BATTLE OF Beersheba
100th Anniversary

The 2007 re-enactment of the charge at Beersheba.
Photo: AP Photo/Ariel Schalit

Beersheba
100th Anniversary
BATTLE OF

Australian Jewish News

The Pratt Foundation is proud to be associated with the Centenary of the Australian Light Horse Commemoration in Beersheva 1917–2017

Photo © Ricki Rosen

Photo © Ricki Rosen
From Egypt to Damascus, the Anzac Light Horse division changed the course of Middle Eastern history. Peter Kohn follows their revolutionary trail.

As Perry wrote, by 1916 and 1917, the Light Horse comprised many courageous, risk-taking young Australian bushmen, the generation born on the eve of the new century, and now battle-hardened by their bitter experiences in Gallipoli and the repulse of the Turkish invasion of Egypt.

Interviewed by The AJN this month, Perry said: “The breakthrough at Beersheba allowed the British to take Gaza after three attempts. From then on, the Turks were on the run.”

Professor Roland Perry

Perry noted that the Balfour Declaration of November 1917 encouraged the Jewish population to expand significantly by the end of that year. The Anzac Light Horse, which was 75 per cent of General Edmund Allenby’s Desert Mounted Corps, commanded by Chauvel, “not only drove the Turks out of the region; they protected the Jewish settlers from marauding Arab tribes.

“The Turks had allowed bullying by the Arabs, but when the Turks were pushed out, the Arabs had no protectors as such,” said Perry. “Hence began a longstanding and strong relationship between the precursor to Israel, then Israel itself, and Australia.”

Meanwhile, Lawrence was making his name as the British officer forging the Arabs into a strategic weapon against the Ottomans. The Arab Revolt of 1916 had slowed, but Lawrence, initially sent to Palestine to gather intelligence, reignited the revolt, elevating Prince Faisal bin Hussein, whose descendants would become Jordan’s royal family.

In doing so, Lawrence coordinated with the Light Horse, which he saw as a corps of elite riders, particularly in battles around the strategic Hejaz Railway from Medina to Damascus.

By the time the Australian horsemen faced the Ottomans on the Sinai in 1916, they were ready for the bloody desert warfare ahead. The Anzac Mounted Division was among forces that repelled the German-led Turks in signature battles such as Romani, Maghdaba and, in early 1917, Rafa.

Under Chauvel’s command, the Light Horse crossed the Sinai and reached Palestine. They fought the first and second battles of Gaza in March and April 1917. The Allied and Ottoman forces battled each other down to a six-month stalemate along the Gaza-Beersheba line, which was broken by the Light Horse’s daring sunset charge into Beersheba on October 31.

The Turks were caught on the back foot, after a ruse by British Colonel Richard Meinertzhagen and his men, who deliberately dropped a satchel containing false documents. The intercepted papers suggested any attack on Beersheba would merely be a decoy for a major third assault on Gaza.

After Beersheba, Perry traced the Light Horse’s trajectory north through Palestine, and the Australians occasionally breaking the slog of war with sojourns at kibbutzes and moshavs, as guests of Jewish pioneers, who reminded them of something intrinsic back in Australia.

Perry quoted Sir Henry Gullett, a contemporary historian: “The sense of straight-planted streets, the little white houses with their red roofs … and the wide, rolling orchards and vineyards along the
kneeling at his comrade’s grave and praying.”

After Allenby’s capture of Jerusalem on December 9, 1917, the Light Horse fought Turkish forces holding out in the Judean Hills.

Perry detailed the eventual dashing of Faisal’s expectations, raised by Lawrence, that the Arabs would win an independent commonwealth as a result of their revolt. Reality set in when Britain and France enforced their 1916 Sykes-Picot agreement, creating the postwar carve-up of the region into British and French administrative zones – Palestine and the Transjordan to Britain, and Syria, Lebanon and Iraq to France.

In October 1918, days before the Ottoman surrender of the city, and weeks before the end of World War I, the Australian riders of the 10th Light Horse led the invasion of Damascus.

However, according to Perry, and to Paul Daley, author of Beersheba – A Journey Through Australia’s Forgotten War, Lawrence was piqued at the Light Horse being first in, as he was anxious for the conquered city to become the locus of an Arab nation-state, so he had wanted the Arabs under his command to lead the storming of Damascus.

Throughout last century, Lawrence’s champions in the British Foreign Office made him a focal point of the Allies’ success in the Middle East during the Great War, marginalising the role of the so-called Australian “colonials”.

“The light horsemen and their leader have largely faded from the national consciousness through time, and with the emphasis on [the romanticised 1962 cinema blockbuster] Lawrence of Arabia,” wrote Perry. “They should be remembered for their enormous impact.” Perry’s latest book, Monash and Chauvel, published this month, details the roles of Chauvel and of John Monash, profiling the two acclaimed Australian generals and the impact of their troops on World War I.
They fought for the right to fight

Despite facing substantial barriers and prejudice, hundreds of Indigenous Australians enlisted in Australian Light Horse regiments that fought in the WWI Sinai-Palestine campaign, including at Beersheba, writes Shane Desiatnik.

The famous charge by the Australian Light Horse that resulted in the liberation of Beersheba from Ottoman rule on October 31, 1917 rightly holds a special place in Australian hearts, minds and military history.

But sadly the significant contribution, sacrifice and bravery of Indigenous Diggers in that battle, and others that led to the liberation of the region from Ottoman rule, have been largely overlooked.

The Australian Light Horse Project – an initiative by Jewish-Indigenous partnership the Rona Tranby Trust – is playing an important role in changing that.

Officially launched by Jewish federal MP Julian Leeser in August, it has given descendants of 12 Indigenous men who served in Australian Light Horse regiments in WWI the opportunity to research and record the stories of their ancestors by sourcing documents, interviewing older relatives and, in many cases, creating books or short films.

The project will reach its peak in Israel over October 31, where participants will ride in the re-enactment of the Charge of Beersheba.

Two of those who served, Charles Fitzroy Stafford and Jack Stacey, were members of the 12th Light Horse regiment that actually took part in the charge.

Stacey’s grandson Lance Waters, who will be participating in the re-enactment in Beersheba with his sister Emily Roberts, said it will be an unforgettable experience.

“When I looked up his records [at the Australian War Memorial] and found out for the first time that my grandfather was involved in the charge of Beersheba, I started welling up in tears,” Waters said.

“Jack was a Kamilaroi man from the Gamilaraay nation and even though he was not given civil rights as an Indigenous man in Australia, he still [felt] compelled to protect the interests of Australia.

“Because whether white Australia acknowledged it or not, it was his land and people to protect.”

“My mum, who is no longer with us, had always wanted his story to be told.

“This [project] is going to honour him, and it will also be for his three children, 18 grandchildren and four, but soon to be six, great-grandchildren too.”

“Stafford’s great-niece, Peta Flynn, and her sister Michelle, plan to write a book about his military service and upbringing in the Coonabarabran/Binaway area.

“My daughter, niece and nephews will be able to take it into their schools and communities and actually be proud of who we are and where we come from – and ensure our family’s history will not be lost to future generations,” Peta said.

Terry Hutchinson will be the first person in his family to visit the grave in Beersheba’s war cemetery of his great-uncle Ernest James Firth, who served in the 1st Light Horse regiment and was killed in action on November 3, 1917 in the Battle of Tel El Khuweilfeh.

Hutchinson, whose cousins are members of the Stolen Generation and whose other great-uncle, Francis, served in the 2nd Light Horse regiment, said “I’m looking forward to spreading some soil from the Piliga onto Ernie’s grave.”

Four of the participants’ ancestors – Frank Fisher, Harry Doyle, James Lingwoodock and Alexander Stanley – served in the 11th Light Horse regiment, which had a large number of Indigenous members from regional Queensland who became known as the “Black Watchmen”.

On the day of the Battle of Beersheba, the 11th operated on the flanks of the strategic Negev town, and it also took part in a charge of Turkish positions at Sheria on November 7, 1917 and pursuits that followed, including at Es Salt in Transjordan in May 1918.

Other Indigenous Light Horse soldiers being honoured in the project are Allan McDonald (8th Light Horse regiment), Frederick Amos Lovett (4th), David Mullett (1st Remount Unit) and Peter Ross (13th).
Praise from Canberra

MALCOLM TURNBULL
Prime Minister

“The battlefields at Beersheba may be distant, but the deeds committed there remain close to the heart of our nation. This is, first and foremost, a pilgrimage to honour the contributions of your ancestors and to affirm that their bravery and sacrifice will never be forgotten. As you gratefully recall the courage and resilience of those who fought a hundred years ago, all Australians join you in saying thank you for their sacrifice.”

JULIAN LEESER
Member for Berowra

“This is another wonderful twin project between the Jewish and Indigenous communities in our country. Unfortunately on return to Australia, Indigenous servicepeople did not receive the recognition in civilian life that their other Australian compatriots did. I have a very personal connection to the Battle of Beersheba. My great-grandfather, Sylvester Henry Brown, fought in the 1st Light Horse regiment which took the town of Tel El Saba. I’m delighted these descendants of Indigenous soldiers who served in the Australian Light Horse will be travelling to Beersheba for the commemoration. I look forward to seeing you there for what will be a moving experience for everyone.”

LINDA BURNEY
Member for Barton

“Indigenous Australians have made a tremendous contribution to the defence of Australia throughout its history. They sacrificed and bled the same [as non-Indigenous Diggers]. Projects such as the Rona Tranby Trust are contributing to a great effort to ensure that Aboriginal Australians receive the recognition they deserved.”

DAN TEHAN
Minister for Veterans’ Affairs

“The Centenary of the battle is a wonderful opportunity for furthering the movement for reconciliation, and for recognising the important role that Indigenous Australians played in the victory over the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East.”

From the Bush to Beersheba

A NOTHER project, called From the Bush to Beersheba, led by Chris Carr, raised almost $16,000 in a GoFundMe campaign to send three Indigenous young men from the Ntaria (Hermannsburg) community near Alice Springs to Israel to take part in the Battle of Beersheba re-enactment.

The three are members of a broader group of young Aborigines who took part in an Indigenous Light Horsemen Anzac ride from Ntaria to Alice Springs in 2015 and again in April 2016. They made their final preparations for Beersheba last month by being given riding and drill instruction in Toowoomba by an instructor from the Australian Light Horse Association.

“Carr said, “This is a project that is important for the young people of the community and for all Australians.”
The legacy of the Light Horse

Beersheba was not the only time the Australian military impacted on Israel’s history, reflects Sam Lipski

He also notes it was a column in The AJN that led to the establishment of the city’s Light Horse memorial.

**Peter Corlett’s statue in Beersheba’s Park of the Australian Soldier.**

What surprised me after the 2003 AJN column, was how many readers told me they had never heard about the Australian Light Horse victory at Beersheba.

Some asked whether there was a Light Horse memorial in today’s Beersheba. I explained the 31 Lighthorsemen killed in the Charge were buried alongside hundreds of other Anzac and British soldiers in the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery in the city. But there was no monument.

As I thought more about the AJN readers’ questions, I proposed the idea for a memorial park to Richard Pratt. It would be a link between Australia and Israel, and a gift to the people of Beersheba. Richard agreed at once to fund the project, and asked me to work with his friend Digger James.

Whatever merit my idea for a park might have had, I know that without Richard and Digger it would have remained just another idea.

Nevertheless, that doesn’t diminish the Battle of Beersheba’s significance for Zionist history. My view, as partly expressed in the 2003 column, is that the Australian victory was a watershed because losing Beersheba was a severe defeat for the Turkish armies, it facilitated General Edmund Allenby’s conquest of Gaza; it opened the road north to Allenby’s capture of Jerusalem some six weeks later, and it therefore marked the beginning of the end of the Ottoman Empire.

In that sense, the Light Horse victory changed the course of history in the Middle East.

Peter Corlett’s statue in Beersheba’s Park of the Australian Soldier.

**Peter Corlett working on his sculpture for Beersheba.**

**Richard Pratt, Shimon Peres and Michael Jeffrey at the park’s opening.**

**Photo: Ricki Rosen**
JNF HONOURS THE ANZAC LEGACY IN BE’ER-SHEVA AND THE LAND OF ISRAEL

JNF is proud to be custodian of the ANZAC Trail in Israel’s South, retracing the path of Australian Light Horsemen in liberating Be’er-Sheva and teaching future generations of their sacrifice.

Over the last century, JNF has supported many projects that have acknowledged and reinforced the close Australia-Israel relationship.

It is in the same spirit that we open the ANZAC Memorial Centre in Be’er-Sheva on the Centenary of this famous battle, recognising the contribution of these brave soldiers towards the creation of a Jewish State and the ongoing shared values and friendship between Australia and Israel.
Honouring Beersheba’s heroes

To commemorate the enduring legacy of the Anzac troops who liberated the town of Beersheba, a brand new museum is opening next week adjacent to the town’s Commonwealth War Cemetery, as Sophie Deutsch reports.

The view of the cemetery from the memorial’s observation deck.

In the main exhibit, visitors experience the war through the eyes of an Anzac soldier after receiving a description of an individual combatant and participating in a re-enactment of a soldier’s recruitment and training.

Featuring an Anzac trail map, recruitment and war bond posters, authentic artefacts, and a scene from the soldiers’ day-to-day life, the main exhibit hall also chronicles the journey of the Anzac regiments through Egypt, Gallipoli, Sinai, Gaza and on to Beersheba.

Parallel to the main exhibit sits a collection of letters and postcards written by Edward Randolph Cleaver. Carrying the scars of defeat from Gallipoli, Randolph continued to fight in the mounted cavalry charge at Beersheba before being struck down by machine-gun fire. The reflective letters, written by Cleaver – one of the first troops to be buried at the Beersheba War Cemetery – reveal the tremendous zest of the Anzac troops and the intensity of emotions that underpin their indomitable spirit.

The main exhibit hall chronicles the journey of the Anzac regiments through Egypt, Gallipoli, Sinai, Gaza and on to Beersheba.

An immersive multi-media presentation in the museum portrays the campaigns on Gaza – the sentiments of the young soldiers, the sounds of war, and the ongoing dilemmas faced by the troops – all of which led to the decision to attack Beersheba from the southeast. The presentation concludes with the cavalry charge on Beersheba and its aftermath.

Letters from Edward Randolph Cleaver are displayed in the new museum.

Edward Randolph Cleaver mainly focused on Gallipoli, and the Battle of Beersheba is comparatively less well-known. But Springer reflects, “It’s a story that needs to be told because of the impact that it had on the region, the creation of the State of Israel and the legacy of shared values between Australia and the Jewish people.”

Its lasting influence is now embedded in the town of Beersheba, providing a meaningful space to honour the fallen and ensure that we continue to remember them.

The stories that have been handed down from generation to generation are much more related to the kindness of the Australian soldiers towards the local population. And that was something that had not previously been experienced by any of the other occupying forces. The Australian people were really the first ones to show any generosity of spirit towards the locals,” reflects Springer.

“It is our hope that the Beersheba Anzac Museum will honour the memory and sacrifice of the soldiers who served here, teach future generations about the role they played in enabling the establishment of the Jewish State and serve as an ongoing reminder of the close relationship between Australia and Israel.”

To date the story of the Anzacs has
The Park of the Australian Soldier – Beersheva
Opened and Dedicated – 28 April 2008 by Governor General of Australia, Major General Michael Jeffery AC (Retd) and President of Israel, Shimon Peres z”l

An initiative of the Pratt Foundation
Battle of Beersheba 100TH ANNIVERSARY
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2017

Beersheba beyond the charge

Australians flocked to Beersheba on October 27, 2017, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Beersheba. The event was a reminder of the city's strategic importance during World War I, when the Light Horse Brigade advanced on the town and captured it, marking a turning point in the Sinai-Palestine campaign. The charge of the Light Horse Brigade is seen as a turning point in the Sinai-Palestine campaign and was declared a heritage site by UNESCO.

From biblical times to a modern metropolis, Nathan Jeffay shines a light on the city at the centre of this weekend’s centenary commemorations.

Australians flocked to Beersheba to honour the history of a century ago. But it is worth taking the time to get a vibe of the modern high-tech city — and also go back to ancient times to explore its biblical heritage.

This is the nomadic region where the biblical forefathers wandered. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are all said to have spent time living in Beersheba. And it is only five kilometres from the modern city to the biblical-era settlement, where you can see some magnificent excavations.

Tel Be’er Sheva National Park has been declared a heritage site by UNESCO because of the remains from the biblical era. There are remains of city gates and a watchtower, a grand building that may have been a palace, storage rooms that were found to contain hundreds of pottery vessels, and a large and impressive water system.

There is lots to explore at Tel Be’er Sheva, and stunning viewpoints over modern Israel. The site is home to one of the deepest ancient wells found in Israel — apt given that “be’er” means well. Abraham is said to have dug wells when he arrived in the area, the root of the city’s name. One spot in the city is referred to as Abraham’s well, as it is thought to be the location of one of the biblical wells. Today, there is a visitors’ centre where booming sound effects and 3D technology help to tell the story of Abraham, and to explore his significance to monotheistic faiths.

The Abraham’s Well International Visitors’ Centre offers daily tours which should be booked in advance, and details can be found at abraham.org.il.

Modern Beersheba is at the forefront of Israel’s high-tech success. Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, which was established in 1969, has become an important research centre in various disciplines — and a driving force of the technology sector. This helps to power a techie culture that goes well beyond the university, to industry and the city’s calendar. Hundreds of people just flocked there for the International Conference for Advanced Technologies, which bills itself as “the meeting place for those developing the most advanced technologies in the world in academia and industry.”

Most of the start-ups that are dotted around the city do not open their doors to tourists, but you can get an excellent insight into the Israeli technology scene at the four-acre Carasso Science Park. There, one of the exhibitions is run in collaboration with Intel, and initiates you in Israeli innovation.

This is the largest science park in a country obsessed with science. The technological and scientific games and exhibits are too much for Australian officials to resist — as of press time the official Australian delegation for the Anzac commemorations is expected to pay a visit.

People of all ages, from toddlers to adults, say that they learn and enjoy themselves in the indoor and outdoor spaces, where they are constantly invited to touch things, press buttons, and get active. The park is home to festivals, shows, concerts and film screenings.

The presence of Ben-Gurion University in Beersheba means that every eighth resident is a student, and there is a large Moroccan, Ethiopian, and Russian immigrant community. Each has left a mark on the city — its cuisine, shops, and the cultural scene.

You can get a good feel for Beersheba by taking some time to explore the Old City. The name is misleading, as compared to the Old City of Jerusalem it is pretty new — an Ottoman construction. But it still has a charm, and its interesting buildings are worth attention.

The Anzac story is so central to Beersheba that visitors from all over the world end up learning about it when they simply decide to seek out an attractive outdoor spot to relax. Many have no idea about the history of 1917 when they stroll into the Australian Soldier Park, where the open areas and children’s toys are accompanied by a monument to the Anzacs and written information about the episode. A sign tells people that the charge of the Light Horse Brigade “marked a turning point in the Sinai-Palestine campaign” and “captured the imagination of the world.”

The Negev Museum of Art is housed in a historic building that was once the home of the Turkish governor. Earlier this year CNN selected it as one of its 10 favourite Israeli museums, writing that “thanks to a recent renovation, its original splendour has been restored.”

There’s fun for kids of all ages at the Carasso Science Park.

Australiana on display

NATHAN JEFFAY

It’s a constant frustration for Australian Jews — trying to discuss Israel with all its variety, when friends and colleagues can only picture a country of soldiers. When Beersheba residents talk about Australia, it seems that they have a similar difficulty.

“In Beersheba many people think of Australia only as the soldiers, only as the men on the horses of the Light Brigade,” reports Dalia Manor, director and chief curator at the Negev Museum of Art.

And so, over recent weeks, her office has been buzz with the arrival of crates of art from Australia, and she has been overwhelmed with customs documentation and shipping paperwork. Just in time for the centenary, she will be opening the exhibition Tracks and Traces: Contemporary Australian Art.

“I want to show Australia as something else as well as the soldiers,” Manor told The A.N., with an echo of the many people who run programs in Australia to give a more three-dimensional view of Israel. “The idea is to also show Australia as a country of culture, art, deep thinking.”

The museum is presenting the exhibition in conjunction with the Sherman Contemporary Art Foundation of Sydney. It comprises painting, sculpture, photography and film by nine Australian artists.

The museum and the foundation are together aiming “to present a sense of nation and society, both ancient and modern, and to link the phenomena of past Australia with historic Palestine and modern-day Israel.”

There are artists with Aboriginal, European, Asian and Jewish heritages. One of the contributors is remote community Aboriginal artist Shirley Purdie. Others include Scottish-born Joan Ross, Japanese-born Hiromi Tango, and Australian-born artists Rosemary Laing and Shaun Gladwell.

“The exhibition is very varied, with artists from different generations, techniques and media,” said Manor. “It has the landscapes, the sea, and history and it gives an interesting preoperative on Australia that has not yet been shown in Israel.”

She hopes that the exhibition will create more of a buzz around Australian art in Israel. “Israeli art is very much oriented to Europe and America, but we know almost nothing about Australian art,” Manor said, adding that she believes there is some common ground between art in Israel and Australia. “Some of the issues of identity, immigration, and memories are themes that are close to the Israeli psyche and identity,” she said.

The Negev Museum of Art is housed in a historic building that was once the home of the Turkish governor. Earlier this year CNN selected it as one of its 10 favourite Israeli museums, writing that “thanks to a recent renovation, its original splendour has been restored.”

Ben-Gurion University. Photo: Inna Orachevsky/Dreamstime

Tel Be’er Sheva National Park. Photo: Lev Levin/Dreamstime

Northangerari (Bush Lemongrass) by Shirley Purdie.
A century of Jewish leadership

CAPTAIN LUCY SAARONI

INSPIRATIONAL Jewish leadership in the Australian Army is still strong, 100 years after Jewish General Sir John Monash led Australia’s soldiers to victory in a battle that changed the course of World War I. Since the early 1900s, thousands of Jewish servicemen and servicewomen have given their time, skills and in some cases their lives serving on Australian military operations. The Magen Davids that pepper tombstones in the Beersheba War Cemetery 75km southwest of Jerusalem are a solemn reminder of the important historical relationship that Jewish Australians hold with the Holy Land – and of the pivotal role Australian soldiers played in shaping national identity for two proud countries.

Rabbi Dovid Gutnick, a Jewish chaplain in the 4th Brigade – the very same brigade that Monash commanded a century ago and the same brigade that took part in the Light Horse charge – explains that it was a seminal battle for both the Australian Army and the state of Israel.

"Many of us feel that the Battle of Beersheba precipitated a series of events that culminated in the formation of the modern state of Israel," he says.

One hundred years after Australian soldiers on horseback charged with courage and determination, using their bayonets as swords to defeat the Ottomans in the desert, the Australian Army has selected Rabbi Gutnick to travel to Israel and participate in the commemorative ceremony that pays homage to those soldiers.

"This trip beautifully coalesces my country of birth (Australia), my Jewish faith and the Jewish homeland," says Rabbi Gutnick, one of the many members of the Australian Jewish community carrying on the proud legacy of leadership in the Australian Army. An admired spiritual leader at the historic East Melbourne Synagogue, Rabbi Gutnick was moved to join the Australian Army Reserve following the death of Private Gregory Sher in Afghanistan.

"Private Sher’s tragic death in 2009 was the first ADF casualty from within the Jewish community since the Second World War and we were all touched by this event. It is a privilege for me to support members and their families when they need guidance, a favour or just a kind word." Rabbi Gutnick provides part-time religious and welfare support to all members of the 4th Combat Service Support Battalion in Oakleigh, as well as Jewish Australian soldiers and officers across the nation.

"I draw on my faith, tradition and teachings to inspire and support our wonderful men and women in uniform – no matter what their religious beliefs or practice may be," he said.

Brigadier David Westphalen, current Commander of the 4th Brigade, said he is looking forward to seeing Rabbi Gutnick and other 4th Brigade members participate in next week’s ceremony in Israel.

"As a young university student, I lived for a short time at Shalom College at the University of New South Wales. It is a privilege to send the 4th Brigade detachment to Israel to participate in the commemoration of the Battle of Beersheba supported by our chaplain, Rabbi Gutnick.”

Participants in the 2007 commemoration at the Commonwealth Cemetery in Beersheba.

Photo: EPA/Pavel Wolberg

Rabbi Dovid Gutnick at an Australian Army Chanukah celebration.

Photo: Peter Haskin

Brigadier David Westphalen, current Commander of the 4th Brigade.

Tim Wilson MP
FOR GOLDSTEIN

"Fighting nationally, delivering locally"

In commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of the Battle for Be’er Sheva

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United Israel Appeal

As 2017 marks the Light Horse Centenary in Be’er Sheva, our 2017 Annual General Meeting will celebrate this milestone.

We warmly welcome our special guest speaker:
SAM LIPSKI AM, BA, LLD (HON)
who will reflect on this recent commemorative event.

Tuesday 5 December 2017, 7.30PM
Quat Quatta
17 Quat Quatta Ave, Ripponlea

For more information, contact
UIA 1300 ISRAEL (1300 477 235)

Supporting Israel’s most valuable asset
Riding into the pages of history

On October 31, 1917, when Australian Light Horse units breached a fortified Turkish outpost at the end of defended lines extending to Gaza, they rode into the pages of history.

Their charge helped open the way for the British advance into Palestine and, many believe, helped change the course of the war in the Middle East.

We pay tribute to the courage of those who accepted the burden of service and remember solemnly those who made the supreme sacrifice for a grateful nation.

Their resolve, amid desperate circumstances, gave hope to a young nation facing a terrible war with a horrendous human cost.

Their actions helped shape the Anzac legend.

At this time of commemoration, I also honour the friendship to which this remarkable battle gave rise.

From the crucible of this war and the next, the people of Israel and Australia forged a unique bond – one that bridges the separation of distance and the passage of time.

Today, our people stand fast, strengthened by a shared resolve to work towards a more peaceful world.

I join you in honouring the historic charge of those regiments of the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade, and the memory of all those who fought.

MALCOLM TURNBULL
Prime Minister of Australia

Flourishing bonds built a century ago

The Battle of Beersheba marked an important moment in both Australian and Israeli independence.

It was important for the newly-independent Australia – a courageous military success, during a war in which much of the country’s national character was built.

And it was important in paving the way for the establishment of an independent State of Israel. It boosted the Allies on the ground, and prompted them to plan what would happen in this region after the war. Their planning meant that the dream of a Jewish state became more realistic – for just two days after the Battle of Beersheba, the British issued the Balfour Declaration. The British government in London said it viewed with favour “a national home for the Jewish people”.

As we mark these historic developments, we celebrate how bonds built a century ago have flourished, and how today Australia and Israel are the very best of friends. We are united by our history, and by values that defined both of our nations then and have stood the test of time: pioneering spirit, creativity, and faith.

I am delighted to welcome Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull to Israel in the coming days to mark this moving centenary, and also celebrate the relationship that our nations have built – from Beersheba onwards to the United Nations vote of 1947 where Australia endorsed the idea of a Jewish state, through to our firm trade and diplomatic ties today.

I want to extend my good wishes to all the Australian Jewish community. This is an occasion that truly echoes the deep connection between us, and highlights your important contribution to the friendship between Israel and Australia. May our friendship grow from strength to strength.

REUVEN RIVLIN
President of the State of Israel