

ANZAC Sprit School Prize



Gordon Cathcart Campbell

By Melissa Campbell

2019

Gordon Cathcart Campbell Biography



Figure 1

The spark that finally set off the simmering tensions in Europe was the assassination of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria on June 28th 1914 whilst he was visiting Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia. (Spartacus Educational, 2019). This tragedy ignited a conflict as countries began to declare war on each other bringing about a complex web of alliances. The Western front formed in France as French, British and Australian troops fought against the Germans. The Western front was most famously characterized by trench warfare and the muddy shelled landscape. Soldiers also faced all the horrors of an industrial war such as gas, machine guns and attack from planes flying above (Canada and the First World War, 2019). Millions of soldiers from many nations experienced the terror and destruction of this war. This is the story of one of them, Australian Gordon Cathcart Campbell whose character, resolve and ANZAC spirit helped him to live through the conflict.

Gordon Cathcart Campbell was born in Blackwood, South Australia on June 4th 1885 to parents Allen Campbell and Florence Ann Way (Vwma.org.au, 2019) (Figure 1). Allan grew up in Cathcart, Scotland hence the name of his son. He became a medical practitioner and arrived in Adelaide on January 24th 1884, where he opened a children's hospital for the poor (Figure 2). In 1898, when Gordon was just 14 years old, his father and role model died of cardiovascular disease (Adb.anu.edu.au, 2019). Gordon had 5 brothers and 2 sisters.



Figure 2

Gordon attended St Peter's College where he discovered his natural talent in sport. He captained the school's running team, cricket team and held 6 records for inter-collegiate sports which still stand today. While in school, Gordon's brothers; Allan and Neil fought in the Boer War. Allan was killed in action devastating his family still suffering from the loss of their father. In 1906 Gordon graduated from Adelaide University with a Bachelor in Arts degree and in 1909 he obtained a law degree. He also studied Philosophy, Greek, English, Economics and Latin. He was called to the bar on April 22nd 1911 (Trove, 2019) (Digital.library.adelaide.edu.au, 2019).

From 1908 to 1914 he captained the South Australian lacrosse team as goalkeeper and from 1909 to 1914 captained the inter-state cricket team as wicket keeper and batsman. (Figure 3) He played 23 first-class cricket matches and scored 497 runs, 28 catches and 20 stumpings in his career (Cricinfo, 2019). He toured North America and was appointed manager of the team to tour South Africa but the outbreak of WW1 resulted in this trip being cancelled (Trove, 2019). At his peak, Gordon was considered one of the best all-round sportsmen in South Australia, achieving well in cricket, lacrosse, football, running, gymnastics and boasting a collection of 50 medals. After his career in sport, Gordon became an apprentice to P.E Johnston and G.M. Evans solicitors in 1915 but soon began practicing on his own account. In 1915 he married Iris Fisher and together they had a son and daughter.



Figure 3

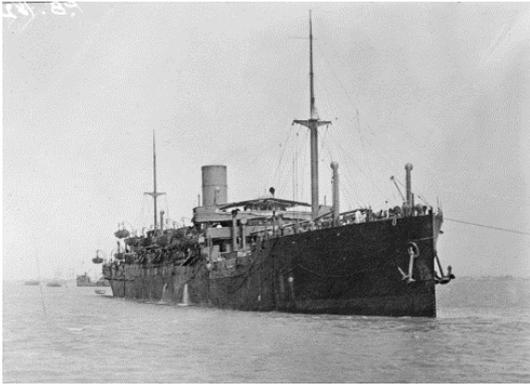


Figure 4

On May 11th 1915 Gordon followed his brother, Neil, and enlisted to fight in the war. Gordon attended an officer's school in Mitcham and was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant in the 10th reinforcements of the 10th infantry battalion. On September 14th 1915, he sailed from Adelaide to Alexandria, Egypt on the HMAT Ballarat (Memorial, 2019) (Figure 4). He then proceeded to Lemnos, an island in the Aegean Sea, with the 10th reinforcements to join the rest of the 10th battalion who had just been withdrawn from the Gallipoli peninsula. Lemnos was used as a training ground and hospital during the Gallipoli campaign. The 10th battalion then travelled to Tel-El-Kebir and Gebel

Habieta in Egypt. Here, Gordon attended a Lewis Gun school, which enabled him to become the commander of the Lewis Gun section of his platoon. The battalion then travelled to France where on March 24th 1916 he was promoted to lieutenant while still remaining in command of the Lewis Gun section.

In July 1916, the 10th battalion entered the battle of Pozzières. The Allies had planned this battle as a large-scale attack against the Germans in the Somme region of France. The ANZACS fought bravely to reclaim a small village called Pozzières and finally, after 42 days, 19 attacks and tremendous losses of 23,000 soldiers the high ground was claimed for the Allies (Memorial, 2019). The Allies received heavy and relentless artillery bombardments as the Germans attempted to reclaim the village, losing many lives and obliterating the landscape. Finally succumbing to the ineffective nature of the campaign it was abandoned but not without great losses on both side. The Germans suffered 500,000 casualties, British and ANZACS 420,000 and French 200,000 (Memorial, 2019). On the morning of July 24th 1916, Gordon showed great courage and skill in this battle not only while he handled the machine guns with great accuracy but organised and led parties of bombers. He threw bombs into a German trench and despite being injured in 2 places continued in his efforts. Largely due to Gordon's bravery, the German trench was taken (National archives of Australia, 2019). For this act of immense bravery, Gordon received a Military Cross which was published in papers around the globe. Australian sports fans rejoiced as the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette printed the story and posters were made saying "keep up the good name of sportsmen" referring to Gordon's decoration of the Military Cross (Vwma.org.au, 2019) (Figure 5).



Figure 5

In September 1916, Gordon proceeded to the 2nd Army School at Wisques and upon return to the 10th battalion was promoted to Captain. During an attack on Le Braque, Gordon injured his left heel and was admitted to the 3rd London General Hospital in Wandsworth. He rejoined the battalion at Ribemont in June 1917 where he was placed in charge of 200 soldiers. He was tasked to train them as a raiding party and at no point in the war did the 10th battalion have a group of men that were more physically fit. During the 3rd battle of Ypres, Gordon was awarded a bar to his Military Cross, the first in the 10th battalion to receive a second decoration. Printed in the 7th of August 1918 edition of the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette it says "For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. While his battalion was assembling for an attack it came under a very heavy barrage. With great coolness and determination and utter disregard of personal safety, he reorganized his own company, and then assisted in reorganizing the rest of the battalion" (National archives of Australia, 2019).

While in hospital for Pyrexia fever, Gordon's company was involved in the Celtic wood raid. The plan was to charge the German trenches and then wait for reinforcements to attack. During this raid, 71 men disappeared

without a trace and to this day no one knows what happened to these brave ANZAC soldiers. Many more were killed or wounded and when Gordon returned to the battalion only 34 men remained of a company once 200

strong (En.wikipedia.org, 2019). Faces of beloved friends and colleagues would be suddenly missing, devastating the morale of the soldiers. During the absence of the commander of the battalion, Gordon was promoted to temporary major but when he sprained his right knee joint during training was transferred to Abbeville Hospital and thus reverted to his previous rank of Captain. Upon return to the battalion, he was made Divisional Courts-Martial Officer on December 6th 1918 and seconded for duty. He relinquished this appointment on December 27th and as his knee was giving him further trouble was once again admitted to the 3rd London general hospital. While in London, he arranged at the AIF headquarters to form an AIF cricket team which toured Britain with much success.

Gordon returned to Alexandria upon the Czaritza, an Arctic exploration ship (Birtwistlewiki.com.au, 2019). After a month in Egypt, he returned to Adelaide aboard the Dunluce Castle and in May 1919 arrived home (Memorial, 2019).



Figure 6

After the war, Gordon helped found the prestigious firm Bennet, Campbell and Ligertwood where he practiced as a solicitor until 1928. He then resumed working as a solicitor on his own account, working on many cases in the High Court of Australia. In 1935 he also became a company director and worked at Albion House, Waymouth Street Adelaide (State Library of South Australia, 2019) (Figure 6).

From 1920 to 1921 Gordon was chairman of the War Gratuity Board and helped pass a bill so that war gratuities could be used to buy store bonds throughout the Commonwealth of Australia. In 1934 he became president of the 10th battalion AIF club.

Gordon Cathcart Campbell died of natural causes on August 13th 1961 at the age of 76 (Vwma.org.au, 2019). He has memorials in the Supreme Court, Blackwood, North Adelaide cycling club and the University of Adelaide WW1 honour roll (Figure 7). Australia will continue to remember and commemorate Gordon Cathcart Campbell for his loyalty, bravery and sacrifice for his country.



Figure 7

Bibliography

Biography

Spartacus Educational. (2019). *First World War Timeline & Events WW1*. [online] Available at: <https://spartacus-educational.com/FWWchronology.htm> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Canada and the First World War. (2019). *Trench Conditions - Rats, Lice, and Exhaustion | Canada and the First World War*. [online] Available at: <https://www.warmuseum.ca/firstworldwar/history/life-at-the-front/trench-conditions/rats-lice-and-exhaustion/> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Vwma.org.au. (2019). Gordon Cathcart CAMPBELL MC and Bar. [online] Available at: <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/256384> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Adb.anu.edu.au. (2019). Biography - Allan Campbell - Australian Dictionary of Biography. [online] Available at: <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/campbell-allan-5482> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Trove. (2019). UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE - DEGREE EXAMINATIONS. - The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA : 1889 - 1931) - 23 Nov 1905. [online] Available at: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/4982841> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Digital.library.adelaide.edu.au. (2019). [online] Available at: <https://digital.library.adelaide.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/2440/33607/102/Page411.pdf> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Cricinfo. (2019). Gordon Campbell. [online] Available at: <http://www.espncricinfo.com/australia/content/player/4713.html> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Trove. (2019). MR. G. C. CAMPBELL. - The Express and Telegraph (Adelaide, SA : 1867 - 1922) - 22 June 1914. [online] Available at: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/210291756> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Memorial, T. (2019). HMAT Ballarat (A70).. [online] Awm.gov.au. Available at: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/PB0182> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Memorial, T. (2019). Pozières | The Australian War Memorial. [online] Awm.gov.au. Available at: <https://www.awm.gov.au/learn/schools/resources/1916/pozieres> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

National archives of Australia. (2019). NAA: B2455, CAMPBELL G C. [online] Available at: <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1853954&S=1> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Vwma.org.au. (2019). Gordon Cathcart CAMPBELL MC and Bar. [online] Available at: <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/256384> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

National archives of Australia. (2019). NAA: B2455, CAMPBELL G C. [online] Available at: <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1853954&S=1> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

En.wikipedia.org. (2019). *Mystery of Celtic Wood*. [online] Available at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mystery_of_Celtic_Wood [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Birtwistlewiki.com.au. (2019). HMT Czaritza - Our Contribution. [online] Available at: https://birtwistlewiki.com.au/wiki/HMT_Czaritza [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Memorial, T. (2019). Soldiers line the deck of the hospital ship HMT Dunluce Castle in the harbour in Malta.. [online] Awm.gov.au. Available at: <https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/C1158875> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

State Library of South Australia. (2019). Waymouth Street, Adelaide. [online] Available at: <https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/B+2040> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Vwma.org.au. (2019). *Gordon Cathcart CAMPBELL MC and Bar*. [online] Available at: <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/256384> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Memorial, T. (2019). Anzac spirit | The Australian War Memorial. [online] Awm.gov.au. Available at: <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/anzac/spirit> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

National archives of Australia. (2019). NAA: B2455, CAMPBELL G C. [online] Available at: <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1853954&S=1> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Images

Figure 1 - Vwma.org.au. (2019). *Gordon Cathcart CAMPBELL MC and Bar*. [online] Available at: <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/256384> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Figure 2 - State Library of South Australia. (2019). Adelaide Children's Hospital : Allan Campbell Buildings. [online] Available at: <https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/B+25678/50> [Accessed 14 May 2019].

Figure 3 - Vwma.org.au. (2019). *Gordon Cathcart CAMPBELL MC and Bar*. [online] Available at: <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/256384> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Figure 4 - Vwma.org.au. (2019). *Gordon Cathcart CAMPBELL MC and Bar*. [online] Available at: <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/256384> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Figure 5 - Vwma.org.au. (2019). *Gordon Cathcart CAMPBELL MC and Bar*. [online] Available at: <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/256384> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Figure 6 - State Library of South Australia. (2019). Waymouth Street, Adelaide. [online] Available at: <https://collections.slsa.sa.gov.au/resource/B+2040> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

Figure 7 - Vwma.org.au. (2019). *Gordon Cathcart CAMPBELL MC and Bar*. [online] Available at: <https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/256384> [Accessed 13 May 2019].

ANZAC Spirit Statement

Memorial, T. (2019). *Anzac spirit | The Australian War Memorial*. [online] Awm.gov.au. Available at: <https://www.awm.gov.au/articles/encyclopedia/anzac/spirit> [Accessed 14 May 2019].

National archives of Australia. (2019). NAA: B2455, CAMPBELL G C. [online] Available at: <https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=1853954&S=1> [Accessed 13 May 2019].