

## Battle of Crete Memorial Committee

### Battle of Crete Memorial Dedication Ceremony

10:00 am Saturday 11 May 2024

Saw Avenue Precinct Kings Park WA

## Welcome

On a very pleasant Saturday morning over 400 people joined the Committee to celebrate the dedication of the Battle of Crete Memorial in the Saw Avenue memorial precinct in King's Park.

The Committee was very proud to hear the very positive praise expressed by our invited dignitaries in their speeches. Without exception all believed the design of the memorial was of an excellent standard, befitting the significance that the *Battle of Crete* has to Australian and Greek military history.

The presence of the highly ranked overseas contingent at this ceremony highlights the strong bonds that have developed between Greece, Australia, and New Zealand. There is little doubt that the ANZAC involvement in Greece and Crete contributed to the Greek migration to Australia and New Zealand in the years immediately following the second world war.

The Committee was both very surprised and grateful for the large number of distinguished guests who chose to support the ceremony by their attendance. Over 30 guests made themselves available.

The well-known TV and radio personality Gary Mitchell very capably performed the duties of master of ceremony for the event.

Arthur Leggett OAM, the 105-year-old veteran was our guest of honour. He was a former member of 2/11Bn AIF. Arthur who is one of the two remaining Australian survivors of the Battle of Crete was taken captive by German Paratroopers and spent more than four years in a prisoner of war camp. The mere fact that he was able to be present was an honour. Arthur recited the Ode of Remembrance and was able lay a wreath.



**Arthur Leggett OAM**

Welcome to Country was presented by Ms Di Ryder OAM, a well known and respected Noongar Elder. She also informed the audience about the little-known facts about the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who participated in the battle. Di also served in the ADF.



## Speeches

After thanking and welcoming the long list of distinguished guests, Bill Evangel asked each member of the Committee to identify themselves by standing. He noted that a great deal of hard work was needed by the Committee to bring the memorial to this stage. He thanked everyone for taking the time to attend the function with specific reference to relatives of veterans and particularly those who travelled long distances. Bill is currently President of the Greek Australian Returned and Services League and Chairperson of the Battle of Crete Memorial Committee.

Bill thanked Smith Sculptors for their outstanding work in designing the memorial and Colgan Industries for executing the construction and installation phase of the project.



**Bill Evangel**

Speeches were presented by His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM, the Governor of WA, the Honourable Roger Cook MLA, Premier of WA, The Honourable Matthew Keogh MP, Commonwealth Minister for Veteran's Affairs representing the Prime Minister of Australia, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church of Australia and His Excellency Stavros Venizelos, Ambassador for The Hellenic Republic of Greece to Australia.



**His Excellency the Honourable Chris Dawson**





**The Honourable Roger Cook MLA, Premier of WA**



**The Honourable Matthew Keogh MP**



**His Eminence Archbishop Makarios**





**His Excellency Stavros Venizelos**



At the completion of speeches, the Catafalque Party took its post around the memorial.



## Unveiling of the Commemorative Plaque



**The Premier Together with the Ambassador and Bill Evangel Unveiled the Commemorative Plaque.**



## Dedication

The Dedication was led by Chaplain Wendy Robertson 11/28 RWAR. She was assisted by Chaplain Matthew Hall and Chaplain Thi Lam.





## Memorial for the Departed



Following the Dedication, His Eminence Archbishop Makarios, together with other members of the Greek Orthodox Clergy conducted a *Memorial for the Departed*. Many of the guests who were not accustomed to Greek religious services found this part of the ceremony very moving and were pleased to be exposed to a different culture.





## Fly Past

Fly pasts have been traditionally performed by the military around the world as a mark of respect for individuals, organizations and public events. The nature of the fly past varies according to the event in question and can involve a number and type of aircraft.

In this case the RAAF indicated that it wanted to support the dedication and pay its respects by allowing a single aircraft, a PC21 from Pearce Airbase to travel North to South over the memorial. At approximately 11:10 am the aircraft flew over Kings Park much to the amazement of the crowd.

Flt LT James Pears who flew the plane commented afterwards that he was very honored to be given the task and enjoyed executing it.

The Committee thanks the RAAF for this very important gesture which had a great impact on the ceremony.

## Wreath laying Ceremony.

After the guests completed their wreath laying, associations, community groups and relatives of veterans were also invited to lay wreaths.

His Excellency Chris Dawson broke with a long-standing traditional protocol by allowing Arthur to lay the first wreath. A kind and generous gesture that was appreciated by all present.



**Arthur Leggett Lays the First Wreath**



**The Governor and Premier Lay Their Wreaths**





**His Eminence Archbishop Makarios Lays His Wreath**





















*Ann and Gail lay a wreath in honour of their father Bill Taylor*







**Display of the Laid Wreaths    Courtesy CMD**

## **The Ode of Remembrance**



**The Ode of Remembrance was recited by our Guest of Honour Mr Arthur Leggett**





The Bugler played the Last Post and after one minute silence played the Reveille/Rouse

## National Anthems and Concluding Blessing

Apostoli Fotiadis a noted Greek performer, who now resides in Perth, sang both the Greek and Australian national anthems with his passionate and soulful voice.  
(Apostoli was in the Greek Army stationed in Crete.)

Chaplain Robertson then performed the Final Blessing to conclude the ceremony.



## Snap









## Committee Members



*Five members of the Committee with Richard Sandover - Patron.*

*From L to R - Ken Michael, John Yiannakis, Cath Papanastasiou, Bill Evangel, Richard Sandover and Manoli Yeroyianakis*

**Ken Michael, John Yiannakis, Cath Papanastasiou, Bill Evangel, Richard Sandover (Patron) and Manoli Yeroyianakis**



**John Dombrose (Committee member - with a stick) with his Brothers and Friend**

Absent - Michael McDonald (unable to attend) and Philip Orchard (On leave).



## **Dedication Ceremony Brochure**

Click [here](#) to view a copy of the brochure that was made available at the ceremony. In addition to describing the order of service it provides general historical information and explains the rich symbolism contained in the memorial design.

## **A Word of Thanks**

The Committee acknowledges the extra work undertaken by the following to have the memorial ready for the event.

- Joan and Charlie Smith from Smith Sculptors for working long hours to prepare the two reliefs,
- Colgan Industries for completing the memorial construction and for installing the two reliefs, and
- The Botanic Gardens and Parks Authority for providing the reserved parking areas, completing the reticulation and garden surrounds in time for the event.

The following organisations were hired to assist in the smooth operation of the event. Marquee Magic for the marquee, Perth Marquees for organising the chairs. Guild of Undergraduates for the tea, coffee and sweets and the St John Ambulance Service for standing by in case of emergencies,

A big thanks to the students from Saint Andrews Grammar who assisted throughout the event. Also, thanks to those who dressed in traditional costumes and added colour to the ceremony.

Special thanks to Committee members John Yiannakis and Cath Papanastasiou who had the difficult task of organising the event schedule and Manoli Yeroyianakis for all the preparatory work.

Thanks also to Jessamy Welfare for the photographs.

Finally, the Committee thanks all those organisations and individuals who have sent warm words of thanks since the Dedication and who have commented enthusiastically on the design of the memorial.

Thank you, your feedback is much appreciated.





**The Memorial on the Following Day, Sunday 12 May 2024      Courtesy DRD**



**Unless otherwise stated images are courtesy of Jessamy Welfare.**