

In memoriam

"If we all perish, let no man say the Assyrian deserted its Allies in time of need"
General Agha Petros Elia Commander Assyrian Army WWI

Unveiled on the 31st day of October in the year of our Lord 2009 by His Beatitude Metropolitan Mar Meelis Zaia AM, Assyrian Church of the East

The Assyrian Army	The Assyrian Levies
World War One	1921 - 1955 including
1914 - 1918	World War Two 1939 - 1944

The Assyrian nation entered World War One in 1915. Isolation and the withdrawal from Persia by its closest ally Russia meant the Assyrian army had no means to replenish their supplies and withstood the full brunt of the Ottoman forces on their own. During the nine months of isolation the Assyrian army recorded 14 victories but by mid-1918 their ammunition was almost exhausted and the nation had been reduced by two thirds as a direct result of massacres in what has come to be known today as the "Assyrian Armenian and Pontic Greek Genocide".

Help arrived too late, a small British force made contact with the Assyrian army in late 1918 just as the front collapsed and most Assyrians were reduced to starving refugees.

The Assyrians having lost their homes in the previous war were now centred around their ancient capital Nineveh in Iraq. Described as "natural soldiers" they were persuaded in 1921 to join a British force that became known as the Assyrian RAF Levies. During WWII this force served in all arms including a parachute company. Their battle honours include the battles of Habbanyia, Falluja, Albania, and Greece. Specialist companies also served in Cyprus, Lebanon, Palestine and Iran.

"The Assyrians have many of the Gurkha soldier's characteristics, taking great pride in their marksmanship and mountaineering capabilities, we who commanded them grew to love them dearly and to this day I feel that I never had the privilege of leading better men". 1980 Major General John Dutton Frost, Battle of Arnhem

A hero is born... This plaque commemorates the contribution made by Australian and Assyrian military personnel of WW1 and WW2

In memory of Lt General Sir Stanley George Savige - KBE, CB, DSO, MC. ED
"Savige of Persia" Australian Imperial Forces

For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty the exodus of Assyrian refugees between 26 July and 6 August 1918. As a Captain he was in command of a small party sent to protect the rear of a column of refugees who were being harassed by the enemy. His energy, resources and the skilful placement of his defences kept a superior number of hostile troops, many of whom were mounted, at a distance.

He held position after position until nearly surrounded, but on each occasion was able to extricate his charges. His cool determination and fine example under fire inspired his men and gave enormous comfort to the almost panic stricken refugees. As a direct result of his actions tens of thousands of Assyrians were saved. The majority of Fairfield's Assyrian community are descendents of those refugees.

The memorial is dedicated by the Assyrian Levies Association and the Assyrian community of Fairfield, NSW to the memory of fallen Assyrian and Australian service personnel. In honour of the Assyrian RAF Levies 1921 - 1956.

Lest We Forget