

WA Saluting Monash

by Keith Shilkin - Convenor, WA Saluting Monash Council



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The Saluting Monash Council is an Australia-wide organisation that recognises the special place of General Sir John Monash in the annals of Australia and the nation's military story and it seeks to have him posthumously elevated to Field Marshal.

The project for this is the "Jerilderie Proposition" named for the town in southern New South Wales which first officially adopted the Proposition and where Monash was a boy, said to have met Ned Kelly and to have held the bushranger's horse for him.

The Chairman of the Saluting Monash Council is the Honourable Tim Fischer AC, a former Deputy Prime Minister. Mr Fischer has been a strong advocate for Monash's promotion, having written the book *"Maestro John Monash - Australia's Greatest Citizen General"* which describes Monash's leadership and outstanding military successes, mainly on the Western

Front, and puts the case for his rank to be that of Field Marshal.

The Western Australian launch of the Saluting Monash-Jerilderie Proposition was held on 31 January 2017, hosted by the local General Sir John Monash RSL Sub-Branch.

The launch was attended by senior RSL, Military and Unit Association personnel including WA State RSL President, Peter Aspinall; CEO, John McCourt; Steve Chamarette, Oliver Lovelle and Keith Boxshall, Presidents of Highgate, Mt Lawley and Nollamara Sub-Branches respectively, LTCOL Robert Colligan CO 11/28th Battalion of the 13th Brigade, Brig (Retd) Duncan Warren and LTCOL (Retd) Richard Cook of the Defence Reserves Association and many other supporters of the project.

Warren Austin, President of the General Sir John Monash RSL Sub-Branch, welcomed the many guests

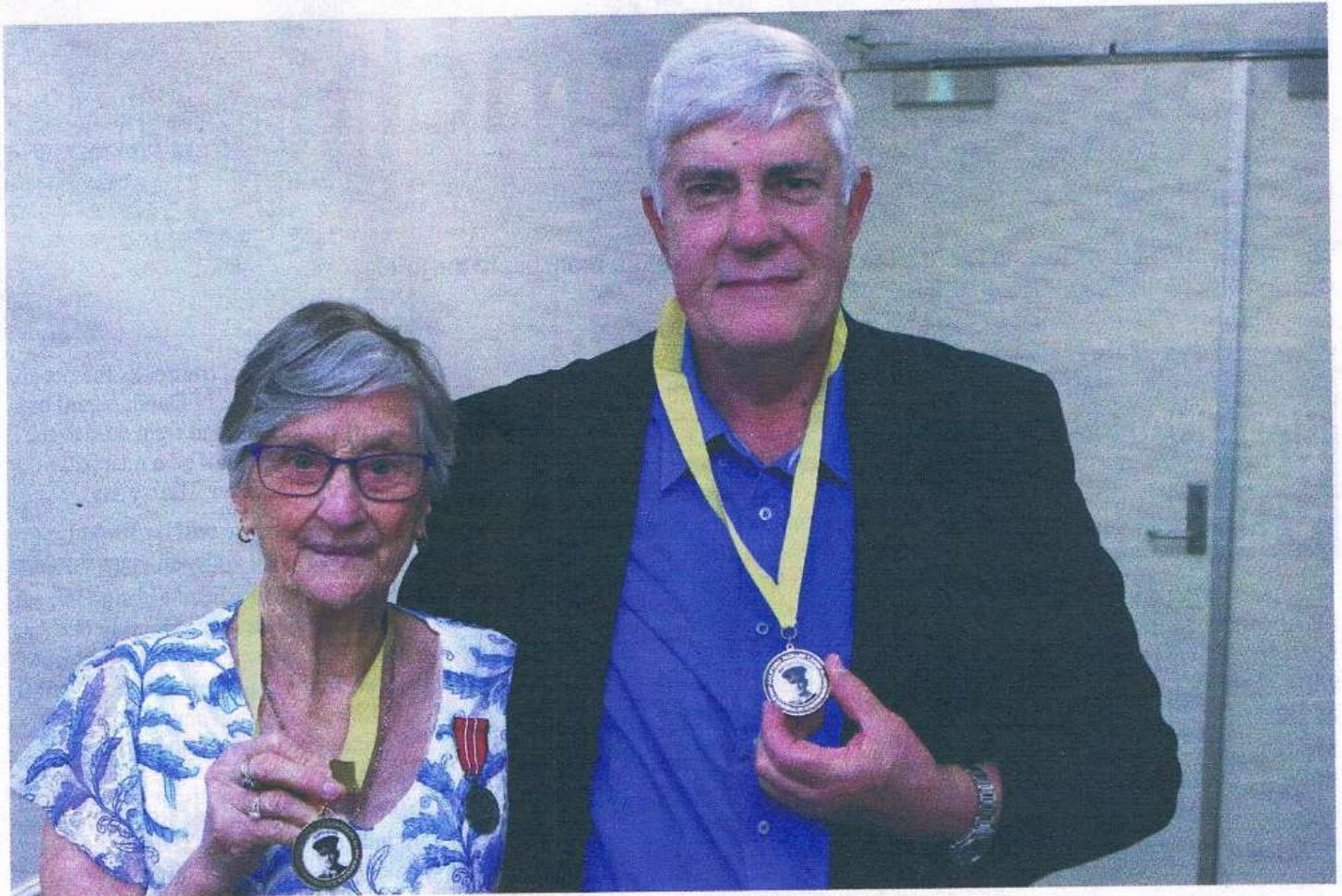
who packed the Sub-branch's meeting venue at the Maurice Zeffert Home.

Keith Shilkin, Convenor of the WA Saluting Monash Launch spoke of the connections between Monash and Western Australia. Apart from commanding WA troops of the 16th Battalion in his 4th Brigade and being in charge of all WA and Australian troops from 1918 as commander of the entire AIF, he visited WA on no less than eight occasions.

He spent almost a year here as an engineer and Supreme Court expert witness in 1898 and 1899, later, of course, with the Second Fleet in Albany in 1914, then again on his return from the War in 1919, and on several other occasions.

The main talk, written by Tim Fischer who, at the very last moment was unable to travel to Perth, was read by his personal long-time friend Ted

Launch



■ [L-R] Thelma Gunzburg and Robert Little with their Saluting Monash Medallions.

Graham of Finding HMAS Sydney Foundation fame.

Mr Graham outlined Monash's career and gave the reasons, justification and precedents for Monash's promotion to Field Marshal and contained a quote from 1924 by WA Senator Edmund Drake-Brockman: *"The wonderful work of this wonderful man has not been fully appreciated in Australia...I think we can say that it was through Sir John Monash and his men, the war finished much sooner than we thought possible. The operation that commenced on the 8 August 1918 was the sole conception of Sir John Monash."*

Sir John's ideas were carried forward and consent to the scheme was given this way: Very little harm can be done, let them have a go at it! The Australians had a go at it and before they finished the Germans had completely cracked back through the Hindenberg Line".

The "Jerilderie Proposition" was read by Professor Kim Kirsner, a Monash family descendant; it states: Following on the outstanding contribution of Sir John Monash to State and Nation before during and after World War One and reflecting the fact that Sir John Monash received no Australian Awards or Honours post 11 November 1918, the Prime Minister approve by Government Gazette publication, the posthumous promotion of one step in rank of General Sir John Monash to the rank of Australian Field Marshal, with effect 11 November 1930, one year after Sir John Monash was eventually promoted to the rank of General.

Tim Fischer's talk concluded with the statement that nothing would do more to promote a better balance with the history of World War One and give the Western Front - given the AIF success after success in battle there -

due recognition than to posthumously promote Monash one step in rank to Field Marshal.

Specially minted Saluting Monash Medallions were presented by Professor Kirsner to descendants of two soldiers who served under General Monash on the Western Front, to Robert Little for his grandfather Lance Corporal Richard Alexander Little of the 16th Battalion and to Thelma Gunzburg for her father Private Arthur Colley of the 44th Battalion.

It is hoped that the entire community will support this project to right a wrong and to have Australia's most outstanding soldier posthumously promoted the one rank to Field Marshal.

Further information about the project is available at www.salutingmonash.org.au