



**6 August 2018**

**Guy Barnett, Minister for Veterans' Affairs**

## **Commemorating the Battle of Lone Pine**

Today marks the 103<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Battle of Lone Pine in Gallipoli where seven Australian diggers were awarded the Victoria Cross after just four days of close quarter fighting.

This was an amazing performance, given that only 100 VC's have been awarded to Australians since Queen Victoria created the medal in 1856.

The battlefield was allegedly named after a solitary pine tree on the ridgeline. Australian soldiers at the time collected seeds from the site and either mailed or carried them home.

Seeds were harvested from this tree by a Tasmanian veteran three decades ago and from these, seedlings have been grown by students from Rose Bay High School and the Veterans and Families Garden Plot under the oversight of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens Nursery.

The battle of Lone Pine was meant to be a diversionary tactic, to draw Turkish forces away from Sulva Bay on the peninsula where British troops were landing.

The diggers fought in brutal hand to hand combat and suffered 2000 casualties. They initially drove the Turks back, but had to give ground when the Turkish forces repeatedly counter attacked.

During the First World War, 15 485 Tasmanians volunteered to serve their nation, from a population of little more than 200 000.

Of the 100 VCs awarded to Australians, 14 were awarded to Tasmanians, with 11 of these awarded in World War 1.

The 100th VC was awarded to Corporal Cameron Baird of Burnie, who was posthumously awarded the medal for action in Afghanistan.