



The Hon Victor Dominello MP

Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, 19 July 2011

95 YEARS ON, NSW REMEMBERS FROMELLES

Minister for Citizenship and Communities Victor Dominello MP today attended a commemoration service at the ANZAC Memorial, Hyde Park to mark the 95th anniversary of the Battle of Fromelles.

Minister Dominello, who has responsibility for Veterans' Affairs, said the First World War battle was Australia's first major engagement on the Western Front.

"It is important for current and future generations to remember Australia's military history and the sacrifices made by early Australian servicemen and women," Mr Dominello said.

"Participation in the Battle of Fromelles was a tragic yet defining event for the first Anzacs.

"At 6 pm on 19 July 1916, Australian and British divisions launched an attack on German troops near the French village of Fromelles, in an effort to draw them away from the Somme offensive in the south.

"A third of the Australian attacking forces, the 14th Brigade, were from NSW.

"The Germans, strongly fortified and well-equipped with machine-guns, quickly realised it was a feint and responded fiercely. Within 14 hours, the battle was over.

"The 5th Australian Division suffered 5,533 casualties, including 1,917 dead. The German casualties were little more than 1,000.

"Most tragically, until recent years some 1,300 Australian soldiers remained 'missing' from the Fromelles battle, having no known grave.

"Since 2007, archaeological investigations have uncovered 250 British and Australian soldiers buried in a mass grave, some of whom have been identified by name and subsequently reinterred with full military honours in 2010.

"The battle of Fromelles was a defeat but it was also a display of incredible courage.

"While many years have passed, we must never forget the service and sacrifice of these brave soldiers."

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