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The Raid on Jifjafa – April 1916 (Part 2)

Col Jim Underwood (ret'd)

The plan for the approach march to Jifjafa called for the establishment of a rear base at the cluster of cisterns in the Wadi um Muksheib near Moiya Harab. (Moiya Harab, a Bedouin campsite, was located on a tributary wadi approximately one kilometre south of the main wadi.) These cisterns, some 56 kilometres south east of Serapeum – the start point for the raid – and 30 kilometres south west of Jifjafa, had been examined by Captain Wearne during his earlier reconnaissance and were the only confirmed source of water between the Suez Canal and Jifjafa. This source would need to be secured to ensure water for the horses for the return trip to Serapeum.

Closer to Jifjafa, a forward base was to be established at Point 1340 – 15 kilometres north east of the rear base and 15 kilometres south west of Jifjafa. Those elements accompanying the raiding force, but not essential for the actual assault – in particular, camels carrying water and forage for the horses – were to remain there until collected during the withdrawal from Jifjafa. Additionally, this forward base 'formed a supporting point with water supply to fall back on in case of difficulties.'¹ Finally, an observation post and the 'starting point' for the attack were to be established at Point 1082 – six kilometres to the west south west of Jifjafa. From this 'starting point', at the south west base of the feature and screened from Jifjafa, the actual assault on the Turkish post was to commence.

10 April 1916

Shortly after last light on 10 April, the Camel Transport convoy, escorted by the Bikaner Camel Corps and dismounted Light Horsemen, passed through the forward defences east of the Suez Canal at Serapeum and marched in a south easterly direction to cut the course of the Wadi um Muksheib. The train would then follow the bed of the wadi upstream until it reached a bivouac site near Point 850, 20 kilometres north west of the Moiya Harab cisterns. There it would wait until the Light Horse squadron and other mounted elements caught up. This was expected to be about midnight on 11 April.

11 April 1916

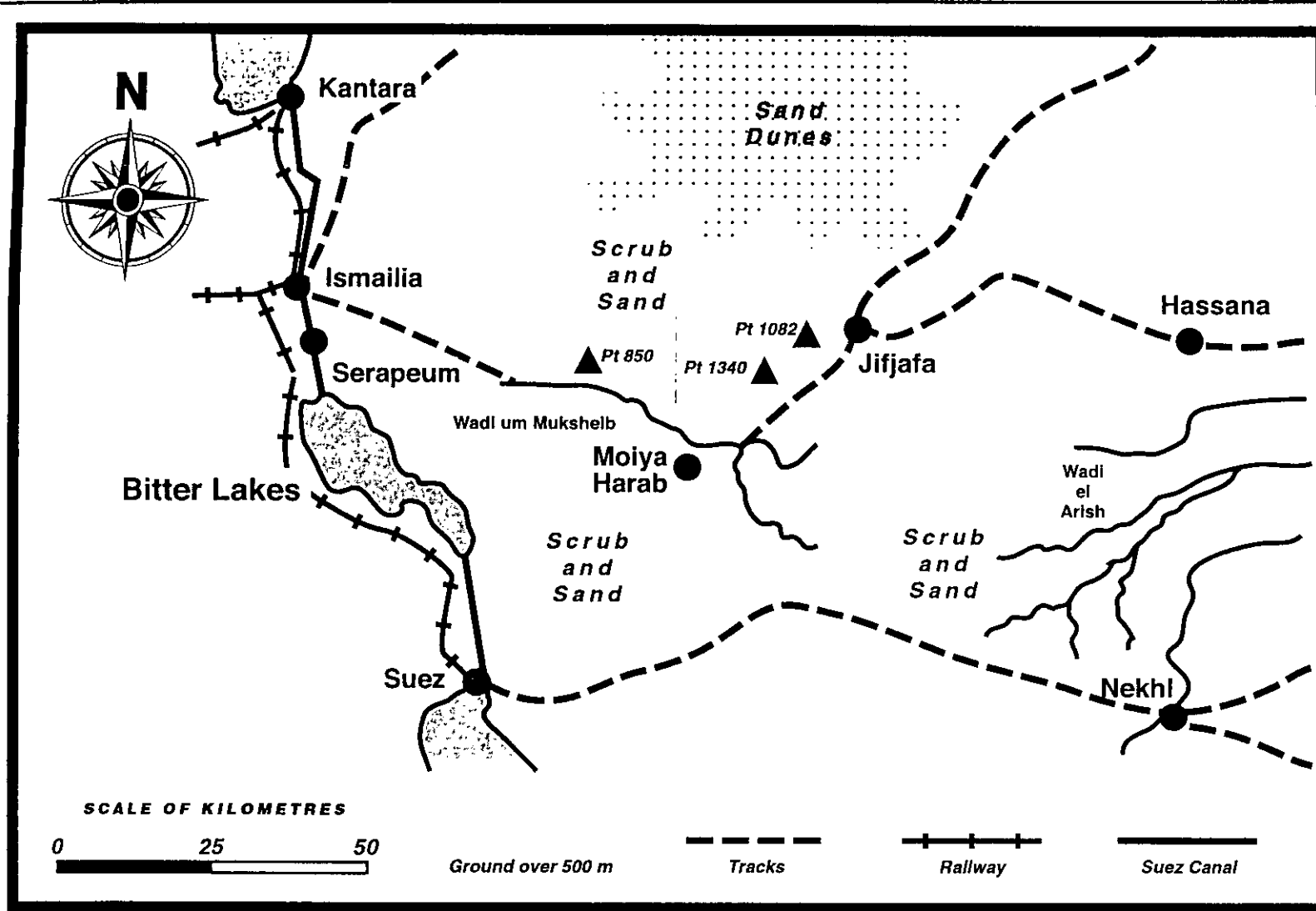
On the morning of 11 April the country between the Canal and Moiya Harab was scouted by a Royal Flying Corps (RFC) aircraft. All was apparently clear except for 'a party of peaceful Arabs' sighted in the vicinity of Moiya Harab.²

At 1407 hours 11 April, the head of the mounted column passed through the forward defences at Serapeum intending to follow the same route to the rendezvous with the camel train. The commander 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade – Brigadier General J M Antill – who observed the troops' departure recorded in his diary '... men and horses well turned out – all looking fit and hard ...'.³

¹ AWM45 Item 7/8 Covering Letter by Lieutenant General Sir A J Godley on Report on Raid on Jif Jafa 10th to 15th April, 1916, p. 2.

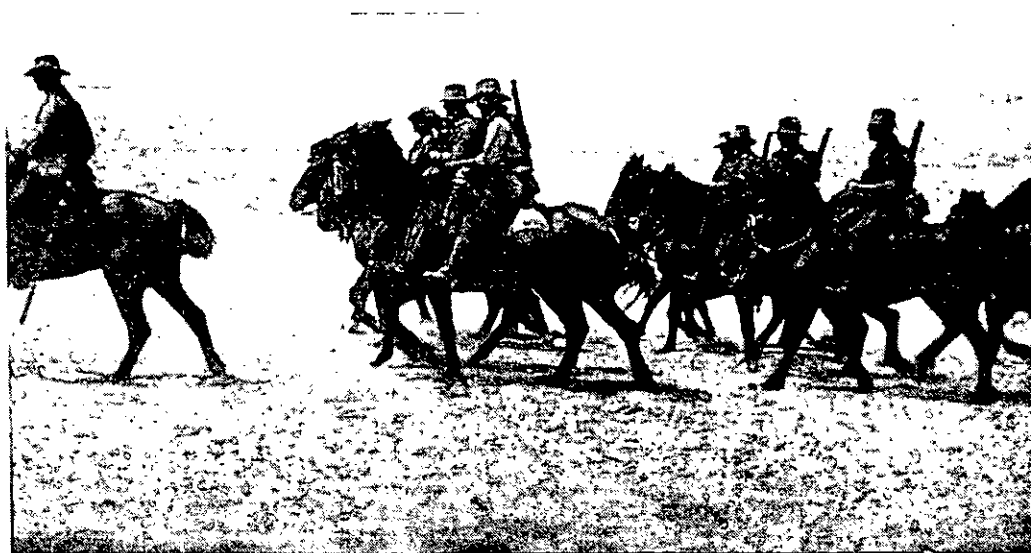
² AWM4 Item 1/9/1: Intelligence Summary. General Headquarters, Egyptian Expeditionary Force. p. 419.

³ AWM 3DRL 6458: War Diary – Major General J M Anthill, C.B., C.M.G., p. 63.



Map 2. Approach March to Jifjafa

The horse column proceeded in a south easterly direction at a normal walk – approximately four miles per hour (6.4 kilometres per hour) – with a halt of 10 minutes to each hour and resuming the march on the hour. At 1750 hours the column halted to feed the horses and for the evening meal of cold bully beef and biscuits. The only water available for the men and horses was that carried in the trooper's waterbottle. Initially, the going was over soft sand and the two ambulance sandcarts of the 3rd Light Horse Field Ambulance bringing up the rear of the column found the pace too fast even though the carts were pulled by four-horse teams instead of the normal two-horse team. During the evening meal halt, the OC of the medical detachment – Major Rowden-White – asked Major Scott to slacken the pace of the head of the column as the carts had to travel an additional three or four minutes at every halt and even trot to catch up. The column moved off again at 1930 hours. Fortunately, the soft sand gave way to harder ground and the sandcarts were able to keep up with the column although it moved at a fast walk in the cooler night conditions. The Wadi um Muksheib was struck at 2130 hours and the column turned upstream along the bed of the wadi. At this point the bed of the wadi was hard sand averaging 50 metres in width and giving 'the appearance of a prepared causeway'⁴. In his after action report, Major Scott noted that in this section of the wadi 'the travelling was very good ... and except for a few short patches which were sandy was fit for field artillery to move at the trot'⁵. The sides of the wadi rose steeply 10-15 metres above the bed. The watercourse itself was marked by isolated clumps of stunted pine trees at intervals on either bank. North of the wadi the terrain was a level plain with no cover; south of the wadi the ground rose to low hills. At 2300 hours the mounted column caught up to the camel train at its bivouac near Point 850. Both elements bivouacked there for the remainder of the night.



Major Scott leads the Light Horse on the march to Jifjafa. Note he is carrying a sabre.
AWM A00221

⁴ AWM4 Item 14/23/6: War Diary – 4th Field Company, Australian Engineers – Engineer Officer's Report on Reconnaissance with Light Horse to Jif Jafa 11/4/16 to 15/4/16

⁵ AWM4 Item 10/3/15: War Diary – 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade. There is no War Diary for the 9th Australian Light Horse Regiment for March and April 1916.

12 April 1916

At 0715 hours a supporting RFC aircraft dropped a message to the column that it had sighted signs of Bedouin camps in the vicinity of Moiya Harab during its early morning reconnaissance ahead of and to the flanks of the raiding column. The column left the overnight bivouac at 0730 hours and continued up the Wadi um Muksheib. At 0900 hours the squadron reached a point some eight kilometres north west of the Moiya Harab cisterns where the wadi entered a range of broken hills and the bed became rocky and more difficult for wheeled vehicles. Some three kilometres west of the Moiya Harab cisterns, Major Scott halted the column. One Light Horse troop was detached which scouted around the north and east of the cisterns, as Bedouin had reported that a Turkish patrol had been seen in that locality some days previously. When this troop reported 'all clear', the column resumed its march. The cisterns, which were identified by two ancient fig trees and the presence of birds attracted by the water, were reached at 1120 hours. Immediately the engineer detachment erected the canvas troughing which was filled with water drawn from a cistern using the rotary hand pump carried by the detachment. (It is presumed this troughing and pump were carried on the detachment's horses and not on the stores camels allotted to the detachment as the camel train did not arrive at the cisterns until some two hours later.) The horses were able to have their first decent drink since leaving the Railhead Camp at Serapeum some 22 hours earlier.

As soon as their horses were watered, three Light Horse troops were sent out to the north, south east and south of the cisterns to reconnoitre the surrounding country for water and to search for hostile Bedouin parties in the vicinity. These reconnaissance also had the aim of deceiving any watching Bedouin or Turkish patrols as to the objective of the column. No reconnaissance was carried out towards Jifjafa. Although fresh camel and human tracks were detected, no Bedouin were caught by these patrols. However, 9 previously unrecorded cisterns were located. While some of these cisterns were empty, others were estimated to contain a total of 140,000 gallons (637,000 litres) of water. It was 1730 hours by the time the three troops returned to the rear base bivouac.

In the meantime, the camel train under escort of the Bikaner Camel Corps, which had left the overnight bivouac at the same time as the mounted column, arrived at the cisterns at 1320 hours. During the morning, three Bedouin and a camel had been captured by the Light Horsemen who handed them over to the camel train for security. These personnel were held at the rear base and later released after the raiding force returned there. Five Bedouin were, however, known to have escaped. The camels whose loads had been used up and those carrying forage and rations for the return trip to Serapeum were left at the rear base. It was also decided to leave the two ambulance sandcarts there as a close reconnaissance indicated that wheeled vehicles would have difficulty moving over the initial leg of the route between the rear base and the planned forward base at Point 1340. Sixteen other ranks from the mounted squadron and four Light Horse camel drivers under command of Lieutenant A H H Nelson remained at the rear base to protect the camel train and to secure the water supply. Four Australian sappers were also left there to maintain the water supply and to complete a detailed survey of the cisterns.

In the late afternoon a British patrol consisting of one officer and 10 other ranks from the squadron of the Middlesex Yeomanry patrolling to the south of the Jifjafa force arrived unexpectedly to bolster the garrison. Contemporary records omit any order or reason for this patrol to join up with the Major Scott's force. It is probable the patrol headed to a known source of water. It is fortunate that there was no friendly clash on this occasion.

Night 12/13 April 1916

At 1900 hours the attacking column moved off north east up a branch wadi to establish the forward base at Point 1340. The going on this leg of the approach march was more difficult than any encountered previously. The advance was very slow; the force taking some seven and a half hours to cover the 15 kilometres from the rear base to Point 1340. The first three kilometres of the route along the boulder-strewn bed of the branch wadi were very rough and impassable to wheeled vehicles and caused difficulties for the camel train. Apparently camels have poor night vision! The course followed was not the main caravan route between Moiya Harab and Jifjafa – the Darb el Maghaza – but cross country. On climbing out of the head of the wadi, the column reached a high stoney plateau where the going was easier. During this night march the Light Horse squadron traveled for only 40 minutes in each hour, then halted and dismounted to allow the camel train to maintain contact.

At 0230 hours 13 April the column reached the planned forward base site at Point 1340. The Bikaner Camel Corps, the Royal Engineers Wireless Detachment and the camel train, including 25 dismounted Light Horse camel drivers, were left at this location under command of Captain B B Ragless, second in command of the Light Horse squadron. Meanwhile, as the column advanced towards Point 1340, the rear base came under persistent sniping from Bedouin. This shooting continued throughout the night and on several occasions the garrison returned fire to drive off raiders who made probing forays and one determined attack against the bivouac. Despite the heavy sniping and probing attacks, there were no British casualties. The number of Bedouin casualties is unknown. The 9th Light Horse regimental history simply states that the Bedouin 'retired taking their casualties with them.'⁶

Attack on Jifjafa – 13 April 1916

Descriptions of the action at Jifjafa in the Official Records are sparse. There are also some contradictions between the accounts published in H S Gullett's Official History 1914-1918 Volume VII, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine*, and in Major T H Darley's *With the Ninth Light Horse in the Great War* – the unit's regimental history. The following account is largely based on after-action reports prepared by Major Scott, Major Rowden-White and Lieutenant Coghlan.

The attacking column remained at the forward base at Point 1340 for three hours. After watering the horses from water carried in *fanatis* and a cold breakfast of bully beef and biscuits washed down with water, the column moved out at 0530 hours on the final nine kilometre march to the 'starting point' for the attack. The assault force was composed of the following elements:

	Officers	Other Ranks
Force Headquarters	4	–
Light Horse Squadron	5	106
Engineer Detachment	1	5
RFC Liaison Party	2	2
Field Ambulance Detachment	1	6
Interpreter	–	1
Total	13	120

The column arrived at the south west base of Point 1082 at 0730 hours. While the troopers waited for their final orders, the command group ascended to the summit of Point 1082 – a climb

⁶ Major T H Darley, *With the Ninth Light Horse in the Great War*, Adelaide: The Hassell Press, 1924, p 37.

of 100 feet above the plateau – to observe the Jifjafa post for the first time through field glasses. At the same time, the RFC liaison party erected their ground wireless station at the foot of the hill and awaited the report from the 14 Squadron aircraft then scouting the Jifjafa position.

From earlier RFC flight reports it was known that each time a British aircraft reconnoitred the Jifjafa position, the Turkish garrison scattered in small groups into the low scrubby hills to the north and west of the post. At 0800 hours the supporting aircraft dropped a message into the FUP that stated 'All was clear'.⁷ Presumably, this meant that the crew had not observed any large bodies of Turkish troops near Jifjafa that could interfere with the raid and that the post itself appeared deserted. Major Scott therefore decided to launch the attack as soon as possible while the enemy had lost cohesion.⁸

The plan of attack was as follows: Lieutenant McDonald was ordered to take his troop of approximately 30 men as quickly as possible around the west and north of the Point 1082 feature to occupy a dominant knoll about 1.5 kilometres north of the Turkish post. This manoeuvre would require a ride of approximately seven kilometres across broken country on either side of the Wadi el Hegaiib. At the same time, Lieutenant Pender would move his troop to the east of Point 1082 and passing south of the enemy camp occupy a blocking position on the main caravan route about 1.5 kilometres east of Jifjafa. This was the most likely direction that any reinforcing Turkish troops would approach from and the route escaping Turkish troops would probably flee along.

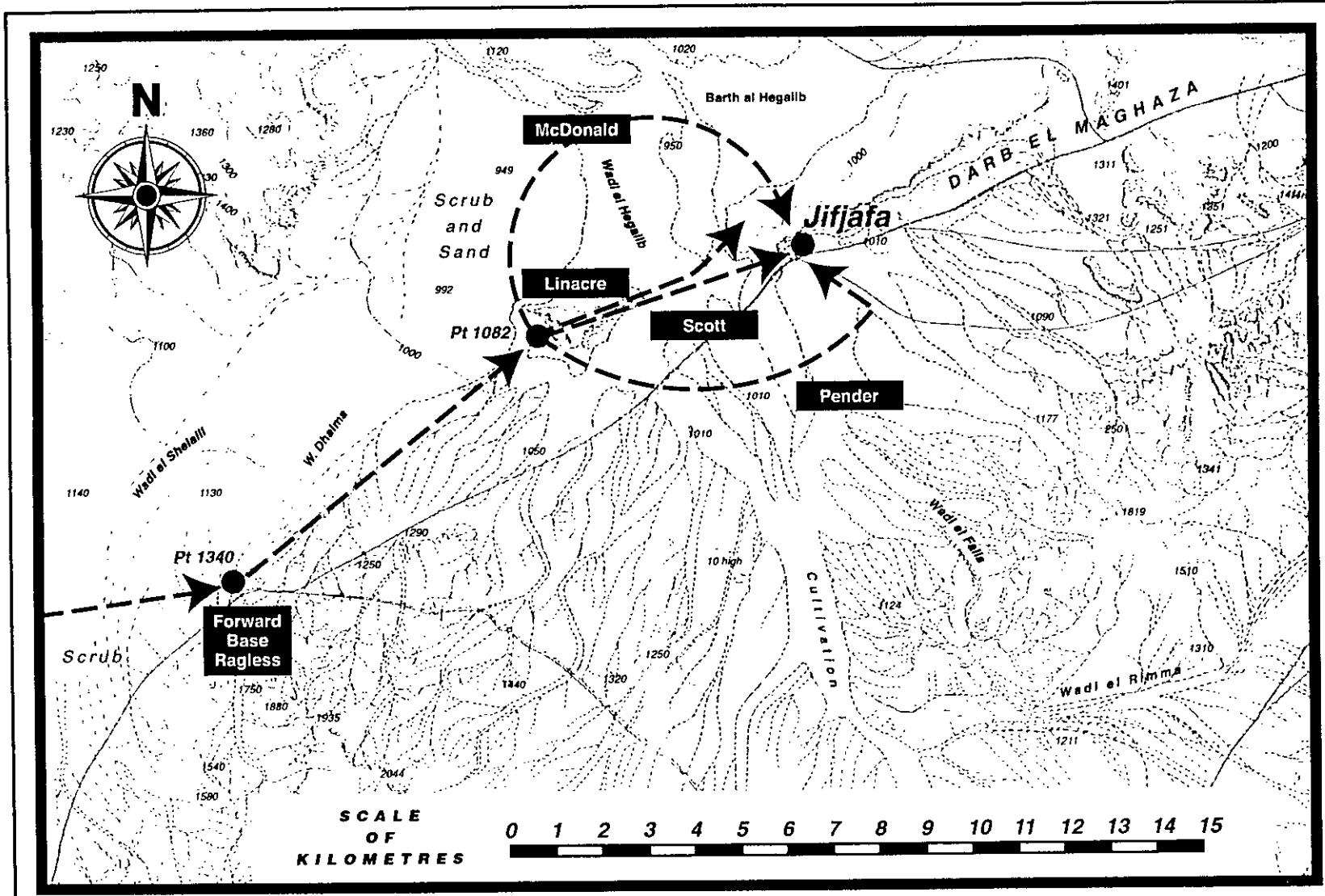
Lieutenant Linacre and his troop (less 8 men) were to deploy north east and make a frontal attack on the enemy post. Actual numbers of personnel in each troop are not recorded but it is estimated that 22 to 24 men would have remained in Lieutenant Linacre's troop to make the frontal attack. Of the 8 men detached from Lieutenant Linacre's troop, 4 troopers were provided to escort the 4th Field Company detachment which would immediately move forward to destroy the drilling rigs and bores as soon as the firefight started and before the post had been captured. The remaining 4 troopers plus the machine gun section (Lieutenant Jacques and 4 men) were held at Point 1082 as a reserve.

On the order to move the three troops rode out on their allotted tasks. H hour was set for 0900 hours. As the day warmed, a hot blustery westerly wind began to pick up strength causing sand flurries hampering long range observation. The reduced visibility resulting from this wind may have helped conceal the initial deployment of the troops.

As Lieutenant Linacre's assault group approached the first suspected enemy outpost on a low ridge approximately one kilometre to the west of the Jifjafa post, Major Scott, from his position on the summit of Point 1082, observed that Lieutenant McDonald's troop making its long enveloping sweep to the west and north of Jifjafa would be late in reaching its objective – a dominant knoll on the ridge to the north of the Jifjafa post – because of the broken nature of the country it had to traverse. Consequently, Major Scott then ordered Lieutenant Linacre to take 16 men from his troop and to occupy the ridge to the north west of the enemy post to provide covering fire for the direct assault on the camp which Major Scott himself would now command. A new assault force was rapidly organised consisting of Major Scott's command group (five officers including Major McKenzie, the OC of the Light Horse squadron), the 6-8 troopers released from Lieutenant Linacre's troop and the reserve of 9 men (the machine gun section under Lieutenant Jacques and the original four troopers from Lieutenant Linacre's troop) – a total force of 20 to 22, including 6 officers.

⁷ AWM4 Item 10/3/5: War Diary 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade April 1916. Reconnaissance Report by Major W H Scott, 15 April 1916.

⁸ Major T H Darley, Op cit, p 35.



Map 3. Attack on Jifjafa

A Turkish soldier was seen to retire from the western ridge towards the Jifjafa post as Linacre's reduced troop closed on the ridgeline. This soldier obviously raised the alarm as a short time later a larger group of Turkish troops attempted to occupy trenches on the ridgeline to the north of Jifjafa post. This movement was observed by Lieutenant Pender's troop which had reached a point to the south east of Jifjafa. Pender's troop galloped to intercept the Turkish group. Several Turkish troops were run down as they attempted to flee to the south east. The main enemy party prevented from reaching the ridgeline then occupied trenches nearer the post and a short sharp fire fight ensued mainly involving Lieutenant Pender's troop attacking from the south east supported by Major Scott's force attacking from the south west. Although outnumbered and surrounded, the Turkish group put up a stout resistance, but after sustaining numerous casualties was forced to surrender. One participant in Pender's attack later described the action in a letter:

Last week I went out into the desert on a bit of a jaunt after Turks. We were away 5 days and covered 60 miles before striking their camp They ran for their lives but they didn't stand a chance, for our fellows ran them down with their horses, and captured the lot We feel very proud of ourselves, as we are the first ALH to go into action as a unit on real Light Horse work⁹

Lieutenants Linacre's and McDonald's troops do not appear to appear to have been involved in the main action but were chiefly concerned with clearing the ridgeline to the west and north of the Jifjafa post and herding the small number of prisoners found there to a central collecting point. The after-action reports do not mention whether Lieutenant Linacre's troop had reached a position to provide covering fire for the assault group. Given the short distance it had to travel, it is probable that it had occupied a position on the ridgeline to the north west of the Jifjafa post from which it could bring long range covering fire onto the Turkish position when Lieutenant Pender commenced his attack.

Six Turkish troops were killed in the action. The Austrian engineer officer in charge of the well boring and 34 Turks and Arabs were captured. Five of the captured were wounded, including one who was too seriously injured to be evacuated. He was treated and left at the post when the attacking force withdrew. According to the Austrian officer, the post had been occupied by himself, 25 troops of the 4th Battalion, 79th Regiment, 27th Division, 8th Army Corps of the 4th Turkish Army and 15 members of an Arab labour corps – a total of 41.¹⁰ It would appear that the whole of the post's garrison was accounted for, but two personnel mounted on camels were seen to gallop away in an easterly direction as the firefight started. These personnel may have been visiting from a neighbouring post and narrowly escaped being caught up in the action.

One Light Horseman – Corporal S F Monaghan, 8th Australian Light Horse Regiment – was killed during the fighting. There were no other Australian casualties. Corporal Monaghan, an unmarried 28 year old sawyer of Launceston, Tasmania, joined the AIF on 18 February 1915 and was posted to the 6th Reinforcements, 8th Australian Light Horse Regiment. He departed Melbourne on HMAT Uganda on 26 June 1915. The dates of his disembarkation in Egypt and his arrival on Gallipoli are not recorded in his personal records.¹¹ However, he was one of the 8th Light Horse Regiment's survivors of the tragic charge by the 3rd Light Horse Brigade at The Nek on 7 August 1915. Writing after the Jifjafa raid, an Australian officer noted that:

⁹ Quoted in Charles Duguid (Scotty's Brother), *The Desert Trail. With the Light Horse through Sinai to Palestine*, Adelaide: W. K. Thomas & Co, 1919, p 16. The assertion that this was the first Light Horse unit to see mounted action is incorrect. A composite Light Horse Regiment had been involved in countering the Senussi in the Western Desert of Egypt in December 1915 and January 1916.

¹⁰ AWM224 Item MSS 36: 9th Light Horse Regiment, Narrative October 1914 – November 1918, p 6.

¹¹ National Archives of Australia: World War I Service Record – Corporal S F Monaghan.

Monaghan ... took part in the famous charge of the 8th LH and was one of ten who escaped uninjured; then to come out here in order to be picked off in a rotten little scrap.¹²

Monaghan's luck on Gallipoli was not to last. On 1 November 1915, he was lightly wounded by shrapnel but remained on duty. On 7 November, he suffered a gunshot wound and was evacuated to the 19th General Hospital, Alexandria. He was then transferred to the No 1 Australian General Hospital, Cairo and later to the No 2 Australian General Hospital, Ghezireh. He returned to duty on 18 January 1916 and was promoted Corporal on 25 February.¹³ Corporal Monaghan's body was buried on the battlefield at Jifjafa. Subsequently, the Imperial War Graves Commission was unable to locate his grave to re-bury his body in a War Cemetery. Corporal Monaghan is commemorated on Panel 58 of the Jerusalem Memorial in the Jerusalem War Cemetery.¹⁴

Destruction of Jifjafa Post

As the first shots rang out, Lieutenant Coghlan's 4th Field Company detachment moved quickly to begin the demolition of the three bores and the well drilling equipment which were the prime objectives of the raid. Fortunately, Number 3 Bore was located approximately three kilometres to the south west of the Jifjafa post and well away from the action. The engineer detachment was able to move up to the bore and prepare their demolition as the Light Horse troops were deploying. This bore which was dry had been drilled to a depth of 266 feet (81 metres) before being apparently abandoned. Although a gin – a metal tripod structure to support the drilling rig – remained in position above the bore, there were no tools or other stores in this locality. Nor was there any sign of recent drilling activity.

Number 1 Bore – drilled to 51 feet (15.5 metres) and apparently abandoned – and Number 2 Bore – drilled to 276 feet (84 metres) – were located adjacent to the Jifjafa post. No water had been struck in either bore; however, the captured Austrian engineer officer stated that No 2 Bore looked promising as moist sand had been reached. All three bores were destroyed by blowing in the well casing 25 feet (7.6 metres) below the surface. This was achieved by lowering two or three slabs of guncotton on string into the bore hole after the fuse was lit. This proved very effective and fragments of well casing were blown up to the surface. Before Number 1 and Number 2 Bores were blown, a large quantity of hand tools, small parts of drilling equipment, 2,000 rounds of captured ammunition and seven damaged Turkish rifles were dropped into the bore holes. On the surface, two sets of gins, two winches, two 4-ton screw jacks and 400 feet (122 metres) of hydraulic piping used for boring purposes were also destroyed using guncotton charges. No part of the drilling plant was left intact.¹⁵ In his report of the action, Major Scott described the plant as: 'German Military Artesian. Very substantive, beautifully made, nothing temporary about any part of it.'¹⁶

Additionally, six bell tents, one large tent, 2,000 rounds of ammunition and supplies of biscuits, blankets and general camp equipment were destroyed by burning. Two Turkish camels and 19

¹² AWM PR84/87: J T H Aram Letter dated 25 April 1916. Aram was incorrect in his assertion that only 10 men of the 8th Light Horse Regiment returned from the charge at The Nek unscathed. Of the 300 men of the Regiment that took part in the charge, 234 were killed or wounded; 66 escaped injury. Source: Peter Burness, *The Nek. The Tragic Charge of the Light Horse at Gallipoli*, Kenthurst, NSW: Kangaroo Press, 1996, p. 123.

¹³ National Archives of Australia: World War I Service Record – Corporal S F Monaghan.

¹⁴ Commonwealth War Graves Commission. Internet Database.

¹⁵ AWM4 Item 14/23/6: War Diary 4th Field Company, Australian Engineers, April 1916. Engineer Officer's Report on Reconnaissance with Light Horse to Jif Jafa 11/4/16 to 15/4/16.

¹⁶ AWM4 Item 10/3/5: War Diary 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade April 1916. Reconnaissance Report by Major W H Scott, 15 April 1916.

rifles were captured and brought back by the raiding force. A quantity of documents, diaries and letters were also seized.¹⁷

Two of these documents proved of particular interest to British Intelligence. One paper found on the captured Austrian engineer officer stated that German aircraft would be flying over the Sinai front anytime after 8 April. While the arrival of German aircraft at Beersheba in March 1916 was known to the British Command, this document confirmed that the German air unit – the 300th Squadron from Hamburg – was about to commence active operations. The squadron was equipped with 14 Rumpler two-seater aircraft which were faster and had a better all-round performance than the BE 2c aircraft of the RFC.¹⁸ The second important document captured was a Turkish report of water resources in the Sinai Desert and the progress of their water drilling program.¹⁹ This document was to prove of great value for operational planning in the coming months of the Sinai campaign as it indicated those areas where water was available in sufficient quantities for mounted formations to operate.

Withdrawal to the Rear Base

The raiding force wasted no time in completing the destruction of the Jifjafa post; collecting, searching and hurrying the prisoners off to Point 1082; and burying Corporal Monaghan and the six Turkish dead. By 1100 hours 13 April all these activities had been completed and the withdrawal to the forward base at Point 1340 had begun. The RFC ground signal station which had been left at Point 1082 and the prisoners were collected on the way. The four Turkish wounded were evacuated on sitting-up cacholets; the five cacholet-bearing camels having accompanied the fighting troops forward to Jifjafa.

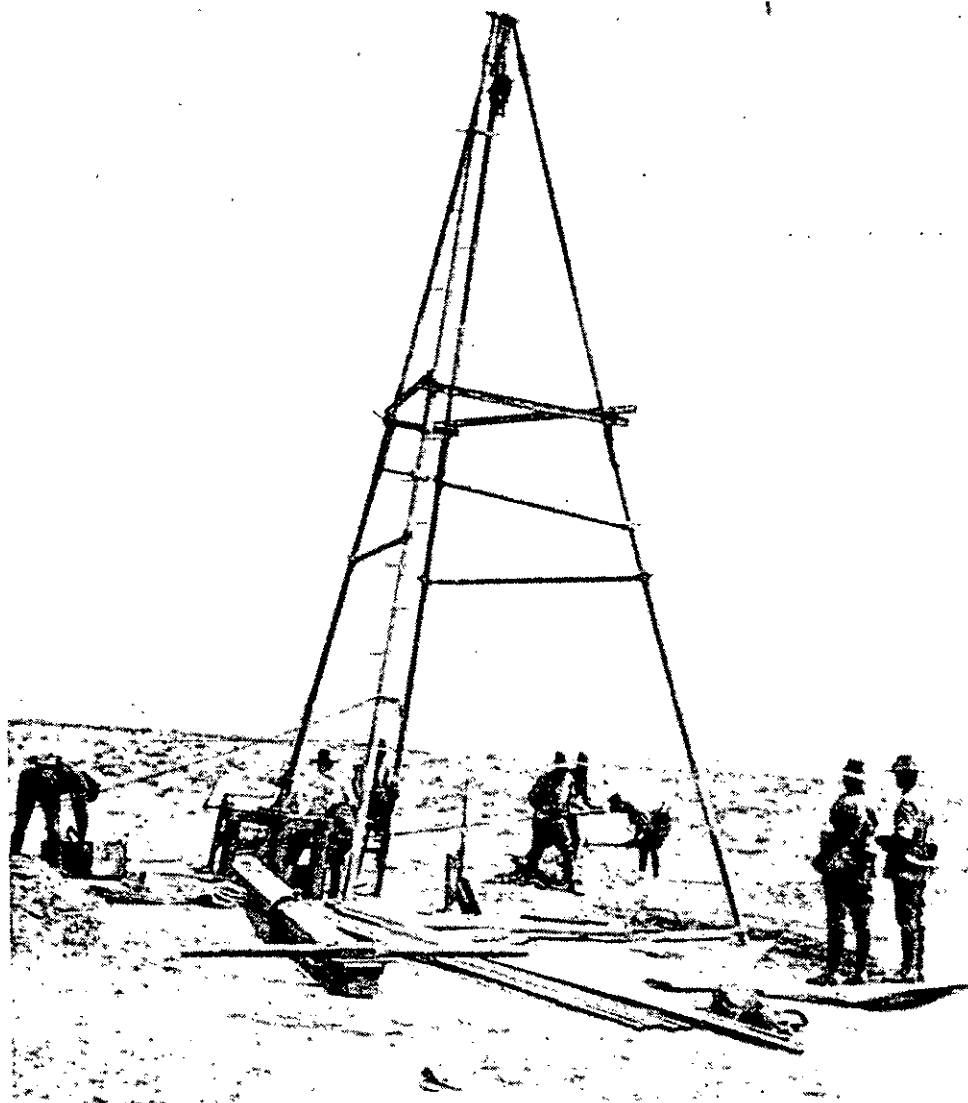
By 1200 hours the hot, blustery wind had developed into a full strength sand storm – a *khamsin* – that severely hindered movement and engendered a great thirst in both men and animals. The flying, stinging sand particles limited visibility to 20 metres. Pressing on, the column reached the forward base at Point 1340 about 1330 hours. Here the horses were fed and watered from supplies carried forward by the camel train. During this time an attempt was made by the Royal Engineers wireless detachment to send a message to Headquarters 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade at Serapeum reporting the success of the raid. However, the severity of the sand storm prevented the message being passed. This message, originally drafted at 1530 hours 13 April, was eventually received by Headquarters 3rd Brigade at 0830 hours 14 April.

The column departed the forward base at 1630 hours 13 April en route to the rear base at the Moiya Harab cisterns. The boulder-strewn branch wadi which had caused so much difficulty on the outwards journey was avoided on the return trip. Nevertheless, progress was very slow as the sand storm continued late into the night. The mounted element had to make frequent halts to keep in touch with the slow moving camel train which included the 34 Turkish and Arab prisoners. The Austrian engineer officer was provided with one of the spare horses and he accompanied the mounted column. The rear base was finally reached at 2330 hours. Here the column rested for the remainder of the night.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ H A Jones, *The War in the Air. Being the Story of the part played in the Great War by the Royal Air Force*. Vol V. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1935, p 179.

¹⁹ AWM45 Item 7/8: Raid on Jif Jafa – 10th to 15th April, 1916. Covering Report by Lieutenant General Sir A J Godley, Commanding 2 A & NZ Army Corps.



Captured drilling plant, probably at Bore No 3, being prepared for demolition by detachment, 4th Field Company, Australian Engineers, Jifjafa, 13 April 1916. The Red Cross brassards worn by the two soldiers in the right foreground indicate these personnel are part of the 3rd Australian Light Horse Field Ambulance detachment. AWM P0228/66/19

Return to Serapeum – 14 April 1916

By morning the sand storm had abated. Wireless contact was established with Headquarters 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade at 0730 hours 14 April and a full report of the operation was sent. At 0900 hours the force departed the rear base on the homeward leg to Serapeum following the same route as the outward journey. The prisoners were now mounted on camels whose loads had been used up.

At 1300 hours the column halted for the midday meal and to allow the camel convoy to close up. During the halt congratulatory messages were received by wireless from Lieutenant General Sir A J Godley, Commander II Anzac Corps and Brigadier General J M Antill, Commander 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade. While these messages were being read out to the assembled troopers, a Light Horseman from one of the outposts came at a gallop shouting and waving as he rode into the assembly. As he neared the halted column, it was observed that the wadi was coming down in a spate. One troop's horse lines had been laid out in the bed of the wadi but all its horses and equipment were hastily evacuated to the bank before the flood reached its position. Had the camels been off-loaded in the bed of the wadi as was the normal custom for longer halts, it is likely that a quantity of equipment and stores would have been swept away and some of the animals drowned before they could be untethered, so swift was the onrush of the water. Initially, the flood was about 25 metres wide and 15-20 centimetres deep. Moving as fast as a horse could gallop, the water had the appearance and consistency of dirty white paint. Within five minutes, however, the wadi had become a raging torrent with waves breaking up to a metre high. This spate was due to a rare thunderstorm in the distant headwaters of the Wadi um Muksheib. There had been no sign of rain of the lower reaches of the wadi being traversed by the returning column and hence no warning of the impending drama. This was the only time during the year long Sinai campaign that the Light Horse saw a running stream in the Sinai Desert.²⁰



Turkish prisoners at Jifjafa, 13 April 1916. The trooper in the left foreground shows a good example of the Light Horseman's basic fighting equipment: .303 SMLE rifle, bandolier, bayonet, haversack and water bottle. Note the fly veil around the crown of his hat. Note also the two camels in the right background. As these do not appear to be fitted with cacolets, they are probably 4th Field Company camels carrying demolition stores. AWM P0228/66/24

²⁰ H S Gullet, *The Australian Imperial Force in Sinai and Palestine*, Official History 1914-1918 Volume 7, Sydney: Angus & Robertson Ltd, 1923, p 73.

The flood caused the column to be split in two, with an element on either bank. The force continued its march down both banks of the wadi. Within the hour the flood had subsided and the column was able to join up again. (The flood waters flowed into the shallow Er Rigm depression about 30 kilometres south east of Serapeum and soon soaked away or evaporated.) The march continued throughout the afternoon and into the night; the advance guard of the column arriving back at the Railhead Camp at Serapeum about 2400 hours 14 April. It was some hours later before the rear guard shepherding the camel train reached the Railhead Camp. In three and a half days the mounted element of the force had covered 260 kilometres (160 miles) of hard marching much of it over unknown territory by night. Although both troopers and walers were tired, the Light Horsemen were jubilant at the success of the raid. Only one horse was lost during the operation – killed during the attack at Jifjafa. Four other horses went lame when they lost shoes in the rocky bed of the branch wadi during the initial stage of the night march from the rear base to the forward base. One camel was also abandoned.

15 April 1916

At 1400 hours 15 April, General Sir Archibald Murray, Commander in Chief Egyptian Expeditionary Force, wired Headquarters 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade announcing the following awards:

Major W H Scott, 9th Light Horse – Distinguished Service Order
 Sergeant P J McGinness, 8th Light Horse – Distinguished Conduct Medal
 Corporal P Teesdale Smith, 9th Light Horse – Distinguished Conduct Medal

Subsequently, the following members of the Jifjafa force were Mentioned in Despatches:

Captain T C Macaulay, Royal Field Artillery
 Captain A E Weame, 8th Light Horse
 Corporal J T Talbot, 8th Light Horse
 Lance Corporal J W J Miles, 8th Light Horse.

On 18 April, the Corps Commander – Lieutenant General Sir A J Godley – inspected the raiding force and addressed the men:

Officers, NCOs and men of Major Scott's Jif-Jaffa party, I am very pleased to be here to have the opportunity on behalf of all Australians and New Zealanders of the 2nd Anzac Corps of expressing our admiration for the gallant feat of arms which you have performed. We are, one and all, very proud of you. You have carried out an enterprise which can certainly be ranked as being equal to any that has been accomplished during the war and will no doubt be carried out in the future.

It is unfortunate that more honours on an occasion like this cannot be distributed, but by His Majesty the King graciously consenting to confer the Distinguished Service Order on your commander, he not only honours him, but every one of the command. I again repeat my admiration for the work you have done, and congratulate you.²¹

The success of the Jifjafa raid, the first offensive action by the Australian Light Horse in the Sinai campaign, was of great psychological importance; both for the troops themselves and the British High Command. For the troops, the raid was a great morale booster. It demonstrated that they could move swiftly and surely across the desert to attack Turkish positions well forward of the Canal defences. Intelligence, planning, execution and logistical support for the operation had all been of a high standard. The Commander in Chief, Egyptian Expeditionary Force – General

²¹ Quoted in Darley, *op cit*, p 38.



Light Horsemen escorting Turkish prisoners into a central collecting point. Jifjafa, 13 April 1916. AWM P0228/66/23

Sir Archibald Murray – appreciated that his planned Sinai offensive would succeed or fail on the combat effectiveness of his mounted troops. He was well aware even before the Yeomanry disaster at Katia (Qatiya) and Oghratina that in the early months of the Sinai campaign he would have to depend on his Australian and New Zealand horsemen as his principal striking arm while his Yeomanry regiments toughened up and gained experience in desert conditions. The Jifjafa raid vindicated his confidence in the Australian Light Horse.

The operation was also an excellent example of the cooperation which could be achieved between the ground force and the RFC. Air-ground cooperation in mobile warfare was in its infancy with procedures which would be refined in later years still being developed. The RFC aircraft provided eyes to the front and flanks of the raiding column and enabled it to advance with speed and confidence not having to rely on time consuming reconnaissance patrols to ensure its flank security and to probe ahead. The raid was an early example of the successful use of wireless telegraphy between the ground force and supporting aircraft. The operation also demonstrated the effectiveness of the newly formed Camel Transport Corps in logistically supporting deep offensive operations against the Turkish forces; albeit, at a cost in the large numbers of animals required and with some decrease in the security of the operation – camels being notoriously noisy at the halt and on the march.

In particular, the Jifjafa raid demonstrated the fighting qualities and the outstanding endurance of the Light Horse troops in mounted desert warfare. The troopers and their walers were to be called upon to exhibit these attributes many times during the ensuing two and a half years of hard campaigning in Sinai, Palestine and Syria.



Furnish of the 77th

Michael Downey

A small booklet titled *Military & Naval Forces, New South Wales* and printed circa 1887 provides a useful section covering the active service experience of some 37 Officers and 10 Warrant Officers then serving either on the Permanent Staff or with the Volunteers. The bulk of the Officers had served with the NSW Contingent to the Sudan in 1885. 'A few skirmishes and many weary marches produced much sweat, but little glory' commented Colonel A J Bennett, recalling his service in that campaign. The Warrant Officers had seen much fiercer fighting. Many served in at least two hard fought campaigns ranging from the Crimea, to New Zealand, South Africa and India. Perhaps the sharpest of this 'sharp-end soldiering' was epitomised in the entry of the Sergeant Major Instructor of Musketry:

Crimea Campaign 1854-5 (77th Foot); present at Battle of the Alma, wounded at Battle of Inkermann, present at the taking of the Russian Rifle pits, dangerously wounded in the Assault of the Redan; New Zealand Campaign 1863 (12th Foot).

His name was James Charles Furnish. His military service commenced as an under-age recruit in 1843 and ended 45 years later in 1888 when his fellow Officers, NCOs and Men of the Military Forces, New South Wales laid him to rest in Waverley Cemetery, Sydney.

Early career and the Crimea

James Furnish was born in Norwich, England in 1826. He enlisted (underage) at 17 into the 77th Foot in December 1843. On 1 March 1846 he was promoted to Corporal and 3 years later to Sergeant. The only blemish on his record occurred in March 1854 when he was found guilty of a minor charge and reduced to Private. Within three months he was back to Corporal and in his rank took part in the Battle of the Alma on 20 September 1854, the first of the major actions in the Crimean Campaign.

Following the Battle of Inkermann on 5 November where he was wounded by a piece of shell he regained his Sergeant's stripes on 21 November 1854.

The 77th Foot then took part in the long drawn out period of trench warfare at the siege of Sebastopol. Furnish was in the attack on the Quarries on 7 June 1855, and was badly wounded during the major allied assault on Sebastopol on 17 June when British troops attempted to capture the Redan positions. He took no further part in the fighting, his severe head wound a test for the primitive hospital facilities and his own physical stamina.

The Regiment returned to Ireland in June 1856 after a treaty of peace had been signed. Furnish was promoted to Colour Sergeant in April 1857 and in May the 77th were warned for duty in the Colony of New South Wales, sailing on 1 June from Kingstown. After a stormy voyage they landed in Sydney on 30 September 1857.

The 77th in NSW

The *Sydney Morning Herald* described the regiment as 'an exceedingly smart body of men, with all the dash and soldierly mein about them which active service in the field imparts, and which so well becomes the defenders of old England'. At 3pm on 30 September the Regiment marched from Circular Quay to Victoria Barracks, Paddington behind the bands of the Artillery and the 11th

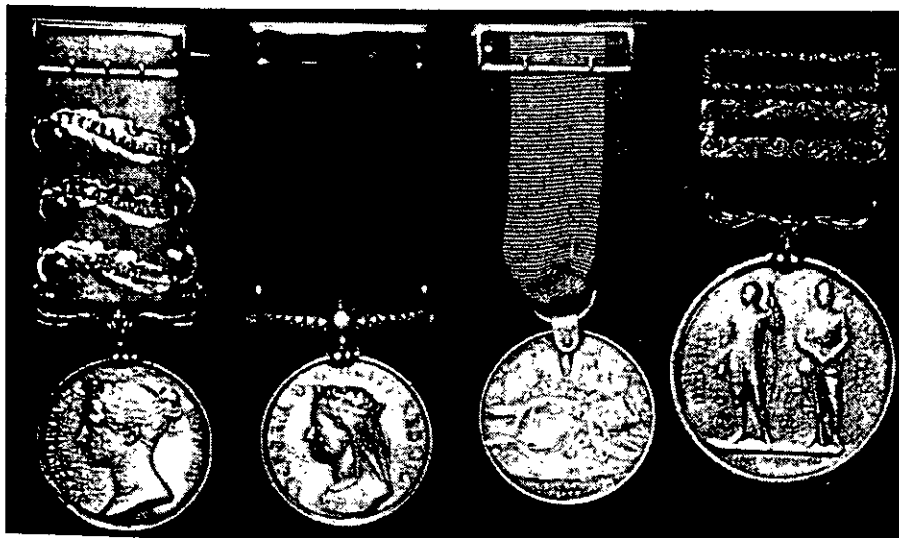
(North Devonshire) Regiment. At the Barracks, the 11th Regiment was drawn up to receive them, and after an address by their Commanding Officer Colonel Straton, the 77th piled arms and raised tents for 300 men, there being insufficient space in the Barracks until vacated by the 11th.

In October the 77th, the 11th, and the Artillery combined in a review held in the outer Domain. Watched by 8000 spectators they went through a series of evolutions; formed a square, 'charged bayonets', and volley firing. The locals were highly delighted with this martial show and 'the fine cleanly, soldierly appearance of the men was the subject of general remark'. At the end of October the 11th departed for home but by the end of November the magistrates' patience was wearing a little thin with the 77th after a number of assaults on police by drunk and disorderly soldiers.

Colonel Straton took outrage at the treatment of his men stating that there were several old soldiers from the 11th regiment now in the police and that these men were jealous of the hard-won honours of the 77th, picking quarrels with Straton's men in the hope of getting them into trouble. The Regimental band attempted to soothe these problems with frequent appearances at charity concerts and a regular performance in the Government Gardens every Tuesday.

In April 1858 the headquarters of the 12th Regiment were ordered to depart Hobart for Sydney to replace the 77th who were called for service in China. In fact the Regiments' next stop was India. They embarked aboard the screw steam-ship *Megaera* on 20 April arriving at their destination in the dying days of the Indian Mutiny. They did not receive the Indian campaign medal or qualify for any of the battle clasps.

Treated by the *Herald* as heroes on their arrival in Sydney, the 77th left a mere 7 months later to the newspapers censure. 'They are fine gallant fellows, although there was a sad lot of disorderlies among them and the black sheep have given a bad name to the entire flock.' No doubt this judgement mattered little to the hardy Crimean veterans who went on to nearly ten years of fighting on the North West frontier of India before they finally returned to the United Kingdom in 1870.



The medals awarded to Col. Sgt. J. Furnish: Crimean War Medal, NZ War Medal, Turkish Crimean Medal, NRA 'Queen's Medal' 1881.

A return to the colonies

Colour Sergeant James Furnish had married an Irish girl, Mary Ward in 1848 whilst the 77th was serving in Ireland. Their first child did not survive infancy and it may have been the prospect of better living conditions and a healthier climate that prompted Furnish to request his discharge in October 1859 after just over 15 years service. His stated place of residence was Sydney. His conduct was noted as 'very good' so he was obviously not one of the *Herald's* 'disorderlies'.

The family returned to Sydney in early 1860. Mrs Furnish giving birth to a daughter Deborah and Mr Furnish presumably feeling at loss in civilian dress attesting for service with the 1st Battalion, 12th Regiment on 2 April 1860! His experience was appreciated and he was appointed Probationary Orderly Room Clerk in June 1860 and regained three stripes 6 months later. His previous service was allowed to reckon and his good conduct pay permitted to continue. Promoted Colour Sergeant in June 1863, he remained in this rank combined with his duties as Orderly Room Clerk until his second discharge in October 1867.

In New Zealand the 12th Regiment formed part of the garrison in New Plymouth, arriving late in 1860. They took a minor part in the Taranaki campaign of 1860 and 1861, and were also involved in a number of engagements in the second Maori war. Col. Sgt Furnish received the NZ War Medal for his campaign service. The roll gives his number as 532, (it should be 663) and lists him as James Charles Feverish. The next man on the roll also has the wrong number against his name... James Feaver ... the gentleman writing up the roll appears to have been a little hot and flustered!

With a second daughter, Mary, born in 1866, Furnish must have decided after nearly 23 years of soldiering a slightly more sedate career would be more suitable. On his discharge papers he lists his residence to be Auckland, New Zealand, and he may have lived there for a number of years but by 1871 the family were back in Sydney and Furnish changed to another uniform for the final 17 years of his military career.

With the NSW Volunteers

The museum at Victoria Barracks holds some military documents of Sgt John Bennett late of the 77th Foot and 2nd Regiment NSW Volunteer Infantry. Like Furnish Sgt Bennett left the 77th in India in 1860 returning to Sydney and joining the permanent staff of the Colony's Volunteer Forces. When Furnish returned to Sydney in 1871 he no doubt contacted his old comrade from the Crimea days. I suspect it took very little to convince him to once again don a military uniform. Regrettably no photos appear to exist of the instructional staff at Victoria Barracks for the period of Furnish's service 1871-1887. By 1881 he was Sgt Instructor of Musketry and by 1885 Sgt Major Instructor receiving 9s6d a day and 18s 8d per week for rent, rations, fuel and light. He was living in Campbell Street, Paddington, a short walk from Victoria Barracks.

Proving the old axiom for all NCOs, 'do it better than the soldiers can', Furnish entered the New South Wales Rifle Association contest in November 1881. He won the Queen's Match. This was open to all Volunteers, the winner received a prize of five pounds and the silver medal of the National Rifle Association, a forerunner of the Queen's Medal. Furnish has added a silver suspender as used on the Crimean War medal to this medal to allow it to be worn with his other campaign medals. It hangs from a plain green ribbon with an ornate buckle and suspender brooch. The competition was held on the old rifle range at Paddington. The range was sited at the rear of Victoria Barracks roughly aligned along Moore Park Road with the butts at the Centennial Park end giving a range of up to 600 yards. The range was in use by military and naval forces until 1890 when, after a long series of complaints by workmen attempting to build

the fencing around Centennial Park it was closed down. There is an amusing series of 'correspondence respecting bullets flying into Centennial Park' published by the NSW Legislative Council and reprinted in the September 1990 issue of *Despatch*, the journal of the NSW Military Historical Society.

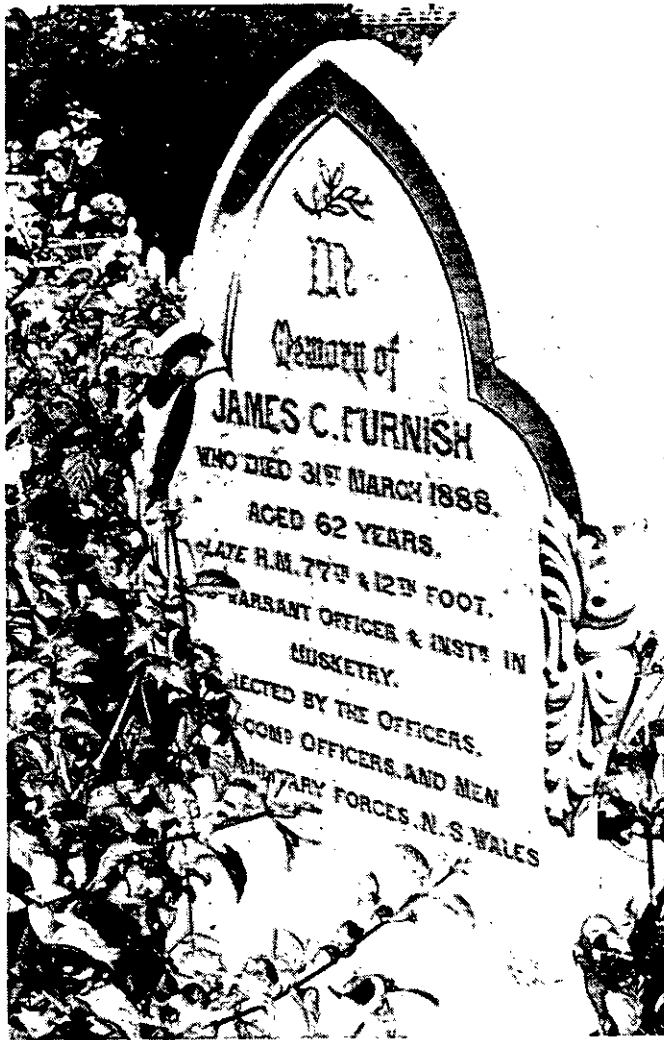


A view looking north along Moore Park Road, the approximate line of the old Paddington Rifle Range. The rear of Victoria Barracks on the left and the Football Stadium on the right.

On 20 June 1889 Warrant Office Tuite advised the Instructor of Musketry that Mr Moore, Director of the Botanic Gardens, told him that a groundsman had been shot whilst working in Centennial Park. In a classic touch of inter service rivalry, Captain Cuthell, Instructor of Musketry advised the AAG, 'this man must have been shot by one of the Royal Navy or a Marine. The reckless firing of these men is proverbial, and is common talk in Sydney as well as on the rifle range!' However the long suffering workmen on the fence building project would have received a rude awakening in the three weeks commencing 12 February 1885. William Dalley, acting premier of New South Wales, had offered the British Government two batteries of Permanent Field Artillery (only one was accepted) and a 500 strong battalion of infantry 'effective and disciplined,' to be dispatched to the Sudan following the news of the death of General Gordon.

The task of ensuring the infantry matched this description no doubt taxed Furnish to the limit of his capabilities as the Senior Warrant Officer in charge of Musketry at Victoria Barracks.

As recruits flooded in they were medically examined and if passed fit, signed up at the staff office and issued uniforms, weapons and accoutrements. Whilst all were from the local Volunteer Regiments there was only a small number who had seen active service in the British Army. Together with the Regiment Staff drill instructors, Sgt Major Furnish commenced an intensive course of weapon training and range practices aimed at turning the 'weekend volunteers' into soldiers that would be proud to take their place alongside the veteran British Regiments in the Sudan.



The grave of James C Furnish in Waverley Cemetery. Mrs Furnish was later buried alongside but there is no existing headstone at her grave.

On 3 March 1885 he watched the Contingent march out of the Barracks bound for the front with only 16 days training behind them. No doubt his thoughts went back some 31 years to his first experience of battle: how would these men react to the massed charges of the fierce Arab warriors. But as Colonel Bennett said, 'there was little glory' for the Contingent. By 23 June they were marching back up Oxford Street to Victoria Barracks, soaked to the skin by torrential rain and fed up listening to a series of political speeches welcoming them back. There had been no battles and few casualties and most of the men were more than happy to see the end of Sgt Major Furnish and his staff. Indeed at a reception in July there was groaning

when the senior NCO in the Contingent, Sgt Major Michael Tuite, was presented with a silver tea and coffee service for his contribution to the efficiency of the expedition. Most of those present had been lashed by the RSM's efficient bellowing and took this opportunity to express their feelings now that they were free of his discipline.

Fading away

In June 1887 Sgt Major Furnish took leave in an attempt to improve his ailing health no doubt acquired by his old head wounds from the Crimea, but after a number of operations he died peacefully on 31 March 1888. The *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 April 1888 reported under deaths: James Charles Furnish beloved husband of Mary Furnish. Late of 77th and 12th Regiments, and Musketry Instructor to the Volunteer Forces of the Colony. Age 62 years.

Furnish was buried in the Church of England Section at Waverley Cemetery. There is a handsome white marble headstone above his grave erected by the Officers, Non-commissioned Officers as men of the Military Forces, NSW. James Bennett, his old comrade from the 77th, who died three years later, lies buried 100 metres away in the Roman Catholic Section. These two men were amongst the first of a long line of Australian Soldiers to hold the respected rank of Warrant Officer. Their battlefield experience has been passed on through generations, perhaps culminating in the WOs of the Australian Army Training Team Vietnam, who at great personal risk worked so hard to instruct and assist the military forces of South Vietnam in the defence of that country.

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Military and Naval Forces NSW circa 1887

WO 100/32 Crimean War Medal Roll for the 77th or East Middlesex Regiment of Infantry

Medals International Magazine, May 1981, 'NZ War Medal Roll'

Discharge Documents of Col Sgt J.C.Furnish

Waverley Cemetery Records:

Section 6, Grave No. 1796 J C Furnish

Section 8, Grave No. 1013 J Bennett

Copy of Death Certificate for J C Furnish



One Hundred Years Ago – Development of the Colonial Military Forces in New South Wales 1854-1903

Dr J K Haken

Troops were located in Australia, or initially in New South Wales, since the first fleet in 1788, which included 197 Marines as guards for the convicts. The British Government provided Garrison Troops for its many colonies and these in Australia guarded the convicts, provided defence against internal agencies, provided nominal defence against possible external aggression, and carried out diverse developmental tasks in the new Colony. The total number of troops variously in the Colony is not known although muster rolls are in existence. Over the years the number varied from hundreds to thousands and while the Colony contributed to the maintenance of the troops, the major cost was borne by the British Government.

The media in the millennium year made mention of 200 years of participation in local defence, referring to local associations formed at the beginning of the 19th century to repel a possible Irish uprising. These forces, however, were small in number, extremely short lived, and not authorised by the British Government. Two companies each of 50 men, named the Sydney and Parramatta Loyal Associations, were formed in December 1800 and disbanded in July 1801.

In the early 1850s, war with France seemed likely. Then in 1854, war with Russia was declared. Queen Victoria, in 1851,¹ approved the formation of Volunteer Rifle Corps and in 1854,² at the time of local concerns about the effect of the Crimean War, an Act of Council authorising the formation of Volunteer Corps was assented. Six companies of rifles entitled The Sydney Volunteer Rifles, a troop of Yeomanry Cavalry, and an Artillery company were enrolled. The establishment in 1854 was 389,³ this decreasing to zero in 1857⁴ due in part to waning enthusiasm as the world situation improved, peace having been established with Russia in 1856. The Inspecting Field Officer of Yeomanry and Volunteer Corps was the Commanding Officer of the Garrison Troops.

The situation became grimmer in the early 1860s with depletion of the British Troops due to their departure for service in New Zealand. With the possibility of war with Napoleon and with America on the verge of civil war, new volunteers were enrolled. A proclamation by the Governor calling for the establishment of twenty companies of rifles and three batteries of artillery was issued.⁵ As an expedient, proclamations were issued disbanding volunteer forces enrolled before 1 January 1860 and requiring former members to return Arms and Accoutrements to the Colonial Store.⁶ Recruiting commenced in the second half of the year and statistics for 1860 recorded 1,644 volunteers. As previously, the Commanding Officer with the title Inspecting Field Officer was the Commanding Officer of the Imperial Troops.⁷ A troop of Mounted Rifles was raised at the same time but was not successful, having no establishment in

¹ Votes & Proceedings New South Wales Legislative Assembly, 1 1854

² Victoria 18 No 8 (1854) Formation of Volunteer Corps Etc.

³ Statistics of New South Wales 1854

⁴ Statistics of New South Wales 1857

⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette No 162 1634, 31.8.1860

⁶ Statistics of New South Wales 1860

⁷ New South Wales Government Gazette No 187 1937, 12.10.1860

1862⁸ and being disbanded in 1864.⁹ The 8 Sydney companies of Rifles formed the Sydney Battalion and the 5 suburban companies formed the Suburban Battalion in 1862.¹⁰

The Colony assumed complete control of the volunteers in 1866 with the appointment of Captain J S Richardson, late of the 12th Regiment as Inspecting Field Officer to command the Volunteer Corps with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.¹¹ Captain Richardson was a seasoned soldier, having served in the Crimean War and as Adjutant of the 12th Regiment in New Zealand.

The number of companies of Rifles altered little until 1869, showing a slight decrease although the number of batteries of artillery increased dramatically to 7 in 1866.¹²

The same year saw the commencement of the cadet movement with the raising and commissioning of a Lieutenant of the St Marks School Cadet Corps, Macquarie Fields.¹³ The name was altered to the Kings School Cadet Corps in 1869¹⁴ and the unit continues today.

The establishments of the Colonial Forces from 1854 to 1900 varied from 389 to 12,225. Enrolments initially decreased from 1860, such that in 1867 the Volunteer Forces Regulation Act (Land Grants) was enacted.¹⁵ Here a grant of 50 acres of land was offered after 5 years of efficient service with past efficient service contributing to a grant. Seven years past efficient service was to be allowed as three years service towards a land grant, 5 and 3 years prior service was to be allowed as 2 and 1 year respectively. Service of existing volunteers was to continue until the additional time to qualify for a land grant had been reached. The introduction of a new scheme was necessary as the British Government in 1867 announced that, as an economy measure, it intended to withdraw its troops from Garrison Duty in its many Colonies in 1870.¹⁶

The commencement of a battalion structure started in 1868 with the appointment of Majors for the Sydney and Suburban Battalions of Volunteer Rifles and the Volunteer Artillery.¹⁷ The establishment of the Suburban Battalion was increased by the raising of two companies of rifles entitled, the Duke of Edinburgh Rifles. The companies with colourful uniforms existed until 1878.¹⁸ The Volunteer Corps in the Western and Northern districts formed the Western and Northern Battalions of Volunteer Rifles with Majors appointed in 1870.¹⁹ The artillery strength was increased in the same year with the formation of No 8 (Prince Alfred's Own) and No 9 batteries.²⁰

The Engineer Corps, 1 company with 60 all ranks, with Captain G K Mann commanding, was also raised. Captain Mann resigned in 1871, being succeeded by Captain E O Moriarty, the Engineer in Charge, Harbour and River Navigation, who retired in 1873. The command then passed to Captain Thomas Rowe, a distinguished Sydney architect who remained with the Corps through its period of growth, until his retirement in 1898.

⁸ Statistics of New South Wales Table 147, 1862

⁹ New South Wales Government Gazette No 144 1626, 19.7.1864

¹⁰ Blue Book of New South Wales 1862

¹¹ New South Wales Government Gazette No 33 405, 17.2.1865

¹² Blue Book of New South Wales 1866

¹³ New South Wales Government Gazette No 126 1489, 26.6.1866

¹⁴ Statistics of New south Wales Table 153, 1868

¹⁵ Victoria 31 No 18, 1867 New South Wales Government Gazette Supplement No 179 2641, 11.10.1867

¹⁶ L B Swift, *Victoria Barracks Sydney Eastern Command August 1973* (contains a list of names and dates of service of British Regiments in New South Wales)

¹⁷ Blue Book of New South Wales 1868

¹⁸ Statistics of New South Wales Table 164 1877

¹⁹ Blue Book of New South Wales 1870

²⁰ Blue Book of New South Wales 1871

The Land Grants Scheme, while increasing enrolments such that the figures more than doubled in ensuing years, was criticised in Parliament and in the popular press. Recruitment of volunteers ceased in 1874 due to widespread abuse by the sale of land, a practice which was exacerbated by the Government, Sir John Robertson regulating in 1870 to make the sale of land easier, making the practice simpler. The Land Grant Scheme was replaced by a new Act assented in 1874,²¹ where volunteers were partially paid for their service. A Regulation was issued in 1880 indicating cessation of Land Grants,²² this following an Act of Parliament.²³

With the departure of British Troops, the necessity arose for the formation of Permanent Military Forces. The Military and Naval Forces Act was assented to in 1871²⁴ with Lieutenant Colonel Richardson to be Commandant of the Permanent and Volunteer Military Forces and Captain T Baynes, Brigade Adjutant of Volunteer Forces to be Pay and Quartermaster of the Permanent and Volunteer Forces.²⁵ A proclamation sanctioned the raising of one battery of Permanent Artillery and two companies of Permanent Infantry.²⁵ The majority of officers appointed were former British Officers residing in the Colony: G J Airey, Lieutenant Retired Half-Pay Royal Marines and W W Spalding, late Lieutenant Royal Marines were appointed as First and Second Captains respectively of the New South Wales Artillery. Captain A F Fitzsimons, late Captain HM 40th Foot and A S Heathcote, late Captain HM 60th Foot were appointed Captains of the New South Wales Infantry. Four Lieutenants were appointed: J Wilson, late Ensign HM 81st Foot, S E Underwood, late Ensign HM 82nd Foot, H W Strong, Lieutenant No 2 Company, Sydney Battalion, Volunteer Rifles and S Chatfield, Ensign No 6 Company, Sydney Battalion, Volunteer Rifles.

Victoria Barracks was taken over by the Government of New South Wales from the British Ordnance Department in August 1871.²⁶

In September, Captain Fitzsimons of A company²⁷ and Commanding the New South Wales Infantry was appointed Major of Brigade²⁸ and the establishment of the New South Wales Infantry was authorised as 6 officers and 167 other ranks.²⁹ A permanent medical officer, W.J.G.Bedford was appointed as Assistant Surgeon.

In April 1872, Captain Fitzsimons was promoted to Major, his salary being unchanged.³⁰ His further service however was short as his death occurred during October 1872. At the same time, Captain Airey was also promoted to Major and to the command of the New South Wales Artillery while G S Lindeman and J J R Russell were appointed as Lieutenants. Further development of the Artillery occurred in November 1872 when the Second Captain was promoted to Captain. Garrison Orders of 24 December 1872³¹ advised that the services of the New South Wales Infantry would be dispensed with from the end of 1872 in consequence of Parliament having determined not to vote the requisite supplies for its members. On 31 December 1872, Garrison Orders³² listed the names of 5 officers and 131 other ranks whose

²¹ Victoria 39 No 12, 1875. Volunteer Forces Act replaced by Victoria 41 No 15, 1878, Volunteer Forces Act.

²² Votes & proceedings New South Wales Legislative Assembly 3 335, 1880-1881

²³ Victoria 44 No 7, 1880, Volunteer Land Orders

²⁴ Victoria 34 No 19, 1871, Military and Naval Forces Regulation Act

²⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette No 190 1669, 1.8.1871

²⁶ Garrison Order 11.8.1871

²⁷ Garrison Order 9.8.1871

²⁸ Blue Book of New South Wales 1871

²⁹ Garrison Order 21.9.1871

³⁰ Garrison Order 6.4.1872

³¹ Garrison Order 24.12.1872

³² Garrison Order 31.12.1872

service was to be discontinued and who would be granted a gratuity of six months pay. An Act of Parliament authorised these payments.³³

While the Cadet Corps under the control of the military at the Grammar Schools had increased with Camden College Cadet Corps being raised in 1868, Newington College Cadet Corps in 1869 and Sydney Grammar Cadet Corps in 1870, Cadet Corps at Public Schools commenced in 1870 under the control of the Department of Public Instruction. Mr H W Strong was appointed to the Permanent Staff as Honorary Captain of Cadet Corps in the Various Public Schools and subsequently in 1875 as Captain on the Permanent Staff to command the Public School Cadet Corps.

The Rifle Corps continued to consolidate and, during 1872, the five rifle companies in the Southern District formed the Southern Battalion of Volunteer Rifles.³⁴ A second battery of Artillery was raised in 1876³⁵ and by the time a third Permanent Battery was raised in 1877,³⁶ any saving in cost due to disbanding the Permanent Infantry had long disappeared. At this time Lieutenant Lindeman had resigned and been replaced by Lieutenant H Le Patourel. In consequence of the changes, Colonel C F Roberts, formerly a Brevet Major in the Royal Artillery, was appointed as Colonel Commanding the New South Wales Artillery, the Commandant having been promoted to Colonel a few days earlier. Captain Spalding was promoted to Major and Lieutenants G H Bachus and N M Murphy were promoted to Captain, while three Lieutenants were appointed namely, A Le Patourel, F T B Baynes and P L Murray. At the end of 1876, the officer strength was 1 Colonel, 2 Majors, 2 Captains and 4 Lieutenants. During 1877, the number of Lieutenants was increased to 8, the increase being due to the raising of the third battery. The year 1878, saw Captain Murphy promoted to Major with Lieutenant Murray promoted to Captain following the death of Captain Bachus, Lieutenant Mackenzie succeeding Captain Murphy. Lieutenant A H P Savage was appointed in 1878 and the establishment was seven Lieutenants as Lieutenant Taunton was promoted to Captain on the Volunteer Permanent Staff as Staff Adjutant to the Volunteer Artillery formed under the New Organisation introduced in 1878. The Staff Surgeon was promoted to Staff Surgeon Major in 1880, and Major Spalding, while remaining Major of a battery, was promoted to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel in 1881.

The Artillery Officers remained unchanged until 1883, when Lieutenant A Le Patourel resigned and was succeeded by Lieutenant A G H Morris. Also Staff Surgeon Major Bedford resigned and was replaced by Surgeon W D C Williams. The Torpedo and Signalling Corps was formed in the same year. Following the report of Sir William Jervois dated 7th June 1877, the Torpedo Company of the Naval Brigade with the Telegraph Company of the Telegraph Department were placed under the control of the Commandant.³⁷ Lieutenant E C Cracknell, commanding the Torpedo Department was appointed Major Commanding the Torpedo Corps.³⁸ The other officers of the Torpedo Company were subsequently also transferred.³⁹

The Majors commanding the 1st and 2nd Rifle Regiments were promoted to Lieutenant on 12 December 1875 while the Commandant was promoted to Colonel on 26th August 1876. The New South Wales Military in its short life of approximately half a century was the subject of

³³ Victoria 36 No 5, 1872, Infantry Disembodiment Compensation Act

³⁴ Blue Book of New South Wales 1872

³⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette No 209 3263, 22.8.1876

³⁶ Blue Book of New South Wales 1877

³⁷ Votes & Proceedings New South Wales Legislative Assembly 3 85, 1876-1877

³⁸ Blue Book of New South Wales 1878

³⁹ Blue Book of New South Wales 1878

many reports, the first being that of Sir William Jervois carried out in 1877 and published by Parliament in the same year.³⁶

The Volunteer Forces were reorganised in 1878⁴⁰ as follows:

- The artillery was to consist of 4 batteries at Sydney and one each at Newcastle and Wollongong to form a consolidated Corps styled New South Wales Regiment of Volunteer Artillery.
- The Infantry at Sydney to form 2 regiments each of 4 companies styled 1st and 2nd Regiments of Volunteer Infantry The Infantry in the Western District to form a Regiment of four companies styled 3rd Regiment of Volunteer Infantry.
- The Infantry in the Northern and Southern Districts to consist of 2 and 1 company respectively. The description Rifles no longer being used.
- The Engineer Corps remained as 1 company with the establishment reduced to 60 all ranks. The establishment of the recently formed Torpedo and Signalling Corps remained unchanged.

A Royal Commission on Defence issues was appointed in February 1881. The President was Sir James Martin, the Chief Justice assisted by nine members which included the Commandant, the Commandants of other Colonies, public servants and politicians. A report of this unwieldy body was tabled in Parliament in July 1881 and ordered to be printed.⁴¹

During 1883, it was decided to supplement the partially-paid military forces by the addition of Volunteer Reserve Forces. Regulations for the forces were published on 25 August 1883 to be effective on 1 January 1884.⁴² The first of these Corps was gazetted on 6 August 1884 to be at Milton and Ulladulla.⁴³ The Infantry in the Northern District formed the 4th Regiment of New South Wales Volunteer Infantry in 1884,⁴⁴ consisting of 4 companies, with headquarters at Newcastle, West Maitland, Singleton and East Maitland.

The military forces were augmented by the formation of Volunteer Reserve Corps attached to the various regiments and corps. The establishments of Volunteer Reserve Corps that were gazetted varied greatly, depending essentially on the postulated support and during 1885 unified establishments of batteries, troops or companies were formalised as 115 all ranks within 20 miles of Sydney and 60 all ranks elsewhere. In the same year, Lieutenant Colonels Commanding and Adjutants were appointed for the Reserves in the Metropolitan and Western Districts, Southern District and Northern District.⁴⁵ The moves were initially very successful, as at 31 December 1885, the number of reservists was 3,200.

When Britain became engaged in the Sudan War the New South Wales Government offered troops, which were accepted. A contingent of approximately 700, consisting of a battery of artillery and infantry under the command of Colonel Richardson was despatched, but saw little active service as hostilities were largely over by the time of the contingent's arrival. The participation, however, was important as it represented the first official instance where assistance was rendered to Great Britain. Earlier, at the time of the Maori Wars, approximately 3,000 men

⁴⁰ New South Wales Government Gazette No 279 3599, 9.9.1878

⁴¹ Votes & Proceedings New South Wales Legislative Assembly 4 581 1881; New South Wales Government Gazette No 66 975, 18.2.1881; New South Wales Government Gazette No 75 1091, 25.2.1881

⁴² New South Wales Government Gazette No 362 4631, 25.8.1883

⁴³ New South Wales Government Gazette No 329 4230, 7.8.1883

⁴⁴ New South Wales Government Gazette No 109 1596, 7.3.1884

⁴⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette No 276 4248, 10.7.1885

travelled to New Zealand, but this was individual involvement. The contingent relied heavily on officers and men of the Permanent and Volunteer Forces. The Commandant assumed Command and 19 of the others officers were currently serving, as shown below, and some employed at higher rank were subsequently promoted.⁴⁶

Serving Officers in the Soudan Contingent

Posting in Soudan Contingent	Regular Posting
Commanding – Colonel J S Richardson	Colonel Commandant
Brigade Adjutant And Staff Officer Of Artillery – Major H.D.Mackenzie	Captain NSW Artillery Promoted Major and Assistant Adjutant General Backdated to 29.3.1885
Paymaster And Commissariat Officer – Major J.T.Blanchard	Not then commissioned, Ordinance Storekeeper and Barracksmaster
Staff Surgeon and Principal Medical Officer – Staff Surgeon Major W D C Williams	Staff Surgeon
Artillery Lieutenant Colonel Commanding – Lieutenant Colonel W W Spalding	Brevet Lieutenant Colonel NSW Artillery Appointed Brevet Colonel December 1885
Engineer Officer – Captain T.S.Parrott	Captain Volunteer Engineer Corps Promoted Brevet Major July 1885
Artillery Lieutenants – R A Nathan* H P Airey C W P Bouverie	Lieutenants NSW Artillery * Adjutant Volunteer Artillery
Infantry Lieutenant Colonel Commanding – Lieutenant Colonel F .Wells	Lieutenant Colonel Commanding NSW Volunteer Artillery
Lieutenant Colonel – A Paul	Major 3rd NSW Infantry Regiment Promoted Brevet Lieutenant Colonel July 1885
Major – C G Norris	Captain and Adjutant, 2nd NSW Infantry Regiment
Captain Adjutant – C F Bartlett	Captain and Adjutant, 1st NSW Infantry Regiment
Captains – W P Mulholland L H Kyngdon	Lieutenant 2nd NSW Infantry Regiment Captain NSW Volunteer Artillery
Lieutenants – C B Airey J R McDonald R H Owen M J Keating	Lieutenant NSW Volunteer Artillery 2nd Lieutenant 1st NSW Infantry Regiment Promoted Lieutenant 2.11.1885 Lieutenant NSW Volunteer Artillery Lieutenant Naval Artillery Volunteers
Lieutenant Quartermaster – M M Boam	Lieutenant and Adjutant, 4th NSW Infantry Regiment

⁴⁶ Blue Book of New South Wales 1885

On returning to New South Wales, Colonel Richardson was created a Companion of the Order of the Bath and promoted to Major General.⁴⁷ Colonel Spalding and Colonel Robert who had been Acting Commandant were each created Companions of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George.

With restructuring of the Headquarters Staff, Captain Mackenzie was promoted to Major and assumed the newly created office of Assistant Adjutant General replacing the office of Brigade Major⁴⁸ formerly held by Lieutenant Colonel Christie. The office was redesignated as Assistant Adjutant General and Chief Staff officer in May 1893. Brevet Major Taunton who had been Acting Major of Brigade assumed the newly created post of Deputy Assistant Quartermaster-General.⁴⁹ Lieutenant H G B Sparrow who served with the Contingent joined the Permanent Staff as Adjutant of the Reserve Corps in the Southern District.⁵⁰ Majors Murphy and Airey were promoted to Brevet Lieutenant Colonel.⁵¹

During September 1885, the first of a series of British Officers were appointed, usually on a three year contract largely as Military Instructors. The first, and only group were Lieutenant Colonel E G H Bingham RA, Major C Penrose RE, Captain W St P Bunbury R A, and Captain C H Milward RA.⁵² The agreements of appointment of Major Bunbury and Captain Milward expired in June 1888 while those of Brevet Colonel Bingham and Major Penrose expired in November and May 1889 respectively. They were replaced in February 1889 by Colonel F R de Wolski and Major W S Churchward RA.

The Metropolitan, Western and Southern Districts of the Reserve Corps were combined to form a single command in 1886 while the 5th Regiment Scottish Rifles was formed as a consolidated Regiment from the Scottish Rifles Reserve Corps.⁵³

The 6th Regiment (Reserve Infantry) was formed as a consolidated regiment from the eight existing companies in the Sydney area.⁵⁴ The regiment, however, was short lived as it was 'disbanded or otherwise disposed of' from 1 December 1889,⁵⁵ the Hunters Hill, Ashfield and Campbelltown Corps being transferred to the partially paid forces and the other Corps disbanded. The strength in 1886 of all branches of the partially paid forces was reduced effective 1 January 1887 due to financial restrictions.⁵⁶ At the end of 1887, an approximate 20% reduction in establishment had been achieved.

Reports on New South Wales Defences were prepared by Major General Henry Schaw and by Major General E J Bevan in 1888, and subsequently both were printed by Parliament.⁵⁷

A proclamation in August 1888 indicated the formation of a troop of Permanent Mounted Infantry and Permanent Submarine Miners.⁵⁸ The Torpedo and Signalling Corps had in the same

⁴⁷ New South Wales Government Gazette No 350 5356, 18.8.1885

⁴⁸ New South Wales Government Gazette No 316 5287, 14.8.1885

⁴⁹ *ibid*

⁵⁰ *ibid*

⁵¹ *ibid*

⁵² Blue Book of New South Wales 1885

⁵³ New South Wales Government Gazette No 522 6280, 15.9.1886

⁵⁴ New South Wales Government Gazette No 522 6281, 17.9.1886

⁵⁵ Blue Book of New South Wales 1889

⁵⁶ New South Wales Government Gazette No 701 8428, 10.12.1886

⁵⁷ Votes & Proceedings New South Wales Legislative Assembly 2 47, 1887-1888; Votes & Proceedings New South Wales Legislative Assembly 1 161, 1888

⁵⁸ New South Wales Government Gazette No 561 6139, 31.8.1888

month been renamed the Submarine Miners.⁵⁹ The Permanent Mounted Infantry commanded by Major H B Lasseter at December 1888 numbered 30, but the troop was short lived, being disbanded in July 1889,⁶⁰ at which time the Submarine Miners numbered 23. Commander J H Lee, commanding the Naval Artillery Volunteers resigned and was appointed to the General Staff as Captain commanding the Permanent Submarine Miners. On reorganisation after Federation he became Officer Commanding the corps of Australian Engineers (NSW) with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

Lieutenant Compton, Honorary Instructor in Musketry to the Volunteer Corps was appointed to the Permanent Staff in 1871 as Captain.⁶¹ On his death in 1885, he was succeeded by Captain Cuthwell,⁶² a position held until he resigned in 1892. After this time the post of Instructor of Musketry was held by a Warrant Officer. During the year the Volunteer Reserve Corps of Artillery were transferred to the partially paid forces or disbanded, while many of the Reserve Corps Infantry Companies were disbanded or transferred to the mounted rifles. The medical services of the Military Forces were reorganised to form the Medical Staff Corps,⁶³ to consist of 69 all ranks.

A new innovation was initiated in 1888 with the raising of Reserve Rifle Companies affiliated with regiments. At the end of 1888, 48 companies of 1,431 volunteers were enrolled, the number increasing to 85 companies with 3,392 men 12 months later, and to 97 companies with 4,500 men in 1890. Some 90 companies with 5,281 men were recorded in 1891, and 91 companies with 4,873 men when the companies were disbanded at 31 December 1892.⁶⁴

The New South Wales Regiment of Volunteer Mounted Infantry (partially paid) was raised in 1889 to consist of 6 existing companies.⁶⁵

Military Works had been carried out by the Colonial Architects Branch of the Department of Public Works since Colonel Barbet retired with designs prepared by the military. The scheme was of limited success and Colonel F M de Wolski RE, who was in the Colony as a military instructor and did not get on with James Barnet, the Colonial Architect, persuaded the Government to create a Military Works Branch within the Department of Public Works. Colonel de Wolski was appointed Director of the Military Works Branch in July 1889, and E M T Boddam, formerly of the New Zealand Military Forces and more recently engaged on military works, was appointed superintending Engineer with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.⁶⁶ Colonel de Wolski subsequently became Commanding Engineer in charge of all engineering functions.⁶⁷ The difficulties of Colonel de Wolski were highlighted in the Report of the Royal Commission on Defence Works of 1890, where the obstructions of the recently retired Colonial Architect were condemned with the efforts of Colonel de Wolski being supported by the Minister of Works.⁶⁸ As with many initiatives, the Military Works Department was short lived. The services of Lieutenant Colonel Boddam were dispensed with in November 1891, while Colonel de Wolski finished his engagement and was succeeded by Lieutenant Colonel H W Renny-Tailour RE, who assumed the title of Commanding Engineer. The Engineering Services were

⁵⁹ New South Wales Government Gazette No 544 5984, 24.8.1888

⁶⁰ Statistics of New South Wales Table 51, 1890

⁶¹ New South Wales Government Gazette No 37 375, 17.2.1871

⁶² New South Wales Government Gazette No 167 2767, 21.4.1885

⁶³ New South Wales Government Gazette No 603 6662, 21.9.1888

⁶⁴ Statistics of New South Wales Table 17, 1892

⁶⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette No 204 2688, 8.4.1889

⁶⁶ New South Wales Government Gazette No 538 7171, 11.10.1889

⁶⁷ Votes & Proceedings New South Wales Legislative Assembly 7 25, 1891-1892

⁶⁸ Votes & Proceedings New South Wales Legislative Assembly 7 115, 1891-1892

reconstructed in July 1893⁶⁹ with the Submarine Miners (2 companies) and the Engineer Corps (2 companies) combining to form the Corps of Engineers and the Military Works Department finally disappearing.

The establishments of the four partially paid infantry regiments were increased to 10 companies, effective February 1889 by the transfer of Reserve Infantry Companies.⁷⁰

A new branch of the partially paid forces commenced in 1890 when the New South Wales Regiment of Cavalry was formed⁷¹ to consist of 6 troops from the Volunteer Reserve Cavalry, namely Sydney Light Horse (A Troop), Illawarra Light Horse (B Troop), West Camden Light Horse (C Troop), Hunter River Light Horse (D Troop), Richmond River Light Horse (E Troop) and Murrumbidgee River Light Horse (F Troop). This title was changed to the New South Wales Lancer Regiment in 1895.⁷²

Diversification and expansion of the forces continued in 1891 with the formation of the Commissariat and Transport Corps,⁷³ to consist of one company with the title being changed to the Army Service Corps in 1893⁷⁴ and the Permanent Medical Staff Corps.⁷⁵ The strength of the Permanent Medical Staff Corps in 1891 being 15.⁷⁶

With communication difficulties between Major General Richardson and the Government, the latter established a Military Secretary's Office to exist as a medium of communication between the military authorities and the Government, through the Permanent Under Secretary. Colonel Robert, previously commanding the artillery forces, was appointed Military Secretary with a staff of 6.⁷⁷ The Gazette notice appointed Colonel Robert⁷⁸ as Military Secretary and Superintendent of Military Stores and Explosives within the Defence Department under provisions of the Civil Services Act of 1884 and to retain the rank of Colonel.

With the deteriorating health of Major General Richardson, he retired on 1 December 1892 and Colonel Spalding was appointed Acting Commandant. The successor to Major General Richardson was Colonel E T H Hutton, a British Army Officer on contract to the Colony, who assumed command on 21 April 1893. Major General Hutton complained to the Government that it was contrary to Queen's Regulations for a subordinate officer to be Military Adviser to the Government. The Minister of Defence terminated this role of Colonel Robert and created a Military's Department under the direction of the General Officer Commanding effective 24 June 1893. The Department to be responsible for all financial matters (A Branch), the Pay Department (B Branch), and the Ordnance Department (C Branch), including the direction of Artillery and Stores (not on charge of troops). Correspondence was not to be directed through the Military Secretary.⁷⁹

During 1892, a Royal Commission into the Military Services of the Colony was headed by Major General Tulloch, a British Officer the Commandant of the Military Forces of the Colony of Victoria. A term of reference was the examination of methods of effecting economy. The

⁶⁹ New South Wales Government Gazette No 503 5573, 18.7.1893

⁷⁰ New South Wales Government Gazette No 75 925, 5.2.1889

⁷¹ New South Wales Government Gazette No 116 1783, 28.2.1890

⁷² New South Wales Government Gazette No 49 395, 18.1.1895

⁷³ New South Wales Government Gazette No 77 954, 3.2.1891

⁷⁴ New South Wales Government Gazette No 807 8966, 24.11.1893

⁷⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette No 64 681, 27.1.1891

⁷⁶ Statistics of New South Wales Table 44, 1891

⁷⁷ Statistics of New South Wales Table 16, 1892

⁷⁸ New South Wales Government Gazette No 336 3781, 3.5.1892

⁷⁹ Report of the Military Forces of the Colony 1893; General Order No 128, 24.6.1893

commission found many deficiencies in the services, but many of these had been caused by financial restraints that had been imposed by the various Governments.⁸⁰ Following the Royal Commission and initiatives of Major General Hutton more developments occurred in 1893. The Permanent and Volunteer Artillery were reorganised into a single body, rather than two separate forces as had existed.⁸¹

The office of Deputy Assistant Adjutant General was established and first held by Major Bartlett in January 1893.

Regulations were gazetted in 1894 for the award of The Volunteer Officers Decoration for 20 years service.⁸² A Royal Warrant dated 25 July 1892 instituted the decoration and prescribed the conditions for its award to British Troops, a subsequent Royal Warrant dated 24 May 1894 extended the grant to Officers serving in Colonial Forces. The letters 'VD' were inserted in the Army List before the name of recipients. The letters 'VD' were used generally after the name of recipients. The first awards were announced in New South Wales in 1895.

During 1900, regulations were gazetted for the award of two decorations, The Colonial Auxiliary Forces Officers Decoration with the letters 'VD' to be used and The Colonial Auxiliary Long Service Medal both for 20 years service. The Long service Medal was not applicable to commissioned officers with the exception of those who served in the ranks of the Volunteer Forces of Great Britain or of other Colonies and are not qualified for The Colonial Auxiliary Forces Officers Decoration. The awards were constituted and created by Royal Warrant dated 18 May 1898.⁸³

Regulations were issued in 1895 for the award of silver medals to the Permanent Military Forces for (i) Distinguished Conduct and Meritorious Service (ii) Distinguished Conduction the Field and (iii) Long Service and Good Conduct (18 years).⁸⁴

The 2 regiments of mounted troops were brigaded to form the Mounted Brigade of New South Wales with Lieutenant Colonel McDonald commanding the New South Wales Cavalry Regiment to be Colonel Commanding the brigade.⁸⁵

Major General Hutton supported on the basis of efficiency and economy, the retirement of the two senior artillery officers, Colonel Spalding and Brevet Colonel Airey and their replacement by a single British Artillery Officer. These officers had performed 23 years service and were not eligible for a pension. It was not until 1896 that the officers were finally retired⁸⁶ and Lieutenant Colonel Airey assumed command until he was succeeded by Captain G R U Smith RA, in December 1896, a British Officer contracted for three years with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Lieutenant Colonel Smith was promoted to Colonel in May 1897 and his appointment was extended for a further period not exceeding two years in December 1899. Colonel Smith was finally recalled for service in South Africa.

⁸⁰ Votes & Proceedings New South Wales Legislative Assembly 8 557, 1892-1893; Sydney Morning Herald 5, 19.10.1892; Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Enquire into the Military Services of New South Wales 1892

⁸¹ General Order No 137, 5.7.1893

⁸² General Order No 161, 17.8.1894

⁸³ New South Wales Government Gazette No 939 7809, 3.1.1900

⁸⁴ General Order No 9, 11.1.1895

⁸⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette No 503 5573, 18.7.1893

⁸⁶ New South Wales Government Gazette No 911 8130, 13.11.1896

The Senior Cadet Corps was transferred from the Department of Public Instruction and affiliated with Regiments and Corps during 1894.⁸⁷ These companies were of limited success as eight were raised, but at Federation only two companies remained.⁸⁸

A Joint Naval and Military Committee was formed in 1893 to consider general questions of local defence.⁸⁹ Major-General Hutton was appointed President with the members being the Commanding Engineer and two officers of the Royal Naval Squadron located in Sydney. The committee was reconstituted in 1897⁹⁰ to include the Officer Commanding the Artillery, and currently serving British Naval Officers, the latter being replaced by their successor on their return to England. The committee disappeared at Federation.

During 1894 C Branch Ordnance Department of the Military Secretary's Department was formed by division of the Civil Department of Ordnance and Barracks Department.⁹¹ The Ordnance Department to be represented by a military staff under the control of the Officer Commanding the Military Forces, with a proportionate use of the Public Magazine and the Mercantile Explosives Department (consisting of the Public Magazine) to be under the control of the Colonial Secretary.⁹² An Assistant Commissary General of Ordnance with the rank of Major and a Deputy Assistant Commissary General of Ordnance with the rank of Captain having been appointed in 1891.

With threats of war existing, regimental reserves were enrolled in 1895 and regulations were gazetted⁹³ allowing members of Authorised Civilian Rifle Clubs to offer their services to the Governor, through the Officer Commanding the Volunteer Forces. At the same time peace and war establishments for 1895-1896 were gazetted.⁹⁴ During 1899 the number of reserves for each infantry regiment was increased from 375 to 500.⁹⁵

The appointment of Major General Button expired in 1896 and he was succeeded by Colonel G A French RA, with the rank of Major General. The appointment was initially for three years but was extended three times, finally concluding with Federation. Major General French reduced the number of civilians in the military forces by the creation of new corps. C Ordnance Branch of the Military Secretary's Department, then essentially a Civil Branch, was converted into an Ordnance Store Corps to remain under the command of the Assistant Commissary General of Ordnance. Approval had earlier been given for the classification of Staff Clerks into a Corps of Military Staff Clerks.⁹⁶ This arrangement however was short lived as Staff Clerks were engaged in a civil capacity after Federation.

Veterinary Surgeons had been associated with mounted troops since the inception of volunteer forces and with the commencement of 1896 the creation of a Cadre Veterinary Department was approved.⁹⁷ The establishment being one Veterinary Surgeon Captain as Principal Veterinary Officer and three Veterinary Surgeon Lieutenants attached to the New South Wales Lancers, Mounted Rifles and Brigade Division Field Artillery respectively.

⁸⁷ Report of Department Instruction 1889

⁸⁸ New South Wales Army & Navy List 28.2.1901

⁸⁹ New South Wales Government Gazette No 801 8899, 21.11.1892

⁹⁰ New South Wales Government Gazette No 480 4211, 18.6.1897

⁹¹ General Order No 8, 12.1.1894

⁹² New South Wales Government Gazette No 52 526, 23.1.1894

⁹³ New South Wales Government Gazette No 580 5585, 28.8.1895

⁹⁴ New South Wales Government Gazette No 579 5537, 28.8.1895

⁹⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette No 387 3714, 11.5.1895

⁹⁶ General Order No 11, 16.1.1896

⁹⁷ General Order No 17, 28.1.1895

The senior volunteer officer in the Colony, Colonel W B Bolborow commanding the 3rd Infantry Regiment was created a Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of St. Michael and St. George.⁹⁸

While the Scottish Rifles had existed since 1885, Irish Rifles⁹⁹ and St Georges Rifles¹⁰⁰ were raised during 1896. The three national rifles forming the 5th (Union Volunteers) Infantry Regiment in the same year. The establishment to be 3 companies each of Irish Rifles and St Georges Rifles and 2 companies of Scottish Rifles.¹⁰¹

With patriotic fervour, the New South Wales National Guard, a volunteer corps, was raised,¹⁰² consisting of two companies with Sir George Dibbs, a leading politician and three times Premier of New South Wales as Captain Commanding. Also raised as volunteers was the 6th Volunteer Infantry Regiment (Australian Rifles),¹⁰³ consisting of 4 companies and the New South Wales Railways Volunteer Corps consisting of two companies¹⁰⁴ under the command of Major J.C. Thom, seconded from the 2nd Infantry Regiment. The Corps however was short lived, being disbanded in 1899.¹⁰⁵

The 5th Union Volunteer Regiment remained intact for only a short time, being reformed as the Volunteer Infantry Regiment (Scottish Rifles). St Georges Rifle Companies formed a separate regiment, the 7th Volunteer Infantry Regiment (St Georges Rifles) in 1897.¹⁰⁶ Captain A K McKay, a well known politician and Captain from the Reserve of Officers became Captain Commanding the 1st Australian Volunteer Horse. This, the junior mounted regiment was raised in 1897 to consist of 4 companies.¹⁰⁷

The year 1898, saw further small increases in the forces. The Permanent Army Service Corps was gazetted with the command vested in Colonel J E D Taunton, the Assistant Quartermaster General. The establishment was the AQMG an Adjutant and Quartermaster (a staff officer) and 8 other ranks. This establishment essentially existing at the time of gazettal and operation of the corps continued as previously.¹⁰⁸

The first women were enrolled in the military forces of the Colony when the Army Nursing Service Reserve was raised. The establishment was one Lady Superintendent of Nurses, one Superintendent and 24 Nursing Sisters these to form part of the Army Medical Services of the Colony.¹⁰⁹ The Medical Staff Corps was reorganised as the Army Medical Corps, to consist of two companies.¹¹⁰

The year 1899, saw further division of the 5th Union Volunteer Infantry Regiment. The Irish Rifle Companies formed a separate regiment named the 8th Union Volunteer Infantry Regiment (Irish Rifles) consisting of 4 companies.

⁹⁸ Report of The Military Forces of New South Wales 1896

⁹⁹ New South Wales Government Gazette No 244 2219, 27.3.1896

¹⁰⁰ New South Wales Government Gazette No 450 4015, 12.6.1896

¹⁰¹ New South Wales Government Gazette No 534 4761, 13.7.1896

¹⁰² New South Wales Government Gazette No 681 5984, 28.8.1896

¹⁰³ New South Wales Government Gazette No 911 8130, 13.11.1896

¹⁰⁴ New South Wales Government Gazette No 1081 9429, 31.12.1896

¹⁰⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette No 538 4905, 28.6.1899

¹⁰⁶ New South Wales Government Gazette No 447 3947, 4.6.1897

¹⁰⁷ New South Wales Government Gazette (Supplement) No 623 5519, 5.8.1897

¹⁰⁸ New South Wales Government Gazette (Supplement) No 888 8089, 8.11.1897

¹⁰⁹ New South Wales Government Gazette No 762 6955, 30.8.1898

¹¹⁰ New South Wales Government Gazette No 859 7768, 28.8.1898

Amalgamation of the military forces of the colonies was suggested by Major General Bevan in 1889 but was not acted on, although the colonies garrisoned Thursday Island and Albany, as these were thought to be likely points of entry by hostile forces. Conferences of Colonial Commandants were held in 1894 and 1896 but amalgamation did not occur as the smaller colonies were suspicious of New South Wales and Victoria. Some progress was made with the approach of Federation of the Australian Colonies, the Queen graciously approved that the Permanent Artillery of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland be integrated, at least in name – The Permanent Artillery of New South Wales becoming the New South Wales Regiment of the Royal Australian Artillery. The partially paid batteries of the Brigade Division Field Artillery to be designated 'B' and 'C' batteries, New South Wales Artillery. The term 2nd Garrison Division was abolished. The companies were redesignated as Nos 1, 2, 3 and 4 Companies, New South Wales Artillery.¹¹¹

The year 1900 saw the rapid approach of Federation. A Permanent Cavalry Half Squadron to be known as the Permanent Cavalry was raised together with a Permanent Infantry Company to be known as the Permanent Infantry, each of 63 all ranks.¹¹² As with other Permanent Companies these were short lived, being disbanded in 1901.¹¹³

The Civil Service Volunteer Infantry Corps was raised consisting of 200 all ranks.¹¹⁴ Just before Federation the University Volunteer Rifle Corps consisting of one company of 100 all ranks was raised.¹¹⁵ This Corps later a Regiment remains active to the present time and is the oldest of the University Regiments in Australia. The strength of the Army Service Corps was increased to three companies.¹¹⁶

The last significant action of the New South Wales Government was the raising of a third company of the Army Medical Corps known as C (Newcastle) Company consisting of two officers and 49 other ranks in February 1901.¹¹⁷ Federation occurred on 1 January 1901 and to allow an effective transfer of State Departments to the Commonwealth it was indicated in the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act that the date of transfer of individual Departments would be proclaimed by the Governor-General.

The date of transfer of the Departments of Naval and Military Defence was cede March 1901.¹¹⁸ The military forces continued largely as before Federation under the scheme of State Organisation with Commonwealth Management until a scheme of reorganisation and integration was adopted in July 1903.¹¹⁹ During the intervening period a General Officer, Major General Sir E T H Hutton, a former Commandant was appointed in December 1901,¹²⁰ and the Royal Australian Artillery being the only Permanent Troops in the Commonwealth were reorganised first. A scheme of reorganisation dated 20 December 1902 was gazetted on 1 January 1903.¹²¹

¹¹¹ General Order No 91, 7.9.1899

¹¹² New South Wales Government Gazette No 640 4997, 29.6.1900

¹¹³ Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No 62 624, 6.12.1901

¹¹⁴ New South Wales Government Gazette No 812 6560, 22.8.1900

¹¹⁵ New South Wales Government Gazette No 1149 9723, 14.12.1900

¹¹⁶ New South Wales Government Gazette No 1094 9189, 23.11.1900

¹¹⁷ New South Wales Government Gazette No 129 1257, 16.2.1901

¹¹⁸ Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No 9 21, 20.2.1901

¹¹⁹ Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No 35 391, 25.7.1903

¹²⁰ The New South Wales Army List of the Commonwealth of Australia 30.4.1903

¹²¹ Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No 1 2, 9.1.1903



658, Private Nain Singh Sailani C Company, 44th Battalion, AIF

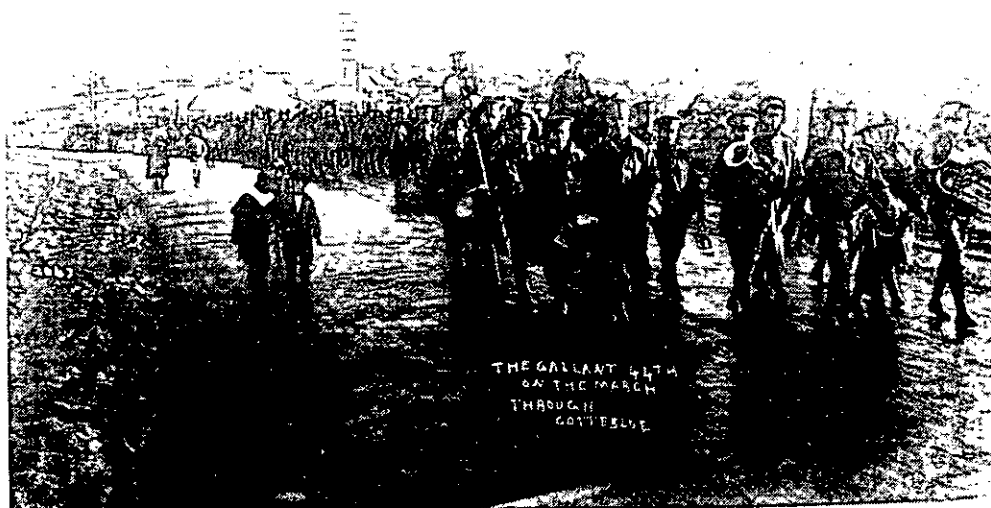
John R Sweetman

P rivate Nain Singh Sailani C Company, 44th Battalion, AIF, 11th Infantry Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, AIF, was killed in action on 1 June 1917. Set out below are the details of his service, as obtained from official records.

Name : Nain Singh Sailani
Age : 43 years
Birthplace : Simla, India
British Subject : Yes
Occupation : Labourer
Marital Status : Single
Address : General Post Office, Perth Western Australia
Next of Kin : Mr Rugore Singh (Father)¹
Post Office, Charamadi, Sarana, Simla, India. (A).
Height : 5ft 4ins
Weight : 110lbs
Chest Measurement : 32 1/2 - 35ins
Complexion : Dark.
Eyes : Black
Vision : Right Eye : 6 / 9.
Left Eye : 6 / 9.
Hair : Black.
Religion : Hindoo.
Distinctive Marks : 3 Vaccination Scars, Left Arm. Vaccinated at Infancy.
Volunteered : For Active Service in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF), Perth, 2.2.1916.
Accepted : After medical examinations etc., for service in the AIF, 2.2.1916.
Posted : Area No. 1, Claremont Show Grounds, with the rank of Private and the number 658, as per Camp Order (CO) 682, 7.2.1916
Transferred : C Company, 44th Battalion, as per Battalion Order (BO) 08, 8.2.1916
Joined : C Company, after further training, 20.2.1916
Pay Allottee : Allotted 4/- per day, to be banked in his name
Banked : At Commonwealth Savings Bank, Perth
Pay Book No : Not stated
Pay Card No : W.A. 25258
Nominal Roll Page : 19579

¹ His father died at some time after his enlistment and his Next of Kin was changed to his mother. There are many various spellings of his father's name, with one being, Runjore Singh. This is how it is spelt on his Last Will and Testament.

Will : Made out in camp, 9.5.1916.
 Executor : Mr Cyril Edward Coleman, Tobacconist, William Street, Perth, WA.
 Beneficiary : Mrs Rugore Singh,² Simla, Empire of India.
 In the event of her predeceasing him, he bequeathed all his belongings, to The Goorkha Association of Simla, Simla, Empire of India.
 Will Lodged : With Morris Crawcour, Solicitor.
 National Mutual Buildings, St. George's Terrace, Perth, WA
 Embarked : Aboard His Majesty's Australian Transport (HMAT) A29 SUEVIC, to join the British Expeditionary Force (BEF – Belgium, France and Britain), as part of Convoy Number 21, at Fremantle, 6.6.1916.



The gallant 44th on the march through Cottesloe, prior to departure, 1 June 1916

Enroute : For Europe, the SUEVIC stopped at the following port:
 Table Bay, South Africa, 29.6.1916
 Disembarked : Plymouth, England, 21.7.1916
 Posted : 3rd Infantry Division Camp, Larkhill, Salisbury Plain, 21.7.1916
 Embarked : Aboard an unnamed transport, with the 44th Battalion, for France,
 Southampton, 25.11.1916
 Disembarked : France, port not specified, 26.11.1916.

² His widowed mother.

Disciplinary Action : Being taken with respect to accidental wounds received by Lieutenant Guy, 5.1.1917

Charged With : 'Conduct to the prejudice of good order and Military discipline – in that he at Armentieres on 5.1.1917 by neglect, eased the spring of his rifle whilst unloading, thereby injuring Lt. Guy, Sgt. Marshall and Pte. Browne.'

Awarded : 7 days Field Punishment (FP) No. 1, by Commanding Officer (CO), 44th Battalion, 19.1.1917

Killed In Action : Belgium, 1.6.1917³

Buried : Grave 10, Section D, Plot II, Strand Military Cemetery, Comines-Warneton, Hainaut, Belgium

Reported : To AIF Administration Headquarters, 130 Horseferry Road, Westminster, London, England

Date of Notification : 8.6.1917

Reported : To Mother
C/- General Post Office, Bombay, India

Date of Notification : By telegram, 12.6.1917

Reported : To Pay Officer, Perth, Western Australia

Date of Notification : 13.6.1917

Casualty List No : 356

Days of Service : 361 days

Certificate of Death : Requested by Morris Crawcour, Solicitor, 27.6.1917
Issued, 6.8.1917

Personal Effects :- Returned to Melbourne, Australia, aboard the MARATHON, date not specified. Sent to Morris Crawcour, for disposal as per his will, 18.3.1918
Received by Solicitor, 25.3.1918

Estate : ————— Paid to his Mother, Mrs Ranjore Singh
C/- Babu Bool Chand, Clerk, Office of Railway Board, Simla, India
Date of payment of estate, is not specified

Awarded : British War Medal and Victory Medal

Issued : To his Mother

Date of Issue : 15.6.1922

Memorial Scroll : Issued to his Mother, date not specified

Memorial Plaque : Issued to his Mother, date not specified

³ In the Regimental History of the 44th Battalion, there is no mention of casualties being suffered on the 1.6.1917. However, I have found one other member of the 44th, who was also killed on 1.6.1917. This was only several days before the fighting at Messines, and may have been the result of shelling or sniping.



A World War I Link with Ned Kelly

George Franki

Private Frederick Arthur Foster, 17 Bn, 5th Brigade, 2nd Division AIF, who was killed in action at First Bullecourt on 15 April 1917, was a nephew of Ned Kelly. His mother, Kate Foster nee Kelly, was a younger sister of the famous outlaw. Ned Kelly is one of the best known of all Australians. It is hard to think of any other Australian of the Victorian age, apart from Nellie Melba, who is a household word in this country to this day. There have been three films made about the Kelly Gang, the first in 1906, and over one hundred books have been published. 'As game as Ned Kelly' is one of our most widely used expressions.

Frederick Foster's death was one of many tragedies which affected the Kelly family. His maternal grandmother, Ellen Quinn, migrated from County Antrim, Ireland to Victoria in 1841 as a 9 year old child with her seven brothers and sisters. In 1850 she married John (Red) Kelly, an ex-convict from County Tipperary. Of the eight children of the marriage, the eldest, Mary Jane, died in childhood; Ned died on the scaffold in 1880; Daniel died in the Glenrowan siege in 1880; and Kate was drowned in the Lachlan River near Forbes, New South Wales, in October 1898 leaving four children, Gertrude, Maude and Frederick and a five month old baby, Catherine.

James Kelly, Ellen's third son by John Kelly, was in gaol during the Kelly Gang's rampage, 1878-1880. On his release from gaol, he lived with his mother until her death in 1923, highly respected in the district, eventually dying a bachelor aged 86 in 1946. On the death of his sister, Kate, he drove a buggy to Forbes intending to bring the four motherless children back to Greta in Victoria. However, the baby, Catherine, had died before he arrived. The three older children were reared by Ellen and Jim.

Frederick Foster

Frederick Foster's records show that he first enlisted in the AIF on 29 June 1915 in Melbourne. He was aged 26 years and one month and was a beekeeper living at Myrree, a hamlet about 50 kilometres south east of Benalla. His next of kin was his father, William Foster, whose address was c/o Mrs. D. Scott, Thirroul, NSW. Mrs. Scott was probably William Foster's sister. Frederick was thickset being 5ft 6½ inches (170 cms) tall and weighing 10 stone 10 lbs (68 kilograms). His complexion was 'fresh', his eyes blue and his hair brown. He has been described as 'the most handsome boy that you could ever look at.' His religion was stated to be Presbyterian. Evidently he had followed his father's religion rather than that of the Catholic Kelly family in which he was reared.

Before enlistment, Frederick had served for three years with the 16th Light Horse at Benalla when performing part time military service, compulsory before World War I. With this background – and like all the Kellys he must have been a fine horseman – he was posted on enlistment to the 4th reinforcements for the 13th Light Horse at the depot located at Seymour, Victoria. On 10 February 1916 he is recorded as being on the 'Deserters Roll.' What led him to desert, leave Victoria and move to NSW is not known but, without any attempt at concealment, he re-enlisted in the AIF at Goulburn, New South Wales, on 14 January 1916 and was posted to the 3rd reinforcements for the 55th Battalion. All the details on his second enlistment form are as given on his first enlistment in 1915. One can conjecture as to his reason for deserting from the Light Horse. Did his connection to the notorious Kellys become known and did he have to endure teasing or worse? In the 'Kelly country' up to recent times those with connections to the Kellys were most reticent about it. No mention is made in his records of any punitive action taken against him for deserting from the Light Horse. With hindsight, his life may not have been lost in the War if he had stayed with the Light Horse. Their casualties, after Gallipoli, were very light compared to the slaughter endured by the Australian infantry in France and Belgium.

Foster must have been a generous young man. Of his daily pay of 6 shillings, he allotted 4 shillings to his aunt, Mrs. Scott; 1 shilling was deferred; and he managed on 1 shilling. The only links with the Kelly family found in Foster's army papers are reference to a letter from Mr J Kelly, c/- Broken River Hotel,

Benalla 'regarding gratuity' which was referred to the District Finance Office, 2nd Military District on 18 June 1920. 'J Kelly' was James Kelly, Foster's uncle as noted previously. Another letter in Foster's papers is from a Bernard F Miller of Elsternwick, Melbourne in which enquiries are made about the death date of 'my father's cousin, Frederick Foster.' The letter states that Foster's sister, Gertrude, married a Cavanagh and another sister, Maude, married a Hibbert. Miller notes that both the husbands served in World War I. Another letter filed in Foster's papers, a sad one perhaps indicating a romance, was from Alice Maher c/o Mrs S Kiely, Terminus Hotel, Wagga, dated 18 June 1917, in which she referred to a report in the *Daily Telegraph* of May 18th concerning an F A Foster killed in action on the 15th of April. 'I wrote to his sisters and other relatives but they all seemed to be in doubt about it.' Alas, the Officer in Charge Base Records confirmed the death in a letter to Alice Maher dated 21 June 1917.

On 23 June 1916, Foster embarked at Sydney in *HMAT Barambah* which reached Plymouth on 25 August 1916. After training in England, he embarked on 28 February 1917 at Folkestone in SS *Golden Eagle* for France. He spent from 1 March until 24 March at Etaples, the huge transit depot hated by troops for the brutality of the instructors in the 'Bullring' there. He did not join the 55th Battalion but was taken on strength of the 17th Battalion on 23 March. He had only 23 days with the Battalion before he was killed.

Lagnicourt

The 5th Brigade, including the 17th Battalion, on 13 April 1917 relieved the hard pressed 13 Brigade of the 4th Division. The 17th Battalion was located south of Bullecourt at Noreuil and Lagnicourt. On the morning of 15 April, 26 German battalions, the greater part of 4 divisions, without preliminary bombardment, as a surprise measure, attacked the positions of the 1st and 2nd divisions at Lagnicourt. The Australians fought desperately and repulsed the attack. It was in this action that Frederick Foster was killed. It is reputed that Frederick Foster's last words to the Anglican padre who bent over him were: 'Kiss me Granny.' He had lived with Ellen and Jim Kelly since he was 9 years of age.

Foster's records state that he is buried in the vicinity of Lagnicourt but his grave is not marked. His name appears on the Villers Bretonneux Memorial where the names of over 11,000 Australians who died in France and have no known grave are recorded.

Two members of the AIF, whose fathers had close associations with the last days of the Kelly Gang, also lost their lives in France. Richard James Bracken, whose name also appears on the Villers Bretonneux Memorial, was killed on 19 September 1918 when serving with the 14th Battalion. Bracken was the son of Constable Hugh Bracken who, in 1880, was captured by Ned Kelly during the famous siege at Glenrowan. When the outlaw was finally overpowered, he pleaded for Kelly's life. In nearby Harbonnieres Cemetery rests Thomas Cumow, 57 Bn, eldest son of Thomas Cumow, the schoolteacher who was allowed by Ned Kelly to leave the Glenrowan Inn before the siege and then took the opportunity to stop the police train heading towards Glenrowan before it was blown up by explosives placed by the Kelly Gang on the railway line. Thomas Cumow jnr was killed action at Villers Bretonneux on 8 August 1918.

Sources

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Mackenzie, K. W. *The Story of the Seventeenth Battalion, A.I.F. in the Great War 1914-1918*. Sydney, Shipping Newspaper, 1945, pp. 166-7.

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I am grateful to Mr. David Butler of Darlingford, Sydney for information supplied on the 17th Battalion, AIF.