

# TARRAS TALK

Proudly sponsored by TARRAS RURAL WOMEN

MAY 2026



**Lest We Forget**  
**ANZAC Service Tarras 2026**  
 A beautiful and fitting service,  
 celebrated by more than 130 people.

**SHOW US SOME LOVE - SUPPORT**  
**TARRAS.ORG.NZ**



LIVING LOCAL      GET TO KNOW US      COME & VISIT

**A huge amount of time, care, and effort has gone into building and maintaining the Tarras website - and we're proud to keep it ad-free and accessible for everyone in the community.**

We rely on the support of local businesses, organisations, and community members to keep it running. If you've found the site useful, please consider making a small contribution. **DONATIONS** are quick and secure via credit or debit card, and truly - every dollar counts. [www.tarras.org.nz/donate](http://www.tarras.org.nz/donate)

Our **COMMUNITY CALENDAR** lets local organisations add events and you can save them straight to your phone! [www.tarras.org.nz/community-calendar](http://www.tarras.org.nz/community-calendar)

**TARRAS TALK'S ARCHIVE** holds 5 years of history - look back, explore past stories, and see how far we've come. [www.tarras.org.nz/tarras-talk](http://www.tarras.org.nz/tarras-talk)

If you value what we're building together, please head to the donations page and chip in if you can. Your support keeps this community resource alive and thriving.

**THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF IT.**



## CHAINSAW SAFETY

One-Day Essential Skills Workshop

**SUNDAY 24 MAY, 9AM - 5PM**



## DRUMMOND RUGBY CLUB

McFarlane Park,  
 Domain Road,  
 Drummond.

\$50 per person  
 + booking fee.

**This workshop will deliver and include advice and information on:**

- Chainsaw use • Maintenance
- Theory & Practical advice on operating a chainsaw

**Lunch will be provided - Open to women and men.**

**Facilitated by: Hemi Picket.**

**Register at - <https://events.humanitix.com/rwnzchainsawsouthland>**

**Important Note - You need to bring your own Chainsaw and gear**

**Limited to 15 spaces so register now!**

**For more information, contact Eunice Roberts - 021 253 4973.**



## TARRAS EMERGENCY RESILIENCE GROUP

**TERG needs a group of committed Volunteers to join those, already working on emergency plans for our community.**

**Previous requests for help have not elicited any response, but we can't continue without you.**

Emergencies are unpredictable – you only need to read the news to see how many NZ has had in recent months.

Flooding, cyclones, slips, fires, tornadoes!! You cannot say "never", when thinking of our rural community in Tarras.

**WE NEED TO BE PREPARED.** That is what will make us resilient.

Please email your interest and contact details to **TERG**: [tarras.terg@gmail.com](mailto:tarras.terg@gmail.com)

## TARRAS TENNIS CLUB

Tarras Tennis Club is a newly formed group and is looking for members, keen to help get this group up and running, and those keen to play on the Tarras all-weather court. Hopefully to be 2 courts in the future.

All ages and skill levels welcome.

Please contact Jonny T for more details:  
[Tarrastennisclub@gmail.com](mailto:Tarrastennisclub@gmail.com)



## CALLING PHOTOGRAPHERS



**Thank you to everyone who has shared their photos of Tarras. We are looking for local images for our front page - whether you're a professional, or just like snapping photos on your phone. From landscapes to everyday community life, we'd be honoured to feature your photos.**

## TARRAS BOOK CLUB

**Keen to meet new people?**  
 The next Book Club meeting:  
 13 May at 2.30 pm. Hosted by  
 Dawn Bosley, 60 Thomson Gorge Rd. Ph 0272798894. Cheers Claire.

## SPREAD THE WORD

Located by the school gate, Lilliput Library sparks a love of reading in our community. It's always in need of restocking, please donate any surplus books to help!

- take a book/return a book
- add a book
- pass it on



## SAVING LIVES UNDER FIRE

**The Remarkable Story of Surgeon Douglas Jolly - By Pete Jolly**

Douglas Waddell Jolly (Doug) was born in Cromwell on 16 December 1904, one of six children of Elizabeth and William Jolly. His father later died in action in the North African desert during World War I.

Doug's roots in Central Otago ran deep. His grandfather - my great-grandfather arrived on the Cromwell goldfields in the early 1860s and later established the general store **D.A. Jolly & Sons**. The original building still stands today in Old Cromwell Town, relocated when the Clyde Dam was built. The family also operated stores in Bannockburn, Tarras, and Wānaka.

Doug was educated at Cromwell Primary School and later at Otago Boys' High School, where he excelled both academically and on the sports field. He graduated in medicine and surgery in 1930, then worked as a house surgeon in Dunedin and Wellington.

In 1932, he travelled to London to complete his Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons. With only his final exam remaining, Doug made a life-altering decision: he volunteered to serve in Spain. With the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, the Republican government lost much of its medical infrastructure. The Red Cross declined to intervene, viewing it as an internal conflict. Doug joined an independent British medical unit and was soon posted to southern Spain, beginning his introduction to frontline medicine. *continued on page 2...*



Photos L-R from Mark Derby's 'Frontline Surgeon'  
 1) Dr Jolly at his field hospital, Spain, 1938.  
 2) Canadian surgeon Norman Bethune, Hungarian nurse Anna-Maria Basch and Jolly in Spain, 1936.  
 3) Jolly with his anaesthetist, Peter de Sarigny.  
 4) Operating in high temperatures, left to right: unknown US doctor, nurse Basch and Jolly.

## WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Whether you'd like to advertise, share your news, or receive Tarras Talk by email, get in touch with Chris at [tarrastalk@gmail.com](mailto:tarrastalk@gmail.com)



Pete Jolly, remembering ANZAC Day.

He was later stationed in Madrid, which he described as "nine months of winter and three months of hell." The defence of Madrid marked one of the first large-scale uses of aerial bombing against both military and civilian targets, with German and Italian forces supporting General Franco.

Doug later wrote: I quote, "this resulted in many new problems in the organisation of front-line medical service. During my earlier days in Spain, we were able to choose the largest vacant house in a village, conveniently located close to the front line, and a major evacuation road in which to set up our field hospital, as long as it was out of range of heavy artillery we could work in comparative peace. Soon however, with the increase in aviation and the enemy's superiority in planes, all villages near the front were unsafe. We then sought isolated farm houses but later these too were dangerous. We tried using camouflaged tents but these had great disadvantages. The intense heat of summer and the frosts of winter made it almost impossible to treat wounded men under these conditions" unquote.

Doug's ability to improvise under extreme pressure was illustrated when faced with no anaesthetist, he called on one of his fellow volunteers, a trained chef, and trained him to perform the task.



### TARRAS CHURCH

11am service on the first Sunday of every month, led by Barry Entwistle

All welcome...

MAY SERVICE - SUNDAY 3  
DUTY: Lucy Annan and Barb Annan

JUNE SERVICE - SUNDAY 7  
DUTY: Mary Ann Morris and Antonia Wilson

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## SAVING LIVES UNDER FIRE

Early in the civil war, when blood loss was being seen as a major cause of death, blood banks were being established and local Spanish people gave generously. Refrigeration units were set up and transfusions were frequently given at the emergency field hospitals, although if they ran short of blood, the doctors, nurses, orderly's etc gave blood directly to the patient.

Doug later wrote that he operated on a lot of enemy pilots. It had become clear to him, that the mortality rate of the wounded men was considerably lessened, when treatment could be administered as close as possible to the front.

With the battle front moving quickly, both advance and retreat, Doug fine-tuned his surgery techniques, and field hospitals, so was to be able to set up a new hospital in record time.

Doug said "I operated in five different hospitals established in railway tunnels, we boarded up the ends of the tunnel and took up the tracks, placed down floor boards and then put up between 50 - 60 beds."

An eye witness described the tunnel at Flix, his theatre being 15 yards inside the tunnel lit by a small generator. Instruments were sterilised inside fish kettles on primus stoves, and the only warmth for patients was from alcohol burnt in open pans, a dangerous practice with ether being used as an anaesthetic. Patients too ill to be evacuated were nursed further up the tunnel.

Doug was awarded the highly regarded republican army's military decoration, **Medalla del Ebro** for his service under brutal conditions.

After two years with scarcely a break from battlefield surgery, Doug was withdrawn from Spain in October 1938, along with all the other volunteers. In his two years in Spain, he was credited with 4,000 operations including 1,000 abdominal operations, requiring some of the more complex procedures, this equates to an average of five to six operations a day!!

His demobilisation papers described him as: "excellent as a surgeon, courageous and totally reliable. He worked with great skill and enthusiasm. Always wanted to operate as close as possible to the firing line."

Doug returned to England mentally and physically fatigued, later on he spoke at 60 different meetings around England on his methods of hospital surgery under battlefield conditions. He returned to NZ briefly in 1939 to visit family and to go on a speaking tour to encourage support for the Spanish people. On his return passage to England, he worked as the ship's doctor.

Instead of completing his FRCS exams he chose to write a book, **FIELD SURGERY IN TOTAL WAR**. The book was quickly adopted by, amongst others, the American military,

and became the foundation by which they shaped their emergency procedures right up until the end of the Vietnam war. This was told to me by the late Dr Brian McMahon, who in his younger days was the doctor in Cromwell and later became the Director of Defence Force Medical Services for the NZ military, adding that surgeons at that time still carried Doug's book in their kitbag.

This is highlighted by the fact the popular television series MASH was based on the systems and procedures that Doug had developed during the Spanish civil war, and it has been strongly suggested that the German military also translated and used his book. Soon after completing his book, Doug volunteered for the British Royal Army Medical Corp and was dispatched with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel to the 8th Army in North Africa. Working once again right behind the front lines in atrocious conditions, searing day time heat, and freezing night time temperatures, plus never ending sand storms.

This time however he was treating ANZACs. Amongst those he treated, was a Mary Morris who enlisted in Cromwell, NZ. At the end of the North African campaign Doug carried on to Italy where he worked until the end of that campaign. He was then able to return to England in time to celebrate VE day.

For his services to battlefield surgery under extreme conditions, he was awarded a military OBE.

After the war, Doug chose not to pursue a surgical career. Instead, he became director of Britain's largest hospital for amputees, continuing his work in innovation and patient care.

His influence on modern medicine is profound. His emphasis on triage, rapid intervention, and streamlined surgical procedures continues to shape trauma and emergency medicine today.

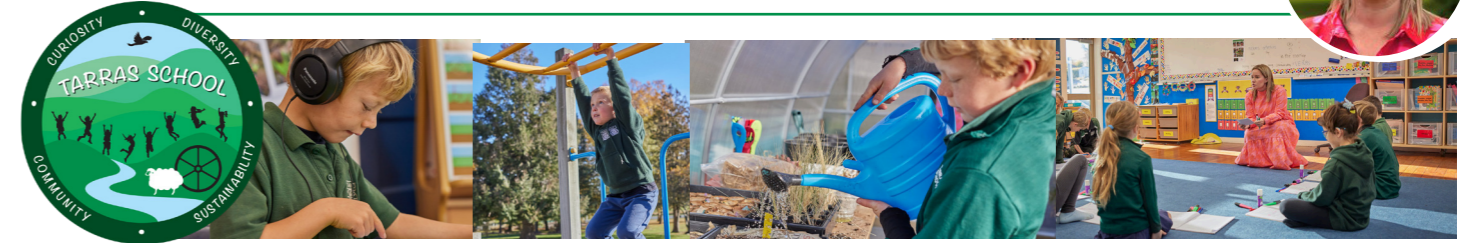
In Spain, Doug is recognised as a war hero. The respect he is held in was evident when a plaque in Old Cromwell Town was unveiled, attended by the Spanish Ambassador to New Zealand, who acknowledged Doug's extraordinary contribution. In retirement, Doug and his wife Jessica settled in Surrey, where he enjoyed gardening and wood carving. He remained closely connected to family, warmly hosting visiting relatives - including my own.

Douglas Waddell Jolly died in England on 19 December 1983, aged 79.

In closing, I acknowledge historian Mark Derby, whose book **Front Line Surgeon** captures the depth and significance of Doug's life and work.

# TARRAS SCHOOL NEWS

The best little school in Central Otago - ALICE CASEY, PRINCIPAL



Kia ora,

We hope you all had a wonderful Easter break. It's been lovely to see the tamariki return with so many stories to share, settling back into school life so positively.

We're pleased to have the new speed signs outside school, slowing the traffic down to 30km/h in the morning and afternoon when our tamariki are traveling to and from school. You'll also spot them wearing hi-viz vests to ensure that those waiting at bus stops are easily visible. We've been working with NZTA to improve our entranceway, we hope you've spotted our new yellow lines!

We are delighted to welcome to our kura, Maggie Trevathan - we have loved having her join us and look forward to seeing all that she achieves!



We began the term learning about ANZAC Day and its significance. A special thank you to Beau Trevathan for organising the service and for including some of our tamariki. As always, we are incredibly proud of the way they represented our school.



Our term Inquiry is 'Epic Expeditions' and to kick this off we had Scott Worthington present his video about his adventures to Greenland. The tamariki were engaged as they listened to stories of adventure! We're looking forward to learning more about explorers and adventurers locally, nationally and globally.

This term, our senior class are competing in the Rippa Rugby tournament held in Wānaka on the 28th of May. **If anyone is keen to come down and help train our tamariki, we'd love a hand!** We know there are some pretty capable players out there!

Ngā mihi, Alice



APRIL THANKS GOES TO:

- Murrell Ruddenklau for removing some rubble to make way for our firewood supplies - just in time for this chilly snap.
- Sam and Bailee Duffy for kindly taking care of the stall during the holidays, keeping it well stocked with our Black Boy Jam and delicious tomatoes!

## Breast Cancer AWARENESS

Please join the Tarras Rural Women for our annual Pink Ribbon Morning Tea...



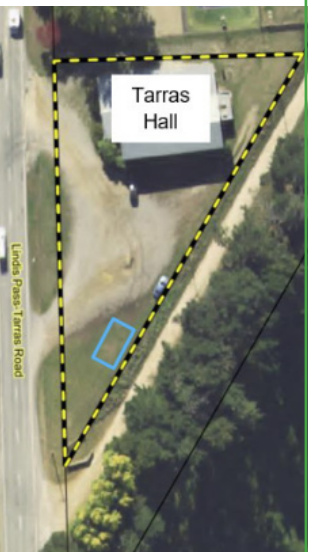
Tarras Cafe, 9:30am - Tuesday 19 May.  
Enjoy a delicious morning tea for \$30 while supporting a great cause.  
All are welcome - **WEAR PINK!**

Please RSVP [tarrasruralwomen@gmail.com](mailto:tarrasruralwomen@gmail.com) by Thursday 14 May.

**1000 FOLLOWERS!**  
The Tarras Community Facebook Page thanks you for your ongoing support.

We now have 1000 followers. Our goal is to share local events and activities, celebrating the diverse and vibrant life of our community.

For many, social media is a window to the world - we hope our page keeps that view fresh, cheerful, and connected to Tarras, wherever you may be.



THE RECYCLING CONTAINER IS NOW ON THE SOUTHERN SIDE OF THE TARRAS HALL.