

Media Statement

For Wyndham Star Weekly

From: Bill Lane, Media Manager, Mercy Health – 0477 720 337

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Lest we forget

Now aged 95, Royal Navy veteran and Mercy Place Mont Clare resident Norman Walker was just a teenager when he landed on a Normandy beach in France during the Allied Invasion of World War II.

Norman's memories of that time are still clear – for four months he remained with his shipmates at Juno Beach after the 1944 landing, under constant attack from shelling and bombs.

75 years later, in 2019 he was invited to Canberra where he received France's highest award, the Legion of Honour, for his service in WW II.

Mr Walker recounted that he had his 19th birthday on Juno Beach "with a cup of tea with powdered milk, with the water heated in a hole in sand boiled by petrol."

"We'd reached Normandy in a landing craft and had to stay on the beach to help the troops coming up and to keep the ships and supplies going," he said.

As one of several residents who served their country, Norman will be one of many to remember those who were involved in the war effort at a commemorative ceremony at Mercy Place Mont Clare.

On one lapel of his smart blazer, he will wear his war medals and Legion of Honour proudly. On the other lapel he will wear an Anzac poppy as he lays a wreath today (Friday) on behalf of Mont Clare residents.

After the war, Norman immigrated to Australia as a "10-pound pom", leaving Tilbury Docks in October 1951, and eventually disembarking in Sydney. He then moved to Bathurst, then Goulburn and then in 1953 he moved to Fremantle.

Mercy Health Manager, Ms Jo Forrest, said ANZAC Day was an important and emotional day for many residents.

“Every year Mercy Place Mont Clare acknowledges the exceptional contribution of all Australian servicemen and women in our ANZAC Day ceremony, and in particular it’s a time for us all to reflect on the bravery and selflessness of our residents, who lived through and also served, including Norman, whom we all have incredible respect for,” she said.

“Indeed, our ANZAC day commemorations enable many of our residents to reflect on the war years, reminisce about that time, whether they were an adult or a child, and also remember those who lost their lives. It’s an important day for all of us.”

Residents at Mercy Place Lathlain (WA) also commemorate ANZAC Day by holding a small service within the home on Friday, April 23.

Mercy Health is a Catholic not-for-profit provider of care, founded by the Sisters of Mercy and grounded in a 2,000-year tradition of caring for those in need. The organisation provides health and aged care services throughout Victoria, southern New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland and the Australian Capital Territory.

In Western Australia, the organisation cares for more than 300 people across six residential aged care homes, with an additional 78 retirement living units.

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