



Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

VA046

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THE LAST OF A GENERATION PRIVATE JOHN ROSS – WE WILL REMEMBER HIM

The Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, today expressed his sorrow at the passing of John 'Jack' Ross, the last remaining Australian to have served during the First World War.

Mr Ross passed away at 3.30 am this morning in Bendigo. Mr Ross is survived by his daughter Peggy and son Robert and four grandchildren.

"Mr Ross showed his willingness to serve Australia and her allies in what was an extremely tumultuous time in our history, and for that we are grateful," Mr Griffin said.

"While he did not travel overseas, he completed his training, ready for deployment."

Mr Ross was a clerk when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in January 1918. He trained at the Wireless Training School and was posted to the 1st (Depot) Battalion at Broadmeadows Camp in Victoria. At the time of his enlistment, he could not – of course – have known that the war would end in November.

With the end of the war and the demobilisation of the Australian Imperial Force, Private Ross was discharged on Christmas Eve, 1918. He served his country again in the Second World War as a member of the Volunteer Defence Corps.

In civilian life, Mr Ross worked for the Victorian Railways for more than 45 years and retired from the service in 1964.

On 9 July 1999, Mr Ross was presented with the *80th Anniversary Armistice Remembrance Medal*, Australia's first commemorative honour, marking the 80th anniversary of the end of the First World War. Mr Ross was also awarded the *Centenary Medal*, in recognition of his contribution to Australian society.

Mr Griffin said with the passing of Jack Ross, the last of the 417,000 Australians that served in the First World War was now gone.

"Although our living links to the First World War have been lost, we will continue to remember their heroic deeds and actions through the stories they have shared with us and through the legend that they created," Mr Griffin said.

"It now falls to Australians everywhere to ensure that their memory is kept alive. We must ensure that their contribution to Australia's wartime history is passed on to future generations, so that their sacrifice is never forgotten."

Please note: Mr Ross' family ask media to respect their privacy and not to contact them today.

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