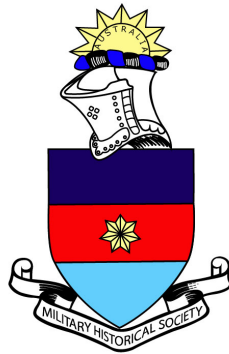


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Sabretache



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EDITORIAL

Since the publication of the last issue, the Society has lost two of its more noteworthy members: Graham Wilson of the ACT Branch, and Don Pedler of the South Australian Branch. Their obituaries appear on page 19, but I want to take this opportunity to add a few words of my own, not only because of my respect and admiration for them as individuals, but also because each in his own way exemplifies (and I use the present tense deliberately) qualities which I believe the Society stands for and promotes.

I didn't know Graham Wilson personally; in fact I only spoke to him over the phone a couple of times in my capacity as editor. But I certainly knew him by the volume and quality of his work in the field of military history. By chance it was only in the last issue that I published his article "'Taken Up as a Rogue and a Vagabond': Civil Punishment of Members of the AIF in the United Kingdom', a piece typical of Graham's avid research practices, microscopic attention to detail, and above all ability to create a good story out of it. No matter how esoteric or unusual the subject matter, his work was never dry or dull in the telling; I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that there was something of the Henry Lawson in him in that regard. I had the privilege of reviewing his book *Bully Beef and Balderdash: Some Myths of the AIF Examined and Debunked* for *Sabretache* when it appeared in 2012. I said then and I still maintain that it is one of the best compendiums of the AIF you are likely to find, so comprehensive and accessible is it in dealing with its topic. Graham was truly the gifted amateur, with the emphasis on the former rather than the latter term; we should be very proud of having been able to number him among our ranks.

Don Pedler I did know well, and for a long time – at least since I joined the SA Branch 25 years ago, although my memory is decrepit enough these days that it may have been longer. Don's particular passion was collecting militaria, but he loved talking about, displaying and writing about his finds. He too had an impressive publication record in the journal, chiefly of brief 'Collectors' Corner'-type articles based on his research into a particular badge or uniform item he had discovered. For him collecting was nothing secretive or selfish; it was a social activity and he genuinely enjoyed sharing stories or information with anyone who showed a like interest. He was always friendly, approachable and warm, and if you got to know him well enough you became privy to his quite wicked sense of humour. Last year his disabilities got the better of him and he was forced to enter a nursing home and sell his collection. On one visit I told him I had discovered among his miscellany what turned out to be a WW1 bomber's badge to the Liverpool Scottish. 'Oh you found that one! Wonderful!' he declared, pumping my hand vigorously. Then I mentioned that a shoulder title of his that I bought – to the River Clyde batteries of the Royal Garrison Artillery – was one that a prominent collector on an online badge forum had to admit he did not have. 'Good on you! Well done!' Don replied, eyes glinting and with more lively hand-shaking. It was like participating in a scene from a Dickens novel, and a delightful scene at that. But that was Don: old-fashioned, a little eccentric, good-hearted. I shall miss him and his ways.

So here's to the memories of Graham and Don. While it's probably true that we shan't see their like again, I sincerely hope for the sake of the field we love that the spirit of their energy and enthusiasm continues to pervade us all.

Paul Skrebels

THE DARWIN CABLE GUARD: PART 1 – ACTIVE SERVICE IN NORTHERN AUSTRALIA

Major Paul A. Rosenzweig (ret'd)¹

Centenary commemorations are currently taking in the anniversaries of practically every event associated with the Great War. But too easily overlooked has been a small garrison of volunteers in Darwin who defended a vital communications link with Great Britain at a time of German colonial expansionism in the region. The Darwin Cable Guard was the first defence presence in northern Australia after the Northern Territory came under control of the Commonwealth in 1911. It was a small land-based defensive organisation created to counter an attack, in the tradition of the three British military garrisons which had existed in northern Australia in the late 19th century, based on a principle of static defence.

By 1914 this humble corps of volunteers had taken on a potential significance, assuming an 'active service' posture and providing local defence when Darwin itself was vulnerable to enemy attack. Typical of the multicultural 'Top End' at that time, the Darwin Cable Guard numbered among its members Imperial military veterans, a grandson of a Prussian botanist, one Maltese soldier, at least one indigenous Larrakia and a Filipino. This article for the first time details the origins of the Darwin Cable Guard and some of its key members.

Origins

The 'Northern Territory of Australia' was created by Queen Victoria under Letters Patent dated 6 July 1863 – prior to which, this vast area was a nameless and undefined part of the Colony of New South Wales. It was placed under South Australian administration, managed locally by a Government Resident living in the town of Palmerston in Port Darwin. Due to the vastness of the continent and Australia's global remoteness, the earliest settlers in Palmerston were virtually isolated. This 'tyranny of distance' was in part resolved by the north-south Overland Telegraph Line, which extended Adelaide's existing telegraph network from Port Augusta to Port Darwin. This in turn connected Australia to Britain by means of submarine cables: the laying of two cables from the UK to Madras, then to Penang and Singapore was completed in 1870. The British-Australian Telegraph Company was created that year to lay the final stage of the cable to Australia – from Singapore to Batavia, which connected to Banjoewangie at the opposite end of Java by landline, and then undersea again from Banjoewangie to Port Darwin.² This final cable arrived in November 1871, and the connection was complete by 22 August 1872. The building which housed the British-Australian Telegraph Company Cable Station in Darwin was called 'BAT House'; it stood on the Esplanade facing the 'Cricket Oval', which overlooked the wharf where the cable came to shore.³

AWM	=	Australian War Memorial
NAA	=	National Archives of Australia
NTAS	=	Northern Territory Archives Service
NTG	=	<i>Northern Territory Gazette</i>
NTTG	=	<i>Northern Territory Times and Gazette</i>

¹ Paul Rosenzweig is a medal collector and non-professional military historian and biographer, with a long connection to the Northern Territory.

² A duplicate cable from Singapore to Darwin was laid in 1879, directly through Banjoewangie overcoming the need for a landline across the island.

³ In 1873, the various companies which had been formed to lay different sections of cables were merged to form the Eastern Extension, Australasia and China Telegraph Company Limited. In Darwin however, this company

On 1 January 1911, control of the Northern Territory was transferred to the Commonwealth. The Government Resident Justice Samuel James Mitchell became Acting Administrator, to administer the government on behalf of the federal government, and Palmerston was renamed 'Darwin'. The Commonwealth assumed responsibility for defence matters in northern Australia from that date,⁴ the isolation again highlighting security concerns.

The Threat

In 1911, most of north-eastern New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago (comprising New Britain, New Ireland, New Hanover and several small islands) was German territory. The 'Imperial German Pacific Protectorates' (*Das Deutsches Sudsee Schutzgebiet*) also included Bougainville and Buka of the Solomon group, Samoa, the Marshall Islands and several small islands and groups in the Pacific. When war broke out, five wireless stations were being established which would connect the naval base and headquarters at Tsingtao with its Pacific territories, including Apia in Samoa and Rabaul on New Britain.⁵ The British-Australian Pacific settlements were gradually being encircled.

Against the fear that German raiders of the East Asiatic Squadron were actively patrolling the sea-lanes around Australia, the BAT Cable Station in Darwin stood undefended, a potential target. The threat had actually been recognised three decades earlier when Col Francis Downes, commanding the military forces in Adelaide, observed in a report dated 6 October 1882: 'the shore end of the Marine Telegraph requires protection in the event of an attempt being made to cut it as would probably be done if England became engaged in war with a naval power'.⁶ Such fears, of course, were realised in September 1914 when the German light cruiser SMS *Nürnberg* shelled the Trans-Pacific Cable station at Fanning Island (now part of Kiribati) and a landing party destroyed the cable station. And then on 9 November the light armoured cruiser SMS *Emden* set out to destroy the Eastern Extension Cable Company station on North Keeling Island.⁷

The Response

An attempt to mitigate this perceived vulnerability was made in 1912 by the creation of a 'Darwin Cable Guard'.⁸ There were very few Europeans living in Palmerston at this time – from 2,846 Europeans, Chinese, Japanese and 'other nationalities', including children, in 1910 there were just 739 adult European males.⁹ Nevertheless, among them were several veterans of imperial military service for whom weapon handling had been an important part of their life, while rifle shooting had become a popular activity among the youth. The age of the veterans notwithstanding, a local rifle club was seen as a potential recruiting base.

The Palmerston Rifle Club had been formed at a public meeting on 18 October 1881, when thirty gentlemen promised to subscribe: an 800-yard rifle range had already been cleared and

was known simply as the 'Eastern Extension Cable Company', although the old name 'BAT' was commonly used even after 1911.

⁴ *Northern Territory Acceptance Act* 1910 (Commonwealth); *Northern Territory (Administration) Act* 1910 (Commonwealth).

⁵ See: Stevenson (2015) pp.19-22.

⁶ Downes (1882).

⁷ See: Rosenzweig (2014b).

⁸ NAA (1912a); NAA (1912b). Similar Cable Guards were also established on Norfolk Island and at Flinders Camp in Victoria.

⁹ *Commonwealth of Australia Yearbook* No. 5 (1912) p.1156.

targets prepared.¹⁰ The next month the BAT staff of the ‘Eastern Extension Cable Company’ offered a silver embossed Challenge Cup¹¹ and the first competition shoot was held on 30 November. In the following year, targets and ammunition were provided by the military headquarters in Adelaide. In October 1882, Col Downes reminded the Government Resident of the strategic importance of the Cable Station and the remoteness of Palmerston, with the rifle club offering the most basic of military defence.¹²

Within five years a second rifle club had been established, and a third was raised in November 1900 with rules and regulations as prescribed by the *Defence Act 1895* (South Australia).¹³ The objects of this ‘Defence Rifle Club’ were much more utilitarian than simply recreation, as the local media prophetically observed: ‘as a matter of fact, in view of our defenceless and isolated position, an organisation of the above character may at some time or another prove of the most vital importance’.¹⁴

The creation of the club was an acknowledgement that this isolated Top End community would otherwise be, ‘absolutely destitute of any practical means’ of defending themselves. It was considered that the weapon handling skills developed through club membership would ultimately prove to be important in the event of some sort of national crisis. Having over 30 members aged eighteen years or more, the club was supplied with rifles, ammunition and uniforms by the South Australian Government, with the liability to be called upon in the event of a crisis to serve with the defence forces of the colony. The club was renamed ‘Port Darwin Defence Rifle Club’. Its rifles arrived via the SS *Tsinan* and were distributed on 23 March 1901: ‘The club’s membership has increased during the last few weeks to such an extent that it will soon be necessary to requisition for another lot of rifles.’¹⁵

With Federation, the rifle clubs had to comply with new Commonwealth requirements laid down by the Department of Defence. At its annual general meeting in December 1903, the Palmerston Rifle Club adopted the new ‘Commonwealth Regulations for Rifle Clubs’, and members signed a Commonwealth Attestation Form. The club conducted an Annual Musketry Course to allow members to be classified as efficient: each efficient member was entitled to a free grant of 192 rounds of ammunition. After 1911, the club was known as the ‘Darwin Rifle Club’ although the old name still continued to be widely used.¹⁶ Throughout the Commonwealth, by 1913 there were 1,133 rifle clubs with a membership of 47,565 – of these, 19,671 men were allotted to citizen units and cable guards to bring those units up to war strength ‘on mobilisation’.¹⁷

Command and Control

With an increased focus on northern defence, the Secretary to the Department of Defence, Commander Samuel Pethebridge of the Commonwealth Naval Forces, visited Darwin in

¹⁰ NTTG 22 October 1881, p.2.

¹¹ NTTG 26 November 1881, p.2 (to be shot for once a month: the winner would hold the cup until the next competition, and if won three times it would become the absolute property of the winner).

¹² Downes (1882): Downes was certainly a pro-active commander: in 1879, he had offered to take 300 South Australian militia to serve in the Zulu War.

¹³ NTTG 2 November 1900, p.2; 7 December 1900, p.3.

¹⁴ NTTG 2 November 1900, p.2.

¹⁵ NTTG 29 March 1901, p.2.

¹⁶ There was in addition the ‘Palmerston Gun Club’ which was closely associated with the civilian staff of the Cable Company, which shot clay targets from spring traps off the Esplanade into the sea.

¹⁷ *Commonwealth of Australia Yearbook* No. 7 (1914) p.941.

September 1911. He had been instructed by his Minister to arrange for the formation of a 'Defence Rifle Club' along different lines from the existing clubs. Pethebridge called on the Acting Administrator and met with key Darwin residents to explain the proposal to raise a local defence corps. To encourage urgency, the Department was prepared to treat the corps in a 'much more liberal spirit' than was practised in the case of ordinary rifle clubs: they would supply the necessary rifles, ammunition and uniforms free of cost, and would provide an instructor.¹⁸ This local semi-military guard was to be created for the protection of the cable station, and incidentally, of the town. Those in attendance, 'resolved that the proposition should receive every assistance locally'.¹⁹

On 15 January 1912, the Secretary of the Department of Defence issued a 'Secret and Urgent Memo' laying out the regulations for the formation of a Cable Guard at Port Darwin 'for the defence of the Cable Landing Station'.²⁰ The Palmerston Rifle Club, led by Councillor F.G.A. Williams, Chairman of the Palmerston District Council, was identified as the most suitable to be the basis of the new body, which would have a strength of 25 men.

The Commandant of the 4th Military District (4MD) in Adelaide, Col Haviland Le Mesurier, wrote to Williams to ask whether his members would join the Cable Guard.²¹ This was a period of transition: although the pre-existing responsibility for the Northern Territory was still held by 4MD, as a Commonwealth entity it was now being brought under the military jurisdiction of 1MD in Brisbane. Williams then received a flurry of correspondence from both Melbourne and Brisbane regarding the Cable Guard proposal. Lt Col Luscombe, Officer in Charge of the Rifle Club Reserves (1MD), also asked Williams if his members would sign up – they would liable for call-out for the protection of the Cable Station whenever required, receiving payment at Militia rates of pay when called out for active service.²² Where rifle clubs generally received a set quantity of rifles which had to be shared among members, the allocation of Service rifles to the Cable Guard would be increased to allow a rifle to be issued to each member.

In February, Capt Parr of the Rifle Club Reserves wrote to Williams to advise 'that approval has been given for the Palmerston Rifle Club to furnish a Cable Guard of a maximum strength of 50 for the defence of the cable landing station at Port Darwin'.²³ This approval included a requirement for the members to attend not less than 16 out of 24 hours' drill annually to be classified as efficient. This drill would be held over two periods, each of five nights and one afternoon, at different times of the year. An instructor from the Thursday Island Garrison would be made available for each period. Each member who attended the maximum number of statutory hours of drill would be granted 100 rounds of ammunition, additional to his allocation as a member of the Rifle Club. An efficiency grant of £1 (in addition to the Rifle Club grant of 5 shillings) would be made annually to the club for each efficient Cable Guard member – if the Club wished, this efficiency grant could be passed on to the individual. Parr advised Williams: 'It is desired that you arrange for the formation of the Cable Guard with-out delay'.²⁴ On 11 March 1912, Williams wrote to the 4MD Commandant to advise: 'All the members of the Club except two has promised to join the guard'.²⁵

¹⁸ NTTG 3 November 1911, p.2.

¹⁹ NTTG 22 March 1912, p.2.

²⁰ NAA (1912a): Secretary, Department of Defence, S1 Defence 1374/1/17 dated 15 January 1912.

²¹ NAA (1912a): COL H Le Mesurier, letter dated 18 January 1912.

²² NAA (1912a): LTCOL A P Luscombe, letter dated 18 January 1912.

²³ NTTG 22 March 1912, p.2: CAPT F W Parr, letter dated 16 February 1912.

²⁴ NTTG 22 March 1912, p.2: CAPT F W Parr, letter dated 16 February 1912.

²⁵ NAA (1912a): F G A Williams, letter dated 11 March 1912.

Formation, 1912

It was directed that the Officer Commanding was to be granted the honorary rank of captain in the Commonwealth Military Forces.²⁶ Williams acknowledged that the Rifle Club Captain should concurrently serve as Captain of the Cable Guard, but he was unable to take on the command himself because of his medical condition and age (45 years). From the 1890s Williams had run a blacksmith and wheelwright business in Smith Street: he was a locksmith and gunsmith, and also held the government contract for shoeing government horses, with hand-made shoes. Councillor Williams offered to accept the command as a temporary appointment, until they could identify someone who would ‘work for the good of the Club’.²⁷

Leslie Henry Alfred Giles²⁸ was selected as the inaugural Captain of the Rifle Club and Cable Guard (1912-13). Born in 1888, he was the second son of the explorer and pastoralist Alfred Giles who had been closely associated with setting the route for the Overland Telegraph Line. He was a clerk with the SA Government Administration in Palmerston from 1909, transferring to the Commonwealth service after 1911. Giles was noted as a very good shooter, and after his term as Officer Commanding continued to serve as Treasurer, 1913-15.

Col John Anderson Gilruth.²⁹ The Cable Guard was presided over in an honorary capacity by the Administrator Dr John Gilruth (see fig.1). Born in Auchmithie in Scotland, Gilruth was the first Commonwealth Administrator of the Northern Territory, appointed on 25 March 1912. He had seen extensive service in New Zealand as the Government Veterinary Surgeon (1893-97) and Chief Veterinarian (1897-08), and was then Professor of Veterinary Pathology at the University of Melbourne.

As Administrator, Gilruth saw himself more as a colonial Viceroy than senior public servant, and he reinforced the social stratification and hierarchical nature of the European community in Darwin. Within two months of his arrival, he insisted upon being appointed as a military officer (he did have previous experience as an officer with the New Zealand Military Forces).³⁰ The Federal Executive appointed him to the temporary rank of colonel with effect from 24 June 1912 – on the Unattached List, Australian Military Forces while employed by the Commonwealth Government.³¹ In this uniformed capacity he oversaw the operations of the Darwin Cable Guard, Darwin’s only military presence at that time.³² The uniformed Dr Gilruth farewelled Northern Territory volunteers for World War 1, attended military funerals, and later attended Anzac Day commemorations. He issued notices under the War Precautions Regulations 1915 signed, ‘J.A. GILRUTH, Colonel, Administrator. (Competent Military Authority.)’. In 1917, Gilruth received an extension of his term as Administrator but his title was down-graded from ‘His Excellency’ to ‘His Honour’.

²⁶ NTTG 22 March 1912, p.2; NTTG 31 December 1914, p.17: the Minister of Defence in the Federal Senate, 2 December 1914.

²⁷ NAA (1912a): F G A Williams, letter dated 11 March 1912.

²⁸ NAA: B2455, Giles L H A, item barcode 5100153; HHA (1920), p.29; NTTG 18 November 1915 – Mr A Giles, undated letter to the Editor; HHA (1920) p.29.

²⁹ Commission as Administrator dated 18 March 1912; GAG No. 24 dated 4 April 1912.

³⁰ *Sydney Mail*, 26 May 1915, p.24.

³¹ *The Sydney Morning Herald* 25 June 1912, p.10; *The Advertiser* (Adelaide) 25 June 1912, p.8; his commission as a Temporary Colonel was withdrawn at the conclusion of World War 1.

³² There was also a Naval Reserve Depot established in 1911, manned by a crew of three, although this was disbanded in 1922.

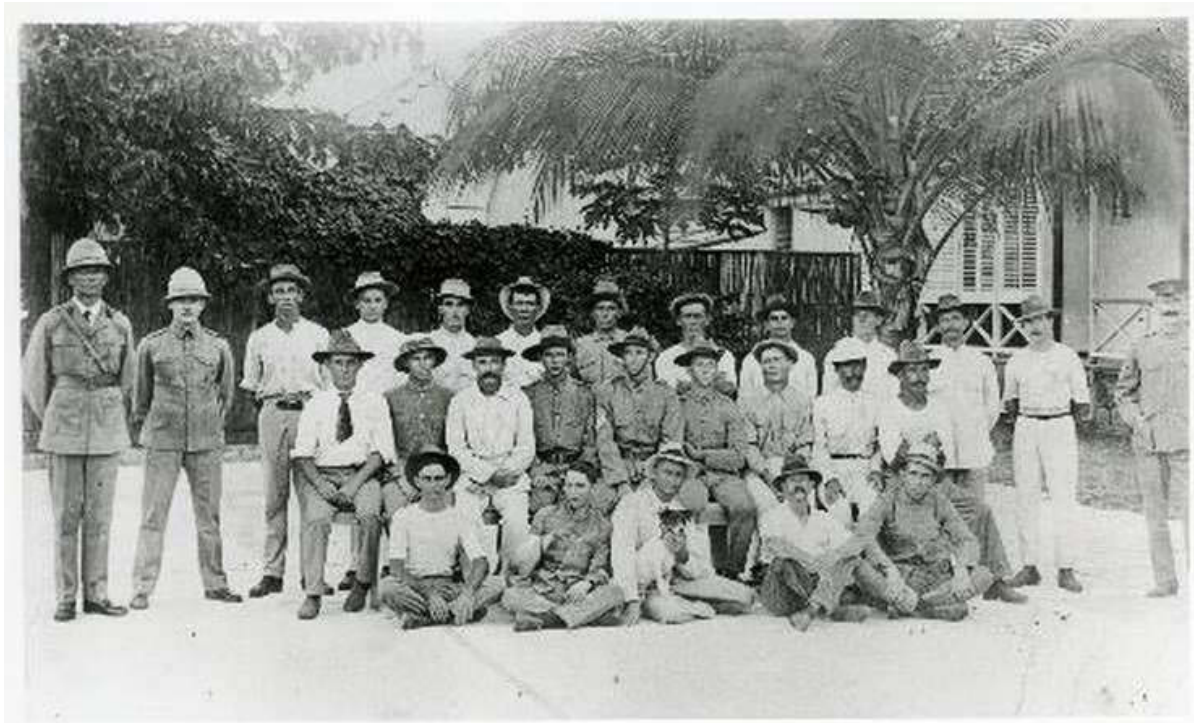


Fig.1: Members of the 'Northern Territory Contingent, Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force', including several Cable Guard veterans. The Administrator of the Northern Territory Dr John Gilruth (left of picture) wears the uniform of a Temporary Colonel. Maj David Bevan (Justice of the Supreme Court) is standing beside Dr Gilruth. Captain Robert Lewis is standing at the far right of picture, with Harry Pott the last of the group to his right. (Northern Territory Library image PH0341/0001, used with permission)

Although they were separate entities, overlapping membership meant that the Cable Guard and the Palmerston (Darwin) Rifle Club were very closely interlinked, and Guard members who were not club members were invited to shooting competitions nonetheless. Each member of the Guard had a haversack, mess tin and water canteen and carrier on permanent issue, and was issued a suit of khaki drill and one hat (triennially).³³ In addition, each member was issued a sling, bandolier, bayonet and rifle – either a Short Magazine Lee-Enfield (with Defence Department markings on the stock and chamber) or a Martini-Enfield (branded on the stock). The building used for the Orderly Room stood in front of the residences of the post and telegraph officials on the Esplanade: it soon became known as 'Wowsers' Camp'.

For specified training periods, members would parade at the Orderly Room and then march out to the Darwin Rifle Range where they would conduct exercises such as the 'sectional attack' followed by a combined shoot with the rifle club. Activities and results were recorded in the newspaper under the title, 'Darwin Rifle Club and Cable Guard'. Members contributed notes on their activities under nicknames such as 'Cordite', 'Marker' and 'Haversack': this became a tradition which continued into the war years. Late in the year, Sgt Moncrieff from the Thursday Island Garrison arrived by the SS *Eastern* to drill the Cable Guard.³⁴ In December, Capt Giles advised members that they were required to submit their rifles and kit for inspection.³⁵ Some of the known early members are detailed below.

³³ NTTG 22 March 1912, p.2: CAPT F W Parr, letter to Mr F G A Williams dated 16 February 1912.

³⁴ NTTG 10 October 1912, p.2.

³⁵ NTTG 26 December 1912, p.2.

William Berghoefers³⁶ was Deputy Captain and Master of Arms and Ammunition of the Darwin Rifle Club, and a Corporal in the Cable Guard. In the club's 1912 season, Billy Berghoefers shot eighth overall.

Vernon Clifford Lanyon³⁷ was the son of Robert and Hannah Lanyon of Kent Town, SA. After moving to Darwin, Lanyon was a clerk with Walter Bell's shipping, insurance and customs agency, and was a noted cyclist and shooter, generally able to 'find the bull' with his first scoring shot.

Arthur Boyce Lauder³⁸ had been born on Thursday Island in 1895, the son of James and Edith Lauder who later moved to Darwin. Arthur was a painter with the Public Works Department, and both he and his younger brother Sidney were active members of the rifle club. Arthur's AIF attestation papers show that he was an original member of the Cable Guard in 1912.

Robert James Lewis³⁹ was a Scot, born in 1873, who had served for ten years in the 13th Hussars – notably holding a six-clasp Queen's South Africa Medal and having been mentioned in the despatches of General Baden-Powell for good work in the Relief of Ladysmith. He came to Sydney in 1908 and for a short time was a Militia officer in the 26th Signal Company, Australian Engineers. He came to Darwin on the SS *Montoro* on 15 September 1912 where he held senior appointments at Darwin Hospital and at the Darwin Gaol and Labour Prison at Fannie Bay, and as Sheriff.

Bert Morris⁴⁰ was a driver by occupation and a noted shooter. In one competition in 1913 it was recorded: 'Corporal Morris, of the Cable Guard, is beginning to get into form, and rattled off 61 in good style despite the failing light and strong shadows'.⁴¹

Harry Bunce Pott⁴² was the second son of Alfred and Gertrude Emily Pott, originally of Torrensville, SA. Alfred came to Darwin and worked with the Customs Department; Harry secured employment as a railway porter, and was an inaugural member of the Cable Guard. It was later said of him:

Harry Pott was born and brought up in the Northern Territory, and it is no mere platitude nor any exaggeration to say that all who knew the lad loved him, for he was of an exceptionally bright, happy, cheery, and kindly disposition.⁴³

He was a good and consistent shooter, on one occasion scoring 10 consecutive bulls. At the end of the 1912 shooting season, Pott came second overall, and won the club's Gold Medal for the best three shoots over all ranges.⁴⁴ In 1913, it was recorded:

Corporal Pott still maintains excellent form, and made top score off the rifle for the day. Finding the bull on his second shot to count, he scored 10 consecutive bulls. Magnificent shooting ...⁴⁵

³⁶ NTTG 26 March 1914, p.7.

³⁷ NAA: B2455, Lanyon Vernon Clifford, item barcode 7379679; AWM: Image no P09220.003.

³⁸ NAA: B2455, Lauder Arthur Boyce, item barcode 7379859.

³⁹ HHA 1917; NTTG, 26 March 1914, p.7; 29 October, 31 December 1914; 29 April 1915; NAA: B2455, 'Lewis Robert James', item barcode 8198804.

⁴⁰ NTTG 20 April 1916, p.12.

⁴¹ NTTG 17 April 1913, p.7.

⁴² NAA: B2455, 'Pott Harry Bunce', item barcode 8019612; NTTG 10 October 1912, p.2; NTTG 13 March 1913, p.5; NTTG 17 April 1913, p.7; NTTG 3 July 1913, p.7; NTTG 16 December 1915 – Private H.B. Pott, letter dated 24 September 1915; NTTG 16 March 1916 – Private H.B. Pott, letter dated 3 December 1915.

⁴³ NTTG 24 August 1916, p.9.

⁴⁴ NTTG 10 October 1912, p.2.

⁴⁵ NTTG 17 April 1913, p.7.

‘Marker’ reported on Pott’s performance on 21 June 1913, a competition shoot of 15 rounds (with two sighting shots): ‘Any-one can fire a gun, but it takes a mighty fine shot to rattle on 15 consecutive bulls at 600 yards’.⁴⁶ Pott won the day with 75 from a possible 75, Robert Lewis was second with 69, and Pte Lewis Williams third with 60. Pott was regularly elected as Secretary of the Rifle Club and Cable Guard, and was a club handicapper. He was Champion of the Darwin Rifle Club in 1913 and 1914, and was touted as a contender for the King’s Medal shoot.

David John Whiteford⁴⁷ originally from Thebarton, SA was a store assistant in Darwin, and a regular committee member. At the close of the 1912 shooting season Whiteford ranked sixth overall, but in determining the best three shoots over all ranges he took the club’s Silver Medal, second to Harry Pott.

Lewis Williams⁴⁸ always put in a ‘creditable performance’ on the mound: in the 1912 season for example, he shot fourth overall. Williams was also a club handicapper, and was noted as, ‘one of our bright, young members’ and ‘one of the Club’s best shots’⁴⁹. He became quite unwell however, and in April 1914 went south for medical treatment.

Development, 1913

Robert Lewis succeeded Leslie Giles as Captain of the Rifle Club and Cable Guard (1913-15). The Guard held scheduled muster parades at the Orderly Room for training commencing at 8 pm. For a signalling class held on 7 February 1913, for example, Capt Lewis directed the dress to be, ‘Plain clothes; carry rifle, side arms, and bandolier’.⁵⁰ For a ‘night attack’ training session on 20 March, members gathered as usual but this time the dress was, ‘Rifles, Bandoliers. Side Arms not to be carried’: the roll was called, and 25 rounds of blank ammunition were served out.⁵¹

Sergeant Instructor Blayton of the Thursday Island Garrison Artillery came to Darwin to assist. In September 1913, the Honourable Justice **David John Davies Bevan** delivered a lecture on ‘Military Tactics’.⁵² Noted as holding, ‘the distinguished rank of major in the Australian Intelligence Corps, Melbourne’, Bevan’s military experience was drawn from service in the University Corps of Officers from 1896, and then with the Victorian Garrison Artillery. After a long career as a Melbourne lawyer, he came to Darwin in May 1912 as the second Judge of the Supreme Court (which had been established in 1911). Justice Bevan was an active and supportive member of the rifle club, and served on the committee (see image 1).

Beyond the training and shooting, a high degree of *esprit-de-corps* was established through the conduct of a ‘smoke night’ coinciding with a quarterly meeting. These ‘men-only’ nights comprised a series of eloquent toasts and responses, with songs and recitations sandwiched between speeches, and with light refreshments ranging from cheese to sweets and aerated waters. The first such meeting was held at Darwin Town Hall on Saturday 8 March 1913.⁵³ At

⁴⁶ NTTG 3 July 1913, p.7.

⁴⁷ NAA: B2455, ‘Whiteford David John’, item barcode 8386060; NTTG 10 October 1912, p.2; NTTG 13 March 1913, p.5.

⁴⁸ NTTG 26 March 1914, p.7.

⁴⁹ NTTG 23 April 1914, p.7.

⁵⁰ NTTG 6 February 1913, p.4.

⁵¹ NTTG 20 March 1913, p.10.

⁵² NTTG 10 September 1914, p.11; see NT Supreme Court:

<http://www.supremecourt.nt.gov.au/judges/former/bevan.html>

⁵³ NTTG 13 March 1913, p.5.

the 'top table' were seated the Administrator Col Gilruth, Maj Bevan, Capt Lewis, Billy Berghoefer and various dignitaries; the Cable Guard members wore their khaki uniforms. At this dinner Col Gilruth formally presented the gold and silver medals to Privates Harry Pott and David Whiteford.

A 'night attack' exercise was conducted for the first time by the Darwin Cable Guard on Thursday 17 April 1913, and the record of this activity gives a good insight into the preparations being made to defend the cable station. It took place on the 'Cricket Oval', the old sports oval opposite the Darwin Hotel on the foreshore overlooking the wharf (this is today Bicentennial Park on the Esplanade, the site of the Darwin Cenotaph). The scenario was that the enemy – the 'Eastern Army' – had occupied Darwin town and was defending a wireless station it had established on the oval.

The plan was for a small attack party of 'Northern Territory Guides' (the Cable Guard) in native canoes to evade the enemy's searchlights and come ashore below the hospital to attack and destroy the wireless station, and then retire to their canoes. Capt Lewis led the attack party, while the enemy defenders were commanded by Sgt Blayton. At about 8.30pm the advanced scouts encountered a small enemy patrol which raised the alarm. Lewis led his main body of attackers forward and drove the enemy into their entrenchment, which they stubbornly defended. Victory rested with Lewis and his attack party: the defenders had initially driven the attacking party from the oval but they failed to protect their right flank – Cpl Harry Pott exploited this and took his patrol to out-flank them and destroy the wireless station. A report on the night stated:

The night's work on the whole was very well conducted, and the men engaged enthusiastically in the game. The defence showed admirable fire control, but stuck to volley firing, which we understand is not now considered effective in modern tactics'.⁵⁴

Early in the exercise, another Cable Guard patrol encountered and captured an advanced scout of the defenders. The newspaper reported that in a certain house the occupants were enjoying a gramophone selection when suddenly several shots rang out: 'A gentleman whom I will not name appeared on the verandah and demanded in the name of all that's good and holy to know what all this shooting was about'. A member of the Cable Guard patrol timidly replied from the darkness, 'Dunno, boss.' Not realising this was a military exercise, the gentleman cried out, 'Well, why the — don't you go for the police and find out, and not stand there like a crimson monkey. Are Europeans permitted to "Bail up" people and shoot them in the vicinity of my dwelling house? Not if I know it! Go for the police, you fool.' The patrol took their prisoner and crept silently away. The editor of *The Northern Territory Times* observed:

This is the first parade of its kind that Darwin has seen. Perhaps the day may come when it might have to be carried out in grim earnest, and until that day, which some of our people think will surely come, let us get ready, and by all-means 'keep your powder dry'.⁵⁵

Among those who joined the Darwin Cable Guard during this year were the following:

Frederick Thomas Askins⁵⁶ had come from the UK in 1908 aged 22, and joined the SA Government Administration. After 1911 he became a Commonwealth public servant: initially as a typist and shorthand writer in the office of the Government Secretary. Fred Askins was a member of the Rifle Club and Cable Guard committee, and a noted marksman. From 1916 he

⁵⁴ NTTG 24 April 1913, p.5.

⁵⁵ NTTG 24 April 1913, p.5.

⁵⁶ NTTG 19 June 1913, p.4; 22 June 1916, p.22; 13 July 1916, p.11; 5 October 1916, p.17.

commanded the Cable Guard while also serving as the Darwin Recruiting and Enlisting Officer for the AIF.

Anthony William Hare⁵⁷ had been born in Balmain, NSW in 1890, the son of William and Grace Hare. They later moved to Unley, SA where Willy Hare served for three years with the 74th Infantry Regiment Senior Cadets. He went to Darwin in 1913, working on the staff of the *Northern Territory Times*, and later worked in the Lands Department and the Government Secretary's Department. He was an active member of Darwin Methodist Church and a Rifle Club and Cable Guard committee member, ultimately achieving the rank of sergeant before taking command.

James Veitch Hay⁵⁸ from Penicuik, Edinburgh was another imperial veteran, with four years' service in the East Lothian and Berwickshire Imperial Yeomanry in the Scottish lowlands. In Darwin he worked in the ironmongery department of Philip R Allen & Co, Importers and General Merchants.

John Lindley Kellaway⁵⁹ served as one of the Rifle Club and Cable Guard auditors in 1913-14 when he was aged 18.

Joseph King⁶⁰ had come to the Top End as a surveyor's chainman with a railway survey party, and later held appointments such as Secretary of the Darwin Workers' Amusement Club (with Billy Berghoefer as Treasurer). Based on wartime correspondence, King was undoubtedly one of the anonymous contributors on club activities.

Active Service, 1914-15

At a general meeting of the Darwin Rifle Club and Cable Guard held in February 1914, the following office-bearers were elected: Chairman – Capt Lewis; Deputy Captain and Master of Arms & Ammunition – Cpl Berghoefer; Secretary – Cpl Pott; Treasurer – Capt Giles. The Committee Members were Cpl Askins, Pte Hare, David Whiteford and Mr Justice Bevan. Pte Jack Kellaway was one of the Auditors; Cpl Pott and Pte Williams were the Handicappers.⁶¹

For 1914, Bombardier Nash of the Thursday Island Garrison Artillery was the visiting instructor.⁶² Formal training and shooting competitions were again complemented by social activities: this year's highlight was a 'Conversazione and Dance' held in Darwin Town Hall on Friday 24 April. The local newspaper reported: 'we are informed that without exception every lady in Darwin received invitations'.⁶³ Capt Lewis announced the winners of various prizes won at the Easter Monday meeting, and the trophies were given out by Mr Justice Bevan.

By July 1914, the fear of an attack on Darwin by a German raider had intensified. The Australian Yearbook of 1919 notes that, 'The first actual warning of the impending war in 1914 reached Australia on 30th July from the officers commanding the East Indies and the China squadrons'.⁶⁴ Accordingly, Capt Lewis intensified the training of the Cable Guard, imposing punishments for failure to attend training:

⁵⁷ NAA: B2455, 'Hare A W', item barcode 4968754; NTTG 26 March 1914, p.7; 31 May 1919, p.16.

⁵⁸ NAA: B2455, 'Hay J V Lieutenant/1022', item barcode 4769144; *London Gazette* of 3 July 1919, Third Supplement No 31430, p. 8357; GAG No 119 dated 17 October 1919, p.531; NTTG 14 January 1915, p.12.

⁵⁹ NAA: B2455, 'Kellaway Jack Lindley', Item barcode 7370121; NTTG 26 March 1914, p.7.

⁶⁰ NAA: B2455, 'King J', Item barcode 1972502; NTTG 1 June 1916; 8 June 1916.

⁶¹ NTTG 26 March 1914, p.7.

⁶² NTTG 14 May 1914, p.9.

⁶³ NTTG 30 April 1914, p.12.

⁶⁴ *Commonwealth of Australia Yearbook* No.12 (1919) p.1025.

The members of the Darwin Cable Guard were called out of their beds after 10 o'clock on Monday evening last. Two of them who thought it was a joke, refused to get out of bed, a constable came round for them. The members are still doing alternate guard duty.⁶⁵

Some in town however, questioned the possible effectiveness of the Cable Guard or even the repercussions its presence could bring. One wrote on 13 August 1914:

Were it not for the grave seriousness of the existing situation there are many incidents connected with its local aspect that give vent to a wealth of humor and sarcasm. Some of the leading citizens of Darwin were much perturbed lest some overzealous member of the cable guard should try to penetrate the armor-plating of a German battleship below the water-line with a rifle bullet and sink her or endeavour to annihilate a landing party. It was feared that the result of such action would be the bombardment of Smith Street, and the massacre of women and children.⁶⁶

Meanwhile operations began in earnest in the Pacific: HMAS *Australia* escorted New Zealand troops to occupy German Samoa and then escorted an expeditionary force to Rabaul⁶⁷, while German wireless stations in the Pacific were soon seized or destroyed (and the cruisers sunk). The German possessions were divided by the equator – the 'Old Protectorate' (including Kaiser Wilhelmsland) to the south came under Commonwealth administration, while the old 'Island Territory' to the north came under Japanese administration. While Fanning Island was a long way from Darwin, the cable station sat as a vulnerable vital asset and the action of the *Emden* reinforced the immediacy of Darwin's vulnerability and the potential that the city heart of Smith Street could have faced a naval bombardment.

Recruiting for the Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force was authorised by Proclamation on 10 August 1914. In the Northern Territory on 13 August, together with the first reports of action in Europe, a notice in *The Northern Territory Times* advised readers that, 'Those desirous of volunteering for local or active military service are requested to send in their names to R J Lewis, captain of the cable guard, as early as possible.'⁶⁸ In 1914, the European population of the Northern Territory totalled 2,452⁶⁹ but this figure included less than 1,000 adult European males, mostly transient labourers at the meatworks. Several early volunteers made their own way overseas or interstate to enlist – marksman Vern Lanyon was one of the first, taking the SS *St Albans* to Adelaide on 30 December 1914, by which time he had been a Cable Guard member for almost three years. Unfortunately, he was also the first Cable Guard Anzac to fall: he received a fatal shrapnel wound to the chest within a week of landing at Gallipoli as an Acting Sergeant with the 27th Battalion AIF.⁷⁰

Capt Lewis was appointed Recruiting and Enlisting Officer for the AIF (on behalf of Headquarters 1MD), and at the same time he called up the Cable Guard for active service. While in camp, each member was provided with one blanket and a stretcher, and table utensils. Other equipment such as tables, cooking utensils and water tanks were loaned by the Northern Territory Administration. The Minister for Defence, Senator Pearce, reported to the Senate in December 1914 and said of the Darwin Cable Guard: 'no complaints have been received there in regard to matters of equipment'.⁷¹ Each member received the militia rate of pay – as a private

⁶⁵ NTTG 6 August 1914, p.8.

⁶⁶ NTTG 13 August 1914, p.8.

⁶⁷ See McKenzie (1927) and Jose (1928) pp.74-99.

⁶⁸ NTTG 13 August 1914, p.13.

⁶⁹ HHA (1920), p.34.

⁷⁰ NAA: B2455, 'Lanyon Vernon Clifford', item barcode 7379679; AWM: AWM4, 23/44/1: First World War Diary, 27th Infantry Battalion AIF, September 1915.

⁷¹ NTTG 31 December 1914, p.17: the Minister of Defence in the Federal Senate, 2 December 1914.

soldier James Hay received 5 shillings per day, Cpl Pott received 9 shillings, while Sgt Hare received 10 shillings (additional to their government salaries). Capt Lewis received the rate prescribed for a Citizens' Forces lieutenant – 15 shillings per day – in addition to his salary as a Northern Territory officer, which at that time was £290 per annum.⁷²

On 28 October 1914, Lewis married Gertrude Catherine Montague Tait, the Matron of Darwin Hospital. She was also a Staff-Sister of the Australian Army Nursing Service, and before coming to Darwin had been the Government Nurse and Lady Superintendent of Native Hospitals in the Territory of Papua.⁷³ It was a 'smart military wedding' at Darwin's Christ Church: the bride was given away by Col Gilruth, while the groom was attended by Chief Justice Maj Bevan.⁷⁴

Among those who joined the Cable Guard at this time were the following:

Willie Allen⁷⁵ had been born to a Larrakia woman in Palmerston in 1886, and from 1898 to 1911 was increasingly active in athletics, cricket, rifle shooting, horseracing and Australian Rules Football with the Waratahs club. He worked as a labourer, and was a prize-winning member of the rifle club.

Anthony Xuereb,⁷⁶ of Maltese extraction, had come to Darwin to work with the Survey Department in April 1913. His AIF attestation papers show that he enlisted in the Cable Guard in about September 1914.

Reginald James Beckett⁷⁷ was a clerk, the son of James Thornton Beckett from Mount Magnet, WA who worked for the *Herald* in Melbourne and had earlier served as Protector of Aborigines in Darwin from 1911. Beckett's AIF attestation papers from November 1917 show that by then he had served in the Cable Guard for three years.

Sidney James Lauder⁷⁸ joined up in February 1915. Arthur's younger brother, he had also been born on Thursday Island, in 1897, and was a telegraph assistant and messenger in Darwin's Post and Telegraph Office.

Felix Spain⁷⁹ was also Thursday Island born, in 1893, the fourth son of Dionisio Antonio Puerte Spain (1862-1926) who had come from the Philippines as a teenager and then to Darwin in 1894.⁸⁰ Felix and his elder brother Hignio ('Harry') were employed by the Public Works Department (as a fireman and labourer respectively), and both were active members of the rifle club. In the 1912 shooting season, Harry came third overall and won a trophy donated by Fred Askins for the highest score by a new member.⁸¹ Felix Spain's AIF attestation papers show that he enlisted in the Cable Guard in about March 1915.

⁷² NTTG 31 December 1914, p.17: the Minister of Defence in the Federal Senate, 2 December 1914.

⁷³ NAA: A1, 1911/12987, item barcode 11354; some sources state that Mrs Lewis herself also enlisted and subsequently went to England and France as an Army nursing sister. There were only two nurses with the surname Lewis serving with the AIF, and both were single.

⁷⁴ *Leader* (Orange, NSW) 9 December 1914, p.1.

⁷⁵ NAA: B2455, 'Allen W', item barcode 3035344; Stephen (2009).

⁷⁶ NAA: B2455, 'Xuereb A', item barcode 3453550; HHA (1917); HHA (1920), p.31.

⁷⁷ NAA: B2455, 'Beckett R J', item barcode 3065936.

⁷⁸ NAA: B2455, 'Lauder Sidney James', item barcode 7379875; NTTG 5 August 1915;

AWM – <http://www.awm.gov.au/collection/P05138.001>

⁷⁹ NTTG 18 June 1914, p.7; B2455, 'Spain Felix', item barcode 8087909; AWM4, 23/66/27 – August 1918: War Diary, 49th Battalion AIF.

⁸⁰ See Rosenzweig (2014a).

⁸¹ NTTG 10 October 1912, p.2.

Men engaged in employment of national significance were deemed exempt from war service: men were not accepted from the Cable Company or the Overland and Radio Telegraphs, but the Cable Guard members were not exempt. This might seem somewhat contradictory, after labouring the perceived vulnerability of Darwin which led to the Guard being mobilised. But its members, skilled in weapon handling, drill and basic military tactics, were ideal candidates for active service and every eligible member was an early volunteer for war service.

Fig.2: The name of former Cable Guard marksman Pte Harry Bunce Pott is commemorated on the Darwin Soldiers' Monument, although the wrong middle initial was given – 1051 Private Harry Pott, 25th Battalion AIF: wounded-in-action at Pozières on 29 July, and died of wounds on 10 August 1916, aged 25. (Author's photo)

Those accepted gradually slipped away in small contingent groups, and this trickle became more of a rush once the successes in the Pacific had effectively removed the German threat to Darwin's cable station. Lewis both commanded the Guard and actively secured AIF recruits until he himself was released to enlist, on 24 March 1915 – 'it having been impossible to relieve him prior to that date' as Dr Gilruth explained to the Minister for Home and Territories.⁸² In farewelling Lewis, Sgt Willy Hare observed: 'The departure of Capt. Lewis will be deeply felt by all his friends, amongst whom can be numbered the members of the Cable Guard who have worked under him.'⁸³



Lewis was appointed to command the first batch of Northern Territory volunteers – called the 'Northern Territory Contingent, Australian Imperial Expeditionary Force' (see image 1). Several among them were Cable Guard veterans, and many were appointed with rank. This contingent was farewelled on 22 April by the Cable Guard and the Palmerston District Council, and the Darwin Brass Band (including Cable Guard members Billy Berghoefler and Sidney Lauder) provided rousing renditions of patriotic and national selections. Capt Lewis occupied

⁸² HHA (1917).

⁸³ NTTG 29 April 1915, p.15.

a chair at the head table with Council President Williams and Col Gilruth. Speeches were made by the Belgian, French and Russian communities, and Mr Yamamoto, a leading merchant in Darwin, conveyed the good wishes of the Japanese community. Leslie Giles proposed ‘The Northern Territory’, and Sgt Hare called the members of this contingent, ‘men of such intelligence and physical courage brought to a fine standard by the conditions of bush life in the north’.⁸⁴



Fig.3: The name of Pte Harry Bunce Pott is commemorated on the Australian War Memorial's Roll of Honour – under the 25th Battalion AIF, panel 105. (Author's photo)

Most of the contingent members were enlisted on 26 April, including Anthony Xuereb, Harry Pott and Leslie Giles. The contingent was marched to the wharf by the Darwin Brass Band to board the SS *Changsha*, with the Australian flag carried at the head of the procession and the Japanese Rising Sun ensign at the rear, indicative

of the Top End's appreciation of the Japanese screen of naval warships across northern Australia at that time.⁸⁵

Willy Hare assumed command of the Cable Guard with the rank of Honorary Captain, and became the new AIF Recruiting and Enlisting Officer. Capt Hare announced that the Darwin Cable Guard was to be demobilised with effect from 19 August 1915, ending the period of ‘active service’ call-out.⁸⁶ He continued in command until he himself enlisted in the AIF on 6 May 1916, aged 25. Perhaps not surprisingly, marksman and Gold Medal winner Harry Pott, Champion of the Darwin Rifle Club in 1913 and 1914, became a noted sniper at Gallipoli but fell at Pozières. Pott's name on local and national memorials (see figs.2 and 3) not only keeps alive his memory but also preserves the memory of the unique Darwin Cable Guard.

Part 2 considers the ongoing service of the Cable Guard and of the AIF volunteers contributed, of whom two were decorated and at least six were honoured for their sacrifice in two world wars.

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⁸⁴ NTTG 29 April 1915, p.15.

⁸⁵ Northern Territory Library PH0107/0047, Frame 07092; *Northern Territory Newsletter*, December 1975 p.17; *Northern Territory Newsletter*, January 1976 p.15. The *Chikuma* and *Yahagi* patrolled between Broome and Torres Strait (1914-15), and the *Aso* and *Soya* patrolled widely between Fremantle and Brisbane during 1915. By 1917, the *Hirado* and *Chikuma* were patrolling between Fremantle and Thursday Island, and the *Nisshin*, *Kasuga* and *Yahagi* maintained a presence off the WA coast.

⁸⁶ Government Notice 161-15, NTTG 16 September 1915, p.10.

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SOCIETY NOTICES

Obituary – Graham Wilson

The Federal Council of the Military Historical Society of Australia expresses its condolences to Sharon and the family of the late Graham Wilson. Graham was a great contributor to the Society as the Federal Research Officer, a past member of Federal Council and the ACT Branch Executive for many years. He was an accomplished military historian and author with his most recent work *The King's Hard Bargain*, recently published by Big Sky Publishing. He was the inaugural winner of the *Sabretache* Writers Prize and a regular contributor to *Sabretache* and international military history publications. His energy and knowledge will be missed. Vale Graham Wilson.

Rohan Goyne

Obituary – Donald William (Don) Pedler

Don Pedler, a long-standing and respected member of the Society, died on 24 March 2016 aged 72 years. Don joined the Society in 1970 and rarely missed a monthly meeting of the South Australian Branch. For his services, including contributions to *Sabretache*, he was made a Fellow of the Society in 2008. His main interests were the collecting of Scottish military dress and insignia, also building a fine collection of local military photographs, and researching the involvement of South Australian units in the Boer War.

Don's keen interest in that war stemmed from his great uncle George Goodall, Farrier-Sergeant to the Second South Australian Contingent to South Africa. George Goodall subsequently was appointed a member of the South Australian Contingent to the Coronation of King Edward VII. Whilst in England Goodall was chosen as the model for South Australia's Boer War Memorial which now stands adjacent to the main gateway to Government House, Adelaide. Don was extremely proud of his link to the statue, now affectionately known as 'Uncle George' or 'the man on the horse'.

Despite ongoing health problems dating from his childhood, he led a full and valued life. He was a skilled glass worker by trade, but could also turn his hand to modelling; not military figures, but miniature swords (usually of the Scottish patterns of course!). He was an accomplished 'piper' and, for many years, played as a volunteer with the Adelaide University Regiment Pipe Band. Don was also a valued volunteer with the Army Museum of South Australia and was *the* reference point for any enquiries about the Boer War.

Don will be greatly missed by his many friends and colleagues.

Peter Harvey and Anthony F. Harris

***Sabretache* WW1 Battle Series to be Published as a Book**

The Federal President has announced that the Federal Council will be producing a hardback edition of the battle series of articles when the series has been completed in *Sabretache* at the end of 2018. Following its securing agreement from prominent military historians to provide significant articles for the journal from 2016 to 2018, the Federal Council has begun the process of applying for a grant through the Department of Veterans' Affairs to provide funding for the production of a book of the collected battle series.

Rohan Goyne

THE AUSTRALIAN ATTACK IN THE BATTLE OF POZIÈRES 21-31 JULY 1916: A TRANSLATION OF THE OFFICIAL GERMAN VERSION – PART 2

Paul Thost and David Pearson

[page 138] In the night of the 25. July R.I.R. 86¹ was also to take over the positions in the sectors of the I.R. 157² and 27 to the north and northeast of Pozières and from there participate in the attack on the village [see Fig.1.2 in Part 1]. The assault, which was to be preceded by a four-hour long fire for effect by heavy batteries, was assumed to commence about 5.30 p.m.³ The commander of I.R. 157 had, other than the units of his regiment which had to be detached, 1. and 2./R. 86 as well as half 1./R. Pi. 9;⁴ the commander of R.I.R. 86 had his regiment (without 1.) and half 1./R. Pi. 9 available. For the fight in the village the assault companies were to be supported by Fl.W.⁵ of the 3./G.R.Pi.R.⁶, Lt. d. R. [Reserve Second-Lieutenant] Bruckmann.

The order to attack only arrived at 2.30 a.m. with Major Hengstenberg⁷ in Courcelette. He decided to carry out the attack with 1. and 2./R. 86 and the 5. and 9./157 which were being made available, in consideration of the general situation. Shortly after 3 a.m. south of the National Str. red flares were seen rising; that signified enemy attack. After drumfire, that had started at 2 a.m., strong enemy forces entered the position of the by now very weak 9. and 10./62 east of Pozières. At the same time, a strong Australian thrust from the village along the National Str. against the Komp. Messerschmidt (II./27) and by the English on the adjoining 2./R. 84. Lt. d. R. Klüver, that butted onto the 62nd were repulsed by rifle and machine gun fire. But Australians of the 2. Australian Br.,⁸ which had arrived in Pozières just the previous evening, broke into the rear of Komp. Messerschmidt, through the wide gap that had been torn into the 62nd. By the light of flares the men of the 27th and the machine guns of Lt. [Second-Lieutenant] Freytag and V.F. [Vice Sergeant] Jordan, which happened to be there, took the Australian under devastating fire. Lt. Engelhart was wounded. Lt. d. R. Binder of I.R. 62 was killed; Lt. Pott, Lts. d. R. Voigt and Heiderich were wounded, Lt. d. R. Lengwening remained missing.

While all this was going on II./R. 86, Hptm. [Captain] Sieveking⁹ advanced under the English curtainfire as relief from Le Sars with the 6. and 5. Companies in the first line and 8. and 7. Komp. in the second line.¹⁰ When Hptm. Schweers¹¹ of 5./R. 86 approached the position that he had to occupy on the furthest left at about 4 a.m. they noticed that the enemy was still in that position. Immediately hand grenades flew at the Australians, so that they lost the inclination to dig in there. In the lead of the 5./R. 86 the Lts. d. R. Wirckau (gef.¹² 8.10.16) and Schmidt¹³ pushed the enemy back meter by meter. The last mentioned [page 139] was wounded in the

¹ R.I.R. = Reserve Infanterie-Regiment (Reserve Infantry Regiment). R. = Reserve (War Office, 1918: 202).

² I.R. = Infanterie-Regiment (Infantry Regiment) (War Office, 1918: 189).

³ See Bean (1936: 557) and Miles (1938: 149 n.2).

⁴ Pi = Pionier (Pioneer) (War Office, 1918: 201).

⁵ Fl.W = Flammenwerfer (Flame thrower) (War Office, 1918: 182).

⁶ Unknown Pioneer unit.

⁷ Major Hengstenberg the commander of I.R. 157 is mention in Bean (1936: 521 n.54, 524, 577).

⁸ Br. = Brigade (Brigade) (War Office, 1918: 175).

⁹ Hptm. Sieveking (II./R. 86) is mentioned in Bean (1936: 576, 584).

¹⁰ This could be the action described in Miles (1938: 150 n.2) in relation to the Australian 10th Battalion.

¹¹ Hptm. Schweers (5./R. 86) is mentioned in Bean (1936: 568).

¹² gef. could be gefallen (K.I.A.) or gefangen (Prisoner)?

¹³ Lt. d. R. Schmidt (5./R. 86) is mentioned in Bean (1936: 568).

process. The Lts. d. R. Zentner¹⁴ and Martin joined in and with hand grenades, rifle and machine gun fire they threw back the Australians, who were fighting doggedly. The enemy was trying to advance reinforcements under cover of fire of M.W.¹⁵ but it was in vain. The fellows from Schleswig-Holstein made it hard for them and finally reoccupied the entire position again. Again and again the brave officers encouraged their people to attack and hold fast. But new Australian reinforcements came close, new M.W. appeared. And heavy batteries fired their shells into the newly regained trenches. Lt. d. R. Zentner and many brave men of the 5./R. 86 were killed. In the end the lack of hand grenades made it impossible to continue to hold on to the line they had reached. About 100m left of the edge of the regimental sector the position was blocked and the advancing enemy held back with rifle fire. Sitting on the parapet, Hptm. Schweers kept firing during the enemy attack on the blocked sector at every target that offered itself, especially at the crews of the enemy M.W., until he was fatally wounded.¹⁶ In the totally uncertain condition at the front, all attempts to make contact with I./R. 84 on the left were unsuccessful. The gap could at this time only be closed by observation and machine gun fire.

When 2./R. 84 reported a serious threat to their right wing by the enemy, two platoons of 3./R. 84 under command of Lt. d. R. Wagner came to help [*see Fig.2.1*]. The combined efforts of 2., 3. and 4./R. 84 made it possible to hold the position of I./R. 84 in spite of heavy losses.¹⁷ Offz.St. [Deputy Officer] Delfs was killed in action there.

The penetration by the enemy at the 62. was made known to Major Hengstenberg soon after 4 a.m. by Lt. d. R. Holler, 9./62. As Courcelette was endangered by this breach, I./R. 86 was ordered to advance immediately to the southwest perimeter of this village. For a further reconnaissance the Lts. d. R. Holler and Dietrich, last mentioned from the I.R. 157, were sent forward. Lt. d. R. Holler reported about 5.30 a.m. that the firing of white flares north of the National Str. were evidence that the enemy had not attacked there. As reported by personnel of the 62nd who had come to the rear, parts of II./R. 86 had repulsed the enemy that had invaded there, south of the street. However, one could still hear battle noises from there.

[*page 140*] Oberstlt. [Lieutenant Colonel] Burmester¹⁸ also had received the order to attack as late as 3 a.m. in Martinpuich. The village was under heaviest English shell and gas shell fire. Officers, runners, telephone operators and wounded were closely together in the Gef.St./R. 86¹⁹ [Reserve Battle Headquarters 86]. The Commander therefore went to Warlencourt and called Major Hengstenberg at 6 a.m. on the telephone. At 4 a.m. he had already reported to the 18. R.D.²⁰ that the relief of the 157th north of the National Str. had not yet been carried out and therefore the preparation for the attack had not been achieved as timely and carefully that a success could be assured. Major Hengstenberg reported to the 18. R.D. again at 6.30 a.m. that the continuous fighting had made the relief as yet impossible and that preparations for the attack could therefore not have been made.²¹ In the early morning hours the unfavourable reports mounted in a short time in the operations centre of I.R. 157. II./157 reported the advance of enemy columns to the northern corner of Pozières. III./157 reported, that as a result of the

¹⁴ Lt. d. R. Zentner (5./R. 86) is mentioned in Bean (1936: 568).

¹⁵ M.W. = Minenwerfer (trench mortar) (War Office, 1918: 103).

¹⁶ See Bean (1936: 568).

¹⁷ See Bean (1936: 568).

¹⁸ Oberstlt. Burmester (R.I.R. 86) is mentioned in Bean (1936: 557 n.70, 612).

¹⁹ Gef.St. could be Gef.Std. = Gefechts-Stand (Battle Headquarters) (War Office, 1918: 185).

²⁰ R.D. = Reserve Division.

²¹ Perhaps the same event is described in Miles (1938: 152 n.1).

enemy attack at the National Str. the relief had not yet been made. Then it was said, that the enemy had penetrated north of this approach into the position. Shortly after 8 a.m. there were reports by both battalions, that an enemy attack had happened on the northern corner of Pozières and that south of the National Str. the first front line had been evacuated. At this approach the enemy was reported to be already behind the front line. These reports about the condition of National Str. were exaggerated, but the enemy penetration at the Khf.²² Pozières at the north-western corner of the village was confirmed by Fähnr. [Ensign] Hübner, who had been sent by Lt. d. R. Vetter from *Schwarzwaldgrabenstellung* [the Black Forest position].

In the meantime 18. R.D. had allocated 3. and 4./R. 86 to I.R. 157 for the attack as well. They were assigned to II./R. 86 for the recapture of the positions the enemy had captured at the National Str., whilst I./R. 86 was to stand to with 1. and 2. Komp. and M.G.Zug²³/157 southwest of Courcelette for a counterattack. A scratch force, foodcarriers etc, who had been formed into Komp. *Glaser* at the I.R. 157, was to occupy the *Bayer* blocking position south of Courcelette.

1./R. 86 had already advanced at 7 a.m. in heavy English artillery fire to the sunken road southwest of Courcelette but had been chased by English shells and shrapnel from crater to crater, from depression to depression, and now had to evade into a shallow trench at the southern perimeter of the village. But here as well the position was terrible. Heaviest English shells rained incessantly in and about Courcelette and threw stones, beams, smoke and fumes to heaven.

[page 141] Hptm. Sieveking, II./R. 86, responded to the report of the enemy attack against the sectors of his 5. and 6. Komp. at the National Str. immediately by marching 7. and 8./R. 86 as reinforcements forward.²⁴ The Batls.Stab.²⁵, which advanced with the first wave of 7. Komp., Hptm. d. L. [Landwehr Captain] Paulsen (gef. 8.8.16) were the first to arrive in the very front line. The 7. Komp. stormed platoon by platoon, forward over an open field with many losses. The following 8. Komp. lost in a short time all its officers in the enemy shell and machine gun fire. The Komp. leader, Hptm. d. R. [Reserve Captain] Rissom, was killed. Only weak sections of both Companies arrived in the first line after leaping from crater to crater. As the attack faltered, from 2./R. 86 which had at first advanced onto the southwest exit of Courcelette, two platoons went west and one platoon east of the National Str. They came immediately under continuous English shell and shrapnel fire; here also dead and wounded soon covered the field. The leader of the Komp., Hptm. d. R. Köhler, was wounded, then Lt. d. R. Gerwig was killed, while his platoon advanced against the windmill height. Everywhere the braves [soldiers] were forced to lie low by the shellfire. Under command of Lt. d. R. Margraf 2./R. 86 finally held their position in the chain of craters of the old third frontline. From the Khf. of Pozières, the 1./R. 86 Lt. d. R. Thalemann²⁶ (gef. 23.11.17) was also not able to advance over the empty, coverless open ground in the sharp English fire;²⁷ and the 3./R. 86 advancing on the left of 2./R. 86 and making reasonable headway in the English shell and machine gun fire, had great losses as well. When their leader Oblt. d. R. [Reserve Lieutenant] Schwebel was wounded, Lt. d. R. Nielsen took over the leadership and was able to hold the position they had reached. And the 4./R. 86 that followed on the road Courcelette-Pozières, also had to suffer badly in the English

²² Khf. = Kirchhof (Churchyard) (War Office, 1918: 192).

²³ M.G.Zug = M.G. Platoon.

²⁴ See Bean (1936: 576).

²⁵ Batls.Stab. or Btl. St. = Bataillons-Stab (Battalion staff) (War Office, 1918: 176).

²⁶ Lt. d. R. Thalemann (1./R. 86) is mentioned in Bean (1936: 739, 740).

²⁷ See Bean (1936: 576-77).

fire. When a report came about 10 a.m., that II./R. 86 was in a tough hand-to-hand fight with the enemy and that ammunition and hand grenades were getting short, Lt. d. R. Seiffe and his platoon of the I./R. 86 were able in spite of the heavy English fire to bring help and ammunition to the comrades.

On the report of the penetration by the enemy Major von Gravert (gef. 18.10.18)* of III./R. 86 at Le Sars had been alerted immediately to hold any enemies that may advance that far. 10./R. 86 with Lt. d. R. von Ahn²⁸ (gef. 8.10.16) was sent to the windmill height, the other three companies advanced in loose fanned-out formations south of the National Str. They had to seek shelter from the heavy English artillery fire [page 142] in the huge craters in the sunken road Courcelette-Martinpuich. Discovered there by English planes, who immediately directed shellfire on the sunken road, they had to flee from there after suffering heavy losses.²⁹ Finally the Companies could be reformed in a gully that was not under heavy fire north of the National Str.

* After being wounded 17.10.18 as Oberstlt. and Komdr. of the R.I.R. 76.

As it wasn't known at I./R. 84 if the gap between II./R. 86 and 2./R. 84 at the front had been closed in the meantime, V.F. Bodinus, 3./R. 84 with two men was sent out for a reconnaissance. He reported about 9 a.m., that he had observed 86th's men advancing and that the position of 2./R. 84 was being held. But the position to the right of 2./R. 84 was filled with dead or wounded fellows of 62nd, 26th and even 84th Reserve.

For the defence against the enemy that had advanced at the Khf. of Pozières, the Komp. Winter (I.R. 26), which had been at the southern exit of Courcelette, had been attached to II./157 in the morning. This extended the Komp. Deckert (I.R. 26), which was in the blocking position towards Pozières, to the left. Of the Komp. Glaser (I.R. 157) the platoon of Lt. d. R. Wiggert supplied the frontline of II./157 with ammunition, hand grenades and flares with great difficulties.

At about 11.30 a.m. Offz.St. Adler, who had been sent to reconnoitre the status of the *Schwarzwaldgraben* position, returned to Courcelette. He reported on the hopeless situation of the remainders of the I. as well as the 6. and 8./157. They were almost encircled by the enemy and were suffering from lack of ammunition, rations and drinking water. Fähnr. Hübner had in the meantime also reported about conditions in the *Schwarzwaldgraben* trench to Hptm. d. R. Theuer, I./R. 11 and asked for urgent relief. As I./R. 11 had observed the arrival of significant enemy reinforcements through the old *Kabel* trench to the *Schwarzwaldgraben* trench, Hptm. d. R. Theuer sent Lt. d. R. Vetter the order, to retreat via the position of R.I.R. 11, to prevent the rest of the 157th being cut off. After a hard fight, this officer was able to reach the *Gierich* path with a few others of 1., 2., 6. and 8./157, as weak sections of 3. and 4./157 remained in their position. 6./R. 11, Lt. d. R. Zoch, had early in the morning in yet another attack onto the section of the *Schwarzwaldgraben* trench which had been occupied by the enemy in the sector of the R.I.R. 11 reconquered about 60m of this trench. This position was then blocked off towards the enemy but was later on under continuous machine gun fire [page 143] from the flank.

²⁸ Lt. d. R. Ahn (10./R. 86) is mentioned Bean (1936: 612-13).

²⁹ See Bean (1936: 577-78).

In Warlencourt in the morning, Gen.Maj. [Major General] Wellmann³⁰ had given command of I.R. 157 and R.I.R. 86 to Oberst [Colonel] von Beczwarzowsky, Komdr. of 81. I.Br. As well, III./R. 84 at Ligny-Thilloy was assigned to him. Finally, I.R. 162 (without III.) from Gueudecourt was sent to Warlencourt. Major Hengstenberg reported at about 1 p.m. that his Regiment 157 and other troops assigned to him were involved in heavy fighting and that therefore the attack on Pozières, ordered for that afternoon, could not yet be prepared. The situation was getting more and more critical. There was a conference at Warlencourt in the afternoon and Major Hengstenberg made it clear that the exhausted condition of the troops and the great casualties made a successful attack unlikely, and that the commencement of the attack as planned was impossible, for the most part as the continuing engagements had made it impossible to prepare for the attack as yet. Upon the advice that the main phase of the attack was to be in the sector of R.I.R. 86 with fresh forces, Major Hengstenberg requested a company or two as well as a postponement of the attack by an hour with corresponding extension of the artillery preparation. But the Brig.Komdr. [Brigade Commander] would not consider it. When Major Hengstenberg returned to Courcellette about 5pm the situation had deteriorated further yet. In the nearly flattened blocking position that led from the northwest corner of Pozières to the old II. Position the crews were to a large part dead, wounded or entombed. The blocking position was only inadequately occupied in the northern part. The Lts. d. R. Nagel, 7./157 and Deckert, I.R. 26 had personally reported at the Gef.St. of II./157 at about 4.30 p.m. of the serious fighting situation and had finally received the order to return to the old II. Position with their reduced forces and sections of Komp. Winter (I.R. 26), which were with them there under Lt. d. R. Franke. In spite of these unfavourable conditions the Gef.St. of I.R. 157 was now trying to relay the order to attack to II./157 by telephone, but this was accomplished only by 5.20 p.m. 9./157 was ordered to attack the northwest corner of Pozières and I./R. 86 was to advance at their left. Hptm. d. R. Mende, II./157 was also indicating that as a result of the heavy losses from the English artillery fire incurred so far and the unsatisfactory own artillery effort, no success could be expected. In spite of this Major Hengstenberg had to insist on the [page 144] early execution of the attack, as demanded by superior orders.

Oberstlt. Burmester in Warlencourt had received only unsatisfactory reports about the difficult position of his I. and II./R. 86. Conforming to higher orders, he had ordered the attack on Pozières by II./R. 86 with machine gun, Pioneers and Fl.W. for 5.30 p.m.³¹ The Fl.W. platoon of 3./G.R.Pi.R. under Offz.St. Hotzel had already suffered badly during its night march on the National Str. from Martinpuich to its forward position. III./R. 86 was to stand by as reserve in the sunken road at the eastern perimeter of Courcellette with seven machine guns, entrenching tools, building equipment, hand grenades and water. For the attack Oberstlt. Burmester and his staff went through the English curtainfire to Courcellette. There, in the dug-out that had been converted to an emergency Gef.St., the lights were flashing on and off, caused by the air pressure of the numerous shells that burst continuously. Strong anxiety filled the commander, who had to issue all orders to his battalions in a great hurry and in complete ignorance of the existing conditions.

II./R. 86 had in the meantime suffered very much again, as the English drumfire had increased yet more in reply to the fire for effect onto Pozières, which had started at 1.30 p.m. The trenches and dug-outs that had remained were crushed or flattened, but crews had continued to keep their crater positions ready for defence and to rescue wounded comrades after digging them free. In this insane fire they were working heroically. Also, many of the brave runners were

³⁰ Gen.Maj. Wellmann is mentioned in Bean (1936: 557, 567, 576, 583-84, 721, 722) and Miles (1938: 149 n.2, 152 n.1, 153 n.1, 155 n.1 and n.3).

³¹ See Bean (1936: 583).

lost, but in spite of exhaustion they carried reports and orders through the curtainfire in an unshakeable and responsible manner. Only Hptm. Sieveking, Hptm. d. L. Paulsen, Oblt. d. R. Holm, the Lts. d. R. Hübner, Stolke, Hoppe remained unwounded and with some 90 men they defended about 900m of craterline.³² In this condition Hptm. Sieveking had received the order to attack at about 4pm.

III./R. 86 (without 10.) had advanced from the depression near the sunken road Martinpuich-Courcelette in waves towards the southwest, to get into the battle-zone of II./R. 86. 10./R. 86 had advanced to the windmill height already.

At about 6 p.m. Oberstlt. Burmester received the message, in part from I.R. 157 and also from the wounded, that the attack had not been carried out. II./R. 86 reported then as well that the serious situation there had made the attack impossible. There were no more machine guns and hand grenades, everything was [*page 145*] lacking. Only with utter effort could the position be held.³³ Even so, Oberstlt. Burmester wanted to carry out his assignment and issued at 7.15 p.m. a new order to attack. After a repeated one-hour artillery effort the assigned III./R. 84, Major Lang, was to carry out the attack with the participation of all available forces of R.I.R. 86 at 9.30 p.m.

At the I.R. 157, 9./157 and I./R. 86 were ready to attack about 6.30 p.m. At that time R.I.R. 86 informed them that the attack had been postponed to 9.30 p.m. Therefore I.R. 157 also held back with the attack.

In view of the poor condition of the troops and the large quantity of ammunition required for a repeated artillery preparation the attack was cancelled by order of Gen. d. Inf. [General of Infantry] von Boehn.³⁴ The parts of I.R. 157 and II./R. 86 remained in their positions at the front; III./R. 86 assembled in sunken roads at Corcelette. The III./R. 84 which had arrived in the sunken roads Courcelette-Martinpuich prepared to relieve II./R. 86. II./162 was put forward to Le Sars.

The rest of II./27, of III./62 as well as the Companies Molsen and Hedicke (I.R. 26) had been retired in the morning after suffering further heavy losses. Oberst Balthasar,³⁵ Komdr. of R.I.R. 84 (gef. 2.9.16) had taken over command from Oberstlt. Hundrich at Le Sars over the former sector of I.R. 27. I.R. 62 had lost during its combat from 15. to 25. July in the sector of the Army Group Armin 188 dead (4 Offz.), 721 wounded (17 Offz.) and 194 missing (7 Offz.).

A new attack was conducted on the *Schwarzwaldgraben* trench position by the Queensland and South Australian Batl. in the night to the 26. July against the left flank and the rear of the exhausted remnants of 3. and 4./157 which had suffered badly from shell and mine fire. Utterly exhausted, they defended themselves in hand-to-hand fighting, until they finally collapsed from the enemy superiority. Lt. d. R. Roske,³⁶ leader of the 3./157, was killed in close combat along with many of his brave Silesians. So this position which had been so bravely defended so far, had also fallen to the Australians. Now the much more endangered position of R.I.R. 11 on the left flank had been secured by reinforcements of the *Gierich* path crew and the *Stockacher*

³² See Bean (1936: 584).

³³ See Bean (1936: 584).

³⁴ Gen. d. Inf. von Boehn is mentioned in Bean (1936: 557, 584, 721, 732, 742) and Miles (1938: 152 n.1, 153 n.1).

³⁵ Oberst Balthasar (R.I.R. 84) is mention in Bean (1936: 721).

³⁶ Lt. d. R. Roske (3./157) is mention in Bean (1936: 547, 578).

trench. In a hand grenade fight with a strong Australian reconnaissance unit that advanced early in the morning from the northern tip of Pozières against the *Gierich* path, Oblt. d. L. [Landwehr Lieutenant] Högermann, leader of 9./R. 22, was killed. The I./162, Hptm. Dziobek, put in a state of alert at night at Warlencourt, was sent to Courcelette to be at the disposal of the 117. I.D.³⁷ [page 146] and were there assigned 1. and 3. Komp. to R.I.R. 11, 2. and 4. Komp. to R.I.R. 22. They formed the rearforce for the line of the 117. I.D. on the front *Feste Zollern-Mouquet Ferme*.

In the sector of I.R. 157 the Companies Winter and Deckert (I.R. 26), which had been retired to the sunken road Courcelette-Pys in the evening of 25. July, moved early on 26. July to Warlencourt after having suffered badly yet again.

Pozières was now under continuous fire from the batteries of the 117. I.D. and 18. R.D. III./R. 84 relieved the much reduced II./R. 86 on both sides of the National Str. under much difficulty and losses in the heaviest English artillery fire. While moving into the position Hptm. von Pavel, 12./R. 84 came across many Australians of the Victorian Batls. who had penetrated on the left wing but who were soon thrown back in a hand grenade fight. A machine gun that had caused many casualties was captured during the fight. Many dead and wounded Australians were left lying there. The position was occupied, after expelling the enemy and blocking it off against them. The continuation of the free left wing led to the enemy position that was barely 50m away. So there was no contact with II./R. 84. The position found by 10., 11. and 12./R. 84 was generally flattened, the few dug-outs were full of badly wounded and in the craters many dead were lying. 9./R. 84 occupied the blocking position east of the Sugar factory of Courcelette. In the supporting line were the rest of 2. and 3./R. 86, 1. and 4./R. 86 were in reserve in sunken roads at Courcelette. I./R. 86 had lost almost all its officers. The commander, Hptm. d. R. Deichmann, was wounded; Lt. d. R. Thalemann was leading the battalion. 9. and 11./R. 86 were positioned in the third line. II./R. 86 had retired to Le Sars.

After heavy English artillery fire from 2 p.m. on the positions at Pozières-Pocket the red flares were shooting up again. The English of the 48. Div. attacked the positions of R.I.R. 11 at the *Ganter* path and the Australians the positions northeast and southeast of Pozières. At the R.I.R. 11 the English were soon repulsed. However, heavier fighting developed at R.I.R. 84. As soon as the red flares had been observed from Courcelette, Oberstlt. Burmester had put forth 10./R. 86 with three machine guns over Martinpuich against the gap between III. and I./R. 84 which was occupied by the enemy.³⁸ In the meantime the artillery curtainfire had commenced but shells that were falling short were causing significant losses at 12./R. 84. [page 147] Lt. d. L. [Landwehr Second-Lieutenant] Rohlf's was badly wounded, V.F. Horstmann was killed. From an entombment seven men could not be recovered alive.

In the late afternoon of 26. July the 2. Komp. that was at the right wing of I./R. 84 and which had still three groups of 3./R. 86 under Lt. d. R. Hagenah along, was attacked heavily several times by parts of the 2. Welsh Batls. (3. Br., 1. Div.). By counterattacks of the platoons of Lts. d. R. Bummerstedt and Kober the tenaciously attacking English were always repulsed with many casualties. Parts of 4./R. 84 were also thrown into this battle and participated heroically in the defence. As well, Lt. d. R. von Ahn with his 10./R. 86 arrived at the entrance of the sunken road Martinpuich-Pozières in time to successfully participate. At the start of dusk V.F. Maxfeldt, 1./R. 84 (gef. 31.7) with his platoon came and two platoons of 1. and 11./R. 84

³⁷ I.D. = Infanterie-Division (Infantry Division) (War Office, 1918: 188).

³⁸ See Bean (1936: 612).

advanced from the right. By this combined attack the English on the right wing of I./R. 84 were thrown out and a machine gun and several prisoners were captured. As there had been heavy losses during this successful action Lt. d. R. Lembke with 5./R. 84 also participated in the action at about 10 p.m.. About midnight the English advanced yet again but were not only repulsed but a part of their position was taken. During this action Lt. d. R. Hagenah was killed. The fights in the gap lasted until early on 27. July, at the conclusion the English retained about 150m of the section. Now started the withdrawal from the front line of 10., of three groups of 3./R. 86 and the sections of R.I.R. 86 that were still south of the path Courcelette-Pozières. For the I./R. 84 the II./R. 84, Hptm. Becker with the 8., 5. and 6. Komp. was inserted in the very first and 7. Komp. in the second line. III./R. 84 remained in contact right in the frontline; they, too, had suffered significantly. As well as people already mentioned, Lts. d. R. Hardow, leader of the 10. Komp., Bruhn (Rudolf) and Wrede had been wounded. III./R. 86 remained at the northeast edge of Courcelette, I./R. 86 occupied the Le Sars position. R.St.³⁹ and M.G.K./R. 86⁴⁰ returned to Warlencourt. I./R. 84 occupied the *Gallwitz* blocking positions on both sides of the National Str. They had so far in their combat had 55 dead (1 Offz.), 227 wounded, including Lt. d. R. Wagner and Ass.Arzt [Assistant Doctor] Dr. Löwenstein, as well as 33 missing and during their retirement lost the Batsl. Adj., Lt. d. R. Reimpell (gef.).

[page 148] In the night to the 27. July, II./162 Hptm. Götze relieved the rest of I.R. 157 with 5., 8., 6. Komp. and six machine guns to the north of Pozières, very much hindered by heavy English artillery fire. 7./162 remained in the sunken road at Courcelette with two machine guns on stand-by. I.R. 157 retired to Thillooy, Ligny-Thillooy and Warlencourt. Their total losses since 21. July were 140 killed (4 Offz.), 526 wounded (7 Offz.) and 286 missing (5 Offz.). III./162, Major de Rainville* was Army group reserve at Warlencourt. Oberstlt. von Rettberg⁴¹, Komdr. of I.R. 162, took over the hitherto sector of I.R. 157 and transferred the R.Gef.St.⁴² to Pys.

* Later as Komdr. Gr.R. 89 [Grenadier Regiment 89], awarded the *Pour le Merite* [Blue Max].

In the sector of R.I.R 11, large components of 3./162, Oblt. d. R. Klüver, dug in in the western part of the *Ganter* path in the night to the 27. July in spite of heavy difficulties. 1./162, Lt. d. R. Eilers, occupied the eastern part of the *Ganter* path, 2. and 4./162 were located in the *Bayern Riegel* [Bavarian blocking position]. Our own artillery covered Pozières, the enemy trenches and the approach lines to the village under fire but the English artillery as well remained very active.

Soon after 8 a.m. the English attacked anew the right wing of II./R. 84, to reconquer the section in the gap of the old position they had lost during the night. 8./R. 84 repulsed this and several other thrusts on the whole. The small remainder of a nest of the English was closely encircled. Even a hand grenade fight of some three hours and subsequently heaviest English shell and mine fire were unable to shake II./R. 84, in spite of having suffered 65 dead, including Lt. d. R. Fahrnow, and 127 wounded, among them Lts. d. R. Tovsby and Petersen.

On 28. July at about 2 a.m. the English again advanced against the gap between III./R. 84 and II./R. 84. They were easily repulsed. Enemy curtain fire then prevented an operation for the complete elimination of the English nest. Another English attack at about 10.30 a.m. after heavy mine and rifle grenade fire against the right flank of 8./R. 84 was repulsed as well by

³⁹ R.St. = Regiments-Stab (Regimental Staff) (War Office, 1918: 203).

⁴⁰ M.G.K. = Maschinen-Gewehr-Kompanie (Machine Gun Company) (War Office, 1918: 197).

⁴¹ Oberstlt. von Rettberg (I.R. 162) is mentioned in Bean (1936: 700).

⁴² R.Gef.St. or R.G.St. = Regiments-Gefechts-Stand (Regimental Battle Headquarters) (War Office, 1918: 202).

11.30 a.m.. Subsequently during the day very heavy enemy artillery fire covered the entire sector of the 84. Res. and increased losses exceptionally. Lt. d. R. Preuss from III./R. 84 was killed; Lts. d. R. Gregersen, leader of 11./R. 84, Renz and Rott [*page 149*] were wounded. Yet another English attack on the positions of 8. and 5./R. 84, who were supported by two platoons from 1. and 7./R. 84, was again repulsed with great losses for the enemy.

Northwest and to the north of Pozières numerous planes and closely bunched together tethered balloons directed heaviest English shell and shrapnel fire onto the sector of I.R. 162 the whole day.⁴³ In the evening heavy enemy concentrations were reported in Pozières. The 2. Australian Div. had been moved in from the direction of Albert and in the night to the 28. July relieved with battalions of the 6. and 5. Br. the battalions of the 1. Australian Div. which had been in combat in the Pozières pocket hitherto. The 7. Australian Br. was in reserve in the vicinity of Pozières. Therefore new large attacks were in preparation against the Pozières pocket. From 9.30 p.m. the English artillery increased their destructive fire to drumfire of every calibre that lasted until 1 a.m., 29. July.⁴⁴ There was especially heavy fire onto the positions of I./162 at the *Ganter* and *Gierich* paths. Almost all constructions of fieldworks were levelled again and renewed heavy losses created. At the II./162 a 21cm shell killed Lt. Döhrmann as well as the artillery observation officer, Lt. d. R. Rettberg of the R.F.A.R. 18 and wounded Lt. d. R. Uther, leader of 8./162. The relief for the I./162 by the III./R. 86, Major von Grawert, was in progress as the expected major attack by the Australians commenced with full might. Red flares shot up at 1.20 a.m. in front of 18. R.D. and well directed curtainfire from the artillery of 52. I.D., 26. R.D., 117. I.D. and 18. R.D. was started.⁴⁵ As the English curtain fire moved to the rear, dense Australian masses, in many waves, attacked the Lübeck Regiment in the Pozières pocket.⁴⁶ At the I./162 they hit exactly in the weakest spot on the right wing of the 1. Komp., which had been reinforced by a platoon from the 2. Komp. [*see Fig.2.2*]. Here, at the road to Thiepval, a gap had been created by many losses, and as the Australians, stimulated by alcohol,⁴⁷ did not find any obstructions and disregarded the defensive fire entirely, the right wing of the 1. Komp. was surrounded in a moment. At this position a bitter handgrenade fight occurred and Lt. d. R. Lüders and 10 men were killed. Machine guns became unserviceable; the Komp. leader, Lt. d. R. Eilers recognised the danger in time and ordered a retreat to the *Gierich* path; it was successful although the company had [*page 150*] to battle their way through enemy lines. Utffz. [Corporal] Heitmann was especially gallant in this action and held off the following enemy and so contributed greatly to prevent the enemy from further penetration. In cooperation with the 2. Komp., Lt. d. R. Sodemann, which held the *Gierich* path, several repeated attacks were then repulsed with heaviest losses for the enemy. At 3.30 a.m. arriving sections of the 12./R. 86, Lt. d. R. Hübner, participated powerfully in the defence. When a scouting party, led by Utffz. Heitmann, ascertained that the *Ganter* path position was strongly occupied by the enemy, it was then subjected to heavy fire from 1. and 2./162 as well as 12./R. 86. After one hour the patrol of V.F. Busch, 1./162, reported that the Australians had vacated the position, so 12./R. 86 could reoccupy it without a fight. The 3./162 Oblt. d. R. Klüver, in the western part of the *Ganter* path, had not been attacked and held their advanced positions; 4./162, Lt. d. R. Schaaf, had also not been involved in the battle. Both companies had supported their endangered comrades splendidly by bringing up ammunition, hand grenades and flares. Lt. d. R. Schaaf continued to lead his company until relieved in the morning although he had been wounded on the head even before the attack.

⁴³ See Miles (1938: 154 n.2).

⁴⁴ See Miles (1938: 154 n.2).

⁴⁵ This seems to be the same event described in Bean (1936: 634) involving the Australian 7th Brigade.

⁴⁶ See Bean (1936: 639). This seems to be a part of the Australian 6th Brigade attack.

⁴⁷ See Bean (1936: 639-40 n.100) on this point.

The Australians attacked the positions of the II./162 as well, in dense swarms, man by man, about ten rows deep. In the raging defensive fire of the battle ready crews and their machine guns these masses collapsed dead or wounded, others fled back in the German curtainfire. But twice more parts of the enemy advanced in renewed attacks, only to be met almost everywhere by devastating fire and to be fought down. Australians who had burst into the position were finished in man-to-man fighting; others who were firing from cover in front of the position were rendered harmless by courageous, forward dashing fellows or taken prisoner.⁴⁸ Those had been of the 25., 26., 28. and 29. Batl. (7. Australian Br.).⁴⁹ Two English machine guns, many dead, especially officers and wounded remained in the German position. When checking over the forefield, Ufffz. Awe, 8./162, brought back another two machine guns and an electric signal lamp. In the course of the battle Lt. d. R. Döscher was wounded. 11./R. 86 now occupied the advanced position east of the path Pozières-Mouquet Ferme for the I./162, which had retired to Warlencourt; 12./R. 86 went to the *Gierich* path and 10./R. 86 to the Bavarian blocking position.⁵⁰ [page 151] Of the mobilised I./R. 86, 4./R. 86 were in *Feste Zollern*, the other companies in the Pys position. II./R. 86 returned to Ligny-Thilloy.

R.I.R. 84 had been able to dig a communication trench to surround the remaining English nest between the III. and II./R. 84 with sections of 9., 7. and 3./R. 84 in spite of heavy English fire. III./R. 84 then received the order to remove this nest with 1., 3., 7., 9./R. 84, four machine guns, two pioneer troops and six Fl.W. From the left wing of 12./R. 84 two platoons of the 9. and some groups of 7./R. 84 with Hptm. von Pavel in command, from the right wing of 8./R. 84 two platoons of 3./R. 84 under command of Oblt. [Lieutenant] Engel (gef. 5.8.) went forward. Contact had only just been made about 1 a.m. between the two battalions, when strong forces of 10. West Riding⁵¹ (69. Br., 23. Div.) in several waves attacked III./R. 84, the new connecting position and the right wing of II./R. 84. In a fight that lasted about one and a half hours the attack was totally repulsed with heavy losses for the enemy. There were especially heavy fights by 8./R. 84 with the enemy who had broken into the position in some sections. But the company threw the English out again without having to rely on help from 1./R. 84, which had been sent forward. As it was getting lighter, the connection between III. and II./R. 84 had been established by a 1.1m deep trench, now occupied by 12./R. 84 and 9., 7. and 3./R. 84. In these bitter fights the Lts. d. R. Röhl and Segelken were killed. Among the many wounded were Lt. d. L. Vogler, leader of 7./R. 84, the Lts. d. R. Ehlert, Arens, leader of 12. and 11./R. 84 and Rumohr. Several prisoners and a machine gun were taken. Several minor English hand grenade attacks occurred in the late evening hours against II./R. 84 after undiminished artillery fire that lasted the whole day. During relief of the exhausted 8./R. 84 by 7./R. 84 the English even managed to break into the position but they were ejected again by Hptm. d. R. Schlettwein, leader of 8./R. 84 and Lt. d. R. Braun with a few randomly collected people. The Komp. Commander, who stormed ahead of his soldiers, was killed. Lt. d. R. Kloevekorn, who had only taken over 7./R. 84 in the morning, was killed on the way to the position.

On the 30. July Australians tried three attacks in the sector of II./162 after drumfire from 4 a.m., but were held each time in the artillery curtainfire.⁵² But German losses also increased that day (Lt. d. R. Rettberg among many others, was wounded).

⁴⁸ Perhaps this action is referenced to in Miles (1938: 155 n.1) in relation to the Australian 7th Brigade.

⁴⁹ Sic. It should read 27. Batl. rather than 29.

⁵⁰ See Bean (1936: 640) and Miles (1938: 155 n.3).

⁵¹ The original text has 'Reading'.

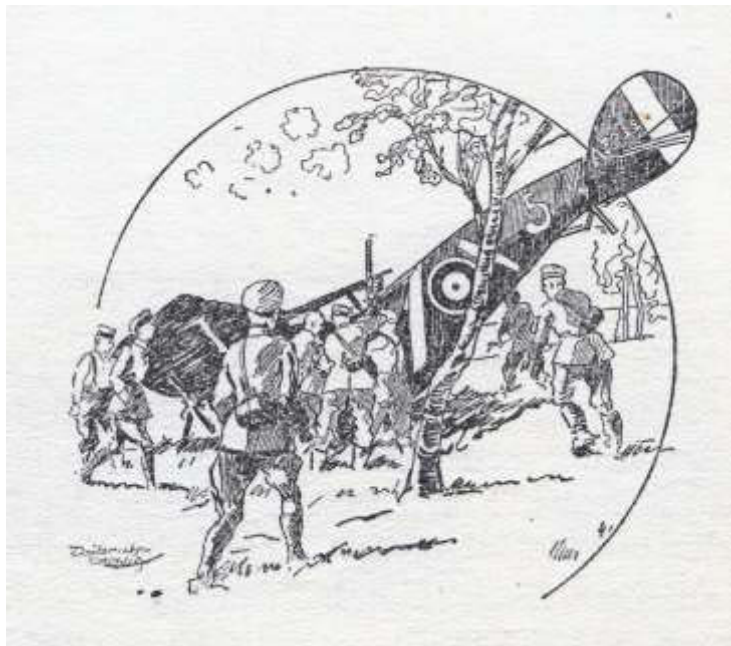
⁵² See Bean (1936: 657).

[page 152] At the III./R. 86 the heavy English fire was directed predominately against the *Gander* path position. Only a few shellholes could remain occupied by small groups. Therefore the *Gierich* path was now to be considered as the real front line. The enemy front line did slowly establish itself through the *Schwarzwaldgraben* trench to the northern tip of Pozières and then around the northern part of the village. Several small trenches were put forward to the north on both sides of the road to Thiepval.

III./R. 84 was being relieved by I./R. 84 with the 1., 3., and 4. Komp. northeast of Pozières. The battalion had suffered badly (among others Lt. d. R. Berner, killed on 30.7) and was now occupying rear positions. At the II./R. 84 Lt. d. R. Thieling was killed fighting against English machine gun posts.

The weary enemy was content to direct heavy artillery fire against the troops on 31. July in the Pozières pocket; they would have to face yet more defensive battles in the coming days.

The 29. July was the most glorious day of the 18. R.D. during their first combat in the Somme battle. Even the official daily Army Communiqué mentioned the valiant actions of the brave soldiers from Schleswig-Holstein on 31. July.



END

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**THE AUSTRALIAN ATTACK IN THE BATTLE OF POZIÈRES 21-31 JULY 1916:
A TRANSLATION OF THE OFFICIAL GERMAN VERSION – PART 2 (MAPS)**

Paul Thost and David Pearson

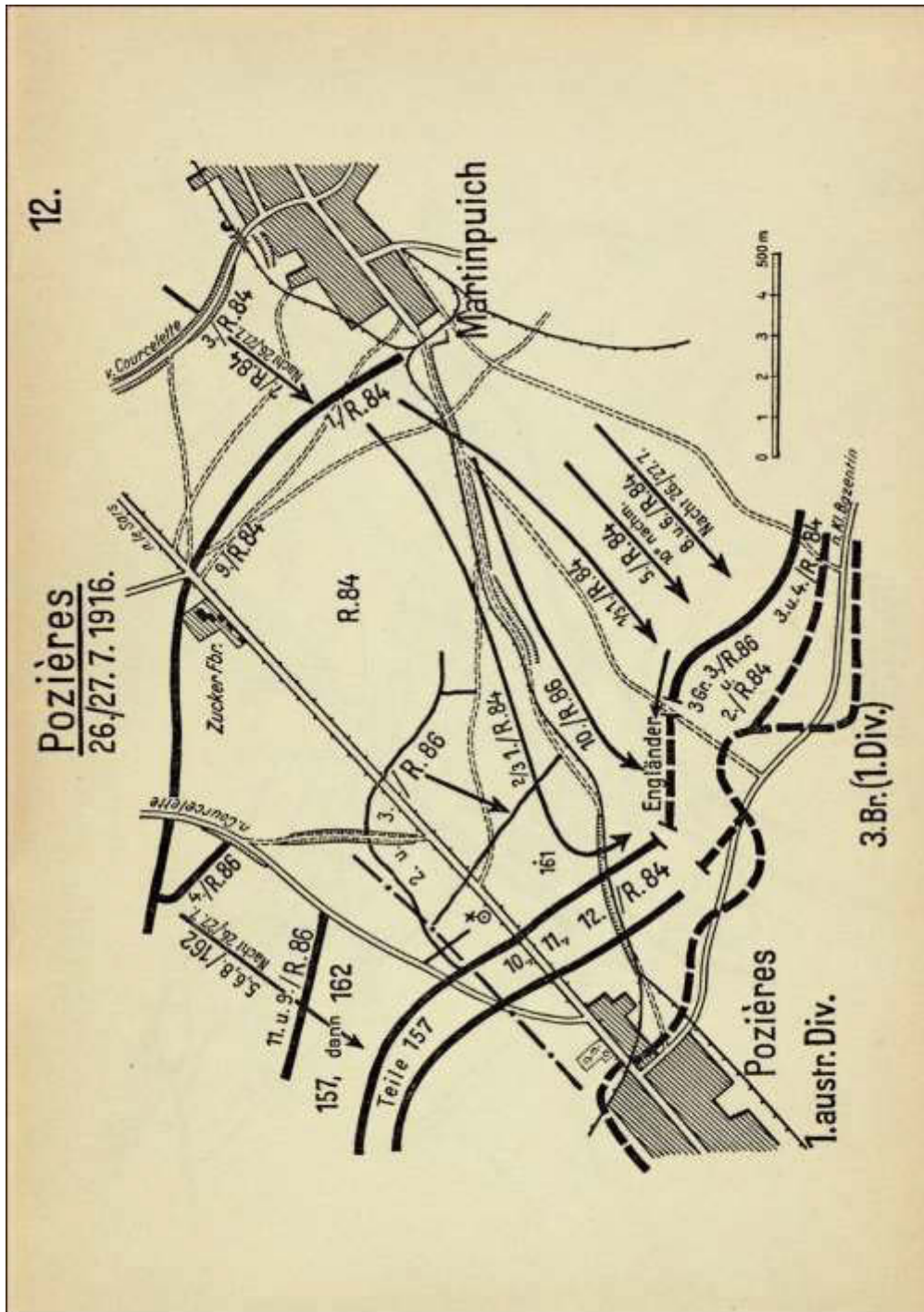


Fig.2.1: Map 12 titled 'Pozières 26./27.7.1916.' The map shows the German counterattacks from the north-east of National Str. on the night (nacht) 26-27 July by the 5., 6., 8./162 (II./162). It also shows the German counterattacks from the north-east and south-east of National Str. by: 2. and 3./R. 86 (I./R. 86); 1./R. 84 (I./R. 84); 10./R. 86 (III./R. 86); 1/3 1./R. 84 (I./R. 84); and at 10.00 p.m. (nachm. = Nachmittag = afternoon) 26-27 July by the 5./R. 84 (II./R. 84); and the 8. and 6./R. 84 on the night (nacht) of the 26-27 July. The German companies from left to right on the front line are: 157; 10., 11., 12./R. 84 (III./R. 84); 3 Gr., 3./R. 86 (I./R. 86) and 2., 3. and 4./R. 84 (I./R. 84). Scale 500m.

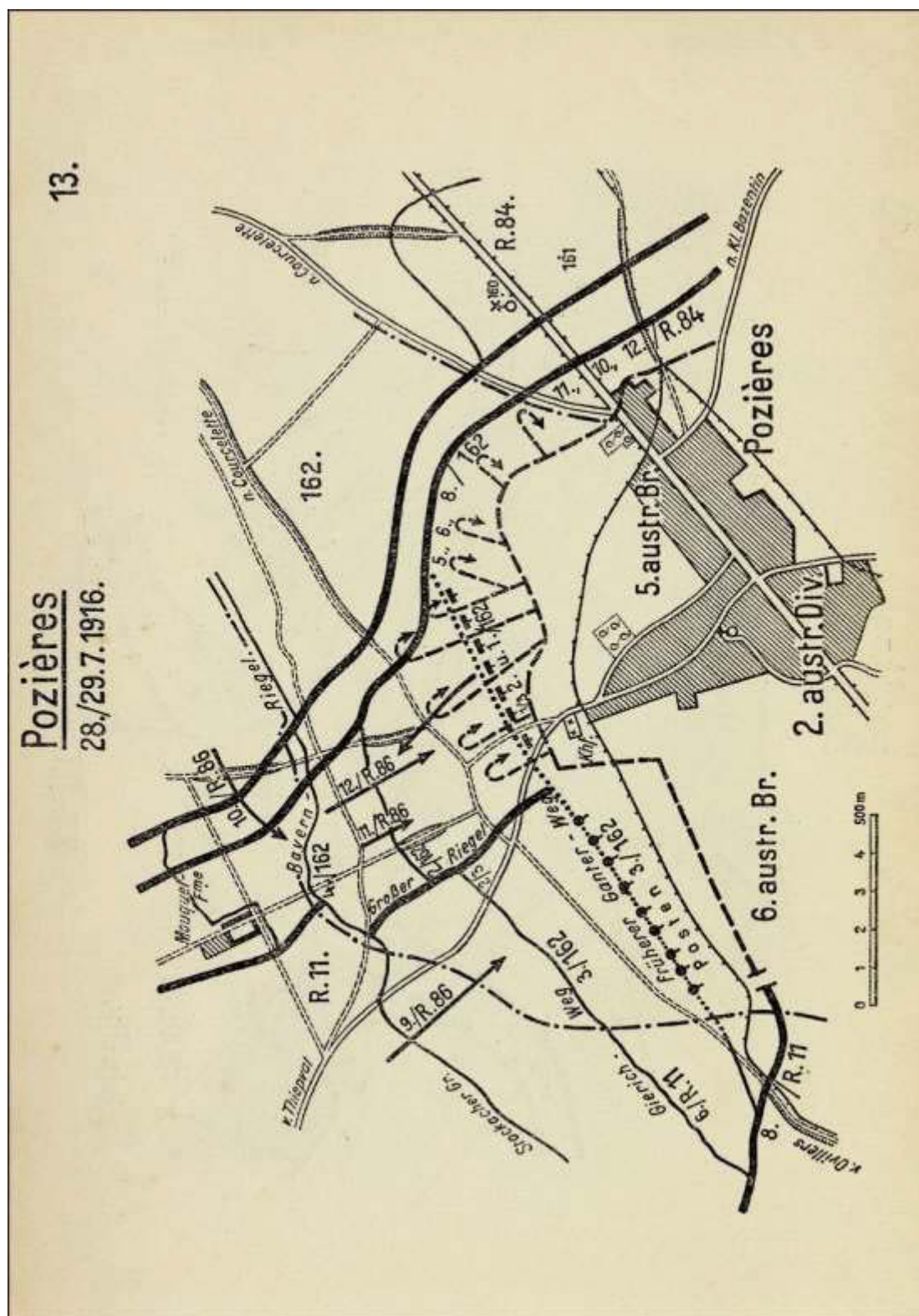


Fig.2.2: Map 13 titled 'Pozières 28./29.7.1916.'. The map shows the German counterattacks north of National Str. by 9., 10., 11. and 12./R. 86 (III./R. 86). The German companies from left to right on the front line are: 6./R. 11 (II./R. 11); 3., $\frac{1}{2}$ 2. and 1./162 (I./162); 5., 6. and 8./162 (II./162); and 11., 10. and 12./R. 84 (III./R. 84). Scale 500m.

COLLECTORS' CORNER

AN UNUSUAL FIND

Anthony F. Harris

Some years ago on a quiet weekend we took a pleasant drive up through the Adelaide Hills (or we were returning from visiting relatives – one or the other) but at one stage we found ourselves in Hahndorf – an interesting little Germanic town not far from home. As always then, as now, we were frequently attracted to antique or ‘junque’ shops ... just in case a little treasure had been overlooked by everyone else! But in one shop we found a small display case containing a couple of dozen items that had obviously been ‘treasure hunted’ by a ‘detectorist’; little bits and pieces, a few coins and dog registration tags, keys etc. ... and that is when I saw IT: – the remains of a mid-Victorian British Army helmet plate! It was very grubby, corroded, the regal crown was missing from its top, there were no lugs, but a proud ‘58’ was standing within the outer laurel wreath. Needless to say I was at the counter with cash in hand within seconds to follow the usual procedure; show mild interest, check the price, pay the money and head home!



*Shako plate of the 58th Regiment of Foot circa 1844-55.
(Author's collection)*

But before heading home I had a few questions for the shopkeeper. Apparently a young man had walked in and asked the dealer whether he would be interested in selling his finds for a fixed commission. It transpired the finder was a local hills dweller who had got the ‘metal-detecting bug’, and would keep the finds that appealed to himself and sell off the rest for whatever he could get. I felt I needed to know if the crown had still been in place when it was found, or whether it had actually been broken off when found and the crown had been bought separately by another customer. The dealer

assured me that no crown was with the badge when he first saw it, but a further question gave me the name and phone number of the finder. Once I got back home I was able to speak to the finder and was told that he had located it in a small rubbish pit adjacent to an old partly demolished cottage close to the nearby village of Nairne a little further up the road. Other than that he could tell me nothing else except to say that he had located no other similar items in the vicinity and he didn't know who the former residents were.

While the 58th had never served in South Australia, the regiment did serve in Australia and New Zealand, arriving in New South Wales by detachments in 1844-45. Most of the regiment returned to Australia from New Zealand for garrison duties in 1846.¹ But what was the badge doing in the rubbish pit of a small colonial era cottage in South Australia? Needless to say, I have no answers. Perhaps it belonged to a retired or pensioned old soldier who had migrated to the colony and kept it with him as a souvenir until it finally got tumbled out with the domestic rubbish? It is, of course, a helmet plate of the 58th (Rutlandshire) Regiment of Foot (later to become the Northamptonshire Regiment)² as fitted to the OR's pattern of the shako between about 1844 and 1855.³ But it sits quite comfortably among my research papers, library and military ephemera collection – a little relic of history with a touch of mystery to add to its character!

¹ R.H. Montague, *Dress & Insignia of the British Army in Australia & New Zealand 1770-1870*. Library of Australian History, Sydney, 1981, p.96 (see also pp.78-9 for an image of a similarly provenanced plate of the 99th Regiment).

² H.G. Parkyn, *Shoulder Belt Plates & Buttons* Gale & Polden, Aldershot, 1956, p.232

³ Kipling & King, *Head-dress Badges of the British Army* vol.1, Frederick Muller, London (reprint) 1980 Ch.4, p.61.

DIGGERS LED BY A DONKEY?: LT COL OSWALD MOSLEY CROSHAW AND THE 53RD BATTALION AIF IN WW1

William Westerman

Lieutenant Colonel Oswald Mosley Croshaw was a well-respected battalion commander in the AIF in the First World War. A veteran of the Boer War, at the time of his death in September 1917 he had a Distinguished Service Order (DSO), three Mentions in Despatches (MIDs) and the Queen's and King's Medals with six clasps from his service in South Africa.¹ He was also reputedly a charming, debonair man. One of his officers remarked that his CO was 'a very fine fellow'.² The unit chaplain wrote that he had 'rarely met men of such charm of manner as Colonel Croshaw possessed'. He was

always courteous, a delightful host, a brilliant conversationalist, with a keen appreciation of humour, quick at repartee, a lover of music and song, always assiduous in his endeavours to make the mess-room a bright cheery place – the convivial rendezvous of his officers, who under him were always a united and happy fraternity.³

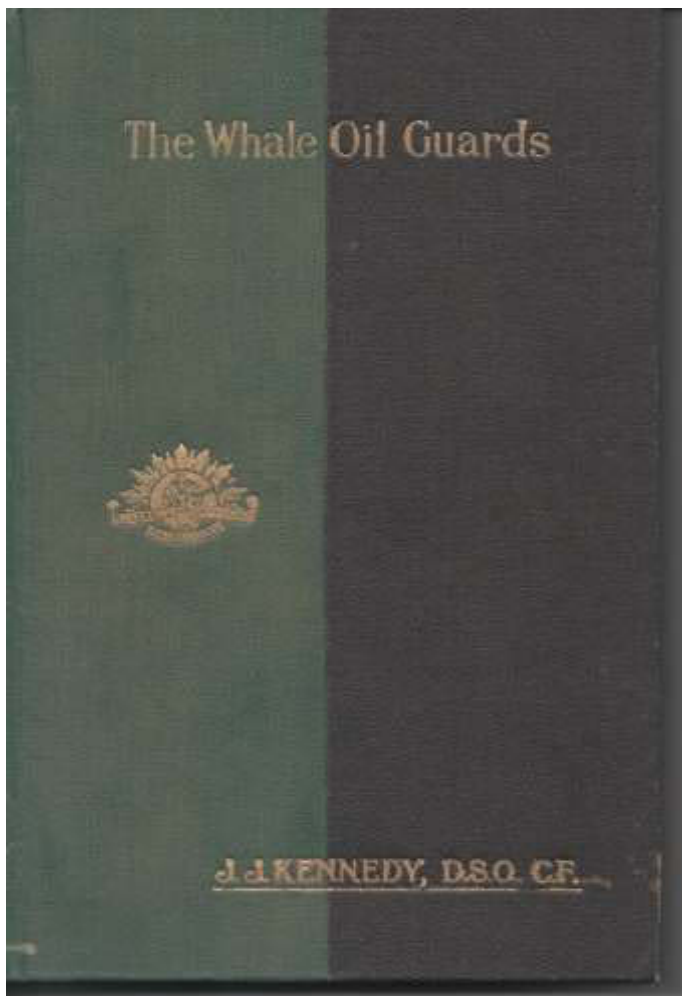


Fig.1: Fr J.J. Kennedy's account of the 53rd Bn at war (publ. James Duffy, Dublin, 1919), a work cited in the article. Not only does the book employ the unit's nickname acquired under Lt Col O.M. Croshaw's command for its title, but it is decorated in the battalion colours of green and black in the upright rectangle shape of the 5th Australian Division's colour patch. (Editor's collection)

Yet Croshaw was uncommon amongst the battalion commanders in the AIF because he was an Englishman and a serving officer in the British Army.

Unfortunately in popular Australian memory the relationship between the AIF and the British often reflects parochial attitudes and animosities. Les Carlyon's *The Great War* (2006) contains many off-hand jibes towards the British high command and the British Army in general.⁴ John Laffin's *British Butchers and Bunglers of World War One* (1988) is the most blatant instance of anti-

British historiography. In *Digger* (1990), Laffin argued that more often than not the AIF was

¹ J.J. Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards* (East Sussex, Naval & Military Press, 2009 [1919]), pp.129-30

² AWM, PR00917, folder 1 of 3, R.A. McInnis diary, 26 September 1916

³ Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards*, pp.60-61

⁴ Les Carlyon, *The Great War* (Sydney, Pan Macmillan Australia, 2006), pp.42-43, 104-05

‘handicapped by British leadership.’⁵ One Australian officer allegedly remarked:

Everyone here is ‘fed-up’ of the war, but not with the Hun. The British staff, British methods, and British bungling have sickened us. We are “military socialists” and all overseas troops have had enough of the English.⁶

This sentiment sums up the attitude towards the British as it is commonly presented. A specific grievance is in regards to British officers, who, if they are mentioned in Australian accounts of the war, are usually referred to in a negative light. Does this accurately reflect Croshaw’s experience in command of the 53rd Australian Infantry Battalion?

Born on 11 March 1879 in Blackheath, Kent, in many ways Croshaw exemplified the late-Victorian/Edwardian gentleman.⁷ A member of the landed gentry, he was educated at Harrow, one of Britain’s elite and influential public schools.⁸ By passing through Harrow, historian Keith Simpson argued that a student had ‘met the army’s requirements in educational and social terms for a potential officer.’⁹ His military life began on his seventeenth birthday when he received a commission in the 3rd Battalion, the Queen’s (Royal West Surrey Regiment), a Militia unit. For an officer who was noted as a ‘great horseman’ and who spent most of his adult life serving in the cavalry, he began his military career the same way he would end it – as an infantry officer.¹⁰

Croshaw’s Militia commission was dated from 11 March 1896 and he was promoted to lieutenant on 16 June 1897.¹¹ Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly argue that the Militia/Special Reserve path to a commission in the regular army was an ‘apprenticeship route’ rather than the ‘academic route’ through Sandhurst or Woolwich. With ‘the appropriate social connections and income’, a gentleman could receive a commission in a Militia unit and would gain experience drilling and training men.¹² These officers could then be commissioned into the regular forces after passing a special examination. The quality of this examination process for ascertaining military competence was questionable, leading to its revision in 1904 to be more technically focused.¹³ As Croshaw did not directly pass through the formal commissioning route via Sandhurst it is unclear whether a career in the army was Croshaw’s ambition, but after almost three years in the Militia he was presented with an opportunity to come in ‘through the back door’. The untimely death of a lieutenant in the 19th Hussars opened a vacancy, which, in a small, professional army, was necessary for advancement. On 4 January 1899 Croshaw gained a commission in the regular army, joining the 19th Hussars as a second

⁵ John Laffin, *Digger: The Legend of the Australian Soldier* (South Melbourne, Sun Books, 1990), p.218

⁶ Quoted by an unidentified Australian officer, although Charlton provides no reference for this quotation. Peter Charlton, *Pozières 1916: Australians on the Somme* (North Ryde, NSW, Methuen Haynes, 1986), p.292

⁷ Unknown Author, ‘Lieut.-Colonel O. M. Croshaw, D.S.O.’, *Harrow Memorials of the Great War April 11th, 1917, to April 10th, 1918, Volume V*, Printed for Harrow School by Philip Lee Warner, Publisher to the Medici Society, Limited, 1920. Names of old Harrovians in alphabetical order, thus it was considered unnecessary to number the pages.

⁸ Lawrence James, *Warrior Race: A History of the British at War From Roman Times to the Present* (London, Abacus, 2002), p.431

⁹ Keith Simpson, ‘The officers’, in Ian F.W. Beckett and Keith Simpson, eds., *A Nation in Arms: A Social Study of the British Army in the First World War* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1985), p.65

¹⁰ AWM, PR00917, folder 1 of 3, R.A. McInnis diary, 6 May 1917

¹¹ *The London Gazette*, 3 March 1896, Issue 26717, p.1271; *The London Gazette*, 15 June 1897, Issue 26862, p.3314

¹² Timothy Bowman and Mark Connelly, *The Edwardian Army: Recruiting, Training, and Deploying the British Army 1902-1914*, (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012), p.14

¹³ *ibid*, p.26

lieutenant.¹⁴

The professional officer corps that Croshaw became a part of has been the subject of much criticism, particularly in the aftermath of the First World War. English historian Lawrence James condemned those Edwardian officers ‘who had sipped port and chatted about past polo chukkas under the fire of Pathan jezails, and ended their careers presiding over the mass slaughter of civilians turned soldiers in the trenches.’¹⁵ One Australian author has written:

Most of Britain’s generals were in thrall to abstract notions they had absorbed at schools such as Eton, Harrow and Clifton and carried into the army, ideas about pluck and manliness and, above all, the importance of character and the power of will. They were not too much interested in down-to-earth matters, such as how to configure an artillery barrage.¹⁶



Fig.2: Lt O.M. Croshaw, 19th Hussars; a photograph taken between his return from South Africa and his promotion to captain. (Harrow Memorials of the Great War April 11th, 1917, to April 10th, 1918, vol.V, [p.71])

The basis of much of this criticism is that the British Army gave too little focus on the technical aspects of warfare and instead reinforced personal and social factors as the foundation for the army’s culture and ethos. Although the purchase of commissions had been abolished in 1871, the British regular officer corps was still characterised by social and financial exclusiveness. Officers required a private income to supplement their meagre pay, which did not cover many of the costs associated with soldiering, such as uniforms, mess bills, servants’ wages, horses, and personal weapons.¹⁷ This was particularly so in the cavalry – an officer required at least one charger and Richard Holmes has suggested that he ‘could hardly avoid hunting and playing polo’. Although an income of £300 a year may have covered these expenses the average private income of cavalry officers was

£600-700.¹⁸ These financial and social barriers to career progression created a culture where officer selection and promotion was based on social and personal factors, rather than technical competency or knowledge.¹⁹ Yet it is important to note is that while the officer corps was

¹⁴ *The London Gazette*, 3 January 1899, Issue 27039, p.6

¹⁵ James, *Warrior Race*, p.427

¹⁶ Carlyon, *The Great War*, pp.42-43

¹⁷ Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army*, p.9

¹⁸ Richard Holmes, *Tommy: The British Soldier on the Western Front 1914-1918* (London, Harper Perennial, 2005), p.121

¹⁹ Robert T. Foley, ‘Dumb donkeys or cunning foxes? Learning in the British and German armies during the Great War’, *International Affairs*, 90 (2014), p. 287

socially exclusive, it had a very strong cultural identity, and whatever the technical limitations of Croshaw's military development he was strongly influenced by the norms and expectations of the organisational culture, providing a framework for how he was to act and lead. Ideas such as loyalty to the regiment were strong in the British Army of that period, and played into how British officers saw themselves and their role as leaders of men in war.

Croshaw would only spend a relatively brief time in his new regiment before being sent overseas to fight in the service of Queen Victoria. During the South African War of 1889-1902, the 19th Hussars saw action at the siege of Ladysmith in 1899-1900 under the command of Lt Gen Sir George Stuart White.²⁰ On 23 June 1900 he was promoted to lieutenant, and with the siege of Ladysmith having been lifted earlier that year, the regiment continued to serve a cavalry role throughout various parts of the Transvaal.²¹ At the conclusion of the war the 19th Hussars, now renamed the 19th (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own) Hussars, returned to Britain. Although the army attempted to implement reforms based on the lessons of the South African War, its officer corps was still characterised by an amateur ethos and was occupied by a less than strenuous workload.²² Anthony Clayton argues that this period was *la belle époque* for the army's officers, who often finished training by lunchtime which provided officers with 'ample opportunities for sport, hunting, shooting and social activities.'²³ On 16 January 1905 Croshaw was promoted to captain and was periodically seconded to act as an adjutant in various yeomanry regiments.²⁴

Capt Croshaw resigned his commission in the 19th Hussars on 4 September 1912 and went to live in Ayrshire, Scotland.²⁵ What he was doing in his civilian life is unclear, yet his time away from army was short lived. With his extensive experience with horses he became Remount Officer for Lanarkshire and Renfrewshire and on 22 February 1913 he was appointed a captain in the General Reserve of Officers.²⁶ He returned to a more active role as a major in the Lanarkshire Yeomanry (Queen's Own Royal Glasgow and Lower Ward of Lanarkshire), his promotion backdated to 29 January 1913, and he continued in this position through to the start of the war.²⁷

At the outbreak of hostilities, the Lanarkshire Yeomanry was mobilised for coastal defence, but Croshaw, who probably sought overseas service, volunteered for the 1/1st City of London Yeomanry, a first line Territorial regiment.²⁸ He left Britain as battalion 2iC and although the unit served in Egypt at the Suez Canal Defences and Gallipoli at Suvla Bay, Croshaw's role in the Dardanelles campaign is ambiguous, but by the start of 1916 he was a brigade-major, possibly in the London Mounted Brigade. Whilst in Egypt, Croshaw was unsatisfied with his staff position, an opinion he made known to his friend, Cyril Wagstaff, who by chance was in

²⁰ 'Croshaw', *Harrow Memorials of the Great War Vol V*

²¹ *The London Gazette*, 4 January 1901, Issue 27263, p.83

²² Bowman and Connelly, *The Edwardian Army*, p.39

²³ Anthony Clayton, *The British Officer: Leading the Army From 1660 to the Present*, (Harlow, Pearson Longman, 2006), p.127

²⁴ *The London Gazette*, 24 March 1905, Issue 27778, p.2275; *The London Gazette*, 3 December 1907, Issue 28085, p.8441; *The London Gazette*, 17 December 1907, Issue 28090, p.8780; *The London Gazette*, 23 October 1908, Issue 28188, p.7646; *The London Gazette*, 29 November 1910, Issue 28442, p.8949

²⁵ *The London Gazette*, 3 September 1912, Issue 28641, p.6535

²⁶ 'Croshaw', *Harrow Memorials of the Great War Vol V*; *The London Gazette*, 21 February 1913, Issue 28692, p.1352

²⁷ *The London Gazette*, 11 April 1913, Issue 28709, p.2638

²⁸ E.A. James, *British Regiments 1914-1918* (London, Samson Books, 1978), p.19

Egypt as GSOI of the newly raised 5th Australian Division.²⁹

The 5th, along with the 1st, 2nd and 4th Australian Divisions, were in Egypt re-organising after the Gallipoli campaign. Only the 1st and 2nd Divisions had served on Gallipoli, the 4th and 5th Divisions had been created by split the original four brigades of the AIF into two equal halves, and create four new brigades out of them, thus (theoretically) spreading experienced officers and NCOs across the four divisions, rather than raising two completely fresh divisions back in Australia. Although the distribution was intended to be equal, many of the best officers remained with their old units, and thus the new battalions of the 4th and 5th Divisions were short on officers. One unit in the 5th Division, the 53rd Battalion, required a 2iC, and Wagstaff recommended Croshaw to fill this vacancy.³⁰

In command of the 53rd Bn was Lt Col Ignatius Bertram Norris, a barrister from Sydney and formerly a major in the Australian militia. Croshaw found him to be ‘a most courteous gentleman’ and ‘a most conscientious officer’.³¹ Unfortunately Norris’s command was short-lived. The 5th Division arrived in France in June 1916 and was thrown into action with the 61st (2nd South Midland) Div at Fromelles on 19 July, with the 53rd among the assaulting battalions. Croshaw was not with his battalion headquarters, however, as he was acting as a liaison-officer between the battalion and the brigade, and ‘faithfully carried out’ his task, ‘personally reconnoitring the position, keeping in touch with the brigadier, and endeavouring to furnish supplies’.³² Croshaw survived the battle and was awarded the DSO for his work, although many of his colleagues were not as fortunate.³³ Amidst the carnage of the assault Norris was killed and 23 other officers in the battalion became casualties.³⁴ As 2iC, Croshaw took command of the shattered battalion, which had lost a total of 625 officers and other ranks.³⁵

His first task as CO was to rebuild his unit. Initially the battalion was unable to maintain four companies and even when they reverted back to a four-company structure, there were not enough men to make four platoons per company.³⁶ Second Lieutenant R.A. McInnis, who had only recently transferred from the 8th Field Company, Australian Engineers, remarked on 17 September: ‘The Battalion suffered severely on the 19th July, and its strength has not yet been made up.’³⁷ Croshaw apparently ‘relished’ the work of reorganisation and retraining. Chaplain John Joseph Kennedy, DSO, the battalion’s Roman Catholic padre who wrote an account of his time with the battalion, remarked that Croshaw’s ‘energy was indefatigable, his personality made itself felt and the result was, after a few months, a magnificent unit comprised of splendidly-trained officers and men, who took a soldierly pride in their battalion’.³⁸ C.J. Hobkirk, the brigadier, recommended him for an MID in March 1917 specifically for his work in reconstituting his unit, noting that the battalion was ‘greatly handicapped’ by a lack of experienced officers and NCOs to train the large drafts of reinforcements, but he had ‘through

²⁹ Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards*, pp.10-15

³⁰ *ibid*, pp.10-15

³¹ *ibid*, p.15

³² Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards*, p.369

³³ *The London Gazette*, 26 September 1916, Issue 29765, p. 9419; *Supplement to The Edinburgh Gazette*, 28 September 1916, Issue 12992, p.1755

³⁴ C.E.W. Bean, *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918 [hereafter AOH] Volume III – The Australian Imperial Force in France, 1916*, 12th edition (Sydney, Angus & Robertson, 1941), p.369

³⁵ *ibid*, p.442

³⁶ AWM4, 23/70/4, 53rd Battalion unit diary, September 1916, 8-17 September 1916

³⁷ AWM, PR00917, folder 1 of 3, R.A. McInnis diary, 17 September 1916; National Archives of Australia, B2455, MCINNIS R A, Ronald Alison McInnis service record

³⁸ Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards*, pp.60-61

individual hard work, brought it to a good state of efficiency.³⁹

Part of restoring the unit was to rebuild its *esprit de corps* and regimental pride, an attribute that the British Army (then as now) held in high regard.⁴⁰ During the terrible winter of 1916/17, the battalion developed a nickname, directly from Croshaw's intervention. One day, Croshaw was impressed when he saw one of his own men on guard duty wearing a very brightly polished tin hat. It turned out that the soldier had used his allotment of whale oil, which was supposed to be for his feet, to burnish his helmet. Rather than rebuking the man, Croshaw commended him, and later that day called a meeting of his officers and instructed them that all the unit's helmets should be presented in that way when they were out of the line.⁴¹ As such, the battalion developed a specific identity as 'the Whale Oil Guards', which became a source of considerable pride. By the end of February 1917 McInnis wrote: 'We look on our battalion as one of the best in the Australian Army, and are rather proud of our nickname of the "Whale Oil Guards". Our colonel, who is a fine soldier, is responsible for the Esprit de Corps.'⁴²

The particularly British emphasis on *esprit de corps* was evident in Croshaw's command; he probably recognised its strengths and sought to apply it to his Australian battalion. As the 53rd lacked a pedigree stretching back centuries, Croshaw improvised and his enthusiasm for the Whale Oil Guards moniker is evidence of that. This identity was probably very helpful in re-constituting the battalion after Fromelles.⁴³ So instrumental was Croshaw in creating the 53rd's identity that he became linked with it.⁴⁴ McInnis observed: 'He has made a fine battalion of the 53rd, and we are known everywhere as "Col. Croshaw's Whale-Oil Guards".'⁴⁵ After Croshaw was killed, Kennedy recalled that it briefly seemed that 'all the enthusiasm and vitality of the Whale Oil Guards had died with him'.⁴⁶

Another mark of effective command was his concern about his men's welfare. Towards the winter of 1916-17 Croshaw endeavoured to make sure they were comfortable and rested in their billets as best they could be under the circumstances.⁴⁷ Arriving back from leave on 25 November, he found his battalion encamped at Mametz, where the conditions were terrible, due to the rain, and were getting worse. He complained to the CO of the responsible engineering unit and to the 5th Division HQ, getting some of the staff to visit the camp for themselves. In two days there was a 'noticeable improvement'.⁴⁸ In his final address to his officers before the going 'over the top' at Polygon Wood, he declared, 'Gentlemen, your men before yourselves.'⁴⁹ This was a directive he lived out himself. Allegedly when one of his soldiers came across him after he was fatally wounded at Polygon Wood, the soldier offered to send a stretcher for him. Croshaw replied: 'Don't trouble, lad. Look after yourself, and, besides, the stretchers will all be needed for the lads. I'm done. Good-bye.'⁵⁰

³⁹ Recommendation of Lieut.-Colonel Oswald Mosley Croshaw, D.S.O. for Mention in Despatches, 9 March 1917

⁴⁰ H.J. Coates, 'Morale on the Battlefield', *Defence Force Journal*, 45 (1984), p.10

⁴¹ Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards*, p.101

⁴² AWM, PR00917, folder 1 of 3, R.A. McInnis diary, 23 February 1917

⁴³ Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards*, pp.60-61

⁴⁴ AWM, PR00917, folder 1 of 3, R.A. McInnis diary, 23 February 1917

⁴⁵ AWM, PR00917, folder 1 of 3, R.A. McInnis diary, 6 May 1917

⁴⁶ Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards*, pp.129-30

⁴⁷ *ibid*, p.86

⁴⁸ *ibid*, pp.90-92

⁴⁹ G.D. Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches: Officer-Man Relations, Morale and Discipline in the British Army in the Era of the First World War* (London, Basingstoke, 2000), p.128

⁵⁰ 'Colonel Croshaw's Death', *Reveille*, 1 March 1936, p.5

Another way Croshaw demonstrated his concern about his men was his willingness to join them in dangerous situations. Despite the popular image of senior British officers living safely and luxuriously in a chateau, most regimental officers shared the dangers of the front line. Croshaw was awarded another MID for his command in the first half of 1917, his recommendation specifically noted that he was wounded ‘whilst seeing to his men during a bombardment’.⁵¹ The desire of a commanding officer to be near his men when ‘the ironmongery was flying’ is congruent with another characteristic of command that soldiers respected: courageous example. One of Croshaw’s MID recommendations stated that he ‘never spared himself & has always shown a fine example in the line, which is reflected in his officers and men.’⁵² During an artillery barrage in October 1916 he was ‘standing on a fire step, looking over towards the front line’. McInnis wrote: ‘He is not a “dugout king” by any means.’⁵³ To act otherwise would not have been appropriate for ‘an officer and a gentleman’. According to Charles Bean, Croshaw met his death leading his battalion ‘revolver in hand’.⁵⁴ Kennedy described Croshaw as ‘the bravest soldier, the most God-fearing Christian, and the most perfect gentleman I have ever known.’⁵⁵

Through his time in command Croshaw earned the respect of his men, despite being a British officer. In May a German artillery shell landed near Croshaw’s headquarters, seriously wounding him.⁵⁶ When he returned to the battalion, Kennedy recalled:

There wasn’t a man in the battalion, from the Second in Command to the humblest private, who wasn’t rejoiced at his recovery and reassured at his return. The general opinion with regard to his leadership was this: ‘With Croshaw with us, everything is bound to be right. With him away – well, we can’t be so confident or cocksure.’⁵⁷

The respect the 53rd Battalion’s officers and men had for their CO was pronounced, and this was and is a vitally important aspect of building effective working relationships within a battalion. At one point in his command there was a rumour that he was to be transferred back to a British cavalry unit. McInnis wrote in his diary: ‘I am very sorry to say we are going to lose our C.O. soon.’⁵⁸

Such respect and emotion for a British officer seems to contradict the popular conception of British and Australian officer-man relations.⁵⁹ This is in addition to the fact that Croshaw, ever the strict British officer, did not change his style of command to suit his Australian soldiers. He could be ‘brusque and harsh with people whom he deemed rotters’ and on parade he was ‘strict and soldierly but never over-bearing’.⁶⁰ Soon after he took command, McInnis found that his CO was ‘not at all satisfied with our knowledge of our platoons, and did not hide the fact.’⁶¹ When 2nd Lt J.G. Ridley received his commission he discovered how strict Croshaw could be. He was ‘straffed’ for halting his platoon in the wrong spot, and acknowledged: ‘I do try to play my best, however I know I was wrong and so deserved my rebuff.’⁶² He later

⁵¹ Recommendation of Lt. Colonel Oswald Mosley Croshaw, D.S.O. for Mention in Despatches, nd

⁵² *ibid*

⁵³ AWM, PR00917, folder 1 of 3, R.A. McInnis diary, 1 October 1916

⁵⁴ AWM38, 3DRL606/89/1, C.E.W. Bean diary, 30 September 1917

⁵⁵ ‘Death Presentiment: Col. Croshaw’, *Reveille*, 31 January 1931, p.6

⁵⁶ AWM, PR00917, folder 1 of 3, R.A. McInnis diary, 6 May 1917; Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards*, p.106

⁵⁷ Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards*, p.110

⁵⁸ AWM, PR00917, folder 1 of 3, R.A. McInnis diary, 6 May 1917

⁵⁹ James, *Warrior Race*, p.473

⁶⁰ Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards*, pp.60-61

⁶¹ AWM, PR00917, folder 1 of 3, R.A. McInnis diary, 18 October 1916

⁶² AWM, 3DRL/6428, folder 1 of 4, item 1, J.G. Ridley to mother, 17 July 1917

observed that Croshaw was ‘rather severe on those who don’t please him’.⁶³ Kennedy wrote:

He looked a soldier every inch, and though the men had no very pleasant memories of their associations with English officers on Gallipoli, they admired him though a ‘Pommy’ as he walked through the lines or rode round the parade-ground to inspect their training. The slackers soon discovered his keenness, and bestirred themselves. The men who loved the game of soldiering recognised in him an officer after their own hearts, in fact a military enthusiast.⁶⁴

Had he deviated from his natural style he would have violated an important rule of leadership: do not be inauthentic. Gen Sir John Monash, in a pamphlet he distributed to the officers and sergeants of the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade in late 1914, told those in positions of responsibility: ‘Be natural. The assumption of mannerisms is easily detected by men, personality is lost, and in most cases, respect suffers.’⁶⁵

In explaining how Croshaw integrated his ‘British’ style to an Australian command, Gary Sheffield reminds us that the difference between British and Dominion attitudes to discipline should not be overstated.⁶⁶ Although Australian commanders were probably less formal than many of their British counterparts, many of the most efficient and most respected Australian COs were uncompromising disciplinarians, including Harold ‘Pompey’ Elliott, Ray Leane and Iven Mackay.⁶⁷ Croshaw was a commander in this mould, and there is little evidence to suggest that his men pushed back against his style. Richard Holmes believed that men ‘generally preferred a hard man who knew what he was doing to a genial incompetent.’⁶⁸ Warfare was a stern business, one that required strength of will and strength of character. Many popular COs could not stand the strain of combat. Charles Bean described the first CO of the 8th Battalion, Lt Col W.K. Bolton, as a ‘soft-hearted commander very solicitous for his men’, but his time on Gallipoli proved that he was neither mentally nor physically capable of commanding on active service.⁶⁹ If Croshaw was a hard man it was to the benefit of his men, whom he honed through training, drill, and discipline, into a sharp weapon of war.

Croshaw’s command of the 53rd Battalion came to an end when he was killed leading his men at Polygon Wood on 26 September 1917. The officers and men of the 53rd mourned him. One ‘brother-officer’ wrote that the battalion was ‘heart-broken and disconsolate.’⁷⁰ Another officer wrote: ‘There is general grief among all ranks about the Colonel’.⁷¹ Although the British Army of the First World War did have its share of poor officers, Croshaw was not one of them. He commanded his unit effectively and both his superiors and subordinates recognised it. In the Australian Official History of the First World War, Charles Bean acknowledges that the ‘debt’ the AIF owed ‘to its small quota of British officers was beyond computation, especially in the standards set by them for personal conduct.’⁷² Croshaw was among this ‘small quota’, a group almost forgotten by the larger public and usually sidelined in histories of the period. It is important that they not be forgotten.

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⁶³ AWM, 3DRL/6428, folder 1 of 4, item 1, J.G. Ridley to brother, 22 August 1917

⁶⁴ Kennedy, *The Whale Oil Guards*, p.18

⁶⁵ AWM, 3DRL/2316, Series 3/72, A Hundred Hints for Company Officers, 23 November 1914, p.3

⁶⁶ Sheffield, *Leadership in the Trenches*, p.172

⁶⁷ Bean, *AOH Vol I*, p.133; Bean, *AOH Vol III*, pp.707-08; Ivan D. Chapman, *Iven G. Mackay: Citizen and Soldier* (Melbourne, Melway Publishing, 1975), p.93

⁶⁸ Holmes, *Tommy*, p.576

⁶⁹ Bean, *AOH Vol I*, p.133

⁷⁰ ‘Croshaw’, *Harrow Memorials of the Great War Vol V*

⁷¹ AWM, PR00917, folder 1 of 3, R.A. McInnis diary, 27 September 1917

⁷² Bean, *AOH Vol V*, pp.16-17

THE BATTLE OF ROMANI: FIRST BRITISH VICTORY OF THE GREAT WAR

Neil Dearberg

The Battle of Romani from 3 to 13 August 1916 saved the Suez Canal. Remarkably, it was the first major British victory in two years of the Great War. It turned the war in the east in favour of the *Entente* allies. Delivered by the Anzacs, it showed the world the Anzacs were more than Gallipoli. It was the beginning of the Sinai Palestine campaign, victory which, one hundred years later, gave us today's Middle East chaos. Beersheba's mounted charge involving one brigade is well celebrated yet Romani, involving the whole Anzac Mounted Division (AMD) was stunning, yet little seems known of it, or what followed. Five key factors created that victory: the leadership of Australia's (then) Maj Gen Harry Chauvel; the stamina of the Waler horses; the training, discipline and initiative of Anzac troops; the first real integration of air, land and sea forces; and empty Turkish water bottles.

The British War Office considered the Sinai such a formidable barrier between Palestine and Egypt that no large force could cross it; perhaps they forgot that the armies of Rome, Alexander the Great and Napoleon had. Gen Maxwell, commander of British forces in Egypt, waited on the western side of the Canal. 'Are you defending the Canal or is the bloody Canal defending you!' It wasn't a question. Kitchener's outburst to Maxwell followed the first Turkish attack on the Suez Canal on the morning of 3 February 1915. Maxwell, a man of some administrative capacity perhaps, consoled himself that his 'passive defence' had stopped the Turks. They hadn't captured the Canal. Hadn't blocked it. However, 16,000 of them with 12,000 horses, 10,000 camels, 300 oxen, heavy wheeled artillery, pontoons and boats crossed 120 miles of sand in a near waterless desert where foot and wheel prints would be visible to anyone looking – Kitchener's point.

The Canal was the carotid artery of the British Empire. Captured or blocked with sunken shipping and the British war effort was itself sunk. Another Kitchener point. It was to Great Britain what roots are to trees. It flowed with life: troops destined for the Western Front and Arabia from Australia, New Zealand and India had safe travel; shipping from the Indian Ocean and Persia to the Mediterranean was quicker and safer than around South Africa; German U-boats and battle-cruisers lurking the Atlantic Ocean had no rapid access to the Mediterranean or Red Sea; oil and trade could pass east to west unhindered; ships of the Royal and French Navies moved unhindered to blockade the Arabian Peninsula to prevent food and weapons getting to the Turks; 20 million pounds of Australian minted gold sovereigns safely passed during the war; and Germany was deprived fast access to its East African and Pacific colonies.

The British understood they had to defeat Germany to save the homeland and free Europe from oppression. The western front was the British priority. Corrupting strategic thinking was the distraction of conflicts in Egypt, Palestine, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Salonika, Africa, New Guinea and the Pacific. British resources were low. Political concerns were high. But these were only 'sideshows' to some British politicians and generals. There were divergent views and decisions didn't come easy.

The Germans, wanting to nullify British advantages, realised their threat to the Suez Canal would tie-up a major British force that couldn't be deployed against them in France – and all the better if Ottoman troops provided that distraction. That attack had failed. But German and Turkish eyes were intent. A year and a half later they would have another go, twice.

As 1916 unfolded another Turkish attack against the Canal was expected. The War Office and political leaders got mildly serious about the east. A change of emphasis decided a new commander was needed with a more active defence. On 9 January 1916 Gen Sir Archibald Murray assumed command of the newly titled Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF). He drove the principle of active defence although confusion reigned about Turkish numbers and intentions. Allocation of allied troops between France and Egypt was argued. Murray saw his experienced infantry divisions withdrawn to France. He was left with under-trained and inexperienced Territorial soldiers from the farms and villages of England, the antithesis of desert. He did have the AMD, on which he begrudgingly depended.

Just as the British force in Egypt was dwindling, the Turks had their own problems. They were committed in Mesopotamia, Persia, Greece and the Caucasus, while many troops were still around Gallipoli, unable to move through poor rail and road systems. The Germans became alarmed as British troop numbers and quality increased in France. They pressed the Turks to attack the Canal.

Murray identified three possible routes of Turkish advance from Palestine: A northern route: direct from Gaza through watered hods at Romani and Katia, a total distance around 120 miles. A central route: from Beersheba at the end of the Turkish railway in southern Palestine, southwest to Kossaima then west through jagged mountains and boulderous wadi passes 85 miles to Jifjafa, used by the attackers in February 1915. A southern route: two approaches, from Kossaima in the north or, south from Aqaba on the Red Sea. These were ruled out being too long, too hot, too mountainous and waterless.

Murray foresaw the likely Turkish approach was via the northern and central routes. His plan was simple and well founded: move troops along that northern route towards El Arish and stop the Turks at the gateway to Sinai. Concurrently, neutralise the central route. To convince the War Office Murray wrote: 'Strategically therefore, the true base of the defensive zone of Egypt against invasion from the east is not the 80 or 90 miles of the Canal Zone, but the 45 miles between El Arish and El Kossaima.'¹

To support the northern route he had to build a railway, provide fresh Nile waters to men and animals via a pipeline, lay a roadway and build a telegraph. The War Office gave retarded approval restricting his movements to Romani/Katia, a mere 25 miles from the Canal and 70 miles short of El Arish – an invitation for the Turks to move unhindered on that precious water at Katia and close to the Canal. Approval was given for the construction of the infrastructure, and action on the two routes was planned.

Gen Murray catapulted the Anzacs into history. He thought they were naughty soldiers when they didn't salute British officers, drank too much beer and set fire to 'gyppo' brothels. But

Murray was deeply impressed by the resourcefulness of Anzac Mounted; they found their way surely about the trackless wastes of Sinai, carried out their tasks to the letter and returned to base in remarkably quick time. In fact, they were the only desert worthy troops at Murray's disposal in this early phase...²

¹ G. MacMunn and C. Falls, *Military Operations Egypt and Palestine*, [vol.1], HMSO, London, 1928, p.171.

² A.J. Hill, *Chauvel of the Light Horse: A Biography of General Sir Harry Chauvel, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.*, Melbourne UP, Carlton, 1978, p.70.

The first Anzac task was to neutralise the central route. Chauvel selected 3rd ALH Bde commanded by Brig J.M. Antill. This would be the first significant operation conducted by Australians. Critically, it would be Australian commanded. It was therefore, the first real test of Australian tactics and leadership. Antill tasked 9th ALH Regt, under temporary command of the experienced Maj William Scott (commissioned in 1903 and a Gallipoli veteran). The Australians didn't have all the support troops they needed so Scott was given an untried and multi-national force of mixed religions, cultures, languages, training and commitments to join his eager troopers. His force comprised 18 officers and 303 other ranks that included a Royal Flying Corps (RFC) wireless detachment, Bikanir Cameliers, Egyptian Transport Corps camel drivers, Light Horsemen, Field Ambulance detachment and British engineers, with 175 horses and 261 camels. They had to carry all their food, water, weapons, ammunition, personal gear, demolitions, communication equipment, medical needs and facilities for prisoners.

The mission given Scott was to 'Verify reports of a Turkish force around Jifjafa of approx 40 men, destroy water wells, report other water along the route, capture enemy personnel, identify other works and defences in the area.'³ Within four days Scott was back; wells destroyed, 34 prisoners taken including an Austrian engineer with plans of Turkish water wells in Sinai and successful integration of Australians, Britons, Indians and Egyptians, with but one KIA, Cpl Monaghan – a splendid 'stunt' that brought to the ALH pride and good lessons learnt of desert warfare.

Murray's attention turned to the northern route where the railway was under construction and heading east. Coincidentally, 3,500 Turks with German Col von Kressenstein were on their way west, towards Romani. Murray thrust unprepared British yeomanry at the northern route and disaster. Their objectives: protect the water for use of the railway's engineers and construction crews, and deny the only water in the Sinai to Turks who may advance towards the canal.

Lt Gen The Hon. Sir H.A. Lawrence was commander of the Canal Defence Zone that included Romani/Katia. He'd been a junior officer in the Boer War, passed over for promotion then 'retired'. He became a banker and Member of Parliament. At the outbreak of war he was recalled as a junior officer (rank of major) following ten years of banking and parliamentary service. He rose to brigadier within 11 months of staff work as an intelligence officer having no field, command or battle experience. That he got to lieutenant general within another year is somewhat a mystery. Lawrence dispatched 5th Yeomanry Bde to Romani under command Brig E.A. Wiggins, without artillery or adequate machine gun protection and accompanied by infantry and engineers. On arrival, Wiggins dispersed packets to camps at Dueidar, Oghratina, Romani and Katia. Wiggins and his HQ staff then trotted off (with Lawrence's permission) towards Mageibra 12 miles away, in pursuit of a reported Bedouin enemy force. He lost all communication with the rest of his brigade.

The scattered packets were separated by six to twelve miles. At a travel pace of one to three miles per hour, it was impossible to support one another or receive assistance from reserve troops, had there been any. The result, as described in the Australian Official History was:

In the tragic engagement which followed, the folly which first sent the brigade alone into the desert, and afterwards which divided it into isolated camps, ignorant of the enemy's movements, was redeemed by the magnificent fight to the death carried on by the slender force of yeomanry

³ War Diary 3rd ALH Bde, April 1916. AWM4 Item 10/3/5.

officers and men.⁴

Thick fog oozed. The air was still, no warning smells of stale BO and bad food drifted on the breeze. The cavalry sent out their early patrols; all returned before the fog lifted, yet didn't leave sentries outside their perimeter. They had no idea a silent enemy in large number was upon them. Kressenstein had divided his force among the scattered British groups. Covered by the morning fog they attacked the piecemeal detachments. The outgunned Tommies fought well while ammunition lasted, inflicting high casualties. The cavalry had horses; they could have escaped. Yet, as reported by the British Official History, the cavalry commander courageously stayed to support his ground troops. They could not contact their brigade commander. Many were wiped out one group at a time while others surrendered once they ran out of ammunition.

With 600 of his soldiers dead, wounded, captured or left on the battlefield for the Bedouin to plunder, Wiggins and his HQ, not having found the reported Turks and with no one left to command, withdrew. Col Keogh wrote that Wiggins' plans for defence were unsound. Rather than scatter he should have concentrated his force. To then disappear with his HQ may have shown personal courage but no aptitude for his real task. The greater folly was Lawrence not sending artillery and machine guns, then allowing Wiggins to scatter and head off. But the politically connected general kept his job.

The Turks were upbeat; they had completed a very successful raid. With no intention of holding the wells at Katia or Romani, they withdrew. On return to Jerusalem with their British prisoners paraded, they achieved enviable propaganda and celebration. In a mastery of understatement the British Official History's total summary of the action reads: 'The affair at Katia was a lamentable occurrence, resulting as it did in the total loss of three and a half squadrons of Yeomanry. Otherwise, it had no effect, except to delay the progress of the railway for a few days.'⁵

Murray ordered Chauvel to rescue 5th Yeomanry. Chauvel ordered 2nd ALH Bde, commanded by Brig Ryrie, to move as quickly as possible. After a nightlong march the 2nd arrived, all too late. They occupied the remnants of British camps. They were appalled. Among the bodies of soldiers and animals lay evidence of comfortable officers' living with little military significance – golf clubs, white tablecloths and silver candelabra, sherry decanters and folding chairs. The Turks were gone. Only the scavenging Bedouin were to be seen, desecrating the bodies of British and Turkish to relieve them of jewellery, clothing, boots, weapons, food, money. They stole off into the desert as Ryrie's troopers approached.

Murray placed command of the Romani/Katia area to Chauvel with all the mounted troops. Through the desert's summer they prepared for the next Turkish attempt on the Canal. The solitary water along this road that the Turks could use was the goo at Romani and Katia a few miles east. Chauvel concentrated the AMD around Romani and ordered extensive patrolling in strength with his officers and young soldiers gaining desert experience. Patrols were not to engage in protracted fire fights. They were to maintain their mobility, report Turkish movements and seek water for future use. No.1 Sqn AFC was attached to the RFC so aerial reconnaissance soon provided advanced intelligence.

⁴ H.S. Gullett, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine 1914-1918*, Official History of Australia in the War of 1914-1918, vol.7, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 3rd edn, 1936, p.85.

⁵ MacMunn and Falls, p.169.

The Battle of Romani

The folly of the fragmented dispersal of 5th Yeomanry hadn't got through to Murray and Lawrence; their thinking was as mysterious as the occult. Moreso, as in a letter dated 12 July 1916 Murray praised Chauvel: 'Whatever I ask you people to do is done without the slightest hesitation and with promptness and efficiency. I have the greatest admiration for all your command.'⁶ Selfishly, Murray and Lawrence divided much of these 'people' among themselves, scattering the AMD such that Chauvel had only two of his four brigades, the 1st and 2nd plus the Wellington Regt of the NZMR Bde. The NZMR Bde (less the Wellington Regt but with 5th ALH Regt) went west, under command of Lawrence with an infantry division incapable of fast movement, as a reserve force. The 3rd Bde went south under Murray with his reserve force of immobile infantry on the Canal. Chauvel was given what was left of the Territorial 5th Yeomanry and their untrained, inexperienced reinforcements. Worse, Murray placed himself and his reserve force at Ismailia at the south of the Canal. Lawrence positioned himself and his reserve force at Kantara at the north of the Canal. Both were so far behind any action with difficult communications they were unable to observe any action about which to make battle decisions.

On 19 July Brig Chaytor, commander NZMR Bde, while observing from an aircraft of No.14 Sqn RFC, detected around 8,000 Turkish soldiers plus horses and camels with artillery and vehicles moving towards Katia and Romani and therefore, the Suez Canal. Over coming days airmen of Nos. 1 and 14 Sqns spotted further Turkish advances:

These (advances) abruptly stopped on 31 July, suggesting the Turks were in position and ready to strike ... On 1 August, Australian pilots Alfred Ellis and Lawrence Wackett joined a seven aircraft bombing raid on those positions. Richard Williams meanwhile tried his hand at directing fire from an offshore naval vessel on the Turkish positions ... It was a process that would come to play a vital role in British tactics, but was still in its infancy on this front.⁷

The attack was imminent.

For the battle scene, imagine a rough rectangle; on the east side in a north-south direction, was the 52nd Infantry Div dug in trenches with fortified defences and almost impossible to attack successfully and quickly. Across the top was the Mediterranean Sea. To the west was the Suez Canal with water and reserve forces. The bottom of the rectangle, in an east-west direction, was Chauvel's AMD. Murray had positioned the entrenched infantry forcing the Turks to move around them to attack the non-entrenched mounted troops in the sand and heat to defeat them, then turn on the infantry from behind and defeat them. Then move on the Suez Canal. It was a tough ask for 'Jacko'.

Chauvel's tactic was to allow the Turks into the bottom of the rectangle, lure them into the waterless, soft sands and heat, tempt them by withdrawing his mounted troops as if being defeated, then attack with his mounted reserves and the infantry when the Turks were exhausted and dehydrated. To be effective he would need rapid access to the NZMR Bde, his 3rd ALH Bde and have the infantry available to assist. Murray and Lawrence, with faulty communications when landlines were cut, faltered, retaining those reserves until the battle was nearly lost.

First though, Chauvel must have wondered whether this could work with his mounted units

⁶ Hill, p.74.

⁷ M. Molkentin, *Fire In The Sky*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2010, p.64.

divided. And why did he have two commanders anyway; who *was* running this show? And, would the Turks really react the way he hoped? On the night of 3 August he found out. The Australian Official History records, ‘History scarcely presents an example of such complete conformity by an enemy taking the offensive to the plans and wishes of the defenders.’⁸ The British Official History reports, ‘The Turks were fully prepared to play the role allotted to them by the British command. The account given by Kressenstein shows that it was exactly what had been anticipated.’⁹

Around midnight the Turks by-passed the entrenched infantry and followed on the heels of a returning Australian patrol into camp. This was an error of Australian tactics in returning to camp at the same time and the same way each night; it was never repeated. The desert was quiet that night; starlight shimmered off the sands and people sneaking up could be detected. As good training and a vigilant sentry system had it, the Turks were spotted and all hell broke loose. Screams of ‘Allah, finish Australia’ were countered with lively outback obscenities. Early detection destroyed von Kressenstein’s plan as he’d hoped to get further into the Anzac position and surprise them in daylight. The alert sentries foiled him and the battle started in the dark hours before he wanted. His troops were caught in the heat of the next day that exhausted them quicker. Of course, the Anzacs would also contend the heat and thirst. As Trooper Bygott colourfully described it, ‘the sun would melt the sins out of Satan.’¹⁰

For three days the battle raged backwards and forwards. Chauvel tried desperately to have his horsemen released to join him. Murray and Lawrence were obstinate. Lawrence had little idea of what was happening. His telephone lines had been cut and he was so far in the rear he could not communicate with Chauvel or his own infantry commanders. British infantry commanders refused to join Chauvel without specific orders from Lawrence even though they had no other part in the battle. Brig E.S. Girdwood commanding 156th Bde declined to involve his fresh infantry to allow 1st and 2nd ALH Bdes to water and rest before resuming the battle.

At near desperate times, two wonderful things happened. First, the commander of 52nd Div using his own initiative sent 156th Bde into action to assist exhausted horsemen who needed water for their horses and rest for themselves. Second, Lt Col R.M. Yorke led his Gloucester Hussars, also on his own initiative, into action on the right of the Anzacs, deflecting a Turkish outflanking movement that could have been destructive to the Anzacs. These two British commanders showed what could be achieved with cooperation and personal initiative.

Throughout the battle the British artillery fired incessantly and accurately when called upon. Guns of the Territorial units and the Hong Kong and Singapore Battery (nicknamed the Bing Boys) met all that was expected of them. Stretcher-bearers were peppered as they recovered the wounded. Medics went sleepless treating or evacuating. Vets were sleepless. Drivers, camel drivers and supply staffers were extraordinary. Naval guns fired. Cameliers charged.

Finally, communication getting through, Lawrence released the Kiwis. Chaytor’s brigade arrived but only in the nick of time. Murray then released 3rd ALH Bde. Chauvel was now able to commit his reserve regiments. The Turks, lacking resupplies were, as Chauvel expected, exhausted from heat and dehydration. But, the British infantry having refused to join battle, the Anzacs were also exhausted, thirsty (man, horse and camel) and hungry. Men were falling off horses asleep. Weak from dehydration and lack of food for three days, they had to rest. The

⁸ Gullett, p.190.

⁹ MacMunn and Falls, p.184.

¹⁰ R. Bygott, *Diary*, privately published by the family.

fresh Kiwis and 3rd Bde had to catch up and assemble. Then, with near half his force as casualties or prisoners, Von Kressenstein withdrew the remainder. A chase was to be launched, but not quickly.

For the first time, the air war was seen for what it would become. Pilots and observers of the AFC and RFC maintained flights over the battlefield with the intensity of zealots. Enemy dispositions and movements were reported to commanders on the ground. They dropped bombs. They strafed enemy ground forces. They dropped notes. They took photos. They directed artillery and naval gunfire. And all the while dodged the faster, better armed German aircraft doing the same thing. The integration of air support with ground troops began to have a positive impact on ground tactics. The role of aircraft was becoming appreciated and further understood by the more imaginative ground commanders of both sides. And the airmen were learning how they could be of use to those ground warriors.

Von Kressenstein had few options. He could not attack and defeat entrenched British infantry. He had to take the circuitous route to where the Anzacs were in non-entrenched positions on the sand. He knew his Turkish troops were hardy and accustomed to the heat with minimal water. The Turkish soldier was devout and would endure until the situation is hopeless when he surrendered willingly. Kressenstein had expected the advantage of surprise that a night insertion would provide. He used his mounted force and foot soldiers in a tactically sound and methodical way, nearly overcoming the Anzacs at various points. But for the doggedness of the Anzacs, their leadership at almost every level, the two timely interventions of junior British officers, and with less heat and more water he might have had his victory. But, just as Chauvel had predicted, the endless slow moving sand, ferocious heat while trying to fight a mobile battle, lack of water, the stamina of the Waler horses and Anzac leadership were von Kressenstein's downfall.

In the desert's heat the wounded were laid on stretchers in the sun with just their hats for shade, temperatures wandering from 40°C to 50°C. According to the Official Australian medical history:

The evacuation by train was carried out in a manner which caused much suffering and shock to the wounded. It was not effected till the night of August 6th – the transport of prisoners being given precedence over the wounded – and only open trucks without straw were available ... ,

a wounded yeomanry officer recording that 'Every bump in our springless train was extremely painful'.¹¹ The conditions caused official war correspondent Henry Gullett to explode in rage:

The arrangements for the transport of wounded were deplorable and should have led to drastic action against the British (non-medical) officers responsible ... the light horsemen were allowed to lie about for hours under shell fire in the blistering sun ... a number of men who left the ambulances in sound condition died from sheer neglect and exhaustion.¹²

But Murray took no action; failure of leadership by him, Lawrence and HQ staff magnified Australian contempt that never died for the EEF staff.

Of the 1,130 allied casualties at Romani, 900 were from the AMD. This reflected the involvement of the mounted troops and virtual absence of infantry. The Turkish losses however, were estimated at 9,000 of an 18,000 force, including nearly 4,000 prisoners and

¹¹ A.G. Butler, R.M. Downes, R.M. and F.A. Maguire, *The Australian Army Medical Services in the War of 1914-1918*, vol.1, AWM, Melbourne, 1930, part 2, *The Campaign in Sinai and Palestine*, p.580.

¹² Gullett, p.162.

1,250 or so who never saw home.

Three days after the Turkish attack had commenced and still with the mounted troops scattered, Lawrence finally gave command of all the Light Horse, NZ Mounted Rifles, Cameliers, British cavalry and their attached artillery and machine guns to Chauvel with orders to pursue. Instead of moments to assemble a concentrated force, it took hours to prepare the scattered troops; to feed and water men and horses, resupply ammunition, munitions, water and stores then assemble the artillery, field ambulances, veterinary sections and signallers before a pursuit could begin. A concentrated force in the beginning would likely have seen the entrapment and end of the whole Turkish force and reportedly cut that campaign by a year or more.

Chauvel's unrested force finally began their pursuit. The depleted and tired Anzacs marched on for six days skirmishing. Sleep, water and food was taken when they could. Trooper Bygott related:

We watered our horses and got water for ourselves, but though it was terribly salty it was very refreshing. We now drew rations for the next day, which had been brought over the desert on camels. We would then boil our black billies and with a bit of bully, an onion and some biscuits, we would have our night meal. This over, you would get your saddle-blanket and lay it down on the sand which is now nice and cool and with your saddle at your head and a feed bag for your pillow.¹³

The Turks withdrew, received reinforcements and showed their resilience and clever use of their reserve troops. Once more they demonstrated how well they could fall back to prepared positions and fight another day. Then, they counterattacked:

the Turk was ready and full of fight; he was far more numerous and more strongly supported by artillery. When he had measured the strength of the attack and brought it to a halt, the Turkish commander counter-attacked; Chauvel's troops had done all they could and were forced onto the defensive ... he ordered a general withdrawal ... Only fine leadership and steady discipline saved the weakened regiments; it was a near-run thing.¹⁴

The counter-attack put 6,000 Turks against Chauvel's 3,000 and the Turks were now rested. Their attack nearly came off, except for the well-disciplined extraction and leadership continually displayed by officers and NCOs. Constant patrolling and skirmishes by the Anzacs stopped the Turks.

With no more to be gained, the Turks withdrew into El Arish, 50 miles away. The chase was over. Romani was won. The Anzacs had brought about a stunning victory. Although exhausted, a man's willpower is sometimes unfathomable in times of crisis or need – and makes the difference between win or lose, survive or perish. Australia's Official History reports:

Gaunt from prolonged sleeplessness, their eyes bloodshot from glare and strain, their faces begrimed with dust and sweat, and bristly with a few days growth of beard, the Australians and the Wellingtons might have unnerved troops in better condition than the unfortunate Turks opposed to them.¹⁵

And of the horses:

These wonderful Walers were so exhausted ... despite all their spirit ... they lay down in the sand at each temporary halt, but when urged by their riders, responded gamely and carried them

¹³ Bygott.

¹⁴ Hill, p.81.

¹⁵ Gullett, p.165.

forward ... Their capacity to suffer and continue working, was unsuspected even by their Australian riders.¹⁶

The Significance of Romani

Notwithstanding his command errors, Murray's wisdom in moving east to counter the Turkish threat is acknowledged. As Massey points out, 'Romani will stand as the decisive battle that put an end to the dream of the Kaiser of bleeding the British Empire to death by severing what he termed its most vital artery.'¹⁷ The Suez Canal was never again threatened. This was the first British victory in two years of the Great War, delivered by the Anzacs. Although minor in numbers during the Sinai Palestine campaign, these Anzacs were dominant in effect.

What was the British contribution to this victory? Col Keogh highlights the deplorable staff work in medical treatment of the wounded and the extreme danger created by Generals Murray and Lawrence in the conduct of their command function:

Notwithstanding all the notice given by the enemy of his impending attack, and the expectation that a big battle was about to take place, the arrangements for the transport of the wounded from railhead to Kantara were deplorable. No ambulance trains were provided.¹⁸

How well did Murray and Lawrence do as battle commanders? First, who *was* the battle commander, Murray or Lawrence? Both had reserve forces but both were in distant locations. Both were out of touch with commanders in battle. Their infantry refused to join the fight without explicit orders that never came. Neither moved forward. Murray's separation of the brigades and Lawrence's retention of mounted troops was schoolyard childish negligence. According to the Australian Official History,

The High Command did not excel at Romani, but the result was still a splendid and far-reaching triumph for British arms. And, considered from any angle, this triumph must stand almost entirely to the credit of Chauvel and his Anzacs.¹⁹

Chauvel's own thoughts were typically non-blameful of his superiors and he was perhaps overly generous. His words included:

The most instructive criticism should be related to the divided command throughout, not only in the forward positions ... The battle should either have been Murray's or, if it had to be Lawrence's, he (Murray) should have placed all the troops available for it at Lawrence's disposal ...²⁰

But of course, it was difficult for either Murray or Lawrence to appreciate happenings once battle commenced as both of them were so far in the rear, in comfort, and communications had failed. Lawrence had repeated his failures of command and control that he and Wiggins had committed a few months earlier when 5th Yeomanry was wiped out. Murray achieved no glory for his efforts.

Murray's next effort astounded everyone. Verbally, he had heaped praise and appreciation upon the Anzacs. But his official despatch to the War Office, which was subsequently published in public newspapers, credited the British infantry with involvement in events they had not been party to, while overlooking that of the Anzacs. No one could have been more

¹⁶ Gullett, p.174.

¹⁷ W.T. Massey, *The Desert Campaigns*, Constable, London, 1918, p.51.

¹⁸ Col E.G. Keogh, *Suez to Aleppo*, Wilke, Melbourne, 1955, p.58.

¹⁹ Gullett, p.190.

²⁰ Hill, p.83.

astounded than the British infantry who must have thought Murray had watched a different movie. Certainly the Anzacs knew he had. The Australian Official History records;

Still more difficult to understand was the discrepancy between Murray's messages of appreciation to the troops and his list of awards to officers and men for service covering the period of the Romani fighting. The great majority of these went to troops recruited in the United Kingdom, and an excessive number to the officers of the Staff which had blundered in the conduct of the fight from beginning to end. Had no awards been made, the Anzacs would not have complained; but the publication of a list so discriminating and unfair caused much discontent.²¹

Despite the presence, or absence, of Murray and Lawrence, Chauvel's plan of drawing the Turks into a trap to feed them heat and dehydration, maintenance of his reserve force for an opportune time, the discipline of the Anzac force, knowledge of his countrymen's qualities and the endurance of the horses, the first effective use of air integration with land forces, and a strong logistic plan, won the day. Britain's Col Wavell (Field Marshall Wavell in WW2) described the Anzac horsemen this way:

Endowed with a natural aptitude for the work and a fine physique, the Dominion horsemen soon became seasoned warriors, and from now till the end of the war did magnificent work. As now in the desert, so later in the steep, rocky hills of Judea and Moab, they showed the value of enterprising horsemanship even in terrain the most unpromising for mounted troops.²²

The Battle of Romani was the beginning of a much under-reported campaign in Sinai and Palestine where the Anzacs, under command Australia's Lt Gen Sir Harry Chauvel and New Zealand's Maj Gen Edward Chaytor, became the mounted vanguard of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, first under General Murray then General Allenby. There is much more to be told of this campaign with its significance to the Great War and the world today.

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WANTED

A copy of *British Army Pensioners Abroad, 1722-1899* by Norman K. Crowder.
Originally published by Genealogical Publishing Co., Baltimore, Maryland USA, 1995.
Must be complete but condition immaterial.

If you can assist, please contact

A.F. (Tony) Harris

tonail@bigpond.com

PO Box 550, Mitcham, South Australia, 5062

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Share your discoveries ...

Have you come across a book, magazine, DVD or website which you think may be of interest to readers of *Sabretache*? Why don't you write a brief description of it – include illustrations if you think they help – and email your contribution (editor@mhsa.org.au) with the subject line 'Page and Screen', or contact the editor with your idea.

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²¹ Gullett, p.192.

²² Col A.P. Wavell, *The Palestine Campaigns*, Constable, London, 1928, p.45.

THE VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS AND WESTERN AUSTRALIAN RAILWAYS DURING WORLD WAR TWO – PART 2

Michael Firth

Listed below is the final part of the table of railwaymen who applied for permission to join the local VDC units and whether permission was granted (Part 1 appeared in the December 2015 issue, vol.56, no.4, pp.54-60). The table is based on the information taken from the file titled 'Volunteer Defence Corps – Conditions etc.' held by the State Records Office in Perth, Western Australia.¹ Included in the table are the person's name and the local VDC unit which would have operated in the area where the person was located. The unit shown may not be the unit they joined as this can only be confirmed by examining their service records, and some men might have joined a unit later once permission had been granted as numerous men applied several times for permission.

Walker, A.W.	App. Boilmaker	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Warman, A.A.	Moulder's Asst.	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Warnock, L.	Boilermaker Asst.	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Way, J.N.	App. Fitter	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Weaire, J.L.	Fitter	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Wearmouth, R.	Chainman	Perth	N	3rd Bn Swan
Webb, R.	Fitter	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Wells, C.	Slotter	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Williams, J.	App. Fitter	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Williams, A.J.	Boilermaker	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Williams, H.T.	Asst. Engr	Perth	Y- part time	3rd Bn Swan
Williams, J.S.	Process Worker Annx	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Willoughby, S.W.	Fitter's Assistant	Perth	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Withnell, G.	Lifter	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Wright, S.	B/Mkr's Assitant	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Wright, W.J.	Telegraph Operator	Perth	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Wymond, H.L.	Wireman	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Yule, J.F.	Sub Foreman Turner	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Brand, H.S.	Painter	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Brooks, G.A.	Painter's Assistant	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Broomhall, G.M.	Welder	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Bruce, T.W.	Fitter	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Butterley, D.C.	App. C.& W. Builder	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Grant, C.	Coppersmith Asst.	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Macpherson, C.W.	Turner	Midland	Y	3rd Bn Swan
Armstrong	Carpenter	Bunbury	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Barnett, A.J.	Station Master Line & Signal	Waroona	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Bleakly, L.	Maintainer	Bunbury	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Brearly, T.H.	Fireman	Collie	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Burrell	Repairer	Bunbury	Y	4th Bn Bunbury

¹ SRO WA 'Volunteer Defence Corps- conditions etc.' S- 1247, C- 1240, I- 1942/12334.

Burton, A.V.J	Cleaner	Collie	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Bye	Repairer	Brunswick	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Callaghan, J.C.	Cleaner	Collie	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Church, G.	Station Master	Wokalup	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Cosby, A.W.	Repairer	Brunswick	Y- part time	4th Bn Bunbury
Davidson, S.J.	Asst. Station Master	Brunswick	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Dorrington, A.W.	C & W Examiner	Brunswick	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Flynn, O.	Ganger	Bunbury	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Hatton, W.J.	Fireman	Collie North	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Hidderley, W.H.	Repairer	Dandalup	Y- part time	4th Bn Bunbury
Hough, A.J.	Junior Clerk	Bunbury	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Howard, W.G.	Guard	Brunswick	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Isaac, G	Fireman	Collie	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Johnston	Repairer	Brunswick	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Jones, H.	Repairer	Fernbrook	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Jones, T.E.B.	Junior Worker	Collie	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Koch, A.J.	Repairer	Fernbrook	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Lennon, W.T.J.	Fireman	Collie	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Lowther	Repairer	Brunswick	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
McInerney, J.	Guard	Bunbury	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
McQuade, I.R.	Fireman	Collie	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Meddings, R.A.	Length Runner	Brunswick	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Morrison, J.S.	Coal Inspector	Collie	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Napier, G.	Fireman	Pinjarra	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Neale, A.	Porter	Collie	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Nicholson, A.	Ganger	Bluff Point	Y- part time	4th Bn Bunbury
Price, D.O.	N.S.M.	Harvey	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Rossiter, J.	Fitters Asst.	Collie	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Ryan, J.D.	Fireman	Collie	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Sergeant	Ganger	Brunswick North	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Smith, W.E.	Station Master	Dandalup	N	4th Bn Bunbury
Thompson	Repairer	Brunswick	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Tower, H.J.	Cleaner	Brunswick	Y	4th Bn Bunbury
Baarsel, H.	Ganger	Noggerup	Y	5th Bn Busselton
Briggs, H.J.	Station Master	Jardee	N	5th Bn Busselton
Clayton, F.W.	Repairer	Mullalyup	Y- part time	5th Bn Busselton
Cooke, R.G.	Asst. Station Master	Balingup	N	5th Bn Busselton
Higgins, C.	Guard	Busselton	Y	5th Bn Busselton
Jeffery, F.	Station Master	Boyup Brook	N	5th Bn Busselton
Kitschke, A.R.	Repairer	Noggerup	Y	5th Bn Busselton
Laurence, J.D.	Ganger	Mullalyup	N	5th Bn Busselton
Leeder, R.W.	Guard	Busselton	Y	5th Bn Busselton
Lund, D.	Ganger	Boyanup	N	5th Bn Busselton
Lyon, P.G.	Repairer	Mullalyup	Y- part time	5th Bn Busselton
Madden, J.H.	Repairer	Boyanup	Y- part time	5th Bn Busselton

Myers, W.P.	Repairer	Noggerup	Y	5th Bn Busselton
Sanders, J.H.	N.S.M.	Boyanup	Y	5th Bn Busselton
Scott, A.G.	Repairer	Boyanup	Y	5th Bn Busselton
Sullivan, R.W.	Repairer	Greenbushes	Y- part time	5th Bn Busselton
Tylor, A.G.	Repairer	Noggerup	Y	5th Bn Busselton
Viner, F.	Repairer	Greenbushes	Y- part time	5th Bn Busselton
Wadsworth, R.W.	Repairer	Boyanup	Y	5th Bn Busselton
Walton, A.	Station Master	Balingup	N	5th Bn Busselton
Williams, C.L.	Repairer	Greenbushes	Y- part time	5th Bn Busselton
Alford, T.	Ganger	Tambellup	N	6th Bn Albany
Bitters, A.K.	Station Master	Tambellup	N	6th Bn Albany
Bovey, T.	Carpenter Asst.	Albany	Y	6th Bn Albany
Fisher, A.E.	Labourer	Albany	Y	6th Bn Albany
Harsley, W.H.	Repairer	Elleker	Y- part time	6th Bn Albany
Hutchings, S.	Repairer	Torbay	Y- part time	6th Bn Albany
Jones, G.D.	Repairer	Tambellup	Y- part time	6th Bn Albany
Lawson, L.	Labourer	Albany	Y	6th Bn Albany
Magee, B.	Station Master	Mount Barker	N	6th Bn Albany
McCormick, C.	Leading Carpenter	Albany	Y	6th Bn Albany
Moran, F.	Temp. Carpenter	Albany	Y- part time	6th Bn Albany
Newman, J.E.	Carpenter	Albany	Y- part time	6th Bn Albany
Paddick, D.	R. & D. Ptr.	Katanning	N	6th Bn Albany
Retallick, W.J.	Asst. Station Master	Cranbrook	N	6th Bn Albany
Webb, A.S.	Station Master	Tambellup	N	6th Bn Albany
Wilkins, M.	Station Master	Gnowanerup	N	6th Bn Albany
Williams, A.J.B.	C & W Examiner	Albany	N	6th Bn Albany
Ayling, K.J.	Junior Worker	Geraldton	N	7th Bn Geraldton
Ayling, W.	Labourer	Geraldton Warf	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Baker, J.G	Labourer	Geraldton Warf	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Barnden, E.F.	Repairer	Perenjori	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Beckman, G.A.	Insp. Per. Way	Geraldton	N	7th Bn Geraldton
Britten, E.J.	Wagon Builder	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Browne, A.J.	Shunter	Mullewa	N	7th Bn Geraldton
Bunter, R.B.	Repairer	Nanson	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Butler, W.J.	Ganger	Pindar Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Cato, F.	Labourer	Warf Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Cleary, E.J.	Carpenter	Warf	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Curtin, J.J.	Ganger	Nanson	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Dowling, J.J.	Ganger	Mullewa	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Fraser, A.	Plumber	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Gosnells, J.	Costs Clerk	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Hall, A.K.	Inspector's Clerk	Mullewa	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Hayes, J.	C in C	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Heap, J.E.L.	Repairer	Perenjori	Y	7th Bn Geraldton

Herbert, E.S.	Repairer	Nanson	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Johnson, G.S.	Porter	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Kerr, J.	Length Runner	Pintharuka Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Lynch, F.E.	Labourer	Warf	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
McCagh, A.	Repairer	Perenjori Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
McDermott, J.J.	Labourer	Warf	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
McLean, A.D.	Asst. L. & S. Maint.	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
McLean, A.D.	Asst. L. & S. Maint.	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
McShane, T.	Repairer	Tardun	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Merritt, F.	Repairer	Tardun	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Mills, M.L.	Ganger	Pintharuka	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Mitchell, M.	Repairer	Nanson	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Mullender, H.G.	Repairer	Nanson	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Normington, H.	Ganger	Perenjori	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Norwood, C.	Length Runner	Mullewa	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
O'Donnell, M.	Repairer	Pintharuka	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
O'Hare, M.L.	Repairer	Pintharuka	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Rose W.L.	Length Runner	Geraldton	N	7th Bn Geraldton
Rundle, S.E.	Blacksmith	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Sculley, S.W.	Repairer	Nanson	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Shanahan, T.P.	N.S.M.	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Shaw, L.H	Repairer	Mullewa	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Sims, R.I.	Repairer	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Stonehouse, W.G.	Carpenter	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Sutherland, G.A.	Asst. Engineer	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Wallace, J.G.	Ganger	Tardun	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Walsh, J.P.	Ganger	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Ward, L.	Repairer	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
White, H.	Transport Clerk	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Young, W.F.	Junior Clerk	Geraldton	Y	7th Bn Geraldton
Clements, F.W.	Driver	Kalgoorlie	N	8th Bn Goldfields
Dunn, E. R.	Repairer	Scaddan	Y- part time	8th Bn Goldfields
Dunn, F.A.	Ganger	Esperance	N	8th Bn Goldfields
Foord, A.	Clerk	Kalgoorlie	N	8th Bn Goldfields
Harris, R.	Driver	Kalgoorlie	N	8th Bn Goldfields
Marshall, W.E.	Driver	Kalgoorlie	N	8th Bn Goldfields
McCudden, W.J.	Repairer	Esperance	Y- part time	8th Bn Goldfields
Miller, R.	Cleaner	Kalgoorlie	N	8th Bn Goldfields
Randall, A.	Clerk	Kalgoorlie	N	8th Bn Goldfields
Stevens, W.L.	Repairer	Pioneer	Y- part time	8th Bn Goldfields
Tetlaw, J.	Clerk	Kalgoorlie	N	8th Bn Goldfields
Turner, A.T.	Repairer	Esperance	Y- part time	8th Bn Goldfields
White, A.W.	Repairer	Esperance	Y- part time	8th Bn Goldfields
Worth, C.L.	Repairer	Salmon Gums	Y	8th Bn Goldfields
Bailey, S.R.	Porter	Northam	Y	9th Bn Northam

Bellas, T.	Guard	Northam	Y	9th Bn Northam
Bradfield, H.B.	Checker	Northam	N	9th Bn Northam
Brown, C.G.	Guard	Toodyay	N	9th Bn Northam
Brown, J.A.	Repairer	Goomalling	Y- part time	9th Bn Northam
Campbell, W.F.	Ganger	Grass Valley	N	9th Bn Northam
Chester, A.C.	Fitters Asst.	Northam	Y	9th Bn Northam
Clements, G.H.J.	Stricker	Northam	Y	9th Bn Northam
Copper, J.	Labourer	Northam	Y- part time	9th Bn Northam
Cumming, A.A.	Repairer	Quairading	Y	9th Bn Northam
Cunningham, J.	Guard	Wongan Hills	N	9th Bn Northam
Cusworth, C.	S.W. Ptr	Crackline	Y	9th Bn Northam
Dawson, W.	Station Master	Toodyay	N	9th Bn Northam
Dennisen, R.	Clerk	Northam	N	9th Bn Northam
Doig, J.C.	Station Master	Bakers Hill	N	9th Bn Northam
Easthope, F.T.	Guard	York	N	9th Bn Northam
Edwards, C.A.G.	Fitter	York	N	9th Bn Northam
Ferguson, B.E.	Repairer	Calingiri	Y	9th Bn Northam
Flaherty, L.	Station Master	Bolgart	N	9th Bn Northam
Gallacher, W.	Repairer	Spencers Brook	Y	9th Bn Northam
Hackett, E.P.	Ganger	Crackline	N	9th Bn Northam
Haines, F.H.	Ganger	Calingiri	N	9th Bn Northam
Halse, J.H.	Length Runner	Crackline	N	9th Bn Northam
Harman, J.	Guard	York	N	9th Bn Northam
Harmer, R.	Station Master	Quairading	N	9th Bn Northam
Hart, F.H.	Asst. Station Master	Meckering	N	9th Bn Northam
Hatswell, C.	Telegraph	Northam	Y	9th Bn Northam
Hawkins, C.	Guard	York	N	9th Bn Northam
Hayward, W.A.C.	Ganger	Northam Spencers	Y- part time	9th Bn Northam
Henderson, J.A.	Repairer	Brook	Y	9th Bn Northam
Illingworth, K.A.	Dist. Supervisor	Northam	N	9th Bn Northam
Jackson, A.D.	L. & S. Maintainer	Northam	Y- part time	9th Bn Northam
King, A.	Station Master	Meckering	N	9th Bn Northam
Kirkwood, K.R.	Repairer	Grass Valley	Y- part time	9th Bn Northam
MacGregor, S.L.	Repairer	Cunderdin	Y- part time	9th Bn Northam
Martin, D.	Carpenter	Northam	Y- part time	9th Bn Northam
McCarthy, J.	Station Master	Beverley	N	9th Bn Northam
Orr, J.R.	Station Master	Dowerin	N	9th Bn Northam
Palmer, S.	Sig.	Northam Spencers	Y	9th Bn Northam
Richardson, A.J.	Repairer Asst. Line & Signal	Brook	Y	9th Bn Northam
Rickie, J.G.	Mntr	Northam	Y	9th Bn Northam
Robeson, J.G.	Repairer	Grass Valley	Y	9th Bn Northam
Shepherd, P.	Storeman	Northam	Y- part time	9th Bn Northam
Stephens, C.H.	Clerk	York	N	9th Bn Northam
Thyer, G.A.	Staff Clerk	Northam	Y	9th Bn Northam

Watkins, F.	Clerk	Northam	N	9th Bn Northam
Watters, W.J.	Ganger	Greenhills	N	9th Bn Northam
Winchester, E.	Carpenter	Northam	Y- part time	9th Bn Northam
Winslade, F.O.	C. in Charge	Northam	N	9th Bn Northam
Wolfenden, A.	Clerk	Northam	N	9th Bn Northam
Ashworth, D.R.	Repairer	Piesseville	Y- part time	10th Bn Narrogin
Becker, A.E.F.	Repairer	Dumbleyung	Y- part time	10th Bn Narrogin
Brough, H.	Guard	Wagin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Causebrook, J.	Porter	Narrogin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Cunniffe, W.M.	Repairer	Dumbleyung	Y- part time	10th Bn Narrogin
Delehaunty, F.J.	Shunter	Wagin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Delmenico, J.	Ganger	Yearling	Y- part time	10th Bn Narrogin
Denton, W.	Repairer	Dumbleyung	Y- part time	10th Bn Narrogin
Dickson, A.S.	R. & D. Ptr.	Wagin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Dunstan, E.A.	Guard	Wagin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Evans, J.A.	Repairer	Piesseville	Y- part time	10th Bn Narrogin
Gilchrist, D.	Station Master	Lake Grace	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Gordon, G.	Repairer	Dumbleyung	Y- part time	10th Bn Narrogin
Hunt, W.G.	Porter	Narrogin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Jones, D.	Station Master	Dumbleyung	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Kirkham, H.	Ganger	Kulin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Lawrence, H.	Fitters Asst.	Narrogin	Y	10th Bn Narrogin
Loftus, T.M.	Asst. Station Master	Corrigin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Mackie, A.G.	Junior Clerk	Narrogin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Moon, A.J.	Storeman	Narrogin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Munro, A.K.	Repairer	Williams	Y- part time	10th Bn Narrogin
Pattern W.	Ganger	Kukerin	Y	10th Bn Narrogin
Pilling, L.E.	Guard	Lake Grace	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Reads, J.	Repairer	Karlgarin	Y	10th Bn Narrogin
Ribe, J.H.	Driver	Narrogin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Stephens, L.	Guard	Wagin	N	10th Bn Narrogin
Stevenson, R.	Repairer	Brookton	Y- part time	10th Bn Narrogin
Wood, J.C.	Ganger	Piesseville	Y- part time	10th Bn Narrogin
Wood, L.C.	Repairer	Williams	Y- part time	10th Bn Narrogin
Braithwaite, L.C	Repairer	Muradup	Y	12th Bn Jarrah
Cowie, J.	Station Master	Williams	N	12th Bn Jarrah
Fare, J.	Repairer	Duranillin	Y	12th Bn Jarrah
Forbes, C.	Repairer	Duranillin	Y	12th Bn Jarrah
Roberts, J.A.	Repairer	Boddington	Y	12th Bn Jarrah
Thompson, A.J.	Repairer	Boddington	Y	12th Bn Jarrah
Clatworthy, L.K.	Repairer	Ballidu	Y	13th Bn Moora
Collins, M.G.	Repairer	Ballidu	Y	13th Bn Moora
Hambleton, J.	Station Master	Buntine	N	13th Bn Moora
Massam, W.E.	Repairer	Ballidu	Y	13th Bn Moora
Russell, L.W.	Station Master	Dalwallinu	N	13th Bn Moora
Twite, B.R.	Ganger	Ballidu	N	13th Bn Moora

Batchelor, W.	Ganger	Nukarni Southern	N	15th Bn Merredin
Brown, D.	L. & S. Maintainer	Cross	Y- part time	15th Bn Merredin
Bryan, A.W.	Repairer	Korbel	Y	15th Bn Merredin
Caldwell, A.	Guard	Merredin	N	15th Bn Merredin
Daly, W.B.	Repairer	Koorda	Y- part time	15th Bn Merredin
Davey, L.C.	Repairer	Mukinbudin	Y- part time	15th Bn Merredin
Ding, N.K.	Repairer	Korbel	Y	15th Bn Merredin
Emery, C.	Station Master	Mukinbudin	N	15th Bn Merredin
Ford, R.	Station Master	Bruce Rock	N	15th Bn Merredin
Gamble, V.	Guard	Merredin	N	15th Bn Merredin
Hall, A.	Station Master	Doodlakine	N	15th Bn Merredin
Hanley, J.	Elec. Fitter	Merredin	Y	15th Bn Merredin
Joss, A.E.	Ganger	Mukinbudin	N	15th Bn Merredin
Kennedy, J.K.	Station Master	Tammin	N	15th Bn Merredin
Lyall, G.B.	Ganger	Hines Hill	Y	15th Bn Merredin
McKinnon, G.	Sig.	Merredin	N	15th Bn Merredin
Mills, J.A.	Repairer	Wyalkatchem	Y- part time	15th Bn Merredin
Naylor, L.F.A.	Ganger	Wyalkatchem	N	15th Bn Merredin
Nevin, V.	Station Master	Kununoppin	N	15th Bn Merredin
Rowley, F.	Temp. Repairer	Nukarni	Y- part time	15th Bn Merredin
Rutherford, W.	Sig.	Merredin	N	15th Bn Merredin
Scarlett, A.E.	Repairer	Nukarni	Y	15th Bn Merredin
Smith, L.S.	Guard	Wyalkatchem	N	15th Bn Merredin
Starcevitich, J.	Repairer	Korbel	Y	15th Bn Merredin
Stewart, W.A.	Ganger	Korbel	Y	15th Bn Merredin
Taylor, C.H.	Repairer	Korbel	Y	15th Bn Merredin
Zagami, V.	Asst. Station Master	Bruce Rock	N	15th Bn Merredin
Burgess, C.J.	Ganger	Yalgoo	N	16th Bn Murchinson
Carlson, A.D.	Repairer	Cue	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
Clarkson, E.E.	Inspector's Clerk	Cue	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
Hart, J.W.	Repairer	Mullewa	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
Hill, J.J.	Station Master	Wiluna	N	16th Bn Murchinson
Hince, J.A.	Repairer	Cue	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
Hulbert, F.W.	Station Master	Big Bell	N	16th Bn Murchinson
Logan, A.A.	Asst Station Master	Wiluna	N	16th Bn Murchinson
Martin, E.	Repairer	Cue	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
McDonald, J.	Repairer	Wurarga	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
Moyle, A.	Clerk	Perth	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
O'Donnell, E.P.J.	Repairer	Wurarga	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
O'Malley, S.E.	Repairer	Yalgoo	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
Penman, W.	Ganger	Wurarga	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
Pike, D.E.	Asst. Station Master	Esperance	N	16th Bn Murchinson
Sheehan, R.A.	Repairer	Wurarga	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
Silver, T.	Length Runner	Cue	Y	16th Bn Murchinson
Worroll, K.A.	Repairer	Cue	Y	16th Bn Murchinson