Corporal Ronald James Barassi
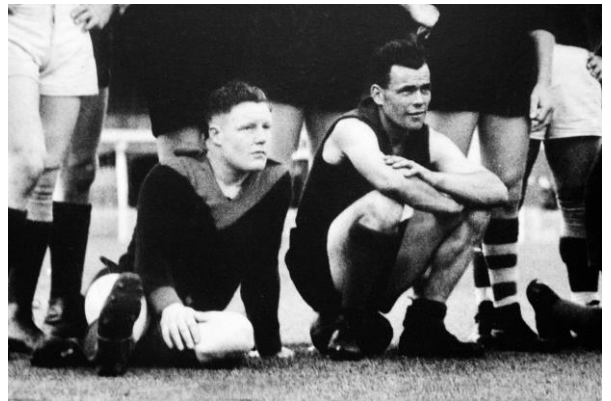
From Italian/Swiss heritage, Ronald James Barassi was the son of Carlo and Anne Barassi. Ronald Snr was born on October 24, 1913, at Castlemaine and attended Guildford Primary School and Castlemaine High School. Barassi was offered work at the Melbourne City Council. The chunky rover (5'8" and 11.7st) was a goal-sneak and debuted in 1936. Between 1936 and 1940 he played 58 games and booted 84 goals. His last match was the Redlegs' 1940 premiership in which he was Melbourne's 19th man. Cpl Ronald James Barassi died of wounds at Tobruk on July 31, 1941. Barassi had volunteered to drive a truck to the wharfs when the regular driver was unavailable. The truck was hit by either a German dive bomber or an errant mine. Barassi was raced to a base hospital and died of his wounds twelve hours later.

Keith William "Bluey" Truscott (left) and Ronald James Barassi listen to Frank "Checker" Hughes address the Melbourne players at training. Hughes had served in World War I. Truscott and Barassi would both die in World War II.

Even at the age of five Ronald Jnr remembered his Mum, Elza, receiving the devastating news by telegram. On August 16, 1941, Melbourne and Collingwood played at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. The players lined up prior to the game for a minute's silence with the Last Post played as a tribute. The Melbourne Football Club coterie group promised to look after Mrs Elza Barassi and her son, young Ron. In 1984 Ronald Jnr with his wife Cherryl, travelled to Tobruk War Cemetery, Libya. Ron Jnr was alone when he said, "Dad, I love you." Ronald Dale Barassi went on to play in six premierships with the Demons and coached Carlton to two flags, North Melbourne to two flags, and also coached Melbourne and Sydney.

A Richmond Hero – Sergeant Bill Nolan

Born in 1888 in the Victorian country town of Corop, William Nolan was educated at Tolmie State School. After the family moved to Melbourne, Nolan played with the Brighton Juniors F.C. before stepping up to VFL level with Richmond in the opening round of 1914.

A fine young footballer described as "a grand specimen of the Australian. Well over six feet in his socks..." Bill "Barney" Nolan had the perfect build for the ruck or centre half forward. Nolan represented Richmond in 1914-1915 in 30 games and contributed four goals.

Sergeant William Nolan had been a tram gripman at South Melbourne before the war and was an immediate pick for Richmond each Saturday.

Nolan enlisted with the 58th Battalion, 1st AIF, seeing service in Egypt then France. Sergeant Bill Nolan died of wounds received at Fleurs on July 23, 1916. He was 27 years old and was buried at Boulogne Military Cemetery. Bill Nolan was highly respected by all and the Football Record described him as "great – hearted".

Local paper the *Richmond Guardian* noted, "Big, brave Bill Nolan is reported to have been killed in action. It does not need any superfluous word here to point out his splendid qualities." When Richmond took the field for the 1916 semi final against Carlton, its players wore black armbands in honour of "their grand follower".

One can only speculate what might have been had Nolan survived World War I. Bill Nolan's family notice asked "Rest in Peace". Tragically his papers showed he had joined three cousins as casualties of the Great War.

Football at the MCG on April 24

1915: Four VFL premiership matches were played on April 24 for the first time. Melbourne defeated Richmond 12.10 (82) to 11.7 (73) at the MCG. The following day the ANZACs stormed the beaches of Gallipoli.

1937: Richmond and Melbourne meet again. It is the first football match at the MCG on April 24 since 1915. April 25 was named ANZAC Day in 1916.

1995: The first AFL match on a Monday evening was played between Richmond and North Melbourne at the MCG.

2000: Easter Monday fell on April 24. The Richmond v Carlton fixture drew 63,149, the largest crowd for a match on the day before ANZAC Day.

2015: The first ANZAC Day eve ceremony is held before the Richmond v Melbourne match. A cauldron was lit by Ron Barassi Jr prior to the game. The torch was carried into the MCG by the Creswick Light Horse.

2017: The ANZAC Eve match draws a crowd of 85,657, a record attendance for the date.

2020: The match on ANZAC Day eve is postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2021: The Inaugural Frank ″Checker″ Hughes Medal for the best player on the ground is presented to Melbourne's Christian Petracca.

Senior Matches at the MCG on the Eve of ANZAC Day — April 24

April 24			MCG Match	Home Team		Opponent		Att.
1915	Saturday		VFL Round 1	Melbourne	12.10 (82)	Richmond	11.7 (73)	7,385
1937	Saturday		VFL Round 1	Melbourne	14.8 (92)	Richmond	9.12 (66)	19,726
1965	Saturday		VFL Round 2	Melbourne	11.14 (80)	North Melbourne	10.12 (72)	21,744
1976	Saturday		VFL Round 4	Melbourne	17.12 (114)	Carlton	24.13 (157)	34,991
1987	Friday	night	VFL Round 5	North Melbourne	18.19 (127)	St Kilda	16.14 (110)	16,078
1995	Monday	night	AFL Round 4	Richmond	21.8 (134)	North Melbourne	13.7 (85)	62,606
1998	Friday	night	AFL Round 5	Richmond	12.14 (86)	West Coast	10.11 (71)	34,837
1999	Saturday		AFL Round 5	Melbourne	13.12 (90)	Port Adelaide	9.12 (66)	24,533
2000	Monday		AFL Round 7	Richmond	10.9 (69)	Carlton	18.12 (120)	63,149
2010	Saturday	night	AFL Round 4	Melbourne	15.13 (103)	Brisbane Lions	7.11 (53)	36,396
2015	Friday	night	AFL Round 4	Richmond	6.15 (51)	Melbourne	12.11 (83)	58,175
2016	Sunday	night	AFL Round 5	Melbourne	20.9 (129)	Richmond	14.12 (96)	59,968
2017	Monday	night	AFL Round 5	Richmond	12.16 (88)	Melbourne	11.9 (75)	85,657
2018	Tuesday	night	AFL Round 5	Melbourne	8.8 (56)	Richmond	15.12 (102)	77,071
2019	Wednesday	night	AFL Round 6	Richmond	12.13 (85)	Melbourne	6.6 (42)	72,704
2021	Saturday	night	AFL Round 6	Melbourne	12.10 (82)	Richmond	6.12 (48)	56,418
2022	Sunday	night	AFL Round 6	Richmond	8.6 (54)	Melbourne	9.22 (76)	70,334
2023	Monday	night	AFL Round 6	Melbourne	15.6 (96)	Richmond	11.12 (78)	83,985

Frank "Checker" Hughes Medal

Tonight's best player on the ground will receive the Frank "Checker" Hughes Medal. Inaugurated in 2021, it commemorates the World War I serviceman and seven-time premiership player and coach Francis Vane "Checker" Hughes MSM. Born in February 1894, Hughes had played 24 games for Richmond in 1914 and 1915, before he enlisted. He served with the 57th Batallion of the 15th Brigade, 5th Australian Division. He rose through the ranks to quartermaster sergeant, and received a Meritorious Service Medal in 1918. While in Mametz, France, he helped establish an Australian football ground.

Hughes returned to Australia and the Richmond Football Club in May 1919. He played in the Tigers' 1920 and 1921 premiership teams and ended his League playing career in 1923 after 87 games and having booted 51 goals. He then refined his coaching arts at Ulverstone, Tasmania, returned to Tigerland in 1927, and coached Richmond to grand finals in 1927, 1928, 1929 and 1931, before breaking through for his first premiership as a coach in 1932. Richmond player Jack Dyer remembered, "Checker Hughes, the psychologist of the game, was a great coach and he beat champions with good players because he knew and understood them… with a few scathing words he could lift a side."

Hughes was enticed by Percy Page, Melbourne's secretary and a former Richmond secretary, to join him at Melbourne the following year. Hughes instilled a ruthless attitude in Melbourne's players, epitomised by the "Red Demons" moniker he bestowed on them and the club. Under Hughes' guidance from 1933 to 1941, and then from 1945 to 1948, his Demons won flags in 1939, 1940, 1941 and 1948. Therefore, Hughes was fundamental to the development of two great eras at two great clubs. He had a life-long commitment to the game and was a selector at Melbourne for two decades following his formal retirement as coach. He even stepped in as an acting coach of Melbourne for one match in 1965. Hughes died in 1978. He was an inaugural inductee of the Australian Football Hall of Fame as a coach in 1996, and is a member of the Richmond Football Club Hall of Fame as well as the Melbourne Football Club Hall of Fame.

Captain George Elliott MC

George Stephenson Elliott was born at Charlton West in north-west Victoria on 1 June 1885. Elliott was educated at Ballarat College, where he was not only dux of the school, but was presented with a medal as the "best all round boy". He also won trophies for athletics and football.

In 1905 Elliott played one match with Fitzroy under another Ballarat identity in Fitzroy champion, Gerald Brosnan. George Elliott studied medicine and surgery at the University of Melbourne and resided at Ormond College. Aged 23 years he debuted with the University Football Club, then a member of the VFL, where he played from 1910 to 1913 in 79 games. He captained the Students in 1911 and 1912. He was a member of the Victorian team at the 1911 Australian Football Carnival held in Adelaide. His services were recognized as a doctor when he helped the injured players. George was married to Alice and lived at Ripponlea. They had a daughter named Jacquelyn.

Captain George was with the Army Medical Corps and was 32 years old when killed by a single shot on 25 September 1917 at Chateau Woods. He is buried at Huts Cemetery, near Ypres, Belgium. His brother, Brigadier General Harold "Pompey" Elliott, was unable to come to his brother's funeral because of his involvement with conduct of the war.

George Elliott received the Military Cross but was unaware of the award prior to his death. Harold Elliott sadly committed suicide in 1931 and is buried at the Burwood (Vic) Cemetery, half a world away from his fallen brother.

Right: George Elliott, pictured wearing the black and light blue colours of University.

Over To You

1. Who was the former Richmond player killed in the Second World War who had the Tiger emblem emblazoned on his plane?

2. Who was the three-time premiership wingman who lost his life when his Beaufort with No. 100 Squadron crashed and the crew was machine-gunned by the Japanese? The Melbourne Football Club commemorates this fallen hero with the runner-up trophy in the best and fairest award.

3. Who am I? My name is commemorated at The Menin Gate, Ypres. I lost my life when killed in action on June 8, 1917, at Snitchells Farm, Messines, Belgium. I played two games for the Tigers.

4. Who am I? I was a Victorian cricketer and a Melbourne Football Club player. I was killed at Villiers-Bretonneux when attacking a German parapet, in shocking conditions. I have no known grave and my life is commemorated at the massive Villiers-Bretonneux Memorial.

5. Who am I? I was a member of the 1939 and 1940 Melbourne premiership sides and a great ruck/defender prospect. I came to VFL football from Merbein and played 33 games with 33 goals. I was executed by the Japanese during World War II.

6. Who am I? I played nine games with Richmond during 1934 and 1935, and was seriously injured in an accident on the Atherton Tablelands near my camp.

7. Who am I? I played with both Richmond and Fitzroy. In 1913 I was a member of Fitzroy's premiership team. Already injured twice, I was killed in action on the Somme, I have no known grave, and am commemorated at the Villiers-Bretonneux Memorial.

8. Name the year that the pictured one-off guernsey design (right) was worn by Melbourne players for their ANZAC Day Eve match against Richmond.

9. Who am I? I am the nephew of Flight-Sergeant William Cosgrove, and became a prominent Australian defence figure in Vietnam and East Timor?

This Round in History – Round 7 on the MCG

The highest score on the MCG in Round 7 is 28.12 (180) by North Melbourne against Melbourne 22.11 (143) in 1982. The overall Round 7 record is 37.17 (239) by Geelong against the Brisbane Bears 11.9 (75) at Carrara in 1992. The biggest winning margin at the MCG in Round 7 is 122 points by Melbourne 25.16 (166) when they defeated North Melbourne 5.14 (44) in 1937. The overall Round 7 record is 164 points by Geelong against the Brisbane Bears at Carrara in 1992. The lowest Round 7 score at the MCG since 1925 is 3.9 (27) by North Melbourne against Melbourne 15.21 (111) in 1927. This is the overall Round 7 record since 1925. The most goals by an individual in Round 7 at the MCG is 10 by Sydney's Tony Lockett against Collingwood in 1998. The overall Round 7 record is 17 by Jason Dunstall for Hawthorn versus Richmond at Waverley Park in 1992. The highest score in a quarter for Round 7 at the MCG is 10.3 (63) by the Kangaroos against Adelaide in the first quarter in 1999 and by North Melbourne against Melbourne in the second quarter in 1982. The overall Round 7 record is 14.3 (87) in the fourth quarter by Geelong when playing the Brisbane Bears at Carrara in 1992. The highest Round 7 attendance was in 2000 when 88,390 saw Essendon defeat Collingwood by 40 points at the MCG on ANZAC Day.

Statistics for Richmond v Melbourne

Richmond v Melbourne by venue

	Won By Richmond	Won By Melbourne	Draw
Docklands	1	1	0
MCG	74	66	1
Motordrome	1	0	0
Punt Road	32	18	1
Waverley Park	0	1	0
	108	86	2

Last Time They Met – Round 20, 2023, MCG

	Richmond	Melbourne
Quarter time	5.4	3.5
Half time	9.7	8.5
Three-quarter time	13.8	14.6
Full time	15.8 (98)	20.10 (130)

Highest Score

Richmond	30.16 (196)	Rd 2	1942	PR
Melbourne	26.19 (175)	Rd 21	1993	MCG

Lowest Score

Richmond	1.6 (12)	Rd 10	1908	MCG
Melbourne	4.10 (34)	Rd 11	1910	MCG

Greatest Winning Margin

Richmond	93 points	Rd 9	1980	MCG
Melbourne	121 points	Rd 21	1993	MCG

Frank "Checker" Hughes Medallists

2021	Christian Petracca	Melbourne
2022	Clayton Oliver	Melbourne
2023	Jack Viney	Melbourne

Jim Park

Born in Bendigo on February 14, 1910, Park was one of seven children. His family eventually settled in Moonee Ponds and he attended Scotch College from 1919 to 1926. He then went to the Dookie Agricultural College. A fine all-round athlete and an outstanding student, he worked on the land before moving to Tatura to work in a family flour mill run by his uncles. He joined Carlton in 1932 but played only one game for the Blues that year. He moved back to Melbourne in 1933 and was a consistent performer for Carlton in subsequent seasons, playing 128 games up to the end of 1940. He spent most of his early career minding resting ruckman in the back pocket but was given the important task of minding Collingwood's star full forward, Ron Todd, in the 1938 grand final, which Carlton won by 15 points. He was alongside Todd throughout the game, restricting him to just three goals. Park also gained Victorian selection in 1938 and won the Blues' best and fairest award. Enlisting in the 2nd AIF in March 1941, he served as Lieutenant in the 2/6th Battalion in the Middle East before they were recalled to New Guinea to help defend it against the attack by the Japanese. After five months in New Guinea, he returned to Melbourne, where he was briefly reunited with his wife and young daughter. He soon returned to the fighting in New Guinea, however, and lost his life on February 9, 1943, during the Battle of Wau. The Carlton Football Club paid tribute to Park in their game against Richmond on May 8, 1943, when players from both clubs stood to attention at Princes Park while the Last Post was played.

Over To You Answers:

Q1 Flight-Sergeant William Cosgrove. **Q2** Flying Officer Syd Anderson. **Q3** Private Leslie Lee. **Q4** Lance-Corporal Lugton. **Q5** Private Harold Ball. **Q6** Private Bill Garvie. **Q7** Lance Corporal Arthur Harrison. **Q8** 2021.
Q9 General the Honourable Sir Peter Cosgrove AK, CVO, MC.