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## Anzac Day in Mirboo North

One of the reasons the recent story we carried that originally appeared on Channel 7 News was that the soldier in question was the first from the Mirboo North district to be killed in action in World War I.

Private David George Mills died on that most iconic of days in Australian military history, 25 April 1915.

His is the first name that appeared in Roll of Honour for the district in the local paper, then called the *Gippslander and Mirboo Times*. This was included for the period of the war and beyond, the sadly ever-growing list being able to be

accessed by anyone going to the Trove web site.

Of the 200 locals who enlisted from the former Shire of Mirboo, 30 were killed, five died of illness and another 46 wounded. There were also four nurses from the district who enlisted, as well as two local soldiers who were taken prisoner.

To quote from an essay included in "Honouring Our men Who Served and Returned" produced by the Mirboo North Cemetery Trust in 2015, when soldiers returned, "the grief of many families who had lost sons

was still raw" and was reflected in a national grief that saw 60,000 Australian soldiers killed. This in a country with a population roughly the equivalent of what Victoria's is now.

While there are a number of tragic instances of returned soldiers who succumbed to either physical or mental afflictions, here is a very different story, taken from the same essay already referred to:

"Jacob (or Jake) North was an example of a digger who was given practical help to make it easier to make the transition to civilian life. A one-day working

bee in May 1919, involving 30 willing helpers, erected a combined machinery shed and dairy on the closer settlement block he had been allocated. This help was necessary as Mr North had lost a leg in France in 1916; he continued as a farmer for almost the next 40 years."

Attitudes to the Anzac Day have evolved over the decades since World War I, going through periods of not being well observed to creating a great deal of interest, most noticeably with the centenary of the Gallipoli landings in 2015.