



Apostle Norman & Pastor Barbara Miller
 Services 124 Spence St Cairns Sat 2-4pm
 P.O. Box 425, Westcourt, Cairns, Qld 4870, Australia
 mob 0466 076 020 or 0407 128 199 cfirm@bigpond.com



CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL
 RECONCILIATION & PEACE
 www.reconciliationandpeace.org

33 Lake St, Cairns, Australia, Services 4pm Saturdays

REPORT ANZAC/800 LIGHTHORSE TOUR ISRAEL 2010

By Ps Barbara Miller

We took a team of 21, 14 Australians and 7 New Zealanders to Israel in Oct-Nov 2010 with Pastor Norman Miller and I leading the team. This report does not cover the wonderful time we had in the footsteps of Jesus and meeting congregations of Jews & Arabs worshipping Yeshua, and much more.

IN THE STEPS OF THE LIGHTHORSE/ANZACS

We timed our visit to Israel so that we would be in Be'er-Sheva for the 93rd anniversary of the famous charge of the Australian Lighthorse on October 31, 1917 and the ceremonies being held that day. We travelled to most of the other battle sites where the ANZACS fought as well.



Britain and the ANZACS had brought a huge breakthrough before and now it was time to saddle up and bring a spiritual breakthrough. Courtesy of the popular books and talks by Col Stringer and the excellent scholarship by Kelvin Crombie, many Christian Australians are coming to know their connection with Israel historically.

For those who haven't heard the story before (which is most Australians and still many in Israel) I'll briefly say that the taking of the wells of Be'er-Sheva (Beersheba) was critical for Allied victory in Palestine. The British had fought all day, the NZ Mounted Rifles and an Australian regiment took the high place of Tel es Sabe after heavy fighting. Still, all would have been lost had it not been for a daring charge by the Australian Lighthorsemen (about 800 of them) charging straight into the Turkish guns. They were not cavalry but mounted infantry and the daring charge just before nightfall took the Turks by surprise and they didn't adjust the sights on their guns quickly enough. Some

Australians fought hand to hand in the trenches and others jumped the trenches and rode into the city to stop the Germans blowing up the wells. German planes were firing at them as they did their dangerous but successful charge. Still, the charge could not have happened without the British fighting all day and the New Zealanders taking the high ground, preventing them being mowed down.

This happened on Oct 31, 1917. On the same day, the British Parliament passed the Balfour Declaration in favour of the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. The political will and the military victory went hand in hand. After fighting in other towns, Gen Allenby was able to walk into Jerusalem with his forces and accept the surrender of the Turks, thus ending 400 years of the Ottoman Empire, and nearly 1200 years of almost uninterrupted Islamic rule of Jerusalem. There had always been a Jewish presence in Jerusalem and Palestine however and Jewish forces fought alongside the British to free their land.

This was a precursor to the formation of the modern state of Israel in 1948 and again, ANZACS played a critical role in the defence of Israel, then Palestine.

So as we prepared to go to Be'er-Sheva for the Oct 31 service, we approached a number of organisations in Australia to let them know we were going and the Cairns RSL donated us 4 red poppy wreaths, one of which we laid at the Park of the Australian Soldier, Be'er-Sheva and one at the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery. We laid one at the Commonwealth Cemetery at Mt Scopus in Jerusalem and one at the NZ monument in Ness Ziona. We also laid wreaths of fresh flowers at all three ceremonies in Be'er-Sheva, including the one at the Turkish memorial.

The New Zealand team brought with them pillows with poppies sewn into them to lay as wreaths at each place noted above because the NZ soldiers didn't have pillows according to Lila Diprose who made the pillows. They also brought loose poppies to strew.

Norman is wearing a Torres Strait Islander flag at the ceremony as he gave the Aboriginal flag to Richard Evans to wear and he wanted the other indigenous group in Australia to be represented. Kris Schlyder, an ex army man with our team laid the wreath at the Park of the Australian Soldier with Liz Wright and Joanna Moss.

We went to 3 commemoration ceremonies - the Park of the Australian Soldier, the British Cemetery and the Turkish ceremony where we laid wreaths at all three - Australia, New Zealand and Britain together. It was a moving time for all of us and there was time for the team to pray at the cemetery the next day when Norman and I met with the Municipality of Be'er-Sheva.

On Oct 31, we had organised for the Vice Chairman of the Society of the Heritage of World War I, Mr Ezra Pimentel to be our guide and he was very informative. As well as going to the ceremonies, we went to Tel es Saba where the NZ Mounted Rifles and some Australians took the high place, Abraham's well and Chauvel's Hill from where he watched the 800 Australian Lighthorsemen ride into history with their famous charge. We also saw the Warriors Club where a local ex IDF serviceman has built a museum in his backyard with much war memorabilia.

While in Be'er-Sheva, we visited HaMaKom or Bible House where local Messianic congregations have a library, meeting place and coffee shop. Ps Howard and Randi Bass are very involved there and Randi had prepared a wonderful display re the Australian Lighthorse and NZ Mounted Rifles. It is becoming an ANZAC Museum and deserves support from Australians and New Zealanders. They also gave us refreshments.

Norman and I and our ministry hosted Howard and Randi in Australia (Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra) and, with Sue Rowe, in New Zealand (Auckland, Hamilton and Tauranga) in July 2010 in preparation for our ANZAC tour of Israel. While we were in Melbourne meeting at Jill Curry's house, Kelvin Crombie suggested HaMaKom become the ANZAC museum Jill had been working for for some years and Howard and Randi have taken up the idea but need financial support.

We followed the steps of the Australian Lighthorsemen and the New Zealand Mounted Rifles as they fought in Gaza, Be'er-Sheva, Ashkelon, Armageddon, Semack, Ayun Kara near Rishon Le Zion, Yafo near Tel Aviv, Jericho, Hebron and Jerusalem.

We prayed in the dark at Semakh which was amazing as the battle was fought in the dark although early morning and we were there in the evening. It is near the Sea of Galilee and was captured 25 Sept 1918 by the 11th and 12th Australian Lighthouse who charged a heavily fortified Turkish railway station. Indigenous light horsemen were involved too. The charge was not as big as the charge at Beersheba but just as dangerous and daring. They were mostly Queenslanders and some from South Australia. This ended Turkish and German opposition around the Sea of Galilee.

We went to Mt Carmel and Megiddo, the Allied forces capturing it on 19 Sept 1918, with Australian General Chauvel calling it the Battle of Armageddon. British General Allenby was made Vicount of Megiddo or Lord of Armageddon.

On Friday, Nov 5, we visited Rishon Le Zion which is built on top of Ayun Kara where, outnumbered 8 to 1, the NZ Mounted Rifles won a hard fought victory. We visited the graves of the 50 Kiwis who died in that battle buried at Ramleh. We laid wreaths at the statue to the NZ Mounted Rifles at Ben Gurion School in Ness Ziona. This statue was only built this year with the opening on March 1.

It has been said that one of the reasons why the ANZACS did not get the recognition for their breakthrough fighting and bravery in Be'er Sheva and Palestine generally as Israel was then called was because of an incident that greatly annoyed the British. The Bedouins were robbing the camps of the ANZACS over a period of time and the British were protecting the Bedouins. One night a NZ called Leslie Lowry had his gear under his head to prevent the stealing and he was awakened by a robber. He chased him and was killed. Within 24 hours of non action by the British and a build up of resentment over a long period, the New Zealanders with some Australians accompanying them, surrounded the Bedouin village of Surafend, got the women and children out and took their revenge. It is believed about 30 Bedouin men were killed.

We understand why this happened but do not condone it. We stand with Israel and are glad for the connection between our nations and Israel. However we wanted to say sorry to a present representative of the Bedouins for this incident. We have not been able to do that but a prominent resident of nearby Rishon Le Zion recommended that we write an apology and they would see it goes into the archives of the city. This we did. We also had a special time of repentance before the Lord. Liz stood in the gap and repented for the British involvement in this incident and using the ANZACS generally as cannon fodder etc.

The New Zealanders led the prayers at Surafend as both New Zealanders and Australians repented. Joanna led the prayers at Leslie Lowry's grave which we located. He may have been of Maori descent and Joanna linked this into prayers for the Maori people.

This account is only a quick summary of one aspect, though an important one of our tour i.e. our journey in the steps of the ANZACS and Lighthouse. We prayed right through Israel, believing to bring spiritual breakthrough.



Joanna Moss, NZ, Liz Wright, Britain & Barbara Miller, Australia after laying a wreath together at the Turkish memorial

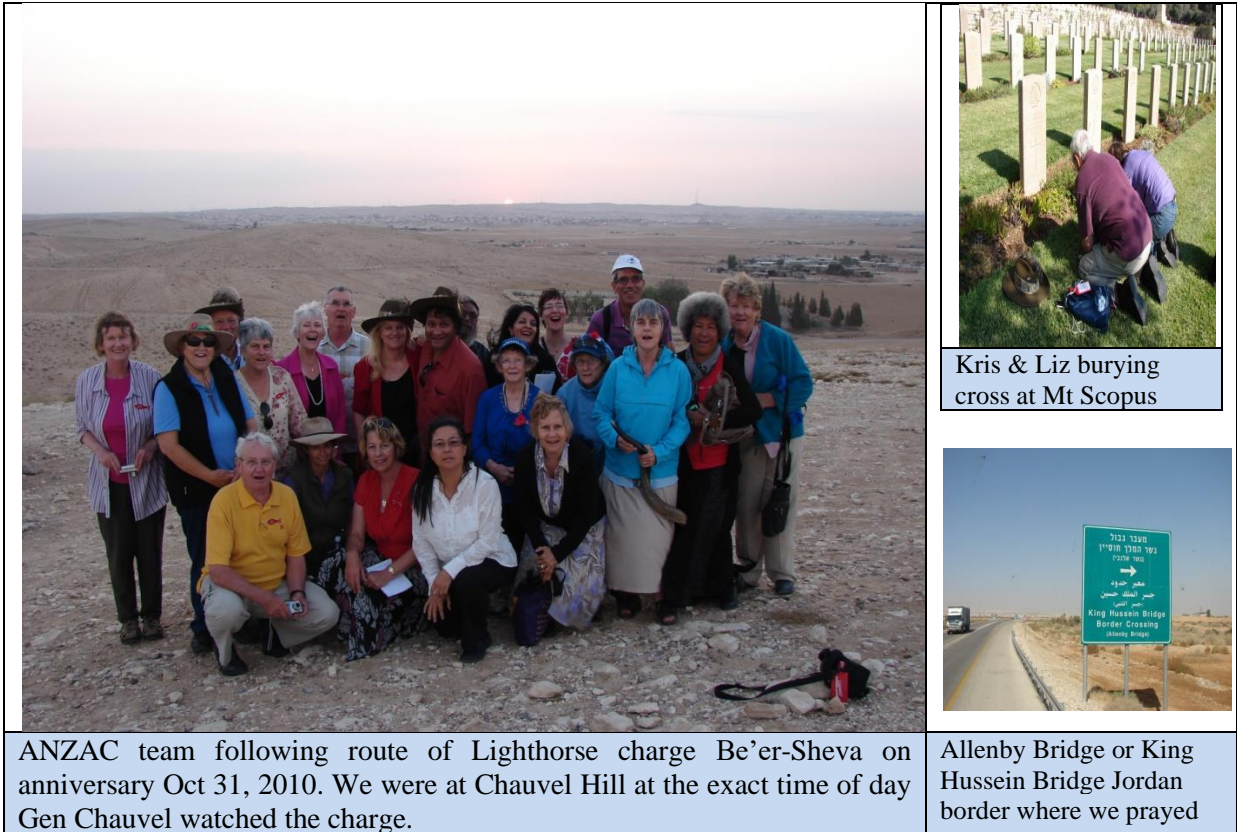
HaMaKom or Bible House ANZAC Display made by Randi Bass, Be'er-Sheva for Oct 31

175 Aussies & 31 Kiwis buried at Be'er-Sheva

Ceremony at 93rd anniversary Be'er-Sheva

Plaque - One of the key things we were able to do was to present a plaque to Ezra Pimentel, Vice Chairman of the Society for the Preservation of World War 1 in Israel. It is beautifully engraved. While we were with the Jewish Prayer Focus Tour led by Jill Curry in Jan 2004, we presented a certificate on paper to Jewish businessmen Avi Zakai, who has now passed away but his dream was to have an ANZAC Museum in Be'er-Sheva and he had collected many items for it. He was working to have it established at the old Turkish railway station which is beside the Commonwealth War Graves Cemetery. Jill has been trying to raise support for this project with agencies in Be'er-Sheva and Australia. His dream lives on. As an acknowledgement of that history, we have included that record on our engraving. We placed an image of the statue of the horsemen currently in the Park of the Australian Soldier on the plaque instead of the image used in 2004. We hope this plaque will become part of the ANZAC Museum in Be'er-Sheva.

Kris Schlyder, who founded the Australian Indigenous Prayer Network, brought along crosses made of horseshoe nails as a gift for each participant to put on their Lighthorse hat or elsewhere for the Kiwis (NZ). They were welded together and were to help bring unity to Australians and New Zealanders known for their sporting and other rivalries. Also, Kris believed the Lord had given him an assignment to bury the crosses at certain places the ANZACS fought, along with a Kiwi intercessor, and pray for salvation for the descendants of the soldiers who fought there. Pam Benseman became the Kiwi who did this with Kris and Liz Wright joined in. This was mainly done with the whole group supporting in prayer but sometimes on their own.



ANZAC team following route of Lighthorse charge Be'er-Sheva on anniversary Oct 31, 2010. We were at Chauvel Hill at the exact time of day Gen Chauvel watched the charge.

Kris & Liz burying cross at Mt Scopus

Allenby Bridge or King Hussein Bridge Jordan border where we prayed

What did our tour achieve?

- We don't glorify war but we honoured the sacrifice of those who fought and sewed their lives into the land of Israel and those who fought and survived.
- We were able to let our soldiers presently serving in Israel with multi-national peace keeping forces know that we appreciate their efforts.
- We were able to let the present Israel government and the Municipality of Be'er-Sheva know that there are Christians from Australia and New Zealand who stand with them. We appreciate the wonderful help of Gal Greenberg of the Municipality in helping us connect a school in Cairns with a local school in Be'er-Sheva etc.
- The Kiwis were able to see the monument to the NZ Mounted Rifles for the first time, connect with the school where it is placed, connect with the caretaker of the cemetery and pray at the graves, connect with an interested congregation in nearby Rishon Le Zion and see the tribute to the Kiwis at the museum in Rishon. I actually put more effort into organising this day than any other on the tour and had the help of a local pastor with my research.
- We were able to build a unity between the Australians and New Zealanders as modern day ANZACS. The Lord told me before we left to call us ANZSACS – Australian and New Zealand Spiritual Army Corps.
- It was important for our nations to repent at Surafend. This place was hard to locate as the village no longer exists but we did with local help before we left Australia. We believe some healing of the land occurred here.
- The repentance of Liz as a British citizen to the ANZACS was significant. This not only included British inaction to Bedouin thieving over a period which was a causative factor to what happened at Surafend. It also included cursing the ANZACS for taking matters into their own hands, strategically bad decisions which pulled the

ANZACS out of the first Gaza war when they had taken Gaza and then sending them back later to be slaughtered when the Turks had reinforcements. Having said this, on other occasions the British made very positive comments about the quality of the ANZACS.

