DIGGER

Photo: Driver Geoffrey Atkinson, 10th FCE, [left] with some friends in Paris on 29th March 1919. The building in the background has been identified by Yves Fohlen as the Palais du Trocadéro, created by architect Gabriel Davioud for the 1878 Exposition Universelle in Paris. It was demolished in 1937 to build the Palais de Caillot. Photo courtesy of Ruth Atkinson, Geoffrey’s daughter. Driver Atkinson is profiled in this issue.

December 2008

Magazine of the Families and Friends of the First AIF Inc

Edited by Graeme Hosken
This issue
DIGGER 25 is once again a 60 page magazine, thanks to our contributors and the Treasurer’s astute financial management. We have several new authors in this issue, and it is gratifying to see members being prepared to share their stories and interests with others. I hope that you enjoy reading this bumper issue.

Volunteer sought for indexing DIGGER
After indexing the first 24 issues of DIGGER, Russell Curley has opted to take a break from the task. Consequently, the committee is seeking expressions of interest from any members who have an interest and/or experience in indexing and would like to assist their association in maintaining this facility for readers. The indexes are compiled quarterly but published and distributed about every eight issues. The index also appears at the back of the bound volumes. Please contact the Editor [see below] if you would like to offer your services.

New members

Canberra exhibitions relating to WWI
Three outstanding exhibitions are presently running in Canberra. ‘Billy Hughes and War’ is on at Old Parliament House until 2nd February 2009; ‘Advancing to Victory, 1918’ is at the AWM until 11th February 2009; and ‘Shell-shocked: Australia after Armistice’ is running at the National Archives until 26th April 2009. A trip to Canberra to see these exhibitions is highly recommended.

AGM news
Twenty-six members and seven visitors attended the 2008 AGM held at the Garden City Motel in Canberra on 10th November. The Committee of Management for 2008/09 is: Russell Curley (President); Jim Munro (Vice-President); Chris Munro (Secretary); Alan Kitchen (Treasurer/Membership Secretary); Graeme Hosken, Margaret Snodgrass, Maurice Campbell, Andrew Willetts and Lorraine Curley (committee members). The after-meeting speaker was Andrew Pittaway, who gave a very interesting and informative lecture on Fremantle’s WWI enlistments. This was followed by dinner, which included the drawing of the ‘.303’ Raffle. First prize went to Helen Carey; second to Kim Winter; and third to Brian Tink.
In addition to the normal AGM business, four special resolutions were carried unanimously. They were:
1. To invite the Governor-General of Australia to accept Patronage of the association.
2. To add Rule 49 (as circulated to all members with AGM material) to the association’s rules which enables honorary membership to be offered in certain circumstances.
3. To invite Lambis Englezos to accept honorary membership of the association.
4. To invite Craig Laffin to accept honorary membership of the association.
Invitations have been mailed to the Governor-General, Lambis and Craig, and we await their responses.
On the 11th November members attended the 90th Anniversary of Armistice Day held at the AWM. Our reserved seats were in a prime position and members felt privileged to be there on such an important day. Anny de Decker, Heather Ford and Andrew Pittaway laid a wreath on behalf of the FFFAIF.

Marvellous photos
It is not often that a full page in DIGGER is given over purely to photographs, but I am sure you will agree that the photographs from Geoffrey Atkinson’s album (cover and pages 9 & 37) are worthy of the space.

Contributions to website
Website manager Chris Munro is updating our website each Wednesday. She would be pleased to receive any contributions of news items, short articles or photographs to go on the website. One suggestion is that members send in photos of memorials to the Diggers in their local area. These ‘memorials’ could be in the form of monuments, rolls of honour, war trophies, community halls, etc. Chris can be e-mailed at: projectfffaif@yahoo.com.au.
‘Arch’ Mychael spent the last fifteen days of his life fighting as an infantryman on Gallipoli. He had gone to Gallipoli without orders, sailing from Alexandria with his brothers, Ken and Dennis (‘Dil’). They followed Arch’s mate, Ted Kiley, who had been chosen as one of the reinforcements for the 1st Australian Light Horse Regiment on Gallipoli. The 1st ALHR had suffered 88 casualties since landing on 12th May.

Arch was twenty-two years of age when he died on Saturday, 21st August 1915. He was being treated at a field ambulance station on the beach at Anzac Cove for wounds he had received the previous day at Walker’s Ridge.

Archibald John Mychael was the youngest of the five sons of John Thomas Mychael and his wife, Ellen (nee Lynch), of Glen Rock Station, Moonan Flat. He was born at Omadale, Moonan Flat, on 9th August 1893. Educated at a public school, he and his four brothers trained as members of the 6th Light Horse, a local militia regiment.

Recently engaged to Ida Tilse, Arch was twenty-one years old and working as a shearer when war was declared. He and his brothers immediately volunteered for overseas service. Arch was accepted straightaway; twenty-seven year old Dennis and twenty-eight year old Ken were accepted on 8th September 1914; while James and John were rejected as unfit for service by Doctor Scott at their initial medical examination.

Arch stood 5 foot 8 inches (170cm) tall and weighed 10 stone 8 lb (67kg). He had a fair complexion, blue eyes and light brown hair. His religious denomination was Roman Catholic.

With twenty-three fellow volunteers, twenty-one of whom were serving members of the 6th Light Horse, Arch attended a farewell party at the Scone skating rink on the evening of 17th August. Together with four hundred well-wishers they partied until well after midnight. Five days later, at 5am, with the town band playing and five hundred people cheering, they boarded the first troop train from the north that conveyed volunteers to Sydney.

On 28th August, Arch was taken into ‘A’ Squadron of the 1st Light Horse Regiment, commanded by 33 year old Captain (later Major) James Moffatt Reid, who had enlisted from the New England Light Horse. The squadron was made up of men from northern New South Wales; eighty per cent of whom had been born in Australia. They trained at Rosebery Racecourse for seven weeks before being ordered to be ready to embark for England within three days. During their training more than half of the squadron gained top marks as marksmen.

On 19th October, after a delay of four weeks due to reports of the German Cruisers Emden in the Indian Ocean and Gneisenau and the Scharnhorst in the Pacific, the 1st ALHR, consisting of 24 officers, 484 men and 461 horses, embarked on HMAT A16 Star of Victoria at Woolloomooloo. The following morning the A16 left the sheltered waters of the harbour and sailed unescorted for Albany, a town on the south-west coast of Western Australia. Here they joined a convoy that was to take the first contingent of troops from Australia and New Zealand to the war. The light horse brigades were eager to prove a match for the British cavalry who were fighting on the Western Front.

On 28th November the men learnt that Lieutenant-Colonel Harry Chauvel, finding their proposed training camp at Lark Hill unsuitable, had arranged for them to disembark in Egypt on 8th December, where he would join them. Under the command of Major-General Sir Alexander Godley, the 1st ALHR trained with the New Zealand Mounted Rifle Brigade at Maadi as the NZ & A Division, then with the 1st Australian Infantry Division. They soon became known as the ‘ANZACs’.

Chauvel trained the 1st and 3rd ALH Brigades to English standards of drill and discipline, while the 2nd LH Brigade under Colonel Granville Ryrie retained the Australian training routine.

On 15th February 1915 negotiations took place between Turkey and the Allies during which Turkey offered to withdraw from the war in exchange for payment of four million pounds. Failing to agree, the talks...
broke down on 15th March and the Allies made plans to attack Turkey: a decision that would cost Australia, 2½ million pounds and 8,709 lives.

Arch Mychael was disappointed at not being chosen among the reinforcements with his mate Ted Kiley, and made plans to join Ted, William Isted and ‘Willie’ Pinkerton as they embarked for Gallipoli. Learning of his plans, his brothers Ken and Dil decided that they too would embark with the reinforcements.

Landing on Gallipoli on the evening of 5th August 1915, oblivious to the fact they had been recorded as deserters three days earlier, they were joined by Syd Lee, also from Scone. At 3am the following morning they reached the 1st ALHR position at Pope’s Hill. They were surprised to find that their mates, who had left Egypt fit and healthy in May, were now thin and haggard, with many covered in sores and affected by dysentery.

After a meal of salted bully beef and hard biscuits, they prepared themselves for the planned attack on the Turkish trenches on Dead Man’s Ridge, timed to begin at 4.30am the following morning. Discarding their tunics, they sewed a square of white calico to the back of their grey flannel shirts.

Dil Mychael volunteered as a bomb thrower for Lieutenant (later Colonel) Geoffrey Hamlyn Lavicount Harris, who was to lead the first line of the storming party. Arch and Ken lined up with members of ‘A’ Squadron, with bayonets fixed to their unloaded rifles. They had been ordered to charge across the narrow end of the gully through the rifle and machine gun fire that emitted from the four lines of Turkish-held trenches. The first line of the enemy trenches had been dug by the British 13th Battalion during their unsuccessful attack against this position on 2nd May. Used only at night by the Turks, it was only ten yards from the Australians’ take off point.

Despite heavy casualties, the men of ‘A’ Squadron soon captured the first two lines of trenches. They were then joined by Major William Thomas Glasgow DSO, and ‘B’ Squadron, who had launched their attack from Waterfall Gully, directly below Dead Man’s Ridge. The Turks then rallied, and as the Australians attacked the third Turkish trench they suffered even greater casualties. Major Reid who led the attack from Pope’s was killed as he left the first trench.

Dil Mychael and Lieutenant Harris were the first Australians to reach the third trench, a mere fifty yards from where they had commenced their charge. Both were wounded while attempting to reach the fourth trench. Dil received a bullet wound to his thigh while Harris was wounded in the back by an exploding bomb.

Lieutenant (later Major) William Weir and a handful of men were the next to reach the third trench, and although they were separated from Harris and Mychael, both groups continued to bomb the fourth trench with bombs brought to them by Muswellbrook-born 566 Corporal (later Lieutenant) Bryan Irvine Keys, 437 Private Roy Charles Tancred and 397 Private Fred Barrow. These men had volunteered from ‘C’ Squadron which had remained to garrison Pope’s.

For the next two hours as they sheltered in a small section of trench, they could clearly see the dead and wounded of the 8th and 10th Light Horse Regiments who had simultaneously charged the Turks at the position known as The Nek.

As dawn broke, with the Turks still hurling bombs at them, Major Glasgow, fearing all would be killed, led the survivors, including the wounded, back to their starting point at Pope’s Hill.

[Left: ‘Gallipoli Peninsula, December 1915. Simultaneously with the attack on Quinn’s, Light Horse left Pope’s Hill and charged the Turkish trenches at Dead Man’s Ridge. At the same time the 3rd Light Horse Brigade attacked the Turkish trenches on The Nek. Three lines were mown down within fifteen yards and a fourth was stopped. The Nek is on the left and scarcely visible. Also shows Turkish trenches on Chessboard, which is behind it.’ Text and photo: AWM G01133]

During this action, which was described by Charles Bean, Australia’s official War Correspondent, “as showing self-sacrifice and heroism unsurpassed in history”, Arch Mychael had seen his mates Ted Kiley, Donald Crichton, Sid Lee and ‘Willie’ Pinkerton killed, and his brothers Ken and Dil, Lieut Arthur Andrew White, Joe Rowe and Stan Thurlow, all from Scone, wounded.
As Arch repeatedly returned into No-Man’s Land to rescue wounded comrades, his brothers Ken (who had his right knee badly wounded by a bomb) and Dil were evacuated and later transferred to a hospital in Heliopolis.

Arch, and fellow Scone-ites Walter Hudson, Alf Harper, William Isted and Roy De Alevion were five of only forty-two men who survived the charge physically unscathed.

Fifty-nine of the men who fought in this battle were killed with ninety-five wounded. Many of the wounded, including Stan Thurlow, died from their injuries.

Arch, deeply saddened by the loss of so many of his mates, was back in action the following day. It was his 22nd birthday, which he spent giving covering fire to the 1st Australian Infantry Battalion as they clung desperately to their hard won gains at Lone Pine.

Relieved by the 2nd LHR, the surviving men of the 1st LHR moved to a nearby gully where they rested during the day, returning to Pope’s each night to support the 2nd LHR.

Arch was interrogated regarding his and his brothers’ presence on Gallipoli and told the inquiry he was glad that he had been there to take his place in the charge. He described it as being like ‘Hell’, with bullets, bombs and shells coming from all directions. He revealed that at no time had he been afraid; he had just charged the Turks as he would have charged his opponents on a football field.

He told of how he had had only seven hours sleep during the 102 hours he had been on the peninsula and that now, due to the loss of so many of his mates from Scone, he felt terribly lonely.

Arch had no way of knowing his brother John had successfully enlisted on 18th August. John had volunteered on the 13th and left Scone on the mid-day train on 17th August for Sydney, where he was attested and passed fit for service the following day. Entering camp just three days before Arch died, John would go on to serve with the 1st LHR in the Middle East.

The day before he was wounded, Arch had written a letter to his sisters telling them he was pleased his brother Jim had again been rejected as ‘unfit for service.’ He was convinced that three members of the family serving was sufficient, pointing out that if his four brothers had been with him, they may well have all been killed at Dead Man’s Ridge.

He told them of ‘Willie’ Pinkerton having been “shot while carrying one of our officers back to our trench.” He concluded by saying that only he and three others from his troop had survived the charge.

Arch Mychael was wounded on 20th August at Walkers Ridge. Although a reserve position, it was constantly under heavy shell and sniper fire during the day, and at night it was attacked by enemy bombing parties.

Arch died the following day and was buried in a grave at Shrapnel Valley Cemetery, next to his mate Ted Kiley, who had been killed two weeks earlier. [Right: Ted Kiley, who is buried next to Arch. Source: Scone’s Fallen Anzacs, Harry Willey. Donor Mrs M Woodlands.]

Reverend Ernest Northcroft Merrington, formerly of St Andrew’s Cathedral, Brisbane, conducted the service. Arch is buried in Plot 4, Row C, Grave 13, of Shrapnel Valley Cemetery, 400 yards south-east of ANZAC Cove.

Ida Tilse, Arch’s fiancée, was working at the Woolooma post office when the cable sent to the Mychael family, informing them of Arch’s death, was received.

Arch’s brother James, who had tried so hard to join his brothers in the army, died on 16th July 1918. A memorial was placed on his grave in memory of Arch. Their mother, Ellen, died 10th June 1920, two years before Arch’s service medals; the 1914/15 Star (No. 3074), the British War Medal (No. 3601) and the Allied Victory Medal (No. 3601) were issued to the family.

On 17th March 1967, the Australian Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Harold Holt, announced that all living Anzacs would receive the Australian ANZAC Medallion and a lapel badge. The Medallion, which was cast in bronze and depicted Simpson and his donkey carrying a wounded soldier, would also be issued to the nearest living family member of a deceased Anzac. Arch’s sister, Mrs Minnie Cone, the only surviving member of his family, applied for and received Arch’s medallion.

Arch Mychael’s name also appears on Memorial Panel 2, The Australian War Memorial, Canberra; the Memorial outside the Scone War Memorial Swimming Pool; the Roll of Honour at the Scott Memorial Hospital, Scone; and the honour rolls at Scone RSL Club, the Soldiers’ Memorial Hall at Moonan Flat and the Moonan Flat Union Church.

DIGGER 25
Charles Cathro was born in the sleepy New Zealand town of Wanganui. Young Charles was one of three sons, and named after his father Charles senior, who was a retired Master Mariner. (Source 1) They resided at the family property of ‘Jury Hill’ with mother, Margaret.

From his time as a lad, he listened intently to his father’s stories of his time at sea and yearned to follow in his father’s footsteps, for a life at sea. But Charles senior knew the true horrors of ocean life and wanted something better for his sons. He steered young Charles towards a career in electrical engineering, whilst the other two boys wanted a life on the land. (1)

After completing school Charles secured an apprenticeship at Boyd and Brennan (NZ). (1) Following the completion of his apprenticeship, Charles again indicated to his father his desire to “serve before the mast”. Charles senior still resisted his son’s requests, but in the end he knew that nothing he said would persuade his son to stay on land and so reluctantly gave his blessing. Charles secured a job as an engineer on board a British merchant ship. (1)

The young bloke relished the sea, and in a life full of adventures he toured the world and visited exotic ports. Like most sailors, Charles visited the odd tattoo parlour and soon his body was adorned with numerous tattoos, including various Red Indians, girls with pistols, coiled snakes, boats, butterflies and flowers. (2)

In 1911 Charles found himself in Galveston, Texas, and decided to try his hand at something different. After knocking about in odd jobs, he visited Houston and later Dallas, where he decided to join the now-famous Texas Rangers. (1)

The Rangers had been founded about a hundred years before by a local rancher named Gulliver. Its mission was to protect the large border ranches from cattle rustlers and marauding Mexican bandits. The Texas Rangers were a cross between a police force and a mercenary army. Its ranks were filled by hard men, ex soldiers and Indian fighters, and in the words of the ex-Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, Colonel Homer Garrison Jnr, “They were men who could not be stampeded”. (3)

Charles stated that when he joined the Rangers, the force was about a hundred and twenty strong. They had no official uniform as such. On joining, each Ranger was issued with a horse, rifle, two revolvers, a pass-book and a badge (Number 783) in the form of a five pointed Texas lone star. His preferred weapons were the Colt or Smith and Wesson six shooters, with the 12 inch barrel. He admitted that he was no good at this “quick draw business” but boasted that “he could kill a man as far away as 100 yards”. (1)

The Rangers were popular amongst the local ranchers, who welcomed their presence and looked after them with food, water and, at times, shelter. The Rangers patrolled the notorious border region and were tasked to maintain law and order, which at times called upon them to kill or capture unruly bandits.

In Charles’ words: “There was very little law and order in those days and every man had to live by his own wits. Just about everyone carried a gun. You never knew when you might need it.” (1)

Charles’ duties took him all over the country and with him was his trusty mount, ‘Baldy’, so named due to the white streak that ran the length of his muzzle.

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One day in 1913 Charles was summoned into Ranger Headquarters. He was chosen for a special mission: to kill or capture a particular Mexican bandit who had a price on his head. He was known to be a thief and murderer and the Rangers sorely wanted him ‘Dead or Alive’. Charles felt that he was chosen for the job due to his foreign accent, which made him less conspicuous to others as being a Ranger. (1)

For the next three months Charles underwent an intensive training program. His success depended upon him being able to draw and shoot, fast and accurate, and it was here that he found he wasn’t much good on the ‘quick draw’, and he was sure that he’d be dropped from the task in favour of a faster gun. Here is where his engineering prowess came into play. Charles devised a pair of special holsters that were fitted with ‘dog swivels’ fitted to the gun belt. The barrels of each pistol protruded about half an inch below the bottom of the holster. Now there was no need to draw; simply pivot the pistols forward on the dog swivels and fire. (1) The device worked and Charles perfected his unique shooting technique with deadly accuracy.

As Charles would be called upon to frequent saloons, the Rangers taught him how to play poker and, more importantly, how to ‘read’ a room. He was taught to always sit in a position where no-one could
position themselves behind him. He was never to sit at a table with more than four other men and above all, he was to always position himself at the table directly opposite the man he was after. (1)

He was now as ready as he would ever be and he set off for the dusty border town which the Mexican band was known to frequent. As he sat in the dusty, smoke-filled saloon, he eyed off his quarry. The time had come and it was either him or the Mexican – who was it to be? ‘Bang!’ and the Mexican dropped to the floor, dead. In the ensuing gun fight, Charles shot a further ten of the gang, but it wasn’t a one-sided affair. A bandit’s bullet got Charles in the knee, with another grazing him behind his right elbow.

Years later when being interviewed, the modest Ranger refused to go into details of the shootout in its entirety. All he said was, ‘I think they are best forgotten!’ (1) He did state though: “Let it suffice to say that in those days you had to kill the man you were after ... or be killed.” (1)

Charles had to get out of town quick. With a bandana tied around his knee, he climbed aboard ‘Baldy’. He made his way to Houston where he was hospitalised, with the bullet still lodged in his knee. Whilst still hospitalised, he learnt that he was to be awarded the coveted Texas Legion of Honour. He was only the twenty-fifth recipient of this prestigious medal, which was made of solid silver. The medal was to be presented to him personally by no less than the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. It was the first time that the President himself had presented the award. (1)

The award ceremony and subsequent publicity was overshadowed by the fact that Charles had a 1000 peso bounty placed on his head by the surviving bandits and they now wanted him – dead or alive. (1)

The Rangers felt that it was best that Charles left the country as soon as possible. When he was able to travel, they got him to Vancouver, Canada, from where he boarded a ship bound for Australia. (1)

Charles arrived on Australian shores to rest and recuperate after his injury. He returned to his work as an electrical engineer and settled down in the Sydney suburb of Woollahra to enjoy a quiet life – or so he thought.

As war was thrust upon the world, the cream of Australian youth flocked to the enlistment offices. Some were set upon defending the Motherland against the tyranny of the rampaging German Army; others wanted a bit of adventure and to see the world.

Charles’ knee was still not right and he knew that if he presented himself for enlistment, he would surely be rejected, perhaps permanently. He had to bide his time, no matter how much he wanted to go.

He read of Gallipoli and of the death and destruction on the Western Front. He was envious of the young men he worked with, chucking their jobs in and enlisting. Then, in early 1917, he felt that his leg was now strong enough to ‘give it a go’ at the recruiting office.

As he filled out the enlistment forms he thought long and hard as he placed in the comments on distinguishing marks. He thought to himself: “It’s a bit hard to disguise a couple of bullet holes”, so he wrote them in. He did however work them in amongst the description of the many tattoos that adorned his body, so the medical officer may very well have missed the notation of them [right]. (2)

Due to Charles’ civilian qualifications, he was allocated to the Engineers and was posted to the 1st Field Squadron, which was serving in the Middle East in support of the Light Horse.

Charles embarked in early May aboard the Troopship Port Sydney, bound for Egypt. (4) Disembarking at the Egyptian port of Suez on 20th June, Charles and his mates were taken to the Engineer Training Camp at Moascar. (2) It was here that the Sappers honed their skills before heading off to join the Anzac Forces. The Diggers learnt the finer arts of winning water, establishing wells, testing for poisoned water, demolitions, defusing explosives and establishing telegraph lines. It was tough work given the oppressive heat but it was enjoyable training. On 11th August they marched into the Australian Mounted Division.

In late October 1917, the Allied forces were on the offensive. Due to one of the greatest deceptions of the war, the enemy felt sure that the allies were again massing for an attack on the port city of Gaza, which they had attacked unsuccessfully twice before. Moving over a number of nights and in complete secrecy, the light horseman and the mounted engineers rode through the dusty darkness: their objective – the wells at Beersheba. (5)
By day the men and horses rested as best they could in the oppressive heat and dust. In an effort to travel light and fast, it was decided that once the advance had commenced, the only water that they would have was what each man carried. The horses would have to bear the brunt and would be watered if and when Beersheba was captured.

Charles lay in the lee side of a dusty washout; he was sick of trying to chase shade. As he lay there he looked at his horse as it tried to nuzzle Charles’ water bottle. Charles said to his mount: “God, I’d love a cold beer mate, what about you?”

On the morning of 31st October 1917, the allies looked down on the town. Infantry were massed on one flank; mounted elements of the Anzacs were deployed to the other flank to seize the vital defensive positions of Tel el Saba and Tel el Sakaty. The capture of these key positions would cut off the main access route of possible enemy reinforcements from Jericho, Hebron or Jerusalem.

By late afternoon the capture of the town and its vital wells was still in doubt. If it could not be captured by nightfall, then the allies would have to break off contact and withdraw to the nearest water and undergo a forced march of more than 30 miles. The horses by this time had not had a decent drink in the last three days. Their nearest water lay there, within the town.

In a bold plan it was decided that two Australian Light Horse Regiments, the 4th and 12th, would charge against the eastern defences, burst into the town and capture the all important wells. As the regiments shook out and formed up for the charge, the engineers were briefed that it was expected that the vital wells would be mined and destroyed by the Turks if they were under threat. Their job was to go in right on the heels of the Light Horse and defuse the primed demolitions before they could be detonated.

As the regiments got the order to advance, the engineers checked their equipment for a final time. They would carry in only what was most-needed, with the remainder following up in the wagons once the town was secured. As they mounted, they could see that their mates in the Light Horse were now at the canter as their unwavering lines advanced ever closer to Beersheba, then all of a sudden the horsemen broke into a charge. The engineers grinned as they could hear the blood curdling yells of the troopers over the pounding of the hooves.

As the sappers began to follow the line of the charge they heard the enemy guns open up and saw the rounds detonate amongst the horsemen, but the charge continued undaunted. Then the rattle of machine-guns and rifles erupted and gaps appeared in the ranks. The engineers were not untouched either, as the bullets found their mark amongst the advancing sappers.

As they reached the trenches many of the horsemen had already dismounted and were locked in a vicious hand-to-hand battle. Horses and men lay strewn around the enemy emplacements, and grenades burst here and there. The Turks were busy trying to withdraw their artillery but were being chased and run down by the horsemen.

The sappers had to bypass the ground fight – it wasn’t their job. Theirs’ was to concentrate on saving the wells; some of which they were sure had already been destroyed, given the explosions that could be heard in around the town.

They galloped up the narrow streets passing large numbers of Turkish prisoners being marched away at bayonet point by one or two troopers. As they hit the town square, their officer broke them into small groups and allocated them to specific wells. Charles jumped from his horse and ran towards one of the vital wells. Scanning around the base of the well he spied some tell-tale wires, and in one smooth action he whipped out his pliers and cut a three foot length out of the trail. The sappers worked quickly and efficiently in neutralising the hidden explosives. Little did they know that both the German demolition officer and the demolition switchboard which was to be used to detonate the precious wells were now safely in Allied hands. They now had time to catch their breath and, more importantly, to grab a drink from one of the wells. Charles fell to his knees and stuck his face into the pool of clear cool water. His horse drank beside him and as Charles lifted his head he said to himself: “That’s better than any bloody beer!”

The ANZAC Forces found that there was no time to rest on their laurels. The enemy were withdrawing and the Light Horse needed to maintain the pressure on the retreating enemy and keep them off balance.

In the ensuing months, battles came and battles went but for an engineer his job was never done. In early May 1918, the Light Horse was poised to push across the River Jordan and take on the large reserves of Turkish troops guarding the approaches towards Damascus. It was planned to carry out a series of raids, one being against the town of Es Salt. The engineers were again in support of their mates, the troopers. As they advanced on the town the Anzacs struck a series of scattered outposts. As they galloped towards one of these posts, Charles saw a Turk suddenly pop up and throw a stick grenade in his direction. It was as if everything was in slow motion as he watched the grenade tumble through the air. He saw the Turk grab his chest as a
nearby trooper put a round into the Turk with his rifle. Then the grenade exploded, the blast bringing down both Charles and his horse. As Charles regathered his senses he reached down and felt his left hip, and as he looked at the palm of his hand he saw it covered with blood. “Shit!” he said to himself as he thrust his hand firmly onto the wound in an attempt to stem the flow of blood.

Although the wound was only classed as ‘slight’, it was serious enough to take Charles out of any further action. He was evacuated to hospital, and then evacuated further rearward to Cairo. Upon him being well enough to leave hospital, he was sent to a series of rest camps where he could make a full recovery. On 31st October 1918, the first anniversary of the Charge at Beersheba, the war in the Middle East came to an end, when an armistice was declared with Turkey.

Following war’s end, Charles returned to Australia. He secured work at Cockatoo Island Dockyard as a Mechanical Fitter, and later found work with the English Electric Company. He returned home briefly to New Zealand in 1924 and then in 1925 was employed with the Metro Vickers Company. Charles was to work for the company for the next thirty-three years until he retired in 1958.

Charles met a lady, Mary Vivian Lapse (who went by her middle name, Vivian) and the couple fell in love and married in 1939. (6) They had one son, Kim, who went on to serve in the Army as an engineer. Charles, Vivian and Kim settled into a nice quiet life in Sydney’s northern suburbs.

Unfortunately, Charles Cathro did not enjoy good health in his later life and he suffered a cerebral haemorrhage. A severe side effect of this was an almost complete loss of memory. Luckily, as he recovered, his memory slowly returned, otherwise this story may have been lost forever. (1)

On ANZAC Day 1965, Charles was invited to attend a dinner that night to commemorate the day. As he dressed, his wife pinned on his First World War medals, and said, “Why don’t you wear your Texas medal tonight?” Charles was his usual modest self and did not feel comfortable wearing the medal, but at his wife’s insistence, he wore it to the function.

The guest of honour at the dinner was the then Ambassador for Costa Rica, who immediately recognised the coveted decoration and engaged Charles in conversation as to the circumstances surrounding the award. So the humble hero’s story was now out of the bag. (1)

Charles received notoriety when his story appeared in the local paper, The Mosman Daily, in June of that year – the text of which has contributed greatly to the writing of this story. (1)

Charles Coulson Cathro, a Kiwi by birth, an electrical engineer by trade, a sailor by choice, a Texas Ranger by virtue, and a Digger by duty, died in 1966. (6)

Sources:
3. Texas Ranger History Website.
4. AWM 8, Unit Embarkation Nominal Rolls, 1st Field Squadron AIF, 1914-1918 War.
6. NSW Births, Deaths and Marriages.

Volunteers settle into Camp

Photo: Eleven recent enlistments, and now tent-mates, pose with their newly-issued uniforms, mess kits and blankets in a Sydney camp. Geoffrey Atkinson (profiled in this issue on page 36) is in the centre of the back row. Presumably the men are all reinforcements for the 3rd Division Engineers; more specifically the 10th Field Company Engineers, which was Atkinson’s unit. Photo courtesy of Ruth Atkinson.
Caught in a masquerade

Trevor Munro, Dubbo

WWI Forums often hold ‘discussions’ on civilians, or even soldiers, who stowed, or attempted to stowaway, aboard troopships in order to fight with the AIF. Apparently several young ladies even attempted this feat, trying to don khaki and serve alongside the men. While looking at Military Police files I came across the incident related in this article.

On 18th May 1917 the Australian Garrison Military Police (AGMP) in London arrested a young Australian ‘soldier’ who claimed to be 5832 Private C Haines from the 24th Battalion. The ‘soldier’ arrested by the AGMP had struggled violently, and at every opportunity would attempt to escape. Apparently at one stage he did break free and fled, and again struggled violently when re-arrested.

It would take nearly a month before the army was satisfied of the ‘soldier’s’ identity, and that he was in fact an Australian civilian who had purchased a uniform in London and donned it to parade around the streets of London. The man was John Small, a native of South Australia.

It was not unusual for such an occurrence at this stage of the war, when any piece of AIF uniform (or look-alike kit) could be purchased for a price. Indeed, even the entire garrison of the AGMP had ordered tailored khaki jackets, made locally in 1916, to give them a smarter appearance. Around the time of Small’s arrest there are reports of arrests of civilians for the illegal sale and possession of AIF issue boots and leggings.

Lieutenant Cooper was the APM at the Hurdcott Camp and recorded the statement made by John Small at the No. 10 Camp Guard Room on 19th June 1917. It read as follows:

My right name is John Small and my home address is Coffee Palace, Hindley Street, Adelaide, South Australia. I was working in South Australia as a slaughterman and a butcher. I left Adelaide about the end of February 1914 and went to San Francisco and from there went to Boston. I did a number of trips on different boats from America, one being to Alexandria in June 1914, where I had “Egypt 1914” tattooed on my right forearm. I came to England by the Clan McDougall, this boat carrying a cargo of wheat somewhere about December 1916. This boat carried a dark crew. I came over as a stowaway. The Marconi operator knew I was on the boat. His name is Muir, he is a Scotchman and he is very small in stature. The Captain of this boat was a man about 53 years old, height about 5’9”, build medium, complexion dark, heavy dark moustache, and short beard. Since coming to England I have lived in the East End of London, and have always dressed as a civilian up to two or three days before I was arrested. I wanted to get into the Australian Army, but could not do so, and went to Petticoat Lane, London, and bought a uniform from a Jew.

Signed J. Small.

The above statement was made to me by John Small at No. 10 Camp, Hurdcott, on 19th June 1917.

Signed B.H. Cooper, Lieut.

A.P.M. AIF Hurdcott

Major Brown, the APM London at this time, requested that Small be charged under the Defence of the Realm Act and Regulations. Correspondence quoted by Geoff Barr in his book, Beyond the Myth, shows the head of the Provost Corps in the UK, Lieutenant Colonel John Williams, recommendations on what should occur with Small:

**RE ATTACHED PAPERS – J.W.SMALL**

You will see by the file attached that this man was arrested in London on 18-5-17 and gave the name of 5832 Pte Haines C.

He however, now makes a statement which you will see attached [see Cooper’s statement] to the effect that he is a civilian. He was in the possession of two A.I.F. passes and a railway warrant. One of the passes appears to have been originally issued from Administrative Headquarters; the other one No. 1911882 is unsigned and strikes me as having been stolen. In accordance with our conversation I think Small should be brought before the Civil Court on charges of–

1) being illegally in possession of Railway warrant and leave passes – or – Charged straight out with stealing same.

2) Masquerading as a Australian soldier and being in possession of Government Clothing etc.
I will be glad if you will press the bench to inflict a severe punishment in cases of this kind which are becoming prevalent and ask them to order that the prisoner on completion of his punishment be handed over to the British Recruiting Authorities. The G.O.C. is very interested in cases of this kind and I shall be glad to know the result immediately the case is disposed of. I would specially draw attention to the number of charges preferred against this man vide A.F's B 252 attached. These, I think, should be brought under their notice.


Above: An example of the type of pass issued to men of the AIF; this one is from December 1917 for a Corporal M O’Gorman. This pass is green in colour; in an attempt to reduce fraud, AIF Headquarters would change the colour of the passes after a period of time.

A brief service in the AIF
Graeme Hosken, Dubbo

Walter Walker, born in Yarrawonga, Victoria, enlisted in the AIF on 23rd July 1915 at Liverpool, NSW. His parents were living at ‘Old Breeelong’, Gilgandra, and it is likely that Walter was farming in that area. Walter enlisted at age 19 and was allocated to the 5th Reinforcements of the 18th Battalion.

Walter’s military career was very brief. He died at Liverpool Camp Field Hospital from cerebro spinal meningitis on 27th August 1915, just a little over four weeks after joining up. He had been ill for fifteen days.

The Army sent his family ‘Form A: Inscriptions on War Graves’. Walter’s father advised that they wished to have the following inscribed on his headstone: “In Memory Of Dearly Loved Son Of Mr & Mrs R Walker, Breeelong, Age 19½.” However, this form was despatched by the Army in error, and the family were then sent the correct ‘Form B’ on 9th September 1920. It appears as though the Walkers decided to change the headstone inscription, as it now reads: “Our Dear Son And Brother, Gone And Never Forgotten, Walter Dear.”

As Walter never served overseas, he was only entitled to a Memorial Plaque and Memorial Scroll. He did however receive a War Graves’ headstone in the Gilgandra Cemetery [left].
During his presentation at the John Laffin lecture day in July 2008, Lambis Englezos described research as ‘fluid’. In other words, it is not all about going forward along a straight line. One thing does not always lead to another. Sometimes we hit dead-ends. Other times we are diverted. Sometimes we are proved wrong. Many times the coincidences we discover are astounding. But one tiny item of information may also lead to astounding discoveries. What Lambis was saying is that research is forever changing and evolving.

Besides the service records of each individual soldier, the Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau Files [AWM IDRL/0428] held by the AWM, are the most powerful, graphic and touching of any relating to the AIF. It is these very files that led Lambis on his most important journey. It is also these files that helped me discover more about my grandfather’s service with the 54th Battalion, and along the way confirm some family hearsay about him. They also unearthed more questions than answers – the beauty of researching the AIF.

My grandfather, Corporal 4128A Henry Richard ‘Harry’ Arnold, was an original member of ‘A’ Company, 54th Battalion. He was wounded at Fromelles, injured at Bullecourt and gassed at Passchendaele.

I knew nothing of Harry until I was about sixteen, when my mother gave me three or four postcards he had sent home from the Great War. I was immediately enthralled. In those days even his service record was still classified and unavailable. The only information attainable was a précis of his service from the Central Army Records Office, Australian Army, which stated that he had been wounded in action 19-20th July 1916. After initially consulting Bean, I found he had been wounded at Fromelles. Eventually, when his service record did become available, I learnt he had been shot in the knee during that awful night. But this new and exciting information only led to more questions. When and where, more precisely, had he been wounded? Did he get shot crossing No-man’s land early in the battle, or was he one of those who were later surrounded and fought for their lives to escape?

In about 1979, before I had obtained Harry’s service record, his youngest sister visited our home. With her she brought a beautiful postcard portrait of Harry which she gave to me. She also told me a few stories about his terrible time in the Great War. I listened intently, but always thought they were just stories, distorted by time and family embellishment – until I ‘discovered’ the Red Cross files.

The stories my great-aunty told me were:
1. Harry told his family of retreating from the Germans in a disastrous attack that went wrong. He remembered seeing Australian soldiers bayoneted by the Germans as they tried to surrender. This was obviously Fromelles;
2. While sitting in a trench one day, Harry and his mate were having their morning rations when a shell came over and landed near them. Harry’s mate was blown apart and killed but Harry remained unscathed, although very badly concussed. I found later this was at Second Bullecourt.

Left: Photo taken November 1916 at No. 4 Command Depot, Worgret Hill Camp, Wareham, England. Harry Arnold is standing far right. Probably all the men in this photo were recovering from wounds received at Pozieres or Fromelles. The man standing in the back row, second from the right, already wears two wound stripes.
Sometimes you have to be lucky when researching, as I was when I found that Harry had made three Red Cross reports. They answered some of my questions but also produced a few more – the ‘fluid’ nature of research.

**Fromelles, 19-20th July 1916**

The 54th Battalion, like most of the attacking battalions at Fromelles, suffered many casualties before advancing from artillery fire, both enemy and friendly. They took the first German line and then moved on, searching for the second and third German trenches. What they found were mere water-filled ditches which were not defendable. At about 6.45pm, nearly an hour after the attack began, the men in the third ditch withdrew to the second.

Harry’s Fromelles statement was written after enquiries were made of **4183A Private Edwin Henry Dibben**. Harry would have definitely known Edwin Dibben. Both were from ‘A’ Company and they had left Australia together with the 13th Reinforcements, 1st Battalion, aboard the *Aeneas* on 20th December 1915.

Dibben was born in Dorset, England, and was 32 years and 9 months old when he enlisted in the AIF on 23rd August 1915. He listed himself as a coachbuilder from Stanmore.

Informant states that on July 19th at Fleurbaix he saw Dibben and a man named Richardson who was reported killed, lying together out in front of them and he was told by Pte. Cleary, 54th A.I.F., that they were both dead.

The statement made by **3487 Private Thomas Cleary** is even more revealing: *The only one I know anything about was Dibben. I don’t know his initials or number, but I think he was in A. Coy. On July 19th, we took two German trenches and six of us got into a gully 100 yards beyond the second trench. There Dibben was shot through the chest. I dressed his wound, but he was drilled right through, and I couldn’t do much for him. We had to get back to the second line and leave him, and next day we went back to our old lines. He was dying when we left him.*

Harry’s statement answered my long-time question of, ’At what stage of the battle was he wounded?’ By the way, it also confirmed the truth behind the story told by his sister over sixty years later. It is obvious Harry had made it to the third line and later pulled back to the second line of ditches. It is here that he met up with Private Cleary who told him about Dibben. So I concluded that Harry had been wounded some time later in the night, and must have been extremely lucky to escape captivity or indeed further wounds, or even death, in the scramble back to the Australian lines on the morning of July 20th 1916.

But of course the reports produced a number of new questions. Who was Cleary? And can we validate him leaving Dibben to die? There were two men named Richardson of the 54th who were killed at Fromelles. Which one did Harry see?

The question of what happened to the bodies of Dibben and Richardson never occurred to me until 2006, when Lambis first contacted me seeking information on thirty of the 54th Battalion dead he believed were missing and buried at Pheasant Wood. Dibben was amongst them. It would be safe to assume that the Richardson lying near Dibben would also have been buried with him at Pheasant Wood. This would have allowed me to distinguish which of the Richardsons Harry had seen. But both Richardsons had been buried by the Germans!

They were **4581 Private Benjamin Richardson** and **2912 Sergeant Harold Richardson**. To further complicate matters, both Richardsons, like Harry and Dibben, were members of ‘A’ Company.

*Left: September 1916. Harry Arnold [seated left] with unknown Australian and British soldiers. Taken while he was in the Northampton War Hospital. All men are dressed in ‘hospital blues’.*
Private Benjamin Richardson was born in Suffolk, England, and joined the AIF on 3rd August 1915. At the time he was 21 years and 8 months old and was working as a labourer and lived at Arncliffe. He sailed with the 14th Reinforcements, 13th Battalion, on 16th February 1916, and joined the 54th Battalion in Egypt on 1st April 1916.

Sergeant Harold Richardson [right] was born in the Newcastle suburb of Stockton. When he enlisted on 10th June 1915, he was working as a colliery clerk in Woonona, near Wollongong. He was 26 years and 6 months old. He sailed with the 9th Reinforcements, 2nd Battalion, on 30th September 1915. Like Harry and Dibben, he became an original member of the 54th Battalion on 16th February 1916. He was promoted to corporal on 1st March 1916 and to sergeant on 1st May 1916.

The Red Cross files of both the Richardsons offer no clues to definitely identify which one Harry saw. By the tone of Harry’s statement we might assume that he did not know well the Richardson that lay dead near Edwin Dibben. He probably did not know his first name. It is conceivable that Harry would not have known a private in his own company, but doubtful he would not have known a sergeant in his company, who like him was an original of the battalion. This leads me to conclude that it was Private Benjamin Richardson who lay near Dibben. Also, Harry described him as a ‘man’, possibly meaning private. If it were Sergeant Harold Richardson, and if my assumptions are correct, and Harry knew him, he would have named him in his report.

The other informant of the death of Edwin Dibben was 3487 Private Thomas Cleary [left]. When he enlisted on 1st October 1915, Cleary was 36 years and 11 months, married and living at Stanmore. He was born in Darlinghurst and worked as a telephone supervisor. He left Australia on 12th December 1915 with the 8th Reinforcements, 19th Battalion, and became an original member of the 54th Battalion on 16th February 1916. His service record reports him being wounded at Fromelles, but strangely he was admitted to hospital on 21st July 1916 suffering from bronchitis. He never returned to the Western Front and was sent home on 27th August 1917.

Cleary’s decision to leave the mortally wounded Dibben and withdraw to the second German line may seem in hindsight a selfish act. But such an incident highlights the cold, hard facts about the brutality of Fromelles – indeed all trench warfare. Dibben was dying. Nothing could be done for him even if Cleary had got him back. Cleary knew this. His position in the third line was impossible to defend and in danger of being overrun by the enemy. Callous, tragic, selfish? Yes, but in the context of the situation, I feel understandable.

**Second Bullecourt, 15th May 1917**

The Second Battle of Bullecourt began on 3rd May 1917. The two weeks of hand-to-hand fighting was the most intense experienced by the AIF. The German artillery and trench-mortar fire was constant as they attempted to evict the Australians from their small toehold in the Hindenburg Line. On the night of 13-14th May the 54th Battalion took over the most dangerous part of the Australian front line. Early in the morning of 15th May the Germans began their last counter-attack. After three hours of shelling, later described as the heaviest experienced by any troops of the 5th Division, in which ‘C’ Company, 54th Battalion, was almost wiped out, the German infantry attacked. The 54th Battalion repelled them after vicious fighting and lost half of its front line strength in doing so.

Long before I learnt of the existence of the Red Cross Files, I had obtained Harry’s Repatriation Department medical records. I had always wondered if Harry had taken any part at Second Bullecourt. To my amazement, one report confirmed that he was in the front line at the time of the German attack. Written in March 1918 in England a medical officer recorded his examination of Harry: 

Harry wrote two reports for the Red Cross about Second Bullecourt. The first related to 3486 Lance Corporal William Clarke, another original ‘A’ Company, 54th Battalion man. William Clarke had left Australia with the 8th Reinforcements/19th Battalion and had been wounded at Fromelles. He was wounded again on 15th May 1917 and died two days later. In his report Harry wrote:

I saw him wounded at Bullecourt. He was hit about the face with shell fragments and also injured internally. He was in a quarry when I saw him but was fully conscious. He was taken away to the dressing station where he died.

Harry’s rather clinical description of a man he obviously knew well only highlights the fact he had seen many men killed before and was becoming blasé about death. His second report was even more interesting. In it he described how his mate 3479 Private Charles Dixon Butler was killed by his side by a shell, confirming the tale told by his sister many years after Harry’s death.

Dear Miss,

With reference to your enquiry re 3479 Pte CD Butler, Killed in action, 15th May, 1917, I am in a position to give you some particulars.

On 15th May, Pte Butler was sitting next to me when a HE Shell came over & killed him instantly. I was personally acquainted with Pte Butler, his age was apparently between 30 & 35, his height about 5 ft 9 inches, features sharp, & slim build.

With regard to his burial, I was not present myself, but he was buried just outside the trenches on the Bullecourt-Queant sector.

It is interesting to read from the above obituary that Charles Dixon had apparently served at Pozieres. In fact he was at Fromelles, a long way from the Somme in July 1916. The misconception is not uncommon in the contemporary accounts. Fromelles was an aberration that was hidden from the Australian public, and 19-20th July casualties were conveniently ‘pigeon-holed’ with those of July and August 1916 from Pozieres and Mouquet Farm.

The Red Cross Wounded and Missing Files helped me to discover more about my grandfather’s AIF service and resolve some family ‘myths’. More importantly, they led to Lambis’ magnificent discoveries at Pheasant Wood. They are one of the most valuable sources of AIF history. The graphic eye-witness reports of the deaths of so many Australian men and boys remains an immensely sad but tangible memorial to their sacrifice.
A life that would not be forgotten: 2nd Lieutenant John Vernon Larkin

Heather (Frev) Ford, Montrose

Cemeteries for some people can be quite depressing, perhaps because they bring their own fears of death to the fore. But for many history buffs they are beautiful, restful places, full of amazing stories of days gone by. I’ve had a habit of wandering cemeteries since I was young, and after a recent visit, I began to wonder whether the ‘spirits’ were perhaps becoming a little ‘familiar’. I had to admit this day to being a little spooked!

I was into the second day of scouring the Borroondara Cemetery in Kew (Vic), for graves and memorials of WWI veterans. One of the oldest cemeteries in Melbourne, it is extremely worse for wear, though the ground staff seem to be endlessly busy. We’d just had an incredibly bad storm, and there were uprooted trees and huge branches obscuring many graves, so I’d already resigned myself to the fact that I might miss some of the veterans’ graves.

Having come upon a few lone graves buried deep under years of pine needles, I shrugged my shoulders and decided to add these to the ‘possibly missed’ category. But someone or something had other ideas; I simply couldn’t walk on. One of these graves was nagging at me, drawing me to it. Picking up a large stick, I poked it down through the mass of matted needles, and started dragging it around until I’d made an opening. The letters ‘A.I.F.’ stared up at me and I instantly broke into a sweat, and the back-breaking work hadn’t even started yet!

Anyway, much later, with my trusty stick and paintbrush still in hand (wondering whether I might have to start lugging a pitchfork with me as well!), I stood there, gazing down at the unearthed Memorial to Lieut. John Larkin, who is actually buried in France. Convinced that his parents, whose grave this was, obviously wanted his story told, how could I deny them? Totally unaware at this stage of my previous encounter with John Larkin, I began to research.

Michael Larkin and Elizabeth Gearon (Gueran) had both been born in Ireland, and coming to Australia, had married in 1891. Their four children were born in the nearby suburb of Hawthorn; John Vernon, their eldest, having been born the year after their marriage.

John Vernon Larkin (known as Jack) was just twelve years old when he became the man of the family, his father passing away at the young age of forty. The family was living in Ballarat at the time, but Michael had possibly already pre-purchased a plot, because he was buried at Kew. Jack attended St Patrick’s College in Ballarat before returning to Melbourne, where, still a teenager, he served for a couple of years in the Artillery (2nd Battery at Prahran), and worked as a clerk with the Crown Lands Office. He gave up the Artillery in 1910 when he was transferred to the country town of St Arnaud, which is where he was still working when he made the decision to enlist in the Great War at the age of 23.

Entering into the Seymour Camp in July 1915, Jack was taken into the 7th Reinforcements of the 24th Battalion in November, and ‘set sail’ for Egypt on the 26th on board the A73 Commonwealth. They arrived at Suez on New Year’s Day 1916, and after only a day to find their land legs, were thrown into the first of many marches across the heavy sands. When all the ‘Gallipoli’ troops had returned to Egypt, the rearrangement of battalions took place, and Jack and his mates were trained to the camp at Serapeum on 24th February, where they were taken on strength of the 8th Battalion. Apart from the sandstorms, their month at Serapeum was quite enjoyable, with plenty of chances to swim and ample quality food.

This, however, came to an end, and the next stage of their journey began on 25th March, when they packed up for the ten hour train journey to Alexandria. Boarding the Megantic the following morning, they sailed the day after, travelling in their lifebelts and standing to, ready for torpedoes, all the way to France.
Disembarking at Marseilles on the 31st, they eventually endured an even-longer train journey to the north of France, where they settled into their billets on 5th April. Moving on to Fleurbaix at the end of the month, Jack’s company took over the support trenches, and experienced their first heavy bombardment on 5th May. On the 15th they moved into the forward trenches for a couple of weeks, thus completing Jack’s baptism of fire on the Western Front.

The battalion’s first experience with gas came on 17th June, and two days later they moved to Belgium.

It wasn’t long before they were back in the trenches, this time in the Messines sector, contending not only with the enemy, but also with the rain that often fell at night and the general lack of food. Relieved by the 6th Battalion on 7th July, they returned to France, where their next stint was at Pozieres.

During the battle of Pozieres, Jack received a wound to his finger and hand which took him out of the line. It was the 26th of July, and a member of Jack’s company had the following to say about the day:

“...A repetition of yesterday but if anything the bombardment was heavier, our trench was full of killed, the wounded we put into a deep dugout until night. Our experience was a terrible one, it was just a matter of waiting to be killed and wondering whose turn it would be next. At 8pm we saw the Germans massing on our right and that meant everybody had to stand to and be prepared to repel an attack, but fortunately it didn’t come back, by now we only had one Corporal, another Lance Corporal besides myself and thirty men left out of the Company, and the nerves of a lot of them were shattered, very few men stood that awful strain.”

Jack was lucky to be out of it, and was taken to the 1st Australian General Hospital at Rouen. The following day (27th July), while his mates were being relieved from hell, he was on his way to England where he was admitted to the Greylingwell War Hospital in Chichester.

Returning to France on 2nd November 1916, Jack rejoined his battalion on the 17th, where they had been at rest in comfortable billets at Ribemont. The following day brought a heavy snow storm and a move to St Vast, followed by Bernafay Camp, allowing him to ease back into it before returning to the mud-filled trenches on 14th December. The battalion was then lucky to be out of the line and in camp at Mametz, for both Christmas and New Year.

1917 continued in the same vein as 1916, with time spent endlessly on the move, alternating between the line, fatigue training, and rest camps. On 17th February, Jack was promoted to Lance Corporal. In May the battalion played a part in Second Bullecourt, and it was noted that: “During our forty eight hours in the line Fritz put over no less than seven heavy barrages, rather an extraordinary occurrence besides shelling us continuously between barrages.”

Having returned to Belgium, the battalion also took part in the Third Battle of Ypres. On 20th September Jack’s platoon lost their sergeant, Charlie Gladman, during the battle for Menin Road. Charlie came from Serpentine, a small farming community near my Grandfather’s hometown of Bridgewater, and one of the many soldiers from the area that I’ve been researching. Whilst reading through Jack’s service record I had come across a note from Charlie’s father, written in 1917, asking for Jack’s number [below left]. The little prickles that had broken out in the back of my neck were still burning as I dug out Charlie’s file, which contained a copy of his diary and some letters. Sure enough, one of those letters was from Jack Larkin, who had written to Charlie’s family describing his last moments.

“...Charlie met his death on the morning of Thursday, 20th September 1917, when we made a very successful push and advance to the east of Ypres, between Inverness Copse and Glencorse Wood. He and I were together all the way through, and we were going splendidly until after we passed the first two objectives for fully 1000 yards. Just in front of our third objective, our barrage was holding us up a bit, and also one of Fritz’s famous block houses, or pill-boxes, from which he was continuously firing a machine gun at us. Charlie was up on top, and we were discussing as to how we would crawl around this pill-box and bomb the occupants out. We were then less than fifty yards off. Unfortunately it was at that time a heavy 9.2 shell landed less than 10 yards from us, and a piece of the shell casing struck Charlie on the center of the left thigh, practically severing the leg in two. A couple of us laid him in a shell hole, bound up the wound as well as we could and tied a tourniquet of rubber tubing on the top of the thigh. ... I then left him as we had to continue on with our
advance and dig in, but our barrage drove us out, and we had to retire for about 20 minutes, until it lifted. I again went back to Charlie, and found him in really good heart ...

Unfortunately, next day I found out another shell came whilst he was sitting in the shell hole and tore half his back away, thus killing one of the finest and most conscientious soldiers I have ever met in the army. ...

Kindly excuse me if I have been harsh in expressing myself in such a letter as this, but you probably know two and a half years of this life tend to make one very hard and unemotional.”

Following close on the heels of Menin Road, was the attack on Broodseinde Ridge on 4th October 1917, which miraculously coincided with an attack by the enemy at the same hour. However, the Australians won through and achieved their objectives, but at a cost. At the end of October the depleted battalion received a batch of much-needed reinforcements, and during the following reorganisation, Jack was promoted to Corporal.

His promotion was followed a few weeks later by a month of leave from 19/11/17 to 17/12/17 at Desvres, where the battalion was resting. Unlike 1916, Christmas 1917 was spent in the mud-filled trenches, but at least they didn’t miss out on their plum pudding. While out resting at Locre at the end of January, Jack was promoted to Temporary Sergeant, then Sergeant two weeks later. This was again followed by leave, but this time Jack was off to Paris for a couple of weeks. The timing proved fortuitous, because two days after his return to his battalion, all Paris leave was cancelled until further notice.

By 12th April the 8th Battalion had been rushed to Hazebrouck, to help in the defence of the Channel Ports, and after their success, was moved into the line at Strazeele. On 19th May they were again relieved from the line, and the following day Jack was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant.

The next two months were spent in and out of the line, and then, after being relieved on the night of 2nd August, the battalion began the move to the Aubigny area, where they arrived on 8th August, Ludendorff’s ‘black day of the German army’. The next morning they moved off through Villers-Bretonneux towards the village of Rosieres, to take their part in the Allied offensive that had begun the day before.

The War Diary states: “The weather was bright and warm, and the country to be covered flat and open. In front at a distance of about 8000 yards was a ridge held by the enemy, which on account of good visibility gave him a clear view of the whole of our advance.” The battalion “first encountered strong opposition on the outskirts of Rosieres, though MG Fire opened almost as soon as the advance began.”

Lieutenant Colonel Mitchell, CO of 8th Battalion wrote: “2nd Lt J.V. Larkin was wounded during the advance of the battalion North of Rosieres on 9/8/18 by a machine gun bullet through the body. He was carried back about half a mile on a stretcher but died before reaching the dressing station. He was buried by Chaplain Hayden 12th Bn, 2,400 yards south south west of cross roads in Vauvillers and a cross was erected over the grave.”

After the war, Jack’s body was exhumed and re-interred at the Rosieres Communal Cemetery Extension, where he lies amongst sixty-five of his countrymen, most of whom were killed in the same battle.

A short time before Jack had embarked for overseas, his younger brother William had joined the Permanent Forces as a Military Staff Clerk, at the age of 17. In March 1917 he’d enlisted for overseas service, sailing in June. Unlike Jack, William returned home in 1920, and went on to become a Lieutenant-Colonel in WWII.

Their mother Elizabeth lived to the age of 92, dying in Kew in 1949, never having remarried. Fifty-nine years later her grave has been temporarily rescued from the pine needles, and the cold stone once more dances with the rays of the warming sun. I can’t help wondering if in years to come, when nature has again obscured her resting place, whether her spirit will reach out once more and snag yet another curious history buff. I can only hope so.

Remembering Jack – John Vernon Larkin – Lest We Forget. [Right: Darge Photographic Company photo of JV Larkin, around 1st December 1915. AWM DA12701]
The Spirits of Gallipoli
Kim Phillips, North Ryde

Member Kim Phillips has a massive project underway, which will be of great interest to anyone with an interest in WWI, especially Gallipoli. Kim’s article is adapted from a talk she presented to the Newcastle Family History Society.

October 2000 and I’m in Israel; my first big overseas trip. I decided that it was easier to get to Gallipoli from Israel than Australia, so off I went. I had no grandfathers, or great uncles, who served at Gallipoli. I was aware, as most Australians are, of the history of the Anzacs and the Gallipoli campaign. We landed. We fought. We died. We didn’t reach our objectives. We left. But I had an urge to visit.

The Gallipoli Peninsula is a rough and beautiful place: rugged, stark, and now peaceful. Standing on Anzac Cove, I looked up at the cliffs in front of me and wondered how the men had made it up there, in the dark, under fire, on that first day. There is an ‘essence’ at Gallipoli that reaches out and grabs you. It’s difficult to breathe, there is a lump in your throat, tears form. I returned with my daughter in July 2004. Gallipoli had captured me.

There are many books and reference materials about the campaign, in which every aspect is analysed. The Anzac legend and the mateship ethic is dissected and examined. I was struck by the men themselves: who were they? Who grieved for them? Seven thousand two hundred and forty-nine members of the AIF never left Gallipoli’s shores. I had to find out all I could about them. ‘The Spirits of Gallipoli’ project was born.

If you are trying to find any information about a member of the AIF, you begin at the Australian War Memorial (www.awm.gov.au) and the National Archives of Australia (www.naa.gov.au). From here you can obtain the embarkation papers, the enlistment forms, unit diaries, rolls of honour and perhaps a photo. There were a number of ‘honour’ books compiled after the war (for example, ‘The All Australian Memorials’). Newspapers are an invaluable source of information. However, trying to find information for an individual can be difficult. Even in early 1916 some families did not know the fate of their men.

So I began searching through as many sources as I could find; indexing names and scanning material. To date, I have found photos of more than half of the men who served at Gallipoli. I have some information on more than 70% of them. One of the men I have found information for is Thomas Leonard Cadell.

Thomas was born on 7th December 1896 in Goulburn, NSW, and was the only son of John A and Mary G Cadell. John was the Manager of the London Bank of Australia in Newcastle when Thomas enlisted on 3rd September 1914. He embarked with the 3rd Battalion on the Euripides on 20th October 1914. Thomas fought during the battle of the landing, and on 7th May received a gun shot wound to his right hand. He returned to his unit on 22nd May. On 21st June he was seriously wounded by a shrapnel ball that penetrated his liver. Thomas was transferred to the Hospital Ship Gascon, where he died on 22nd June. He was buried at sea, and is commemorated on Panel 19 at Lone Pine. He is also commemorated on the Newcastle War Memorial.

There are many, many stories similar to Thomas Cadell’s. The aims of the ‘Spirits of Gallipoli’ project are to identify those who fought on Gallipoli; to find photographs of the men; locate newspaper articles featuring them; find where are they commemorated; and then to make this information available to anyone looking for it. To date, I have over 100 000 files for these men, such as the two on this page. I can quickly search my database to see if I have any details on a soldier that a member of the FFFAIF or the public may be researching.

If you’re a young Australian, maybe three or four generations on from the first Anzacs, not interested in family history, but interested in any of your ancestors who may be buried at Gallipoli, where do you start? How do you identify which of the dead are your ancestors? Would this generation know, for example, the name of their maternal grandmother’s brother?
Another aspect of my project helps people find their family. I’m looking at each of the men, using the State Birth, Death & Marriage records, and listing their families and those of their siblings. This information will bring people up to the 1940s – 1950s. From this time, most people know the names of their grandparents. I’ve listed women under both their maiden and married names. Once you find a familiar name you can look at the details for that man and see if he is part of your family.

As you can imagine, this is a large project, with many aspects of research to be done. If you are researching a Gallipoli man and looking for information, please make contact. If you have a couple of spare moments and would like to help, I’d love to hear from you.

Endnote: Kim’s website is www.spirits-of-gallipoli.com. You can write to Kim at PO Box 706, North Ryde BC, NSW 1670.

The perils of being short … Private 2706 Albert Moston, 3rd Battalion
Graeme Hosken, Dubbo

English-born Albert Moston enlisted in the AIF at the age of 24 years on 5th August 1915. He had been working as a stove fitter and living at ‘Waveney’, Wolseley Street, Haberfield. Albert stood only 5ft 2¾in tall and weighed 124 pounds, so he was only of small stature.

Albert left Australia in November 1915 and moved through the 19th Battalion and 4th Battalion before settling in the 3rd Battalion at Tel-el-Kebir on 25th February 1916. Albert was wounded in action on 26th June 1916 and an inquiry was held to ascertain whether the wound was self-inflicted.

The Court of Inquiry was conducted at Sailly on 6th July and consisted of Captain Kemp, Lieutenant McDermid and 2nd Lieutenant Daniels, all of the 3rd Battalion. The first witness, L/Cpl Spratt, stated that “on the night of 26th June at about 11 o’clock in the trenches I was in charge of a sentry group in Bay 51. Pte Moston was on duty and was standing on firing step sniping. He was just about to fire when his feet slipped and he put out his left hand to save himself and his rifle went off, the bullet passing through his left wrist. It had been raining and the fire step was slippery.”

Private Briggs testified that “the night was wet and duck boards and firing step was very greasy. Moston is a short man and had to stand on his toes to fire. He was about to fire and asked me to observe the shot when he slipped and fell and his rifle went off…”

Private Vanderberg stated that “Private Moston relieved me and had been on post for some little time when I heard his rifle go off and he shouted ‘Oh Jack, Jack.’”

In a statement, Albert Moston said “I was on observation at 10 pm and the parapet being high I had two sand bags to stand on. On top of the sand bags I had two loop holes, one on the left flank and one on the right. I fired on the right and then pulled my rifle out to fire on the left. I was standing on the edge of the parapet and while changing positions on the left flank I slipped down, my rifle falling on the trench board and discharging. It was raining at the time and the bags were slippery.” [This statement was not made at the Inquiry, as Albert was away in hospital at that time.]

The Court found that: (1) the wounding of Pte Moston was accidental and through no fault of his own (2) that the night was wet and duck boards and firing step slippery (3) that all precautions were taken to prevent the man slipping, sand bags were placed on the fire step.

Albert’s wound (described as ‘severe’) saw him sent to England for treatment, and he did not rejoin his unit until 19th December 1916. Apart from some hospital treatment for scabies in March 1918, Moston served with the 3rd Battalion until the Armistice. He left England for Australia in April 1919.

While no doubt painful at the time, Albert may have later conceded that missing the Battle of Pozieres, where the 3rd Battalion suffered heavily, was a benefit of his accidental wounding.

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SURGEON AND GENERAL [Ian Howie-Willis]
Biography of Surgeon, Major-General Rupert Downes. He was our youngest Lieut-Colonel in 1914, and led a Field Ambulance to Gallipoli and later became Head of Medical Services, Anzac Mounted Division & Mounted Corps. In WWII his great achievement was the construction of Concorde, Greenslopes, and other military hospitals. He was killed with Vasey in a 1945 plane crash.
[418 pp] HARDBACK
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The Hartnett brothers  
Nola and Albie Thomas, Kogarah

The Hartnett family came from Bago, a small farming community between Batlow and Tumbarumba in NSW. There were five boys and three girls in the family. Three of the Hartnett brothers served in WWI.

Walter Robert Hartnett enlisted as Private 559 on September 14th 1914. He was an unmarried school teacher and gave his next of kin as Mr Robert Hartnett of Bago via Adelong, NSW. He left Sydney on 19th October 1914 and joined B Squadron, 1st LHR, on Gallipoli on 15th July 1915. Walter was returned to Port Said in August suffering from colic (dysentery) and he did not return to Gallipoli until 13th November. On 2nd December Walter was allocated to the Anti-Aircraft Section. Fifteen days later he arrived in Alexandria following the evacuation from Gallipoli. (His machine gun section was the last off Gallipoli.)

Walter then joined the Western Force on 14th January 1916, which was a composite unit assembled to fight the Senussi in the Western Desert of Egypt. He was transferred to the 1st LH Brigade MG Squadron at Romani on 21st July 1916. Promotion to lance corporal followed on 1st August and to lance sergeant on 12th December 1917. Walter was sent to Officers’ Cadet School at Zeitoun on 28th June 1918 and graduated on 1st January 1919 as a second lieutenant. On his present work I will have no hesitation in recommending him for further promotion when he has had more practical experience as an officer. Promotion to lieutenant on 16th March is shown on one form, but correspondence in his file states that there is ‘no record’ of him gaining such a promotion. Walter sailed from Kantara aboard the Essex on 13th June 1919 and was discharged from the AIF on 27th September.

John (‘Jack’) Hartnett, born 26th February 1893, joined the AIF on 10th December 1915. He had been working as a tramway clerk in Sydney and was aged 22 when he enlisted. Jack was allocated to the 17th Reinforcements for the 1st Field Artillery Brigade as Gunner 17183 but was transferred to the 6th Reinforcements, 5th Field Artillery Brigade, on 1st April 1916. He arrived in Suez on 6th July 1916 and was transferred to the Isolation Compound the next day, indicating he was unwell. On 12th July Jack boarded the Borda for Marseilles, but did not reach the Australian Artillery Training Depot at Parkhouse, UK, until 1st October due to a bout of myalgia. He was transferred to the 117th Howitzer Battery of the 22nd Field Artillery Brigade on 26th October 1916 and proceeded to France on 26th March 1917.

On 3rd April 1917 Jack was transferred to the 105th Battery of the 5th FAB and saw action during the heavy fighting around Lagnicourt, the First Battle of Bullecourt in April 1917 and the Second Battle of Bullecourt in May 1917. He was killed in action by enemy shellfire on 3rd May and was buried one mile north north west of Lagnicourt. A Memorial Cross was erected to the memory of Gunner J Hartnett and other fallen gunners, and photographs of this cross were sent to members of Jack’s family. Jack Hartnett has no known grave and his name appears on the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux.

Sadly, Henry and Jack had passed nearby each other in trenches on the day before Jack was killed, without either brother knowing his sibling was so close.

Henry (‘Harry’) George Hartnett (Nola’s father) was a 23 year old letter carrier from Inverell when he enlisted on 13th September 1915 and was allocated to the 14th Reinforcements for the 2nd Battalion. He arrived in Egypt on 15th January 1916 and travelled to France aboard the Transylvania on 29th March, finally joining the 2nd Battalion in the field on 14th May.

Harry was wounded at Pozieres on 23rd July 1916 and admitted to hospital with a severe gunshot wound to the left shoulder. On the 27th July he was transferred to England for treatment, which was successful, and he returned to France and his unit, now trained as a Lewis gunner, on 5th October 1916. Harry spent some time at Command School in February 1917 and was sick with pyrexia in June. He received promotion to lance corporal on 25th July 1917 and spent time in the UK on leave in September. In October he was sent to a School of Instruction and this was followed in November with a bout of urticaria that saw him admitted to hospital.

Harry was wounded for the second occasion on 22nd April 1918, with a shrapnel wound to the left thigh. By 30th April he was being treated in the Pavilion General Hospital at Brighton. Following convalescence, Harry Hartnett left England on 23rd September 1918 for discharge in Australia.

Harry saw service at Pozieres, Flers, Bullecourt, Passchendaele and Hazebrouck, and had certainly ‘done his bit’.

_____________________________________________________
During the war Harry had kept a diary and subsequently wrote a manuscript on his return [AWM 2DRL/0840: ‘Detailed account based on personal diary covering training in Egypt and England and service in France. Describes actions at Pozières, Bullecourt, Gueudecourt, Kemmel, Amiens and Hazebrouck, 1915-1916.’] After reading Patrick Lindsay’s book *Fromelles*, and seeing Chris Bryett’s name mentioned, we contacted Chris to show him what memorabilia we had relating to Harry’s war.

With his expert knowledge of WWI, Chris supplied trench coordinates showing the probable area where Jack Hartnett was killed on 3rd May 1917. That information gave us the incentive to visit the Western Front and follow in Jack and Harry’s footsteps.

We selected a four day ‘Anzac Tour’ with Annette and Christian Linthout, staying at Camalou guest house at Dickebusch near Ypres, in a building used for a time as the headquarters of a British brigade due to its strategic location. The tours and service provided by Annette and Christian were faultless in every aspect.

We visited many of the places where the brothers had served. On the day we visited the Noreuil/Lagnicourt area, Annette used a GPS to find the likely location where Jack had been killed. Nola had prepared an Australian flag showing John Hartnett, his unit, rank, age and date killed. His flag was planted at the edge of a farmer’s field amongst some Flanders’ poppies [right]. The ‘Ode’ was recited in his memory.

On a visit to Menin Gate for the nightly ceremony, Nola gave her father’s and Jack’s medals an outing, wearing them with great pride to this moving memorial [left]. We found Jack’s name on the Menin Gate [right].

A highlight of our trip was a visit to meet Ivan Sinnaeve (‘Shrapnel Charlie’), who frequently receives FFFAIF members when they are visiting Ieper in Belgium [below left].

We were able to visit several Allied and German bunkers, Hill 60, the Passchendaele Museum, Tyne Cot Cemetery, Bullecourt (including the home of Jean Letaille, former mayor, and the museum), the Somme Valley and river, Villers-Bretonneux, Sausage Valley, Mouquet Farm (where we met the owners), Pozières, Armentieres, Polygon Wood, Talbot House, Poperinge House, Fromelles area, Ieper Museum and the Cloth Hall.

Our intention – to follow in the footsteps of Harry and Jack – was well and truly achieved.

We were puzzled by the fact that Jack seems to have had a marked grave, yet he is now one of the Missing. The photograph sent to the Hartnett family [below right] shows a cross carrying the words: “In memory of 17183 Gnr J Hartnett, 10121 Gnr AJ Bayliss and 10386 Gnr HN Baxter, 105th How Bty AIF. Killed in action, May 5th [sic] 1917.”

We asked the Commonwealth War Graves Commission to investigate this matter and they reported back: “Cross for Hartnett, Bayley and Bayliss recovered from map ref 57c.C.15.b.4.0. in Feb 1920. No bodies found, Cross re-erected in Vaulx Hill Cemetery as Memorial Cross 5 in the memorial plot. The map reference [for] burial returns in the cemetery was checked but none of the unknowns matched it. So either the cross had been moved by the time it was found in February 1920 or the bodies were so badly destroyed in 1917 that nothing remained in 1920.”

With Chris Bryett’s skills in reading trench maps we were able to visit the area in which Jack was killed and initially buried behind his battery. It was here, on the edge of a field in France, that we placed our tribute to Nola’s uncle.
The General Court Martial of Lance-Corporal WH Kenny, ANZAC MP
Ismailia, 18th February 1916

Graeme Hosken, Dubbo

President of General Court Martial
Brigadier General GN Johnston, RA.

Members
Major JA McKenzie, Otago Btn, NZEF
Major C McGilp, 1st Bde, NZFA
Major SS Allan, Auckland Btn, NZEF
Major TT McSherry, 15th Bn AIF
Captain JG Stewart, NZ ASC
Captain DJ Gibbs, NZE, NZEF
Captain HC Ford, 13th Bn AIF.

Prosecutors
Lieut OH Mead, Canterbury Btn
Major JMA Durrant, 13th Bn.

Judge Advocate
Lieut Colonel H Hart, Wellington Bn.

Accused person's Defence team
Lieut T Christopher, Canterbury Btn
2nd Lieut John Quirk, 14th Bn.

Trial of No. 171 Lance Corporal WH Kenny, ANZAC Military Police
Pledged ‘Not guilty’.
The accused … is charged with committing a civil offence, that is to say, manslaughter, in that he, at Ismailia, on the Thirtieth day of January 1916 feloniously did kill and slay No. 1524 Private Richard Thomas of D Company, 14th Battalion AIF.

First witness for the Prosecution: No. 914 Cpl CL Russell, 14th Bn states: ‘On January 30th 1916, at about 3.30pm I was standing by a shop between Ismailia and Moascar Camp. The deceased passed me, proceeding towards Moascar Camp. He appeared to be drunk. About 5 minutes later I saw him lying on the road, and I thought he was stunned.’

Cross-examined by the accused, Russell stated that he did not see the deceased go towards Kenny nor Kenny strike the deceased.

Second witness for the Prosecution, Pte RH Hooper, 14th Bn, states: … ‘The deceased, who appeared to have had a good drop of drink, was 20 or 30 paces in front of me. Two Mounted Police were coming towards us, and one dismounted, approached the deceased, and struck him with his fist. The deceased fell, and struck the back of his head on the hard ground. I thought he was stunned. I could not identify either of the two Mounted Police.’

Hooper, cross-examined by the accused, said he saw the deceased take a couple of paces towards the accused. He [Thomas] had two or three companions. He saw the MPs ride away.

Third witness for the Prosecution, Pte GH Dickinson, 14th Bn: ‘On the 30th January 1916, I had been drinking in Ismailia with the deceased. Between 3pm and 4pm we were proceeding towards Moascar Camp, when two MP came towards us along the road, and one of them said something to the deceased. I did not hear what he said. The deceased approached the Policemen and said, “You will do me.” One of the Policemen struck the deceased, and the latter fell backwards and struck his head on the road. I thought he was stunned … Deceased was put in a ghari and taken away. I did not see him alive again. I identify the accused as the Policeman who struck the deceased.’

The witness stated that it was possible that he missed something that passed between the deceased and the accused.

The fifth witness for the Prosecution, Pte JS Bellamy, 14th Bn: … ‘When I looked around, I saw two MPs approaching. One of them said something to the deceased. I could not hear what he said. The deceased replied: “You will do me.” One of the Policemen, whom I identify as the accused, dismounted and struck the deceased, using his fist, I think … I thought the deceased was simply knocked out at that time, and I undid his coat. A few minutes later, Private Parish and I put the deceased in a ghari and took him to hospital. On arriving at the hospital a MO there saw deceased and said he was dead. The MP who struck the blow rode away almost immediately after striking the deceased. Later, on the same day, I went with a corporal from my
Battalion to the office of the APM when I saw the accused standing with another MP. The accused said “How is he?” and I said he was dead. The accused said “I know I had no right to hit him: I do not know why I did so.”

Under cross-examination by the accused, Bellamy admitted that he may have misinterpreted what Kenny said.

The sixth witness for the prosecution, Lieut. CT Bradshaw, 9th Bedfordshire Regiment, produced a medical certificate showing that the death of Thomas was due to fracture of the base of the skull.

The accused, L/Cpl Kenny, was sworn in and handed in a written statement to the court:

‘I am a member of the Military Mounted Police attached to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps. On the 30th January 1916 at about 3.30pm while on police duty in the native quarter Ismailia in company with P Delaney MMP we were met in the street by a party of soldiers, one of whom (the deceased) without getting any provocation from me or my companion, came towards me and said, “You are a nice looking f****** c***, ain’t you?” I then dismounted and said to him “What’s wrong with me?” He replied, “You can’t arrest me, you cold-footed bastard”. At the same time he clenched his right hand and drawing it slightly back. I thought he was about to strike me and so I hit him and he fell to the ground, and as I thought he was not hurt at the time, and as he had a number of soldier mates with him to look after him, I mounted and rode down the street to where there was a disturbance going on between soldiers and fruit sellers. Subsequently at about 4.30pm on hearing that the man was dead, I immediately reported myself to my Superior Officer, Mr Bradshaw, the Assistant Provost Marshall.’

Kenny gave evidence that he struck the deceased with the forefinger and thumb of his open hand, under the chin. It was ‘rather more a push than a blow’. He hit the accused once only and did not see any mark on the deceased’s face.

First witness for Defence, No. 181 L/Cpl P Delaney, 24th Btn, states: ‘On Sunday, 30th Jan 1916, I was in Ismailia with the accused. We were both mounted and on duty, going towards Ismailia. We passed two parties of soldiers, and as we passed the second, one of them said to the accused, “You are a nice looking f****** c***.” The accused dismounted and said, “What’s wrong with me?” and the man said to him, “You could not arrest me, you cold-footed bastard.” At the same time he stepped forward about two paces towards the accused, and drew back his right hand, as though intending to hit the accused. The accused gave him more of a shove than a blow with his right hand, somewhere about the left side of the face of the deceased, and the latter fell down, striking the right side of his face on the ground. The accused and myself both rode away then, as there were several riots through the Town between soldiers and natives …’

Second witness for Defence, 15/57 Sgt GC Little, 2nd NZ Mounted Rifles, states: ‘On the afternoon of 30th January 1916, about 4.30pm I was in the APM’s Office when the accused and Cpl Delaney came in. The accused reported that he had been told that he had killed a man. A few minutes later, Cpl Coates and Pte JS Bellamy also came in, and they wanted to make a statement, to the effect that the accused had killed a man. I told them to put it in writing, and provided material. Cpl Coates spent some time endeavouring to write a statement, and then tore the papers up. Pte Bellamy did not attempt to write. They both appeared too drunk to be able to put in a written statement.’

First character witness for the accused, Lieut CG Bradshaw, 9th Bedfordshire Regiment, states: ‘I have known the accused for about two months, during which period he has acted as a Mounted Police under my orders. I have always found him most reliable, and one of the best men I have. If ever there was any special work required doing, I usually selected him to carry it out. I produce statement signed by JG McConaghy, DAA and QMG Anzac, as to character of the accused.’

McConaghy’s statement advised the court that Cpl WH Kenny had served continuously at Anzac from first landing to the evacuation; his conduct was always exemplary; he was specially selected and recommended for a French decoration – the Medaille Militaire; and was mentioned in despatches for general good service and devotion to duty throughout the whole period of the occupation of Anzac.

Kenny was found not guilty of the charge and the accused was released. Thomas’s death was recorded as an “accident” and due to “Concussion of the brain”. Thomas was buried at Ismailia Cemetery.

Endnotes: (1) Photo of Kenny: AWM H05515. (2) Kenny was a bodyguard to General Birdwood on Gallipoli and later in France. He was awarded the DCM and French Medaille Militaire, and at the end of the war held the rank of Warrant Officer Class 2. He was the brother of Sister Elizabeth Kenny of polio fame, who was a member of the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS) in WW1. (3) Kenny was accused of killing Pte 1524 Richard Thomas. However, a look at Thomas’ record reveals that his given name was in fact Robert. (4) Kenny was featured in the cover photo for DIGGER 22.
WWI photo location discovered

The photo below, featured in DIGGER 20, was supplied by Brenda Leece, whose father, Clyde Overell, is standing third row, second from left, wearing his slouch hat (brim down, light hatband). At the time, a friend of Yves believed the photo to have been taken in France or Belgium in 1918 or 1919, and that the performing artists were possibly ‘The Chequers’ of the 34th British Division. It was hoped that the location of this photograph could be identified by a reader.

Our dogged French researcher, Yves Fohlen, takes up the story: “I sent the picture to my older sister, Patricia, because she graduated from Ecole du Louvre from Paris and so has a very good knowledge about all kind of arts. She lives on Martiniqua Island and is a painter. On 20th August 2008 Patricia watched on French TV a program about The Parc de Saint Cloud sited west of Paris ... and she was flabbergasted to recognise the fountain shown in the picture sent by me about one year ago. That fountain is called ‘La grande cascade du Parc de Saint Cloud’, created by Le Pautre and built between 1660 and 1665.”


Using this information it would be possible for Brenda to stand in the same position that her father did all those years ago. That would certainly be an emotional experience.

[Endnote: The Parc de Saint-Cloud is located at 92210 Saint-Cloud, Paris and is open all year, daily, dawn to dusk. The gardens were built on an escarpment overlooking Paris and the River Seine.]
Lieutenant Francis Laracy, MC, was a victim of the torpedo-sinking of the RMS ‘Leinster’ on 10th October 1918 [see article in DIGGER 24]. Like a number of Australian officers, he seems to have had an ‘English base’, where numerous items of personal property (including battlefield souvenirs) were kept for when he was on leave. Three packages of the late officer’s property were sent to his mother in Toowoomba, Qld, by Mrs Alexander of Red Hill, England. Francis Laracy could never be accused of travelling light, as evidenced by the inventory of items. It would be interesting to know if any of the articles are still in the family.

Laracy’s possessions
Maurice Campbell and Sandra Smith, Dubbo

Australian Imperial Forces
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110. GREYHOUND ROAD,
HAMMERSMITH,
LONDON, W.6.

FDJ. 18.

Inventory of Effects of -  Lieutenant. F.P. Laracy, 1st. Batt’n. A.I.F

Forwarded to -  Mother,
                Mrs. M. Laracy,
                Toowoomba,
                QUEENSLAND.

Received from Mrs Alexander, Copsley, Ontwood, Red Hill, Eng. 25.10.18
ONE GREEN VALISE (Sealed), CONTAINING: -
3 Prs Ankle Boots, 1 Pr. Dance Shoes, 1 Pr. White Shoes, 1 Pr. Slippers, Socks, Sword Frog, 1 Pyjama (sic) Case, 1 Muffler, 1 Pyjama (sic) Coat, 1 Rosary, 1 Sheet, 1 Pr. White Trousers, 1 Towel, 1 Singlet, 1 Haversack, 1 Blanket, 2 Raincoats, 1 Brown Dressing Gown, 1 Pr. Breeches, 2 Tunics (Officer’s Pattern), 1 Khaki Drill Tunic, 1 Small Purse, 1 Knife, 1 Fork, 2 Spoons, 2 Cork Screws, 1 Pr. Trench Boots, 1 Smith & Wesson Revolver in Holster No. 455 not Government Property, 1 German Pistol in Holster No. 91881, 1 Civilian Felt Hat.

D/S. No. 49437 in Case No. 2104

Permit required for Revolver & pistol

ONE BLACK KIT BAG (Sealed) CONTAINING: -
2 Suits Pyjamas (sic), Socks, 1 Pr. Woolen Gloves, 1 Pr. Mittens, 1 Khaki Shirt, 1 Pr. Puttees, Handerchiefs (sic), Post Cards, Letters, 3 Books.

D/S. No. 49436 in Case No. 2104

ONE CABIN TRUNK (SEALED), CONTAINING: -
4 Red Sheets New, 7 Towels, ½ Suits Pyjamas (sic), 1 Pillow Slip, 1 Singlet, 3 Prs. Underpants, 2 White Shirts, 6 Shirts, 7 Prs. Socks, 11 Handerchiefs (sic), 7 Ties, Collars, Negatives, 9 Books, 1 Pocket Diary, 1 Mirror, 1 German Clasp Knife, 1 German Buckle, 1 Safety Razor in Case, 1 Pr. White Kid Gloves, 1 Chain 2 Money Purses attached, 1 Whistle & Lanyard, 1 Pr. Puttees (Odd), 3 Brushes, 1 Watch & Chain, 1 Souvenir Brooch, 1 Silver Identity Disc, 1 German Whistle, 1 Sponge, 1 Comb, 2 Cigarette Holders, 1 Religious Emblem, 1 Gold Locket, 1 Pr. Silver Links, 1 Brush, 2 Sword Frogs, 1 Cigar Case, 1 Silver Medal in Case, 1 Note Case Containing Photos, 1 Pocket Wallet, Visiting Cards, 1 Leather Coat, 1 Nail File, 1 Cardigan Jacket, 1 Civilian Suit, 1 Pr. Cream Trousers, Letters, Postcards, Photos.

D/S. No. 49424 in Case No. 2098
Tropical Force and the Kavieng graves

Greg Knight, Kareela

Kavieng is the principal town of Papua New Guinea’s New Ireland and less than three degrees south of the equator. Present-day Nusa Parade runs along Kavieng’s sleepy waterfront, with large tropical trees forming a shady archway over it. A kilometre or two from town and tucked away to the side of Nusa Parade is the local European Cemetery at Bagail, where two WWI Australian graves lie.

New Ireland was colonised by Germany in 1886 – they called it ‘Neu Mecklenburg’. By 1900 the German New Guinea Company (Deutsche Neuguinea-Kompagnie) had located its New Ireland administration centre at Kavieng. In 1899, Franz Boluminski, a former employee of the German Astrolabe Company, was posted to Kavieng. He was promoted to District Officer in 1910 – his legacy is the coastal, 110-mile long Boluminski Highway which runs along the north eastern coast of the island. Each village was commanded to construct a section of the road and maintain it. He also established large copra plantations in the area. In April 1913, he died of heat exhaustion and was buried at the Bagail Cemetery – his grave is marked by a large cement cross.

After the surrender of German New Guinea (Kaiser Wilhemsland) at Kokopo (Herbertshöhö) on 21st September 1914, Colonel William Holmes, the commander of the Australian Naval & Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF), dispatched the Nusa from Rabaul with a small force under the command of Major FB Heritage to occupy Kavieng. Heritage also had orders to find and release Rabaul’s British Consul, Frederick Jolley, who had been incarcerated at a plantation some 20 miles from Kavieng by the Germans at the beginning of the conflict. They landed in the afternoon of 17th October 1914 unopposed and raised the British flag.

Leaving ten men under the command of Lieutenant B Holmes, Heritage then departed in the Nusa to search for the small German vessels, Siar, Matupi and Senta, which they soon found at anchor near Gardenar (Tabar) Island. All three vessels were quickly seized and their German crews arrested. The little fleet returned to Kavieng on the morning of 20th October. The following day Heritage departed for Rabaul leaving Lieutenant Holmes and a small temporary garrison.

On 20th November the HMAT SS Te-Anau left Sydney carrying the 4th Battalion of Tropical Force. This was a section of relief troops for the AN&MEF and under the command of Commander Samuel Petherbridge. His role was to provide a military administration for the area and peoples. During the voyage an outbreak of measles developed on board, and in December when the Te-Anau arrived at Simpson Harbour, it was immediately ordered into quarantine near Matupi Island. An out break of such an infectious disease would have devastated the local native population who had little resistance to these diseases. For the remainder of the battalion’s time in New Guinea they carried the sobriquet, ‘The Measles’, as a legacy.

At Kavieng a permanent garrison of three officers, two NCOs, ten men, a European police master (Sgt Howarth) and sixty-one native police was later established. Captain Guy Owen Manning, a pre-war plantation manager in Papua, took over the roll of District Officer and Officer Commanding the small
garrison at Kavieng in February 1915. His wife, Lynda Manning, and two-and-a-half year-old daughter were also present at the station.

On the morning of Friday 18th June 1915, Captain Manning and Private Percy Good left Kavieng, each riding a motor-cycle along the Boluminski Highway. They spent the day inspecting various plantations and carrying out administrative duties. On the return trip, and only two and a half miles from Kavieng, Manning’s motor cycle failed to round a slight corner properly and he drifted to the side of the road and into a depression where some cut saplings were left. This caused him to swerve and fall off. Good was about three to four hundred yards in front when he realised Manning was not behind him. Good returned and found Manning on the side of the road with two natives assisting him. He was conscious at this stage, and as they were only a short distance from their HQ, Good proceeded to get help. He rode to Police Master Sergeant David Howarth’s residence for assistance. Howarth took Good’s cycle and returned to the accident site. Mrs Manning arrived at the scene driving a buggy with Private Ernest Henry Ward, the medical orderly from the Kavieng Hospital. Ward examined Manning and pronounced him dead.

At 9am in the morning of 19th June, Colour Sergeant Dillane conducted a military funeral at the District Office and then proceeded to Bagail Cemetery, where a funeral service was conducted and the coffin lowered into the grave [left]. Sergeant Penn from Namatanai and Kavieng garrison members formed the firing party.

A Court of Enquiry was held at Kavieng on 23rd and 24th June 1915 to determine the cause of Manning’s death. The President of the enquiry was Major Seaforth Simpson Mackenzie; the other Members being Captain Harry Lou Spencer Balfour Ogilvy and Captain Cedric William Campbell Whiting (AAMC). The witnesses were Private Good, Sergeant Howarth, Patlum, a local native who witnessed the accident, Helome, a local boy who also witnessed the crash, Private Ward, Sergeant Dillane and Mrs Lynda Manning. The two locals were interviewed in Pidgin English and translated to English for the court record. They called Manning ‘Kiap’ and his motor cycle a ‘wheel-wheel’.

Mackenzie’s finding was that Manning was “…inadvertently killed by being thrown from a motor cycle … whilst in the execution of his duty on active service.” There were no contributing factors. Mrs Manning and daughter were to “…return to Sydney by the SS Morinda on her next trip”.

The second grave [right] is that of Private William Thomas Addis. He was born in Sydney in 1885 and was over 30 years old when he enlisted at Sydney Town Hall in August 1915. His trade was listed as ‘striker’ and he was presumably involved in the steel industry. He was medically classified as ‘fit’, with a ‘fresh’ complexion and ‘good’ brown eyes. As he was unmarried, he listed his aunt, Myra Addis of Ryde, as his next of kin. He embarked from Sydney on HMAT SS Te-Anau on 20th November 1915 with the 4th Battalion.

It appears that he finally landed in Rabaul on 6th January 1916 and served for about twelve months at the little Kavieng garrison. He died of malarial complications on the morning of 13th January 1917 in Kavieng Hospital. He was awarded the 1914/15 Star, the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

On 24th January 1942 Japan occupied Kavieng, and over the next three years the US Air Force, RAAF and RNZAF reduced Kavieng to rubble, but the little Bagail Cemetery survived.

[Left] The firing party at Addis’ funeral.

Postscript: Greg is interested in hearing from any members who may have information and photographs concerning the AN&MEF, particularly unseen primary sources. Greg can be contacted at gknight1@iinet.net.au. – Ed.
Sources:
4) National Archives of Australia, *WW1 Service records, www.naa.gov.au*
5) Australian War Memorial, Embarkation rolls, www.awm.gov.au

Endnotes:
1) During the colonial period Kavieng was known as Kawieng or Kaewieng.
2) Franz Boluminski, b: Prussia 1863, d: 1913 Kavieng.
3) The German Astrolabe Company was based near Madang at Friedrich-Wilhelmsafen.
4) Major General William Holmes, b: 1862, KIA at Messines by shrapnel in 1917. Holmes was the most senior Australian officer to be killed on the Western Front. Sydney’s General Holmes Drive is named in his honour.
5) Naus – a 64-ton armed steam yacht captured from the German Navy in 1914.
6) Brigadier FB Heritage CB, MVO, b: Tas 1877, d: 1934.
7) Captain FR Jolley – later enlisted in the AIF.
8) Major Basil Holmes DSO, of Sydney b: 1892. He was the son of Maj-Gen William Holmes. Later served at Gallipoli with 17th Battalion AIF and was wounded; later served on the Western Front and then transferred to the Indian Army in 1917.
12) Captain Guy Owen Manning, b: 1881 at Hunters Hill, NSW, d: 18 June 1915 at Myym, New Ireland. 1st Battalion AN&MEF. He is commemorated at All Saints Church, Hunters Hill, and at the Kings School.
15) Captain Michael James Dillane, No. 6. b: 1878 Qld. Accountant. Embarked SS Eastern, November 1914. A-Coy, 3rd Battalion AN&MEF. Became DO & OC Garrison at Namatani, Eitape (Aitape) and Morobe. He was discharged from the Army in 1921 to join the Civil Administration in Rabaul.
17) Major Harry Lou Spencer Balfour Ogilvy, b: 1876. Embarked on SS Eastern, November 1914 with 3rd Battalion AN&MEF. Was temporary District Officer at Kavieng after Manning’s death. He returned to Rabaul in August 1915 and served there till 1919. He had served in the Boer War with the 2nd & 7th South Australians, received the Queen’s Medal with five clasps and been awarded the DCM and MID by Lords Roberts and Kitchener.
18) Major Cedric William Campbell Whiting, b: 1890 Medical doctor. Embarked on SS Eastern, November 1914. Served with the AM&NEF until 1916. Awarded the MC for bravery under fire at Messines with the 12th Field Ambulance in 1917. He returned to Rabaul in 1918 and served there to 1921.
20) This was later challenged by his eldest sister, Mary Ralph of Rozelle. His war medals and a small sum of money and some photographs in William’s possession were transferred to her.

FFFAIF member wins Premier’s Westfield History Scholarship

Congratulations go to Peter Morrissey of Coonabarabran High School (NSW) for winning the Westfield History Scholarship, valued at $15 000. Peter will use the funds to travel to Gallipoli and the Western Front in April/May 2009. Peter is an IT teacher but has a passion for WWI history. He has his own website at http://www.notjustanameonawall.com. Peter outlines his successful project proposal below:

“This program will provide online resources so that all students can use technology to study WWI through the ‘eyes’ of the soldier. It will virtually transport them to the battlefields of France and Turkey. The program will involve a detailed study of the battlefields of Gallipoli 1915 and the Western Front 1916-1918. The study will produce a set of panoramic and 3-D VR immersive photographs of places and battlefields of particular significance to Australians studying the history of soldiers that served in World War 1. The 3-D immersive photographs will be interactively linked to videos and objects of interest so that students can conduct battlefield studies as if they were there.

“VR immersive or 3-D images enable the viewer to simulate being inside the image and suspended above the ground. The viewer can look in any direction just like they were actually at that location. A series of VR Immersive images can be interactively linked together with aerial shots, videos, 3-D objects, sounds and still photographs to create a complete battlefield tour/investigation. This can be viewed on the internet using java applets and does not require the downloading of additional software.”

Peter plans to travel with his daughter to France and Belgium and then proceed to Turkey. He has been in contact with other FFFAIF members to gather advice on sites to visit and accommodation.

Peter’s finished product will not only be of interest and help to school students studying WWI, but also to members of the public who wish to undertake a ‘virtual tour’ of the battlefields ‘then and now’.

[Left: Peter with then NSW Premier, Morris Iemma, on the day Peter was presented with his scholarship.]
‘At the front’: Private 571 Robert Hutchinson, 8th Battalion

Graham Hutchinson, Allambie Heights

DIGGER 24 carried Graham’s story of the famous ‘Trench Photo’ and the story of its discovery and frequent publication many years after the war. In this issue, Graham profiles his father Bob, shown closest to the camera in the photo [AWM A03869, below].

Bob Hutchinson was born on 12th October 1880 on a farm in Wail East (Vic). After leaving school at the age of 14, Bob drove a horse team, worked as a shearer, and turned to contract fencing of farmers’ paddocks. When war was declared on 5th August 1914 (in Australia), the call to arms for men to voluntarily enlist and fight to save the Mother Country had an immediate effect, and Bob made his way to the Dimboola Recruitment Office the day it opened on 18th August.

Men from the Wimmera towns of Horsham, Dimboola, Stawell and Ararat were required to make their way to Ballarat to join the 8th Infantry Battalion under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel William Bolton.

Soldiers were sent to do their initial training at Broadmeadows Camp, 12 miles [18km] north of Melbourne. By the time the 8th Battalion boarded the Troopship A20 Benalla at Port Melbourne on 18th October 1914 to join the main convoy at Albany (WA), firm friendships had been created between Privates Freeman, Clements, Bryant, Wilson and Hutchinson.

The Benalla berthed in Alexandria on 8th December and the 8th Battalion disembarked to board a train to Cairo, then by trams to Mena Camp near the Pyramids. Strenuous training in the hot desert sands involved digging trenches, and Colonel Bolton often referred to his 8th Battalion men as ‘Digger Soldiers’, as many had experience in the mines at Ballarat and were excellent diggers. Some think that this was when the term ‘Digger’ originated and not later in the war.

In Egypt, soldiers were issued with distinctive colour patches to promote regimental morale and as an aid in identification. The 8th Battalion colour patch, worn on the shoulders, was a horizontal rectangular felt patch; the lower half was red to signify the 2nd Brigade, and the upper half was white to represent the 8th Battalion (the fourth battalion in the brigade). This combination of white over red led to the 8th being sometimes being known as ‘Blood and Guts’ or the ‘Old Blood and Bandages’.

On 4th April 1915 the 8th Battalion left Mena Camp to travel to Alexandria, where they transferred to the troopship Clan Macgillivray, which would eventually take them to the Gallipoli landing at Anzac Cove.

At 4.30am on 25th April, the 3rd Infantry Brigade landed at Ari Burnu, a mile further north than intended, and the 2nd Brigade, consisting of the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th Battalions, followed soon after. The 8th Battalion were led up a ridge line (to become known as Bolton’s Ridge, after their CO) and ordered to dig in and hold this right flank. Diary entries from Bob’s diary read as follows:

25/4/15: Arrived at landing place. Big battle going on. Landing under hot fire, shrapnel bursting everywhere. Under hot fire all day. Country very hilly. Advanced about a mile. Dug ourselves in. Saw several get shot. One bullet hit my puttee. Geo (Clements) and Sam (Wilson) all right near me.

26/4/15: Turks made night attack last night. Firing at intervals all night. This morning I counted 8 dead about 80 yards in front of our trench. Dug trenches all night. Was relieved about 11 and put in trench on extreme right [the Trench in the photo]. Another battle going on about 9 mile down [Cape Helles]. Did well today. Our artillery arrived. Big guns nearly deafen me. Am getting sore throat.

27/4/15: Few Turk snipers during night. Had no difficulty in holding our trench. My throat burst and I feel well. Big guns firing all the time. Turks attacked in afternoon but was [sic] easily repulsed. Did a good lot of shooting today. Went for water – under fire all time.

28/4/15: Had a spell from trenches today. Bombarding on both sides. Turks attacked at night but suffered. 30 of them broke through lines on left. Our prisoners are building a road for us. More ships arrived with reinforcements. All doing well on right. Made tea, etc. Had a tough night.

29/4/15: Early morn attack. 6 Batt post machine gun put out of action.
Went down and brought water. Had a good feed and tea. Went into line at 6. Everything going well. Did turns at sentry all night.

30/4/15: Just the same. Our battalion got relieved at 11 and we went down to the beach. Cooked up a good feed and made ourselves comfortable. Several shells burst over us in the afternoon, and a few casualties. I had a good swim. Went to bed early. Doing well.

Notes: Sunday the 25th was reckoned by us the most memorable day for Australians. And we considered that every man that came through it very lucky.

1/5/15: Had a good day down on the beach. More transports arrived. Had some very lucky escapes from stray bullets and shrapnel. Getting sore throat again.

2/5/15: At 9am left beach and relieved men from firing line. Went into hottest place. Turks about 400 yards from us. Firing all day. My throat crook. Was awake all night. Busy night firing.

3/5/15: Was relieved from trenches 1 o’clock. 2 shot dead & one wounded in our Company during day. Resting in dugouts behind trenches. Brought in wounded. Turk 12 yards in front of trench this morning. George took photo of trench under fire. Was called out during night.

4/5/15: Had a good rest out of trenches until 6 o’clock. Then we were kept busy all night. Turks in bushes 200 yards in front. Too dark to see much. Had some good meals today.

5/5/15: Our batt. was relieved from trenches at 9am. Went down to beach. Carted water from barge. Camped in dugout on side of hill until 7pm. Then the 2nd Bde. was shifted to the English & French front. All night very cold.


7/5/15: Standing by all day. Splendid country. Fields of poppies and daisies. Can get water anywhere by digging 2 feet. Was to stand by day & night.

8/5/15: Left camp 11am. Went a mile and dug supporting trenches. Was ordered to attack about 4. Advanced about a mile in front of trenches. Numerous casualties. We made a firing line 300 yards from Turks. Under heavy fire all the time. Got wounded in foot and with much trouble got back to Dressing Station. Worst day of the lot.

Bob Hutchinson was taken by mule ambulance to the Dressing Station, and from there by the Hospital Ship *Braemer Castle* to Valetta Hospital, Malta, where he pleaded with the doctors not to amputate his foot. He was later transferred to Manchester in England, then to a convalescent home at Holyhead on the Isle of Anglesea, Wales. Bob reported he was the first Australian to be at the Holyhead, and the Aussie slouch hat was a big hit with the locals. He couldn’t go anywhere without someone wanting a photo of the big (6 foot) Australian in his hat. The locals also found it hard to believe his stories that Australians had a harvester machine that strips the crop, threshes, cleans, and puts the wheat into bags. And as for a machine that ties hay into sheaves (the ‘binder’) and lays sheaves in a row … well, that sounds incredible, as all these tasks were done manually in Wales.

Bob was finally transported home on the *Suevic*, arriving in Melbourne on 19th November 1915 and to his home in Wail on the 21st. He was given a large reception by the Dimboola/Wail Rifle Club, of which he was a long-time member.

Bob was discharged from the AIF on medical grounds on 25th March 1916 and then worked as a motor mechanic for two years. He started the first Scout group in Horsham and was appointed its first Scoutmaster in 1917. Also in 1917, with a number of other returned soldiers, he started the Horsham RSSILA [later the RSL] and was its first President.

When Australia was calling for more volunteers, Bob re-enlisted on 26th April 1918 and was sent to Egypt as a Quarter-Master Sergeant, No. 64578, with the 3rd Light Horse Brigade, and later with the 15th Light Horse Regiment. He remained in Egypt until the end of the war and, on his return to Australia, was discharged for the second time on 5th September 1919. Bob was again made President of the Horsham RSL in 1919.

Bob lived in Horsham for the rest of his life, married, and had a daughter Joan, and three sons, Robert, Norman and Graham. He was the superintendent of the Shell Company in Horsham for 25 years and retired in 1950. During the Second World War he was appointed as Sergeant No. V225363, and did part time instructor duties at Broadmeadows.

Bob Hutchinson – the man in the front of the Trench Photo – died on 17th May 1964 and was interred at the crematorium at Ballarat.
Beware of Trains
Graeme Hosken and Trevor Munro, Dubbo

Becoming a casualty on the battlefield would be foremost in a volunteer’s mind when joining the AIF. However, death by accident claimed quite a few soldiers’ lives, as did death through illness. Here we tell the story of two Diggers who had a run-in with trains – one lived to tell the tale, while the other did not.

NSW Government Railways & Tramways
Office of the Chief Commissioner
Sydney
20th Sept. 1915

Sir,

Confirming my telephonic communication of Saturday last, I am directed by the Deputy Commissioner to bring under your notice that at 11-35pm on the 17th instant, about 20 soldiers were on the Island Platform at Granville fighting amongst themselves. The Night Officer at that station went to stop them and succeeded in doing so, but a few minutes after he left they again started fighting, just as the 10-40pm goods train from Darling Harbour was passing, with the result that one of the men, named Samuel Border, was knocked under the train and received injuries to both feet. He was taken to the Parramatta Hospital for treatment where it is understood both feet had to be amputated.

The Deputy Chief Commissioner feels very gravely concerned over this matter and would be glad if you would take it up with the men concerned. It would also appear desirable that arrangements should be made for Military Police to be stationed at Granville, the same as is done at Liverpool.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient servant,

JS Spurway
Secretary

The above letter was addressed to the Provost Marshall, 2nd Military District, Victoria Barracks, Sydney. Lieutenant-Colonel AP Luscombe, AAG, took the ‘necessary action’ two days later, and MPs were detailed for duty at Granville Station.

On 20th April 1916, Private Samuel Border, 10th Reinforcements for the 3rd Battalion, made the following statement:

“At about 10.40pm on 15th September, 1915, I was standing on the platform of Glanville [sic] Railway Station. There was a crowd of people (chiefly soldiers) standing on the platform beside myself. There was a row proceeding on the other side of the platform to where I was standing. I found that the train to Liverpool for which I was waiting did not leave from the platform where I was, and as I rushed along to go over the over-head bridge, a goods train was passing through the station, and someone gave me a bump. I fell between the platform and the moving train and as a result both my legs were cut off below the knees. After the accident I did not remember anything further until I found myself in Parramatta Hospital. I was in that Hospital 5 weeks, after which I was transferred to the Garrison Hospital and thence to Rosehall [sic] in which latter place I have been four months.

At the time of the accident I was perfectly sober. The only witness who actually saw what happened was a Jack THORNE who has since embarked on active service. No enquiry has ever been held by the military authorities and I have not been examined by any medical board. My pay was continued up till approximately 15/2/16 when I was informed that payment had been stopped.

The accident was caused by no fault of my own. Neither can I say that the military authorities are to blame in any way.

My trade was carpenter’s labourer, but I could do some light work.”

What can we discover about Samuel Border? He appears to have been christened Somerset Arthur Border, but preferred the name ‘Samuel’. Border was born near Cowra and enlisted when a 22 year-old deck hand on 7th July 1915. His mother, Amy Border of Canowindra, was nominated as his next-of-kin.

Following his accident on 15th September 1915 the Army seems to have lost track of him, as on 24th November he was declared a deserter since 1st October – at the time he was recovering in Parramatta Hospital! This warrant for his arrest was later withdrawn.
A medical report dated 20th April 1916 (the same day he made his statement) records that both legs were lost at the ‘upper ⅓’ and that both stumps were ‘quite healed and he is able to get about with artificial limbs.’ Not surprisingly, it was recommended that he be discharged from the AIF.

Samuel Border, of 4 Clisdell Street, Surry Hills, was granted a fortnightly pension of £3 for his permanent disability.

The NSW BDM website shows a Samuel A Border marrying Eileen Hodge in 1922, and a Samuel Arthur Border passing away in Marrickville in 1963.

Born and raised at Wellington, NSW, Valentine John (‘Val’) Madden was the son of James and Mary Madden. Val was a railway fettler, aged 31, when he enlisted on 22nd August 1914, and was early enough to be placed with the 1st Battalion of the 1st Brigade. Val thus became an original private (No. 717) of F Company.

Val Madden sailed on the Afric on 18th October 1914. He became a corporal and served throughout the Gallipoli campaign. Val wrote to his brother, W Madden, from Gallipoli:

‘I am still going strong, and am feeling very well indeed, considering how hard our life up here is. As you say, I am very lucky, and hope to keep on dodging them till the finish. I have had some bally close shaves though, and it is a marvel how they did not get me the first day we landed. We chased them a little too far, and about a score of us were cut off. I was the only one to get back of that crowd that I know of. I tell you a person requires some nerves to last all this time at this game. You see some pretty rotten sights at times, but one seems to get used to them. I will give you a good history of the whole affair, if I get back alright. I hope to meet some of the Wellington boys that are enlisting some time or other, but I haven’t struck any of them yet, although I think there are a good few here, mostly in the Light Horse. You see, we haven’t much time to go poking about looking for lads we know. I suppose Dan [Val’s brother] will be well on his way by this. I will look him up if he comes here.’

Except for a period of sickness, Val survived the rigours of the Peninsula unscathed. Once back in Egypt the 1st Battalion was involved in the defence of the Suez Canal (mainly building trenches – which soon filled with sand). Preparations then began for the move to the Western Front.

The ‘Wellington Times’ reported that Val Madden was killed in an accident on 29th March 1916. Val had fallen from a railway carriage and both his legs were crushed. He died about 9am on the way to No. 3 French Military Hospital from trauma and loss of blood (cited as ‘shock’ in correspondence to his family).

The details of Val’s death are correct, but at the time the family did not know that the accident had occurred in France. Val was killed in Marseilles, where the 1st Battalion had disembarked the day before from the HMT Ivernia. Madden would have been the first of the 1st Battalion, of the 1st Brigade, of the 1st Division, to die in France. Hundreds more would follow, but the accidental nature of Val’s death, at a time when the troops would have been excited and glad to be in France, makes it especially poignant, and perhaps made even more tragic because Val would have been used to working around trains from his pre-war employment.

A Court of Enquiry held at Camp Moussot on 1st April 1916 recorded an opinion that “he was killed whilst on duty, but whether he was to blame or not, there is no evidence to say.”

Val Madden was at first buried in the British Section of St Pierre Cemetery, but was exhumed and re-interred in the Mazarrques Communal Cemetery Extension, Marseilles, in 1920.

**Endnotes:**

1. Val Madden was possibly not the first man of the AIF to die in France, but he may have been the first infantryman. The 2nd Division had arrived in France on 24th March, but did not enter the line until 7th April. Barring fatal accidents or mortal illness, the 2nd Division should not have incurred any deaths until after Val was killed. The Siege Artillery was the first Australian unit in France, and Bean (Vol. III, p116n) states: “The 54th Battery had left England for France on Feb. 26 and the 55th on March 2. They were now at Maroeuil, where on March 21 and 25 the 55th had been sharply shelled by the enemy, losing several men. During the same month a billet of this battery at Mont St. Eloi was shelled, 3 men being killed and 16 wounded.” There is still some vagueness, though, in Bean’s comments: Was the ‘loss’ of several men possibly referring only to wounded, rather than killed? And on what date exactly was Mont St. Eloi shelled?

2. AWM Photo P02321.053 shows an Australian troop train on 6th August 1916 during a rest stop.
‘Anzacs over England’
The Australian Flying Corps (AFC) in Gloucestershire 1918-1919

Sourced by Alan Kitchen from the above book, published in 1992, and video, with permission of the authors, David Goodland and Alan Vaughan, UK. The documentary appeared on television in the early 1990s.

The book by Goodland and Vaughan appears to be the only written history of the 1st Flying Wing Training Squadrons: Numbers 5, 6, 7 and 8 Squadrons AFC. Not one word of these squadrons is mentioned in ‘The Official History of the AFC’, Volume VIII, as the Official Histories are principally devoted to front line units. It was not until the above two Englishmen put the video together in the early 1990s that this story saw the light of day. A lot of rich, untapped resources are at the AWM awaiting to be researched, especially the individual Squadron diaries which have not yet been digitised. Many of the AFC men rose from the Light Horse and Infantry ranks to become 2nd Lieutenants (the lowest rank for a pilot).

This story begins and ends in the corner of a graveyard in the village of Leighterton in Gloucestershire, UK. There can be found the graves of twenty-four Australian servicemen who died during and after the First World War, killed in England while learning to handle the early aeroplanes. They belonged to the Australian Flying Corps (AFC).

The part that these twenty-four airmen play in this short history is a sad one, but in remembering their tragic deaths we celebrate their lives. Another seven also died and are buried elsewhere. They, and their colleagues who survived, occupied the Stroud district of Gloucestershire for less than eighteen months, yet they are still remembered today.

They came from a vast continent still being developed, and found themselves in an English rural backwater which had hardly changed in two hundred years. Many houses and businesses still did not have running water.

The four Training Squadrons were:

5th (Training) Flying Squadron [1st Flying Wing] Formed Shawbury, England, 1st September 1917. Also known as 29th (Australian Training) Squadron, Royal Flying Corps. Equipped with Avro 504, Maurice Farman Shorthorn and Airco DH6. Based at Minchinhampton Aerodrome near the present day A419, north of Leighterton.

6th (Training) Flying Squadron [1st Flying Wing] Formed Yatesbury, England 1st September 1917. Also known as 30th (Australian Training) Squadron, Royal Flying Corps. Equipped with Avro 504, Bristol Scout, Sopwith Camel, Sopwith Pup, SE5a and Airco DH5. Based at Minchinhampton Aerodrome.

7th (Training) Flying Squadron [1st Flying Wing] Formed Yatesbury, England 24th October 1917. Also known as 31st (Australian Training) Squadron, Royal Flying Corps. Equipped with Avro 504, BE2c, RE8 and Bristol Fighter. Based at Leighterton Aerodrome near the present day A46.


Miscellaneous Flying Corps units were the:

1st Aeroplane Repair Section [1st Flying Wing] Formed 1917 for 1st Flying Wing and based at Leighterton, England.

1st Two Squadron Station [1st Flying Wing] Formed England 27th June 1918 for 1st Flying Wing.

2nd Two Squadron Station [1st Flying Wing] Formed England 27th June 1918 for 1st Flying Wing.


Australians in particular were considered to make excellent pilots. A letter dated 11th July 1916 from the War Office to AIF Headquarters, recognised the good work done in the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) by Australian-born officers. With their temperament suited to flying services, an offer of 200 commissions was made to men of the AIF to train in Australian Squadrons in England. This was taken up, and Nos. 2, 3 and 4 Squadrons AFC arrived in late 1916 and early 1917. So efficient were these all-Australian squadrons that an AFC Training Wing with four new squadrons was formed in Tetbury, Gloucestershire.

The first Empire men to arrive in the autumn of 1917 were Canadian foresters, whose task was to clear the local woods to provide timber for the temporary canvas and wood (Bessonaux) hangars whilst the permanent brick hangars were being built.
Major T Henley, MLA, Commissioner, Australian Comforts Fund (ACF) addressing the officers and men of the Australian Flying Corps on the occasion of the presentation of ACF gifts. Temporary canvas and wood (Bessonaux) hangers are in the background.

Many of these airmen were ‘1914 and 1915 men’ who had served on Gallipoli in other units. Indeed, Lieut. Cummings, killed in an accident with two other airmen on 28th August 1918, landed on Gallipoli with the 2nd Battalion on 25th April 1915. Others had also seen action on the Western Front in many of the units of the AIF. For these men, the quiet English countryside of Leighterton in Gloucestershire (30km north of Bath), would have been like heaven. Both the local community and the AFC men embraced each other. Of course, there were occasionally incidents and crimes typical of when you get a large group of upwards of six hundred single men who had not seen home for 2 – 4 years.

Prior to the formation of the 1st Flying Wing AFC, AIF trainees, after arriving in the UK (the majority having some flying experience), were allocated to Royal Flying Corps (RFC) training squadrons, with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant (Cadet) if they did not already have a higher rank. They were then trained for up to eight months in fighter tactics, which involved a high degree of danger for the pilot. The flying machines had an engine of 90HP or higher that rotated in one direction. With that spinning weight, and in learning to recover from spins, diving on targets, etc, many accidents occurred, which often resulted in severe injuries or death.

On the monthly report that the 1st Flying Wing had to submit on each squadron using an RFC form, apart from the number of aircraft, flying hours, instructors, and engine hours, was a heading of ‘Deaths in the Squadron’!

Numbers 2, 3 and 4 Squadrons AFC (which all served on the Western Front) arrived late in 1916 and early 1917, and went into action in the later part of 1917. They appear to have had 12–16 aircraft to a squadron and a roster of 24 pilots. The ground staff (of approximately 200 men) were mainly ranked as Mechanics I and II. They received extra pay of around 1 and 2 shillings per day over an infantry private. Many of these men were a little older and came more from the trades, such as rubber workers, photographers, telegraphists, engineers, blacksmiths, postal employees, wireless operators, opticians, coppersmiths, electrical engineers, pattern-makers, gunsmiths, motor-body builders, and wheelwrights. Such skills were needed to keep these machines, made of canvas and wood, strung together with wire, with high horsepower rotary engines, in the air.

It was amazing that these ground-crew, who knew how dangerous it was to fly these machines, were given the opportunity to apply for six pilots-in-training positions within several months of arriving in England. Ninety percent of the other ranks in the 2nd Squadron AFC applied for these pilots-in-training positions.

It was not until early 1918 that the 1st Flying Wing AFC Training Squadrons were formed, and 5, 6, 7 and 8 Squadrons AFC completed their move to Leighterton and Mitchinhampton. Flight training started in March 1918 and the Australian pilots were regularly seen flying over Stroud and the surrounding villages and towns.

[To be continued in later issues]
Driver Geoffrey Neil Atkinson, 10th Field Company Engineers

Ruth Atkinson, North Turramurra

My father, Geoffrey Atkinson, was born in Mudgee, NSW, on 8th September 1892 and died in Sydney on 18th August 1965. When war was declared in 1914 my father was working on his father’s sheep station, ‘Galambine’, Mudgee. He was aged 22 and immediately wanted to enlist in the army and go overseas, having had experience in the School Cadets at Mudgee Grammar School.

Father was very disappointed to find out that he was not acceptable to the army as he suffered from ‘flat feet’. Not wanting to take ‘no’ for an answer, he tried other recruiting centres, but all to no avail. He then travelled to Melbourne, hoping that the southern state might be more lenient, but regrettably received the same response.

My father was becoming very frustrated, as his older brother, Eric (Private 2986), had enlisted on 6th July 1915, and his younger brother, Valdemar (Private 2776), had enlisted four days earlier, on 2nd July. Both brothers were allocated to the 4th Battalion and embarked on HMAT *Argyllshire* at Sydney on 30th September 1915.

Eric was invalided home to Australia on 10th June 1916, with knee problems. He was discharged, medically unfit, on 14th August 1916.

In April 1917 Valdemar was wounded in action, receiving a gunshot wound to the face. He was promoted to the rank of corporal on 19th August 1918. Valdemar was wounded again on 11th September 1918; this time with a gunshot wound to the chest and a fractured arm. His life was apparently saved by the metal cover of a notebook in his left breast pocket.

Valdemar would be awarded the Military Medal for bravery in the field in the last months of the war. His citation reads: “At Chuignes on 23rd August 1918, L/Cpl Atkinson was operating with his Lewis Gun Section on the left of his platoon, and showed excellent leadership and resource in rushing his gun forward on several occasions, in order to bring enfilade fire to bear on hostile posts. By his quick action he completely frustrated any enemy attempt at any opposition, and garrisons soon afterwards were taken prisoner.” He returned to Australia in May 1919 and was discharged from the AIF on 13th October.

Not to be defeated, my father tried once again to enlist at Victoria Barracks in Sydney on 16th October 1916, and this time, to his delight, he was accepted. The medical report though, did state that he had a ‘tendency to flat feet’. My father was now aged 24 and stood just over 6 foot tall, weighed 183 lb and had a chest measurement of 45-48 inches, so he was a bigger man than most enlistments.

Geoffrey Atkinson was placed as Driver 16650 in the 10th Field Company Engineers. His group of reinforcements embarked on HMAT *Orsova* from Sydney on 2nd December 1916, disembarked in Plymouth, UK, on 17th February 1917 and proceeded to No. 4 Camp, Parkhouse. He left for France from Folkestone on 14th May 1917 and marched out to the 3rd Division Engineers at Rouelles on 8th June. He was placed with the 11th FCE on 10th June but transferred back to the 10th FCE one week later.

Father had a short stay in hospital with mumps from 26th May to 10th June 1918, then had a bout of trench fever soon after. At some time he was gassed, which would affect his health for the rest of his life.

He spent the period between 6th and 23rd September 1918 on leave in the UK. Following the Armistice, he was transferred to the 11th FCE on 19th March 1919, no doubt due to the reduction in unit numbers as repatriation home proceeded to gather pace.

Driver Atkinson sailed for England on 14th April and finally boarded the Nestor for return to Australia on 20th May. He was discharged from the AIF on 30th August 1919.

In January 1926 my father received a letter from the OIC, Base Records, advising him that:

“... during the course of exhumation work in France a cross was found erected over the grave of an unknown soldier about 2 500 yards east of Le Sars, bearing the inscription – ‘16650 Unknown. N.S.W. X.O. or 7.0’

And as it is noted you formerly bore this regimental number, it is desired to learn whether you can throw any light on the identity of the soldier in question ...”

Unfortunately, my father was unable to help in this regard, and he often wondered if the unknown soldier was ever identified.

Like many ex-servicemen, my father did not discuss the War very much with his family, but I do recall him mentioning the Somme, Pozieres, Ypres, Polygon Wood, Villers-Bretonneux, Amiens, Bullecourt, Flanders and Passchendaele. There was also talk of the cold and mud. It was not until 1960 that my father, at the age of 68, applied for Repatriation Benefits.

Endnote: The photos on the next page come from Geoffrey Atkinson’s collection, courtesy of Ruth.
Above: A group of Australian and British ‘tourists’ in Paris, 23rd March 1919. Geoffrey is fifth from the right in the back row. This photo was taken in the courtyard of the Louvre.

Above: Photo labelled ‘Winning tug-of-war team, Australians and New Zealanders, France, August 1918’. Geoffrey Atkinson is second from the right in the back row.
Entries from the Fussell diaries
Trevor Munro, Dubbo, has taken these extracts from AWM 3 DRL 3394.

Captain Warwick Fussell (Assistant Provost Marshall, 1st Australian Division) relates three incidents concerning horses, two from June 1917 and one from July 1917. The first describes how he obtained one of his mounts, and is an entry from 16th June 1917 whilst at Baizieux, and the next is from later that month on 30th June, when he was still at Baizieux. The third incident is from Henencourt in July 1917, when Fussell was mounted on ‘Big Jim’ and supervising his MMP and Traffic men as they awaited the King’s vehicle to pass during a royal visit near the Front.

“I was riding my new cuddy, one we swapped old ‘Warrigal’ for, from Chinnery of the Artillery. ‘Warrigal’ is one of the neddies I had in Belgium (when it was possible to ride) that is, far enough back from the line. The one we got for him is a great big raw-boned bay colt, about seventeen hands high. He was dog-poor when we got him, and supposed to be an outlaw. He roots a bit. But as I have my decent saddle over here now, I took him. He has picked up wonderfully under good treatment, and plenty of feed and is not bad at all. He doesn’t want to buck much, (and I’ve let him try) and he’s a good fast trotter. His great big frame and long legs, do climb over the ground.”

“This afternoon I changed my big neddie with one of the men in the troop, Pilly, to do a bit of tent-pegging. But the big bay fellow wasn’t taking any. He dumped Pilly on his nut, and I had to give back his own horse and ride my own”.

The rider ‘Pilly’ was Lance Corporal Herbert Wilfred Pilley, who served with the 1st Division MMPs in France, and had in fact been detached to 1st Division Headquarters for service as a MMP on Gallipoli in 1915.

Captain Fussell made mention of his detachment in late May 1917:

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“Today I had the Divisional Mounted Police out, giving them a bit of ‘Light Horse’ Troop drill. They are a smartish lot of fellows, (25), and have the best horses in the Division. And also, they have the best-mounted body in the Anzac Corps. They are decent riders, but they don’t know their drill too well, being mostly from Infantry Battalions. I’ve had a few of the best of them tent-pegging. (It was under fire at the time).” [Left: Illustration from ‘Sydney Mail’]

“The King passed the Chateau, at Henencourt, where I was on ‘Big Jim’, at twenty past twelve. ‘Jim’ was very fresh, and had been sidling, and backing, and rearing, all the morning in his freshness, on account of the good condition young Bob has got him in. I was afraid that, when the Royal Car was passing, right alongside me, and I was sitting in a rigid salute, he would be curving and backing, and probably turn his tail round to the car. But the only thing he did was to stop fooling, prick his ears forward, and gaze curiously and interestedly at his boss’s King. I was very pleased of course, at his good behaviour, at so important a time, and to repay him, I let him go home at his great, long trot, as fast as he liked, the two kilometres back to his stable. And when I got off him, he nearly knocked me over by rubbing me with his big, strong, ugly, (though sensible) head – trying to show his appreciation. I left the reins hooked over his neck, and he stood alongside me and looked all round, while I sang out for Bob Devlin, my groom. As soon as ‘Jim’ saw him coming through the orchard, he whinnied, left me on my own, and walked over to meet Bob, arching his long neck, and sniffing at him when he got to him. Bob grinned happily, and walked back towards the stable, without touching the reins, the big bay horse following him closely. He looked back once, still walking on, as much as to say ‘It’s alright to ride me for fast trips, and all that sort of thing; but this is where I get a good feed and drink and rub down.’”

Trooper Bob Devlin was one of the 1st Division’s MMPs and was in charge of Fussell’s mounts, as well as ‘Jim’. Captain Fussell also had a batman, who at this time was probably a private from the Cyclist Corps, Ralph Handcock.
A further incident involving one of Fussell’s traffic men, **Jim Drummond**, and a handler and his mules, was recorded from October 1917:

“It was raining like hell, as usual, and just getting dreary dusk, and he (Fritz) was shelling the road right from Birr Cross roads, past the ‘Culvert’, and Hooge Crater, and up to Chateau Wood. A Tommy got to the corner on a mule, and leading another with 18 pounder ammunition on. Both mules jibbed, as they pricked their long ears, and saw and heard the bursts (explosions) on ahead. He cursed and swore at them and tried for some time to get them to face the road, till old Jim Drummond, the traffic man on duty, got behind them and gave them a start.

As they went on Drummond sang out: ‘They don’t like goin’ up. They want to go back home!’ The rider turned round with a mouthful of swear words as he went along, and answered, ‘They don’t B-X-Q-well want to Z-Q-well go back home more than I do!’”

Around the time these diary entries were made, Captain Warwick Fussell [shown standing, right], was the Assistant Provost Marshall (APM) for the 1st Division on the Western Front. Fussell was a well-respected officer and took great pride in his role within the Division. He was by all accounts well-liked and respected by his men. Fussell also took a great deal of pride in the welfare of the mounts that his men rode.

Fussell wrote copious entries in numerous diaries, which he would send home to Australia to his wife, Vera, whom he normally referred to as ‘Vee’. Vera was a published author, and between the pair, numerous exercise books were filled, corresponding back and forth. Fussell would relate many such incidents to his wife; he would also frequently ‘slip back’ to remembering his life on the land in Australia before enlisting.

Captain Fussell was eventually posted back to England; the strain of his time on the front had weighed heavily upon him. Colonel Williams, head of the Provost Corps, rather than burning out a good officer, agreed to the posting. The photo [right] shows Fussell at a meeting in February 1917 of several of the APMs and TCOs for the various Divisions in France. The officer seated is **Colonel William Smith**. Colonel Smith was the Head of the French section of the Anzac/Australian Provost Corps for most of the war. Smith in his pre-war days had been the remount officer for the Victorian Police and no doubt would have ensured that his MMP in France were issued with suitable mounts to carry out their duties.

[Left] AWM photo D00480, taken at Tidworth, showing some of the fine horses with which the MMP of the Australian Provost Corps were issued. The officer on the extreme left is Captain Theodore Levy.

Would you like to have your Digger-ancestor profiled in DIGGER? Contact the Editor with your Digger’s name and unit details, and Graeme will prepare the draft of an article for you. If you have any letters or photographs relating to your soldier, send copies along. Every Digger has a story to tell.
Interview with Wendy Gadd, Assistant Curator AWM
Graeme Hosken, Dubbo

Wendy, what is your job title at the Australian War Memorial?
My official title is Assistant Curator, and I work as part of the Official Records section, which operates within the Research Centre at the Memorial. The Research Centre is responsible for the Memorial’s library and archival collections, and provides access and reference services to the collections.

I am responsible for the administration of the three Honour Rolls – the Roll of Honour, the Commemorative Roll and the Remembrance Book. The archival series of records that the rolls are based on are part of the Official Records collection and are therefore managed by my section, which, strictly speaking, is made up of archivists.

How long have you worked in this position?
I have been working exclusively on the Honour Rolls for the last nine months, and before this I worked in the Research Centre for five years. I have just completed some post-graduate studies in Archives and Records. My introduction to archival records began when I worked in a position photocopying personal Service Records at the National Archives of Australia, before digitisation was introduced. I was immediately fascinated by the Service Records, especially when I first saw the records of my relatives. My grandfather and great-uncle fought in the First World War, and my father and uncle both served in the Royal Australian Air Force in the Second World War.

What does your work entail?
My daily tasks involve the administration, research, and the writing of recommendations for enquiries relating to the Honour Rolls. I also update and amend the entries on the database, which contains the three rolls.

The Memorial receives many enquiries from the public regarding entries on the Honour Rolls. The enquiries range from simple and straightforward requests (for example, amending any spelling errors or adding a middle name), to more complex cases relating to the date, cause, and place of death of the person commemorated. We also receive requests for adding personnel to the rolls, and we add names of those personnel who have died in recent conflicts.

I usually visit the National Archives of Australia Reading Room at Parkes (ACT) every few weeks to view records that are not online. After undertaking thorough research for each case I write a recommendation for approval that is considered by management. The integrity of the record is very important and no changes are made until we are sure they are as correct as possible. Database amendments are considered and approved by the Senior Curator, Private and Official Records, and the Head of the Research Centre, while corrections or additions to the bronze panels are approved by the Assistant Director, National Collections and the Director, and in some cases by the Memorial’s Council.

I also attend Roll of Honour Advisory Group meetings where issues relating to the three Honour Rolls are discussed by representatives of the different sections that are involved with their administration, such as Military History and Buildings and Services.

How should people contact you if they believe there is an error on the AWM databases?
Any queries, questions, or requests for amendments to the Honour Rolls should be emailed to: HonourRolls@awm.gov.au. Please include your contact details and as much information on the person commemorated as possible, and a description of the error or type of query.

The Information Services section in the Research Centre also provides a reference service for public enquiries in general:
Phone: (02) 6243 4315
Email: info@awm.gov.au
Reftracker: http://www.awm.gov.au/research/(Reftracker is an online reference service where you can fill out an online reference form stating your enquiry.)

When you are investigating a possible error on the database, what primary and secondary sources do you refer to?
For each enquiry, I gather information from as many sources as possible in order to build up a broad picture of the circumstances of the case. In this way an objective decision can then be made based on all the available evidence and information to hand.

The primary archival sources I refer to are the Roll of Honour index cards and Roll of Honour circulars, Personal Service Records, unit war diaries and other related archival records, such as casualty reports and private records. The Roll of Honour cards and Roll of Honour circulars are part of the
Memorial’s Official Records collection, and each set of cards (a series) pertains to a conflict and service; for example, the cards for the army during the First World War, belong to series AWM145. [Right: Roll of Honour card for Wendy’s great uncle, Lindsay Gadd, 14th Brigade AFA, KIA 24th April 1918.]

As Commonwealth Official Records, these series are catalogued on the National Archives of Australia RecordSearch database, and the series notes provide more detailed information on each one. I recommend reading the Series note for AWM145 as it contains a summary of the history and policy of the Roll of Honour at the Memorial [http://naa12.naa.gov.au/scripts/SeriesDetail.asp?M=3&B=AWM145].

Information recorded on the Roll of Honour cards was collected for each conflict from various sources, namely Commonwealth War Graves Commission records, official casualty lists and personal Service Records. Information recorded on the Roll of Honour circulars also varied for each conflict; for example, for the First World War, circulars were sent out to the families and they filled in the details of their deceased family member on the form. [Below: Roll of Honour circular filled out by Wendy’s great grandfather for his son, Lindsay Gadd.]

Other examples of secondary sources I use are: Official war histories (available online on our website); published unit histories; published books and serials; and online databases and articles.

For recent conflicts, information for each case is obtained from the Department of Defence, and is documented in the Memorial’s correspondence files.
If an error is found, what work may be involved in rectifying the error, here in Australia and possibly overseas?

The Memorial collaborates with the Department of Veterans’ Affairs and the Office of Australian War Graves to obtain consistency with the information on our databases. If any errors are amended on the Roll of Honour that relate to information on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Debt of Honour Register, or to the Department of Veterans’ Affairs Nominal Rolls, I advise them of the amendments we have made and the reasons for doing so. They likewise notify me of any amendments they have made that relate to the Roll of Honour.

How would you describe the work you do?

I really enjoy the work I do as it provides a range of interesting tasks and challenges – administration, communication with the public, research and writing, and all of these support the principal purpose of the Honour Rolls – to commemorate those Australians who have died on active service. By making each entry as accurate as possible, I believe I am contributing to the act of commemoration and remembrance. The Memorial is a unique institution in Australia and I feel privileged to be able to contribute to the personal and collective memory of Australians who have died in war.

Is there one particular investigation that gave you considerable satisfaction from completing?

Each person commemorated has a unique and usually sad story, and after completing the work for the case I feel I have in some way contributed to continuing the memory of that person. An example of a case I am compiling at the moment is one for the Commemorative Roll. This roll takes the form of an online database and a beautiful hand-made book that can be viewed in the Commemorative area of the Memorial. The Commemorative Roll commemorates Australians who were not eligible for the Roll of Honour, because they served with forces of allied countries, the Merchant Navy and other organisations. The Commemorative Roll was developed in the early 1980s from public appeals for nominations, and it is often the case that some eligible personnel have not been included on the roll.

Acting Squadron Leader Frank Eddison, who served with the (British) Royal Air Force (RAF) in the Second World War, was killed in action over the Netherlands in 1941 and has recently been approved for inclusion on the Commemorative Roll. He is not eligible for the Roll of Honour as he served with an allied force. The Memorial holds a studio portrait of him in the Photographs collection [Left: AWM P03469.001].

As I began to collect information for his case, I became interested in the story of his family who lived in the Canberra region. His father, Walter Eddison, served with the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) in the First World War and settled on a rural property ‘Yamba’, part of what is now Woden Valley in the Australian Capital Territory. Present day ‘Eddison Park’ at this site was named in honour of the family, and contains the Eddison Park War Memorial.

Walter Eddison and his wife Marion had three sons, all of whom died fighting in the Second World War. Two of the sons, Edward and Jack, are commemorated on the Roll of Honour. There is a memorial plaque to all three sons at St John the Baptist’s Church, Reid, which is not far down the road from the Memorial; the plaque was unveiled by their mother.

Frank Eddison served with the Commonwealth Military Forces from 1932 to 1934, and then with the Palestine Police from 1934 to 1936. According to a newspaper clipping of 11th October 1936, after his term with the Palestine Police, Frank was “seeking new fields” and was “undecided whether to enter the British Air Force or go to China”. He said that the “Arcadian calm of Canberra, its tiled pool, its domestic politics and the rugged hills of Brindabella often call, but he would travel a few years longer before settling down on the farm” (PR89/088).

Frank then joined the RAF in Britain and served with No. 214 Squadron. He received a Distinguished Flying Cross in 1941 but was killed in action on 9th May 1941. A copy of an accident report in Dutch, that is included in the papers of Frank Eddison, states that he and his crew were all killed when their Vickers Wellington was shot down by a German night raider over the Netherlands at 2.48 am. This report was sent to friends of Eddison’s from a Dutch friend and attached is their letter translating the report into English. The friend writes that “they crashed in a daffodil field and the people working in the field put the parts of their bodies in the daffodil boxes” (PR89/088). Frank was later buried in the Bergen-Op-Zoom War Cemetery in the Netherlands.
Here is a list of all the sources collected in Australia for this case: Commonwealth War Graves Debt of Honour Register entry for Frank Eddison; AWM65: 1162 - RAAF biographical file for Frank Eddison; Studio portrait of Frank Eddison P03469.001; AWM Private Record PR89/088 - Letters written by Frank Eddison; AWM Private Record PR03468 - Collection related to Mrs WH Eddison (mother); The London Gazette, 19th November 1940, p.1163, Distinguished Flying Cross awarded to Frank Eddison; The London Gazette, 19th November 1940, p.6633, Frank Eddison granted a commission as a pilot officer in the RAF, on 3rd September 1940; ACT Memorial website entry for Frank Eddison; Roll of Honour entry and circular for Edward Eddison (brother); Roll of Honour entry and circular for Jack Eddison (brother); Service Record for Walter Eddison (father).

Thank you, Wendy, for agreeing to be interviewed for DIGGER, and for the wonderful work you are doing to honour the memory of those Australians lost in all conflicts.

16th Battalion history released: ‘Bloody Angle, Bullecourt & Beyond’

Member Ian Gill, formerly of WA and now living in Bali, has released his history of the famous 16th Battalion. In 2000, Ian co-produced the re-publication of ‘Westralian Cavalry in the War’, the unit history of the 10th Light Horse Regiment, AIF. His first stand-alone publication came in 2003 with ‘Fremantle to France – 11th Battalion AIF 1914-19’, which was self published. He intends to co-write with Neville Browning, a book of similar nature on the men of the 10th Light Horse Regiment, AIF. A précis of Ian’s book on the 16th Battalion is featured below.

‘Bloody Angle, Bullecourt & Beyond’ is a reference-style publication relating to the men of the 16th Battalion AIF. Originally raised in the states of Western and South Australia in September 1914, the 16th Battalion formed part of the famous 4th Brigade, and later the 4th Division.

The battalion distinguished itself at Gallipoli at Pope’s Hill and Quinn’s Post in the early fighting, suffering appalling losses in the attempt on Baby 700 at Bloody Angle on 2nd May 1915. After weeks in reserve, it then fought in the August Offensive at northern Anzac in the attempt on Hill 971; by then its numbers depleted by the heavy fighting, disease and sickness that were common during the campaign.

In France and Belgium the 16th Battalion fought gallantly at Pozieres and Mouquet Farm in 1916, followed by Bullecourt in April 1917, where the battalion suffered heavy losses in killed, wounded and captured. It then fought in Belgium at Messines and in the Battle for Passchendaele.

In 1918, in response to the German Spring Offensive, the battalion fought almost continuously at Hebuterne, Villers-Bronneux and Hamel, followed by its own August Offensive in front of Amiens, culminating with a last victorious battle at Le Verguier on the Hindenburg Outpost Line in September.

This work (hardcover, 715pp) includes a chronology, a biographical note on each award recipient, Honour Roll, letter and diary extracts, POW roll and statements, shipping list and embarkation roll. It contains numerous maps and hundreds of photographs, and is a tribute to one of the finest infantry battalions in the AIF.

Endnote: To obtain a copy of Ian’s book before 20th January 2009, send a cheque for $70 (plus $10 for postage within Australia) to Ian Gill, 8(B) Patfield Street, Myaree, WA 6154 (enquiries to iangill1@bigpond.com.au). After January 20th, send your cheque to Lesley Patching, 15 Steiner Avenue, Success, WA 6164 (enquiries to wes23@bigpond.com). Ian has only around 300 copies left (as at Nov. 23rd) so don’t delay your order or you may miss out on this great addition to your WWI library.
New member seeking information on the 2nd Battalion
Patric Millar, Glen Innes

I don’t know how I missed the FFFAIF for so long, but I’m glad I found it. From what I’ve seen and read it is a wonderful organisation, full of knowledgeable people. After trading emails with Graeme chasing some 2nd Battalion information, he suggested that I write a ‘brief new member introduction’.

I’ve been doing research on my Grandfather, Captain CK (Ken) Millar MC, on and off for a number of years. He was an original member of 2nd Battalion, First AIF, enlisting on 22nd August 1914 and receiving a regimental number of 707. He was in the Landing at Gallipoli and commanded one of the C Parties at the Evacuation. He left Gallipoli on the second last ‘beetle’ around 3.00am on 20th December 1915. From there he went to France until the end of the War, finally returning to Australia on 16th March 1919.

At a 2nd Battalion Reunion on Anzac Day 1968 he gave the following address which best summarises his service (spelling as per original):

May I say this as your principal speaker today; I feel honoured to make this address and I do so with the knowledge that there is no officer, NCO or man in our battalion with more front line service in the battalion, and more right than I have to address you on the day we celebrate.

I served in all companies, except headquarters; as a private and NCO “C” company, then a young Lieutenant “Don” company at Pozieres and then as a Lieutenant to Command “A” company up to and including Hermies and Bullecourt and in the mud and wretchedness of Paschendale. I commanded “B” company until Joe Colingwood came back from Australia and we took it in turns to take that company into the line.

I fought in the landing and had the greatest compliment and honour paid to me in a long life of ups and downs, when Captain Harrison of “C” company selected me in company with Ernie Kelly to be the last of his company to join five officers and ten other ranks to leave the empty trenches at Anzac. I fought in the first battle in France, Pozieres, and was in the line round Hargicourt the last time we went in.

Like many others, Granddad was a prolific letter writer and I am fortunate enough to have copies of the letters he sent to his sister and mother, his unpublished memoirs, photos, memorabilia, his Service Record and copies of the articles I know he wrote for *Reveille*. I’ve just started putting this all together into a single document for my family. My aim is to produce a manuscript written almost entirely in the first person from Granddad, into which I’ll add historical context and other information. Part of my project is to provide an insight into some of his mates which he mentions in his memoirs and letters. In a future DIGGER article I’ll list all his mates which he mentioned in his letters and memoirs, along with details of some of their fates and a request for further information.

At the moment I’m looking for additional first-hand accounts which he may have written. I have a number of the articles he wrote which were published in *Reveille* in the 1930s, but I’m sure he wrote more than I’ve found so far. So my first request is to anyone who’s seen any *Reveille* articles by Captain CK Millar, MC or Captain Ken Millar MC, could they please contact me?

He was a stalwart of the old 2nd Battalion Association and, I believe, a regular contributor to their Monthly Newsletter. So far my quest to find copies of old 2nd Battalion newsletters has drawn a blank. So my second request is, if anyone knows where I might find old 2nd Battalion Association newsletters or indeed has copies of them, could you please contact me?

I have amassed some 2nd Battalion information which I’d love to share, so if anyone is interested please drop me an email. Finally I look forward to contributing to the FFFAIF and to DIGGER in the coming months and years.

My contact details are:
Home Phone: 02 6732 5226
Mobile: 0406 640593
Email: missydog@netspace.net.au
Address: 5 Cramsie Cres, Glen Innes, NSW 2370.

Photo right: Group portrait of officers of the 2nd Battalion at Meteren, 13th February 1918. Captain Ken Millar MC is third from the right in the front row. AWM E01660.
The caption for AWM photo E01842 (above) taken on 31st March 1918 at Baizieux, France, reads: “Australian soldiers conveying to the local cemetery the body of a civilian killed by the German shells. Whilst Baizieux was being heavily shelled, in a back street, soldiers discovered an old lady of about seventy years of age sitting beside the corpse of her husband who had just died. The woman was sent to a village out of range of shell fire and the old man was buried in the local cemetery. The services of a French interpreter attached to the 35th Division, who happened to be passing through Baizieux at the time, and who in peace time was a priest, read the burial services over the old man. The interpreter was awaiting our arrival at the cemetery. A cross was erected over the grave and the old man’s particulars placed inside a bottle, which was placed on the grave. The old woman was the last the last civilian to leave Baizieux.

Identified, left to right: Major M.L.F. Jarvie MC, Deputy Assistant Provost Marshal (DAPM), 4th Australian Division; M. Diebolt, French Interpreter; Sergeant Shirley, MSM, Australian Provost Corps (APC), attached to the 4th Australian Division (with moustache); Trooper (Tpr) Hackett, APC, attached to the 4th Australian Division (beside Shirley); Tpr Mulhare, APC, attached to the 4th Australian Division (obscured, behind Shirley); a member of the Australian Army Medical Corps (behind Mulhare); Tpr Kelly, APC, attached to the 4th Australian Division (behind Hackett); Sergeant Major Wilkinson MSM, APC, attached to the 4th Australian Division (carrying rope); unidentified in the background.”

In the photograph, the interpreter can be seen carrying the bottle in his left hand, with the old man’s details inside it. The AWM doesn’t acknowledge the taker of E01842 or the two photos that follow in Milton Jarvie’s profile, but presumably they were taken by the same official war photographer who fastidiously
recorded the details of the scene and all the persons within it. [In a coming issue of DIGGER, the other men in the photograph will be profiled.] The clarity of the photo and the detailed story recorded suggest it may have been the work of one of the official AIF photographers, possibly Captain Hubert Wilkins and his staff.

**Major Milton Livingstone Frederick Jarvie, MC**

Milton Jarvie was born at Pyramul, near Mudgee in New South Wales in 1891. Having received a university education, by 1914 Milton was believed to be managing the ‘Costing and Manufacturing Department’ of the British-Australasian Tobacco Company in Sydney.

Jarvie had spent a period of time as a Sub-Lieutenant in the Naval Reserve before he chose to enlist in the AIF early in 1915. His exact enlistment date is unclear; however he applied for and was granted a commission on 13th August 1915. On that application he stated that he had already spent about five months at the Liverpool Camp, during which time he had completed various Officers’ courses as well as musketry training.

Granted a commission, Jarvie became a 2nd Lieutenant with the 1st Battalion and sailed as a reinforcement for that battalion in October 1915, arriving at Suez in Egypt in early November. Jarvie didn’t join the 1st Battalion on Gallipoli, instead remaining in Egypt; presumably joining his battalion when it returned to Egypt in early January 1916 following the evacuation of the Gallipoli Peninsula in December.

With the expansion of the AIF and the need for more military policemen, Lieutenant Jarvie joined around a dozen other officers to help form part of the fledgling Anzac Provost Corps in early May 1916. The officers and men came together at Abbassia on the outskirts of Cairo. Officially the Corps was to have a total strength of 21 officers and 589 other ranks. Jarvie, at six foot two inches and twelve stone, and in his mid-twenties, fitted well the mould of a suitable provost officer, and he would prove to be a capable one throughout the war.

With the emphasis shifting to the Western Front in early August 1916, the Training Centre at Abbassia began winding down as the bulk of the corps was now trained. Most of the corps, including Lieutenant Jarvie, was sent to Bhurtpore Barracks at Tidworth, in England. Tidworth would become the focal point for the Australian Military Police in the UK, as well as becoming the AIF’s military police training centre in England. From now on, about twenty-five per cent of the corps would be posted around the Tidworth area.

On 1st January 1917 Jarvie was promoted to captain and was appointed as the Adjutant at Bhurtpore Barracks. Jarvie would remain in that role until mid 1917. At that time Colonel Williams, the Head of the AIF’s Provost Corps in the UK, received a telegram requesting that his Adjutant, Captain Jarvie, proceed to 1st Anzac for permanent duty in France. This was in line with the corps policy of rotating the Corps’ officer and men through the more hazardous duties on the Western Front.

Williams responded to Colonel Griffiths, the Commandant at the AIF Headquarters in London:

“Jarvie is a very capable A.P.M. indeed, and I will have much difficulty in filling his place. I am not sorry, however, that he is going for his own sake, and as I told Major Smith [head of the Corps in France] when he was here, I am glad to do anything to the interests of the detachments in France.”

In July 1917 Captain Jarvie was sent on rotation to France and attached to 1st Anzac Headquarters where Jarvie was appointed as an APM Learner. On 21st November 1917 Jarvie was appointed as the APM, 4th Division Headquarters, taking over from Major T Brown, who was posted back to England. It would appear that Jarvie, as APM for a division, was probably given the acting rank of Major.

Jarvie would prove to be well suited to this role. In late January 1918 he attended the 4th Army Provost School for a weeks’ training and then resumed his duties with the 4th Division. While serving on the Western Front it appears that Milton Jarvie chose to take most of his leave in Paris or in other parts of Europe, rather than travel to the UK as most Aussies did. In February 1918 Milton was granted two weeks’ leave in Paris.

On 15th May Jarvie was admitted to the 12th Field Ambulance for three days, suffering pyrexia. This appears to the only ill-health that Milton suffered whilst overseas. Ten days after rejoining his unit, Jarvie was given seven days’ ‘special leave’ in Paris.

The photo on the next page was taken on the same day (31/3/18). This photo [AWM E01843] shows cattle being driven to a safer location at Mellen-au-Bois. A mixture of men, including French gendarmes, British gunners, Veterinary Corps men, as well as Jarvie and some of his MMP, were involved in the relocation of the stock. Major Jarvie is the mounted officer on the roadway.
The following photo [AWM E02529] was taken in the Picardie area of France on 7th July 1918. The group consists of many high-ranking generals, as well as several important French officials. The mounted figure in the rear is an MMP keeping an eye on the group; presumably he is a member of the 4th Division, as the officer closest to him is Major Jarvie, MC.

Amongst the group of dignitaries are the French Premier, Clemenceau; General Rawlinson; Lieutenant-General Monash; Major-General Sinclair-MacLagan; and Colonels Dowse and Lavarack. The inspection is of the 4th Division’s portion of the front. Of added interest in this scene are the general service wagons on the skyline. Both these photographs were probably taken by the same official war photographer as the first photo in this article.

**Note:** If you wish to identify the people in these two photographs, see AWM E01843K and AWM E02529K on the AWM website.
In early September 1918, Jarvie was granted two weeks’ leave to a somewhat unusual destination – Rome. Upon his return to the 4th Division, Major Jarvie was formally awarded the Military Cross. His citation reads as follows:

“For continuous good work and devotion to duty as DAPM of this Division, particularly in regard to his duties in the forward areas under heavy shell fire. At all times arrangements for the evacuation of POW’s and traffic control during operations have been most successfully carried out, and his intrepidity and coolness on very many occasions under heavy shell fire have been a most excellent example to his own men and all around him. Period covered – 25 Feb to 17 Sep 1918.”

Jarvie was formally promoted to the rank of temporary major on New Year’s Day 1919 (though he had been wearing the rank for over twelve months). Shortly after that promotion, Jarvie was again granted Paris leave. Milton Jarvie remained in France until early May 1919.

On 2nd May Jarvie marched out to London and commenced duty as the DAPM for the Warminster area, and retained his rank of major. The Warminster detachment numbered one officer and about sixty men.

Jarvie continued to serve at Warminster for the remainder of 1919. On 27th January 1920 he took up duty with Headquarters in London. The photo at right [AWM A02815] would be from this period. Described as ‘Warwick Square’, this was where the Australia Provost Corps operated from in London. Milton Jarvie is second from the left.

It was not until 20th May 1920 that Jarvie boarded the Kigoma and returned to New South Wales, where he disembarked at Sydney on 18th July. Major Jarvie remained in the AIF until October 1920. In May 1925 he became a member of the NSW Legislative Assembly, and would remain so for some ten years, firstly as the Member for the Western Suburbs and then as the Member for Ashfield.

In November 1927 Jarvie had cause to take the newspaper the Labor Daily Ltd to court following its publication of the following article:

“Mr Jarvie the Nationalist candidate, has put some jargon questions to Mr Lang. One of them refers to Mr Ryan as “an avowed Communist”. I have known Mr Ryan personally for some years. He was never in the Communist Party. If ex-Major says he is, then let him swear an affidavit to that effect; or if he is a sport, let him wager 100 pounds on it, the loser’s cut to go to the Children’s Hospital. Prior to his enlistment he was a clerk in the employ of the Tobacco trust. When he went into camp the rank of Lieutenant was thrust upon him. But here’s the point, he asks Mr Lang to deny ‘facts’, well Mr. Jarvie deny the truth of this. He never saw a shot fired, smell powder (unless it was face or flea), succoured the wounded, or even set foot in France. He was a military ‘jack’ in London for the duration. I know all this because I went to Egypt in the same draft as he did. He left us very quietly and mysteriously. At one conference of the Returned Soldiers’ League, a member moved that any able bodied man that was in the Military Police should be debarred from Membership. That applies to ex-Major Jarvie.”

To prove Jarvie’s case, his solicitor requested a summary of his service (B103) from the Army be presented to the court. Indeed, this summary confirmed his service with the 4th Division on the Western Front for well over a year, as well as recording that he had been awarded the Military Cross for his service in France.

The portrait to the left is of Milton Jarvie taken towards the end of World War II. He again held the rank of major throughout WWII and from 1945 to 1947 worked with the United Nations’ Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), mainly supervising displaced persons camps in Austria. [AWM P01042.009, c1946]
Sailing disaster claims three Diggers’ lives

Sandra Playle, Fremantle, and Graeme Hosken, Dubbo

Three young men, mates from Western Australia, survived the Great War only to tragically lose their lives in a sailing accident. An article (abridged) from the Albany Advertiser, Wednesday, 6th September 1922 details the incident:

“A yachting fatality that resulted in the loss of three splendid young lives, occurred in Wilson’s Inlet, Denmark [WA], on Sunday afternoon. The fourth member of the party, a youth named Dickenson, was the sole survivor. All were members of a survey party operating under the direction of Mr A Parry, Superintendent of Lands for the South West …

“From particulars gleaned by our Denmark correspondent it is learned that [Victor] Green and [Harold] Weight journeyed to Albany and purchased a yacht of 14 ft named the Thistle, which had seen service in local waters for some time. The purchase was railed to Denmark only on Friday last, and on Sunday morning the quartet set out for a trial spin on the Inlet. The boat behaved splendishly on the run to the Bar but a strong gale arose on the return journey, and the lads, instead of putting into the river, made the fatal mistake of continuing on their course up the lake towards Young’s Siding. When near Pelican Island a sudden gust upturned the boat, hurling the occupants into the water. All, however, managed to climb onto the craft. The mast was striking the bottom and, in the heavy swell existing, the boat kept bumping uncomfortably.

“After retaining their hold for some time, the three victims, being strong swimmers, were tempted to try and reach the shore. Green was the first to strike out and after swimming a chain called to warn his companions that the swell was too heavy. He then sank. Dickenson is unable to swim. And to this fact he owes his life. He remained on the boat, but [Edgar] Rushton and Weight, finding the position untenable, owing to the intense cold and encouraged by the fact that the boat had drifted closer to the shore, set out. Weight was the first to disappear, after making a stern struggle. Rushton proceeded even further, but then turned and tried to regain the boat. He only failed by a few feet from reaching his objective.

“Dickenson had meanwhile kept to the boat. After a time the mast, gradually weakened by the buffeting, snapped, thus enabling the boat to drift into shallow water, allowing the occupant to wade ashore.

“… Weight was the second son of Mr and Mrs WR Weight, of Serpentine Road, Albany, 28 years of age. He enlisted on the outbreak of war as a member of the 16th Battalion, and was for some time a prisoner of war in Germany, but later rejoined the ranks and saw the fighting to a finish. By a strange coincidence Green was also a prisoner of war in Germany for a portion of his period of service. Rushton, the third in a family of four sons, was about 27 years of age. He also had seen service abroad …”

The remains of Edgar Rushton was [sic] accorded a military funeral at Denmark yesterday afternoon, when practically the whole of the town and district joined in paying their respects to a lad who was universally popular and esteemed.

“The body of Harold Weight was brought to Albany by yesterday’s train. At the expressed wish of the parents of the deceased, the burial will be deferred until the recovery of the body of his comrade. The Base Commandant (Major PC Raper) has granted permission to wear military uniform, as military honours are to be accorded both the deceased.”

The funerals of the victims were reported in the Albany Advertiser, Wednesday, 19th September, and added information on the war service of Weight and Green:

“… both were members of the 16th Battalion AIF and were taken prisoners of war by the Germans on the same morning. They were repatriated together, returned to Australia in the same vessel and were discharged simultaneously. They later worked together until they met their sad end. It was fitting indeed then that in death they should not be divided.” [Right: Weight and Green have identical headstones and are buried side-by-side, befitting their mateship.]
Service records of the three drowning victims
Lawrence Edgar Rushton was born in Blackburn, Lancashire, UK, and enlisted on 10th August 1915 at the age of 18 years and 11 months, having been farming in Denmark, WA. He was described as having fair complexion, yellowish eyes and yellow hair. Edgar was allocated to the 12th Reinforcements for the 10th Light Horse Regiment (which, unbeknownst to Edgar, had just been in the charge at The Nek).

When Edgar arrived in Egypt he was transferred to the 3rd LH Reserve Regiment before being appointed the 4th Division Ammunition Column as a driver on 1st May 1916. The 4th DAC sailed for the Western Front on 6th June and Edgar remained with his unit in France until he was sent to England for treatment for influenza and jaundice on 19th November 1916.

Following treatment, some leave, and a bout of going AWL, Edgar rejoined his unit on 19th April 1917. He went on leave to England in February/March 1918 and spent the period 25th April to 19th December attached to the 12th Infantry Brigade’s 4th Light Trench Mortar Battery as a gunner.

Edgar left England for return to Australia on 1st May 1919 and disembarked at Fremantle one month later.

Harold Stuart Weight was also born in England and was working as a farmer near Albany when he enlisted in the AIF on 21st June 1915 at Blackboy Hill, WA, aged 20 years. Harold was allocated to the 8th Reinforcements for the 16th Battalion as Private 2716.

Harold left Australia on 26th August and joined his unit at Mudros on 23rd October. While not stated, it is likely that he spent a short time on Gallipoli until the evacuation in December. He sailed for the Western Front on 1st June 1916 and transferred to the 4th Light Trench Mortar Battery on 5th September. Soon after Harold was admitted to hospital with VD and did not rejoin his unit until 8th December 1916.

On 11th April 1917 Weight was reported missing in action, following his capture at Reincourt (in the Battle of Bullecourt). Harold was interned at Limburg POW Camp in Germany, until he was repatriated to England on 30th December 1918 following the Armistice. He returned to Australia aboard the Khyber on 31st March 1919.

Victor Mainwaring Green was a native of Bunbury WA, and was a 21 year old farm hand of Denmark when he enlisted on 19th June 1916 and was appointed to the 21st Reinforcements for the 16th Battalion.

Victor sailed from Fremantle on the Port Macquarie on 13th October 1916 and was taken on strength of the 16th Battalion on 13th February 1917 in France.

Victor was wounded in the left hand and captured at Reincourt on 11th April 1917. He appears to have been imprisoned at Gefangenenlager, Dulman, in Germany until his repatriation to England in December 1918.

Green was also returned on the Khyber, but on a later voyage to Weight, leaving England on 23rd May 1919. He was discharged on 30th June.

The service records contradict some of the information in the Albany Advertiser, but this is not unexpected, as the reporter was relying on other people’s memories for information on the deceased. The boys were linked by pre-war geography and all served in the 4th Brigade, and while the three men were not in the one unit, there would have been opportunities to mix out of the line, and, at Bullecourt, to fight in close proximity. Edgar, Harold and Victor were able to renew their friendships after the war, and it was on a ‘boys’ day out’ that they met their deaths, close to home and family.

[Right: A Google Earth image of Wilson’s Inlet. The boys were sailing from the bar (at the ocean entrance to the lake) in a north-easterly direction. When the wind came up they tried to make for the mouth of the Denmark River, but were blown towards the southern shore of the lake, where the boat overturned about half a mile from shore near Pelican Island, which appears as a small whitish dot in the water. An exhausted Dickenson spent the night sleeping under a bush and then staggered to the beach the next morning, where he collapsed and was later found. Even today the southern shore of Wilson’s Inlet is sparsely inhabited.]
Eric and Paul Simonson had a close relationship with their ‘Uncle John’ long before war brought them even closer. John Monash had married their mother’s younger sister, Victoria Moss, in 1891, and in the early days of their marriage, John and ‘Vic’ relied heavily on their brother-in-law, Max Simonson, as a peace-keeper during this tempestuous time. Maximilian Michaelis Gabriel Simonson had been born in Christburgh, Prussia, around 1851, and after emigrating to Australia, married Sarah Maria Moss in Victoria in 1884. They had six children, all born in Brighton, with Eric and Paul being the youngest, born in 1894 and 1895 respectively.

Eric followed his uncle into Engineering, and Monash helped him with his studies, advising him that ‘steady conscientious work ... a good and wide education is the very best asset, better than wealth and influence.’ During his schooling Eric had also been a member of the University Rifles and the Senior Cadets.

Having successfully completed his third year at Melbourne University, Eric walked away from a promising career and into the AIF in July of 1915. After enlistment he completed a course at Point Cook Aviation School near Werribee [left, AWM DAD0009], but didn’t join the AFC at that time. Instead, he sailed with the 9th Reinforcements of the 8th Battalion as a 2nd Lieutenant, embarking on the Makarini in mid September.

Paul had also attested in July, but wasn’t accepted until a week before his brother sailed. His mother had given her consent, even though she wasn’t well, and was stoically coping with the mental deterioration of her previously wise and steady husband, Max. Paul had been employed as an accountancy clerk, but he too had spent time in the Senior Cadets. Embarking only a couple of weeks after his brother, he sailed with the 4th Reinforcements of the 22nd Battalion on board the A20 Hororata, as an acting sergeant.

Both boys arrived in Egypt and remained there. Monash took a few weeks leave from Gallipoli in October/November, and spent a couple of days with his favourite nephew Eric. At the end of November, Eric transferred to the 14th Battalion, which brought him into the 4th Brigade and therefore effectively under the command of his uncle. Sarah wrote often to her brother-in-law, asking him to look after her sons, and on 4th January 1916, Eric was transferred to Brigade HQ as Monash’s Orderly Officer.

A couple of weeks later Paul was transferred to the 14th Battalion and promoted to sergeant. He then received his appointment as a 2nd Lieutenant on 1st February 1916. However, with the rearrangement of battalions in February/March, Paul was again transferred – this time into the 14th’s new daughter battalion, the 46th (12th Brigade/4th Division).

Monash’s nephews took their next step towards the war at the beginning of June, travelling to France a day apart. Paul and his battalion first went into the frontline trenches near Fleurbaix on 5th July. Their baptism of fire was relatively quiet compared to the hell their relief was to face a short time later. Eric's situation was a little different to his brother’s, as he was billeted in a two-storey mansion in Calais. His time in France was cut short though, when on 14th July Monash set sail for England to take command of the new 3rd Division and Eric went with him as his Aide de Camp (ADC).

The quality of Eric’s staff work was appreciated by his uncle, and would have helped make his task easier as they worked tirelessly over the following months to whip the raw division into a fine fighting force. The 3rd Division was into their third month of training at Lark Hill Camp on Salisbury Plain, when it was arranged for the King to inspect it. Eric had the honour of leading the march-by, which continued for nearly two hours and was considered a splendid success.

While his brother and uncle made the return crossing to France on 22nd November 1916, Paul was heading the opposite direction, on leave to England. By this time he’d seen a bit of warfare. Paul had been through the battle of Pozières, and as a result had been promoted to lieutenant. He’d also spent some time in Belgium, and had just left his battalion behind in the harsh winter slush on the Somme.
To allow them to ease into their new lives, the 3rd Division was placed in a quiet sector at Armentieres, but nothing could prepare them for the weather; it was the coldest winter experienced in over thirty years. Eric didn’t feel it quite as much as the troops however, because for the first couple of months he was comfortably housed in the Plouvier family chateau at Steenwerck. However, most days he and his uncle would walk or ride for miles through the surrounding quagmire, attending to the business of war.

At the beginning of December, along with two of his fellow officers, Paul was promoted to Captain. Their second Christmas and New Year away from home was again fairly quiet for both Simonson boys.

In January of 1917 Monash took another nephew under his wing as an ADC. Aubrey Moss had enlisted in the first month of the war, landed at Gallipoli on the first day and stayed until the evacuation. He’d worked his way up from private to lieutenant by mid 1916, and had been doing well until the French winter finally took its toll. The last month of the year saw him laid low with chronic bronchitis, and he walked out of the convalescent home and into his uncle’s care.

As the winter turned to spring the 46th Battalion continued the endless trudge around the war zone, alternating between the line, fatigue parties and rest camps; trying not to complain about their bad lot, and just basically trying to stay alive. This was all to change on 11th April 1917 with the disastrous attack on the Hindenburg Line at Bullecourt, which left the battalion decimated. Still under-strength, their next major involvement, and the last that Paul would see with them, was at Messines in June. The 3rd Division also played an important role in this action, and although they suffered many casualties, only a small percentage were deaths, and Monash was extremely satisfied with the outcome of the battle.

Eric, who had caught up with his younger brother and been promoted to captain in March 1917, finally decided to put his flight training to some use. He transferred to England at the start of September to join the AFC, and Paul stepped into his shoes, so Monash still had a Simonson nephew as an ADC.

Reporting to the No. 1 School of Aeronautics at Reading on 7th September, Eric was then attached to the 29th Training Squad, AFC, at Shrewsbury in November, followed by the 43rd Training Squad, RFC, at Fernhill in December. On the 18th January 1918 he was appointed Flying Officer Pilot, and then a couple of weeks later posted to 28th Training Squadron, Castle Bromwich, for higher instruction.

Meanwhile Paul had taken to his new role and was described by one junior officer as ‘a first-class ADC’. (He didn't however think too highly of Paul’s cousin, Aubrey Moss.) The cousins both sported moustaches, (although Aubrey’s isn’t obvious in the photo on the next page) and apparently they were widely known as ‘Mo’ and ‘Arf a Mo’.

Returning to the quiet sectors of Armentieres and Ploegsteert until March 1918, they then left the line for a rest. This was short-lived however, as the German Army soon began their big push for victory. Monash was enjoying a break in the south of France and hastily caught the morning train to Paris, where he’d arranged for Paul to pick him up. They hit the road with no time to waste, travelling through the turmoil that had broken out in Amiens, and arrived in Doullens at 3pm to find even greater confusion. Deciding to continue on they reached Blaringhem around 7pm, where they found the 3rd Division preparing to depart, and were told that they should report to 10th Corps for orders. Snatching a couple of hours sleep, they departed the next morning (26th March), and continued from town to town trying to find 10th Corps.
After travelling around in circles for most of the day, they were told they were now to report to 7th Corps. At 1am in the morning they found 7th Corps at Montigny, only to receive the scanty orders to ‘get into the angle between the Ancre and the Somme as far east as possible and stop him’ [the enemy]. Monash sent Paul back to Couturelle to pick up his batman and belongings. Shortly after daybreak on 27th March, Paul returned, and the whole party continued on to Franvillers. A stand was made and Amiens was saved, and no doubt Paul and his uncle eventually caught up on their sleep.

At the beginning of April, Eric finally headed back to France, where he was posted to No. 2 Squadron, AFC, the following month. It wasn’t until 24th September however, that he shot down his first enemy plane and he then proceeded to tally up five more in the following two months. Because his ‘score’ had surpassed five, he’d earned the right to be classed as an air ‘Ace’.

On 1st June 1918 Monash was given the command of the Australian Corps and Paul and Aubrey continued as his ADCs. The successful battle of Hamel was executed the following month, and then the battle of Amiens began the final campaign of the war.

The war over, Monash was offered the post of Director General of Repatriation. Before heading to England to take up the post, he and Paul took a quick trip to Waterloo and Brussels, while Aubrey took the opportunity to take a couple of months leave in Paris to marry and honeymoon.

The new phase of the Monash-Simonson partnership began in England on 1st December 1918, and Aubrey rejoined them at the end of January. On 19th December, Eric also returned to England, and from 10th January 1919 to 9th September he was granted leave with pay. His leave time was spent at the Boulton & Paul Aircraft Dept in Norwich. During the war the company had been building planes and it was decided to continue this practice, so they also opened a design department. What better place for an Engineering student turned pilot, to gain valuable experience before returning home?

Following in his cousin’s footsteps, Paul also made the decision to marry. The wedding took place on 15th March at the Registry Office in St George Hanover Square. His new wife Beatrice was the daughter of an accountant, so he and Paul would have had a lot to talk about during the rest of his stay in England.

Monash had been campaigning to gain some recognition for his various friends and of course his protégés, and Paul received a mention in dispatches, dated the day after his marriage. He was also awarded an OBE in 1919. The newlyweds finally embarked at the end of September, sailing on the family ship Osterley, along with other officers and their new wives.

Aubrey also returned on the Osterley with his wife and child, but on a later sailing in January of 1920 (after having spent six months in Paris with his new family).

Eric set sail for home on 15th November 1919 on board the Ormonde. He travelled with his uncle John, along with his Auntie Vic and cousin Bertha, who had joined Monash in England after the war. Also travelling with them was General Birdwood, and they were welcomed home to Melbourne on Boxing Day.

Monash continued to look out for his nephews in post war Australia, aiding them with any problems, probably even more so for the Simonsons after the death of their parents. Max passed away in 1920, and Sarah, who had suffered a heart condition since before the war, joined him three years later. The boys had to stand on their own, however, when they also lost their favourite uncle in 1931. Eric paid tribute to Monash in
1939 when he wrote a eulogistic report on him which clearly showed the ‘respect, loyalty, admiration and affection’ that he had for his uncle.

In 1923 Eric had married Olive Jenkins, who had been widowed the previous year, and they had (at least) two daughters, Leslie born 1925 and Vivienne born 1926. Vivienne was a driver with the WRANS 1945-46. Eric also enlisted in WWII and served as a Squadron Leader at Air Defence HQ in Melbourne. He died in 1954 in St Kilda at the relatively young age of 60. Olive lived to see her 90th birthday, passing away in 1985.

Paul and Beatrice had two sons: Donald born in 1920 and Robert born in 1924. Both boys enlisted in WWII; Don earning an MC at Deneki (Kokoda) in 1942, and Robert ending up a POW. Paul lost Beatrice in 1948, aged 51, and he lived to the age of 71, dying in 1966 at Malvern.

Endnote: Monash’s Nephews were Capt Eric Laudon Simonson (1894 – 1954); Capt Paul William Simonson (1895 – 1966); Capt Aubrey Moton Moss (1886 – 1944).

A message of thanks

Member Daphne Tongue of Hazelbrook was moved to write to Madame Demassiet of Fromelles, who donated her land at Pheasant Wood containing the burial pits to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. The land will become the site of a Memorial, rather than the new cemetery.

Hazelbrook
19th July 2008
Dear Madame Demassiet,
I write to you from far off Australia to thank you for the generous gift of your land where my countrymen are buried. Our soldiers are so far away from their motherland, and although it happened many years ago they are still in the hearts of their families and fellow countrymen. I’m sure your gesture is appreciated not only by me but thousands of other Australians.
Thank you,
Daphne Tongue

Madame Demassiet replied to Daphne:

Fromelles
25th July 2008
Dear Madame Tongue,
I thank you for your letter which goes right to my heart. Many hundreds of soldiers were buried in my field. I find it natural to offer these fields in order to give the possibility to have a monument erected to honour all these courageous boys who have given their lives to save our country. They will always remain in my heart. I think this is the best thing I can do. May they rest in peace in this peaceful corner far away from noise except the song of birds.
Cordially,
Madame Demassiet Marie Paule

Endnotes: (1) Translations by Anny de Decker. (2) Daphne is the sister of FFFAIF founder, John Laffin. (3) Photo left: Madame Demassiet with member, Tim Whitford; Photo right: Madame Demassiet with her grandson next to the plaque unveiled at Pheasant Wood following the cessation of the 2008 dig.
Megan’s Journey – The Lost Epitaph

Mike Goodwin, North Mackay

Mackay North High School’s ‘Lest We Forget’ Project has recently written another chapter in its long-running quest to link the younger generation with its wartime heritage. Between 19th September and 8th October this year, the school undertook its fifth overseas commemorative tour, the ‘Remembrance 2008 Tour’.

On their three week pilgrimage, the 32 students and 5 teachers visited Kranji Cemetery in Singapore and the battlefields, cemeteries and memorials of Gallipoli and the old Western Front in France and Belgium, where they commemorated 115 fallen soldiers in 47 cemeteries and on 9 memorials.

All the students undertook research into their soldiers. Some researched their own relatives, whilst others undertook the research on behalf of people from all over Australia. On November 1st, the group hosted a special presentation evening, where the results of their research plus the photos of the soldiers’ graves were presented to the relatives.

The personal stories were all so interesting and, of course, tragic, and could fill many volumes of DIGGER. One soldier’s story was particularly heart wrenching, both in terms of the history involved and the beautiful nature of his commemoration in Belgium. For the first time on any tour a soldier was commemorated on the battlefield spot where he died.

Tour student, Megan Mabin, 16, decided she wanted to be a part of the school’s Anzac tour after enjoying the stories she learnt in Year 10 History. After signing up for the tour, she delved into her own family history and this is where she learnt of her uncle’s grandfather, James Avery, who was killed in WWI.

As a young, novice historian, Megan began her research into James’ life and war history and it became a wonderful and enriching journey, although some interesting questions still remain.

James Avery was born on 7th September 1886 in North Melbourne to parents, Samuel and Agnes Avery. He moved to Western Australia in search of work and was living there with his wife, Eriminnie, and five children when he attempted to enlist into the AIF in early 1916. However, he was rejected due to “defective teeth”. James attempted to enlist again in September and this time was successful. Clearly, Army standards had relaxed, as his Medical History record contains the hand written comment, “teeth to be attended to in camp”. Stories from Megan’s family indicate James enlisted to better provide for his children – four girls and a boy.

He left Fremantle on board the HMT Berrima on 23rd December 1916 with the 8th Reinforcements to the 51st Battalion, and after spending some time in training camps and hospital in England, he was taken on strength into the 51st in France on 3rd August, 1917. In his first major action, James was involved in the 13th Brigade’s attack north of Polygon Wood on 26th September. James’ first action proved to be his last, as he was killed after having reached the battalion objective on the southern outskirts of the village of Zonnebeke.

Megan’s research led her to the Red Cross Missing and Wounded files, where she found that James’ death was described in some detail.

A good friend of James’, Private Reid, stated, “We reached our objective and dug in and while doing this Avery was sniped. I saw him fall and all he said was ‘Oh God, I am done for’, and then he died.”

This account is supported by Lance Corporal McAuliffe, who stated, “We ... were digging in and making a bombing post when I saw Avery hit by a sniper in the neck. I went to him; he was two yards away; and he died in my arms. We put him in a shell hole and buried him right away.”

Private Campbell added, “He was buried just near where hit ... He was very popular amongst the boys.”

James was buried with his helmet and a note on his identity marking the grave. However, in an all too common World War I scenario, this battlefield grave was lost and James is now honoured on the Menin Gate Memorial in Ieper.

In attempting to learn more about the 51st Battalion’s movements on 26th September 1917, Megan accessed the newly-digitised WWI battalion diaries on the Australian War Memorial website. It was in these files that Megan found the document that would bring her closer to James’ spirit and provide a new and emotional experience for the Remembrance Tour students. The 51st’s diary for the battle includes a trench map which clearly marks the objective line of James’ C Company. Megan immediately corroborated information from the map with the Red Cross reports. The reports clearly stated he was buried close by where he died and the map provided a specific location. [Photo above: Megan, with Mike Goodwin and Johan Vandervalle, identifying the location of C Company’s position. Photo by Johan Durnez.]
She then compared this map with a modern-day map, and with my help and that of FFFAIF Belgian member, Johan Durnez, she was able to determine the approximate position of James’ battlefield burial. It was just to the south of Zonnebeke Lake, which was near the prominent feature of the brickworks.

This was an exciting find; however, what Megan came up with next added a whole new dimension to her journey. Page 28 of James’ service record is a letter from the Army dated 4th March 1922, informing Eriminnie that the epitaph she had requested on Memorial Form ‘A’ had too many words. Both Megan and I were very confused by this letter as James’ burial was unknown.

Notwithstanding this, the letter clearly stated Eriminnie’s preferred epitaph. It was then that Megan asked me if she would be able to deliver James’ eulogy at the position where he died and was buried. She now had a clear (and unexpected) understanding of what Eriminnie wanted to say to her lost husband and she was determined to deliver those words in person at the spot where James died.

On 26th September 2008, Megan’s journey of family research brought her to Zonnebeke.

The owners of the brickworks built a small chateau after the war and the site we were interested in was in the grounds of the chateau. Thanks to the efforts of Johan Vandervalle, we were given permission to enter the chateau grounds so that we could be as close to C Company’s objective line as possible. Whilst the exact spot where James died and was buried will never be known, Megan and the group knew they were very close. [Photo right: Johan Vandervalle, Megan and Johan Durnez close to the spot where James is believed to have been killed. Megan has placed a poppy in the soil.]

The fact that Megan stood in that spot on 26th September, 91 years to the day since that fateful bullet pierced James’ throat, made the whole experience even more poignant. It was here that Megan delivered a heartfelt eulogy and, for the first time, delivered Eriminnie’s words from her ‘lost’ epitaph:

Though absent from among us
You are always in our thoughts
And we who loved you dearly
Still keenly feel your loss.

Megan’s tour journal provides a wonderful reflection on the way that theoretical research slowly developed into deep personal connection and understanding:

“On the way to the chateau grounds where James died I was so emotional. I couldn’t believe it. I had waited so long for this day. When I then first saw the area I was totally overwhelmed. Sad, because James deserves a grave. But I feel honoured now to have fulfilled Eriminnie’s wishes. I believe that they both would have been watching and hopefully I did them proud.

“I can’t wait to tell my uncle. I will tell him that it was the most peaceful place. James would be so happy there.”

After this truly emotional tribute, the group visited Buttes New British Cemetery in Polygon Wood, where a number of commemorations took place. Megan felt a special bond as she believes that if James’ body was recovered, he would most likely be buried here.

“I laid a poppy there on an unknown grave to symbolise him. I knew it was unlikely to be him, but I just had a feeling, like I was drawn to him.”

Two days later, the Remembrance 2008 group conducted its special service at the Menin Gate to honour ‘tour men’ whose names appear on this imposing memorial. Megan spoke briefly at this service, with one last goal – to repeat Eriminne’s words where John’s name is honoured [right]. This she did, and her quest was complete.

“I’ve said enough now. James is at peace. His epitaph has been heard at two different places. Hopefully Eriminnie and James heard it wherever they are.”
Endnote: I have never before come across a letter outlining the words of an epitaph in a soldier’s personal service records. I’m keen to hear if anyone has had a similar ‘find’.

Whilst it is very difficult to be sure, I believe that Eriminnie may have applied for the epitaph in the mistaken belief that James had a grave or possibly because she did not understand the nature of a memorial. The fact that the Army sent back a reply asking her to shorten the epitaph seems to indicate that their own records had not been thoroughly checked or that a simple mistake had been made. There is no further correspondence regarding the epitaph, so it is possible that Eriminnie lived out her life thinking that her words were with James. Megan has ensured that they now are. – Mike

‘With friends’ on Anzac Day 2008
Yves Fohlen, France

Private 1179 John Alan Curtis, 20th Australian Infantry Battalion, was born at Armidale and educated at Hillgrove. He was the son of Mr and Mrs AT Curtis of Terrier Road, West Marrickville, Sydney. Prior to his enlistment he was a member of the famous All Black football team from Hillgrove.

At the age of 18 years and 8 months, John Curtis sailed for Egypt with the 20th Battalion on 1st March 1915. He was in action at Gallipoli but was evacuated with dysentery to Malta, and then on to England. Admitted to No. 2 Southern General Hospital, Bristol, England, on 2nd October 1915, he was the youngest and smallest Australian soldier to be admitted to the hospital from the peninsula. He later returned to Gallipoli and remained there with his unit until the evacuation.

Curtis went to France and disembarked at Marseilles with all the 20th Battalion on 25th March 1916. Private John Curtis was killed in action at Pozières on 1st August 1916.

According to the Australian Red Cross Wounded and Missing enquiry files and the information therein given by 1342 Sergeant Knight:
“He was killed at Pozières in the village about 7.30 on August 1st. A shell came over and killed him and a man named Woodhill instantly. They were digging a hop-over trench. They were buried in Sausage Gully, and have a cross with their names on it. He was a very popular chap.”

On 25th April 2008, after the Villers-Bretonneux Dawn Service, I stopped at Gordon Dump British Cemetery. I wanted to pay a tribute to “the youngest and smallest” Digger, who was aged 20 when he was killed.

I read Curtis’ epitaph: “In loving memory. A young life nobly ended”. I planted an Australian flag near his headstone and took a picture [right].

Next to John Curtis is buried his mate and officer: Second Lieutenant Geoffrey Guy Woodhill, who, according to the Australian Red Cross files and the information given by 2239 Private G Wharton, met in his end in this way:
Whilst we were digging a communication trench for a jumping off point for the 2nd attack on Pozières, we were spotted by Germans and heavily shelled. Woodhill was killed by concussion without being wounded and died very peacefully in a few minutes. I was with him in Gallipoli and he was the ‘whitest’ man I ever knew and was much liked by all the Company. I was put in charge of a burying party of six and we took his body about 3 miles back and buried him in a small cemetery in Sausage Gully between La Boiselle and Contalmaison with a cross over, with his name and rank as Officer which he had been promoted to the day before his death …”.

Second Lieutenant Woodhill, a medical student of Sydney University, was just 21 years old when killed with Private John Curtis by the same German shell.

I spent long minutes facing their two headstones. Do not ask me how many minutes. It could have been hours or days … but it was not important … it was Anzac Day 2008 and I was with “the youngest and the smallest” and also “the whitest”.

Endnotes: (1) According to another witness, Private 2426 R Plunkett, Woodhill had studied medicine for three years. He enlisted as a private in the AIF on 19th March 1915. (2) The shell that ended the lives of Curtis and Woodhill also killed two other men.
**ETCHED IN STONE**

*(Edited by Russell Curley)*

*This is the twenty-fourth in a series of extracts, from John Laffin’s “We Will Remember Them - AIF Epitaphs of World War I”, which will appear in successive issues of ‘DIGGER’.*

“By God’s Will and Following the Christ” continued

Place names in bold type are cemetery names

**GOD NEVER IS BEFORE HIS TIME  
AND NEVER IS BEHIND  
THY WILL BE DONE**

This inscription is on the headstone of Cpl R. H. Hill (MM), Engineers, at **Kandahar Farm**, Belgium, who was killed on 8/8/17, aged 27 years. The MM awarded to Robert Hill illustrates yet another aspect of war duties for which Australians were decorated. East of Messines in the Ypres Salient of Belgian Flanders, on the night of 9/10 June 1917, Hill was in charge of a mixed party of sappers and infantry, carrying stores forward to the support line. Because of the heavy enemy barrage, the men kept losing touch with one another and at great personal risk, the NCO moved up and down the line encouraging his men to ‘close up’. He made three journeys through heavy shellfire, delivered the vital stores and so enabled the parties putting up the barbed wire entanglements to complete their work. *(JL)*

| WHEN THE LAST TRUMPET SHALL SOUND  
OH MAY I THEN IN HIM BE FOUND | Pte H. F. Hardy, 24th Bn, 5/10/18, (22)  
*Calvaire*, France |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| THY PURPOSE LORD WE CANNOT SEE  
BUT ALL IS WELL THAT'S DONE BY THEE | Pte F. W. Walker, 2nd Pnr Bn, 29/10/17, (29)  
*Perth Cemetery*, Belgium |
| DEAD DID YOU SAY:  
NAY, ONLY HEAVEN SPED  
JUST SAFE IN GOD’S HOME PORT | Pte E. Covey, 3rd Bn, 2/7/16  
*Canadian Cemetery*, Sailly-sur-la-Lys, France |

This cemetery is located opposite Anzac Cemetery and was begun by Canadian units in March 1915, and used as a front-line cemetery until July 1916. Although Canadian by name, there are only 9 Canadians buried here in a total of 314 burials. Others are: 285 British, 19 Australian and 1 German. The British burials include two Shot at Dawn: Riflemen W. Smith and G. Irish, 2nd Bn (Rifle Brigade), executed for desertion on 3.10.15.*

| NOTHING IN MY HAND I BRING  
SIMPLY TO THE CROSS I CLING | Pte N. McLeod, 14th Bn, 31/5/15  
*Allonville*, France |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| GREATER LOVE  
HATH NO MAN THAN THIS | Pte H. D. Caswell, 17th Bn, 9/10/17, (29)  
*Passchendaele*, Belgium |
| HE GAVE HIS LIFE THAT OTHERS MAY LIVE  
GOD WILLED IT SO | Pte W. H. Grady, 22nd Bn, 4/10/17, (23)  
*Oxford Road*, Belgium |
| BE THOU FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH  
AND I WILL GIVE THEE A CROWN OF LIFE | Sgt F. E. Miller, 51st Bn, 6/8/18, (26)  
*Crouy*, France |
| ETERNAL JESUS GRANT HIM REST  
ERECTED BY HIS FOND MOTHER AND SISTERS | Pte P. J. Barrett, 14th Bn & Cyclist Corps, 31/5/15, (27)  
*Crouy*, France |
| AS HE DIED TO MAKE US HOLY  
SO HE DIED TO KEEP MEN FREE | Pte O. McG. Oldham, Field Artillery, 2/6/18,  
*Crouy*, France |
| BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART  
FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD | Pte L. T. Lewtas, 24th Bn, 8/8/18, (18)  
*Crouy*, France |
| THE PEACE OF GOD  
THAT PASSETH ALL UNDERSTANDING | Cpl R. W. Gilbert, 48th Bn, 21/11/16, (20)  
*Bernafay Wood*, France |
| A SOLDIER GONE TO GOD ABOVE  
HAVING EARNED OUR PRIDE AND LOVE | Pte H. Gledhill, 8th Bn, 24/8/16, (21)  
*Etaples*, France |

*www.cwgc.org and www.ww1cemeteries.com  
Continued next issue.*
Using eBay for AIF research
Patric Millar, Glen Innes

Most of us know of eBay and other online auction sites as great places to snap up a bargain or sell that unwanted junk. But how many of us would think of it as a research site, least of all for First AIF information? With a bit of judicious searching and a bit of luck, eBay can yield a wealth of valuable material.

Over the years I’ve bought and sold a number of things on eBay, so when I started to get serious about researching my Grandfather’s WWI service, it seemed natural to see what eBay could yield. So far I haven’t found anything directly relating to my family history or my Grandfather, but I have purchased some great resources which have aided my research.

One of my first WWI eBay purchases was a copy of *Volume IX* of Bean for $30, delivered. From there it snowballed into other old and rare books, photos and other items. As eBay is an auction site you must be prepared for all the vagaries of auctions. For example, one Sunday night I was bidding on a *1st Edition, Volume I* of Bean. It had a low start price and there had been little interest shown in it. In fact it had only had three bids with five minutes to go. In the last two minutes of the auction all hell broke loose, and it rapidly went from around $120 to over $300! This might seem like market price for such a rare volume, but ten days later I found an auction offering the same volume in better condition. It ended with the winning bidder paying $85. This highlights the lottery of buying and selling at auction.

There are several keys to successfully using eBay to buy research materials. The first is to know your subject and your price. Secondly, I always bid in the last ten seconds and tend to avoid Sunday nights, especially if there’s nothing good on the television. Another tip is to use very broad search terms, as many sellers misspell key words or just list their items with a simple description. So think creatively and be prepared to spend some time browsing through listings. A recent example of this was an auction for “Military books x 3”. Upon closer inspection I discovered that these rather generally-listed books included two WWII diaries and a *2nd Edition of The Straits Impregnable* by Sydney Loch, published in 1916. The whole lot sold for $8.95 and only had a single bid.

My final piece of advice is, do not be disappointed if you lose an auction; you never know what tomorrow will bring. So good luck and start bidding!

Endnote: eBay’s Australian website is [www.ebay.com.au](http://www.ebay.com.au). This article is presented for members’ education and should not be seen as an endorsement by the FFFAIF of eBay, its policies or practices.

DIGGER Quiz No. 25: “Campbell’s challenge”

Maurice has been reading member John Hamilton’s ‘Gallipoli Sniper’ and Michael Lawriwsky’s ‘Hard Jacka’ to come up with this issue’s quiz on two of our most revered soldiers.

1. John’s book is about Australia’s most deadly WWI sniper. What was the sniper’s name?
2. Where was the ‘Gallipoli sniper’ born?
3. What unit did he join on enlistment?
4. What was his occupation at the time of enlistment?
5. How many confirmed kills did the sniper have on Gallipoli?
6. Was the sniper ever decorated for bravery?
7. Did the sniper ever marry?
8. Who was the famous Australian author (post-war) that served in the same unit as our sniper?
9. What was the name of the book he wrote concerning his experiences in WWI?
10. Who was the Sydney journalist who also joined the same unit as the sniper and the author, and what was his pen name?

11. Who were the Commanding Officers of the 14th Battalion during the course of WWI?
12. Albert Jacka won the VC at Gallipoli. What decoration was he awarded for his actions in the Battle of Pozieres?
13. Who was the Commanding Officer of the 14th Battalion at the time Albert Jacka won this decoration?
14. Captain Albert Jacka was often outspoken. With which senior officer did he reportedly have repeated clashes?
15. Who was the popular officer of the 14th Battalion KIA during the battle of Polygon Wood?
16. What were the names of the two chaplains of the 14th Battalion?
17. On 8th May 1917 the 14th Battalion was involved in severe fighting. Where did this take place?
18. The 14th Battalion was made up of men primarily from which Australian state?
19. Captain Jacka was finally poisoned by gas on 15th May 1918. Was he discharged medically unfit and returned to Australia in late 1918? Where in France was he gassed?
20. At what age did Albert Jacka pass away?
Answers to DIGGER Quiz No. 25

1. William Edward (‘Billy’) Sing.
2. Sing was born in Clermont, Queensland, on 2nd March 1886.
3. Sing was allocated to the 5th Light Horse Regiment. His service number was 535.
4. Horse breaker.
5. Sing was credited with 201 confirmed kills.
6. Sing was awarded the DCM at Gallipoli; MM at Polygon Wood; and Belgian Croix De Guerre.
7. Yes – to Elizabeth Stewart on 26/9/1917 in Edinburgh. From the scant information available it appears she did not follow him to Australia, and she remains a mystery to this day.
8. Ion Llewellyn (‘Jack’) Idriess.
10. Oliver Hogue, who wrote under the pseudonym of Trooper Bluegum.
11. Lieutenant Colonels Richard Courtney (Gallipoli); Charles Dare; John Peck; Walter Smith; Henry Crowther; William Arrell.
15. Lieutenant Harold Wanliss.
16. Reverend Andrew Gillison (The ‘Cocoa King’) and Chaplain Frank Rolland.
17. The First Battle of Bullecourt.
18. Victoria.
20. Jacka died at the age of 39, from chronic nephritis at Caulfield Military Hospital, Melbourne.

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