

WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S FIRST GALLIPOLI MEMORIAL

The ANZACS had not yet left the gullies of Gallipoli, when in October 1915 the Mt Hawthorn Progress Association formed a committee to build 'Anzac Cottage' (sometimes called 'Anzac House') at N°38 Kalgoorrie Street, Mt Hawthorn, a developing suburb 5 kilometres (3.1 miles) north of Perth. The Association wanted to perpetuate the name 'Anzac' and build a monument that would be useful, providing a home for a wounded soldier who took part in the famous landing.

Members of the Progress Association started the fund-raising by contributing the large sum of 5 pounds each and the heavily timbered bush block was prepared by volunteer labour on Saturday, January 29th 1916, when about 30 men assembled, armed with shovels, saws and axes, to clear the land. At 4pm the Ladies Patriotic Guild regaled the workers with afternoon tea. After this, the last tree standing which they called 'Lone Pine' - was felled.

The following Saturday, February 5th, 70 drays laden with donated building materials, formed a spectacular half mile (.8 kilometres) procession through James Street, Perth, accompanied by about 150 men all on their way to the Mt Hawthorn building site.

Mrs. Roberts, the 'Soldiers Queen', headed the procession in her motor car, which also carried a Metters stove and copper and was accompanied by two other decorated motor cars. Then came 20 drays of stone, 27 of bricks, 1 of lime, 3 of tiles, 12 of timber, 1 of cement and paints, 1 of scaffolding, 1 tiled grate, 1 large enamel bath, 1 of refreshments and 4 of sundries. Thousands viewed the procession as it proceeded to Mt Hawthorn and on arrival at the building site, it was greeted by hundreds of enthusiastic men, women and children.

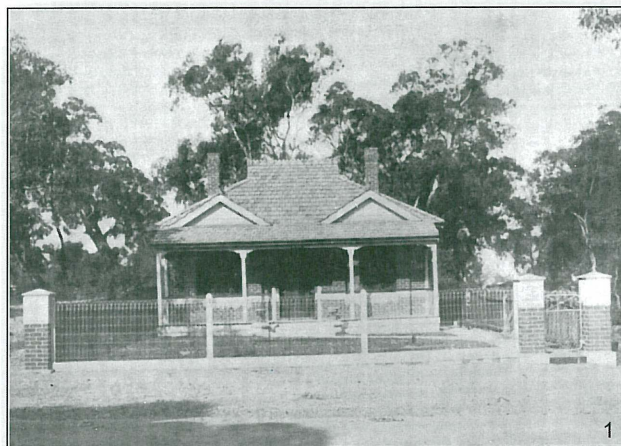
On Saturday February 12th at 3.30am, the 'busy bee' construction of the house commenced and by 1pm, the number of volunteer workmen on the site had reached two hundred.

Mrs Roberts, ceremoniously turned the first sod. Hot dinners were provided for the workers, the Police Band provided the music and a local rifle club fielded the Honour Guard for the Governor and his wife Lady Barron, who laid the inscribed foundation tablet.

A crowd of thousands, it was claimed, dressed in their Sunday best looked on. Construction of the house was completed by 'bedtime'. As the official souvenir booklet of the event put it, 'Mt Hawthorn was en fete....' all that day.

The festivities were repeated when the cottage was officially opened by the Premier and Mrs Scadden on April 15th 1916 and handed over to the returned Anzac the following day - a Sunday. There was more celebrating then, including bands, cadets and Girl Guides. A flag pole had been erected in the front garden upon which the Australian flag - bearing the motto 'ANZAC' - was to be hoisted each Anzac Day at 4.30am, the time of the first landing at Gallipoli.

Anzac Cottage was to house a returned Gallipoli digger, his family and descendants for as long as they needed, to ensure that the cottage would remain for all time as a monument to what Lord Kitchener had termed "A remarkable record of valour".



A Private John Porter and his wife Annie were the lucky couple granted the cottage, their good fortune deriving from his participation in the fighting at Gallipoli, where he had been wounded. Private Porter publicly declined the home, saying he did not wish to receive anything his comrades in arms could not have. He was prevailed upon to accept the honour. John Porter died in 1964, his wife Anne, four years later, but some of his descendants did indeed live on in Anzac Cottage until 1971.



Private John Porter

By 1991, the cottage had become dilapidated and passed into the hands of the Vietnam Veterans Association of Australia, W.A. branch. In cooperation with the Mt Hawthorn Anzac Cottage Restoration Group and with a grant from the Lotteries Commission, added to by the generosity of many donors, the V.V.A.A.WA has restored the building as closely as possible to its original condition.

In 2006 the cottage was gifted to the Town of Vincent and continues to be the headquarters of the V.V.A.A.WA. Local schools and other interested groups may visit the cottage by prior arrangement.

Anzac Cottage has been classified by the National Trust, recognised by the WA Heritage Council and is included in the Register of the National Estate. As well as having outstanding local, State and National heritage significance, it is one of the country's earliest World War 1 memorials and perhaps unique of Australia's many war memorials.



*The cottage when handed to
Vietnam Veterans in 1991*