

Beaconsfield ANZAC Service 2021.

Today we gather to commemorate soldiers, men and women who served in the Australian Military Forces now known as the Australian Defence Force.

Beaconsfield has had its share of enlistees throughout the years. At this service it would be fitting to remember the soldier for whom this very reserve we stand on, is named after. In 1951, what was then the "Shire of Berwick" unanimously agreed this land, with the war memorial would be known as Bonette Reserve.

George Leonard Francis Bonette was born in 1890.

On the 21 June 1915, now calling himself David, David Bonette enlisted for the First World War. After training at Seymour, David left Australia on the 26 August 1915 to serve with the 21st Battalion and postal corps. He was wounded but continued to serve, initially in Egypt and then France; until his return to Australia after the war in 1919.

David came to be the companion of Ada Amytage and lived at "Holm Park", here in Beaconsfield. There he collaborated with Ada, and through her contacts, they embarked on multiple projects to raise funds for various charities, groups and causes within the district. These fundraising functions would benefit returned soldiers and scouts in particular.

David held many official positions, local and further afield, including the appointment in 1934 as an honorary life governor of the Eye and Ear Hospital Melbourne, in appreciation of his efforts on behalf so the institution.

After the death of Ada in 1939, David continued living in Beaconsfield, he had purchased this vacant lot of land, probably thinking he would eventually build a home and retire.

In 1941 David enlisted for World War Two, so determined to serve again he reduced his age on enlistment to qualify. He served in the dental division here in Australia and was discharged in 1944.

In 1945 David sold Lot 1, Beaconsfield to the "Shire of Berwick" for the extension of the land encompassing the war memorial.

After the small park was named "Bonette Reserve" in 1954, the war memorial was moved to the centre of the park and a fence was erected. In 1954, David passed away in the Mount Royal Hospital Parkville, a hospital for veterans.

This site, where we stand today was dedicated to David by the Council at the request of the residents of Beaconsfield, for his outstanding contribution to the Beaconsfield community.

David was a person who devoted his entire adult life to service for the benefit of others and his country of birth; Australia. His contribution is remembered by this small park and today we acknowledge his exceptional service to Beaconsfield.

Researched and written by Penny Harris Jennings 2021.