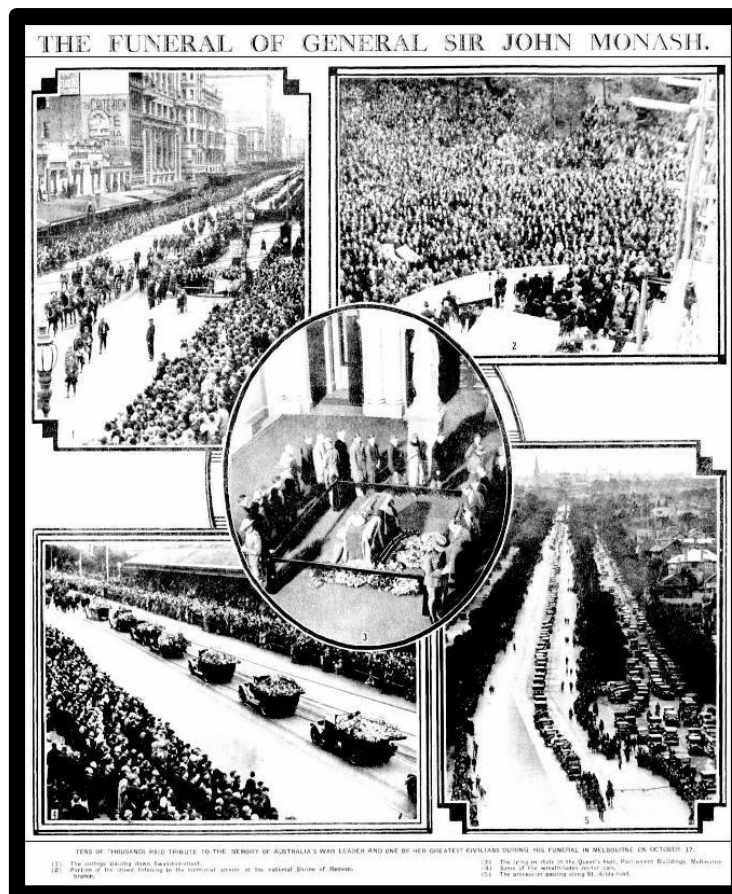


FROM THE NEWSPAPERS

OCTOBER 1931

88 YEARS AGO

THE FUNERAL OF SIR JOHN MONASH



Source: 'Western Mail' (Perth) October 22nd 1931; page: 22.

The people of Yallourn held the name of Sir John Monash in highest regard. The archives show that because of his vision and determination, as the first full-time Chairman of the State Electricity Commission of Victoria, the town of Yallourn grew, from the most humble beginnings, to become one of the finest 'garden towns' in Australian history.

It was not just the people of Yallourn who revered John Monash...

" ...In the 1920s Monash was broadly accepted, not just in Victoria, as the greatest living Australian. The soldiers had to have a representative hero who was a volunteer; he was acceptable to the community as a seemingly unpretentious outsider, not really part of the Establishment. His commanding intellect was sensed as well as his basic honesty and decency.

*He was one tall poppy who was never cut down.” Source: ABD
Volume: 10 1986 (Geoffrey Serle)*



John Monash (born 1865) was indeed a durable ‘tall poppy’ and furthermore, it was once written that...

“...John Monash was arguably the greatest ever Australian. Engineer, lawyer, soldier and even pianist of concert standard, Monash was a true leader. As an engineer, he revolutionised construction in Australia by the introduction of reinforced concrete technology. He also revolutionised the generation of electricity. As a soldier, he is considered by many to have been the greatest commander of WWI, whose innovative tactics and careful planning shortened the war and saved thousands of lives” Rolfe Hartley. March 2013.

Bearing in mind Mr Hartley’s quotation, it is little wonder that more than 300,000 people attended Sir John Monash’s funeral and it was claimed to have been the biggest funeral in Australia’s history. It was an extraordinary and fitting farewell to one of Australia’s ‘greatest sons.’

JOHN MONASH.

AUSTRALIA'S GREATEST SON.

(By C B)

IT is fitting that the termination of World War II and the contemplated wide extension of the State Electricity Commission's works in the Morwell area should revive memories of the great Australian soldier-engineer, Sir John Monash, who applied the qualities of a brilliant and triumphant leader to the building of the vast electrical undertaking in which he was the guiding spirit for the first ten years. The following appreciation, written by a member of the old A.I.F., who was also intimately associated with him in the Yallourn undertaking gives a clear picture of this brilliant Australian.

‘Morwell Advertiser’ February 7th 1946; page 5.

Countless Yallourn residents mourned the passing of Sir John; and although it is not precisely known how many people travelled from Yallourn to Melbourne to be part of the funeral throng, the 'Morwell Advertiser' (October 16th 1931) reported that ...

“Several car loads of Returned Soldiers and also members of the Electricity Commission staff journeyed to Melbourne on Sunday to attend the funeral of the late Sir John Monash.”



While other articles posted on the Virtual Yallourn website deal with the life and achievements of Sir John Monash, this newspaper extract, from 1931, deals specifically with his funeral.

After a short illness, Sir John Monash died on the 8th October 1931; and the following newspaper article tells of the State Funeral held in his honour in Melbourne on October 11th.



Monday 12th October 1931

Page : 1

Barrier Miner (Broken Hill)

SIR JOHN MONASH

THE STATE FUNERAL

OVER 300,000 PEOPLE

WITNESSED the PROCESSION

Melbourne, Monday

Deeply impressive scenes marked the State funeral of Sir John Monash. It is estimated that more than 300,000 people gathered along the eight-mile route of the funeral procession to do honour to the memory of the great soldier and citizen when the remains of General Sir John Monash were laid to rest in the Brighton Cemetery after lying in State in Queen's Hall, State Parliament House, since Friday.

The proceedings began officially at 12.30 in the Queen's Hall.

The service in Queen's Hall, where the coffin had been passed by tens of thousands since Friday, was attended by relatives of Sir John Monash, representatives of the Governor-General, the Lieutenant-Governor, Federal and State Parliaments, Legacy Club, Returned Soldiers' League, and generals who served under the late general.

Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Chauvel delivered a simple but sincere panegyric. There were no lashing oratorical phrases, but the enunciation of every sentence revealed the pride of a born soldier in the accomplishments of a citizen turned soldier.

General Chauvel, after outlining the late general's achievements in various commands during the Great War, culminating in the advance of August 1918,

recalled that Sir John had given up a large part of his life "to the service of the country which he served faithfully and well to the very end. We mourn Sir John Monash as a great soldier and a great citizen. His life will ever be an example of patriotism to those who follow," concluded Sir Harry Chauvel.

A few minutes later the coffin was raised to the shoulders of eight soldiers, and escorted by pallbearers, who included Mr. E. J. Hogan, the Premier of Victoria, and Mr. A. E. Green, the Postmaster-General, followed by personal friends of the dead general.

The coffin was taken down the steps of Parliament House, which were crowded with people and placed on a gun carriage drawn by six dark bay horses, three drummers beating muffled drums on the steps of Parliament House.

The cortege was headed by Sir Harry Chauvel and his staff officers, who were followed by about 5,000 returned soldiers, all with the exception of a few officers, clad in mufti. As the cortege passed Queen's Hall, each man placed his hand on his heart and turned eyes to the left. No flags were carried to distinguish the different units, but they were used for the assembly before the cortege moved off.

After a long gap came four mounted policemen, behind whom marched intermittently at slow and quick time with arms reversed a full escort of troops. These were headed by naval detachments, followed by a small body of air force officers and men, representative detachments of all arms of the military forces.

The firing party from the Melbourne University Rifles immediately preceded the gun carriage on either side of which marched the pall-bearers, those on the left being led by Mr. Hogan, and on the right by Mr. Green, a charger with field boots reversed in the stirrups followed, and behind came seven heavily-laden floral carriages presenting a sight never previously witnessed in Melbourne streets, and scores of official and private motor cars.

At the Shrine of Remembrance, where a returned soldiers' memorial service was held, it was estimated that the crowd numbered 60,000 or more. On the road to Brighton Cemetery every side street in the vicinity of the cemetery was packed with cars, and although it had been intimated that the public would not be admitted to the cemetery until the interment was completed, tens of thousands thronged the vicinity.

The interment was carried out with full military honors, including the discharge of a volley by the firing party. The sounding of the "Last Post" marked the end of what was the most impressive funeral service seen in this city.

The cortege was scheduled to arrive at the Brighton Cemetery at 4 p.m., but so great were the crowds and so hampered the progress that the gun carriage did

not enter the gates until 5.20 p.m. The service at the graveside was conducted in Hebrew ritual. The late general was buried in the same grave as his wife, who died in 1921.

FOOTNOTES

1. An explanation regarding... *'a charger with field boots reversed in the stirrups' ...*

"Anzac Day marches and other memorial parades are often led by a lone, riderless horse, with a pair of boots set backwards in the stirrups and the saddle stripped. Ancient peoples, such as the Saxons and Scythians, used to bury a great warrior's horse with him so that it could serve him in the afterlife. This practice was continued in some European countries until the late eighteenth century. In modern times, custom has been kinder to the horse, which has been led in its master's funeral procession with his boots reversed as a sign that a warrior has fallen in battle. A lone charger has been added to some Anzac Day parades as an additional symbol of respect and mourning, often for the men of the Light Horse units." Source: The Australian War Memorial website...

2. It is recorded that Rabbi Jacob Danglow and Rabbi Israel Brodie conducted the graveside service at the Brighton Cemetery that day.



Rabbi Jacob Danglow

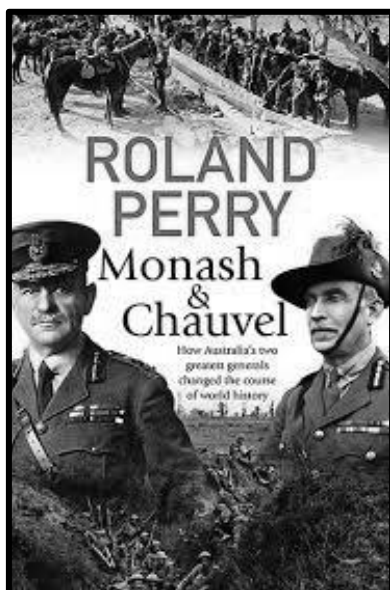
3. Because the funeral was held on Sunday (11th October), it is recorded that ...

"In all of the city churches and in many suburban churches the death of Sir John Monash was referred to by those conducting the services to-day." *'Sydney Morning Herald'*.

4. For younger readers, Lt. General Sir Henry George Chauvel (aka as Harry) was a distinguished Officer of the A.I.F who gained distinction as the commander of

the 1st Light Horse Brigade during World War: I. He served at Gallipoli and later with the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division in the Desert Campaign. In 1917, he led the Desert Mounted Corps in a major offensive at Beersheba.

5. Some readers may be interested in Roland Perry's account of two of Australia's finest commanders, John Monash and Harry Chauvel. Allen and Unwin published the book in 2017.



6. Sir Henry Chauvel died in May 1945 aged 79 years; and, it is recorded that his State Funeral attracted thousands of onlookers. The funeral procession was an imposing event and it is believed that the cortege was one mile in length. Sir Henry's burial service was conducted at the Springvale Cemetery with Full Military Honours
7. The word 'panygeric' (panegyric), which is seldom used today, means 'extravagant praise delivered in formal speech or writing.'



8. Mr Hogan was the Premier of Victoria in two stints. (May 1927-November 1928 and then again in December 1929 until May 1932).

9. The ABC relayed a radio broadcast of Sir John's funeral throughout Australia...

"Funeral of Sir John Monash To be Broadcast...A description of the funeral of General Sir John Monash will be broadcast throughout Australia on Sunday. The Australian Broadcasting Company will relay it to all States..." 'The Advertiser' October 10th 1931.

10. In October 1935, the 'Morwell Advertiser' carried the following article regarding the anniversary of Sir John Monash's death...

"...Tuesday, 8th October, was the anniversary of the death of Sir John Monash. Wreaths were placed on the memorial in the Town Square, by the local branch of the R.S.S.I.L.A., and the "Lest We Forget" Pennant and the flag at the Main Office were flown at half-mast."



Sir John Monash's final resting place at the Brighton Cemetery.

Note: A collection of photographs of Sir John's funeral was published in 'The Argus' on 12th October 1931.

FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING SIR JOHN MONASH

Since the creation of the website in 2010, Julie has posted some eight pages of articles and photographs related to the life of John Monash. To read more information regarding Sir John simply type the word: 'Monash' into the search field above and click 'Apply'.

Those readers who have articles and photographs related to Sir John Monash may like to forward them to Virtual Yallourn for posting on this website.

The research, validation and footnotes for this story were completed by Roger Spaul and presented and posted by Julie George for the Virtual Yallourn website in October 2019.

The above article from the 'Barrier Miner' has been faithfully reproduced. The only amendments to the original copy are the font style, font size and spacing, to enhance the article for purposes of posting on the Virtual Yallourn website.