

## **The Graceville War Memorial**

### **Fallen Heroes Honoured and in Memory Evergreen**

At the end of the Great War, communities all over Australia felt moved to honour the sacrifice of their young men by erecting memorials. In some cases, memorials were commissioned by local councils, such as the plaques by the Stephens, Coorparoo and the Sherwood Shires, and the war memorials erected in Yeronga Memorial Park, the Memorial Gates at the entrance to Langlands Park and the War memorial in Graceville Memorial Park. In other cases, the memorials were the creation of local associations such as progress associations. The soldiers' memorial at Oxley and the Mount Gravatt Roll of Honour are good examples. For most of the fallen, their relatives would have no opportunity to visit the site in which they lay; and for many there was no grave at all, with their names recorded in the vast lists of those with no known grave at Villers Bretonneux, Menin Gate and Tyne Cot

The following narratives are an attempt to tell the story of the men and one woman who are commemorated on the Sherwood Shire Memorial in Graceville Memorial Park. It is not my intention to produce a scholarly work but rather to simply tell the story as best as it can be pieced together from documents contained in official records. Other researchers may choose to pursue details of earlier lives and family descendants. The memorial lists the names of 53 residents of the former shire who died during the Great War. The names are listed in true military fashion in descending order according to rank and alphabetical order and I will adhere to this protocol in the following document.

The unveiling of the Sherwood Shire memorial was a very important event for the shire. The Sherwood Shire Council had set aside land on Oxley Road Graceville as a Memorial Park. The erection of the War Memorial was at the instigation of Miss Ethel Lidgard of Graceville; sister of Pte Jack Lidgard who was killed at Passchendaele and who is commemorated on the memorial (See below). A granite obelisk, designed by the Shire Clerk was erected upon which a bronze plaque listing the names of 53 shire residents who had perished in the war was fixed.

The memorial was unveiled on 29th November 1920 by Lieutenant Edwin (Maurice) Little of Corinda, a former school teacher who had lost both eyes and his right hand when a bomb exploded in his hand at Gallipoli. The ceremony was reported in the Brisbane Courier on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November. Maurice Little was the inaugural President of the Sherwood RSSAILA. Also present at the unveiling was Brigadier James Howard Cannan, President of the R.S.S.A.I.L.A. Queensland.

Brigadier "Bull" Cannan had been the commanding officer of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Gallipoli. One of the officers in the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion was Brig. Cannan's elder brother, Major Douglas Cannan who was killed at Sari Bair Ridge, Gallipoli in August 1915; and whose name was included on the Graceville Memorial. Also listed on the memorial was Brig Cannan's brother in law, Capt. Dudleigh Chalmers Ranken of the 23<sup>rd</sup> Royal Fusiliers who it was reported, although being from a local family, enlisted in a British Regiment so that his mother (he was her only son) would not see him in uniform. Also present was the Member for Oxley, Charles Elphinstone who was himself a returned soldier.

Included in the memorial were plantings of an avenue of trees from Oxley Road to the memorial as well as trees planted around the perimeter of the park. The Graceville Memorial listed citizens who were residents connected to the shire and many of the names commemorated on the Graceville Memorial are also listed on the Oxley Memorial (which was erected by the Progress Association of Oxley).



## **Wilson, Myrtle Elizabeth    Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service**

It has been difficult to find many details of Myrtle Wilson. The Australian War Memorial has no details on file, save for a few scant details of her death in December 1915. Myrtle Wilson is not listed on the Australian War Memorial's Roll of Honour but rather the Commemorative Roll. Myrtle had joined the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service, which was a British Organisation. Her file in the British national archives provides little information apart from records of correspondence between Myrtle's sister, Lillian and the British authorities regarding her pay after her death. Myrtle Wilson was probably born around 1877 in Fitzroy, Melbourne. Her parents Andrew and Catherine Wilson moved to Queensland and established their family at "The Roses", Victoria Avenue, Chelmer.

By the time Myrtle departed for overseas, her father was deceased but her mother continued to live in the family home at Chelmer. Myrtle had trained as a nurse at the Royal Brisbane Hospital but by 1915, it would appear that both she and her sister Lillian were working at the hospital in Bundaberg. There is some documentary evidence to suggest that Lillian eventually became the Matron at Bundaberg.

Myrtle departed for England sometime in April 1915 on the "Orontes" and joined the QAIMNS in June 1915. She probably paid her own passage for the trip to England. It is likely that Myrtle had the rank of Sister when nursing in Australia but the QAIMNS documents record her as a Staff Nurse. Correspondence from Lillian Wilson refers to Myrtle as "Sister" and her gravestone gives her that title.

She was posted to the 7<sup>th</sup> British General Hospital near Boulogne on the Channel Coast where she worked until early December 1915. The Matron in Chief recorded in her diary: 9<sup>th</sup> Dec-Miss Wilson very ill, 19<sup>th</sup> Dec- Miss Wilson Dangerously Ill- Family informed; 23<sup>rd</sup> December – Miss Wilson critically ill; later died. She was 38 and one of six nursing staff from QAIMNS to die from illness during the course of the war

Myrtle had died of pneumonia, no doubt caused in part by a lack of suitable drugs at the time and a punishing workload. She was buried at the Wimmeraux Communal Cemetery outside Boulogne and her sister Lillian chose the inscription "Behold I come quickly" from the Book of Revelations. Wimmeraux Cemetery is located on sandy soil and consequently all the headstones in the cemetery lay flat on the ground.

Myrtle had made a will in Brisbane in 1913 in which she had nominated bequests to her mother, sister, and brothers James, Andrew and Godfrey.

## **CANNAN, Douglas Herman    Major 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Douglas Cannan was one of six children born to John Kearsy Cannan and Elizabeth Christian Cannan. Douglas's father was a bank manager. Soon after Douglas's birth in Townsville in April 1880, the family moved to Brisbane and settled at "Leswell" Chelmer. Douglas like his brothers attended Central Boys State School and then Brisbane Grammar. Service was obviously something that was instilled in the Cannan boys from a young age. Douglas and his younger brother James both received commissions in the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry

Regiment (Citizens Forces) in 1904. Both continued to serve as part time officers until the outbreak of war.

At the time of his enlistment, Douglas was 34 years old, single and employed as the secretary and manager of the Queensland Fish Marketing Board. He was commissioned as a Captain in the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion in command of "D" Company. The Battalion Commander was Douglas's younger brother James.

The 15<sup>th</sup> battalion would form part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade AIF under Brigadier John Monash. The battalion travelled to Sydney where they embarked on the "Ceramic" on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1915 and arrived in Alexandria on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1915.

The 4<sup>th</sup> brigade went ashore at Gallipoli late in the afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup> April and immediately moved from the beach up a gully (Monash Gully) to a precarious position on the heights which eventually bore the name of an officer of the 15<sup>th</sup>; Quinn's Post. The 15<sup>th</sup> remained on Gallipoli holding the line at Quinn's for the next month. On 1<sup>st</sup> June, Douglas was evacuated to Lemnos with tonsillitis and rejoined his company ten days later. Douglas was promoted to Temporary Major on the 11<sup>th</sup> July.

Birdwood, the British Commander at Anzac, was under some pressure to secure a breakthrough to the heights above the beach-head. The ultimate goal was the commanding hill named Chunuk Bair and in early August, a series of coordinated attacks was planned to drive the Turks from the high ground. The first of these offensives (a diversion really) was the attack on Lone Pine (where Albert Jacka won the first Australian Victoria Cross) followed by a second landing of British troops at Suvla. The main offensive was planned for the northern sector of the Anzac beachhead which entailed an advance at night along the beach before turning inland to scale a series of ridges towards the heights of Hill 971 also known as Sari Bair. The 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade would be part of this action on 8<sup>th</sup> August.

As was often the case at Anzac, the planning did not live up to expectations and the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade soon found themselves lost in the dark in a bewildering tangle of gullies; primarily due to a reliance on Greek guides rather than the maps which had been issued. It was soon apparent that no advance could be made and the Battalion Commander of the 15<sup>th</sup>, Lieutenant Colonel James Cannan ordered a withdrawal. The battalion war diary records that during the 8<sup>th</sup> August, eight officers were wounded and eight officers were missing. Among the missing was Douglas Cannan.

The official records indicate that Douglas was listed as Wounded and Missing. The August offensives were a failure all round and the Anzac front settled into a stalemate which was eventually ended with the withdrawal of all forces in December.

Back in Egypt; investigations were conducted into the fate of Douglas Cannan. Conflicting statements from witnesses variously reported that Douglas had been captured, that he had been shot and left behind when the battalion withdrew, and even one witness who stated that he had attended Douglas's burial. The final determination was that Douglas had been killed in action and probably "buried by the Turks." The findings were relayed to Headquarters signed by Douglas's younger brother, James.

Douglas's personal effects (which in the case of officers included all uniform items) were eventually returned to the family in Chelmer. His eldest brother, John K. Cannan (jnr); a

solicitor with his own firm in the city handled the winding up of Douglas's estate. Douglas had named his elder sister, Catherine as sole executor.

When the Imperial War Graves Commission returned to Gallipoli in 1919, no trace of Douglas Cannan could be found. He is commemorated on the Australian Memorial at Lone Pine. Douglas, as a Grammar old boy, is also commemorated in the "Golden Book" at Brisbane Grammar.

Douglas's brother, James, who went on to serve on the Western Front and subsequently as Quarter Master General during World War 2 applied for the Gallipoli Medallion on behalf of Douglas in 1967.

### **RANKEN, Dudleigh Chalmers**

### **Captain 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion Royal Fusiliers**

Dudleigh Ranken was probably born in Roma about 1886 where his father was a bank manager. He was one of six children born to George and Anna Marie Ranken, and was their only son. Around 1910, the Ranken family purchased a parcel of farm land at Sherwood from the Francis estate which extended from the corner of Dewar Terrace and Marlborough Streets through to a point opposite Sherwood Road and down to the banks of the Brisbane River. The property included the family home, "Dunella". One of Dudleigh's sisters; Eileen, married James Cannan who went on to command the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF at Gallipoli.

Sometime in 1915 it would seem that Dudleigh resigned his position as a brewer and travelled at his own cost to England to enlist. There is a family story that states he enlisted in England so that his mother "would never see him in uniform."

About 60% of British WW1 service files were destroyed during an air raid on London in 1940 and details of Dudleigh's military career would appear to have been destroyed. The information that is available indicates that Dudleigh was commissioned as a Captain in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Battalion of the Royal Fusiliers (City of London). The 23<sup>rd</sup> battalion was one of the many so called "pals" battalions raised as part of Kitchener's New Army; and was also known as the sportsmen's battalion.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> arrived in Boulogne in November 1915 and saw action in the British sector north of the Somme. It would appear that the battalion was engaged in the Somme offensive which began on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. Dudleigh is listed as being killed in action on 27<sup>th</sup> July. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission lists Dudleigh Ranken as being commemorated at the British Memorial at Thiepval, near the village of Pozieres. The Thiepval memorial lists the names of 72,000 British soldiers killed in France (90% of those named died in the second half of 1916) and who have no known grave. A ceremony is conducted at Thiepval on the 1<sup>st</sup> July each year to honour those men.

Dudleigh's mother; Anna Marie, died four months after Dudleigh was killed; perhaps as a result of the grief she suffered at the death of her only son. Anna Marie was buried in the Anglican cemetery on Sherwood Road and her gravestone also mentions her son, Captain Dudleigh Ranken.

The Ranken farm was eventually sold off to the Sherwood Shire in 1923 for the creation of the Sherwood Arboretum. Included in the arboretum is an avenue of Kauri Pines planted to

honour the shire citizens who gave their lives in the Great War. No doubt one of the trees honours Dudleigh Ranken. The name of Dudley Street (although incorrectly spelt) as well as the name of the family home, Dunella Street, perpetuate the legacy of the Ranken family in the Sherwood district on the land which was once their farm.

### **DUNSDON, Charles Edward    Lieutenant 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Company Australian Engineers**

Charles Dunsdon was born in Toowoomba to Edward and Elizabeth Dunsdon in 1885. As a boy he attended Middle Ridge State School in Toowoomba and given that he also enlisted in Toowoomba it is reasonable to assume that he spent most of his life in that town.

Charles enlisted on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1914 and must have been one of the first volunteers to enlist in Toowoomba when recruitment began. He was given the regimental number of 3. At the time of his enlistment he gave his address as South Street, Toowoomba and named his brother Walter of the same address as his next of kin. Both parents were deceased.

Charles gave his occupation as draftsman, and with such a background was posted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Field Company Australian Engineers. His unit embarked in Melbourne on the "Geelong" on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1914; barely one month after he enlisted. When one considers the travelling time from Toowoomba to Melbourne, training would have been seriously curtailed. Upon arrival in Egypt, the engineers were tasked with constructing the camps and associated infrastructure to house the soon to arrive Australian troops.

The War Diary of the 3<sup>rd</sup> FCAE gives a graphic picture of the type of work being performed by the sections in preparation of the landings at Gallipoli. Maps were being produced in different scales (no doubt Charles's drafting skills were useful) and a transport ship had been designated to carry stores and materials when they landed on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915. The diary has no entry between the 21<sup>st</sup> April and 1<sup>st</sup> May; which is indicative of the frantic work being carried out by the engineers in those first few days.

The engineers were employed in making bombs out of jam tins, pegging out and digging trenches and saps, laying wire entanglements as well as more mundane tasks such as providing drinking water and erecting shelters for headquarters staff. The construction of Watson's Pier by Signals Captain Watson and 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Engineers was a further example of the vital work performed by engineers in those first few months. While on Gallipoli, Charles was promoted to corporal on 16<sup>th</sup> May and to staff sergeant on 26<sup>th</sup> July.

Charles was evacuated to the #2 Australian General Hospital on Mudros Island on 9<sup>th</sup> August (which coincided with the series of failed offensives at the Nek and Suvla) with pleurisy. He returned to the peninsula on 24<sup>th</sup> September.

After the evacuation of Gallipoli the Australian forces in Egypt went through a period of reinforcement and expansion. Charles went off to officer training and was commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1916. His unit was shipped to Marseilles in June 1916 and during the voyage, Charles was promoted to Lieutenant.

Field Engineers followed the infantry to the Armentieres sector of the western front and when Haig called the Australian divisions south to the Somme for the assault on Pozieres in July and August, the engineers followed.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> August in the vicinity of Sausage Gully, Charles was fatally wounded. Accounts collected by the Red Cross some months later vary but it is fairly certain that Charles and Captain Riddell were consulting a map when a high explosive shell landed nearby. Charles was struck in the neck by a piece of shrapnel and died almost immediately, Riddell was also injured. Some Red Cross accounts reported that Charles had been buried near where he fell and a wooden cross with his name engraved was erected, either by men from his own unit or a company of pioneers.

The ground around Pozieres would continue to be a battleground for another month, and would again be fought over during 1918. When the Imperial War Graves Commission began to consolidate scattered burials at the conclusion of hostilities, no trace of Charles's grave was found. Charles's brother Walter moved from Toowoomba to Kew Street, Graceville soon after Charles was killed; and it is no doubt for this reason that Charles is commemorated on the Graceville War Memorial erected in 1920.

Charles was also eventually commemorated on the panels of the Australian National Memorial at Villers Bretonneux when construction began in 1933. The National Memorial was officially dedicated by King George VI and contains the names of over 10,000 Australians who were killed in France and have no known grave.

On the site of a windmill in the village of Pozieres today is a commemorative stone which reads:

*"The ruin of the Pozieres windmill which lies here was the centre of the struggle on this part of the Somme Battlefield in July and August 1916. It was captured by Australian troops who fell more thickly on this ridge than on any other battlefields of the war."*

## **HINTON, Herbert Gerald**

## **Lieutenant 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse Regiment**

Herbert Hinton was born in Brisbane in February 1879. He attended Central Boys School up to year six (probably equivalent to the Scholarship examination). In November 1899, aged 20, Herbert volunteered for the Queensland Mounted Infantry contingent which sailed to Cape Colony, South Africa during the Boer War. Details of his service in South Africa are sparse but it is recorded that he was for a time evacuated to England. Herbert also advised that he had been commissioned as a Lieutenant in Warrens Mounted Infantry and the South African Light Horse during the South African campaigns.

When Herbert applied for an officer's commission in September 1914, he was 34 years old, married to Mabel Cecilia Hinton and had 4 children. He stated his occupation as commercial traveller and named his wife Mabel of "Wanelta" Graceville as his next of kin.

Herbert was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse Regiment on 8<sup>th</sup> September 1914 and embarked on the "Star of England" in Brisbane just two weeks later.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse arrived in Egypt on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1914 and proceeded to camp at Mena for extensive training. Herbert was promoted to Lieutenant in February 1915. The original plan for the Gallipoli campaign was for the infantry to land and close off the peninsula to reinforcements while the more mobile light horse brigades would range north along the peninsula towards Constantinople (Istanbul). When the original plan was thwarted by

stronger than anticipated Turkish resistance, the decision was made to land the light horsemen as infantry at Anzac. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse; minus their horses, landed at Anzac on 12<sup>th</sup> May. On the 19<sup>th</sup> May, Herbert was wounded slightly in the eye but he returned to duty the same day.

The hottest spot at Anzac was Quinn's post at the head of Monash Gully. Quinn's Post was the farthest point inland on the Anzac line, situated on the edge of an escarpment, with the Turkish trenches only metres away. The Post was named after Major Harold Quinn of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, whose company held the position from the first day. In late May, the Turks exploded an underground mine at Quinn's Post, followed by an infantry assault which captured the Australian positions and allowed the Turks to enfilade down Monash Gully to the beach.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse was charged with recapturing the positions at Quinn's Post through an all out charge on the 7<sup>th</sup> August. During this assault, Lieutenant Hinton was killed. He was buried at the cemetery at Shrapnel Gully, the same cemetery in which Major Quinn was laid to rest one week earlier.

Communications between Gallipoli and Australia were slow and tortuous in 1915. Signals were sent from Anzac to Lemnos, then on to Cairo before being communicated to London for despatch by cable to Melbourne. Such difficulties meant it took considerable time for the Australian authorities to be able to provide death certificates. Herbert's wife Mabel had four children to support and although her husband had allotted 9 shillings of his daily pay to her, this of course ceased once he had died. Herbert's file contains a number of letters from Mabel and a firm of solicitors requesting a death certificate so that a life assurance policy with AMP could be redeemed as well as bank balances transferred. Mabel was finally granted a war widow's pension of 91 pounds a year, as well as 13 pounds a year for each child.

Mabel also received the personal effects of her late husband, which included a full set of mess dress and his Boer War medals. Mabel and the children left Chelmer to live near relatives in Sandgate in 1916.

### **BERRY, Roy Morley**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Roy Berry was a member of a prominent pioneering family from the Sherwood district. His parents, William Kinkead and Annie Maria, lived in Berry Street Sherwood; and there is also a Kinkead Street adjoining Berry Street. There is a heritage listed memorial in the Sherwood cemetery to Robin Edwin Berry who was killed in the Transvaal, South Africa in 1902. It is possible that Robin Berry was Roy's elder brother.

Roy Berry originally enlisted in Brisbane on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1915. He gave his age as 27 years and named his mother as his next of kin. Documents in Roy's file in the National Archives suggest that Roy had been employed as a costing clerk by the Commonwealth Railways in Melbourne. It is not unreasonable to assume that he had taken leave from his employer to travel back to Brisbane to see his parents before enlisting.

Even though Roy had begun the enlistment process as an ordinary soldier, on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1916 he applied for an officer's commission and was accepted as a second lieutenant in the 7<sup>th</sup> reinforcements of the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Time was spent in training at Enoggera and six

months after being commissioned, Roy embarked on the "Clan McGilvray" in Brisbane and arrived in Plymouth on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November 1916.

Roy was posted initially to the 7<sup>th</sup> Training battalion at Rolleston on Salisbury Plain before being posted to France on 23<sup>th</sup> January 1917. Three days later he was taken on strength by the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Roy's battalion at this time were holding the line at La Sars, close to Flers. The winter of 1916/17 had been bitterly cruel and the men in the trenches were exposed to snow and sleet. Rations when they arrived were often cold or even frozen. The German's were holding the higher ground and although there was no thought of mounting an attack in those conditions the enemy artillery continued to target the frontline outposts with regular bombardments. During one of these bombardments on 7<sup>th</sup> February, Roy Berry was killed. He had been with his battalion for 12 days.

The Australian War memorial has on file a number of reports collected by the Red Cross into the circumstances of Roy's death, which all recounted similar events. The history of the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF; "Black over Blue" contains excerpts from a letter written by Private O'Brien five days after the event:

*"Roy was in charge of post similar to ours .....things were quiet so he(Roy) went into a trench for a bit of a rest.....Soon after this Fritz began shelling the post.....One got poor old Roy and a bomber. The man was killed instantly, but Roy lingered for about two hours but never regained consciousness."*

The Red Cross interviews that were conducted many months later confirm O'Brien's account and also mention that Roy was a popular officer. He was buried just behind the post where he fell and a wooden cross was erected over his grave. Ironically just two weeks after Roy was killed, the men of the 25<sup>th</sup> woke to discover that the Germans had abandoned their positions and withdrawn several kilometres to the Hindenburg Line.

Roy's grave remained undisturbed through the remainder of the war. His remains were reinterred in the Adanac Military Cemetery(Canada spelt backwards as most of those interred are Canadians). In due course, Roy's mother received his personal belongings and kit and a pension of two pounds a fortnight.

Annie also received Roy's medals, a memorial scroll and commemorative plaque, a copy of his commission and three photographs of his grave.

Roy's younger brother, Percy Norman Berry also served. He was a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse and returned to Australia at the end of the war.

### **LYON, Charles Herbert Scott**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Charles Lyon was born in Townsville. By the time of his enlistment his family, father Charles William and mother Annie, had moved to Hood Street, Sherwood. Charles presented himself for enlistment in Brisbane on 27<sup>th</sup> July 1915. He stated his occupation as clerk and was 19 years old.

Charles was drafted as a private into the 11<sup>th</sup> reinforcements of the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He departed from Brisbane on the "Seang Bee" on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1915. By the time Charles arrived in Egypt, the Australian forces had been withdrawn from Gallipoli and were undergoing a period of expansion. Half of the original 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion which had been on

Gallipoli since May 1915 were designated to create a new battalion, the 47<sup>th</sup>. Charles and the rest of the reinforcements joined the 15<sup>th</sup> to bring it up to full strength. During his sojourn in Egypt, Charles was hospitalised briefly with mumps.

The newly reinforced 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion arrived in Marseilles on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1916 and proceeded to the “nursery trenches” around Armentieres. In July, the battalion was called to the Somme and saw its first major battle at Pozieres in July and August. After being taken out of the line Charles was promoted to Lance Corporal. As winter approached Haig; the supreme British commander in France closed down the front. The winter was extremely severe, with troops exposed to snow and sleet. Charles was promoted to corporal on 22<sup>nd</sup> November and was made sergeant in February the following year.

With the arrival of spring on the Somme, the Germans began a planned withdrawal back to pre-prepared defensive positions on what was called the Hindenburg Line. The 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion along with the rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Divisions pursued them cautiously. Charles however was headed in the opposite direction. On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1917 he was posted to the Officer Cadet Battalion in Cambridge, England.

On 4<sup>th</sup> August 1917, Charles was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the 15<sup>th</sup> battalion. He rejoined his unit in Belgium on the 20<sup>th</sup> August. The Australian 1<sup>st</sup> Division were at this time engaged in a series of bite and hold operations outside Ypres which had begun in June at Messines and progressed to the Menin Road. The next objective was a wooded area named Polygon Wood on the trench maps. The 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion in company with the three other battalions in the brigade would assault the enemy positions behind a creeping artillery barrage. The battalion diary for September 1917 records that the unit suffered fairly light casualties in this operation, with only 14 other ranks and one officer being killed. Unfortunately the one officer was Charles Lyon.

Red Cross reports indicate that he had been struck in the abdomen (or back) by a high explosive shell. He was placed on a stretcher (or trolley) and taken to a Field Ambulance Unit and then to a Casualty Clearing Station where he consequently died. His death is recorded officially as Died of Wounds.

Charles was buried close to the Casualty Clearing Station and his grave marked. At the end of the war, the Imperial War Graves Commission began to consolidate the known graves into military cemeteries. This theatre of the war has perhaps the greatest number of cemeteries, including the largest Commonwealth War Cemetery and Memorial in the world; Tyne Cot near Passchendaele. Charles was finally interred in the Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery near Poperinghe. His parents received photographs of his grave as well as two medals, a memorial scroll and a commemorative plaque.

## **RADCLIFFE, Leslie Caldwell**

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Leslie Radcliffe was born in Sydney on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1894. His family moved to North Queensland while he was young. Leslie attended Brisbane Grammar until he was 15. The Golden Book at Brisbane Grammar, which records all past students who enlisted in the First World War, lists six Radcliffes who were Leslie’s brothers and cousins; one of whom, John, was a Rhodes Scholar.

When Leslie enlisted on 25<sup>th</sup> February 1916 aged 21, he was living in Ayr and working as a cane farmer. He gave his father as his next of kin with the same address so it is reasonable to assume that he was working on the family cane farm. Although only 21 Leslie had previous military experience with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse and in signalling. He was drafted as a private into the 11<sup>th</sup> reinforcements of the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

After two weeks of home leave in May 1916, Leslie boarded the "Boorara" in Brisbane on 12<sup>th</sup> August. He arrived in Plymouth on 13<sup>th</sup> October and by February 1917 was with his unit. Leslie had joined his unit at a very unsettling time. The 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion had a reputation in the AIF as a bunch of "toffs and street loafers and wasters all mixed in together." After a mauling at Bullecourt in 1916, the 47<sup>th</sup> were in a rest area in early 1917.

The commanding officer was replaced in January 1917 by Lt. Colonel Imlay who had a reputation as a "hard man." Soon after Leslie joined the unit, Imlay ordered a route march to toughen up the battalion. A number of men fell out of the march and Imlay ordered that the defaulters receive 14 days pack drill. One of the defaulters, Private Noud, while waiting for the drill to commence committed suicide with his own rifle in front of the battalion. This incident would no doubt have had a lasting effect on the newly arrived reinforcements like Leslie.

In June 1917, the Battle of Messines began with the exploding of 19 mines under the German lines. The 47<sup>th</sup> battalion advanced 800 metres under a creeping artillery barrage on the first day and continued to hold the line gained. Messines was the opening of a series of battles that became known as The Third Battle of Ypres or more commonly Passchendaele. During this period, Leslie was promoted to corporal and then lance sergeant.

After the final assault on the Passchendaele Ridge in October 1917, Leslie was posted to the officer cadet battalion in Oxford, England. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant on 1<sup>st</sup> May 1918 and on 22<sup>nd</sup> May joined his new battalion, the 49<sup>th</sup> on the Somme.

After the decisive battle of Villers Bretonneux in April 1918, the Australian divisions were holding the line while regrouping for the Battle of Hamel (July). On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1918, while waiting to go into the line at the Battle of Amiens, Leslie Radcliffe was killed in action. The battalion war diary simply records "2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant Radcliffe killed by shell fire." Leslie's parents, who had by this time moved briefly to Thallon Street, Sherwood, were informed of his death but soon after returned to North Queensland.

Leslie was buried in a nearby civilian cemetery, Domart-Sur-La-Luce with the Rev. H. Harper in attendance. In 1934, the Imperial War Graves Commission wrote to Leslie's mother, his father having died, to seek her permission for Leslie's remains to be reinterred in the Hourges Orchard Military Cemetery. The reason given for the reinterment was that his grave would be better cared for in the new location. Emily Radcliffe, writing from Ayr, gave her permission. In 1938, Doctor D. Radcliffe of Otago Region, NZ, wrote to enquire if the family could obtain photographs of his brother's new grave. He was informed that the request could be granted with the payment of six shillings.

It is unlikely that Leslie Radcliffe ever lived in the Sherwood District. The reason for his name appearing on the Sherwood Honour Roll is probably attributable to his uncle, who lived at Sherwood and whose son Alan Radcliffe (see below) also appears on the memorial.

## **COOLING, William Henry**

## **#253 Sergeant 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

William Cooling was born in December 1894 at Corinda, the only son of Henry and Ellen Cooling. By the time of his enlistment, his family's address was given as "Oxley, near Brisbane." The embarkation roll listed his occupation as state school teacher and given that he lived in the Oxley District, he may well have been a teacher at Oxley School. By the time William enlisted, his father had died, leaving his mother a widow. It is reasonable to assume that his salary as a teacher was supporting both his mother, and his younger sister, Ida

Prior to his enlistment in May 1915, William was a member of the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, Oxley Regiment of the Citizen Military Forces. This prior military experience would see him promoted to Sergeant of A Company; 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion when he arrived at Enoggera for basic training. After just one month at Enoggera, the 26<sup>th</sup> sailed on H.M.A.T. "Ascanius" bound for Melbourne and ultimately Egypt.

The 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion was one of two Queensland Battalions raised at Enoggera in early 1915 as part of the newly created 2<sup>nd</sup> Division AIF. The 26<sup>th</sup> was comprised of mainly Queenslanders and Tasmanians, whilst its sister battalion, the 25<sup>th</sup> was almost exclusively Queenslanders. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Division was destined for Gallipoli, where they would relieve the 1<sup>st</sup> Division who had been holding the ridges since April 1915.

After the failed August offensives at Suvla Bay and The Nek and the heroic battle of Lone Pine, the ANZAC front settled into a quiet stalemate. When the 26<sup>th</sup> arrived at ANZAC on 12 September, they performed a mainly defensive role at Courtney's Post and Steele's Post.

On 22 October, just over a month after his arrival at ANZAC, William Cooling was admitted to a Field Ambulance station with shrapnel wounds to the abdomen. Later that day he was transferred to a Casualty Clearing Station for evacuation but he died that same day. He was buried in a cemetery near the CCS with an Army Chaplain conducting the ceremony. His religion was given as Methodist.

As was the usual practice, William's mother as next of kin, was informed that her son had died of wounds. A clerical error incorrectly listed his death as occurring on 22 September, not 22 October. This error was to cause his mother great anguish as soon after being informed of his death she received a letter from her son dated 17 October, some three weeks after his supposed death.

William's mother was granted a military pension of \$26 per year. His army file contains a number of letters from his mother seeking clarification on his date of death and she even sends the letter of 17 October as proof that the date of 22 September must not be correct. This matter, she writes needs to be cleared up so that a death certificate can be issued and Williams' life insurance and his bank account can be transferred to her. She was obviously very dependent on this money to support herself and her last surviving child, daughter Ida. Ellen had been named the sole beneficiary of William's Last Will and Testament, with the prophetic heading "*in the event of my death.*" During this long correspondence Ellen and Ida Cooling continued to reside at "Oxley, near Brisbane." In the middle of 1916, Ellen received two parcels containing the personal effects of her late son: comforter, letters, wallet, photograph, watch, belt and three coins.

At the end of the war, the Australian Government, placed advertisements in all newspapers calling for the next of kin of deceased servicemen to contact the armed services so that medals could be issued. William's sister, Ida replied advising that her mother had died and that she was the sole surviving relative of William Cooling. The medals were duly issued to Ida, 1914-15 Star, the Empire Medal and the Victory Medal. Ida also completed the Roll of Honour Card. At some time after William's death, a palm tree was planted in the grounds of the Sherwood Methodist Church (now Uniting Church) in his memory. It is probable that this may have been the church he and his mother and sister attended as his religion was given as Methodist, and the tree may well have been planted by his mother and sister. During recent renovations to the church and grounds, the palm tree was removed and the plaque commemorating William Cooling has been placed on another tree in the church grounds.

William Cooling is also commemorated on the Oxley War Memorial. His grave is located in the Embarkation Pier Cemetery at Gallipoli. He is buried with almost 300 fellow soldiers from the Empire. A photograph of William Cooling is held in the Australian War Memorial collection.

### **GUTHRIE, John Marsland**

### **Sergeant 11<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Brigade**

John Guthrie was barely 18 years old when he enlisted on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1914. He stated he was employed as a clerk with Queensland Railways and gave his address as simply Sherwood. It is possible that he was living with his uncle; William Guthrie, of Skew Street, Sherwood. He named his mother, Elizabeth, as his next of kin; however Elizabeth's address was C/- Miss Marsland of Cotton Street Sandgate. John's cemetery details list his father as Arthur Drummond Guthrie but letters in John's service file from his mother indicate that Arthur Guthrie abandoned his wife and children in 1907, and his whereabouts were unknown. The same letter says that as a result of being abandoned, Elizabeth had no home. She would appear to have been living with her sister, Miss Marsland, for a time before gaining employment as a cook in a railway construction gang. The situation faced by Elizabeth (her only daughter had been killed in a riding accident in 1910) provides evidence of the possible motivation for young John to enlist; as he allotted 3/6 of his 5 shillings a day to his mother.

John had previous military experience with a Field Artillery Brigade and was promptly drafted into the 301<sup>st</sup> Mechanical Transport Company. He embarked on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1914 in Melbourne and landed at Anzac on the first day. There was not much call for motor transport on the peninsula and John reverted to a field artillery battery as a gunner. Whilst stationed on Gallipoli, John was promoted first to corporal and then to sergeant.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli in December 1915, the Australian forces regrouped in Egypt. John was posted to the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery and accompanied the brigade to Havre in France where they were issued with new 18 pounder guns and limbers. The artillery supported Australian Infantry actions at Pozieres in July and August; Flers and Bullecourt in October and November.

On 11<sup>th</sup> March 1917, John was posted to an artillery school for two weeks. When he rejoined his unit, they were supporting assaults against the Hindenburg Line at Lagnicourt. On 15<sup>th</sup> April, John's battery was called to provide a covering barrage on the flank of an advance by the 56<sup>th</sup> Battalion. In order to be able to locate the targets, the battery had to move out of

concealed positions. When the German artillery observers spotted the exposed guns, they called down counter battery fire. The brigade war diary records that one officer and twelve other ranks were killed, as well as the loss of two guns and 3000 rounds of ammunition.

John and the other 11 gunners were laid to rest in the H.A.C. (Honourable Artillery Company) Cemetery in the same row. His personal belongings were eventually returned to his mother after advertisements were placed by the authorities in newspapers seeking her whereabouts. Elizabeth had been reduced to a state of homelessness after her husband abandoned her and the children. After the death of her son she had no family on which to rely. Elizabeth Guthrie moved around the state with the railway construction crew, being located at Ferny Grove, Samsonvale and Baralaba. It took some time for her son's effects to be delivered to her as her address was not constant. It would appear that Elizabeth applied for repatriation benefits in 1935.

### **The Brothers Keid**

Charles and Mary Keid were the parents of nine children, six of them boys. By 1914 the family had moved to "Chewton", Molonga Terrace, Graceville. All six of the Keid boys enlisted in the First World War; and four of them would lose their lives. Three of the deceased brothers are commemorated on the Sherwood Shire memorial. The story of the Keid family's sacrifice has been recorded in a number of media reports recently as well as in a book by Cedric Hampson; "The Brothers Keid." Since the stories of all six boys are so interwoven, I have grouped their narratives together, and in the interests of completion, I will include Leonard Keid. Leonard, the only brother to be married with a family, is not listed on the Sherwood Memorial but is instead commemorated on the Coorparoo Shire Memorial at Langlands Park.

All six brothers are listed on the Sherwood Methodist Church Roll of Honour.

### **Bennet Walter Keid**

**# 3809 Sergeant 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Bennet (usually known as Walter) Keid was born at Ormeau. He attended school at Junction Park State School and Christian Brothers Gregory Terrace; this in spite of the fact that his mother was a devout Baptist. Walter was the fourth eldest of the six brothers and by the time he enlisted on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1915, four of his brothers had already enlisted. His elder brother Leonard enlisted nine days later.

Walter was drafted as a reinforcement into the 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion and embarked from Brisbane on the "Itonus" on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1915. When he arrived in Egypt the AIF was going through a period of expansion after the withdrawal from Gallipoli. The 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion was being created out of a nucleus of Gallipoli veterans from the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion and newly arrived reinforcements.

The 49<sup>th</sup> continued to train in Egypt for the next three months during which time Walter was promoted to corporal and then sergeant. The battalion left Alexandria in June 1916 and arrived in Marseilles on 12<sup>th</sup> June. From Marseilles, the battalion was transported by train to the rear areas of the western front for acclimatisation to the business of trench warfare.

Haig; Supreme British Commander in France and Belgium; launched the Battle of the Somme on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916. As the situation on the Somme called for increasing manpower,

Haig brought three Australian Divisions (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) to the staging areas around Albert to use in the assault on Pozieres.

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Divisions were thrust into the struggle for Pozieres first during late July and early August, and had secured the village and the important blockhouse on the site of a windmill above the village. It was now the turn of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division; which included the 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion, to continue the offensive towards a ruined farm which the Germans had heavily fortified by extending the cellars and creating a line of three defensive trenches. The farm was depicted on the maps as “La Ferme du Mouquet” but the Australians referred to it as “Moo Cow Farm” or “Mucky Farm.”

The assault on the farm began at midnight on the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> September 1916. It was conducted on an ever narrowing front that was enfiladed by German artillery and machine guns on three sides. The ground was so churned up that advancing troops could not recognise a trench line when they reached it. Attempts to dig new trenches were unsuccessful due to the loose ground caving in. The 49<sup>th</sup> was finally withdrawn from the battle for Mouquet Farm without the objective being reached at considerable cost. The 4<sup>th</sup> Division had sustained 4650 casualties. The 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion has sustained 430 out of a strength of 1000. Amongst those listed as killed were Walter Keid and his elder brother Leonard.

Red Cross Wounded and Missing Reports indicate that Sergeant Keid was killed outright by shell fire. Walter was the third of the brothers to have lost his life in the war, but would not be the last.

### **Edward Alexander Keid**

### **#1153 T/Sergeant 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Edward Keid had been born in Brisbane and as a boy attended Junction Park State School like his brothers. He enlisted in Townsville on 9<sup>th</sup> October 1914 and gave his age as 25 years and occupation as selector. Edward was single and apparently had no family in North Queensland at the time as he named his mother Mary Keid of “Chewton” Molonga Terrace Graceville as his next of kin. In spite of Edward’s early enlistment date, two of his brothers had already joined up; William and Harold (known as Guy).

Edward was drafted into the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade 1<sup>st</sup> Division AIF. The 9<sup>th</sup> was the first infantry battalion to be raised in Queensland when war was declared. The first contingent of the 9<sup>th</sup> had already departed for overseas when Edward joined and he was drafted into the 1<sup>st</sup> reinforcements which left Melbourne on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1914. Upon arrival in Egypt, Edward was taken on strength by the 9<sup>th</sup> and proceeded to go through extensive desert training in preparation for the landing at Anzac.

The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion was one of three battalions which first hit the beach at dawn on the 25<sup>th</sup> April. Edward would remain on Gallipoli for the remainder of the campaign, being promoted to corporal as the evacuations took place in December 1915. A period of retraining and reorganisation followed in Egypt and the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion arrived in Marseilles on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April enroute to the Western Front.

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The 1<sup>st</sup> Division was thrust into the struggle for Pozieres during late July and early August, and had secured the village and the important blockhouse on the site of a windmill above the village. During this action, Edward would have been subjected to some of the most intense artillery barrages of the war. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division were withdrawn for rest recuperation while the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division continued the assaults.

With Pozieres secured, it was now the turn of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division; which included the 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion (to which his brothers Leonard and Bennett belonged), to continue the offensive towards a ruined farm a few hundred metres along the ridgeline from Pozieres; which the Germans had heavily fortified by extending the cellars and creating a line of three defensive trenches. The farm was depicted on the maps as "La Ferme du Mouquet" but the Australians referred to it as "Moo Cow Farm" or "Mucky Farm."

The assault on the farm began at midnight on the 3<sup>rd</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> September 1916. It was conducted on an ever narrowing front that was enfiladed by German artillery and machine guns on three sides. During the assault by the 49<sup>th</sup>, both Leonard and Bennet were killed, their bodies not recovered. When the 1<sup>st</sup> Division was thrown back into the line at Mouquet Farm, it was reported that Edward scoured the battlefield looking for his two brothers.

The Australian divisions were withdrawn from the Somme late in September 1916 for much needed reinforcements and re-equipment. While resting behind the lines, Edward was posted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Training Battalion in England. It would be heartening to think that this posting was an attempt to provide Edward with a period of recovery after the tragedy he had experienced in France.

While in England, Edward was promoted to temporary sergeant. He was to fall foul of the authorities twice while in England; once for being absent without leave and once for refusing to provide a leave pass to the sergeant of the guard. On both occasions he was simply reprimanded which perhaps implies that the commanding officers were still concerned about the state of his mental health.

Edward returned to his unit on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1917, just as the Battle of Messines was launched. The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion continued to be thrust into the line in a series of engagements in the Ypres salient during the remainder of that summer and into autumn.

By November of 1917, the British forces had advanced some 15 kilometres from Ypres and Haig was insistent that the line push on towards the village of Passchendaele, despite soaking rain that turned the battlefield into quagmire. On 1<sup>st</sup> November, during an attack near Zonnebeke, Edward received a shell wound to the head. He was transported back behind the lines to a casualty clearing station near Poperinghe, just west of Ypres. Edward succumbed to his wounds the following day and he was buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery.

Edward was the fourth son of Mary and Charles Keid to die in the war. His death would spark the family into action to save their remaining two sons (see postscript below).

## **Leonard Keid**

## **Lieutenant 9<sup>th</sup>/49<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Leonard Keid had been born in Pimpama in October 1886. As a boy he attended Junction Park State School and then St. Josephs Gregory Terrace. He qualified as an accountant and according to his application for a commission (potential officers did not complete the attestation papers that ordinary ranks did) he was employed as a paymaster with Queensland Railways.

Five of the six Keid brothers gave their address as Molonga Terrace, Graceville. Leonard was married with three children, living at Watson Street (off Bennetts Rd) Coorparoo when he presented himself for enlistment on 5<sup>th</sup> May 1915. An article in the Courier Mail 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2014 "The Keid Family lost four sons in less than 2 and a half years" reports a family story that Leonard had received an anonymous white feather (symbol of cowardice) in the post, thus prompting him to join up, in spite of the fact that the family expectation was that he would remain at home as he was the only one of the six brothers who was married and with children. According to the article, Leonard's brother; Walter, perhaps to support his brother's decision, enlisted the following day.

Leonard enlisted on 5<sup>th</sup> May (Walter did indeed enlist the following day) and received his commission as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1915 and was drafted, along with brother Walter, into the reinforcements for the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, amongst which were two other Keid brothers, Henry and Edward, who had enlisted in October 1914.

Leonard and Walter departed Brisbane on the "Warilda" on 5<sup>th</sup> October 1915 and arrived in Egypt just as the ANZACs were being evacuated from Gallipoli. In December of 1915, Leonard wrote to Army Records enquiring into the circumstances of the death of yet another brother, William who had been erroneously reported as having died in hospital in Malta (see William Keid below). He had in fact been buried at sea in June 1915. The mistake was explained as a clerical error.

During the sojourn in Egypt, the Australian forces were expanded to double the size, creating four divisions out of two. This was achieved by splitting existing 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> division battalions to create the nucleus of two new battalions. Leonard's 9<sup>th</sup> battalion was split to form the 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division. Brother Walter also transferred to the 49<sup>th</sup> in February 1916. After additional training and the inclusion of new reinforcements from Australia, the 4<sup>th</sup> Division arrived in Marseilles on 12<sup>th</sup> May 1916.

In July 1916, Haig (Supreme British Commander on the Western Front) launched the Somme offensive. Casualties were enormous but Haig was determined to keep up the pressure. Three of the four Australian divisions in France were deployed to the Somme. (The other division, the 5<sup>th</sup> had already suffered a mauling at Fromelles). The Australians were to go into their first major action at Pozieres.

The 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Divisions were thrust into the struggle for Pozieres first during late July and early August, and had secured the village and the important blockhouse on the site of a windmill above the village. It was now the turn of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division to continue the offensive towards a ruined farm which the Germans had heavily fortified by extending the cellars and creating a line of three defensive trenches. The farm was depicted on the maps as "La Ferme du Mouquet" but the Australians referred to it as "Moo Cow Farm" or "Mucky Farm."

The assault of the farm was conducted on an ever decreasing front that was enfiladed by German artillery and machine guns. The ground was so churned up that advancing troops could not recognise a trench line when they reached it. Attempts to dig new trenches were unsuccessful due to the loose ground caving in. In an attack beginning at 5:10am on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1916, A Company with Lt. Keid as acting company commander ( the company commander of "A" Coy, Captain Walker, had been arrested) advanced on the farm under an intense artillery barrage. Subsequent investigations by the Red Cross suggest that Leonard Keid was killed when an enemy dugout he was entering was hit by a large artillery shell. Leonard was originally listed as Missing :Presumed Killed in Action as his body was not seen again after the shell impact. Later it was confirmed from eyewitnesses that he had in fact been killed. Sadly his brother Walter would have been nearby, if not in the same action. Sergeant Walter Keid was Killed in Action the next day. Neither body was ever recovered.

### **KEID, William**

### **#170 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse Regiment**

William Keid was the first of the six brothers to enlist, and would be the first of the four to be killed. William had been born in Brisbane and attended Junction Park State School. Upon joining he named his mother; Mary Keid of "Chewton" Molonga Terrace, Graceville as his next of kin. At the time, William was 28 years old and employed as a carpenter.

William was drafted into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1915. The 2<sup>nd</sup> LHR was the first of the Light Horse Regiments to be raised in Queensland. Less than one month after enlisting, William and the rest of the unit embarked on the "Star of England" bound for Egypt. Whilst the Australians were at sea, England declared war on Turkey.

When the Light horse arrived in Egypt, they were engaged in patrolling the approaches to the Suez Canal. After the landings at Gallipoli, the authorities decided to land the light horsemen as reinforcement infantry. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse landed at Gallipoli on 11<sup>th</sup> May and was immediately rushed to relieve the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion at Quinn's Post. Almost immediately, the light horsemen were called upon to repel a Turkish onslaught of bomb throwing and infantry attacks.

For his action at Quinn's Post on 13/14<sup>th</sup> May, William along with eight other men from his unit was recommended for the French Medaille Militaire by the regimental commander. In William's case it was reported that he threw a greatcoat over an unexploded bomb and sat on it allowing his comrades to continue the offensive. It seems unusual for Australian soldiers to be recommended for a French gallantry award and there is no record of the recommendation being approved. There was a further recommendation that William be Mentioned in Despatches for valuable services rendered between 6<sup>th</sup> May and 28<sup>th</sup> June. These must be arbitrary dates as William did not arrive on Gallipoli until 11<sup>th</sup> May and he had already been evacuated by hospital ship and buried at sea by 28<sup>th</sup> June. William's file indicates that the Mentioned in Despatches was promulgated (after his death) but he was not entitled to the bronze oak leaf which would be attached to a medal ribbon signifying MID.

After holding the line at Quinn's Post, the 2<sup>nd</sup> LHR moved into bivouacs in Monash Valley before going back into the line at Pope's Post. William's file indicates that he received a gunshot wound to the pelvis on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1915. He was evacuated to the Hospital Ship Gascon where he subsequently died of his wounds; and was buried at sea, three miles of Gaba Tepe (the ANZAC beach head) with Chaplain Warner reading the service.

There was some confusion as to the circumstances of William's death as they were related to the family in Graceville. The family were originally informed that William had died of his wounds in Malta and was buried there, yet other sources obviously did not support this statement. It is likely that William's father, hoping to get to the bottom of the matter, wrote to his eldest son; Lieutenant Leonard Keid (see above) when he was evacuated from Gallipoli in December of 1915. Leonard wrote to Army Records in Cairo (he probably hand delivered the letter) on 28<sup>th</sup> December requesting clarification as to William's fate. He received a reply dated the following day (probably the swiftest piece of military communication in history) that stated the information regarding the burial in Malta was incorrect. The mistake was based on a clerical error. William had indeed been buried at sea. Eventually the family were informed of the correct version.

Obviously William has no known grave. He is commemorated on the Australian memorial at Lone Pine, Gallipoli.

### **Postscript**

When Edward Keid was killed at Passchendaele in November 1917, the Keid Family had lost four sons. Harry Keid, the youngest of the six brothers, had already returned to Australia for "family reasons" and representations began to have the last surviving brother, Henry Keid returned to Australia also.

On 27<sup>th</sup> November 1917, the Chief Secretary to the Queensland Premier T.J.Ryan sent a cable to the Australian Agent General in London; Andrew Fisher:

*"Relatives of Private H.C.Keid strongly desire his return to Queensland (stop) Five of his brothers have been on active service 4 killed(stop) Keid now on furlough in London where I understand General Birdwood is at present(stop) Good opportunity to represent matters. Chief Secretary Brisbane"*

The interesting aspect of this communication is that it came from the Queensland Premier and not the Prime Minister. The cable requests Keid's return to Queensland, not Australia. This is perhaps an indication of a political aspect to the matter. Ryan's Labor government was strongly anti conscription, unlike Prime Minister Hughes who had been expelled from the Labor Party for his pro conscription policy. The second conscription referendum had just been defeated.

In invoking the assistance of Andrew Fisher; a former Labor Prime Minister who had close connections to Queensland (Fisher had been the member for Gympie in the Federal Parliament), Ryan's representations may be seen as an attempt to circumvent the Prime Minister and deprive Hughes of a political opportunity.

In due course, Henry Keid was repatriated back to Queensland on the orders of General Officer Commanding Australian Imperial Forces, Lt General Birdwood.

Of the four Keid brothers killed in action, only one has a known grave. William who died of wounds off Gallipoli was buried at sea. The bodies of Leonard and Walter were never recovered from Mouquet Farm. They are instead commemorated on the tablets at the Australian National Memorial at Villers Bretonneux.

It was reported that when Mary Keid, mother of the boys, was approached for a donation to erect a war memorial at Graceville Memorial Park, she told the collector "I have already given four sons."

The story of the Keid family is certainly one which even today evokes a profound sense of loss. Perhaps other families made similar sacrifices, but the contribution of the Keid family is one which deserves to be remembered.

### **SUTTON, Charles Arthur**

### **#2903 Temporary Sergeant 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Charles Sutton was born in March 1890 at Samford. At age 21 he joined the Queensland Police Force and served mainly at Esk and Yarraman before resigning in March 1914. On 8<sup>th</sup> June 1915, Charles married Julia Agnes in the Albert Street Uniting Church. Just 6 days later, Charles enlisted and was drafted into the reinforcements for the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion. At the time of his enlistment Charles stated his occupation as farmer and his age as 25 years. Charles named his new wife as next of kin but they obviously had not had time to find a home as Julia's address was given as C/- Mrs Carr, Bacon Factory (Foggitt Jones Bacon Factory) Oxley.

The reinforcements were transported to Sydney by train where they boarded the "Ayrshire" on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1915 and set sail for Egypt. By the time Charles arrived in Egypt, the bulk of the AIF had been withdrawn from Gallipoli and were now in camp around Cairo undergoing expansion and reinforcing before being deployed to the western front. While in camp, Charles was promoted to corporal. The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion arrived in Marseilles on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 1916.

In July 1916, Haig (Supreme British Commander on the Western Front) launched the Somme offensive. Casualties were enormous but Haig was determined to keep up the pressure. Three of the four Australian divisions in France were deployed to the Somme. (The other division, the 5<sup>th</sup> had already suffered a mauling at Fromelles). The Australians were to go into their first major action at Pozieres. During the 1<sup>st</sup> Division's assault on the village of Pozieres, Charles was wounded in a rather delicate place, but after a month convalescing he was able to rejoin his unit.

Charles was wounded on a second occasion at Flers in December 1916. He received severe shrapnel wounds to his right leg and was evacuated to hospital in England for surgery. After spending time in a convalescent depot and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Training Battalion at Codford, Charles rejoined his unit which was engaged in the final stages of the battle of Passchendaele in Flanders.

In May 1918 Charles was sent off to a short course army school and upon his return was promoted to temporary sergeant. On 20<sup>th</sup> June 1918, it was reported that Charles had been killed in action near Albert on the Somme. There are no Red Cross reports to shed any light on the circumstances of his death and the Australian War memorial lists him as being buried at the Australian National Memorial at Villers Bretonneux.

By the time of Charles' death, Julia had moved to Grantham. She requested an inscription for his headstone but it was too long. Inscriptions had to be 66 characters or less; including spaces. There is no record that she amended the text.

**FOOTT, Arthur Patrick****#2570 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion**

Arthur Foot was born on Dundoo Station in the Warrego district in 1879. His father, Thomas Wade Foott was the owner of the station, having moved to Queensland from Bourke, NSW. Thomas died in 1884 (some reports suggest his death was due to stress caused by the drought) leaving his wife, Mary Hannay Foott and two young sons, Arthur and Cecil destitute. Mary by accounts from the time was an educated woman. She was able to work as a journalist and wrote poetry. Mary Foott's best known poem is "Where the pelican builds."

The family moved to Toowoomba for a short while before Mary opened a private school at Rocklea. The school must have been reasonably successful as she was able to have her sons educated at Brisbane Grammar from 1889 to 1890.

When Arthur Foott presented himself for enlistment in March 1916, he was 36 years old, married to Grace Olivia, and was living in Kew Street Graceville. He had one daughter, Grace Patricia Hannay. At enlistment, Arthur reported that he was currently serving with a commission in the 1<sup>st</sup> Field Company Engineers, Citizens Forces. Unusually Arthur did not apply for a commission in the AIF but enlisted as a private soldier and was drafted into the 4<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion as a reinforcement.

Pioneers were essentially combat engineers, tasked with trench and dugout construction as well as assisting signallers laying telephone cables and establishing headquarters posts. Arthur embarked on the "Seang Choon" in Brisbane on 19<sup>th</sup> September 1916 and arrived in Plymouth on the 9<sup>th</sup> December. During the sea voyage Arthur was promoted to acting sergeant but on arrival in England he reverted to the ranks.

After five months in training in Perham Downs, Arthur was shipped to Belgium where he transferred to the 1<sup>st</sup> Pioneer Battalion. In June 1917, the battle of Messines opened a series of operations which became known collectively as the Third Battle of Ypres or more commonly Passchendaele. The 1<sup>st</sup> Pioneers were supporting the Australian 1<sup>st</sup> Division as they were brought up to the line for action around the Menin Road just east of Ypres. The pioneer war diary outlines continuous work by the pioneers in constructing mule tracks and a light railway as the 1<sup>st</sup> Division advanced towards the Passchendaele Ridge.

On 17<sup>th</sup> September 1917, while working in the forward area, Arthur Foot was killed. There is scant evidence surrounding his death, no Red Cross reports are available and Arthur's file simply states that he was buried at the Menin Road South Military Cemetery.

Arthur's wife, Grace Foott, received a war widows pension of two pounds per fortnight, and his daughter received one pound. In 1920, Grace remarried, her surname was now Grew, and she moved to Priory Street, Indooroopilly. Arthur's mother Mary died in 1918.

Arthur's elder brother, Sir Cecil Henry Foott CMG. CB., had a distinguished military career in the War. He was a professional soldier who attained the rank of Brigadier General and was knighted in the field by the King.

**LYELL, John Garland****#6095 6<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Field Company Engineers**

John Lyell was born in Ladybank, Fifeshire, Scotland; the second son of David and Isabella Lyell. He attended school in Ladybank and served as a professional soldier for seven years in the Royal Scots Regiment before serving a further five years in the reserves.

John and his elder brother William emigrated to Australia after their parents died. At the time of his enlistment John was working for Queensland Railways, and was probably living with his married brother, William at Graceville. When John presented himself for enlistment on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1916 he was 38 years old. He was drafted as a reinforcement into the 6<sup>th</sup> Field Company Engineers and embarked from Brisbane on the "Runic", arriving in Egypt on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1916.

On 18<sup>th</sup> March, John was transferred to the 15<sup>th</sup> FCE as a sapper. The word sapper comes from the French word "sappe" meaning to dig; which is a fairly apt description of the work required by engineers in the First World War. On the 29<sup>th</sup> June, John and his unit arrived in Marseilles and boarded a train for the northern sector of the western front, arriving near Armentieres on 7<sup>th</sup> July.

Sir Douglas Haig; the British Expeditionary Forces Commander in Chief commented on the newly arrived Australians "splendid physique... mad keen to kill Germans and to start doing it at once." The 15<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the AIF under Brigadier Harold "Pompey" Elliot; supported by the 15<sup>th</sup> FCE attacked the German line at Fleurbaix on the 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> July, just short of two weeks after their arrival.

Tactics at this early stage of the AIF campaign in France were directed wholly by the British and displayed the old maxim that generals usually fight the current war with tactics from the last. The assault on the German lines at Fleurbaix (as well as the assault by the 5<sup>th</sup> AIF further down the line at Fromelles) was totally unsuccessful. A frontal assault without artillery support against an entrenched enemy would always fail. The engineers who were following up the infantry were tasked with digging saps (trenches perpendicular to the front line towards the enemy) when it was reported that John Lyell had been killed.

Subsequent enquiries with the Red Cross uncovered witnesses who reported that John had been struck in the head by a sniper's bullet and died instantly. One witness described John as an "elderly man", which to some of the youngsters in the AIF he probably appeared to be, he was nearly 40. It was also reported that John was buried in a cemetery in the same row as "15 others." The war diary of the 15<sup>th</sup> FCE does not record more than two fatalities from the company on those days so the others were most likely infantry men.

John was buried in the Military Cemetery at Rue-de-Bois and his brother requested that his headstone be inscribed as follows: "His big kind heart was his greatest enemy."

John Lyell is listed on the Graceville Memorial with the rank of corporal, however his military records have no notation of such a promotion. Perhaps the error was due to confusion over the rank of sapper.

**STRONG, Herbert James****#282 Sergeant 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

Herbert Strong was born to Mary Anna and George Strong at Graceville and attended Sherwood State School. It is possible that the Strong family were long time residents of the district, there being a Strong Avenue running off Oxley Road parallel to Graceville Avenue. Herbert's mother also reported that Herbert's eldest brother served in the Boer War.

When Herbert presented himself for enlistment on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1915, he was 22 years old and employed as a clerk with Queensland Railways. He named his mother; Mary Anna, as his next of kin and stated his home address to be Oxley Road, Graceville.

Herbert was originally drafted into the 35<sup>th</sup> Battalion but before embarkation he was transferred to the 41<sup>st</sup> battalion and promoted to corporal. The 41<sup>st</sup> battalion which had been raised at Enoggera embarked for overseas on the "Demonthenes" from Sydney on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1916 and arrived in Plymouth on the 20<sup>th</sup> July.

The 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion was part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade; 3<sup>rd</sup> Division AIF. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, unlike the other 4 Australian divisions was not sent directly to the western front. Instead the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division spent considerable time in England training under the new divisional commander, Maj. Gen. John Monash and was not deployed to France until the beginning of 1917.

The 41<sup>st</sup> battalion spent the early months of 1917 rotating in and out of the line around the French / Belgian border area near Armentieres. During this time Herbert was transferred to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Tunnelling Company, which was engaged in preparing some of the massive 19 underground mines that would be fired later in the year. It seems that Herbert was not cut out for underground work as he returned to the 41<sup>st</sup> after only a week. Herbert was promoted to sergeant in April.

After the campaigns in France in 1916, Gen Sir Douglas Haig was anxious for a new offensive in the summer of 1917. He chose to direct his forces against the Germans around the Ypres salient in Belgium. The offensive would begin with the simultaneous firing of 19 mines under the German lines in front of the village of Messines; followed by an intensive artillery barrage and an infantry advance of some 800 metres.

Prior to the opening of the Battle of Messines on 7<sup>th</sup> June; the 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion were tasked with manning the front line while the brigades that were to take part in the assault assembled in the rear. After the success of Messines, the 41<sup>st</sup> were taken out of the line for a short rest before the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade was pushed back into the line near Warneton. The task was to straighten the line by digging a new forward trench line, in clear view of the enemy. This period is referred to in the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade history as the "18 Days." The entire brigade was subjected to constant artillery, machine guns and deadly sniping. The action was so intense that the 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion Diary has no entries at all for this period, even battalion administrators were hard pressed.

During the 18 days, on the 25<sup>th</sup> June, Herbert Strong, was evacuated to the 53<sup>rd</sup> Casualty Clearing Station with a compound fracture to the thigh caused by machine gun fire. He died of his wounds later that same day. There are no Red Cross reports into the circumstances of Herbert's death and he was buried in the nearby Bailleul Communal Cemetery.

His parents received his personal effects and photographs of his grave. When the memorial Scroll and King's message was delivered to the family, Herbert's rank was stated incorrectly as Lance Sergeant. Errors over his rank persist with him being listed on the Graceville Memorial as corporal.

## **HALL, David**

## **#189 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

David Hall was a 27 year old labourer when he enlisted on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1915. He was married to Matilda Hall and they had a daughter, Matilda Jean. He stated his address as Darra, Queensland and his occupation as labourer.

David enlisted around the same time as Herbert Strong (see above) and Sidney Haggar (see below) and like Herbert and Sidney was drafted into the newly created 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion. The battalion embarked on the "Demosthenes" in Sydney on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1916 and sailed for Plymouth via Cape Town.

The 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion was part of the 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade; 3<sup>rd</sup> Division AIF. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Division, unlike the other 4 Australian divisions was not sent directly to the western front. Instead the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division spent considerable time in England training under the new divisional commander, Maj. Gen. John Monash and was not deployed to France until the beginning of 1917.

As a newly arrived battalion to the front, the 41<sup>st</sup> was stationed in an area referred to as the nursery trenches near Armentieres. This area had not seen any serious fighting since 1914 and was considered an ideal location to accustom troops to the business of trench warfare; even though there were no trenches as the ground was too boggy. The front in this sector was made up of built up breastworks about 8 feet high made out of sand bags.

Soon after taking up position in the front line, the battalion commander was ordered to organise a raid on the enemy lines on 11<sup>th</sup> February at Square Farm. These raids served two purposes; the first being to give the troops exposure to contact with the enemy, and the second being to gather intelligence about the strength of the enemy. A party of 40 men comprising three officers and two platoons set off at midnight, after a short artillery barrage to cut the German wire.

Cutting barbed wire entanglements using artillery was an art form that field artillery found difficult to master. On this particular raid, the wire was not cut and the raiding party being held up at the German wire abandoned the enterprise. The war diary of the 41<sup>st</sup> records that as the party was withdrawing they came under intense fire from machine guns and minenwerfers (heavy trench mortars). No mans land was also illuminated by searchlights.

Casualties from the raid were one O/R killed, 8 O/R wounded. Sadly the one ordinary rank killed was David Hall. Red Cross reports indicate that he was killed outright by concussion of a heavy mortar. His mates carried the body back to the Australian lines and David was buried in a nearby military cemetery at Cite BonJean.

Soon after David's death, Matilda and young Matilda moved from Darra to live with David's unmarried sister at Newmarket; and then to Enoggera to live with Matilda's mother. Matilda was granted a war pension of two pounds per fortnight and one pound for young Matilda.

It is difficult to explain how David's name appears on the Graceville memorial and yet does not appear on the Oxley Memorial, which lists a number of young men from the Oxley and Darra district.

**BOURKE, William Michael Sylvester      #24 14<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment/ 52<sup>nd</sup> Battn**

William Bourke was born in August 1897 at Coraki on the Richmond River in Northern New South Wales. He attended the convent school at Ballina NSW but left school at 14 to help his mother raise his younger brothers and sisters. By the time of his enlistment, the family's address was "Darra, Ipswich Line."

William enlisted in Brisbane on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1916. His age at enlistment was given as 19 years and 5 months and his occupation as labourer. He was initially drafted into the 14<sup>th</sup> Light Horse with the regimental number of 24.

The 14<sup>th</sup> Light Horse 1<sup>st</sup> Reinforcements sailed from Sydney on H.M.A.T. "Beltana" and landed in Devonport, Plymouth Harbour, England in July 1916. Soon after disembarking, William was admitted to Devonport Hospital with mumps, where he celebrated his 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. On discharge, he was sent to Rolleston on Salisbury Plain and taken into the 13<sup>th</sup> Training Bn. After the Battle of Pozieres on the Somme in July – August 1916; there was a serious shortage of manpower to replace the heavy losses of the AIF. In all likelihood, William was encouraged to transfer to the infantry.

On 28<sup>th</sup> November 1916, William arrived at the huge British Expeditionary Force Camp at Etaples, France known as the Bullring. On the 13<sup>th</sup> December he joined the 52<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. The 52<sup>nd</sup> was a newly formed battalion raised in Egypt in early 1916 as part of the 13<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division. The battalion was a mixture of Gallipoli veterans and new reinforcements. At this time William would have sown on his Unit patch, a circle of white over blue.

In the early months of 1917, the 52<sup>nd</sup> were involved in a huge offensive against the enemy in France, advancing as the Germans withdrew back towards the Hindenburg Line. On 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1917, just two months after joining the unit, William was wounded. Official records list the wound as "*slight, remained on duty.*" His mother, Helena Bourke, was informed by telegram that he had been wounded.

Less than two months later, William was killed in action at Lagnicourt in France. His mother wrote: "*My son was a runner for the company and was killed while taking an important message from headquarters and is buried at headquarters which I believe was somewhere about Lagnicourt(sic) as that was the day of the battle.*"

The official records list the death as K.I.A., Artillery Fire. His age at the time of his death is recorded as 20 years and 8 months.

His mother had perhaps received a letter from William's Commanding Officer or a mate relating the details of his death, and she was certain that he had been buried. Lagnicourt is located in the Somme Valley, near the more well known Bullecourt. In the years between William's death and the armistice, this land would be fought over two more times, and sadly the grave of William Bourke, if it existed, was lost.

His mother wrote repeatedly to the authorities requesting information of her son's resting place and requesting the return of any of his personal effects. Unfortunately she was not successful. Finally, six years after her son's death, the family received William's medals; The British Empire Medal and the Victory Medal. By this time the family had moved to the Summit, near Stanthorpe.

William Michael Bourke is commemorated on both the Oxley War Memorial and the Graceville War Memorial.

**BRADNAM, Victor Percy Bennett**

**#5349 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Victor Bradnam was a 30 year old painter who lived with his married sister, Mrs Young at "Rose Cottage" Jerrold Street, Graceville. At enlistment he gave his father; Mt T. Bradnam of Kentish Town Road, London as his next of kin.

Victor enlisted in 31<sup>st</sup> January 1916 in Brisbane and was drafted as a reinforcement into the 12<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He departed from Sydney on the "Hawkes Bay" on 20<sup>th</sup> April and arrived in Weymouth, England on the 7<sup>th</sup> July.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> July 1916, just three days after arriving in England, Victor went absent without leave. He was confined to quarters for 7 days but during this time he was absent from four defaulter's parades. He was given 168 hours of Field Punishment #2 (FP #2 meant that the defaulter would have to spend 2 hours in every 24 shackled. If taken literally, this would have meant that Victor was on FP#2 for 84 days; a totally improbable punishment. The recording of 168 hours is in all likelihood a misprint in his files).

In spite of the punishment meted out, Victor again went absent on 28<sup>th</sup> July. This time he was sentenced to detention in the stockade for 8 days. It must have been apparent to the military authorities that such a record of going absent was an indicator that something was seriously wrong. Regardless, Victor embarked for overseas on the 9<sup>th</sup> August and reached his battalion; which was in a rest area behind the lines in Belguim, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1916, it would appear from testimony later given at a court of inquiry that Victor attempted suicide by gunshot. The regimental medical officer stated that in his opinion Victor had "lost his mentality", and recommended that he be assessed for discharge. While waiting for the discharge process to take effect, the company commander ordered that Victor be placed on a suicide watch.

Victor was placed in the orderly room where he would sleep among a number of soldiers who would stand watch during the night. Evidence taken at the court of inquiry records that there was a shortage of candles and so sentries were instructed to light a candle only if they suspected any movement from Victor. In spite of the precautions, and in the view of the inquiry, a slack attitude by the sentries, Victor somehow obtained a rifle and cartridge and shot himself in his bunk, sustaining a fatal wound to the head in the early morning of 4<sup>th</sup> April 1916..

Victor was buried at the Klein Vierstraat British Cemetery with the Rev. Milne in attendance. The official version relayed to his family was that Victor had died of wounds, and the Roll of Honour at the Australian War memorial also states that he died of wounds. When his sister

in Sherwood wrote requesting more details she was coolly informed that Victor had committed suicide.

The circumstances surrounding Victor's death illustrate one of the less praiseworthy aspects of any war. Soldiers are often subjected to incredible stress which results in self inflicted wounds or death. Instances of soldiers taking their own lives during World War 1 are rare but nonetheless certainly did happen. Most often this could be put down to what we would call post traumatic stress. In Victor's case it is perhaps attributable to a pre-existing mental condition which was exacerbated by military life.

**COOK, George Frederick**

**#2638 25<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

George Cook was 24 years old when he enlisted on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1915. He stated that he was married to Elsie Matilda Cook and they had one son, Leonard George. George's address was Lockwood Street, Sherwood where he and his family were apparently living with his parents, Frederick and Elizabeth.

George reported he had been born in Maryborough, Victoria but his family obviously moved to Sherwood when he was young as his wife advised that George had attended Sherwood State School.

After a period of home leave, George embarked on the "Seeang Bee" in Brisbane on 21<sup>st</sup> October 1915 as a reinforcement for the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion. By the time George arrived in Egypt the entire Australian Corps had been evacuated from Gallipoli and were in the process of expanding the size of the force from 2 divisions to 4 divisions. During this process George was transferred to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion; another Queensland regiment, on 4<sup>th</sup> March 1916. The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion arrived in Marseilles on 3<sup>rd</sup> April and proceeded north by train to the "nursery sector" around Armentieres to become accustomed to fighting on the Western Front.

In July 1916, Haig (Supreme British Commander on the Western Front) launched the Somme offensive. Casualties were enormous but Haig was determined to keep up the pressure. Three of the four Australian divisions in France were deployed to the Somme. (The other division, the 5<sup>th</sup> had already suffered a mauling at Fromelles). The Australians were to go into their first major action at Pozieres and the 1<sup>st</sup> Division; which included the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion would be first into the line on 21<sup>st</sup> July. During the assault on the village of Pozieres, George received a gunshot wound to the arm and was eventually evacuated to a military hospital in Norwich, England to recover.

George rejoined the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 17<sup>th</sup> November. The brigade at that time was manning trenches around Flers and Guedecourt. Haig had closed down the front in that area as winter approached. Rather than contending with the enemy, the Australians were faced with the severest winter in 40 years. Temperatures plummeted to -15 Centigrade, and the Australians were exposed to the elements without suitable winter clothing.

George reported sick in late January 1917 and was evacuated to Reading War Hospital with nephritis (trench fever). His wife was informed that he was in hospital and telegrams sent on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> February informed her that George was "progressing favourably" and "improving." On 15<sup>th</sup> March, George was still progressing favourably.

George's condition took a turn for the worse in late March. He was admitted to Alderney Isolation Hospital in Dorset with severe cerebro spinal fever (meningitis). George lingered for three weeks but finally died on 24th April. He was buried the same day in Wareham Military Cemetery with Chaplain Harper presiding and a military escort in attendance.

George's widow was entitled to a funeral benefit from the Loyal Sherwood Forest Lodge of the M.U.I.O.O.F. (Oddfellows Lodge or Rechabites) and a widow's pension amounting to three pounds per fortnight for herself and young Leonard. By the time that war medals were being distributed, Elsie had remarried (Mrs Rossner) and was living in Booval, Ipswich.

George's father, Frederick enlisted soon after his son on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 1915. He was almost 50 years old but was nevertheless drafted into a remounts unit and shipped off to Egypt. Soon after George's death, Frederick was slated for discharge on the grounds that he was "over 45." If age was going to be a factor, perhaps it would have been prudent to refuse Frederick at enlistment rather than ship him all the way to Egypt for the decision to be made.

Both George and Frederick Cook are commemorated on the Roll of Honour in the Sherwood Methodist (now Uniting) Church.

### **DODD, Alfred Searle**

### **#3003 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Alfred Dodd was born in Maryborough, Qld and attended school in Townsville. He presented himself for enlistment on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1916 armed with written permission from his parents; Susan and Ambrose Dodd of Appel Street, Chelmer, and a letter from the Commanding Officer Naval Reserve Brisbane stating that the Navy gave its permission for Alfred to enlist. Although he had stated he had 4 years experience in the Navy Reserve, according to his father he was primarily a bandsman. Alfred stated that he was 19 years old and employed as a mercer.

One month after enlisting, Alfred embarked with reinforcements for the 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion on the "Marathon" in Brisbane. Such a short period between enlistment and embarkation illustrates the desperate need for reinforcements on the western front after the mauling that three Australian divisions received at Pozieres and Mouquet Farm in July and August of 1916.

Alfred disembarked in Plymouth on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1917 and was sent to the 12<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion at Codford. Four months later he was posted overseas travelling via the camps at Etaples to Belgium. He arrived at his unit on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1917.

After the failure of the Somme campaign in 1916, to gain the breakthrough he so desperately wanted, General Sir Douglas Haig shifted his attention to Flanders and the Ypres salient. His plan called for a great offensive to begin in front of the village of Messines. On the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1917; 19 huge underground mines exploded all along the front, followed by an intense artillery barrage and an infantry advance of some 800 metres. The 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion as part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division AIF jumped the bags at 9:00am to advance across the shattered ground.

Sometime during the day, Alfred Dodd was killed in no man's land. Red Cross reports of his death are conflicting with some witnesses claiming he was hit by a sniper and others

claiming he was struck by an artillery shell. Given that many of the witnesses were not interviewed until several months later, and were in hospital recovering from wounds or gassing; it is not surprising that memories become faded or soldier's identities are mixed up. Regardless of his fate, Alfred's body was never recovered. He had been with the battalion 25 days.

At war's end, an imposing memorial was constructed at the eastern gate of the city wall in Ypres, Belgium. Known as the Menin Gate, the names of some 55,000 Commonwealth soldiers who perished in Flanders and have no known grave are inscribed on the tablets there. Every evening since the gate's construction in 1923, the last post is played at 8:00pm (except for the years of occupation in WW2) by local volunteers to honour the sacrifice made 100 years ago.

Three months before Alfred's death, his elder sister Alice Maud Dodd enlisted in the Australian Army Nursing Service. She saw service in Egypt and Salonika aboard a hospital ship and returned to Australia in 1919.

### **DOUGLAS, Alfred Lionel**

### **#3032 26<sup>th</sup>/ 48<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

When completing the Roll of Honour Circular in 1920, Mrs Amy Douglas of Mary Street, Sherwood reported that her son, Alfred, had been born in Silkot, Punjab, India. She stated he attended school in Nottingham, England and had qualifications in railway construction and marine engineering. By the time of his enlistment on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1915, Alfred was 22 years old and employed as a fireman on the railways. Alfred's father had died in 1910 and as a dutiful son, Alfred allotted four fifths of his pay to his mother.

Alfred was drafted as a reinforcement for the 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion and embarked on the "Itonus" in Brisbane on 30<sup>th</sup> December 1915. While the ship was waiting to take on West Australian reinforcements in Fremantle, Alfred went AWL for 26 hours and was fined 2 days pay.

By the time Alfred arrived in Egypt, the entire Australian force had been evacuated from Gallipoli and was in the process of doubling its size, by creating two new infantry divisions to supplement the two that had been on Gallipoli. Rather than joining the 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion, Alfred was transferred to the 48<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 9<sup>th</sup> March. The 48<sup>th</sup> was predominantly a West Australian battalion and there were so many members of the 48<sup>th</sup> from the Leane family (including the battalion commander) that the battalion was referred to as the Joan of Arc Battalion (Maid of Orleans; made of all Leanes). The 48<sup>th</sup> was part of the newly created 4<sup>th</sup> Division AIF.

After brigade training in Egypt the 48<sup>th</sup> embarked for France; arriving in Marseilles on 19<sup>th</sup> June. Like all of the newly arrived Australian battalions, the 48<sup>th</sup> travelled by train to Hazebrouk where they were billeted. The battalion war diary for the remainder of the month is primarily concerned with the weather (it was wet) and the tardiness in receiving officer reinforcements from ANZAC Corps.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, Haig (Supreme British Commander on the Western Front) launched the Somme offensive. Casualties were enormous but Haig was determined to keep up the pressure. Three of the four Australian divisions in France were deployed to the Somme. The

Australians were to go into their first major action at Pozieres and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Divisions were put into the line in late July. After these two divisions had exhausted themselves in gaining the high ground above the village, the 4<sup>th</sup> Division was brought up to defend the ground captured.

Pozieres is renowned for the intensity of the artillery barrages laid down by the German defenders; and the 48<sup>th</sup> Battalion was to suffer the most of any of the Australian units. Between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 7<sup>th</sup> August, the 48<sup>th</sup> suffered 598 casualties (out of a nominal strength of 950); over 100 of which were killed with the rest wounded. At the roll call on the 8<sup>th</sup> August after being pulled out of the line; apart from the casualties listed above, there were 76 missing. Among the missing was Alfred Douglas.

Red Cross Wounded and Missing reports failed to point definitively to Alfred's fate, and there was even a search of prisoner of war records to see if he had been captured. It was not until a court of inquiry was held in early 1917 that Alfred was officially listed as Killed in Action. The authorities were tardy in providing the necessary death certificates to Alfred's mother which prompted her to write to Base Records; in addition to two letters from Mutual Life Assurance with a similar request. Amy Douglas's circumstances no doubt made her rather dependant on the income that would come from the life policy as well as the war gratuity and a war widow's pension.

As late as 1927, the imperial War Graves Commission was writing to Amy to inform her that searches of the battlefield had failed to uncover her son's remains. In 1933, The Australian Government resolved to erect a lasting memorial to all the Australians who had fallen in France and had no known grave. The Australian National Memorial at Villers Bretonneux across the Somme from Pozieres was officially dedicated by King George VI in 1938. Alfred Douglas is commemorated on the memorial tablets with some 10,000 others at Villers Bretonneux.

### **DUNN, William Knox**

### **#5571 25<sup>TH</sup> Battalion**

William Dunn was born into a Scots Presbyterian family in Dublin. Both his father, James Knox Dunn and his brother Ralph Knox Dunn shared the middle name of the founder of the Presbyterian Church, as did William.

The family emigrated to Australia when William was a young boy as his father reported William attending both Sherwood State School and Brisbane Normal School. The family home was "Keppoch" Berry Street Graceville. Keppoch is the ancestral home of the Macdonald Clan in the Scottish Highlands and is further indication of the family's strong Caledonian roots.

William enlisted on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 1916. At the time he stated his occupation as stockman and gave Keppoch as his home address; although other documents indicate that he may have been working in the Central Queensland area prior to enlistment. William's younger brother Ralph, who was just 18, had enlisted in September 1915, and it is not unreasonable to think that the family requested William ; who was 31 years old, to enlist also to keep an eye on his brother. Fortuitously both brothers were posted to the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

William embarked on the "Clan McGilvray" in Brisbane on 7<sup>th</sup> September 1916 and arrived in Plymouth on 2<sup>nd</sup> November. By the 21<sup>st</sup> November he was in a training battalion at Rolleston. On 31<sup>st</sup> July William was finally taken on strength by the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion were in a rest area when William arrived, recovering from the arduous battles of 1916. The billets were in the Reniscure district near Hazebrouk and training consisted of practicing infantry advancement by company, battalion and brigade. It was also harvest time and up to 100 men a day were detailed to help local farmers get in the summer wheat.

The third battle of Ypres (often referred to as Passchendaele) began in June 1917 with mine explosions and artillery barrages at Messines. Plumer (the British Corps Commander) adopted a bite and hold strategy to continue the offensive east from Ypres towards the Passchendaele Ridge and by September, the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion were brought up to the line to continue the offensive along the Menin Road. As the battalion moved up, William reported to a Field Ambulance with trench fever (nephritis). He was evacuated to the 58<sup>th</sup> General Hospital at Rouen and then spent the next three months in convalescent depots before returning to his unit which was by this time wintering in Messines.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion remained in the Messines area for several months, which was relatively quiet. When Ludendorff launched Operation Michael on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1918 on the Somme, the British Army stationed there could not withstand the advance of German shock troops and beat a hasty retreat surrendering all the ground won on the Somme in 1916.

Haig realized that Michael had the capacity to split the British and French, capture the ports of Boulogne, Dunkirk and Havre and possibly win the war. To halt the German advance, Haig called on the Australian divisions resting in Flanders. By this time the five Australian Divisions were now under the command of Lieutenant General John Monash in a single corps. Monash rushed the third and fourth divisions to the Somme and succeeded in stemming the German tide at Villers Bretonneux on Anzac Day 1918. In order to buy time for the counter offensive, the remainder of the Australian Corps were brought to the Somme in early May.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion, as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division was tasked with holding the line in the strategically vital triangle formed by the confluence of the Ancre and the Somme Rivers. On the 28<sup>th</sup> May, it was reported that William Dunn had been killed in action.

Red Cross reports reveal that William had received two gunshot wounds to the back while digging a sap perpendicular to the front line trench. He was buried in the Heilly Cemetery near Ville-sur -Ancre (the village on the Ancre) with a wooden cross erected. At the end of the war, William's remains were reinterred in the much larger Ribemont Communal Cemetery four miles from Albert. His family were provided with photographs of his grave.

William's younger brother, Ralph was fortunate to survive the war. He was wounded on five occasions; the most serious being multiple gunshot wounds and a fractured skull. He returned to Australia in the middle of 1919. William's parents James and Elizabeth left Berry Street in 1922 to live at Wickham Terrace.

**ENRIGHT, Michael (Joseph)****#2263 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Michael Enright was born in December 1896 and attended Oxley State School as a boy. His attestation papers indicate that he enlisted on 12 August 1915. At the time he was only 18 years and nine months and so needed his parent's permission. His file contains a handwritten letter in a childlike script (probably written by Michael himself) which reads:

*Dear Sir*

*I give my consent that my son Michael Enright may enlist in the expeditionary (sic) forces.*

The letter is signed by his mother, Mrs S. Enright, in an even shakier hand. His enlistment papers indicate that his father was deceased and that he was the sole support for his widowed mother, allotting 3 shillings from his pay of 5 shillings per day to his mother whilst he was in the army. Like his mother who from her handwriting seems to have had difficulty with writing, Michael would appear to have had only a limited education. He took two attempts to sign his enlistment papers, originally spelling his name incorrectly.

Michael was drafted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> reinforcements of the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion with a regimental number of 2263. The 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion had been raised at Enoggera in early 1915 as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division of the AIF. The Battalion was comprised almost exclusively of Queensland volunteers. When Michael enlisted, the 25<sup>th</sup> were about to reinforce the 1<sup>st</sup> Division at Gallipoli. He would join the battalion proper after the evacuation of Gallipoli as reinforcement at Ismailia in Egypt in February 1916.

The Battalion disembarked in Marseilles from Egypt on 14 March 1916 and proceeded by train north to Armentieres near the Belgian border. They were the first Australian battalion in France. This was a fairly quiet sector on the western front and the British commanders used this sector to initiate new battalions into the business of trench warfare.

General Haig, Supreme British commander on the Western Front was planning a big push in the south of the British sector through the Somme River valley. It was to be the largest battle of the war so far, and was timed to commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> of July 1916. The attack was a disaster, with the British suffering 60,000 casualties on the first day. In spite of this, Haig was determined to push on and the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Australian Divisions were moved south from the Armentieres sector to Albert to take part in the Somme offensive. Whilst waiting to go into the line, Michael Enright went Absent Without Leave (AWL) for two days. He was disciplined and given 14 days Field Punishment No. 2, but this sentence was reduced (no doubt because the battalion was about to go into battle) to 14 days pay withheld.

The second division's objective was to take a blockhouse which had been built on the site of a windmill in the village of Pozieres, half way between Albert and Bapaume. The windmill occupied a position on the highest part of the ridge, was behind two lines of trenches, and provided a panoramic view of the surrounding countryside. The attack, the first major offensive by the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion since arriving in France, was to begin just after midnight on the 29<sup>th</sup> July. The attack was a failure, with the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion suffering 343 casualties (from a strength of a little less than 1000 men). On the site of the windmill today is a commemorative stone which reads:

*“The ruin of the Pozieres windmill which lies here was the centre of the struggle on this part of the Somme Battlefield in July and August 1916. It was captured by Australian troops who fell more thickly on this ridge than on any other battlefields of the war.”*

Sadly, one of those who *“fell more thickly”* was Private Michael Enright. He was originally listed as “Missing” on 29 July 1916. His mother, as his next of kin, was informed that Michael was missing in August 1916 and she began to receive a war pension in September of that year.

In March 1917, a Mr William Ridings of Oxley, Queensland wrote to Army Base Records in Melbourne with an unusual account. Perhaps the fact that the letter was not written by Michael’s mother is another indication of her limited ability with writing. Mr Ridings states that in respect of Michael Enright *“his mother has heard that he is in England and that he is insane.”* According to the writer, Mrs Enright heard this story from another 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion mother whose son reported that one of his mates said that *“one of his mates, Mick Enright, was in hospital and was completely mad.”*

The army records office dismissed the initial claim as having no substance but Mr Ridings somehow obtained the letter from the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion man (Pte John (Jack) Brown) and sent it to base records. Base records pointed out in their own communications that the claim is unlikely to have substance as if Private Enright was still alive, he would have by now had some communication with his family. Also there were no records of him having been admitted to hospital in England or elsewhere.

Finally 12 months after the Battle of Pozieres, while the Battalion was enjoying a well earned rest, a Board of Inquiry was convened and it was determined (probably by questioning men from Michael’s Lewis Gun Section who took part in the attack) that Pte Michael Enright was Killed in Action on 29 July 1916 at Pozieres. By this time, there were no personal effects found to send to his mother. She was informed that her son was now Killed in Action.

At the end of the war, next of kin were requested to supply some information for the National Roll of Honour. If Sarah Enright did so, the document has not survived.

The 14-15 Star, British Empire Medal and Victory Medal were sent to Sarah in 1921 along with a pamphlet entitled “Where the Australians rest.” Sadly for Sarah, the pamphlet would have been of little comfort as her son, like the other 11,000 Australian soldiers killed in France has no known resting place. He is, instead, commemorated on the Australian National memorial at Villers Bretonneux

Michael is also commemorated in the name of Enright Street, opposite the lower oval of Oxley State School on Oxley Road.

## **FISHER, Joseph William**

## **#880 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Joseph (Joe) Fisher was born in November 1891, the second son of a prominent mining family in Charters Towers. His father, Roger James Fisher had been a coal miner in the Cumberland District of Northern England who had emigrated to Queensland. Roger became part owner of the Cumberland Gold Mining Company on the Etheridge Field near Charters Towers and by the time that Joe was born, his father and uncle were well established as

prominent members of the community. Roger was a crack rifle shot winning the Queen's Shoot in 1901, and was also the Colour Sergeant in the Kennedy Regiment (A volunteer colonial militia). With such a pedigree, it is not surprising that young Joe followed in his father's footsteps.

After attending school in Charters Towers, Joe became an engine driver, stationary (stationary steam engines powered the hoists and battery in underground mines) and also joined the Kennedy Regiment. By 1913 when the family moved to Raceview near Ipswich, Joe had also been promoted to Colour Sergeant of the regiment. Joe resigned from the Kennedy regiment to join his family in Ipswich.

At the outbreak of war, Joe was employed as an engine driver (stationary) at the Aberdare Colliery at Raceview, near Ipswich, where his father was the owner. On 21 August 1914, just two weeks after war was declared, Joe enlisted. He was drafted into the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, one of the first battalions raised as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division of the AIF. With his previous military training in the Kennedy Regiment, Joe was promoted to Lance Corporal one week after enlistment. The battalion sailed for Egypt in September of 1914 and whilst on board ship, Joe requested that he be allowed to revert to the rank of Private in a different company. Such requests were common as soldiers wanted to be with their mates. Joe was allowed to switch to "C" company as a private, but was then immediately promoted to Lance Corporal again in his new company.

The AIF disembarked in Egypt for training and by April 1915, were preparing for the landings at Gallipoli on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion were among the first group ashore, landing at 4:50am, near the promontory known as Gaba Tepe, to the south of Anzac Cove.

Just five days after the landing, L/Cpl Joseph Fisher was listed as Killed in Action at Gaba Tepe. An obituary notice appeared in the Northern Miner (Charters Towers) in June 1915 stating in part:

*"----he volunteered at once, for there was north country blood in the boy, moving with the gallant ninth battalion."*

Information from the Gallipoli battlefield was sketchy and having been advised of their son's death, Joe's parents sought further information. Joe's file in the National Archives contains an intriguing letter from the Secretary of the Prime Minister's Department to the Secretary of Department of Defence. The letter states that Joe's father, Roger Fisher had written to the Prime Minister in June 1915 seeking details of his son's death. The letter also states that Roger Fisher is "*well known*" to the Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister at the time was Andrew Fisher. It is possible that Roger Fisher and Andrew Fisher though not brothers were related; and there were certainly many similarities in their histories. Both arrived in Queensland from England in 1885, perhaps on the same ship. Both had experience in coal mining in the UK (in Cumberland and Ayrshire), and both became involved in both coal and gold mining in Queensland. Andrew Fisher worked in the Burrum Coalfields and on the Gympie Goldfields as an engine driver (stationary), the same occupation as Joe Fisher and Joe's elder brother, Roger Jnr. Andrew Fisher came into labour politics through the formation of the Engine Driver's Union. During the federal election campaign of 1914, Fisher as leader of the Australian Labor Party, famously pledged to defend the empire "*to the last man and the last shilling.*"

Regardless of the intervention of the Prime Minister, no further details were able to be provided to the family. There was no recorded burial. In March 1916, official confirmation of the death of Joe along with a brown paper parcel containing photos, cards, a pocket book, comb and mirror, beads and coins and Egyptian ornaments was sent to the family home in Raceview.

Up until this point in the narrative, there is little connection with Joe and the Oxley District. Sometime before 1922, Roger snr gave up his interest in the coal mine at Ipswich and moved to William Street, Sherwood. At around the same time (1921), Joe's elder brother, Roger jnr, was elected as a councillor in the former Sherwood Shire Council. His occupation was listed as engine driver (stationary) at Foggitt Jones Bacon Factory (located at Oxley) and he lived in Station Road, Oxley. It is perhaps this connection that saw Joseph's name appear on the Oxley Memorial. In 1931, Roger jnr was drowned in Oxley Creek during floods, whilst attempting to cross the Oxley Golf Course.

Lance Corporal Joseph William Fisher, 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion is commemorated on the Oxley War Memorial, Brisbane; The War Memorial and Roll of Honour Charters Towers and the Australian National Memorial, Lone Pine, Gallipoli along with 4,900 other Australians who have no known grave.

### **FIELDING, Robert Alfred**

**#4164 15<sup>th</sup>/ 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Robert Fielding was 43 years old when he enlisted on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1915. He stated his occupation as insurance inspector and gave his address as Dutton Park. He was married to Margaret but had no children. Robert named Margaret as his next of kin and she had moved to Sherwood while he was away to live with Robert's brother, Thomas, who was the Headmaster at Sherwood State School.

Given Robert's age and his background, it would seem that he was best suited to an administrative job; but as was often the case with military authorities, such factors were obviously ignored and Robert was drafted as a private in the reinforcements for the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. He embarked on the "Kyarra" in Brisbane on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1916 and arrived at the Australian Camp at Serapeum in Egypt on 19<sup>th</sup> February.

The Australian forces were undergoing a huge expansion in Egypt in early 1916. Original battalions were split to provide a nucleus of Gallipoli veterans for two new battalions. The 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, to which Robert had been originally assigned, was split to create the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Robert, along with a number of new reinforcements were added to the 47<sup>th</sup> to bring it up to strength.

The 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion would earn a rather questionable reputation in the AIF. It was widely reported that when officers and NCOs were being assigned, the commanding officer of the 15<sup>th</sup> took the opportunity to unload a number of men who had proved less than worthy of command. In addition, the numbers of ordinary soldiers were made up of men from hospitals in Egypt, VD wards and in some cases defaulters from the stockade. One historian

described the makeup of the 47<sup>th</sup> as a “bunch of toffs and wasters and street loafers.” It would be interesting to know what Robert Fielding made of this.

The 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion was one of the last battalions to leave Egypt for France, but not before the unit disgraced itself by not showing respect to the Prince of Wales when he inspected the troops. On the voyage to Marseilles, one of the senior officers drank himself senseless and would be eventually dismissed from the service. Alcohol continued to be a problem for the battalion when the first pay was issued in Northern France.

As part of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division, the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion was moved to the Somme in July of 1916 to support Haig’s grand offensive at Pozieres. During the Pozieres campaign, Robert Fielding was reported as Missing in Action. His wife was duly informed and enquiries began to be made into the circumstances of his disappearance. Witnesses who were interviewed in various hospitals all reported that Robert was with the unit when they were evacuated and that he was quite well. Margaret Fielding even received a telegram from Robert dated 29<sup>th</sup> August (some three weeks after he had allegedly gone missing) stating that he was enjoying a “splendid leave” in England. Surprisingly this period of leave is not recorded on Robert’s file.

It was only after the Commanding Officer of the 47<sup>th</sup> sent a telegram to Australian HQ in September stating that Robert was with his unit that the matter was cleared up. Robert had been confused with another man in the 47<sup>th</sup>, Harold Fielding who had indeed gone missing. How such an error could be made is quite difficult to understand, given that witnesses described Robert Fielding as tall, thin, with grey hair and a grizzled moustache. Harold Fielding was 18 years old with red hair.

Undoubtedly the experiences of Pozieres and Mouquet Farm rattled the entire Australian force that had fought there. The three divisions sustained a total of 23,000 casualties and only a prolonged rest period and reinforcement would return the units to fighting strength.

In October 1916, while still in a rest area, the 47<sup>th</sup> would be again tainted with ill discipline linked to alcohol. Three officers; Judd, Odgers and Koch were found fall down drunk at the Sweet Lavender Tea Rooms. All three were court martialled (Koch had a previous charge of drunkenness from the boat voyage to Marseilles) and dismissed from the army. A new commanding officer was appointed to tighten discipline before the battalion went back into the line at Benafray Wood at Flers. Robert Fielding, as a strict Methodist, was no doubt horrified at the behaviour of his superiors.

The winter of 1916/17 was extremely harsh, particularly for troops manning the front lines. Mud and slush covered the bottom of the trenches to a depth of several feet. Neither side was interested in attacking raids but artillery continued to bombard positions, almost as a matter of honour. The 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion war diary records that while holding the line during the month of November 1916, 13 other ranks and one officer were killed; all from shell fire. Among those killed was Robert Fielding. He is buried, in company with two other 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion men who were all killed on 28<sup>th</sup> November 1916, in the Bull’s Road Military Cemetery near Flers.

Unlike the incident in August at Pozieres, it would seem that Margaret did not make any enquiries with the Red Cross into the nature of Robert’s death. Margaret received her husband’s personal effects which included a scarf and mittens as well as a testament and

two gospels. From February 1917, Margaret received a war widow's pension of two pounds per fortnight.

### **John Howard Fielding #747 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

According to the Roll of Honour Circular completed by his father, John Fielding had been born in Boonah in 1893. By the time he was ready to attend school, his father who was a school head teacher had transferred to Bald Hills and it was there that John began his education. His father also reported that John had trained as a teacher, probably under the pupil teacher scheme. By the time that John enlisted in October 1914 however, he stated on his attestation papers that he was the Clerk of Petty Sessions, presumably at the Brisbane Magistrates Court.

John epitomised the stereotype of those first recruits into the AIF. He was 21 years old, single and six feet tall. He gave his address as Bald Hills and the address of his next of kin, his father Thomas, as State School, Sherwood. John was drafted into the 15<sup>th</sup> battalion as a private on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1914.

The 15<sup>th</sup> battalion was commanded by Lt. Col. W. H. (Bull) Cannan, a career officer with the Citizens Forces before the war, and a man with strong connections to the Sherwood District. The 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion was primarily composed of Queenslanders with one company being Tasmanians. The remainder of the 4<sup>th</sup> brigade was made up of a battalion from NSW (13<sup>th</sup> Btn), a battalion from Victoria (14<sup>th</sup> Btn which was later known as Jacka's mob after its most decorated soldier, Albert Jacka who won a VC at Lone Pine and a MC at Pozieres), and a combined West Australian / South Australian battalion (16<sup>th</sup> Btn). Given that the brigade was made up of such widely distributed units, training in their home states was cut short and the brigade assembled in Melbourne under the Brigade Commander John Monash before embarking on the "Ceramic" for Egypt on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1914.

The battalion arrived in Egypt on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1915 and went into camp at Heliopolis outside Cairo. The first contingent of Australians had been in Egypt for two months and had been formed into an Australian Corps. The later arrivals were combined with a number of New Zealand units into a second corps, which was given the telegraphic code "ANZAC". Training in the desert continued through February and March. On the 12<sup>th</sup> April 1915, the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade travelled by train to Alexandria where they boarded a transport bound for Mudros Harbour on the island of Lemnos. The troops of the 15<sup>th</sup> remained on board their transports, practising boarding boats and horse barges.

The landing on the beach at Gallipoli began at 4:40am by troops of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. The 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade did not begin landing until 5:00pm; by which time the Australians had advanced to the second ridge.

Monash took his brigade up a deep gully, which was later named Monash Valley, towards a precarious position at the head of the gully which would eventually be named Quinn's post after the commander of C Company of the 15<sup>th</sup>. Quinn's Post was the furthest position occupied on the first day and remained so throughout the campaign. The trenches at Quinn's were right on the edge of an escarpment and only a few metres from the Turkish positions. Any counter attacks mounted by the Turks would be aimed at Quinn's.

It was reported that on 30<sup>th</sup> April, John Fielding was killed at Quinn's Post. Reports indicate that the Reverend Wray officiated at the burial. Standard procedure in notifying next of kin was for a telegram to be sent to the Commanding Officer of the nearest Military District who would then arrange for a clergyman to inform the relatives. Since John had listed his religion as Methodist, this task probably fell to the Minister at the Sherwood Methodist Church.

The Australian military authorities were unprepared for the casualties that resulted in the first weeks at Gallipoli. The process of providing certificates of death was chronically delayed. Soldier's estates could not be finalised until death certificates were issued, particularly if the soldier had not made a will (which John Fielding had not). In an effort to resolve the matter Thomas Fielding engaged Morris, Fletcher and Stevens Solicitors (Later Morris, Fletcher and Cross) to deal with the authorities. John's file in the National Archives contains numerous items of correspondence relating to the winding up of his estate and the distribution of his deferred pay. Almost a year after his death, John's father received two parcels of his son's personal effects, some photographs, a cardboard box and an Identity disc. In 1915, procedures had not been put in place to photograph graves as occurred later in the war. For many of the families of those killed at Gallipoli, the resting place of their loved ones remained a mystery.

At the conclusion of the war, the Australian government sent a team of war grave investigators to Gallipoli to consolidate burials into cemeteries and to provide permanent headstones. Although records indicated that John Fielding had been buried at Quinn's Post, by 1921 no trace of his remains was located. Instead a headstone was placed in the Quinn's Post cemetery with the inscription "Believed to be buried in this cemetery".

Thomas Fielding, who had advised that his address was now Thallon Street, Sherwood, received John's Medals; the 1914/15 Star, The Empire Medal and the Victory Medal as well as a memorial scroll and a memorial plaque.

## **GIBBINGS, Alfred John**

## **#3142 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Alfred Gibbings was born at Chauleigh in England and emigrated to Australia with his parents when he was 15. His father was in receipt of a British War Pension. At the time of Alfred's enlistment, his family address was given as Devondairy, Oxley. His mother stated that Alfred was engaged in farming and dairying but other documents give his occupation as bread carter.

Alfred presented himself for enlistment at the recruiting depot in Adelaide Street, Brisbane on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1916, just five days after the defeat of the first conscription referendum. On his attestation papers, he stated that he had been refused enlistment previously with the reason "*chest: under standard.*" His medical details gave his height as just 5 foot 2 inches (157 cms) and his chest measurement as 31 inches. He was 19 years and six months old. The fact that he was now fit for induction is testament to the perilous state in which the AIF now found itself, in meeting the need for more men in Belgium and France.

Alfred was sent to Sydney as part of the 8<sup>th</sup> reinforcements for the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He left Sydney two days before Christmas, and arrived in Plymouth, England on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1917.

Alfred was posted to the 12<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion and a fortnight later was in hospital with mumps for 18 days.

By 20<sup>th</sup> June, Alfred was in France and on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July he joined his battalion. In October of 1917, the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion were engaged in the battle for the ridge on which sat the village of Passchendaele to the west of Ypres in Belgium. This would be the bloodiest battle of the war.

Red Cross reports of several eye witness accounts indicate that Alfred Gibbings was shot in the head by a sniper on 11 October 1917 whilst recovering a Lewis gun from a shell hole. He died instantly. The witnesses then state that the survivors of the group had to withdraw, leaving Alfred's body behind. During the next few days of the battle after Passchendaele was finally taken, Alfred's body was recovered. An official document records he was buried *"1000 yards south of Passchendaele and 1000 yards northeast of Zonnebeke."*

At the conclusion of the war, the remains of soldiers buried around the old battlefield were collected and reinterred in what would become the largest War Cemetery in the world; Tyne Cot. Alfred was buried there along with 12,000 other Commonwealth soldiers, 1,368 of whom are Australians. In addition, the memorial panels at Tyne Cot contain the names of almost 34,000 soldiers killed in Flanders and who have no known grave. This 34,000 is in addition to the 55,000 commonwealth servicemen with no known grave commemorated on the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres only a few kilometres away.

In 1922, Alfred's parents received his medals, the Empire Medal and the Victory Medal, along with a commemorative plaque and scroll and a photograph of his grave at Tyne Cot.

Pte Alfred John Gibbings, 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion is commemorated on the Oxley War Memorial, Brisbane.

## **GRIFFIN, William**

## **#442 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

William Griffin was born in Brisbane and attended Indooroopilly State School. He had several years service in the military cadets and was apprenticed into the drapery trade. At the time of his enlistment on 26<sup>th</sup> October 1914, William was 35 years old and employed as a commercial traveller in the drapery business. He stated his address as Graceville near Brisbane and named his mother; Emma Griffin, as his next of kin. His father George was deceased.

William was drafted into the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion which was being raised at Bell's Paddock, Enoggera. He would have felt quite at home in the 15<sup>th</sup> as there were a number of Graceville men in the unit, including the commanding officer Lt Col "Bull" Cannan and his brother Duncan. A sergeant in the 15<sup>th</sup>; Edwin Little, the son of a clergyman from Ipswich would also appear in the story of William Griffin. Edwin Little would unveil the Graceville War Memorial in the presence of "Bull" Cannan in 1920. (see introduction above).

While in camp, William was absent for a number of hours. He had been getting a tattoo and was admonished. The 15<sup>th</sup> sailed for Melbourne to join the other battalions in the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade and to begin training under the Brigade Commander, John Monash.

Eventually the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade sailed from Melbourne on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1914 and arrived in Egypt on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1915, going into camp at Heliopolis outside Cairo. The first contingent of Australians had been in Egypt for two months and had been formed into an Australian Corps. The later arrivals were combined with a number of New Zealand units into a second corps, which was given the telegraphic code "ANZAC". Training in the desert continued through February and March. On the 12<sup>th</sup> April 1915, the 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade travelled by train to Alexandria where they boarded a transport bound for Mudros Harbour on the island of Lemnos. The troops of the 15<sup>th</sup> remained on board their transports, practising boarding boats and horse barges.

The landing on the beach at Gallipoli began at 4:40am by troops of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade. The 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade did not begin landing until 5:00pm; by which time the Australians had advanced to the second ridge. The 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion dug in at a precarious position at the head of Monash Valley. The situation at Anzac in the first few weeks was extremely dangerous. The Turks were determined to throw the invaders back into the sea and vicious hand to hand fighting ensued as both sides battled to gain ground. The Turks had had months to prepare their defences but for the Australians, trenches and dugouts had to be constructed in haste, often under heavy enemy fire.

On 10<sup>th</sup> May 1915, a section of trench near Pope's Hill collapsed and William Griffin was killed. Such was the intensity of the fighting at the time that William was not buried at Beach Cemetery for five days. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> May, a general ceasefire was arranged so that both Turk and Australian could retrieve and bury their dead. The 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion CO took the opportunity to conduct a Court of Inquiry into the death of William Griffin. In addition to Company Commander Duncan Cannan, the court heard expert testimony from Lt Newbolt of the NZ Engineers who advised that the ground was geologically unstable and prone to slip. Because the trench had been dug at night, and with great speed, it would have been impossible for anyone without extensive geological experience to have foreseen the danger. The court concluded that no person was to blame for the collapse and it should be deemed an accident.

William's mother was informed that he had been Accidentally Killed on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1915 and had been buried at Beach Cemetery with the Rev, Power in attendance.

Soon after the notification of William's death, his brother in law, Mr R.A. Wheeler wrote to base records questioning the date of William's death as he (Mr Wheeler) had received a postcard dated 17<sup>th</sup> May (one week after his death). The official response was that the army records were correct and William probably made a mistake with the date on the postcard.

William's mother was informed in 1917 that he had been buried in Shrapnel Valley Cemetery but this is incorrect. Commonwealth War Graves Commission records show that William Griffin is buried at Beach Cemetery on the southern point of Anzac Cove overlooking the sea. He is buried close to John Kirkpatrick Simpson (of donkey fame).

## **HAGGER, Sidney Edwin**

## **#182 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

Sidney Hagger was born in Charters Towers and attended school there. At the time of his enlistment, his family had moved to Oxley where Sidney was employed as a carter.

Sidney enlisted on 17 Nov 1915 and was drafted into the 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion which was in camp at Bell's Paddock, Enoggera. While in training, Sidney was charged with being *"inattentive on parade and making a false statement"* for which he received 48 hours Confined to Barracks. He was again on a charge when he overstayed home leave, prior to embarkation; this time he received 7 days CB and forfeiture of six days pay (the period he overstayed).

The 41<sup>st</sup> sailed from Sydney on 18 May 1916. Sidney was again in trouble on the transport, being charged with *"breaking away from quarters at sea."* This time he was penalised 20 days pay and had to *"make restitution of three shillings."*

After arriving in England and being sent to training, Sidney was again on a charge; *"Conduct prejudicial to the good order and discipline"* and *"Insolence to an NCO"*. He endured another seven days CB.

Sidney arrived in France on 29 November 1916, almost 12 months after enlistment and joined the 41<sup>st</sup> as a reinforcement. By April of 1917, the 41<sup>st</sup> was in the frontline at Ploegsteert (soldiers called it Plugstreet) just across the Belgian border from Armentieres in Northern France. Official documents record that Sidney Hagger died of wounds on 15 April 1917 .

The normal procedure followed when a soldier died was to contact the appropriate clergyman in the soldier's home town, who would then inform the next of kin personally.

Sidney's sister, in writing to seek more information about her brother's death informed Base Records that in the case of Sidney,

*the "notification sent to Minister of God, who calmly readdressed it to my mother. The shock was terrible as we did not even know that he was wounded."*

His sister had perhaps assumed that Sidney was wounded in a hospital for some time and failed to recover. It is more likely that he was recovered from the battlefield by Field Ambulance stretcher but died at an Aid Post or Casualty Clearing Station within hours.

In February 1918, the Hagger family received Sidney's personal effects: Letters, 8 fountain pens (one broken), wallet, badges, photos, coins and a ring. Sidney was buried in the Berks Cemetery extension in Flanders near Ploegsteert Wood. A photograph of his grave was sent to his parents in 1920 and his war medals were sent in 1922, by which time the family had left the Oxley district.

### **HODGE, Harold Frederick**

### **#3166 52<sup>nd</sup> Battalion**

Harold Hodge was born in Rosewood where his father, Robert Samuel Hodge was engaged in the rural produce business. He attended the local school before attending Southport High School (now The Southport School) along with his brother John who was twelve months younger than Harold. Both boys were members of the school cadets.

In 1909, Robert Hodge was elected to the Queensland Lower House as the Member for Burnett. Robert was subsequently elected as the member for Nanango, a position he held until 1920. As a member of the Legislative Assembly, Robert obviously decided that he needed a Brisbane residence when parliament was sitting and the family moved to "The Laurels" Corinda. (Not to be confused with a famous property of the same name at Chelmer)

By 1916, both Harold and John were working as station hands in Central Queensland. They both enlisted on the same day, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1916 in Emerald. Harold was 19 and John was 18. Since both were under 21 they would have needed their parent's written permission, but no such documents are evident in either file.

The brothers travelled to Brisbane, no doubt visiting their family at Corinda before reporting to Enoggera where they were both drafted into the 52<sup>nd</sup> Battalion. The 52<sup>nd</sup> was a battalion comprised primarily of men from South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania. The unit had received a severe mauling at Mouquet Farm near Pozieres in September 1916 and was in desperate need of reinforcements. Harold and John were placed in the same platoon at Enoggera and embarked on the "Demosthenes" from Sydney on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1916. The practice of placing brothers or mates who enlisted together in the same battalion or company was wide spread throughout the AIF and in some way contributed to the strong bond of mateship born out of the AIF.

The reinforcements landed in Plymouth on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1917 and proceeded to Codford camp where both boys were hospitalised with mumps. On 26<sup>th</sup> April the pair were posted to the 13<sup>th</sup> Training Battalion at Sutton Veney. On 9<sup>th</sup> June, John and Harold were absent from camp for 18 hours, and were each admonished by the Battalion CO and fined one day's pay.

The brothers arrived in France on 26<sup>th</sup> June and were taken on strength by the 52<sup>nd</sup> in Flanders on 16<sup>th</sup> July. Harold and John remained in the same platoon and began training for the unit's next action in the drawn out battle of Passchendaele.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> October 1917, while holding the line at Polygon Wood, Harold Hodge was killed by an artillery shell blast. His brother John who was close by received massive wounds to his chest and thigh from the same blast. Red Cross reports indicate that Harold was buried in a marked grave behind the trench line. At the end of the war, the Imperial War Graves Commission consolidated isolated burials into military cemeteries. Harold's remains were reinterred at Dochy Farm New British Cemetery at Passchendaele and his parents, Robert and Elizabeth received his personal effects and photographs of his grave.

John Hodge was evacuated to military hospitals in England where his wounds were assessed to be permanently debilitating. He was repatriated to Australia and discharged as medically unfit in January 1918.

Robert Hodge had suffered greatly with the death and maiming of his two boys. He died in 1924 at the age of 57 and is buried in the Sherwood Anglican Cemetery on Sherwood Road.

## **JONES, Oscar Harold**

**#8894 13<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance**

Oscar Jones was born at Oxley and attended Sherwood State School and Brisbane Grammar. His father, George Jones was the station master at Sherwood and the family lived in the Station Master's house.

When Oscar enlisted on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1915, he was 22 years old and employed as a clerk. His younger brother Arthur had enlisted 12 days before. Oscar was drafted into the staff of the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Auxiliary Hospital and embarked from Sydney on the "Ballarat" on 16<sup>th</sup> February 1916.

He arrived in Egypt on 23<sup>rd</sup> March and spent the next five months attached to the hospital at Zeitoun. Oscar was in England by August and in France on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1916. At about this time Oscar was attached to the 13<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance which was attached to the 13<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. Oscar's job would primarily have been as a stretcher bearer transporting wounded back from the front lines to field ambulance and casualty clearing stations as the battles of Flers and Bapaume raged.

The winter of 1916/17 was severe and not surprisingly Oscar contracted bronchitis. Spring and summer of 1917 saw the focus of Australian operations shift from the Somme to Flanders and the vital Ypres salient. Stretcher bearers were kept busy with casualties from Messines (June), Menin Road (September) and Broodseinde (October).

Haig wanted to continue the advance to the Passchendaele ridge and even when the weather turned against him, would not be dissuaded from his goal. As the rains came down the troops became mired in thigh deep clinging mud. It was reported that stretcher bearers had to work in teams of 16 to carry one wounded man back through the quagmire.

Exhaustive work in cold wet muddy conditions was likely to lead to trench foot, trench fever, typhoid and influenza and casualties going sick at Passchendaele began to mount. Among those sick was Oscar Jones. He reported sick to his own field ambulance with a fever on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1918. Two weeks later he was in hospital in England with the diagnosis of nephritis (trench fever). Oscar's exhausted state did not allow for a swift recovery and he was transferred to the Australian Hospital at Harefield on 30<sup>th</sup> May. Oscar's condition began to deteriorate and a medical board convened on 11<sup>th</sup> June determined that he was unfit for service and should be repatriated to Australia for discharge.

Oscar's brother, Arthur was also at Harefield recovering from wounds he had received at Passchendaele. On 23<sup>rd</sup> June, Oscar died with his brother by his side. He was afforded a military funeral in the grounds of Saint Mary's Church at Harefield. Several patients and staff of the hospital including Arthur were in attendance; and two chaplains read the service.

Arthur recovered from his wounds and returned to Australia in 1919. By 1923 the Jones family had moved to "Littlethorpe" Oxley.

## **JONES, Trevor Warwick**

## **41<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

Trevor Jones came from a well to do family from the Welsh border area. Although both he and his elder brother, Lancelot (Lance) Alban Jones, were born in Warwick, Warwickshire; they attended Malvern College in the spa town of Malvern, in the neighbouring county of Worcestershire. Malvern was a prestigious public boarding school for the sons of the middle class and had a fine reputation for producing scholars, soldiers and sportsmen, particularly cricketers.

The Jones family emigrated to Australia and settled at "Merrilees" Sherwood. Both Trevor and his elder brother Lance were members of the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion Citizens Forces, with Lance holding a commission. Lance enlisted in August 1914 but Trevor did not enlist until September of 1915, perhaps as stated by his mother, in order that he might gain matriculation into Queensland University.

When Trevor enlisted on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1915, he was 20 years old and being under 21 provided written approval from his mother, Zoe Annie Clara Jones. The document has a line where his father should have signed but Captain Mervyn Jones, a master mariner, had died in 1902. Trevor was employed as a chemical analyst with the state government.

Upon arriving at Enoggera, Trevor was initially posted into a depot battalion. His file contains a letter signed by a Dr Henly of Wickham Terrace and dated 21<sup>st</sup> November stating that Trevor was unable to attend roll call as he was suffering from bronchitis. On 15<sup>th</sup> February 1916, Trevor was drafted into the 41<sup>st</sup> Battalion which was being raised at Enoggera at the time.

While in camp Trevor became ill and was admitted to the Royal Brisbane Hospital where he died on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1916. The cause of death, no doubt after a post mortem, was recorded as Intussusceptions; an intestinal obstruction.

Trevor Jones was buried at the Francis Private Cemetery at Francis Lookout on Dewar Terrace, Sherwood. This cemetery is officially listed in the register of Commonwealth War Graves; Trevor Jones is the only serviceman buried there. Trevor's father, Captain Mervyn Jones is buried in the same cemetery.

Trevor's brother, Lancelot was a Captain in the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF. He was wounded twice at Gallipoli and repatriated back to Australia in early 1916.

### **KERWIN, Walter Edward**

**#243 31<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> FAB/49<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

The connection between Walter Kerwin and the Sherwood Shire is difficult to establish, but since there were only two soldiers in the AIF with that surname and initial it is more likely that Walter is the serviceman named, even though his middle initial has disappeared from the memorial. (The other Kerwin was from country Victoria).

Walter Kerwin was born in Chelsea, London. He would appear to have had no living relatives in Australia as he named a Mr Hassall (a friend) of Christmas Creek via Beaudesert as his next of kin. Walter also lived at Christmas Creek and stated his occupation as farm labourer. Walter stated that his nearest living relative was an uncle; Mr Bourke of Chelsea. It is possible that Walter had some connection to the Lahey family of Corinda (see below). The Laheys had extensive sawmilling and timber cutting interests in the Canungra and Christmas Creek areas, and if such a connection existed, may provide a reason for his name appearing on the Sherwood Memorial.

Walter enlisted at Brisbane on 10<sup>th</sup> July 1915 and was drafted into the 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion. He departed on the "Wandilla" and arrived in Suez on 7<sup>th</sup> December. As part of the restructure and expansion of the AIF, Walter was transferred to the 25<sup>th</sup> Howitzer Battery of the 5<sup>th</sup> Divisional Artillery, perhaps in the belief that his rural background had given him some skill in handling horse teams.

The 25<sup>th</sup> Battery remained in Egypt for 7 months during which Walter was put on a charge twice for neglect of duty. Eventually he arrived in England in August 1916 where he spent time in training before being deployed to Etaples in France on 30<sup>th</sup> November.

On 18<sup>th</sup> January 1917, Walter was transferred back to the infantry as a reinforcement for the 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Less than three weeks after joining the 49<sup>th</sup> at Flers, Walter received serious injuries to his chest and abdomen. He was taken to the 13<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance and then the 54<sup>th</sup> Casualty Clearing Station where he died of his wounds on 9<sup>th</sup> February 1917.

Walter was buried in the Dernacourt Communal Cemetery and his personal effects and medals were dutifully sent to Mr Hassall at Christmas Creek.

**LAHEY, Noel Alaric**

**2743A 25<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup>/ 11<sup>th</sup> Field C Engineers**

Noel Lahey came from a large family of 12 children. His eldest sister, Vida, would become a well known Queensland artist, and Noel's eldest brother; Romeo, would be the catalyst for the establishment of Queensland's first National Park.

Noel Lahey was born at Pimpama and probably attended school at Pimpama before the family moved to Corinda. The family home was named "Wonga Wallen"; which is a district near Pimpama in the foothills of Tambourine Mountain. The Lahey family had extensive interests in timber cutting and milling in the Canungra area and when Noel completed school at Brisbane Grammar, he worked in the family business as a saw miller.

When Noel enlisted on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1915, he was the third of the Lahey brothers to do so. At the time he stated his home address as "Wonga Wallen" Corinda and named his father, David as his next of kin. Noel was drafted into the 6<sup>th</sup> reinforcements for the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion which at that time was about to be deployed at Anzac. He embarked on the "Seang Bee" in Brisbane on 21<sup>st</sup> October and arrived in Egypt just as the Australians were being evacuated from Gallipoli back to Egypt.

During the expansion of the AIF in Egypt in early 1916, Noel was transferred to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion; another Queensland battalion, to bring its numbers up to strength after being split to create the 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion. Noel arrived in Marseilles on 3<sup>rd</sup> April and travelled by train to the northern sector of the western front for acclimatisation to the business of trench warfare.

After Haig launched the Somme Offensive in July 1916, three of the four Australian divisions in France were brought to the Somme to continue the offensive. The 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, being part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division was first into the line at Pozieres. Noel sustained a gun shot wound to the arm during this action and was evacuated to the 13<sup>th</sup> General Hospital in England.

At the same time that Noel was deployed to France, his sister Vida suspended her artistic endeavours and travelled to England to provide a base for her three brothers who were all now fighting in France; perhaps with the hope that they might be able to enjoy some leave in England in the company of their big sister. There is evidence that at least Noel and Romeo were able to both be in England at the same time as the Australian War memorial has in its collection a photograph taken in 1916 of Vida, Noel and Romeo.

After discharge from hospital, Noel was posted to a convalescent depot at Perham Downs. He may have been in close contact with his brother Romeo as while at Perham Downs, Noel requested a transfer to the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Company Australian Engineers (the same unit as Romeo). Upon being posted back to France on 25<sup>th</sup> November, Noel was indeed transferred to the 11<sup>th</sup> FCAE. To distinguish him from another man in the unit with the same regimental number, an "A" was added to Noel's number of 2743.

The engineers were attached to the 11<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Division and accompanied the brigade in rotations in and out of the line during the winter of 1916/17 and then to Flanders for the preparations of the Battle of Messines which began on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1917. The 11<sup>th</sup> Brigade were charged with consolidating gains made in the neighbourhood of Ploegsteert Wood (the men called it Plugstreet). On 9<sup>th</sup> June, Noel was admitted to the 13<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance with wounds to his head, chest, right arm and left hand. His brother, Romeo visited him but Noel died of his wounds the next day.

Noel Lahey was buried in the Pont de Archelles Military Cemetery near Armentieres and his personal effects were sent to his father at Corinda.

Vida Lahey remained in England until the armistice, after which she toured France and the Netherlands before returning to Australia to continue her painting. *“Rejoicing and remembrance: Armistice London 1918”* was painted on her return and is now in the collection of the Australian War Memorial. Vida is perhaps best known for her painting *“Monday Morning”* which depicts a woman (perhaps her mother, Jane Jemima Lahey) washing clothes by hand. *“Monday Morning”* is in the collection of the Queensland Art Gallery.

Romeo Lahey had studied civil engineering before the war, holding degrees from both Sydney and Queensland Universities. In 1914, at the urging of his father, he began to champion the creation of a National Park in the border ranges, the same country that his family had been logging in for many years. His pleadings were not responded to until the election of the Ryan Labor Government in 1915 when the Lamington National Park was gazetted. Having achieved his aim, Romeo was now free to enlist which he did in July 1915; eventually being commissioned as a Lieutenant in the 11<sup>th</sup> Field Company Engineers. At the conclusion of the war, Romeo remained in London to study town planning before returning to Australia and continue his conservation work.

He was instrumental in the creation of the Binna Burra Lodge along with Arthur Groom and became the inaugural president of the Queensland National Parks Association; a position he held until his death in 1968.

### **LIDGARD, Jack**

### **#383 11<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company**

Jack Lidgard was a 26 year old commercial traveller of Graceville when he enlisted on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1916. He had been born in Gympie and spent 6 months with the Gympie Infantry Volunteers.

Jack was drafted into the 11<sup>th</sup> Machine Gun Company and travelled to Seymour in Victoria for training with the Vicker's Heavy Machine Gun. He embarked from Melbourne on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1916 and travelled to England via the Cape and Sierra Leone before arriving in England on 28<sup>th</sup> December.

Jack was transferred to the 5<sup>th</sup> Division Machine Gun Company and spent a further six months in training in England before arriving in France on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1917. He was to spend some time in hospital in France with mumps and myalgia before finally joining his unit on 29<sup>th</sup> September 1917.

Just five days later, Jack was listed as Missing in Action. A court of inquiry conducted five months later in March 1918 finally determined that Jack had been killed in action on 4<sup>th</sup> October by a shell blast at Passchendaele. His body was never recovered.

At war's end, a huge memorial was constructed at the eastern gate in the town of Ypres in Belgium to commemorate almost 55,000 British and Dominion (Commonwealth) troops who perished in Flanders. Jack Lidgard's name is carved on the tablets of the Menin Gate. Every evening since 1924, with only a short respite during the German Occupation 1940-44, a ceremony is held at 8:00pm at the Menin Gate which includes the playing of the Last Post and the laying of wreaths.

Jack Lidgard's sister, Ethel, who continued to live in Graceville was so grieved by her brother's passing that she instigated a subscription fund for the erection of a permanent memorial to all the men of the Sherwood Shire who had paid the supreme sacrifice. The Sherwood Shire War memorial was unveiled in Graceville Memorial Park on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1920.

### **MACARTHUR, Ronald Edward**

### **#4551 15<sup>th</sup>/47<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Ronald Macarthur came from a distinguished line of Australian pioneers. He was the great great grandson of the third governor of New South Wales, Phillip Gidley King and was also related to the Macarthur family of Camden NSW. In addition he was related by marriage to the pioneering Leslie brothers who opened up the Darling Downs.

Ronald had been born in Childers, perhaps when his father was stationed there as a surveyor for Queensland Railways. He attended Brisbane Grammar and then went on to the Hawkesbury Agricultural College to continue the family tradition of pastoralism. While at Hawkesbury he won a prize for an essay on dairying as well as numerous sporting prizes.

At the time of his enlistment in September 1915, Ronald gave his address as "Bootawa" Mt Mee via Kilcoy. He was 20 years old and went to the recruiting depot with a telegram from his father; Edward Hannibal Macarthur, stating: "*Mother and I consent to you in expeditionary force.*"

At Enoggera, Ronald was drafted into the 14<sup>th</sup> reinforcements for the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion and embarked for overseas on the "Wandilla" in Brisbane on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1916. He arrived in Egypt in February 1916. The Australian forces were undergoing a huge expansion in Egypt in early 1916. Original battalions were split to provide a nucleus of Gallipoli veterans for two new battalions. The 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion, to which Ronald had been originally assigned, was split to create the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion, part of the newly created 4<sup>th</sup> Division. Ronald, along with a number of new reinforcements were added to the 47<sup>th</sup> to bring it up to strength.

The 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion would earn a rather questionable reputation in the AIF. It was widely reported that when officers and NCOs were being assigned, the commanding officer of the 15<sup>th</sup> took the opportunity to unload a number of men who had proved less than worthy of command. In addition, the numbers of ordinary soldiers were made up of men from hospitals in Egypt, VD wards and in some cases defaulters from the stockade. One historian described the makeup of the 47<sup>th</sup> as a "*bunch of toffs and wasters and street loafers.*"

The 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion was one of the last battalions to leave Egypt for France, but not before the unit disgraced itself by not showing respect to the Prince of Wales when he inspected the troops. On the voyage to Marseilles, one of the senior officers drank himself senseless and would be eventually dismissed from the service. Alcohol continued to be a problem for the battalion when the first pay was issued in Northern France.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July 1916, Haig (Supreme British Commander on the Western Front) launched the Somme offensive. Casualties were enormous but Haig was determined to keep up the pressure. Three of the four Australian divisions in France were deployed to the Somme. The Australians were to go into their first major action at Pozieres and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Divisions were put into the line in late July. After these two divisions had exhausted themselves in gaining the high ground above the village, the 4<sup>th</sup> Division was brought up to defend the ground captured.

Pozieres is renowned for the intensity of the artillery barrages laid down by the German defenders. The 4<sup>th</sup> Division had to simply withstand the barrages while holding the line in expectation of a counter attack which never came. The 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion war diary for the period from 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> August 1915 simply states "Bombardment heavy. Considerable casualties inflicted on battalion."

During this horrendous onslaught, Ronald Macarthur sustained a shrapnel wound to the head. He was carried to the 13<sup>th</sup> Australian Field Hospital where he died of wounds on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1916. Ronald was buried in the Warloy-Ballon Communal Cemetery Extension near the hospital.

Ronald's father politely but persistently wrote to the authorities to obtain details of his son's death and the whereabouts of his personal effects. Eventually in mid 1917 he received a letter from the CO of the hospital and a consignment of personal effects which included a wallet, wristwatch, photographic film, negatives and photographs (but surprisingly no camera) and a diary. In March 1918 a further parcel arrived containing a tin whistle and a book of views of Egypt.

On the site of the Battle of Pozieres today is a commemorative stone which reads:

*"The ruin of the Pozieres windmill which lies here was the centre of the struggle on this part of the Somme Battlefield in July and August 1916. It was captured by Australian troops who fell more thickly on this ridge than on any other battlefields of the war."*

## **MITCHELL, Robert George**

## **#1911 4<sup>th</sup> Pioneers**

Robert Mitchell was one of four boys born to James and Annie Mitchell. James Mitchell was the Registrar of Titles in the Queensland Government and may have been working in Rockhampton at the time of Robert's birth.

The family relocated to "St Elmo", Oxley and Robert attended Oxley State School and then Brisbane Grammar School from 1908 to 1911. Robert must have been an exceptional student because at that time, most students left school at year 8 (Scholarship). None of his

brothers attended Grammar. The Mitchell home, "St Elmo" became Hopetoun at Corinda before being demolished in 2013.

Robert's elder brother, James, had enlisted in the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion and was seriously wounded in the dying days of the Gallipoli Campaign. Just after receiving the news of James' wounding, Robert enlisted on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1915. At the time of signing up, Robert was 22 years old and working as a surveyor. He was originally drafted into a Field Engineers Battalion, where his surveying skills would have been useful but soon after he was transferred into the 4<sup>th</sup> Pioneer Battalion. Pioneers were essentially front line engineers, engaged in trench and sap digging. They were also combat troops and could be used as infantry.

Robert arrived in Suez on 18<sup>th</sup> May 1916 and was promoted to acting Sergeant. One month later he disembarked in Marseilles, bound for the large Australian Troop depot at Etaples. Upon reaching his Unit in July 1916, he reverted to the rank of private.

In July and August 1916, the 4<sup>th</sup> Pioneers were attached to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division which was engaged in the battle of Pozieres. On 3<sup>rd</sup> August as the battle of Pozieres culminated in the attack on the windmill, Private Robert Mitchell was killed during an artillery barrage. The Red Cross reports into his death indicate that he was killed outright by the concussion of a large shell. Witnesses reported "*there was not a mark on him.*" Robert had been with his unit for 11 days. On the site of the windmill today is a commemorative stone which reads:

*"The ruin of the Pozieres windmill which lies here was the centre of the struggle on this part of the Somme Battlefield in July and August 1916. It was captured by Australian troops who fell more thickly on this ridge than on any other battlefields of the war."*

Robert's mates recovered his body and he was buried at Becourt near Albert. A photograph of his grave was sent to his family, a copy of which is contained in Robert's military file in the National Archives. Sadly this ground would be fought over again in 1918 and the grave of Robert Mitchell was lost.

Private Robert George Mitchell is also commemorated on the Oxley War Memorial, Brisbane and the Roll of Honour, Great Hall, Brisbane Grammar School. Like the other 10,000 Australians who died in France and have no known grave, Robert Mitchell is commemorated on the tablets at the Australian National Memorial, Villers Bretonneux.

Robert's brother James, who was wounded on Gallipoli, was discharged as unfit. His wounds entitled him to a Totally and Permanently Incapacitated (TPI) pension and he saw out his days living in Coorparoo. A second brother, Thomas, originally enlisted in the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion like James but was transferred to the Pay Corps where he saw overseas service.

Another brother, Corporal Thomas William Mitchell enlisted in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Field Ambulance. He was awarded the Military Medal for actions under fire in the battle of Polygon Wood in Flanders 1917.

**McLUNE, Edward****#2783 25<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Edward McLune was a 26year old labourer when he enlisted on 24<sup>th</sup> July 1915. He was one of three brothers who had been born in Ipswich and by the time of his enlistment his parents were deceased. Edward gave his address as C/- Miss Collins of Norman Street, East Brisbane and named his eldest brother James McLune of "Oakleigh" Francis Estate, Corinda as his next of kin.

Edward was originally drafted as a reinforcement for the 25<sup>th</sup> Battalion and embarked on the "Seang Bee" in Brisbane on 21<sup>st</sup> October. Edward's arrival in Egypt in December 1915 coincided with the withdrawal of all the Australian forces from Gallipoli. For the next three months, the Australian Corps would be doubled in size by creating new battalions. Edward was transferred to the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion; another wholly Queensland Battalion, in March 1916 and one month later arrived in Marseilles.

From Marseilles, the 9<sup>th</sup> travelled by train north to the rear areas behind the front at Strazelle where they went into billets in preparation for further training and instruction on the use of the newly issued trench mortars.

This area of the front was comparatively quiet and the battalion rotated in and out of the line frequently. The part of the line in front of the 9th was heavily defended by a well placed German machine gun and the Brigade Commander decided that a trench raid could provide the battalion with valuable experience as well as knocking out the troublesome machine gun. On 11<sup>th</sup> June, a raiding party of 5 officers and 150 other ranks was assembled from volunteers and began training for the raid which would take place on the night of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> of July. The raid was supported by artillery and trench mortars and resulted in a number of enemy being captured as well as the machine gun, which the battalion eventually presented to the Queensland Government. The battalion war diary recorded that 53 enemy were killed but the battalion suffered one officer and five other ranks killed, one of which was Private Edward McLune.

Edward's mates were able to bring his body back to the Australian lines and he was buried in the Rue de Bois Military cemetery near Fleurbaix. Edwards few personal possessions were returned to his brother, James, at Corinda.

**PRICE, Richard James****#6640 54<sup>th</sup> Tunnelling Company**

Richard Price was the son of James and Adelaide Price who lived at Oxley. As a boy he attended Oxley State School. At the time of his enlistment, Richard gave his occupation as railway shunter. He was 22 years old.

Richard was originally drafted into the Engineers but was subsequently drafted into the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tunnelling Company as a sapper. Tunnelling companies were being formed from 1916 onwards in a response by the military to take the war underground. Tunnellers were engaged in offensive and defensive mining operations under the front lines. The effects of their work can still be seen today in the mine craters around Hill 60 and the Caterpillar, Ypres in Belgium and the Lochnager Crater near Albert on the Somme in France. Tunnelling was a highly skilled occupation and Richard, along with the reinforcements for 3<sup>rd</sup> Tunnelling

Company spent some time at Seymour in Victoria during the second half of 1916 in training. He was granted home leave prior to embarkation and his file records that he was AWL during this time and fined 10 shillings.

Richard Price, along with a contingent of reinforcements for various engineer, tunnelling and pioneer units sailed from Melbourne in January 1917 and arrived in Plymouth in March of that year. By April, Richard and the other reinforcements were in the vast British Expeditionary Force camp at Etaples in France.

On 1<sup>st</sup> May, Richard joined the 3<sup>rd</sup> Australian Tunnelling Company which was stationed at the front near Loos. The tunnellers were engaged in mining operations under Hill 70 as well as constructing dugouts in the walls of the quarries around Noeux-le-Mines.

On 22<sup>nd</sup> of July, Richard Price was struck in the head by a shell fragment from a German 5.9 Howitzer. Red Cross reports of the incident state that he was waiting well behind the lines with his mate, Sid Turner, for transport back to their billet when a shell landed close by. He was buried at a nearby cemetery, Hersin Communal Cemetery, with a chaplain present. There are 55 Australians buried at Hersin, 54 of them from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tunnelling Company. Several members of the unit wrote to Richard's family in Oxley after his death. His best mate, Sid Turner was reported to be particularly overcome at his death.

Sapper Richard James Price is commemorated on the Oxley War Memorial, Brisbane; and rests with his mates at Hersin Communal Cemetery south of Lille, France. He is also commemorated in the name of Price Street, opposite the lower oval of Oxley State School on Oxley Road.

## **RADCLIFFE, Alan Arthur**

## **#854 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Alan Radcliffe was born in Toowoomba where his father was a school headmaster. Alan's father, Oliver Radcliffe, gained promotion to be an Inspector of Schools in the Department of Public Instruction (now Education Department). By the time Alan and his brothers were ready to attend Brisbane Grammar, the family had settled at "Kaloma", Graceville.

When Alan enlisted in Rockhampton he was employed as a business manager with the firm of Flavelle, Roberts and Sankey. At enlistment on 28<sup>th</sup> August 1914, he reported that he was 24 years old and had several years experience with the military cadets. Alan was drafted into "C" Company of the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion which was being raised at Enoggera. "C" Company was comprised almost exclusively of men who had rushed to enlist from the Central Queensland area.

Alan embarked on the "Omrah" at Pinkenba Wharf on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1914 and after delays in Sydney owing to the likelihood of German raiders in the western Pacific, proceeded on to Albany where the huge fleet of Australian and New Zealand recruits assembled. The first division of the AIF were originally bound for the western front but while at sea, Turkey entered the war and the Australians were diverted to Egypt to protect the vital Suez Canal.

After a period of training in Egypt, the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion as part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade arrived at Mudros Harbour on the Greek island of Lemnos where they practiced boat drills and

landings. The third brigade had been chosen by Birdwood to be the covering force (first ashore) during the landings at Gallipoli on the 25<sup>th</sup> April with the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion on the far right.

The confusion that occurred on the beach as troops began to land and push up into the ravines that dominated the landscape has been well documented. It is certain that small parties of Australians were able to push on to the heights which dominated the peninsula. It is also certain that most of these isolated groups were overrun by Turkish counter attack and the men perished. Later evidence would suggest that Alan Radcliffe was among one such party.

When the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion could be assembled at Gallipoli for a roll call after that first day, many men had been killed, wounded or were missing. Among those listed as missing was Alan Radcliffe. His father when informed of the uncertainty of his son's situation wrote constantly to the authorities requesting news. He even wrote that he had received word from a returned 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion man that his son was a prisoner at Constantinople. Base Records advised that lists of POWs were being collated by the American Ambassador (the US at this time being a neutral) but unfortunately Alan Radcliffe was not listed as a POW.

It was not until 5<sup>th</sup> June 1916, while the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion was in France that a Court of Inquiry determined that Alan Radcliffe had been killed in action. In February 1918, almost three years after Alan went missing, Oliver Radcliffe received a parcel with his son's personal belongings which included some books, letters, photos and cards.

In 1922, after Oliver Radcliffe had received Alan's medals, he also received an identity disc which had been recovered with the remains of Alan Radcliffe by the Graves Registration Unit at Gallipoli. In all likelihood, Alan had been killed well beyond the Turkish lines and had been buried by the Turks in 1915. His remains were exhumed and reinterred at the Lone Pine Cemetery.

Alan Radcliffe's three brothers also enlisted. Phillip and Charles, who were both school teachers were both discharged as medically unfit. Phillip had sustained serious wounds at Polygon Wood and Charles was discharged from Enoggera due to illness. Alan's youngest brother John was in England on a Rhodes Scholarship when war was declared. He gained a commission in the Royal Horse Artillery and was awarded a Military Cross. John returned to Australia in 1919. All of the Radcliffe boys are commemorated in the Brisbane Grammar Golden Book along with their cousin Leslie Radcliffe (see above).

## **RAFF, Kenneth**

## **#3490 15<sup>th</sup>/ 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Ken Raff was born in Brisbane and attended the Brisbane Normal School. His father then arranged for him to have private tutoring and he qualified as an architectural draftsman, probably working in his father's conveyance and surveying company, where his brother Eric also worked at a surveyor. The family, Harry and Clara Raff and the two boys, lived at Chelmer although Harry Raff gave his business address, Isles Love Building, Adelaide Street, for correspondence.

When Ken enlisted on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1915 he was 25 years old and was drafted as part of the 11<sup>th</sup> reinforcements for the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion. He embarked on the "Seang Bee" in Brisbane on

21<sup>st</sup> October and arrived in Egypt around Christmas 1915, finally joining the 15<sup>th</sup> in February 1916.

As part of the expansion of the AIF that was underway at that time, Ken was transferred to the newly created 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 3<sup>rd</sup> March. Unlike most other battalions in the AIF, the 47<sup>th</sup> was not strictly a state based unit; with numbers being made up from reinforcements from Victoria and Tasmania as well as some Queenslanders from the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion. The 47<sup>th</sup> would earn a reputation in the AIF for ill discipline and poor leadership, particularly at the company level.

The 47<sup>th</sup> was one of the last battalions to leave Egypt for France; not arriving in Marseilles until June 1916. They had little time to get accustomed to trench warfare before being called in to the Somme Offensive at Pozieres and Mouquet Farm in July and August.

Ken had a period in hospital with influenza in September and was again hospitalised in November with trench feet. He rejoined the 47<sup>th</sup> in January 1917 and saw action at Bullecourt in April and then in the support lines at Messines in June.

Messines had been the opening to a series of actions in Flanders that Haig; Supreme British Commander, hoped would lead to the breaking open of the front and allow an advance on to the Belgian Ports. Plumer; The British Corps Commander in Flanders, had experienced success at Messines, Menin Road, Polygon Wood and Broodseinde. The final obstacle was the ridge on which stood the villages of Zonnebeke and Passchendaele but by that time, the weather had turned against the attackers. Constant rain turned the battlefields into seas of slush and clinging mud. The ground was so unstable that the big guns used to lay down a protective barrage could only fire a few rounds before they sank into the mud. The roads and lines of communication were so cut up that ammunition and supplies were in short supply at the front.

In spite of the obvious indications of a less than successful outcome, Haig pressured Plumer to continue to press on to Passchendaele. Many military historians would agree with the words of Charles Bean (Official Australian Historian) that Haig's gamble would become "the most questioned of his career."

In the early morning of 12<sup>th</sup> October 1917, the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion; in conjunction with other units of the 4<sup>th</sup> Division crossed the jump off tapes and began a slow slog towards the red line following the Ypres-Rouliers railway line. The mud and inadequate artillery protection doomed the attack from the beginning. The attack was called off later in the day when the last unwounded officer of the battalion; Captain Gibson, was severely wounded. By nightfall the entire 4<sup>th</sup> Division was back at the start line. The 4<sup>th</sup> Division had lost 1000 men in the disaster; one of which was Ken Raff.

The bodies of the dead lay out in no man's land until the ridge was finally taken by the Canadians in November who then set about burying the fallen Australians. Ken Raff; like so many who fell at Passchendaele, was buried at Tyne Cot Cemetery. Tyne Cot was constructed around a number of concrete blockhouses and pill boxes on the crest of the ridge, which are now integral to the cemetery. Tyne Cot is the largest Commonwealth War Cemetery in the world and contains the graves of 1400 Australians, as well as the names of 35,000 Commonwealth soldiers who have no known grave.

Ken Raff's parents received his personal belongings almost a year after his death. They included a wallet, razor, photos and a tin of ostrich feathers. The Raff family left Chelmer in 1921 and moved to Albion.

**ROWLANDS, Thomas Llewelyn**

**#202 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment**

Thomas Rowlands was born in Ipswich and attended the Southport School, then named Southport High School from 1907 to 1909. Sometime before 1914, his family moved to Oxley. Thomas enlisted on 14<sup>th</sup> October 1914 and gave his occupation as stockman. He was drafted into the 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse, comprised almost exclusively of Queenslanders, which sailed from Sydney in December 1914 bound for Egypt.

After the initial landings at Gallipoli, the Light Horse was sent to the peninsula as reinforcements, without their horses. Thomas remained on Gallipoli from May until September 1915 when he was evacuated sick to Lemnos. He remained in hospital in Egypt until February 1916 when he rejoined his unit. By this time, the Light Horse was defending the Suez Canal, patrolling in the Sinai Peninsula.

On 27<sup>th</sup> August 1916, Thomas Rowlands was accidentally killed when a water well he was digging collapsed. An enquiry into the incident reported that Trooper Rowland was alone at the bottom of the well, which was about 14 feet deep. The working party had stopped for a smoke and Thomas sat down in the bottom of the well to rest. He was covered by about five feet of sand when the well wall collapsed. Witnesses reported that it took about 15 minutes to free him from the well shaft and that when he was brought to the surface, artificial respiration was administered for almost an hour until the medical officer arrived and pronounced Thomas deceased. The enquiry found that no person was to blame and that if Thomas had not been sitting down at the time he may well have survived unscathed.

His mates buried Thomas close to where he died at Bir El Abd and a Chaplain performed the burial service. The site of his burial was recorded, along with map references but by the time the war came to an end, all trace of the grave had been lost.

Thomas's family received a parcel of his personal effects which as well as the usual letters and postcards contained a rubber stamp and two race programs. Thomas' younger brother, Severne Llewelyn also enlisted in November 1915. He was severely wounded on the Western Front in early 1917 and was repatriated to Australia later that year with a war pension of one pound per fortnight.

Trooper Thomas Rowlands, 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse is commemorated on the Oxley War Memorial, Brisbane; the Community Honour Board in the Chapel of St Alban the Martyr, The Southport School and the Jerusalem War Memorial Cemetery Israel.

**SCHLUMPF, Albert**

**# 7544 9<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Albert Schlumpf was born in Zug, Switzerland just south of Zurich. His wife; Paulina, when completing the Roll of Honour circular reported that he had emigrated to Australia at age 20

and was a naturalized citizen. She also reported that he had attended school in Switzerland and France.

When Albert enlisted on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1917, he stated he was 30 years old and employed as a labourer. He lived with his wife and one child at Mary Street, Johnston Estate, Sherwood.

After a period of training in a depot battalion at Enoggera and a period of home leave, Albert travelled by train to Sydney where he embarked on the "Hororata" on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1917 as part of the 25<sup>th</sup> reinforcements for the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion. A note in red pen on Albert's attestation papers indicates that a second child was born between the time he enlisted and the time he embarked. After arrival in Liverpool in late August, Albert spent some time in the training battalions at Sutton Veney interspersed with periods of hospitalisation due to mumps.

Albert was posted overseas to the Bullring at Havre in March 1918 and then was transferred to the 15<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 17<sup>th</sup> April 1918. This period of time coincided with the German Spring Offensive; Operation Michael, which drove the British Army on the Somme all the way back to within gun range of Amiens. In an effort to stem the German onslaught, Haig called the Australian divisions in Flanders south to meet the advance. The five Australian divisions had been formed into a single corps, under the direction of Lieutenant General John Monash. On the 25<sup>th</sup> April, two divisions of Australians drove the Germans out of the village of Villers Bretonneux.

While Monash planned his first counter attack (which would come at Hamel in July) the Australians pursued a period of what was called "peaceful penetration". This entailed establishing forward listening posts and trench raids to gather intelligence.

While manning one of these listening posts out in front of the main defensive line at Hamel, Albert Schlumpf was killed instantly by an artillery shell exploding directly in the post. Numerous Red Cross Wounded and Missing reports confirm the facts of his death but reveal some other curious details. A number of witnesses described Albert as "Norwegian or Swede". This may have been just a case of ignorance but may also have been Albert's way of diverting attention from his Swiss German pedigree (many citizens of German descent, including John Monash himself, had their loyalty questioned, some to the point of internment). One witness described Albert as a "regular toff" which probably is a reflection on his speech as a non native speaker of English. It may also have been a reference to his stature; he was over six feet tall. Several witnesses reported that he "could speak any language you asked him." It is most likely that he spoke French and German fluently due to his upbringing, and he would have been a valuable asset to his battalion when it came to communicating with the French inhabitants.

While Albert was in England, his mother had died in Zurich and left a bequest of 8000 Swiss francs. Albert had dutifully added a codicil to his will stating that in the event of his death, the Swiss bequest would go to his wife Paulina and their two children. There are several letters from the Swiss Consul in Brisbane directed to the military authorities requesting copies of death certificates so that the inheritance could be progressed.

Albert was buried in the military cemetery at Corbie, not far from where he fell and photographs of his grave were sent to his widow. Paulina Schlumpf and her children were still living at Sherwood when medals were distributed in the 1920's.

**SINNAMON, (Robert) Leslie****#4300 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Leslie Sinnamon was born into the large Sinnamon family that had taken up farming land around Seventeen Mile Rocks. His parents, George and Isabella lived at "Rosemount", Oxley. Leslie attended Seventeen Mile Rocks State School and may then have become a Pupil Teacher at the school as he listed his occupation on his enlistment records as *Bank Clerk, Teacher 3 years*. Given that his age at the time was 18 years and 8 months it is reasonable to assume that his teaching was as a pupil teacher. Correspondence from his sister, Marion Xenos (nee Sinnamon) indicates that Leslie was living with his sister and her husband at Bowen Hills prior to enlistment. Marion was 19 years older than Leslie and she referred to him as "*her boy*" and "*my son*."

Leslie enlisted on 20 August 1915 at Sydney Town Hall and was drafted as a reinforcement for the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion, a NSW regiment. He sailed for Egypt on 20<sup>th</sup> December 1915 and joined the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion in June 1916. The 13<sup>th</sup> was at that time being remodelled to accommodate the expansion of the AIF, with a mixture of old Gallipoli veterans and new reinforcements. The reconstituted battalion arrived at Marseilles on 8<sup>th</sup> June 1916 and moved directly to northern France.

Haig, Supreme Commander of the British Expeditionary Force had been assembling a huge force which he would employ in the "Big Push", planned to begin on 1st July 1916. Despite suffering casualties of 60,000 on the first day, the Battle of the Somme continued, with limited gains and appalling casualties. By the end of that month, the Australian First and Second Divisions, at great cost, had taken Pozieres. It was now time for the 1st Division, of which the 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion was part, to go back into the line and continue the offensive North West along the ridge from Pozieres towards Mouquet Farm. The farm, which the Australians called "Moo Cow Farm" was nothing but a tumble of bricks, but it had deep cellars and the Germans had heavily fortified it.

The advance on the farm was difficult due to a narrow front and heavy artillery bombardment of the Australian trenches. On 29 August, almost one month since Pozieres had been taken but with less than one kilometre advanced since, Leslie Sinnamon was listed as missing after an aborted attack on the farm.

Leslie's sister, Marion, was informed by telegram that he was "Missing". She wrote to Army Base Records seeking further details but the reply simply stated there was no further news. Marion would have appeared to have searched newspapers in the hope of finding out more as she wrote again asking if one of a number of unidentified bodies recovered in France may be her "*son*".

Some seven months after he was reported "Missing"; a Board of Enquiry established that Leslie Sinnamon was killed in Action on 29 August 1916. There are no Red Cross records to suggest that enquiries were made into Leslie and since seven months had now past, the possibility of him being wounded somewhere could be discounted. Marion requested that his personal effects, particularly a sheepskin jacket, be forwarded to her but she was informed that none have come to hand.

In an ultimate irony, when service medals were distributed at the end of the war, the strict military regulations stated that medals would first go to the father, then mother, then brothers, then sisters. As Leslie's parents were still alive, it was they who signed for the receipt of the medals.

Private Robert Leslie Sinnamon, 13<sup>th</sup> Battalion is commemorated on the Oxley War Memorial, Brisbane and the Australian National Memorial, Villers Bretonneux.

### **SOWDEN, Ronald Alexander**

### **#4574 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Ronald Sowden was barely 18 when he enlisted on 6<sup>th</sup> September 1915. He was employed as a clerk with Queensland Railways and lived with his parents at "Dalkeith" Corinda. Ronald embarked with reinforcements for the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion in Brisbane on 31<sup>st</sup> January and arrived in Alexandria on 5<sup>th</sup> March 1916.

Ronald did not join his unit straight away but spent some time in Egypt before being shipped to the large British camp at Etaples nicknamed the "Bullring" on 11<sup>th</sup> July. While Ronald was waiting to join his battalion, the 9<sup>th</sup> were put into the line at Pozieres on 23<sup>rd</sup> July and received significant casualties. After they were withdrawn, Ronald joined them on 29<sup>th</sup> July. After a period of rest and re-equipping, the battalion was again thrust into the battle for Mouquet Farm on 21<sup>st</sup> August; further along the ridge from Pozieres. During this engagement, Ronald was slightly wounded and required a few days at a field hospital.

After the shocking experiences of Pozieres, the battalion was sent to the rear areas behind Ypres in Belgium to recuperate and begin training for the next "stunt." Ronald reported to a casualty clearing station with a septic hand on 14<sup>th</sup> November but returned to his battalion 11 days later. In January 1917, Ronald again presented to a casualty clearing station with a septic arm. It is quite possible that this was a recurrence of the earlier infection and since there were no suitable drugs to treat such injuries, infections could be serious.

Nevertheless Ronald made a full recovery and was back with his unit by late February. The 9<sup>th</sup> by this time had moved with the rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division back to the Somme and were holding the line at the juncture of the Somme and Ancre Rivers. The winter had been particularly severe, particularly for men out in the open in muddy trenches. In April Ronald was hospitalised with influenza and by the time he rejoined the battalion in May, his mates were preparing to go up against the Hindenburg Line at Baupume.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> May 1917, Ronald was wounded for the second time. This time it was more serious as he had gun shot wounds to the face, arm and buttocks. After a month in a field hospital he returned to his unit. In September Ronald was granted 12 days leave in England, returning to the battalion on 19<sup>th</sup> September.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Division had been brought to Flanders to continue the series of advances that had begun in June 1917 at Messines and continued along the Menin Road towards the ridge on which sat the villages of Zonnebeke and Passchendaele. The 1<sup>st</sup> Division was moving up to the jump off tapes at Broodseinde Ridge on 3<sup>rd</sup> November when Ronald was struck in the head by a high explosive shell fragment, killing him instantly. The commanding officer of the

battalion reported that Ronald had been buried by the men in his company and approximate grid references were taken.

Sadly, when isolated graves were being consolidated by the Imperial War Graves Commission, there was no trace of Ronald's grave. Instead his name was added to the tablets on the Menin Gate at Ypres along with the names of 55,000 other Commonwealth soldiers who perished in Flanders and have no known grave. Since 1923, every evening a solemn ceremony is held at the Menin Gate which concludes with the reciting of the ode and the playing of the last post.

Eventually Ronald's parents, Samuel and Sarah received his few personal effects, the Empire medal and Victory Medal and a memorial scroll and plaque. Sarah Sowden also was granted a pension of 17 shillings and sixpence per fortnight.

### **STEELE, Robert Stewart**

### **#3496 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Robert Steele was born at Ebbw Vale near Ipswich and attended Bundamba State School. He stated his occupation as brickmaker, although the Roll of Honour Circular completed by his step mother, Florence Steele records his occupation as miner. Both occupations seem feasible as this district had both coal mining and pottery industries at the time.

When Robert enlisted on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1915 he was just 18 years old. He gave his address as Oxley and named his father, William Steele of the same address as his next of kin. Exactly two months after enlistment Robert embarked on the "Warilda" in Brisbane as part of the 11<sup>th</sup> reinforcements for the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion. When the reinforcements arrived in Egypt plans were well advanced to withdraw all the Australians ; including the 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion, from Gallipoli. Robert would spend the next four months in Egypt while the 9<sup>th</sup> took on reinforcements and sent half of the Gallipoli veterans to form a new battalion; the 49<sup>th</sup>.

Robert arrived in Marseilles on 4<sup>th</sup> April and travelled by train to the large training camp at Etaples before finally rejoining the 9<sup>th</sup> on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1916. The 9<sup>th</sup> was originally positioned in the sector of the front around Armentieres where they could become accustomed to the routines of the front. In May the unit rotated in and out of the line at Fromelles and Petillion. In June at Sternwerk the battalion took part in a series of trench raids to, in the words of the written orders: 1) capture prisoners 2) destroy machine guns and trench mortars 3) develop esprit de corps within the battalion. The raids were according to the battalion diary quite successful although there did need to be an inquiry into the loss of 18 revolvers.

On 1<sup>st</sup> July, the Battle of the Somme began and fell well short of the expectations of Haig and his army commander Gough. To continue the offensive, Haig called three of the Australian Divisions in France to the Somme ( A fourth division, the 5<sup>th</sup>, had been put into the line at Fromelles in early July, principally as a diversion; and suffered appalling casualties)

The 9<sup>th</sup> as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Division would be first into the fighting to capture the village of Pozieres. The battalion arrived behind the lines at Albert on 13<sup>th</sup> July and began training for their first big stunt. The first division entered the front line at Pozieres on 23<sup>rd</sup> July and succeeded in capturing the village, all the while being heavily shelled from well dug in

positions further up the slope from Pozieres. During the action of 23<sup>rd</sup> July, Robert Steele was reported as killed in action.

There are no Red Cross Wounded or Missing reports into his death and his file simply states Killed in Action. No body was ever recovered, which was the fate of so many who fell at Pozieres and Mouquet Farm that summer.

Robert's father wrote to Base Records on several occasions to enquire into the circumstances of Robert's death but no further information was forthcoming.

The Australian Government resolved to construct a lasting memorial to those who lost their lives in France but have no known grave. The project was delayed due to a conflict over the design of the memorial and a shortage of funds. Finally on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1938; almost twenty years since the war's end, King George Sixth officially dedicated the Australian National Memorial at Villers Bretonneux. There are over 10,000 names on the tablets at Villers Bretonneux.

It is likely that the authorities wrote to the next of kin of those 10,000 to inform them that their loved ones would finally be commemorated as in Robert's file there is a letter from his step mother, Florence Steele which states in part that Robert's father is deceased and she is now an old lady of 78 years. She also states that she does not see the need to rebury Robert in the new cemetery (Florence obviously misunderstood the purpose of the letter) and that Robert's name appears on the memorial at Ebbw Vale. Strangely Robert Steele does not appear on the Oxley Progress Association Memorial at Oxley, even though he was for a time associated with the district.

## **SULLIVAN, George**

## **#1732 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse Regiment**

George Sullivan was born in Charleville and attended Milton State School as a boy. When George enlisted on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1915, he was 18 years old and stated his occupation as joiner. He also stated that he had previous military experience in the cadets and in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battery of the Field Artillery. His mother, Elanor Sullivan had signed a document giving her permission for George to enlist and had noted that George's father was deceased. George gave his home address as Golf Street Chelmer where he lived with and supported his mother.

The embarkation roll lists George as a reinforcement for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse Brigade when he boarded the "Mashobra" in Sydney on 4<sup>th</sup> October. The embarkation roll also indicates that George had allotted his entire pay of five shillings a day to his mother; which is a clear indication that his widowed mother was reliant on her son for financial support.

George and the rest of the reinforcements arrived at Ismailia on the southern approach to the Suez Canal in December and George was posted to B Troop, C Squadron of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse. For three months, the Light Horse Brigades patrolled the western bank of the canal to deter a possible Turkish attack from the Sinai. When the bulk of the Australian forces departed Egypt for the western front, the mounted troops from Australia and New Zealand remained around the canal to defend this vital communication link.

The war diary of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse is very brief in describing the activities of May and June with constant patrolling and scouting into the Sinai Desert. The only incident of note would appear to have been the bombing of the Australian camps by German Taube aircraft which caused some casualties and resulted in a stampede of some three hundred horses.

In July, the troops were engaged in the construction of defensive works in the vicinity of Romani (modern day Ramanah) to counter a perceived Turkish/ German advance towards Alexandria and the canal.

On the night of the 3<sup>rd</sup> August, Turkish infantry attacked the Australian positions with superior numbers. The Australian fought a rear guard action during the night, often employing "Cossack" outposts (a number of men would fire off a fusillade of shots and then mount up and gallop to the rear). When day broke, the heat, soft sand and lack of water became as big an enemy as the Turks; but still the Light Horse Men continued their tactics of hit and run while meeting the onrushing infantry. It was reported that the commander in the battle; "Gallop Jack" Roysten wore out 14 horses as he raced from one skirmish point to another with a bloody bandage wrapped around his thigh. Men who were in danger of being overrun were rescued by mates who at times had several men hanging on to their stirrups.

The attack was finally repulsed when the Turks, some of whom were bare footed, became exhausted in the soft sand. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse, Romani was a great success with 9 killed and 30 wounded. George Sullivan was one of the wounded. He died later that day. George was buried at the Etmaler Cemetery at Romani with the Rev Teece reading the service.

In April 1917, George's mother finally received his personal effects; a notebook, 2 badges and 6 Bedouin artefacts, and was awarded a pension of two pounds per fortnight. In 1925 the remains of Trooper George Sullivan were reinterred in the Kantara War Memorial Cemetery on the banks of the canal he gave his life to defend.

### **TOLLEY, Thomas Henry**

### **#307 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion**

Thomas Tolley was born in Canning Town, London. When he enlisted he reported that he was married to wife Ellen and had three children, but unusually Ellen and the children were living in Canning Town. Perhaps Thomas had sent his wife and children back to England for the period of his enlistment. Thomas gave his occupation as fireman (most likely a locomotive fireman on the railways) and his address as C/- F. Young of Sherwood.

Thomas enlisted in Brisbane on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1915, having been previously rejected due to flat feet. He was 26 years old at the time and was drafted into A Company of the 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion which was being partly raised at Enoggera. The Queenslanders travelled by train to Broadmeadows where they met up with Victorian recruits who would make up the numbers in the composite battalion. The 31<sup>st</sup> embarked from Melbourne on the "Wandilla" on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 1915.

After a sea voyage of a month, the "Wandilla" arrived at Suez and the troops went into camp for further training. The 31<sup>st</sup> Battalion was part of the newly created 5<sup>th</sup> Division, and arrived in Marseilles on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1916. The Division was placed in the quiet sectors of the front near the French Belgian border to learn the business of trench warfare but less than a month after arriving in France; the division would be put into the line at Fromelles.

Haig had begun his Big Push on the Somme on the 1<sup>st</sup> July and things had not gone well. In an effort to divert German troops away from the front on the Somme and therefore relieve his hard pressed brigades, Haig decided on a feint north of the Somme to distract the enemy. The feint would be provided by the inexperienced 5<sup>th</sup> Division on 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> July. Just as things had gone badly on the Somme, so too did the Fromelles attack. During this action, Thomas Tolley sustained a gun shot wound to the hand which required treatment in England. Thomas could have counted himself lucky. The 5<sup>th</sup> Division suffered 5,500 casualties at Fromelles and were so knocked about that they ceased to be a viable fighting force for the rest of 1916.

By August of 1916, Thomas had recovered from his wound and was posted to a number of training and depot battalions in England for the next 12 months, no doubt being able to see his wife and family on periods of leave. Thomas was posted back to the 31<sup>st</sup> in October 1917, where the battalion was preparing to go into the line at Polygon Wood.

After the exhaustive battles in Flanders during the latter half of 1917, both sides settled into a period of relative quiet, with occasional trench raids and artillery duels conducted to harass the enemy rather than make any substantial gain. The 31<sup>st</sup> War Diary describes days on end of frost, fog and drizzle during which the battalion rotated in and out of the line every ten days or so. It was during one of these periods of inactivity that Thomas Tolley was killed on 18<sup>th</sup> March 1918 at Wytshaete. Thomas's luck which had spared him at Fromelles had now deserted him. For the entire month of March, the battalion war diary lists only 6 fatalities; which by the standards of the day was exceedingly light.

Thomas was buried at Cabin Hill Cemetery, not far from where he fell, close to the village of Messines. There is no indication of a pension being awarded to Ellen and the children but it is almost certain that such a payment was made. A Mr Dart, secretary of the Loyal Sherwood Forest Lodge wrote requesting certificates of death so that a funeral benefit could be payed. It is impossible to determine whether Ellen Tolley returned to Australia. Perhaps Thomas's name on the Graceville memorial is due to his landlord; F. Young of Sherwood.

## **WEBSTER, Alfred**

## **#3217 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Alfred Webster was one of four brothers born in and around the Southern Darling Downs. Alfred was born at Killarney near Warwick. At the time of his enlistment in Toowoomba on 7 November 1916, he was 27 years old, single, and gave his occupation as labourer. His next of kin was stated as being his father, Alexander, who lived in Rowe Terrace Darra and may have been the Postmaster there.

Upon enlistment, Alfred was placed in the 11<sup>th</sup> Depot Battalion before being transferred into the 49<sup>th</sup> Battalion. On the day of embarkation, 22 December 1916, he was transferred again into the 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion as a reinforcement. The relatively short period of training in Australia before embarkation (6 weeks) is indicative of the urgent need to provide men to the Western Front at this time. The first of the conscription referenda had recently been defeated. In fact, Alfred recorded that he had originally been refused enlistment due to defective teeth. By late 1916, either his teeth had been fixed or the medical criteria had been relaxed.

Alfred arrived in Plymouth Harbour in March 1917 and within a month was in hospital with mumps. It seems that there was a mumps epidemic around this time in the training camps as several other soldiers whose stories appear above also were hospitalised with this disease. By June 1917, Alfred had crossed the channel to France and eventually joined his unit which was now in Flanders. The 47<sup>th</sup> was involved in the conflict around Messines, Broodsinde Ridge and Passchendaele.

After Flanders, the battalion spent time in rest and training before going into the line again in the Somme in March 1918 in an attempt to halt and turn the German spring offensive. Operation Michael was Ludendorff's last gamble to force a decisive victory on the Western Front. The 47<sup>th</sup> Battalion were moved into the line around Dernacourt in an attempt to hold the German advance. The situation was chaotic as this area was virtually virgin ground with very little in the way of defensive trenches. On the 27 March, the 47<sup>th</sup> was charged with establishing a defensive line on a railway embankment just west of Dernacourt. It is probably in this action that Alfred Webster was killed. The battalion suffered 80 casualties that day and almost two entire companies were taken prisoner as the Germans outflanked the defenders.

Alfred was buried in Dernacourt Communal Cemetery Extension along with another 480 Australians who fell at Dernacourt. The "Queenslander Illustrated" in May 1918 contained a photograph of Alfred Webster, as well as details of his death, which prompted a Mr A. Cooper of Tannymorel to write to the military authorities enquiring into the settlement of Alfred's financial affairs as Mr Cooper was "*monetarily interested*." There is no indication as to whether the debt was paid.

As was usual practice, any personal effects were despatched to the next of kin but the file indicates that Alfred's effects were "*lost at sea*." The Roll of Honour Card was completed by Alfred's mother who indicated that Alfred had four brothers, 3 of whom were abroad, and his Father Alexander was in the Home Defence.

Alexander requested that the following inscription be placed on Alfred's gravestone:

*"Crown him with many crowns,*

*A lamb upon his throne."*

Private Alfred Webster is also commemorated on the Oxley War Memorial, Brisbane.

#### **WEBSTER, Alexander (Douglas Lennox)**

**#4820 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion**

Douglas Webster was one of four brothers born in and around the Southern Darling Downs. Douglas was born at Tannymorel near Warwick. For most of Douglas Webster's military career he is known as Alexander as this is the name under which he enlisted. It was not until after his death that his mother wrote to Base Records to inform them that his real name was Douglas Lennox Webster (she included a copy of his birth certificate). She also stated that his age at the time of his death was 18 years and six months. Given that he enlisted in December 1915 and was Killed in Action in August 1918, it would seem that Douglas was just shy of his sixteenth birthday when he enlisted. His mother's letter confirms this stating that he was "*to (sic) young*" and he used his father's name.

On Douglas's enlistment papers he gave his occupation as band cutter although his mother when completing the Roll of Honour Card gave his occupation as railway porter. Douglas was drafted as a reinforcement in the 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion. The 26<sup>th</sup> was originally raised at Enoggera in March 1915, as a Queensland and Tasmanian battalion, and saw service on Gallipoli before being reorganised in Egypt before going to the Western Front.

In April 1916, Douglas embarked in Sydney enroute for England. He was admitted to the hospital on board the transport ship with V.D. where he spent 17 days. This would not be the only time Douglas stepped outside the boundaries. The journey to England was quite long, probably due to the route going via the Cape of Good Hope to avoid German submarines in the Mediterranean. By December of 1916, young Douglas was in the Australian depot at Etaples where he was charged with "*gathering wood outside segregation camp contrary to standing orders*" and fined seven days pay. By February 1917 Douglas had joined his battalion. In June of that year he spent two weeks at the army sniping school. Soon after rejoining the battalion, Douglas was again before the Commanding Officer, this time for "*Neglect to obey orders*" and was sentenced to 7 days Field Punishment #2 (Field Punishment #2 meant that the offender would have to be shackled with cuffs for two hours in every 24) In the ensuing months, Douglas ran afoul of his superiors for disobeying orders while on a work party and using improper language to an NCO, for which he received a total of 14 days FP#2.

After the German advances in the spring of 1918 were halted near Villers Bretonneux, Foch, the Supreme Allied Commander planned a huge counter offensive that he hoped would drive the enemy back to the Hindenburg Line. However unlike the tactics that were employed on the Somme in 1916, by 1918 commanders had learnt a lot about mounting a successful attack. The 26<sup>th</sup> Battalion diary for August of 1918 demonstrates the detail in the planning, containing maps of artillery barrages, aerial photo reconnaissance photos and briefing notes for tank commanders. This new coordinated method of warfare, employing infantry, armour, aircraft and artillery, which had been pioneered by General Monash, ANZAC Corps Commander, earlier in the year proved to be decisive in the action to come. The 26<sup>th</sup> had been practicing infantry advances with tanks in preparation for their role in the drama throughout the early days of August. The great offensive began on 8<sup>th</sup> August and the following day, Douglas Webster was reported as killed in action. Ludendorff, the German commander would later describe the 8<sup>th</sup> August as "the blackest day."

Douglas was probably buried on the battlefield where he fell as some time later his remains were exhumed and he was laid to rest at Heath Cemetery, Harbonnieres along with 983 other Australians. He is in good company as amongst the fallen at Heath Cemetery are two V.C. winners as well as a D.S.O. and a Military Medal. His mother gave his age when killed as 18 years and 6 months. His father asked that the following words be inscribed on his grave:

*"Safe in the arms of Jesus' Safe in his gentle breast."*

Private Douglas Lennox Webster is also commemorated on the Oxley War Memorial.