a housemaid, at St Pancras Workhouse, London. He migrated to South Australia about 1912 and was a labourer before enlisting on 27 July 1916.

Clifford embarked from Adelaide with the 32nd Battalion on 21 September 1916 on transport ship A73, *Commonwealth*. He undertook training in the UK before returning to his battalion in France in November 1917. He was frequently admitted to hospital. He was among the Australians who fought at Pozières in the Battle of the Somme; he received a wound to his thigh in August 1918 during the Battle of Amiens. On Armistice Day he was on leave in London. He remained with his unit throughout 1919 and

returned to Australia in January 1920, being discharged on 21 February.

After the war, Clifford worked as a labourer, then as a wardsman at Port Augusta Hospital. He joined the Fire Brigade in Adelaide and was transferred to the Port Pirie Fire Brigade in January 1931. On 7 March he married Winifred Iris Holmes. Eight months later, on 25 November 1931, he complained of feeling unwell after dinner and died during the night. He was accorded a formal Fire Brigade funeral with his coffin placed on a Brigade truck flanked by six of his comrades and with his axe, belt, and helmet, reversed, on the pall. Two fire trucks followed. Today, members of the Port Pirie Fire Brigade will be taking part in his commemoration.

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### Clifford's battalion

The 32nd Battalion, raised at Mitcham on 9 August 1915, left from Adelaide on 18 November. After a time in Egypt it sailed to France in June 1916. The battalion fought its first major battle at Fromelles on 19 July 1916, having only entered the frontline trenches three days earlier. The attack was a disastrous introduction to battle: there were 718 casualties – 90 per cent of its fighting strength.

In early 1917, the German army withdrew to the Hindenburg Line, allowing the British front to be advanced. The 32nd Battalion participated in follow-up operations, including in the Battle of Polygon Wood.

The battalion fought its last major action helping to attack the Hindenburg Line from 29 September to 1 October 1918.

## 551 Private Leslie Thomas Simpson, MM

Leslie was born on 15 August 1882 in Port Pirie to Thomas Simpson and Mary, née Leviton. He was a labourer before he enlisted on 5 September 1914 at Morphettville. He embarked from Hobart on 20 October 1914 on transport ship A2, *Geelong*.

Leslie served with the 12th Infantry Battalion and saw action in France and Belgium. He was wounded in action on 20 September 1917 and 1 June 1918.

During the second Battle of Bullecourt in May 1917, Leslie was awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field, together with a comrade, while on stretcher-bearer duties. The citation read:



“On 4th to 8th May 1917 in operations east of Bullecourt, as stretcher bearers were untiring in attending to wounded men and carrying them back to RAP (Regimental Aid Post) under intense fire. On one occasion when in the front line they picked up rifles and displayed great gallantry in repelling a counter-attack, preventing a number of wounded being captured.”

Leslie was discharged on 31 January 1919 in Australia. His brother, Albert Simpson, also returned after serving with the 9th Light Horse Infantry from 30 November 1914.

Leslie never married. He died on 27 June 1928.

## Leslie's battalion

The 12th Battalion was among the first infantry units raised for the AIF; a quarter were recruited in South Australia, including from the Port Pirie region. With the 9th, 10th and 11th Battalions it formed the 3rd Brigade, 1st Australian Division.

The battalion was raised within three weeks of the declaration of war in August 1914 and embarked two months later, arriving in Egypt in December. The 3rd Brigade was the covering force for the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915 and so was the first ashore at about 4:30 am. It was heavily involved in establishing and defending the front line and in August contributed two companies to the attack on Lone Pine.

In March 1916, the battalion sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918 it participated in sustained trench warfare. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozières in the Somme valley in July. After Pozières, the battalion fought at Ypres in Flanders before returning to the Somme for winter.

In 1917 the 12th Battalion took part in the brief advance that followed the German Army's retreat to the Hindenburg Line. The battalion later

returned to Belgium to take part in the major British offensive of that year, the Third Battle of Ypres.

In May 1917 during the second Battle for Bullecourt, the 2nd Australian Division attacked and despite heavy machine gun fire and shelling, the Australian soldiers got into the German trenches and fought off counter attacks. The 1st Division then relieved the 2nd, and soon the 5th Division took its turn. In a little over a week the enemy gave up the area; it had cost Australia 7,000 dead and wounded to advance the line only a kilometre.

In March and April 1918 the battalion helped to stop the German spring offensive, and later participated in the great Allied offensive of 1918, fighting near Amiens on 8 August 1918. This advance by British and Empire troops was the greatest success in a single day on the Western Front. The battalion continued operations until late September 1918.

In total, the 12th Battalion was awarded 247 honours and awards for service in the field, including two Victoria Crosses. In all, 1135 men of the battalion were killed in action and 2422 were wounded.

# 1982 Private Albert Julius Sjostrom

Albert was born on 21 August 1888 in Port Pirie to Carl Richard Sjostrom and widow Mary Jane Henningsen, née Tiernay. Mary died when their youngest child was two; Carl died five years later. The eldest boy, Ted, is believed to have raised his five brothers and a sister. All the brothers were close; they all enlisted for service and all survived.

Albert was a labourer before enlisting on 19 May 1915 at Keswick. He left Australia on 26 August 1915 on the transport ship, *Morea*. He served with the 27th Infantry Battalion and saw

action in Gallipoli, France and Belgium. His campaign medals were the 1914–15 Star, British War Medal, and the Victory Medal. He was discharged on 5 June 1919.

After the war, Albert worked at the smelters in Port Pirie as a labourer. Never married, he lived in Florence Street at a boarding house. He was often hospitalised, including for three years in the surgical ward.

Albert died on 8 June 1952. His family members are with us today to commemorate him.

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## Albert's battalion

The 32nd Battalion was raised at Mitcham on 9 August 1915. Two companies were raised from South Australian enlistees; two companies were formed in Western Australia, joining the battalion in September. The battalion left from Adelaide on 18 November.

In Egypt, the battalion became part of the newly raised 5th Australian Division, sailing to France in June 1916. The battalion fought its first major battle at Fromelles on 19 July 1916, having only entered the frontline trenches three days earlier. The attack was a disastrous introduction to battle: there were 718 casualties, almost 75 per cent of the battalion's total strength but closer to

90 per cent of its actual fighting strength.

In early 1917, the German Army withdrew to the Hindenburg Line, allowing the British front to be advanced. The 32nd Battalion participated in follow-up operations; it fought with distinction in 1917 in the Battle of Polygon Wood.

The battalion fought its last major action of the war between 29 September and 1 October, when the 5th and 3rd Australian Divisions and two United States divisions attacked the Hindenburg Line across the top of the six-kilometre-long St Quentin Canal tunnel, which had been a major obstacle in the German defence.

## Acknowledgements

The volunteers of The Headstone Project South Australia hugely appreciate the help and encouragement given by many people and organisations. Without that support, today's dedication could not have taken place.

We specially acknowledge and thank the following:

The Hon. Steven Marshall, Premier of South Australia, for three years of invaluable seed funding to allow us to move from ideas to action.

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Port Pirie Regional Council

Members of the RSL Sub Branch, Port Pirie

414 Army Cadet Unit

The Recorder, Australian Community Media & Printing

Bunnings Warehouse

Adelaide Cemeteries Authority

Sika Australia Limited

Adelaide Brighton Cement Limited

Auburn-Clare RSL Sub-Branch

News Corporation: The Sunday Mail

Australian Broadcasting Corporation

Allan Todd

Northern Memorials



*2nd Anzac Division troops celebrating at Fleurbaix, 17 April 1916*



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The Headstone Project South Australia seeks to honour all soldiers and nurses who served in a World War 1 war zone and who lie in an unmarked grave in South Australia.

“Service abroad” during the war resulted in the award of the British War Medal (left).

The Victory Medal was authorised for all who had served in a theatre of military operations between 1914 and 1918. Other medals were awarded too, including five different campaign medals.



FOR FORGOTTEN VETERANS

[www.TheHeadstoneProject-SA.org.au](http://www.TheHeadstoneProject-SA.org.au)

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