

Wednesday 16 April 2014

ANZAC TREASURE TROVE AS RYDE REMEMBERS

Ryde Library's ANZAC Scanning and Photography Day held on Saturday 5 April, has turned up a treasure trove of local World War I memorabilia.

Trevor Jones of Gladesville, an employee of City of Ryde Council, brought about forty items to the Library on Saturday concerning his great-uncle Sidney Garrett who fought at Gallipoli and died on the Western Front. Sidney lived with his family in Stansell Street, Gladesville.

The Garret Collection includes:

- Dead Man's Penny (a commemorative medallion presented to the next-of-kin of the men and women who died during World War I)
- slouch hat, pith helmet, belt, grenade bag, dog tags, paybook, grenade bag and medals
- hand written Anzac Cove postcard describing the Gallipoli landing, letters, photographs,
- prayer book with the inscription "*Embarked for active service 15th October 1914. Died of wounds on 6th March 1917. (Our Hero) & an Anzac.*"
- hand embroidered postcards purchased in France with images of Australian, French and British flags, one with the words 'Home sweet home'
- pair of aviator goggles and an Iron Cross reportedly taken from a German pilot shot down by Sid with his 303 while digging trenches.

Trevor Jones said he was delighted that there was interest in the collection and that Sid lives up to the legend of the Anzacs in every sense: "He probably lied about his age to get into the forces and he was always getting into trouble. Sid was a 'roo shooter so the story of him shooting down a German reconnaissance plane and souveniring the pilot's goggles and Iron Cross I'm sure is true".

City of Ryde Local Studies Librarian and head of the Ryde Remembers team, said: "This is fascinating material that vividly tells the story of a local Anzac. The personalised items, including the Christmas postcard and an inscription inside the prayer book, open a window on the life and family of a soldier at this important moment in our country's coming of age."

Photographs of the items will go on display at Ryde Library in mid-April as part of the Ryde Remembers WWI Centenary Commemorations.

The Scanning and Photography Day is a joint initiative of Ryde Library and the Ryde District Historical Society to create a biographical database of Ryde's WWI soldiers and nurses. Another scanning day will be held in November prior to Remembrance Day.