

Sydney's Cretan community commemorates the 80th anniversary of the Battle of Crete



The words 'MAXH' shone brightly at the Croatian Club in Punchbowl on Saturday night as Sydney's Cretan community gathered to commemorate exactly that – the Battle (MAXH) of Crete.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the battle and the Cretan Association of Sydney & NSW marked the significant occasion with a special dinner dance.

The dance was attended by about 400 people, including a number of guests of honour, dignitaries and representatives from Greek communities across New South Wales.

These included, but are not limited to, the President of the Cretan Association of Sydney & NSW, Terry Saviolakis, the Consul General of Greece in Sydney, Christos Karras, the Very Reverend Father Christophoros Krikelis and the Archdeacon Athenagoras, the Chairman of the Joint Committee of the Commemoration of the Battle of Crete and the Greek Campaign, James Jordan, the Vice President of the Greek Returned Servicemen League of NSW, Peter Tsigounis, New Zealand RSL representative, Margaret McInroy, and Delphi Bank representatives, Nick

Kalikajaros and Tom Christopoulos.

Also in attendance on the night were Kelvin and Phillip Bourke who came to honour their late father Nick Bourke, a runner from the 22nd Battalion, who fought in the Battle of Crete.

Official proceedings began with a minutes silence for members of the Cretan Association who had passed away over the last few months, followed by the entrance of each guest of honour walking side-by-side with Greek dancers dressed in traditional Cretan costumes.

Speeches then began, starting with Mr Saviolakis, Mr Karras, Mr Jordan, Mr Kalikajaros, who presented Mr Saviolakis with a commemorative award, and the Very Reverend Father Christophoros Krikelis. Messages from Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, and the NSW Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, were also read out.

In his speech, the Consul General focused on the relationship between Greece and Australia and stressed how the Battle of Crete “was the culminating moment of the co-operation between two peoples.”

“The Anzac contribution in Greece is a chapter of great importance to our two nations. Australia and Greece share a history of strength and dignity, a history of common values and struggles,” Mr Karras continued.

At the conclusion of the speeches, the Cretan band for the night, which included Sifi Tsourdalakis on the Lyra, Paddy Montgomery and Angelo Goutzios on the laouto, Tony Iliou on guitar and George Ganakas on the bass guitar, were presented with awards before they went on stage to entertain attendees for the remainder of the night.

Their music was accompanied by Cretan dance performances from the Cretan Association’s youth, intermediate and senior dance groups, which brought a smile to the faces of everyone in the room.

The night ended with large groups of people, who had enjoyed a meal of delicious steak or chicken, jumping on to the dance floor and grooving to the music. One lucky attendee also walked away with an 18ct white gold diamond cross from Steven James Jewellers.















  **Saint Joseph the Hesychast**
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