

David Harris

Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty
Minister for Gaming and Racing
Minister for Veterans
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Media Release

Anzac Memorial 90th Anniversary Exhibition launch

Saturday, 2 November 2024

Images available here: [Anzac Memorial - Dropbox](#)

The Anzac Memorial celebrates the 90th anniversary of its opening on 24 November.

To mark this milestone, the *Treasures of the Anzac Memorial Exhibition* has opened featuring a selection of significant artefacts from the Memorial's collection that have been donated since its opening in 1934.

Minister for Veterans David Harris launched the exhibition at a special event last night attended by historical societies, Memorial donors and supporters, veterans and current serving members of the Australian Defence Force, Trustees, staff and volunteers.

For 90 years veterans and their families have donated objects to the Anzac Memorial, all significant to the military history of our country and regarded as treasures.

The collection includes objects from Australia's involvement in the 1899-1902 South African War, the First and Second World Wars through to Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan.

The items also feature in the accompanying *Ninety Treasures – 90 Years* publication.

The 144-page book contains 90 stories demonstrating the diversity of NSW military experience and the courage, endurance and sacrifice of generations of Australians profoundly affected by war.

The book's cover features a cricket ball trophy made as a memorial to Albert 'Tibby' Cotter by his family.

Cotter, a pioneering fast bowler who played for New South Wales and Australia, was killed at the Light Horse charge at Beersheba on 31st October 1917. The ball was bowled by Cotter when he took 6 wickets for 40 runs in a Test match for Australia against England in the 1903-04 season.

Or readers might delve into the kit bag of Flying Officer Brian Willis from Chatswood, a World War 2 pilot of No. 108 Squadron in the Royal Australian Air Force.

Willis was stationed in Egypt when the Wellington bomber he was piloting was shot down by enemy aircraft during a night raid over Northern Africa on 23 February 1942. His kit bag was donated to the Anzac Memorial in 2017, returning to Australian soil after a near 80-year absence.

Many of the items in the exhibition can now be viewed digitally following the launch of the Memorial's online collection.

For the first time in the Anzac Memorial's 90-year history, a searchable database been created to enable access to the remarkable objects, treasures, mementoes and keepsakes that have been donated by veterans and their families since its opening.

View the online database here: <https://collection.anzacmemorial.nsw.gov.au/explore>

On 24 November 1934, more than 100,000 people assembled in Hyde Park to witness the official opening of the Memorial. Prior to the ceremony, a procession of over 20,000 returned servicemen marched from the Domain to Hyde Park with many wearing their war medals with pride.

Special events, exhibitions, and lectures will be held throughout 2024 to celebrate the 90th anniversary.

Minister for Veterans David Harris said:

“2024 is a significant year for the Anzac Memorial in Sydney’s Hyde Park as we begin celebrations of its 90th anniversary.

“Not only is this NSW’s principal memorial, honouring the service and sacrifice of veterans from all over the state, it also houses a remarkable collection of items that have been generously donated over many decades.

“I encourage our community to visit the Memorial and explore the Treasures Exhibition, and witness some of the remarkable items that have been donated to the Memorial over the last 90 years.

“For those who are not able to come in person, the online collection enables anyone to visit the Memorial virtually and experience the thousands of donated items.”

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