E-News – Centenary of the Battle of Beersheba, Commemorative Services

Issue 2: 26 September 2017

In the first edition of this E-newsletter we outlined that on 31 October 2017 we will gather in the town of Be’er-Sheva, Israel for a suite of activities including a joint Australian and New Zealand service at the Beersheba War Cemetery, a New Zealand service will be held at Tel Be’er-Sheva and an Australian service will be held at the Park of the Australian Soldier. This second edition of E-News focuses on what you can expect when arriving at the commemorations on the day and things you should do before leaving home.

When and Where?
The Centenary of the Battle of Beersheba and the Sinai-Palestine Campaign Commemorative Service will be held at 9:00am on Tuesday, 31 October 2017 at the Beersheba War Cemetery. Visitors should be aware that the site will be open from 5:00am and a pre service Reflective Program will commence from 6:30am. Throughout the day there will be a range of commemorative activities occurring including the New Zealand service at Tel Be’er-Sheva in the lead up to the afternoon service in the Park of the Australian Soldier.

Arriving at the commemorative services
In order to reduce traffic congestion near the locations of the commemorative activities being held the Municipality of Be’er-Sheva will establish a Park & Ride facility at the Turner Football Stadium on Etsel Street on the northern outskirts of Be’er-Sheva. All tour coaches, buses and private vehicles will be required to travel to this location where coaches and buses will be registered and escorted to the commemorative site and private vehicles will need to park and leave their vehicles and will transported to the commemorative sites and activities via a shuttle service.

For the joint Australian and New Zealand service in the morning you will be dropped at a carpark located on Ha Atsmaut Street approximately 300 meters from the Beersheba War Cemetery. This carpark will be established as the initial screening point for visitors to the service. Here you can expect to present your attendance pass and photo ID, be cleared through an airport style security screening point and then access the Beersheba War Cemetery via a secure pathway. No public visitors will be permitted to arrive through any other entry.

Important Note: All visitors must have their passport or a photocopy of their passport (or appropriate photographic ID) and attendance pass on their person ready for validation prior to arriving at the check point or entry.
At the completion of the joint Australia and New Zealand service you will be asked to remain in the cemetery for the opening of the Anzac Museum which will be telecast for your viewing. Following the Museum opening you will be invited to depart in the same manner as you entered the site. Your subsequent departure from the cemetery or attendance at other activities will be by personal arrangement, however, the Municipality of Be’er-Sheva may provide a return shuttle service to Turner Football Stadium.

The Municipality will provide a return shuttle service to the New Zealand National Service at Tel Be’er-Sheva and further details will be provided on the following website:

www.ww100.govt.nz/beersheba

For the Australian service at the Park of the Australian Soldier which commences at 4:30pm you will need to make your own way to the site or have arranged with your tour provider to be dropped at the north-western entrance to the Park on Sha’ul Ha Melech Street. If you make your own way you will need to enter the park via the same entrance. At this point you will again be required to present your attendance pass and photo ID, be cleared through an airport style security screening point before entering the Park.

What to take
Prior to arriving at the commemorations all visitors must have their attendance pass and passport (or a photocopy of their passport) readily accessible and within reach for validation as soon as they arrive at the entry scanning point.

In your preparations you should consider that Israel can experience hot and sometimes very hot conditions in October.

Visitors will also need to ensure they have everything they need for the day in a small bag or day-pack. Your bag should not be any larger than that allowed as carry-on luggage on an aeroplane.

What to pack:
• Attendance Pass and passport, (or appropriate photo ID)
• Light jacket, pants and hat for sun protection
• Prescription medication (if required)
• Non-perishable food and snacks
• Sunscreen (less than 100ml container)
• Compact personal camera

Bottled water will be available on site. You will not be able to bring your own bottled water supplies onto the sites.

Accessible Seating Services
If you nominated in your application a requirement for Accessible Seating services, a pass will either be mailed or will be available for collection on the day. Each registered individual will receive two accessible seating passes, one for the individual requiring assistance and
one for their carer. The carer, or accompanying guest, must be registered and hold an attendance pass to the commemoration in their own right.

An accessible toilet will be available at the commemorative sites.

Accessible Seating services will not include personalised or dedicated one-on-one assistance, transport to or from the commemorative services, provision of specialist equipment, specialised support for “high care” individuals or an indoor/covered area. If you require any of these services you should ensure your accompanying person is capable of assisting you. If you require a wheelchair, wheelie walker, walking stick or other aides you must bring this equipment with you to the commemorations.

Other events in the program
The Commemorations for which you hold an attendance pass will be held at the Beersheba War Cemetery, a New Zealand service will be held at Tel Be’er-Sheva and at the Park of the Australian Soldier in the town of Be’er-Sheva, Israel. These Commemorations will be part of a wider set of commemorative activities occurring throughout the day being run by local and volunteer organisations.

The following is the current timeline of events:
• 9:00am-10:00am – Joint Australian and New Zealand Commemorative Service, Beersheba War Cemetery.
• 10:00am – Opening of Anzac museum, Beersheba War Cemetery.
• 11:00am-11:30am – Official commemoration at the Turkish Memorial, Beersheba Turkish Railway Station.
• 12:00pm – 12:30pm – Civic Parade, HaAtsmaut Street.
• 2:00pm – 2:45pm – New Zealand Service, Tel Be’er-Sheva.
• 3:00pm – Re-enactment of the charge of the Light Horse, The Old Turkish Railway Bridge.
• 4:30pm – Park of the Australian Soldier Service.

Other events
With the exception of the services at the Beersheba War Cemetery and the Park of the Australian Solider, the events (outlined above) are not being organised or conducted by the Australian or New Zealand Governments. Attendance pass holders should note that attendance at these and any other non-Australian Government led events (including the New Zealand service at Tel Be’er-Sheva) on 31 October will be at the discretion of the organiser of these events.

A re-enactment of the charge of the Light Horse is anticipated to be held at 3.00pm at the Be’er-Sheva Riverside Park by the Australian Light Horse Association. For further information please refer to the Australian Light Horse Association’s website - http://www.lighthorse.org.au/

New Zealand led events
A New Zealand National Service will be conducted at 2:00 pm at Tel Be’er-Sheva by the New
Zealand Government. For further information please refer to the New Zealand Commemoration website:

www.ww100.govt.nz/beersheba

Contact information
If you would like further information in the lead up to the commemorations in October please contact DVA:

Online
Email: overseascommemorations@dva.gov.au
Facebook – DVA Aus / Anzac Centenary
Twitter - @DVAAus

In Australia
Department of Veterans’ Affairs
Monday to Friday: 8.30am to 5pm
Telephone: 1300 364 002
International Callers: +61 2 6191 8207

In New Zealand
New Zealand WW100 website: http://ww100.govt.nz/beersheba
Facebook – WW100NZ
Twitter – @WW100NZ

Email: info@ww100.govt.nz
Telephone: +64 4 495 1316