

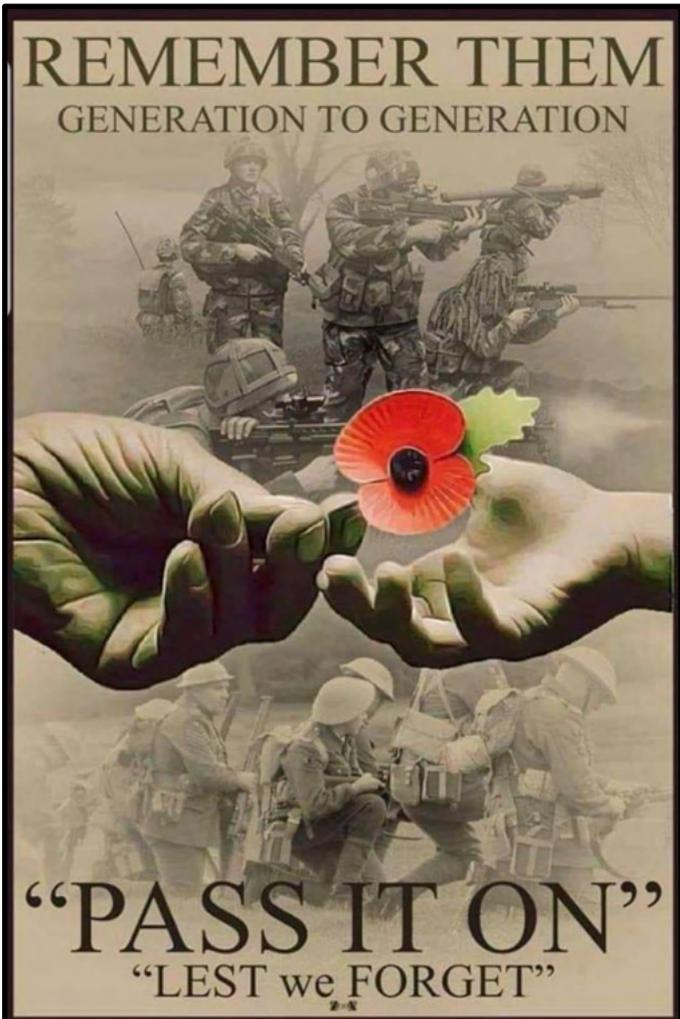


Croydon Despatches

NEWSLETTER OF THE CROYDON Sub-Branch RSL Inc

June 2021 Edition

ANZAC DAY IMAGES 2021



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CALENDAR 2021

July 24, Bus trip to Benalla "Silo Trail"

August 3, Committee and General meeting

August 15, Vietnam Veterans March at Yarra Glen

August 18, Vietnam Veterans March at the Shrine

Sept 10, Footy Night

October 16, Bus trip to Bendigo RSL and Museum

November 2, Melbourne Cup Day at the RSL.

November 11, Remembrance Day March

November 27, Castlemaine / Maldon bus and train trip

December 1, Christmas Lunch

December 10, Final dinner night and close for 2021

January 7, RSL reopens for 2022

All dates subject to any change in restrictions.

CAN YOU ASSIST?

WE ARE LOOKING FOR A NEW SECRETARY

Do you have good Computer, Communication and Letter writing skills. Is there anyone out there to take on the position as Secretary until the next AGM and beyond. The position is currently held by John Woolhouse (*temporarily*) until someone is found.

If you can assist please contact either:

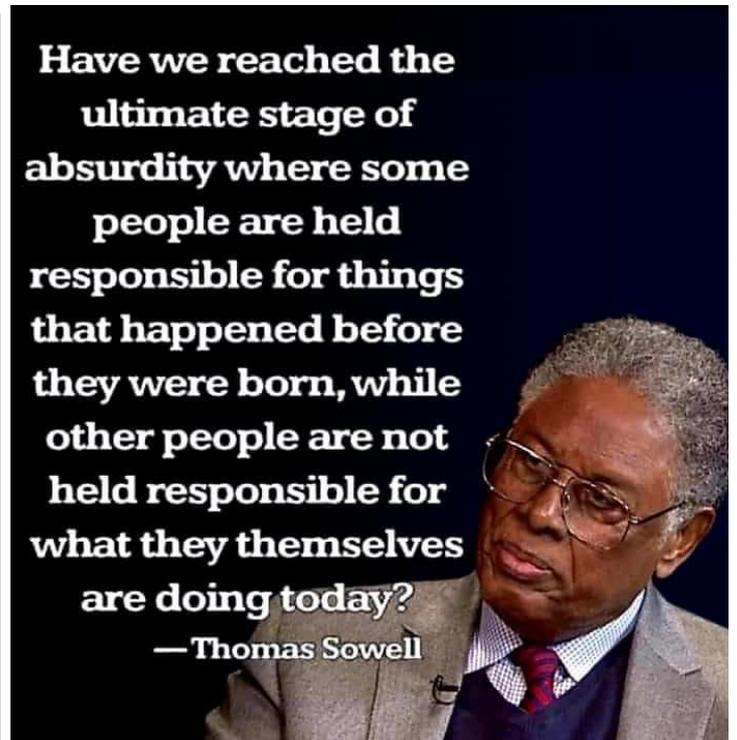
President John Hexter on 0437 392 932

or

Treasurer John Woolhouse on 0437 797 122

Have we reached the
ultimate stage of
absurdity where some
people are held
responsible for things
that happened before
they were born, while
other people are not
held responsible for
what they themselves
are doing today?

— Thomas Sowell





Changed Forever - Legacies of Conflict

Following a visit to the 'Changed Forever' Exhibition at the Central Goldfields, Maryborough Art Gallery John Gault felt the need to write a letter to the Editor of the Maryborough Advertiser on his take of the exhibition.

The Exhibition has been, courtesy of the Shrine of Remembrance, on tour around Victoria since 11 September 2019 and will end on the 30 June 2023.

If you're unable to attend an exhibition and you have received your newsletter by email, simply click on the link below to view the Youtube video.

<https://youtu.be/8BKJlrkbtQo>

SUBJECT: CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS ART GALLERY CURRENT EXHIBITION "CHANGED FOREVER".

Dear Editor,

I am writing to you and your readers as a consequence of my wife and I having visited the current exhibition on display at the Maryborough Art Gallery. The exhibition is entitled "Changed Forever", and is on loan from as a touring exhibition from the Melbourne Shrine of Remembrance, and is sub-titled "Legacies of Conflict".

I am compelled to say that I was deeply affected by the exhibition. It is a very confronting display, extremely artistically and tastefully presented, and very deeply engaging and moving of the experiences of a number of people associated with some of the more recent theatres of war and conflict in which Australia has been involved. It is the "telling of the stories" of soldiers, sailors, and aviators from the Australian Defence Forces and their families, and the equally compelling stories of civilians whose lives have been affected by these and similar events in recent years. In each of these cases, the title of the exhibition describes exactly what has happened to the lives of these men, women and children whether military or civilian, whether friend or foe - "Changed Forever".

The exhibition caused me to reflect very deeply on the never-ending legacy which these conflicts have left in their wake. As many of your readers would know, I have been the Patron of the local sub-Branches of the RSL, and the Vietnam Veterans Association, in each case for many years now, and I have "lived with" veterans and their friends and families for over 20 years. What is portrayed in the Art Gallery exhibition is so much what I have observed in the lives of men and women who we as a nation have sent to war and peacekeeping, and the "forever effect" it has had on their lives. And the effect of these experiences on the lives of enemy combatants with whom they were in conflict, and with the many civilians with whom they came in contact with either during or after their engagement.

The inescapable fact of the experiences displayed in this exhibition is that, volunteer or conscript, civilian or military, friend or foe, ALL of these people have been exposed to utter and overwhelming trauma, sometimes loosely called "post traumatic stress disorder" (PTSD). Everyone affected has been exposed to the assaultment of every sense in their being by experiences that no human being was ever, ever designed to either witness, or be compelled in the name of "nation" to be complicit and participant. They have all to a greater or lesser extent seen, heard, tasted, smelt, and touched events and things for which the human mind, soul and body was never designed. And it has been, in the case of every ADF member, enabled and made almost sacred, and all done in the name of "nation", all in "my name".

My overwhelming sense after leaving this exhibition was utter and complete sadness. That we Australians, for right or wrong, had been and continue to be participants in theatres of war and conflict in which we actively and deliberately expose our citizenry and military personnel to this assaultment of their collective and individual senses. We expose them, in our name, to some of the most horrific, barbaric and soul challenging experiences that any of us could ever have imagined, and then when their service is ended, turn them out into the communities from which they come without, essentially, any real and significant spiritual, psychological, and personal and family counselling, and follow up. Thank God these men and women and their loved ones are surrounded by loving family and friends.

There is currently a Royal Commission being assembled to investigate the death at their own hand of serving and past members of the ADF. The reasons for these tragedies will be explored in a legalistic setting, experts will be assembled, theories will be tested, and findings published. I support the holding of such a Commission. I only hope and pray that they find the real root causes of these tragedies occurring over and over again. A visit to this exhibition will quickly convince any observer that "it's NOT rocket science"!

I suggest that, as an "opening exercise", the Commissioners appointed to this task take the time to visit this exhibition, take the 90 or so minutes necessary to really understand, and look and listen to the words and experiences of these men and women. If the Commissioners will but listen to what is said, and read what has been written by these people, they will very soon come to conclusions as to the root causes of these tragedies. There is really very little reason to argue this cause other than what this exhibition reveals - we cannot continue with impunity to expose men and women to the assaultment of their complete sensory armament in the manner we do, and then disengage then from service without the finest, highest and best spiritual, psychological and personal discharge counselling. And continue such services until the last natural days of these people if necessary.

Unless we do, we deny the undeniable fact that we have people "Changed Forever". It is our very least duty of undying gratitude to support them, help them, comfort them and aid them each and every day of their otherwise peaceful lives.

It is also an opportunity for us to reflect on why we ask, bid, force members of our ADF to undertake such tasks, and to seriously in future deeply examine whether we ought or ought not to commit these souls to the terrible killing fields of war as we have done so in the past.

Yours sincerely,

John Gault *(Address supplied)*

CONFIRMATION OF EMAIL ADDRESSES & MOBILE PHONE NUMBERS

It has been emphasised again by this recent lockdown that we continue to have difficulty in communicating with some of our Members.

We are therefore asking for all Members that have an email and a mobile phone, to provide this to us. This will enable almost instant contact at any time as we can either send off a "Block email" or "text" at any time.

SEARCHING FOR THE ENEMY

67th ANTI-AIRCRAFT SEARCHLIGHT COMPANY (Royal Australian Engineers)

By Don Hughes

Defeat was unthinkable, fighting for our homeland against an unyielding aggressor; the Japanese were ordered to fight to the death in a bid to conquer 'Greater East Asia'. Paul Ham captures the exceptional savagery of the Kokoda Track campaign in his meticulously researched book – Kokoda.



Australia was under direct threat. Our front door needed serious mending. Port Moresby's defences were dismal. Ordinary Australians were called upon to face extraordinary circumstances. Like

Gallipoli, Kokoda was a peculiar cocktail of courage, incompetence and atrocious human suffering.

In February 1942, LT Charles G. Williams (later Major) was the Second in Command of the 65th Searchlight Company at Maribyrnong Searchlight Training Camp. He, along with 18 Sappers were notified to report to the Recreation, Rehabilitation and Disposal Depot (RDD) at Caulfield Racecourse to form the nucleus of the 67th Anti-Aircraft Searchlight Company RAE. They would proceed immediately to the Eighth Military District (8MD) for searchlight protection duties in Port Moresby.

Japanese air raids on Port Moresby were a near daily occurrence. The Zeros and Mitsubishi 97s, flew over the mountains from the north with a noise like a million bees. (Ham p.34) Unprotected ground artillery provided the response. A handful of Empire flying boats and Catalinas were no match.

By the end of March Australia's 75th Squadron arrived in their Kittyhawks. Later, dozens of P-40 fighters, bombers and transport planes arrived in Port Moresby from both American and Australian units. The tide began to turn.

As the newly appointed OC, Williams guided the first Anti-Aircraft Searchlight Company to serve outside Australia. It quickly grew to match the operational need and remained in New Guinea for 22 months. Over that period a total of 823 personnel rotated through the unit from all over Australia.

On the termination of hostilities on 15 August 1945 (Victory in the Pacific Day), unit personnel in Sydney were mustered to operate available searchlight equipment to illuminate the city celebrations. (Day p.iii)

Brigadier B. F. Hussey was the OC of the 2nd & 8th Fortress Companies based in Sydney during 1940-41. He became the Chief Instructor in anti-aircraft, camouflage and fortress engineering at the School of Military Engineering at Georges' and Middle Heads throughout 1941-43. Hussey explains:

"Although the Royal Artillery took over the operation of searchlights from the Royal Engineers in the United Kingdom well before WW2, in Australia it remained an RAE responsibility until the middle of 1943." (McNicoll p. 334)

With a long association of fortress engineers manning coastal and anti-aircraft electric lights, they suddenly became artillery units. 67AASL Company RAE became a Battery of the Royal Australian Artillery.

Hussey suspects the suddenness of the change may be attributable to an incident in Port Moresby:

"A searchlight location that was to be soon abandoned, was visited by a very senior officer! What remained was being guarded by a sapper who could best be spared from other unit duties. The sapper rang his corporal and said 'There's a fat old bloke in Bombay bloomers outside wanting to come in. I told him no one was allowed in but he won't take no for an answer. He says he's General Something. What'll I do?'" (McNicoll p. 337)

The searchlight capability is but one of the many technical military skills born and nurtured within the Engineers. Tanks, Signals, Balloons, Survey and Transport all serving their apprenticeships indentured to the Sappers. Just for a time, searching for a determined airborne enemy using powerful lights, was just another arrow in the Sapper's quiver of capabilities.



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Bibliography:

Day Geoffrey. Eight Hundred Million Candlepower, Journals of 67AASL 1942-1945, 1999, Prominent Press Pty Ltd, Shepparton
McNicoll R.R. Major General, CBE, AM, History of the Royal Australian Engineers 1919 to 1945: Teeth & Tail, 1982, Corps Committee of the Royal Australian Engineers, Canberra
Ham Paul. Kokoda, 2004, Harper Collins, Sydney

Editor's note:

A copy of Geoffrey Day's book "Eight Hundred Million Candlepower: Journals of 67AASL 1942-1945" has been donated to the Oakleigh Barracks Engineer Museum by Melbourne Legacy.





MARNGROOK

BY ZEUS

Veteran Assistance Dog & Canine Correspondent

A Veteran Assistance Dog's Favourite Game?

My Kelpie and Labrador heritage underpins my deep urge to chase balls. Although I love tennis balls, footies are my all-time favourite.

Nothing is more exciting than two mobs of determined players grappling for the possession of one footy. The excitement, the chase, and finally sinking my canines into the soft leather ball is just such a divine pleasure. It's what a Veteran Assistance Canine needs, to relieve the demands of a long working week.

Chasing the other team, or keeping it off them, and to then finally score a goal – is just the greatest fun a dog could have! I also really like that there is a boss in charge, and everyone does 'stop' when the whistle blows. Then they all do 'stay' until the command 'play on' is given.

Dr Jim Poulter who lectures at my local University of the Third Age (U3A), sat me down one day beside the footy ground and explained the origins of Australian Rules footy and how this great game came from the traditional Aboriginal game called "Marngrook".

The ball for Marngrook was from possum skin stitched up with kangaroo tail sinews, then stuffed with powdered charcoal, fur or dried reeds.

It was a socially inclusive game with both men and women playing in the same game, but not against each other. Only women could play on women and men on men. More than this though, every pair of players had to be matched in size and weight, so it was a really fair game.

An early Victorian pioneer in the 1840s, James Dawson of Warrandyte, recorded some details of Marngrook. Up to 50, or even 100, players would divide into two sides and played under the two main tribe totems.

In the Western half of Victoria, the totem teams were White Cockatoo versus Black Cockatoo, but in the eastern half of Victoria the totem teams were Eagle versus Crow. Wow, this is just like today with the Eagles versus the Crows in the AFL!

In Marngrook, the side that had the most kicks and took the most marks had the best chance of winning, but you could not claim victory, because boasting was not allowed. The other side first had to agree that they had lost, otherwise it was declared a draw. There were lots of draws back in the day.

Then they had to decide who was 'Koornmuk' - the best and fairest player on the ground. Again, no boasting was allowed and other players had to praise whoever they thought had taken the most marks, kicked the marngrook highest, and put on the best show for the spectators. Then to the cheers of the spectators, the Koornmuk held the ball aloft and led the applauding players off the ground.

Our original Australians were a real smart bunch. As well as playing the original Aussie footy game, Dr Jim said our original Australians used songs as a GPS navigation system and used their spears as radio receivers. I'll leave those stories for another day, right now I need to have a scratch and a bit of a sniff around!

Editor's note: The Veteran Assistance Dog, Zeus, wrote this article for the Warrandyte Diary in June 2021. The artwork is by "Jock" McNeish OAM and Dr Jim Poulter is a noted local historian. The tribal football game, Marngrook, was played at the last Kulin Nation corroboree held at Pound Bend Reserve in Warrandyte during March 1852. The precursor to VFL and later AFL, the game had been organised by indigenous leader, Simon Wonga. The future of the Pound Bend Reserve was compromised by Victoria's first discovery of gold in 1851.



The Committee of the Croydon RSL congratulates Adele and Rosemary two of our Sub-Branch members for their OAM's in this years Queen's Birthday.

Well done ladies.

ORDER OF AUSTRALIA MEDAL

Congratulations to Adele Allen

Mrs Adele Marion Allen OAM, a pastoral worker for Croydon Uniting Church, was honoured for service to the community through the Church.

Congratulations to Rosemary Varty

Rosemary Varty OAM is an Australian politician. She was a Liberal Party member of the Victorian Legislative Council from 1985 to 1999, representing Nunawading Province and Silvan Province. Varty was born in Lilydale, and was a financial controller and administration manager before entering politics.



WOMEN'S AUXILIARY

Great to be back, let us hope that the rest of this year goes a lot better than the last 18 months. We have not been able to plan anything for the year due to the uncertainty of whether we will be locked down or not. Hopefully we will get to attend Meal Nights and other functions.

Our next Auxiliary Meeting will be hopefully on Tuesday 13th July 2021 at 11 o'clock.

We would love to see some new faces attending. Our thanks go to Karen Harden who had moved to Wodonga. Karen worked hard for the Auxiliary and we miss her a lot. Best wishes to you Karen and Wodonga's gain is our loss. I hope everyone survived the lockdowns, and kept your sanity.

Stay safe and healthy.

Beryl Turner
President, Ladies Auxiliary.

THE SOCIAL SCENE - June 2021



Global Warming? We've had the worst case of weather this month with that dreadful storm. We sympathise with you, should you or your loved ones have been caught in that fury.

So six months have gone by, it seems ever so slowly. Yet here we are on the cusp of our Veterans' Lunch (or "Christmas in July") on 7th July 2021.

Dinners have been a bit of fun. Whilst we are very thankful to those wonderful helpers on a Friday night, it must be mentioned that Monkami did a grand job of winning the most prizes in the Raffle last Friday (June 18).

So I wish to invite you, members and families to our Veterans' Lunch again. Wednesday, 7th July at midday. We will have the Old Dogs band play for us and Beryl and I might have a holiday from shopping, food preparation and cooking as this will be expertly catered for by Hillards again. The luncheon is free for members and there will be a charge of \$30 per head for guests.

There will be a special guest who will be helping to check to see if you've been naughty or nice. Just to be sure.

In the foreseeable future, I have been given the green light to plan some bus trips. There have been many suggestions. Now that we are "allowed out" it would be a great opportunity not to be missed. So with some extra enthusiasm I would be really pleased if you could check times and dates on the notice board and also check your newsletters. The first one of these will be the Silo Trail / Benalla on Saturday 24, July 2021.

Stay well, keep warm.

Remember: Activity suggests a life filled with purpose.

Edith Carroll
Social Co-Ordinator.



AN ALZHEIMER'S POEM

Do not ask me to remember.
Don't try to make me understand.
Let me rest and know you're with me.
Kiss my cheek and hold my hand.

I'm confused beyond your concept.
I am sad and sick and lost.
All I know is that I need you
To be with me at all cost.

Do not lose your patience with me.
Do not scold or curse or cry.
I can't help the way I'm acting,
Can't be different 'though I try.

Just remember that I need you,
That the best of me is gone.
Please don't fail to stand beside me,
Love me 'till my life is done.

2021 ANZAC DAY APPEAL
\$48,922.30 raised.

Following on from 2020 where, due to Covid restrictions, we were not able to fundraise, our dedicated team of volunteers managed to raise a total of \$48,922.30 under trying conditions.

2021 was the first time Croydon RSL has trialed the use of EFTPOS machines and at around 25% of the total takings proved to be a great success. The money raised by this method is money we would not have normally collected because without the machines our customers would have just walked away without buying a badge.

As in previous years it has been difficult to attract members to put up their hand and volunteer. The current group of volunteers are getting on in years and we look to the younger members to step up and assist.

If you are able to assist the next round of fundraising will be the week (10 days) **before Remembrance Day** 11, November 2021.

You can contact the Treasurer John Woolhouse on 0418 103 177 or the Fundraising Manager Tamara Myers on 0424 624 355. We look forward to hearing from you.



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Thank you to **J.J. & K Cafe**,
Kilsyth for their kind donation to the Croydon RSL of
50c of all biscuits sold during the months of April and
November each year.

<https://www.facebook.com/jjkcafe/>



Looking to join a great bowling club? Mooroolbark are always
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<http://www.mooroolbark.bowls.com.au/>

<https://www.facebook.com/mooroolbarkbowlsclub/>

Images of ANZAC Day 2021



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Veterans Wellness Programs

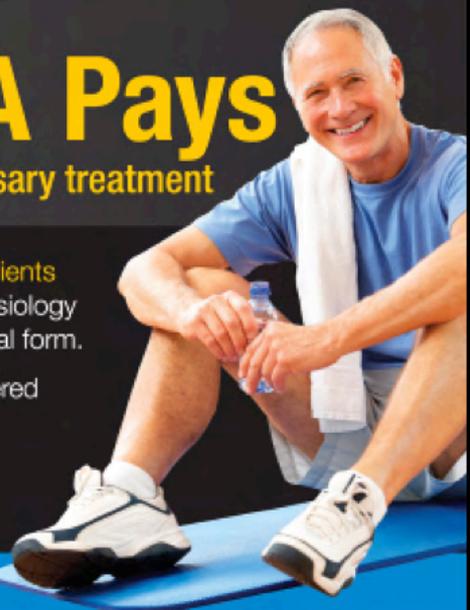
DVA Pays

for the clinically necessary treatment

Entitled Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) clients may be referred for clinically necessary Exercise Physiology treatment by their General Practitioner on a valid D904 referral form.

Gold Card Holders are entitled to clinically necessary treatment covered by DVA's health care arrangements for all health conditions.

White Card Holders are entitled to clinically necessary treatment for an accepted disability ie: an injury or disease accepted by DVA as caused by war.



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Seenager

I **JUST** discovered my age group! I am a **Seenager** (senior teenager).

I have everything that I wanted as a teenager, only 55-60 years later. I don't have to go to school or work. I get an allowance every month. I have my own pad. I don't have a curfew. I have a driver's license and my own car.

I have ID that gets me into bars and the wine store. I like the wine store best. The people I hang around with are not scared of getting pregnant, they aren't scared of anything, they have been blessed to live this long, why be scared? And I don't have acne. Life is Good!

Also, you will feel much more intelligent after reading this, if you are a **Seenager**. Brains of older people are slow because they know so much. People do not decline mentally with age; it just takes them longer to recall facts because they have more information in their brains. Scientists believe this also makes you hard of hearing as it puts pressure on your inner ear.

Also, older people often go to another room to get something and when they get there, they stand there wondering what they came for. It is **NOT** a memory problem; it is nature's way of making older people do more exercise.

SO THERE!

I have more friends I should send this to, but right now I can't remember their names. So please forward this to your friends; they may be my friends, too.

*Came across this poem written in 1869 and reprinted during 1919 Pandemic.
It was written by Kathleen O'Mara*

And people stayed at home
And read books
And listened
And they rested
And did exercises
And made art and played
And learned new ways of being
And stopped and listened more deeply
Someone meditated, someone prayed
Someone met their shadow
And people began to think differently
And people healed.
And in the absence of people who
Lived in ignorant ways
Dangerous, meaningless and heartless,

The earth also began to heal
And when the danger ended and
People found themselves
They grieved for the dead
And made new choices
And dreamed of new visions
And created new ways of living
And completely healed the earth
Just as they were healed.



Photo taken during Spanish flu