**Explore the Anzac Trail**

Sites relating to the Cairns region’s war efforts extend from Trinity Beach south to Bartle Frere and include many within Cairns city. The trail includes war memorials, cemeteries, memorial parks and buildings, each with a poignant reminder of the invaluable contributions made by the men and women of the Cairns region.

While many sites focus on the volunteers who saw frontline service others recognise the contribution of those who tended the wounded, or had to live with the grief of losing loved ones on the cliffs of Gallipoli or in the muddy trenches of France.

This trail can be experienced as a weekend activity or in a series of leisurely day trips. It can be made even more interesting by linking in with similar trails on the Atherton Tablelands and within the Mareeba district.

**The North’s Contributions**

Soon after Britain declared war on Germany, Australian volunteers flocked to the recruiting depots. In Far North Queensland support for the war effort was no less pronounced.

The rail connection to Brisbane was not completed until 1924 so northern recruits sailed south for training and eventual deployment to Europe and the Middle East.

While Gallipoli is seen as one of Australia’s defining moments as a nation it was on the Western Front that servicemen and women faced more prolonged hardship, injury and risk of death. Trench warfare tested many young men in circumstances few can comprehend: mud, illness, gas and bloody battles were part and parcel of their experiences. Medical staff had to treat the sick and injured in the most primitive of conditions.

When armistice was eventually signed, in November 1918, it still took time to repatriate battle weary troops and for them to slowly reintegrate into civilian life. Psychological and physical injury meant numerous survivors would spend the remainder of their lives trying to readjust.

Many subsequently returned, or moved north to work in the cane paddocks, mines, hospitals, offices and on the wharves helping to build a prosperous region.

**Our Last Heritage**

A century of development has inevitably taken its toll on many associated sites and memorials. The Cairns Drill Hall site, for example, is now an inner-city office block. Tableland recruits arrived at the Cairns Railway Station (then located near the present main entrance of the Cairns Central Shopping Centre). Several honour boards have disappeared as schools and organisations have closed, while some memorial halls and social clubs have moved or upgraded their premises.

**Anzac Trail**

Commemorating the First World War

1914

When the Australians came to France the French people expected a great deal of you. I shall go back tomorrow and say to my countrymen I have seen the Australians. I have looked in their faces. I know that these men will fight alongside of us until the cause for which we are all fighting is safe for us and for our children.

George Clemenceau French Prime Minister 7 July 1918

**Cane Beetles’ March**

With patriotism at an all-time high in 1916 volunteers often marched long distances to recruitment centres. On 20 April four young men set out from Bartle Freere (formerly Mooliba) carrying a banner showing the Kaiser fleeing before an onslaught of cane beetles. That scourge of the north’s fledgling agricultural crops inevitably led to the marchers being called the ‘Cane Beetles’.

They trekked along ill-formed roads winding past newly cleared farmlands heading north to Cairns. Townsfolk enthusiastically welcomed the growing team of volunteers and accommodated them at Babinda, Aloomba and Gordonvale. On Anzac Day 1916 the group headed to Edmonton and finally along Hop Wah Rd (now Mulgrave Rd) to an enthusiastic welcome at Norman Park (now Munro Martin Parklands). By then the group had increased to 29.