

## Remembrance Day 2009



**Overdue recognition:** From left, Arthur Lewis, Doug Bain and Geoff Burn unveil the plaque commemorating the World War II chemical warfare unit at Glenbrook.

# Mustard gas men gain recognition

Three RAAF armourers who risked their lives working with mustard gas in Glenbrook during World War II returned to the village last Wednesday to unveil a plaque commemorating the men who worked on the top secret project.

Geoff Burn, Doug Bain and Arthur Lewis were the guests of honour at the special Remembrance Day ceremony at Panthers Glenbrook.

Now in their mid-80s, the men worked with secret stockpiles of mustard gas in a disused Glenbrook railway tunnel during World War II but struggled for decades to gain formal recognition for their role in the war effort.

Federal Member for Lindsay David Bradbury helped lead the campaign to gain this recognition and paid tribute to the men at last week's service.

"In the course of their duties most of the mem-

bers of the unit came in contact with these (chemical weapons) materials, in some cases experiencing burns, rashes and respiratory difficulties.

"Many of the health issues that were faced throughout that period continue to be faced by many of the men that were involved in that unit today," said Mr Bradbury.

The Labor MP paid tribute to historian Geoff Plunkett who helped lift the lid on the secret mustard gas unit with his 2008 book on Australia's chemical warfare history. Mr Plunkett had "taken up the cause almost single-handedly on occasions", he said.

For his part, Mr Plunkett was just pleased to see the 'mustard gas' men finally receive their due recognition.

"This could realistically be the last time ever that a group of them get together," he said.