



HUGE numbers turned out to Wednesday's Anzac Day service in Portland despite the wet weather. Elements of the service had to be shortened or abandoned due to the rain.

Picture: KIRSTY HILL 120425h25

Rain fails to dampen spirits as Portland honours Anzacs

STEVE ROBERTSON

UNDER a Portland sky that alternated between weak sunshine and drenching drizzle, hundreds gathered at the Memorial Triangle on Wednesday to honour the 102,000 Australians who have died serving their nation in the armed forces.

A light but steady rain dampened the crowd that gathered along Percy, Julia, Bentinck and Cliff streets to watch the Anzac Day parade beginning at 10.25am.

"What a shame," one woman said to another along the parade route. "It was sunny just half an hour ago."

At the Memorial Triangle, small clusters of onlookers gathered underneath umbrellas and trees awaiting the marchers, who were led by the banner of the 5th Battalion. Marching behind were several dozen men and women, with Vietnam veterans making up the majority. A very small number of older diggers arrived by jeep and other transport.

The service opened with the laying of wreaths, many of which were carefully placed by students from 10 local schools and from service organisations.

After hymns and a prayer, Glenelg Shire

Mayor Gilbert Wilson introduced the guest speaker, Col. Roger Wainwright, formerly of Charlie Company, 5RAR, in Vietnam. The retired officer, who remains very active in 5RAR activities, reminded the crowd that the Gallipoli landings, 97 years ago on Wednesday, took place when federated Australia was barely 14-years old.

"The loss of life was so profound that it was the first large-scale human tragedy to beset Australia," he said.

Quoting Sir William Deane, Col Wainwright emphasised that the spirit of Anzac was not really about loss at all.

"It is about courage and endurance, and duty, and love of country, and mateship, and good humour and the survival of a sense of self-worth and decency in the face of dreadful odds."

He asked the crowd to recall the four battalions of the 2nd Brigade, who lost one third of their number attacking the key Turkish objective of Krithia.

"Their pluck was titanic," an admiring British officer wrote. "They were not men but gods, demons infuriated."

Col. Wainwright also reminded Portlanders

that Anzac Day is not just about the past. Governments, he said, have a moral responsibility to provide adequate support for the troops both during and after service.

"The upcoming withdrawal from Afghanistan will be a modern yardstick for this commitment," he said. "After 10 years involvement and multiple tours by many, there are those who are suffering. In past wars, casualties from battle fatigue or shell shock were seen as weaknesses. Mental wounding is an area that has been stigmatised, but is now being recognised as a genuine consequence of war."

He called on government to support the families of those who died in this conflict, rehabilitate those who need it and ensure that compensation is applied fairly and swiftly.

Col Wainwright also predicted that even in an era of growing multiculturalism throughout Australia, the nation would continue to pause every April 25 to remember.

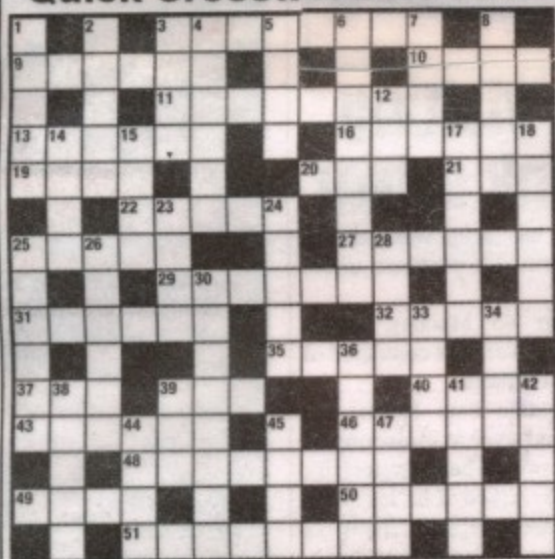
"Anzac Day is instilled in us and will remain part of our lore forever," he said.

By this point in the proceedings, with rain coming down steadily, it was time for the playing of the *Last Post*.

Remembering fallen with beautiful flowers

AN aerial view of the floral tribute in honour of the visiting Fifth Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment, who did two tours of Vietnam, which was made by recreating the Battalion's emblem at the Memorial Triangle. Volunteers helped to recreate the tiger emblem on Tuesday morning, in time for Wednesday's services. The floral displays will be in place until Monday morning.

Quick Crossword No 7262



Across

- 3 Practical people
- 9 Of the eye
- 10 Offensive to sight
- 11 Good-for-nothing
- 13 Parts of plays
- 16 Goes by
- 19 Weary
- 20 Incite
- 21 Greek letter
- 22 Helped
- 25 Acquire knowledge
- 27 Extol
- 29 Jumble
- 31 Disturbance
- 32 Slumbered
- 35 Corroded
- 37 First woman
- 39 Large cask
- 40 S African monetary unit
- 43 Gloomy
- 46 Come forth
- 48 Large S
- 49 American boa
- 49 Fine sediment
- 50 Rut
- 51 Ghosts

Down

- 1 Drink to
- 2 Sovereign
- 3 Utter wildly
- 4 Effaced
- 5 Heavy substance
- 6 Temporary substitutes
- 7 Soapy lather
- 8 Navy
- 12 Find fault constantly
- 14 Quote
- 15 Nigh
- 17 Exhibiting memory loss
- 18 Most secure
- 23 Peruvian Indian
- 24 Postpone
- 25 Elevated
- 26 Astounds
- 28 Remainder
- 30 Kiss
- 33 Old stringed instrument
- 34 Painful emotion
- 36 Heavy hammer
- 38 Very bright
- 39 Make brown
- 41 Shaft
- 42 Frighten from
- 44 Floor coverings
- 45 Young horse
- 47 Planet

Solution to No 7261



VOLUNTEERS work to arrange the collected and donated flowers for the Anzac Day floral display. Together with the wreaths and memorial crosses the lawns of the Memorial Triangle were a fitting floral tribute to veterans that were present and those no longer with us. The wreaths and floral display were prepared on Tuesday, before Wednesday's Anzac Day services. Volunteers are also required to help from 8.30am on Monday to help assist the Portland RSL Sub-Branch with the clean up at the Memorial Triangle.

Picture: SUPPLIED