

SUBMISSION TO ERECT A MEMORIAL TO WILLIAM RUTHVEN VC AT RUTHVEN RESERVE DEVELOPMENT SPONORED BY DAREBIN RSL

Darebin RSL have commissioned Laserform Creative to develop a fitting granite commemorating William RUTHVEN VC at Ruthven Reserve, named after the aforementioned, in the city of Darebin. This memorial would coincide with the new pavilion development at the reserve.

The proposal is to create an etched black granite plaque incorporating an image of William Ruthven VC in his World War 1 uniform alongside a summary of the action that saw him awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) by King George V in 1918. The plaque would also recognize the significant post war contribution by William RUTHVEN VC to the then City of Preston and Reservoir as the longest standing local member of the Victorian parliament.

The plaque would be either set into a natural rock or recreated rock from stoneware that could be situated in the natural gravel and native grass garden bed alongside the pavilion. The granite and rock would tie in with the natural setting and other rocks scattered throughout the landscape at the reserve. If a suitable rock cannot be located, a rock will be recreated out of stoneware that is the approximate colour of the gravel garden bed and path. Refer attached photograph of the preferred location.

It is envisaged that the plaque would be approximately 600 x 400mm and set into a rock that would accommodate the size of the plaque and which would set it about approximately 600 - 700mm above the ground.

The RSL will provide the necessary funding for the proposal.

There would be no ongoing maintenance required as all materials are designed to withstand a lifetime in an external environment.

The plaque proposal conforms to the City of Darebin's memorial policy as follows:

5.2 "Monuments and larger memorials are for the purposes of this policy are specifically designed objects or structures commemorating a person, event, or place.

1. *Council's Leisure, Public Realm and Venues Unit will coordinate the application review process and provide information to the Memorials and Monuments Committee:*
 - *the application will include all relevant details including the nature and intent of the proposed memorial or monument; site preference (location) and analysis; design concept to scale; text or images to be included; and any other information including maintenance costs that will provide Council with a full understanding of the intended outcome of the proposed memorial. Design will not be commissioned at this stage – a concept will be sufficient.*
 - *All plaques must conform to City of Darebin plaque and memorial design specifications. Any wording on plaques or memorials must be approved by Council. A maximum number of words are stipulated for each category of plaque or memorial (see design specifications). Text should be brief and in a language accessible to the public and should avoid use of jargon or acronyms. Text should be written following research from a wide range of authoritative sources and be verified by a qualified historian. Proofing and checking will be undertaken by Council. If a graphic image is utilised the amount of text will be reduced."*

Given the significance and nature of the commemoration, reference has to be directly linked to the awarding of the Victoria Cross, therefore it is not possible for the text component to be brief. The VC citation has been reduced by virtue of a precis of William RUTHVEN's service and post war contribution to Preston and Reservoir.

There is also scope for the monument to not even fall under this policy as it is connected with the opening of a new building (Ruthven Pavilion) that is directly related and named after William Ruthven VC.

Attachment 1: Draft proposal of the engraved granite plaque

Example of the type of rock to be incorporated into the memorial or colour of the recreated stoneware rock.



Image only for purposes of the colour of a stoneware rock

The preferred location at the reserve (Person represents approximate location of the rock and plaque)



Attachment 1 – Plaque proof. (Images are not accurately recreated due to media used. Proof is only for wording and recommended layout)



The image is a black and white proof for a Victoria Cross plaque. At the top, the words "VICTORIA" and "CROSS" are written in large, bold, white capital letters. In the center, there is a stylized representation of the Victoria Cross medal, which is a cross with a central emblem, surrounded by a wreath. Below the medal is a banner with the word "AUSTRALIA" written in a stylized font. On either side of the medal are two circular emblems of the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), each featuring a sunburst and the text "AUSTRALIAN IMPERIAL FORCE" and "MILITARY FORCES".

WORLD WAR 1

William "Rusty" RUTHVEN (1893 - 1970), was born in Collingwood and was a mechanic in the timber industry before enlisting as a Private in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in April 1915. He landed at Gallipoli in October 1915 as a reinforcement for the 22nd Battalion. In March 1916 he arrived in France, where he served on the Western Front for the remainder of the First World War. During his service he was wounded on several occasions. He was promoted several times, eventually attaining the rank of second lieutenant in 1918.

On 19 May 1918, sergeant RUTHVEN took part in an attack near Ville-Sur-Ancre in France where he performed outstanding acts of bravery. When his company commander was wounded, he assumed command, but the advance was held up by heavy machine-gun fire. With total disregard for his own safety he ran at the machine-gun post, bombed it, and captured the gun. Then, encountering enemy coming out of a shelter, he wounded two and captured six. RUTHVEN reorganised his men and then noticed further enemy movement in a nearby sunken road. Armed only with a revolver, he wounded two men and captured thirty-two prisoners single handedly. He spent the rest of the day, under fire, supervising consolidation and encouraging his men.

Throughout the whole operation he showed the most magnificent courage and determination, inspiring everyone by his fine fighting spirit, his remarkable courage, and his dashing action and was awarded the Victoria Cross (VC) by King George V in 1918, the highest award for bravery.

POST WAR

During World War II, he served with the 3rd Australian Garrison Battalion and other garrison units reaching the rank of Major.

He was elected to the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1945 and was the local member for Preston until 1955, then following a redistribution represented Reservoir until his retirement in 1961.

"Rusty" RUTHVEN retained close links with other Victoria Cross winners. In 1956 he attended the Victoria Cross centenary celebrations in London. He was president of the Werrimull and Collingwood RSSILA's (RSL) and was a life member of the Preston sub branch and a trustee of Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance.

He died on 12 January 1970.



DONATED BY DAREBIN RSL
CREATED BY LASERFORM CREATIVE



A black and white photograph of a man in military uniform, wearing a peaked cap and a jacket with epaulettes. He is looking slightly to the right of the frame. The photograph is positioned on the right side of the plaque proof, partially overlapping the text.