

A colourful year

events

- **Main Gallery**
- **Gifted: The Friends of the Gallery**, January 8, 2012
- **Growl: Backyard, Farmyard and Beyond**, until January 8, 2012
- **Links Gallery**
- **Narelle Thomas: A Personal Journey – Kakadu, Kimberleys and beyond**, January 15, 2012

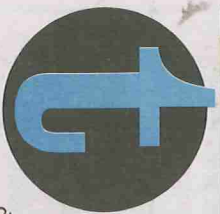
- **Margaret Carnegie Gallery**
- **Ron McBurnie: Metal as Anything**, January 29, 2012
- **National Art Glass Gallery**
- **Momentary Reflections: Kristel Brichter, Melinda Willis and Christopher Boha**, March 11, 2012

- **HOLIDAY OPENING HOURS:**
- Today:** Noon to 4pm
- Sunday, January 1** (New Year's Day): Closed
- Monday, January 2:** Closed

Regular opening hours will resume from Tuesday, January 3.



from the gallery
Linda Elliott

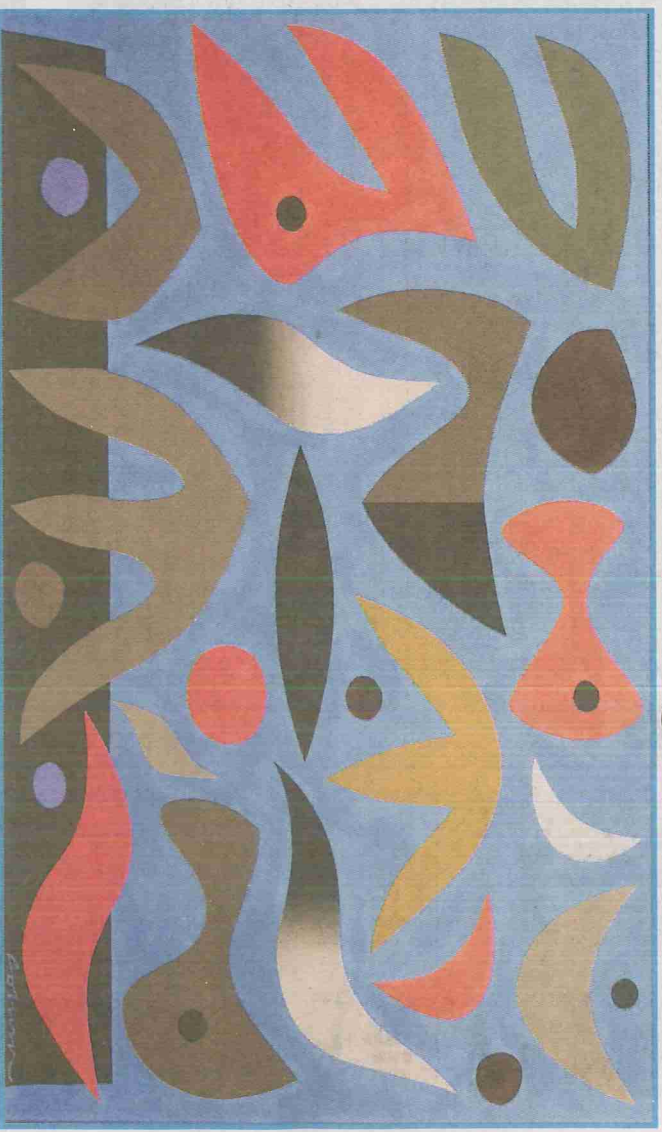


his year has been an extraordinary year, with a host of exciting exhibitions and programs. It started with refurbishments to the lower gallery floors post the December storm. While this did cause some disruption to the exhibition schedule, more public programs and events were created.

JANUARY saw the very successful family-focused exhibition *Swoop: Visions of Flight*. As a cultural facility of Wagga City Council, the gallery enjoys extensive opportunities to collaborate with other departments within the organisation. For *Swoop*, the gallery worked with the botanic gardens to develop programs that encompassed not only visual arts, but performative arts based around visions of flight and the world of birds. This saw activities developed by and for audiences who might otherwise not encounter the gallery's collection. Throughout the school holidays there were activity days at the gallery as well as at the botanic gardens. Families came and went, made bats and birds, learnt about mark making, played games that educated them about the lives of birds and participated in performances by the Swoop Swoop Gang. *Swoop: Visions of Flight* is the first collection-based exhibition that encouraged interaction in multi-disciplinary ways.

FEBRUARY saw the Love Your Gallery Friends Membership Drive, which resulted in a number of new members joining the Friends of the Wagga Art Gallery.

THERE are currently two nationally touring exhibitions on the road – *Women with Clever Hands: Gupuyiyak Mbalakurrururr Gong Djambutinala* and *Tour De Force: In Case Of Emergency Break Glass. Women with Clever Hands* has just finished a very successful exhibition and public programs visit to Tamworth Regional Gallery and *Tour De Force* has just opened at the



John Coburn *Night Performance* ud, gouche on board from the exhibition *Gifted: The Friends of the Gallery*.

Perc Tucker Regional Gallery in Townsville.

PARTNERSHIPS have been forged with Charles Sturt University's School of Communication and Creative Industries with an artist in residence by Virginia Kaiser. Virginia presented workshops at the university and gallery to theatre and production students, the members of Wingadnan Wagga/Wagga Waybarr: *Women of Wagga Weaving (WoWW Project)* and the general public. The highlight for the WoWW Project was the culmination of 18 months of work in the exhibition *Gilangbang Bangamalanha: Sharing Stories*. Since the establishment of the WoWW Project in 2009, the participants – including local Aboriginal Elders, women and students alongside weaving enthusiasts from all backgrounds – have led a local revival in fibre practices. They have explored the Riverina's heritage and exchanged skills and techniques with weavers from across Australia. This exhibition was testament to this revival.

THIS year saw the launch of the Lunchtime

Blamey: Wagga's top commander



at the archive
Wayne Doubleday

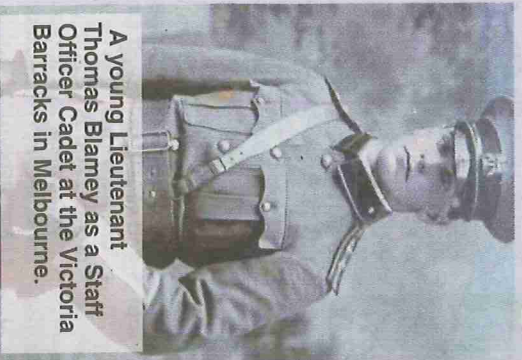


ir-Thomas Blamey is undoubtedly Wagga's most famous, and the highest ranking officer, who has served in the Australian military. Blamey also had the honour of serving in both World War I and World War II.

Despite this, Blamey had a tendency to polarise people, either being loved or hated, and perhaps due to this trait, controversy was also never too far away.

Donald Horner, the historian who penned Blamey's entry in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, perhaps best summarises these opposing viewpoints and opinions.

"Blamey's critics have assigned personal motives to his actions. To them, he was a self-seeking, devious manipulator who struggled ruthlessly to retain his powerful position and to bolster his ego. In contrast, his supporters have called him Australia's greatest general. To them, he was a wise and forceful administrator who fought relentlessly



A young Lieutenant Thomas Blamey as a Staff Officer Cadet at the Victoria Barracks in Melbourne.

to maintain Australian independence in military matters and who had a genuine concern for the welfare of his troops. A credible evaluation of Blamey's character lies somewhere between these two views, probably closer to the second."

Thomas Albert Blamey was born on January 24, 1864 at Lake Albert, the eighth child of Richard Henwood Blamey and Margaret Louisa (nee Murray). Richard was an English migrant who arrived in Australia in 1862 and by 1878 he and Margaret had settled at Lake Albert.

Thomas Blamey attended the Wagga Superior Public School and later trained as a pupil teacher at

both Lake Albert Public School and South Wagga Public School between 1899 and 1903. It was during this period that Blamey first experienced any type of military training through his involvement with the school cadets. After passing his final examinations in 1903, Blamey moved to Western Australia to teach at the Fremantle Boys' School, where he continued his participation with the school cadets.

After turning down an appointment as a probationary minister at Carrarvon, Blamey applied for a commission in the Commonwealth Cadet Forces, where in a nationwide examination he placed third, and was subsequently posted to Melbourne where he joined the Administrative and Instructional Staff Unit. While broadening his military knowledge, Blamey married Minnie Caroline Millard in Toorak on September 8, 1909. Together they would later have two children: Charles (born 1910) and Thomas (born 1914).

Blamey was promoted to the rank of captain in 1911 and selected to attend the British Training College at Quetta in India. He performed impressively, yet his commanding had gained an insight into Blamey's character which would later prove to be one of his weaknesses. "If he is not gifted with a large amount of tact he is not, in any way, conspicuously devoid of that very necessary quality." By the outbreak of World War I in August 1914, Blamey was serving at

the War Office in London. He had attained the rank of major when he was ordered to join the 1st Australian Division in camp in Egypt as a general staff officer to General Bridges. Blamey landed with the AIF at Gallipoli on April 25, 1915, and after another promotion to lieutenant colonel, he returned to Egypt in July to assist with the formation of the AIF 2nd Division (although Blamey did return to Gallipoli in September 1915). Blamey's meteoric rise through the ranks continued when the AIF moved to the Western Front in France. By July 1916, when the Australian troops were in action on the Somme, Blamey was the new chief of staff of the 1st Division. In 1917, he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order.

However, he really came into the spotlight in June 1918 when he was appointed to the position of chief of staff of the Australian Corps under Lieutenant General Sir John Monash. Blamey played an important part in the planning of the battle at Hamel, an offensive which ultimately broke through the Hindenburg Line. His commanding officers though could still see Blamey's obvious strengths and weaknesses. Monash, who himself had a reputation as being demanding, thought that Blamey "... possessed a mind cultured far above the average, widely informed, alert and prehensile. He had an infinite capacity for taking pains".

General Birdwood, the overall

Commander of the AIF, described Blamey as "... an exceedingly able little man, though by no means a pleasing personality."

When Blamey returned to Australia in October 1919, he was feted as a major celebrity, particularly in Wagga. As well as the DSO he received in 1917, he was also the recipient of the French Croix de Guerre and mentioned in dispatches seven times. At a civic reception held for Brigadier-General Blamey in Wagga on November 17, 1919, he was told that: "During the course of the war the people of Wagga had watched his many promotions with joy, and felt a thrill that one of their number was being given such high honours".

Given this wave of local support, it was therefore not surprising that on September 17, 1922 when the cenotaph was officially opened in the Victory Memorial Gardens, Blamey had the honour of unveiling the monument.

References: D.M Horner, "Sir Thomas Albert Blamey" in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Vol 13: 1940-1980, Melbourne University Press, pp. 200-201. Sherry Morris, *Wagga Wagga – A History*, Wagga Wagga City Council, 1999. Keith Swan, *A History of Wagga Wagga*, City of Wagga Wagga, 1970. CSU Regional Archives – SA1621/1 – Wagga Wagga Superior Public School Admission Register, CSU Regional Archives – SA1525 – South Wagga Public School Centenary Collection.