



A CENTENARY OF THE GREAT WAR

FROM THE EVACUATION TO ARMISTICE

Extracts from the USCQ Magazine
December 2015 to December 2018

UNITED SERVICE CLUB QUEENSLAND

THE STORY BEHIND THE STORIES

The idea of including a “History Page” in the Club’s Magazine was born in mid-2015 when the Club’s History Interest Group United (HIG) suggested that we should commemorate those of our members killed in action during the Great War on the centenary of their deaths.

As convenor of the History Interest Group and author of the History Note “Men on the Board – Great War Honour Roll”, I volunteered to write the stories for each month’s edition. Any errors of fact, grammar, punctuation, etc are therefore my fault.

The concept grew to include a short month-by-month narrative of how the war unfolded across all theatres, but mainly on the Western Front and in the Middle East. The idea was to try to draw a global chronological picture of the war as it seemed that most formal texts did not provide the broader picture and therefore did not enable most readers to imagine how the war progressed or picture how it affected Australia (both our forces and the home front) on a month-by-month basis.

By the time the first edition was ready, the Centenary years were well advanced: the Australians had already been evacuated from Gallipoli to Egypt; the AIF was about to be reorganised and expanded; the infantry divisions and bulk of the AIF would soon be redeployed to the Western Front; and the Light Horse would soon be utilised in the Egyptian and Palestine campaigns. The page evolved over time to include added stories, where space permitted, of a more general nature and/or with a more local focus with topics likely to be of interest of members.

We thought that we should consolidate these pages into one document, so that those members particularly interested in the “Centenary of the Great War” stories, and new members who may not have seen the whole series, can read them in context.

Writing these pages dovetailed nicely with other research to prepare for the Club’s 2017 Western Front Battlefields Tour. This consolidated version should also provide useful background reading for the participants of the proposed third USCQ Western Front Battlefield Tour.

The History Page continued throughout 2019 and will continue again in 2020, albeit with a changed focus as the emphasis on the Great War stories decreases and other things emerge.

Ray McNab
Convenor
History Interest Group
United Service Club Queensland



The Men on the Board 1914-1918

In December 1915, the troops were evacuated from the Gallipoli Peninsular. The ANZACs withdrew without any casualties on the nights of 19 and 20 December after a brilliant deception plan implemented since late November and a staged withdrawal over two nights, both of which were masterminded by Colonel Charles Brudenell-White (whose name appears on our WW2 Honour Board). Australian casualties during the campaign were 8,141 killed and 17,970 wounded. The troops felt badly about leaving their dead mates at Gallipoli and many visited and tidied their graves for the last time in the final days. They returned to Egypt where the AIF was expanded and reorganised and the men recovered and re-trained before being moved to the Western Front a few months later. Also in December 1915, the Allied chiefs met in France to coordinate their 1916 offensives. One of these evolved into the Battle of the Somme in July 1916 that claimed thousands more Australians, many of whom had survived Gallipoli.

We will provide a glimpse of the 12 USC members killed at Gallipoli over the next few months and from mid-2016 we will shift the focus to our members who were killed in other theatres. More detail is available in our Men of the Board History and Heritage Notes at <http://www.unitedserviceclub.com.au/history/>



LIEUTENANT JOSEPH WILLIAM COSTIN - 9th Battalion

Joseph William Costin was born in Brisbane and educated at Brisbane Grammar School 1905-1908 and was later employed as Junior Assistant Engineer in the Post Master General's Department. Joe Costin served in the militia before the war and was appointed Lieutenant, 9th Battalion on 20 August 1914. Three weeks after he had joined the AIF, he became engaged to Miss Viola Foss Larsen.

9th Battalion was the first ashore at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Lieutenant Costin was the battalion's Machine Gun Officer and he was one of the leaders in the advance from the beach. He was killed by a direct hit by shellfire later that day while firing a machine gun.

Lieutenant Costin was only 23 years old. His remains were never recovered and he is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial above Anzac Cove.



CAPTAIN JOSEPH PETER LALOR - 12th Battalion

Joe Lalor's story has more than a touch of romantic mystery. Joseph Peter Lalor was born in 1884 at Richmond, Victoria. The family was very well known. His grandfather, Peter Lalor, was leader of the 1854 Eureka Stockade insurrection, and later a Minister and then Speaker of the Victorian Legislative Assembly.

Lalor served in the militia and was appointed as Lieutenant in the permanent forces in 1910. His postings included Brisbane. On the outbreak of war, he joined the AIF, being appointed Captain, 12th Battalion. At 8.30am on 25 April 1915, Captain Lalor led his men in an advance up Baby 700. Baby 700 was won and lost twice during the day. At about 3.30pm another attempt was made to retake Baby 700. Joe Lalor was killed in that battle.

He was 30 years old when he was killed leaving a young wife and two-year old son. Captain Lalor was one of three USC members killed in the same action and now lies in Baby 700 Cemetery.

HISTORY OF OUR BUILDINGS

During November we received the sad news that long-term Member FLTLT Ian Davies had passed away. His father and aunt once owned our current premises, inherited from their father William Davies who had constructed today's buildings. We have passed our condolences to the family, but it may be of interest to summarise the family's role in the story of our premises.

The original Deed of Grant for the land was issued to William Wilson on 29 January 1856, and later transferred to Anglican Archbishop Edward Tufnell in February 1864. The original Montpelier was built in 1864 as a pair of large semi-detached villas.

William Davies bought the property as an investment in 1897 and it remained in the Davies family until purchased by the United Service Club almost 50 years later. The Green House was erected in 1906-07, and the original Montpelier was replaced c1910 with the current Montpelier building, a

purpose-built high-quality brick boarding house for gentlemen. The architect for both buildings was Claude William Chambers.

During July 1946, the Club placed an advertisement in The Courier-Mail, but none of the buildings inspected met the requirements. The situation was becoming desperate when Major Maldwyn Davies, a Club member, bumped into the President in the street and mentioned that his family owned a property which might be suitable. Major Davies and his sister eventually agreed to sell.

The Committee's recommendation to Members was:....the only property recommended by the committee is "Montpelier". It was on a prime location, for the site could not be built out, it was within easy tramming distance of the city and, most importantly, it provided ample parking space for cars. Apparently there were only small structural changes required and after conversion work, the Club moved into Montpelier on 26 May 1947.



In February 1916 the Australians were back in Egypt after their evacuation from Gallipoli in December 1915. There were also some 40,000 new reinforcements that had been held in Egypt and on 19 January 1916 it was recommended that the AIF be expanded from two to four divisions. The units of 1st Australian Division were split into 'mother' and 'daughter' battalions, and brought up to strength with the reinforcements. The 2nd Division was left untouched as it had been formed only recently. The reorganisation produced the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th Divisions, all in Egypt. (3rd Division was being formed in Australia and later sent to train in the UK.)

The troops in Egypt were increasingly seen as reinforcements for the Western Front. It became urgent to take pressure off the French following the German attack on the French at Verdun on 21 Feb 1916. I Anzac Corps (1st and 2nd Divisions and the NZ Division) was warned on 29 February that its move to the Western Front would start in a fortnight, with II Anzac Corps (4th and 5th Australian Divisions) to follow soon after. Almost all the Light Horse Regiments and brigades would be kept in Egypt to defend the Canal and would later play a vital role in the Palestine Campaign.

The Men on the Board 1914-1918

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MAJOR SYDNEY BERESFORD ROBERTSON - 9th Battalion

S Beresford Roberston (as his mother asserted he was always known) was born in 1886. His father's vocation as a Congregationalist Minister meant moving the family around Australasia. He was educated at Prince Alfred Grammar School in Adelaide and Muirden College and later he took up a position as a law clerk.

He served in the militia from 1907 to 1914, including as a Lieutenant in 9th Battalion and as a Captain in Australian Intelligence Corps. On the outbreak of war he applied to join the AIF and was appointed Captain in 9th Infantry Battalion. After landing on Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 Major Robertson led his B Company up the broken cliffs towards Baby 700. Captain Lalor of 12th Battalion did likewise, both arriving at The Nek about 7 am. The fighting was very heavy and Robertson was killed after being wounded three times at about 4pm. "Carry on, Rigby," he said to a junior beside him, and died. Lieutenant W. J. Rigby "carried on" until he too was killed.

Major Robertson was only 29 when he was killed and one of three USC Members killed in this action (Captain Lalor and Lieutenant Rigby were killed nearby). Robertson now lies in Beach Cemetery Gallipoli.



LIEUTENANT WILLIAM JOHN RIGBY - 9th Battalion

William John Rigby was born in Brisbane and attended Brisbane Grammar School in 1906 and 1907 after which he worked as an insurance clerk.

His military experience prior to the Great War consisted of four years in the cadets, three years in the Australian Garrison Artillery, and three years (1911-14) as a Lieutenant with 9th Infantry Battalion. He volunteered for the AIF soon after war was declared and was appointed Lieutenant, 9th Battalion in August 1914. Lt Rigby landed at Gallipoli with the first wave at dawn on 25 April 1915. Major S.B. Robertson led B Company, including Rigby, up the broken cliffs towards Baby 700. Captain Lalor of 12th Battalion did likewise, both arriving at The Nek about 7 am. The fighting was fierce and raged all day and Rigby was killed about 4pm, shortly after Robertson had been killed.

Lieutenant Rigby was one of three USC Members killed in this action (Captain Lalor and Major Robertson were killed nearby). He was only 23 years old. His remains were never recovered and he is commemorated on Lone Pine Memorial, not far from where he was killed.

HERITAGE TRUST FUND

Members are fortunate to have attractive buildings of heritage significance that are the Club's home, which provides the added benefit of a location within an historic Brisbane CBD precinct.

In 2008 the Committee recognised that the preservation of the Clubhouse for future generations of Members required ongoing funding outside of normal operations. In July 2010 the Club Heritage Trust Fund was launched with the intent of establishing a fund, under the auspices of the National Trust of Queensland, to receive donations from Members and friends of the Club.

Donations to the Club Heritage Trust are for the purposes of preserving and maintaining buildings, furniture, artwork and other attractive items of heritage, artistic or architectural interest. Donations to the Trust Fund are tax deductible and the Club welcomes donations from Members by completing a Donation Slip that can be downloaded from the Club website, or by contacting the Club's accounts department directly.



It had been decided that the bulk of the AIF (including a mounted element comprising 13th Light Horse Regiment plus one squadron) would serve on the Western Front, while the rest of the Light Horse would stay in the Middle East theatre. I ANZAC Corps began to sail from Alexandria on 13 March 1916, with the first unit (25th Battalion) arriving in Marseilles on 19 March 1916. 2nd Division was followed soon after by 1st Division. They travelled by trains to the British zone of the Western Front 130 km north of Paris. Both the 1st and 2nd Divisions were to be deployed in early April to a quiet sector of the line (the 'Nursery', near Armentieres) to train and become familiar with Western Front warfare. Meanwhile the 4th and 5th Divisions continued to train in Egypt. Delays in equipping and training them (especially artillery) meant that they did not move to France until June/July.

The newly-arriving troops of 1st and 2nd Divisions were not the first Australians to serve on the Western Front. An Australian Volunteer Hospital (AVH) had been formed in England in August 1914 from Australian expatriates. All medical practitioners in the unit were Australians and Australian nurses were accepted. It was set-up as an independent hospital for patients of many nationalities. It left England for France in August 1914 initially to St Nazaire and then to Wimereux in October. In July 1916, the AVH was absorbed into the British Army.

Meanwhile, in Egypt, in March 1916 the ANZAC Mounted Division was formed from the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Light Horse Brigades and the NZ Mounted Rifles Brigade. Some units entered Sinai on 10 March 1916.

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CAPTAIN WILLIAM ORGAN WILLIS - 15th Battalion

Captain William ('Billy') Organ Willis was a talented and experienced infantry officer who had extensive military experience including service in the Boer War, militia and the permanent force.

Billy served as a private in the Boer War and also served in the militia between 1907 and 1911. Willis joined the Permanent Forces in 1911 and served as a 'regular army' officer until he joined the AIF when he was appointed Captain and Adjutant of 15th Battalion.

The 4th Brigade (including 15th Battalion) landed at Anzac late in the afternoon of 25 April 1915. The Battalion's War Diary for 3 May records: The enemy made an attack upon our position early in the morning but was repulsed, we losing Capt. Willis killed...

Captain Willis was in his prime when he was killed at 37. He left a young widow but no children. He has no known grave and is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial.



CAPTAIN WALTER ALAND LESLIE - 3rd Field Artillery Brigade

Walter Aland Leslie was born in Brisbane in 1887. He and two of his brothers were killed in action in the Great War and another brother was later a Rhodes Scholar. Leslie attended Brisbane Grammar School 1901-1903. He was a member of the militia as an officer in the Australian Field Artillery from 1909 until he joined the AIF and soon after he was posted to 7th Field Battery along with other Queenslanders.

He landed at Gallipoli on 26 April 1915. The three guns of 7th Battery were on the right, near Bolton's Ridge. Captain Leslie commanded No 1 Gun. They were so close to the front line that they acted like giant shotguns, with devastating effect on the assaulting Turkish infantry.

On 5 May the enemy began heavy shell fire on Bolton's Ridge. Captain Leslie was badly wounded by a shell and was evacuated to the Hospital Ship A36 Gloucester Castle. He died onboard on 6 May 1915 and was reported by the Captain as buried at sea.



AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTARY HOSPITAL (AVH)

Four of the nursing sisters of the Australian Voluntary Hospital at the entrance to the AVH mess tent at Wimereux in France 1915. (From top: Sisters Elizabeth Mundell of Brisbane; Patience Anderson of Hill End NSW; Ella Walter of Kew; and Mary Rawson of Kyneton). They were expatriates, already living in Britain, but keen to use their nursing skills.

The AVH was an initiative established by Lady Rachel, Countess of Dudley, the wife of Australia's then Governor-General. The hospital was established as an independent field hospital to care for soldiers of several nationalities and Commonwealth soldiers. It was the United Nations of emergency healthcare. In 1916 the AVH was absorbed by the British Army and renamed Number 32 Military Hospital. When the hospital finally shut its doors in 1919, its staff had treated more than 70,000 patients.



On 7 April 1916, I Anzac Corps (1st and 2nd Divisions) took up positions in 'The Nursery', south of Armentières. This quiet sector was used by both sides to accustom new arrivals to the routines, rhythms, techniques, and tactics of the Western Front. The Australians, especially the Gallipoli veterans, were impressed by short periods and relative quiet in the line, the beauty of France, the warmth of the welcome by the locals, and the availability of creature comforts (including estaminets and wine) so close behind the lines. Compared to Gallipoli they thought France was a picnic and with a cheeky grin they would ask British soldiers: "Been fighting long....or have you been in France?"

Meanwhile in the Middle East: 4th and 5th Divisions continued their training and defence of the Canal in Egypt; 9th Light Horse Regiment mounted a successful raid in Sinai; No 1 Squadron of the Australian Flying Corps arrived in Egypt; and the Mesopotamia Half-Flight conducted its final operations in support of the British forces. The brigades and units of 3rd Division were forming and undergoing rudimentary training in Australia before sailing to the UK in May and June for further training on the Salisbury Plain.

In 1916, Anzac Day commemorations, ceremonies, and marches were held for the first time in many places in Australia, including Brisbane's first parade and march by 11th Brigade (see photograph of 41st Battalion marching past at Petrie Bight below) and civic ceremonies and commemorations. There was also a march of more than 2,000 Australian and NZ troops in London and a sports day in the Australian camp in Egypt.

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LIEUTENANT FRANCIS LEOFRIC ARMSTRONG - 15th Battalion

Francis Leofric Armstrong was born in Brisbane 1880. He attended Brisbane Grammar School and served in the militia (Queensland Volunteer Rifles) between 1896 and 1900. He was not selected for the Boer War contingent but he made his own way to South Africa to enlist in a unit raised there. Corporal Armstrong was invalided home to Australia in 1902. After the war he worked in Capetown until his final return to Australia in 1910 when he re-joined the militia. Armstrong volunteered for the AIF and was appointed 2nd Lieutenant, 15th Battalion which landed at Anzac late in the afternoon of 25 April 1915. On the night of 9/10 May 1915, the battalion attacked the Turkish lines in front of Quinn's Post but they were forced to withdraw as daylight broke on 10 May. Lt Armstrong remained to the last and then ran back to the Australian trenches. He was killed as he tried to climb out to see if any of his wounded men remained in the open.

Frank Armstrong was 33 years old when he died in the same action as Lt Wareham, a fellow USC Member. Frank now lies in Quinn's Post Cemetery. He never saw his three-month old baby son.



LIEUTENANT EDWARD GRAHAM WAREHAM - 15th Battalion

Edward Graham Wareham was born in Townsville. After the family moved to Brisbane he attended Brisbane Grammar School before working as a customs clerk. Wareham served in the militia for over two and a half years, before he was appointed to the AIF as a Lieutenant on 1 January 1915. He was allotted to 15th Battalion which at that time was training in Egypt. By the time of his arrival the Battalion was fighting on Gallipoli and he was held on board ship with other reinforcements until 2 May 1916. On the night of 9/10 May the battalion assaulted Turkish trenches in front of Quinn's Post but were forced to withdraw with heavy casualties early on 10 May. Lt Wareham was killed in this action.

Wareham was only 25 years old when he was killed. A fellow USC Member, Frank Armstrong, was killed a few hours later in the same action. Lt Wareham was buried on 24 May during the armistice and is commemorated on the walls of the Lone Pine Memorial at Gallipoli.



BRISBANE'S FIRST ANZAC DAY PARADE – 1916

Copied from a postcard, the back of which reads:

Bells Paddock, 41st Battalion. A Company. My Dear Brother, Just a post card to let you know I am well. We are leaving on the eighth of the month for lord only knows where. We have not had any drill yet, so it will be a few months before we see the firing line. Charley Williams is down here in camp. I will send a photo of myself before I go. This postcard of our battalion leading on Anzac Day, six thousand marching. There is a lot of Mackay lads in the hut. I ...(?) will now conclude, hoping this will find you well, as it leaves me. I remain, your affectionate brother, Earl.



In May 1916 on the Western Front, 1st and 2nd Divisions were in the line near Armentieres in 'The Nursery' sector, where they continued 'in-theatre training' including polishing the techniques of trench raids and patrolling. Although there were no major battles, there were regular casualties even in a quiet sector in a quiet time, from snipers, shell fire, raids etc.

The units of 3rd Division left Australia for the UK for training in May and June but the division would not be ready to move to France until November. The 4th and 5th Divisions continued to train in Egypt where they had to raise and train their own specialists. The creation of their artillery was unparalleled in British history. Only four guns were available for training, and these were used in relays. Officers were trained each morning from 0430 to 0630 and they then trained their men all day, but within a fortnight they were producing results.

Also in Egypt, the Light Horse continued to conduct training, patrols and outpost duty. Many felt they were missing out on "the real war", but there were good reasons for keeping them there - the Suez Canal was of the greatest strategic importance and Palestine, part of the Ottoman empire for hundreds of years, lay at Egypt's border just across the Sinai Peninsula.

On 30-31 May 1916, the British Grand Fleet and the German High Seas Fleet met in the Battle of Jutland, the only full-scale naval engagement of the main fleets in the North Sea theatre. There were no Australian ships in the battle - the RAN's flagship HMAS Australia was serving with the Grand Fleet but was undergoing repairs from a collision a few weeks before (see below). However three Australians were killed while serving on HMS Defence when she was hit by two salvos and exploded with the loss of all hands.

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL HUBERT JENNINGS IMRIE HARRIS, VD - 5TH Light Horse Regiment



Hubert Jennings Imrie Harris was a long-time member of the United Service Institute (now USC) including a period as its Honorary Secretary (1901-1904). He was born at Dalby in 1871 and educated at the Normal School (Brisbane) and Brisbane Grammar School.

Hubert gained employment in a variety of roles and also served as a citizen soldier, joining Queensland Volunteer Rifles as a 15 year-old bugler and later rising to Lieutenant. Lt Harris and about 50 others were called-up and deployed in the Central District during the Shearer's Strike in 1891.

He served with the Second Contingent (Queensland Mounted Infantry) in the South Africa war from 1900 to 1902. On his return, he continued to serve in the militia, eventually promoted to Lieutenant Colonel. On the outbreak of war, Harris volunteered for the AIF and was appointed Lieutenant Colonel, 5th Light Horse Regiment. The unit arrived at Gallipoli (without horses) on 20 May 1915.

Lieutenant Colonel Harris was killed on the night of 31 July 1915 when the 5th Light Horse Regiment was tasked to man the trenches and support by fire an attack by 3rd Infantry Brigade on 31 July 1915. He was 44 years old and left a widow and three children. Lieutenant Colonel Harris now lies in Shell Green Cemetery.



HMAS AUSTRALIA

HMAS Australia was the RAN's first flagship. She was a modern battlecruiser and when commissioned on 21 June 1913, she was the largest warship in the southern hemisphere. She led the entrance of the first RAN fleet into Sydney Harbour on 4 October 1913, a career climax for Vice Admiral Cresswell (a former USC President) who had argued hard for an independent Australian navy and who became the 'Father of the RAN'. (Other dominions, eg NZ, paid for Royal Navy ships instead of raising their own navy).

She served in Pacific waters before joining the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet in Scapa Flow in February 1915. On 22 April 1916 she collided with HMS New Zealand in heavy fog and missed the Battle of Jutland as she underwent repairs. She was one of the RAN ships that took part in the surrender of the German High Seas Fleet after the Armistice. She returned home in 1919 and was scuttled off Sydney Heads in accordance with the Washington Treaty on 12 April 1924.



By the end of June 1916 the Light Horse formations and No1 Sqn Australian Flying Corps (AFC) were the only major Australian combat elements left in Egypt. In late June, II ANZAC Corps (4th and 5th Divisions) had begun to arrive in France from Egypt. 4th Division was in northern France moving to the 'Nursery' near Armentières to relieve 1st Division, while 5th Division was just starting to arrive in southern France. The newly-arriving 4th and 5th Divisions were to replace the 1st and 2nd Divisions in the 'Nursery'.

I ANZAC Corps (1st and 2nd Divisions and the NZ Division) were trench-raiding, sniping, and shelling in the Nursery sector during June. Their actions changed the sector from a 'nursery' to a lively one. By the end of June about 600 Australians had been killed there.

On 30 June the 1st and 2nd Divisions were beginning to move south from the Armentières area to Messines but were warned to be ready to move further south at short notice – to Albert, close to The Somme battleground. July would bring battles of horrific intensity that caused thousands of Australian casualties - more in six weeks than in the eight months of the Gallipoli campaign.

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MAJOR THOMAS JAMES LOGAN - 2nd Light Horse Regiment

Major Tom Logan of Forest Hill was killed in action during an attack on trenches opposite Quinn's Post on 7 August 1915. The attack was doomed to failure and Logan and a fellow Member, Lieutenant Hinton, were killed within a few seconds and yards of each other and only a few yards from the start point.

Thomas James Logan was born in Brookfield and was educated Brisbane Grammar School. He served with the 1st Queensland Mounted Contingent during the South African (Boer) War, volunteered for the AIF and was posted to 2nd Light Horse Regiment (2LHR). The regiment landed at Gallipoli (without their horses) on 12 May 1915. A heavy operation was commenced on 6 August with attacks planned in several locations. 2LHR was to capture Turkish trenches opposite Quinn's Post and attacked at 4.30am on 7 August 1915. Surprise was impossible and the enemy was perfectly prepared. "Nevertheless the troops...faced their task with a grim determination. Major Logan, who led the line, was killed before he had gone five yards." Major Logan was 38 years old when killed in action. He now lies in Quinn's Post Cemetery.



LIEUTENANT HERBERT GERALD HINTON - 2nd Light Horse Regiment

Lieutenant Hinton and his comrades (including Major TJ Logan, another Club Member) were killed in an attack on a Turkish position near Quinn's Post on 7 August 1915. It was all over in less than two minutes.

Herbert Gerald Hinton was educated at Boys Central State School and was later employed in the pearl industry on Thursday Island, as a salesman in Brisbane, and then as a commercial traveller. He was also a citizen soldier and later served in the Boer War in the First (Queensland Mounted Infantry) Contingent before re-joining the Militia in about 1912. He volunteered for the AIF and was appointed to a lieutenant, 2nd Light Horse Regiment (2LHR) which landed at Gallipoli on 12 May 1915. 2LHR attacked at 4.30am on 7 August 1915. "With one exception, every man of the first line was killed or wounded, the majority before they had gone six yards..." Hinton was 36 years old when killed. He left a widow and four young children, then residing at Sandgate. Lt Hinton lies in Shrapnel Green Cemetery.



AROUND THE CLUB: NOTABLE VISITORS

Lord Kitchener (Field Marshal The Right Honourable The Earl Kitchener KG, KP, GCB, OM, GCSI, GCMG, GCIE, PC) visited the Club in 1910 when touring Australia to inspect preparedness and advise the Government on our defences and future army. He won his reputation in various imperial campaigns and later played a central role in the early part of the First World War. Kitchener won fame in 1898 in the Sudan, after which he was granted the title 'Lord Kitchener of Khartoum'. He served as Commander-in-Chief in the Boer War and later in India.

At the start of the Great War, Lord Kitchener became Secretary of State for War, a Cabinet Minister. One of the few to foresee a long war lasting for at least three years, he organised the largest volunteer army that both Britain and the world had ever seen ('Kitchener's New Army'), and oversaw a significant expansion of materials production. His commanding image on recruiting posters remains recognised and parodied in popular culture even today.

Britain and the Empire were shocked when Lord Kitchener drowned on 5 June 1916, aged 65. He was travelling to Russia for talks when the cruiser he was aboard struck a German mine and sank, killing over 600. His 'New Army' was to meet with disaster in the Battle of the Somme, July 1916.



By 5 July 1916 both 1st and 2nd Divisions were redeploying to the Messines sector when they were ordered to go instead to the Amiens sector (100 km to the south). On 6 July, 4th Division was also added to the list to be moved south. 5th Division was just arriving in the British zone in northern France and moving to the Nursery sector to relieve 4th Division.

The Battle of the Somme had commenced on 1 July preceded by a tremendous seven-day artillery bombardment and the detonation of 17 mines. The offensive would drag on until November as a 'wearing-down' battle of attrition. The British suffered staggering casualties on the first day but the Australians, moving south to rear areas close to Albert, near to the battle, were not yet committed.

A scandalously-poor plan was hatched for what was meant to be a diversionary attack at Fromelles in the Nursery (Armentières sector). The 5th Division was only just arriving in the sector and was the most inexperienced and poorly-trained of the AIF divisions. The Battle of Fromelles was launched by the British 61st Division and the Australian 5th Division at 6pm on 19 July. By dawn it was clearly a disastrous failure. 5th Division had suffered 5,533 casualties in the one-night battle. Trust of the British was poisoned.

A few days later the 1st Division was committed to the Battle of the Somme, tasked to capture the village of Pozieres which had resisted four previous British attacks. It attacked just after midnight on 23 July and by nightfall the shattered village was securely in their hands. 1st Division was relieved by 2nd Division on 27 July. By then 1st Division had suffered 5,285 casualties. 2nd Division attacked the adjacent 'Pozieres Heights' and the highest point (the Windmill) on 29 July but the attack was too hurried and failed with 3,500 casualties. A second attack a few days later would succeed.

4th Division would relieve 2nd Division in early August and commence attacks on the nearby Mouquet Farm strongpoint. The 1st, 2nd, and 4th Divisions each had another spell in the line at Mouquet Farm during August. The German artillery fire was horrendous in the Pozieres/Mouquet Farm sector - every square foot of ground was turned-over by shellfire several times, and trenches were impossible to maintain. The casualties were very heavy.

Elsewhere in July 1916, the Anzac Mounted Division captured Rafa and El Magruntein in the Sinai, enabling the British to extend their railway and pipeline closer to Gaza, and the 3rd Division arrived in the UK from Australia and began to train on the Salisbury Plain.

The Men on the Board 1914-1918

Major Cannan (below) was the last of the 12 Club Members killed at Gallipoli. From next month we will shift the focus to our Members who were killed in other theatres, commemorating them in the editions that mark the centenary of their deaths. More detail of each is available in our 'Great War Honour Roll - The Men on the Board' History Note available for Members on the Club's website at <http://www.unitedserviceclub.com.au/history/>



MAJOR DOUGLAS HERMAN CANNAN - 15th Battalion

Douglas Herman Cannan was born in Townsville and attended Brisbane Grammar School before building a successful civilian career. He served in the militia prior to the Great War, in 9th and then 8th Infantry Regiments. He joined the AIF and was appointed captain in 15th Battalion, landing at Anzac late in the afternoon of 25 April 1915. 4th Brigade (including 15th Battalion) was ordered to capture Hill 971 on the night of 6/7 August. After some initial success the battalion began to suffer heavy casualties from the withering fire of eight machine guns. All but five officers of the battalion were killed or wounded.

Cannan was later reported as killed in action on 8 August 1915 near Abdul Rahman ridge. He was 35 years old and had never married. Major Cannan's remains were never recovered and his name is inscribed on the Lone Pine Memorial. He was the last of the 12 USC members killed in action at Gallipoli.



'POZIERES GUN'

This 5.9 inch howitzer (stamped 'Liege 1894') was captured from the Belgian Army by the Germans sweeping through Belgium in 1914. It was later captured by the 9th Battalion at Pozieres village on 23 July 1916 in their successful attack.

'Near the right of the 3rd Brigade...an officer of the 9th Battalion...shouting to his men in the confusion of the night to "keep on moving,"...swept straight on until they reached the light railway skirting the back hedges and a narrow projecting plantation, or copse... An explosion had been observed in this copse, and men of the 9th, thrusting forward among the shredded trees found...an abandoned battery of old Belgian 5.9-inch howitzers. They threw bombs into the neighbouring shelters [and] chalked the name of their battalion on certain guns...' (Extract from The Official History.)

It is now on display outside the Ninth Battalions' Museum in Gallipoli Barracks Brisbane.



August 1916 was marked by continued heavy casualties at the Battle of the Somme. Three Australian divisions were to be used in turn as battering rams over the next few weeks. On 4 August, 2nd Division's second attack succeeded in capturing Pozieres Heights and the Windmill. By 6 August, the 2nd Division had sustained 6,846 casualties and was relieved by 4th Division. 'Extreme' artillery fire fell while the 4th Division was moving in on the night of 5/6 August. Major Duncan Chapman, the first man ashore at Gallipoli and a USC Member, was killed by shellfire during the relief operation (see below). 4th Division repeatedly attacked the nearby Mouquet Farm strongpoint until relieved by 1st Division which was relieved by the 2nd Division on 22 August, that was relieved in turn by the 4th Division on 26 August. There were many attempts to capture the strongpoint by all three divisions, all ultimately unsuccessful. One of the casualties of these Mouquet Farm battles was Capt Chambers, another USC Member (see below).

Meanwhile, about 20 miles east of the Suez Canal, the Anzac Mounted Division played a central and vital role in the Battle of Romani on 4-5 August. It was also the first large-scale victory for the Light Horse and was a fillip for British spirits after the bad news from the Somme. This was the first Allied victory over the Ottoman Empire in the war and ensured the safety of the Canal - the Light Horse was on the offensive across the Sinai and later Palestine.

On 30 August in Melbourne, the Prime Minister (Billy Hughes) announced that a 'referendum' on conscription would be held. Bitter and divisive public debate was to follow.

The Men on the Board 1914-1918

This section now turns to the Club Members killed on the Western Front and other theatres. More detail is contained in our Men on the Board History Note available on the Club website at <http://www.unitedserviceclub.com.au/history/>



MAJOR DUNCAN CHAPMAN - 45th Battalion

Lieutenant Duncan ("Chappy") Chapman had made history as the first man ashore during the Gallipoli Landing - 9th Battalion has proudly referred to itself as 'First Ashore' ever since. As the AIF was expanded on its return to Egypt, Captain Chapman was transferred to 49th Battalion and then to 45th Battalion and promoted to Major in mid-March 1916. In June 1916, the 45th Battalion arrived on the Western Front.

On 5 August 1916, 45th Battalion went into the line at Pozieres as part of the system of reliefs. Chapman was killed by shellfire as he led his company through the trench system in the early hours of 6 August. The exact spot of his death has not been clearly stated but it is believed to be a point about 400 yards east of Pozieres. Major Chapman was 28 years old and now lies in the Pozieres British Cemetery. He was the first of eight USC Members killed on the Western Front.



CAPTAIN ROBERT WILLIAM LAWS CHAMBERS - 9th Battalion

Robert William Laws Chambers was born in Brisbane and attended Brisbane Grammar School after which he was employed as a draftsman in his father's architect firm. Chambers served in the Militia prior to the war with 9th Infantry (Moreton) Regiment. He joined the AIF and was appointed to 9th Battalion as a lieutenant. Captain Chambers was wounded a few hours after landing at Gallipoli in the first wave on 25 April 1915 but later re-joined his unit and went with it to the Western Front, arriving on 2 April 1916.

Captain Chambers was the only remaining company commander in 9th Battalion by the end of the intense fighting to capture Pozieres on the night of 22/23 July. On 19 August 1916, the battalion was back in the line, facing the strongpoint of Mouquet Farm where Chambers was killed by shell-fire on 21 August 1916. The precise location of his death is not clearly stated, but it is believed to be in or near C Company's position on the Australians' left flank. Captain Chambers was 23 years old and now lies in the Regina Trench Cemetery, Grandcourt, France.



AROUND THE CLUB: GREAT WAR HONOUR BOARD

The 1914-1918 Honour Board was unveiled on 13 August 1924 by the Governor of Queensland, The Right Honourable Lieutenant Colonel Sir Matthew Nathan. It was designed by Lieutenant Colonel T Pye (later USC President) and carved from Queensland Maple by Mr. Hedley Smith, of South Brisbane. Under the names is the motto of the Club: 'Pro Aris et Focis' (interpreted as meaning 'For God and Home' or often as 'For Hearth and Home').

The design features allegorical symbols. At the top centre is the AIF emblem (the 'rising sun' badge - worn by every Australian soldier, airman, and nurse) is shown as rising over the sea which they had to cross to fight and serve. Supporting the centre at each side is an angelic figure represented in the act of removing the sword of strife and replacing it with the laurel wreath of peace and honour. At the feet of these figures is a conventional growth of foliage, typifying the restoration of prosperity to the nation by the sacrifice of its heroes.



On 5 September 1916 the Australians at Mouquet Farm were relieved by the Canadians and the 1st, 2nd, and 4th Divisions were withdrawn from the Somme sector. They were severely overstrained and there were many cases of 'shell shock'. Over six weeks the Australian divisions had launched 19 minor offensives in the same sector with a front of seldom more than a mile and often less, and suffered over 28,000 casualties – around 50%. Many felt that they were being uselessly sacrificed in narrow-front attacks.

I Anzac Corps (1st, 2nd, and 4th Divisions) moved to Flanders, to a quiet sector south of Ypres. The area was quiet as the Germans were also resting their troops there. They conducted some trench raids to occupy German attention during the British and Canadians' Somme attacks in September, but the priorities were to replace casualties, rebuild units, rest and recover, and to improve the trench systems. Newly-appointed officers and NCOs were sent to schools and a proportion of the troops were granted leave and many visited the UK, London, or Paris. The troops expected that they would spend a quiet winter in this sector.

In the Middle East, the Light Horse attacked Bir el Mazar only 20 miles from El Arish on 17 September but the attack was aborted after three hours despite seemingly imminent success. The Turkish garrison abandoned Mazar two days later.

3rd Division was still training in the UK during September, while in Australia the upcoming conscription 'referendum' was bitter, heated, and divisive. As well as the electors at home, the AIF members serving abroad would vote between spells in the line.

A Breath of History



AROUND THE CLUB: CANNAN PORTRAIT

A portrait of Major General James Harold Cannan, CB, CMG, DSO, VD hangs in the Reading Room. It was donated to the United Service Club by Dr Dinah Brockett, a Club Member and niece of General Cannan. In 2005 it was returned to Dr Brockett on loan until her death. It came back to the Club in late 2014. Cannan was a Queenslander by birth and a long-term Member of the USC. He rose to the rank of Brigadier-General in the Great War and served as the Australian Army's Quartermaster General during the Second World War as a Major General.

Lieutenant Colonel Cannan was appointed Commanding Officer (CO) of the 15th Battalion in 1914 and landed with it at ANZAC Cove on the evening of 25 April 1915. The 15th Battalion later defended Quinn's Post. In an operation to capture Hill 971 on the night of 6/7 August, all but five officers of the battalion were killed or wounded. His older brother (Major Douglas Herman Cannan) was among those killed (see July 2016 Newsletter or our website for details).

On the Western Front, Cannan was CO of 15th Battalion during the Battle of Pozieres and Battle of Mouquet Farm. He later commanded 11th Brigade at the Battle of Messines and the Battle of Broodseinde in 1917, and the Battle of Hamel and during the Hundred Days Offensive in 1918. Between the wars Cannan was president of the Queensland branch of the Returned Soldiers' and Sailors' Imperial League of Australia (now known as the RSL) and became the first president of the Brisbane branch of Legacy in 1928.

During World War II Major General Cannan served in the 2nd AIF as Quartermaster General responsible for planning and preparing the logistic support of operations. Despite his immense responsibility and achievements he received little recognition after the war. He retired in 1946 and was the last surviving Australian General of the Great War at the time of his death in 1976.



AROUND THE RIDGES

This 1929 photo of what is now our neighborhood shows Montpelier and the Green House (then owned by the Davies family and which then enjoyed sweeping city and river views), Brisbane Tabernacle and other interesting features including (clockwise from top left):

- Craigston, Brisbane's first high-rise apartment building (1928)
- Trades Hall (1923) sold in 1984 and demolished soon after
- Brisbane's Chief Weather Bureau station (c1887 until c1960s)
- Tram lines on Edward St – a key factor in the Club's selection of Montpelier for purchase

- An equestrian statue ("The Scout"), a memorial to the Queenslanders killed in the Boer War, on the corner of Turbot and Edward Streets on 16 December 1919 and relocated to Anzac Square in early April 1939, just in time for Anzac Day



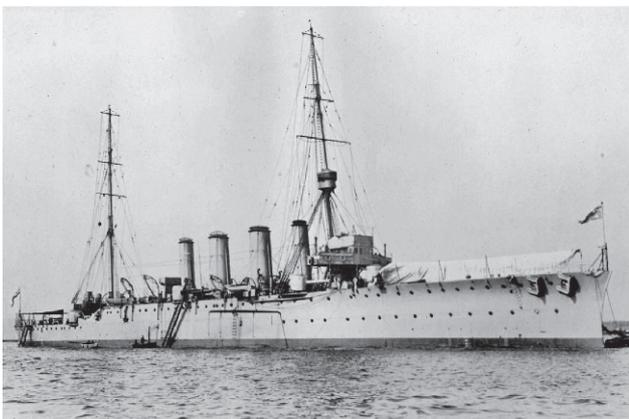
In October 1916 life was relatively pleasant for the men of I Anzac Corps (1st, 2nd and 4th Divisions) in the quiet sector near Ypres. It was quiet because the Germans were resting their troops there too. They were rotated through the line for short spells, and although there was always danger there were no major offensives. They had a chance for rest, recovery, retraining and sports days. The men voted in the conscription “referendum”, and looked forward to spending the winter in the trench systems and dugouts they were improving. But they were to be bitterly disappointed.

In mid-October, I Anzac Corps (now also including 5th Division, finally battle-ready again after the disastrous attack at Fromelles in July) was warned to move back to the Somme battlefields. In their absence the British front line had been advanced four miles past Pozieres but was still three miles short of Bapaume. The Australians were allocated to the Flers-Guedecourt sector, which was a quagmire – it took a whole day for one battalion to move two miles and another took 24 hours to move three miles. By 30 October, I Anzac Corps was responsible for the sector. The conditions were terrible, with men forced to stand up to their knees in water in their trenches in rain and cold. Trench Foot and illness became serious problems.

In northern Sinai the Australians continued to push the Turks. On 15 October, the 11th and 12th Light Horse Regiments (of 4th Light Horse Brigade) attacked Maghara and drove-in the Ottoman outposts, but it was clear that the attack on the main position would cause heavy loss and was called off. The Turks later withdrew.

Also in October 1916, HMAS *Sydney* and HMAS *Melbourne* joined the British Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow for operations in the North Sea – the RAN’s flagship, HMAS *Australia*, had already joined the Grand Fleet in February. 3rd Division began to prepare for a November move to France from the UK. The results of the conscription “referendum” on 28 October became clear – the AIF had voted in favour by a small margin but the “referendum” was defeated overall.

A Breath of History



AROUND THE CLUB: SYDNEY’S LIGHTS

The navigation lights of HMAS *Sydney* were acquired by the Club in 1929 and are proudly displayed to the port and starboard of our main entry door. HMAS *Sydney* was a light cruiser; one of three ordered in 1910 and the first laid down for the RAN. Commissioned at Portsmouth on 26 June 1913, she formed part of the Australian Fleet Unit that ceremonially entered Sydney Harbour on 4 Oct 1913, to a rapturous welcome from tens of thousands of spectators who turned out to watch the arrival of “our” fleet.

She is most famous for destroying the German cruiser SMS *Emden* at Cocos Island on 9 December 1914, while escorting the first convoy of the AIF. HMAS *Sydney* served in the Pacific and Indian Oceans and North America and West Indies waters before joining the Grand Fleet at Scapa Flow in 1916. She returned home after the war and was scrapped in 1928.



AROUND THE CLUB: MAHOGANY ELEPHANT

The mahogany elephant near the front door was presented to the Club by Brigadier H Wrigley CBE MC in 1946. He had a rich and unusual military service spanning both world wars and more, with active service in: Gallipoli and the Western Front with the AIF in the Great War; in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Waziristan with the Indian Army in the interwar period; and in North Africa, Greece, Palestine and the Pacific theatres with the 2nd AIF during World War II. He also had successful careers in the public and private sectors when no longer in uniform, serving in a number of overseas trade posts.

The piece was presented to the Club as a gesture of his appreciation of the hospitality of the Club during his service in Brisbane in the late stages of World War II. Evidence suggests that many passing members have given it a friendly pat on the rump over the past 70 years.

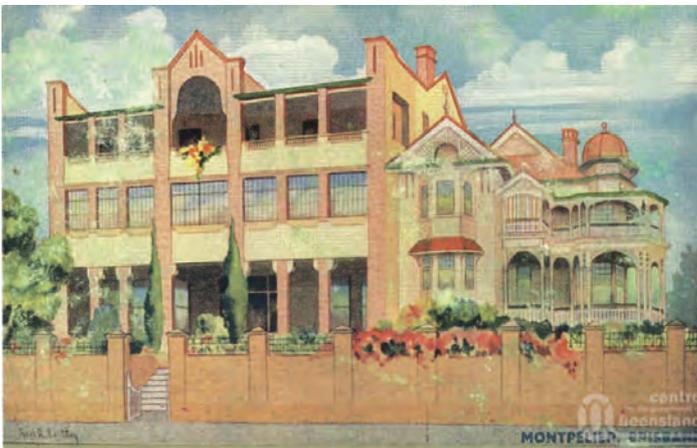


On 5 November 1916 the British, including the Australians, attacked near Flers in the Somme sector. 1st Brigade (of 1st Division) attacked north of Gueudecourt and 7th Brigade (of 2nd Division) attacked a trench system known as The Maze. The mud was knee-deep and the men could not keep up with the creeping barrage. The attack failed. A second attack was launched on 17 November by 5th and 7th Brigades (both of 2nd Division). Some trenches were taken but they were recaptured by the Germans two days later. 2nd Division had lost another 901 casualties.

It was the worst winter in memory – the mud increased and men of both sides were standing on their parapets, not firing at each other, more interested in survival than fighting. Movement was impossible. Field Marshall Haigh ended the Somme offensive on 18 November and the men would focus on defence and survival. Disease, trench foot, terrible weather and low morale were taking a severe toll on the Australians. There was a fear that the AIF was finished as a fighting force.

On 21 November the 3rd Division (now allocated to II Anzac Corps) crossed from Britain to France and the next day they were in the line in the “Nursery” near Armentières. The Australians in the other divisions referred to the 3rd Division’s troops as “The Deep Thinkers” – they thought that 3rd Division men were late in enlisting, had enjoyed a very long preparation period in the UK before moving to the battle zone, and were late in arriving into the battle zone. The Diggers may have been cold and miserable but they had not lost their wit.

A Breath of History



AROUND THE CLUB

Ownership of our current premises was transferred to the United Service Club in November 1946.

Although the two buildings are of completely dissimilar styles, they were built within a few years of each other and designed by the same architect for the same owner – “Montpelier” as a private boarding house and the Green House as a surgery/residence.

“Montpelier” was still in use as a quality guest house when the Club purchased it, requiring negotiations with the lessee and some conversion work before the Club could move-in from George Street.

There had been an extensive process to identify potential new premises and Montpelier was almost ideal, with on-site tennis courts, a near-city location, sweeping views of the city and river, a nearby tram stop and ample car parking space. The Club was in a strong financial position (during WW2, with the help of the Americans, “we drank the Club into a sound financial position”) and many returning WW2 veterans joined the Club, swelling membership numbers and boosting turnover. The cost of purchase and conversion of “Montpelier” could be met without increasing membership charges.

We are still here after almost 70 years. The Committee’s decision to purchase these premises, perhaps somewhat courageous at the time, has proven to be far-sighted and wise. The watercolour above shows the buildings c1930.



70 GEORGE STREET

In May 1914 the Club purchased a block of land at 70 George Street from the Electric Light Company for £1,600. Plans were immediately prepared for a modestly-sized but solid and presentable building. Contract price for the building was £2,498. The plans included foundations to support the addition of a second floor if required.

A new single story brick Club House was built on the land that year (1914). The timing was fortuitous because the Great War broke out on 5 August with consequent manpower shortages and the prohibition of non-essential building projects.

Although this was our fifth home, it was the first building the Club owned. It was to be the centre of the Club’s life for the next 33 years. The photograph at left is c1929, after the second floor had been added. The keen eye – the very keen eye – may be able to discern our brass sign on the fence next to the gate.



centenary of the great war

1916 had been a terrible year for the Australians on the Western Front. In December 1916 and January 1917 the four AIF infantry divisions in the Flers-Gueudecourt sector were in a poor state of health and low morale due to the miserable conditions. But as they were no longer on the offensive there were improvements in their conditions, despite patrols, raids, and shellfire: the units stayed in the trenches only 48 hours at a time; huts and drying sheds were erected close to the rear; and hot meals resumed, two per day. 9th Battalion was in the line there on Christmas Day and enjoyed their Christmas Dinner of tinned plum pudding and condensed milk despite the harassing artillery fire falling around them. To the north, also in bitter winter weather but in slightly less uncomfortable conditions, the 3rd Division was in the Nursery near Armentières, perfecting their tactics, procedures and routines.

Things were sunnier in the Middle East theatre. On 20 December 1916 the Anzac Mounted Division captured El Arish, a town 30km west of the Palestine border. The Australians attacked Magdhaba, 35km to the south east on 23 December. It was a hard fight and Major-General Chauvel called-off the attack at 1pm but Brigadier-General Cox was about to assault with bayonets and “temporarily misplaced” Chauvel’s message until the attack was underway. By 4.30pm the Turkish garrison surrendered. The Light Horse offensive continued in January 1917 with the Battle of Rafa, on the border with Palestine. Once again, the order was given for the Australians to withdraw but it was ignored at unit level and the entire Turkish defence collapsed.

No Australian would have heard or cared that a groundswell of discontent was building among the Russian people or that Russian nobles killed Grigori Rasputin on the night of 29-30 December. These were ominous signs of trouble brewing that would impact directly and severely on the Western Front and on the Diggers in early 1918.

A Breath of History



THE LIGHT HORSE

The Light Horse combined the mobility of cavalry with the fighting skills of infantry. They were technically “mounted rifles”, i.e. not “mounted infantry” or “cavalry”. They fought dismounted with rifles and bayonets but very occasionally they charged on horseback (e.g. at Magdhaba and Beersheba). Almost all the Light Horse was retained for the campaigns in the Middle East while the bulk of the AIF went to the Western Front. A Light Horse unit (a regiment) contained around 400 men, compared to an infantry unit (a battalion) of around 1,000 men. One trooper in each section of four was allotted to horse-holding duties while the other three fought.

Their Australian horses (mainly Walers) were sturdy and hardy – they often went for up to 60 hours without water while carrying a load of almost 130 kilograms. At the end of the war the Australians had 13,000 surplus horses which could not be returned home for quarantine reasons. 11,000 were sold, mainly as remounts for the British Army in India, and two thousand were cast for age or infirmity.



AROUND THE CLUB: BILL BROWN

The Bill Brown (billiard) Room on Level 4 is named in honour of Flight Lieutenant William Alfred Brown OAM, a long-term Club member. He served in the RAAF in WW2 and owned and operated Bill Brown’s Sport Store in George Street for some 30 years, but he is perhaps best known for his cricket career.

Bill was Queensland captain and toured England with the Australian side three times including with Don Bradman’s undefeated “Invincibles” in 1948. His international career highlights included scoring a double century at Lord’s, captaining Australia in the first-ever Test against NZ, and being named Wisden’s Cricketer of the Year in 1939.

WW2 cost Bill his peak cricketing years but he stayed close to the game after his playing career, sitting on the selection panels for Queensland and Australia. He was made a life member of the QCA in 1992, was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia in 2000 for services to cricket, and was inducted into Queensland Sports Federation’s Hall of Fame in 2009.



By February 1917 there were no major offensives in any of the Australians' areas on the Western Front, but there was still a steady flow of casualties in all sectors caused by smaller attacks, patrols, raids, artillery and snipers (including Lt May, killed on 12 Feb – see below). 3rd Division was in the line near Armentières, while the 1st, 2nd, 4th, and 5th Divisions were in the line at Flers-Gueudecourt sector of the Somme battlefield in front of Bapaume.

On 24 February a patrol of the 9th Battalion discovered that the Germans had abandoned their positions on the Butte at Le Sars. Further patrols across the British front discovered that the Germans had started to withdraw, to move back to the Hindenburg Line to shorten their front line by some 45km and release about 13 divisions from frontline duties – they too were short of replacements and materials. The Australians followed-up cautiously and began to prepare attacks on Le Baque and Ligny-Thillois to clear the way to seize Bapaume.

The Light Horse formations in Sinai were pushing back the Ottomans as part of the Palestine campaign. They were following-up on their success at Rafa in January by assisting the clearing of the last Turkish garrisons in the Sinai and closing on Gaza for a British attack in March.

In global news: strikes and riots in Petrograd (St Petersburg) grew into the first Russian Revolution and a provisional government was declared; and on 24 February 1916 the British passed the “Zimmerman Telegram” to the US government – this was an intercepted cable that revealed German attempts to entice Mexico to attack the USA and became a factor in the US decision to declare war on Germany a few weeks later.

The Men on the Board 1914-1918

More detail is available in our Men on the Board History and Heritage Notes available to Members on the Club website at <http://www.unitedserviceclub.com.au/history/>



LIEUTENANT RICHARD WILLIAM MAY - 42nd Battalion

Richard William May, was born in Geelong, attended Brighton Grammar and then employed by the Union Bank of Australia (now ANZ Banking Group), later appointed to Kilcoy and then to Brisbane. May enlisted in the AIF and was allotted to the 12th Reinforcements, 9th Battalion. At that time all new recruits were enlisted as privates, but his potential was quickly recognised and soon after enlistment he was appointed second lieutenant in the just-raised 42nd Battalion, a unit of 11 Brigade, 3rd Division.

At the end in November 1916 the 42nd Battalion entered the Armentières Sector in France. On the night of 11/12 February retaliatory artillery fire wounded Lt May. Unit stretcher bearers took him to the 10th Field Ambulance where his death was recorded at ten minutes past midnight.

Lieutenant May now lies in the Cite Bonjean Military Cemetery, Armentières.

A Breath of History



AROUND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD: ANZAC SQUARE

Brisbane's Anzac Square was dedicated by the Governor of Queensland, Sir John Goodwin, on Remembrance Day 1930.

Originally envisaged as a memorial to those Queenslanders who fell in the Great War, it has become a repository for memorials of other wars over the years. The oldest is the statue of a mounted trooper of the Boer War, relocated from the Turbot-Albert Streets corner, just in time for Anzac Day 1939. In 1932 the Queensland Women's War Memorial was unveiled, designed and executed by Daphne Mayo. Other memorials have followed.

The design has several symbolic elements: the shrine has 18 columns representing the year of peace; the number of the stairs leading up to the shrine contain 19 in the first flight and 18 in the second; the bottle trees commemorate the Light Horse regiments in the Boer War; and the date palms represent the success in the Middle East theatres. (Photo is c1940s. Montpellier is just visible).



In March 1917 on the Somme battlefield near Flers, the Australians followed-up the German withdrawal cautiously. On 3 March, Captain Archie Raymond, a USC Member, was killed by shellfire (see below) behind the lines in the Flers sector. On 17 March 1917 the Australians entered Bapaume after capturing Le Baqu and Ligny-Thillooy. Despite the Germans' scorched-earth policy, the green and open country and the broad views over the previously-unseen German rear areas were a tonic to the Australians. Two all-arms Australian columns closely pursued the German rear-guards, clearing their defensive outpost villages while the rest of their divisions followed-up.

Club member Temporary Lieutenant Colonel Hockley, was awarded a DSO for his work repairing the damage at this time: "For consistent good service and devotion to duty as second in command of the 2nd Pioneer Bn, October 1916 to February 1917. During the operations on the Somme he has shown himself to be a courageous and capable officer, is most zealous and a good organiser."

In the Palestine Campaign, Lieutenant Frank McNamara of No 1 Sqn AFC was awarded a Victoria Cross for his actions on 20 March 1917 in the lead-up to the Battle of Gaza (see story below – the action is depicted in the large print on the wall of the Glasgow Room).

Light Horse units took part in the First Battle of Gaza (26-27 March 1917), moving around the town to seal the Turk's withdrawal route. But the main attack was a failure and the order to withdraw was issued at 6pm. Although the troopers had already penetrated the town there was no question of disobeying on this occasion.

Elsewhere in March 1917: in Mesopotamia, British troops supported by 1st (Anzac) Wireless Squadron recaptured Baghdad on 11 March after a long fighting advance from Basra in the south – Anzac detachments with the British cavalry were among the first into Baghdad; and in Russia Tsar Nicholas and family were placed under house arrest as the Russian Revolution gained momentum.

The Men on the Board 1914 – 1918

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CAPTAIN ARCHIBALD HEWLAND RAYMOND – 2nd Field Artillery Brigade
Archibald (Archie) Raymond was born in Brisbane and educated at The Southport School (TSS). After completing school he was employed as a mercantile clerk in his father's business and served in the Militia.

He was appointed second lieutenant in the AIF on 20 Aug 1914 and posted to 3rd Field Artillery Brigade (3FAB). Raymond would have spent time in action with 3FAB's guns at Gallipoli before moving to the Western Front and being transferred to 2FAB.

Archie was killed by shellfire on 3 March 1917 at Flers Road, near the village of Les Boeufs. "They were going up with the guns" when a German shell exploded, killing Captain Raymond and severely wounding a Lieutenant Miller, both of 4th Battery. Archie Raymond was only 23 years old and now lies in Flat Iron Copse Cemetery, Mametz, France.

A Breath of History



Lt F. H. McNAMARA VC

On 20 March 1917, Lieutenant Frank McNamara of No 1 Sqn AFC, flying a single-seater aircraft on a bombing operation leading up to the First Battle of Gaza, saw a fellow pilot (Captain D. W. Rutherford) shot down.

Despite a serious leg wound he landed near Rutherford's stricken aircraft and Rutherford climbed onto the wing, but McNamara's wound prevented them from taking off in the lop-sided aircraft and they crashed. The two men made it back to Rutherford's plane (a two-seater) and got it running again, set fire to McNamara's plane, and took off just as Ottoman cavalry reached the scene. (This scene is depicted in the large print in the Club's Glasgow Room.)

With McNamara close to unconsciousness, he managed to fly them some seventy miles (113 km) to their home base at El Arish where he carried out a safe landing but lost consciousness from loss of blood.

Lieutenant McNamara was the first Australian airman to be awarded the Victoria Cross. Air Vice Marshal F. H. McNamara VC CB CBE retired from the RAAF in 1946.



centenary of the great war

By 9 April 1917, the Australians had pushed-in the last German outposts and faced the formidable main defences of the Hindenburg Line. The First Battle of Bullecourt was launched on 11 April, a hasty attack by 4th Division and 62nd British Division supported only by early-model tanks which proved inadequate and ineffective. It was a failure – although the infantry had seized part of the German trenches our artillery was not permitted to fire and the infantry were forced to withdraw. There were over 3,000 Australian casualties. Australians maintained a strong mistrust of tanks until their success in the Battle of Hamel more than a year later.

At 4am on 15 April, 23 German battalions launched a large-scale raid against a weakened and over-stretched Australian line at nearby Lagnicourt. They were expelled a few hours later after a vigorous counter-attack by four Australian battalions of 1st Division, but not before they had over-run the guns and damaged some of them.

To the north, 3rd Division moved from the Nursery in Flanders to the Messines sector for detailed preparation for a major offensive scheduled for June. They studied large models of the battleground, coordinated their plans in the exhaustive detail for which Monash was to become famous, and rehearsed their assigned attacks and tactical maneuvers and movements.

In Palestine, General Murray launched the Second Battle of Gaza (17-19 April). The Anzac Mounted Division and the Imperial Camel Corps (the latter was 50% Australian) were tasked to support the attacking British troops and tanks, but they were not appropriately utilised in that battle. The Turkish defence was never really threatened and the attack was another failure. Patrols, ambushes, and reconnoitering tasks were the main role of the Light Horse until the British advance could continue beyond Gaza, ie until Gaza was captured.

In global news: USA declared war on Germany on 6 April 1917; German Intelligence assisted Vladimir Lenin to move through Germany from Switzerland to foment the Russian Revolution; and on 21 April 1917 the Imperial War Graves Commission was established by Royal Charter.

A Breath of History



IMPERIAL WAR GRAVES COMMISSION

The Imperial War Graves Commission was constituted through Royal Charter on 21 April 1917. It had originated as a Red Cross organisation for documenting the location of graves and was transferred to the British Army as the Graves Registration Commission in March 1915. It became the Directorate of Graves Registration and Enquiries in 1916 as the scope of work began to include responding to enquiries from relatives of those killed. Its work was also extended beyond the Western Front into other theatres of war.

The Commission was responsible for commemorating all Commonwealth war dead on a headstone or a memorial, uniformly and equally (to avoid class distinctions). It became the Commonwealth War Graves Commission in 1960 and still superbly maintains over 23,000 separate burial sites and more than 200 memorials worldwide, caring for 1.7 million Commonwealth war dead in 153 countries.



HMAT BALLARAT

The Australian troopship *Ballarat* was on its 13th voyage, a fact that caused some disquiet among the troops aboard. They were mainly reinforcements who had left Australia in February for the Western Front via England.

She was torpedoed by a German submarine in the English Channel off southern England on 25 April 1917, the second Anzac Day. No lives were lost of the 1,752 souls aboard, a striking testament to the calmness and discipline of the troops.

Although efforts were made to tow the *Ballarat* to shallow water, she sank off The Lizard (England's southernmost point) the following morning.

Hector Creswick was one of the men aboard and extracts from his letter home provide some first-hand insights:

"... hit near the stern as she started to sink that end very quickly for the first 20 minutes... our unit had no life boats, and had to stand by the rafts... we were all prepared for the worst as we shook hands with our mates... There was no panic on our deck, every man kept his head... at last the destroyer came alongside for about 15 minutes... another destroyer came up and took off the rest of the men on board..."

The photo shows HMAT *Ballarat* after the attack. HMS *Phoenix*, her sole escort, stands by. Note the men standing in the smoking stern, and in the lowered boats.



During the period 3-17 May 1917, the Second Battle of Bullecourt raged, a renewed attempt to penetrate the formidably strong Hindenburg Line. The 2nd Division (5th and 6th Brigades) and a British division attacked on 3 May, this time with artillery fire supporting them. The 6th Brigade penetrated the German line and held-on despite heavy shellfire and counter attacks. The 1st Division relieved the 2nd Division, and soon the 5th Division took its turn. Finally, after more than a week, the Germans gave up their position. The Hindenburg Line had been broken! The Australians were relieved and withdrawn to recover – the furious fighting had caused another 7,482 Australian casualties. The continuous need for replacements was a factor in the decision to abandon the creation of the embryonic 6th Division, then beginning to be formed in the UK.

In the Messines sector to the north, 3rd Division was preparing for the upcoming major attack and 4th Division (still recovering from its 3,300 casualties in First Bullecourt) was also deployed there to prepare for its part in the imminent Battle of Messines (in June).

In the Palestine Campaign, Light Horse units continued to patrol and to harass the Turks, including a major raid near El Auja attacking more than 20 miles of railway simultaneously and destroying it absolutely beyond repair, requiring its complete reconstruction.

In other news: on 3 May, French Armies began to mutiny and to refuse to take part in any more offensives – this meant that the British would have to shoulder more of the burden to distract the enemy and support the French Army's recovery; on 4 May HMAS *Sydney* fought a day-long running battle with Zeppelin L43 in the North Sea (see story below); in Australia, Hughes's National Party won the general election on 5 May; and in Russia, the popularity of the Bolsheviks increased steadily following Lenin's arrival thereby causing more problems for the shaky Provisional Government.

A Breath of History



AROUND THE CLUB: OPENING DAY

The Club moved into Montpellier on 26 May 1947 – 70 years ago. Ownership had been transferred to the Club in November 1946 but there were issues to resolve before we could move from our George Street premises, eg arrangements with the Montpellier lessee and some building modifications and improvements.

Once in the new premises, the committee moved quickly to improve the range of social activities. However, there were difficulties caused by post-war rationing and the general austerity of those years, eg Friday was a “meatless and butterless” day due to the difficulty in obtaining these goods.



HMAS SYDNEY and ZEPPELIN L43

HMAS *Sydney* was famous for destroying the German Raider SMS *Emden* in the Cocos Islands in November 1914. On 4 May 1917 she was leading the cruiser HMS *Dublin*, and four destroyers on a sweep of channels south east of Rosyth in Scotland, between the Forth and Humber estuaries. The force came under attack from the German naval Zeppelin L43. The airship was first sighted shortly before 10.30am, approaching the east at about the same time as *Sydney's* skipper (Captain John Dumaresq) discovered that several submarines were in his vicinity.

By charging in L43's direction and opening fire with anti-aircraft guns at extreme range, the cruisers forced the airship to rise steeply and veer off. As soon as Captain Dumaresq ordered his force to resume its original course, L43 began stalking the ships. After failing to gain a bomb-dropping position on HMS *Dublin* the Zeppelin targeted one of the destroyers and managed to land three bombs within ten metres of her.

The airship captain then turned his attention to the *Sydney* which began evasive action. The duel continued for two hours, drawing to an inconclusive end only after the Zeppelin ran out of bombs at approximately 2.30pm. By then the cruisers had also expended all ammunition for their high-altitude guns. Both sides reportedly “parted on good terms”. HMAS *Sydney* had become the first Royal Australian Navy vessel to be subjected to an air attack.

The *Sydney's* navigation lights were acquired by the Club after the war when she was being decommissioned and broken-up. They have been burning bright each night for the past 70 years in their current position either side of our front door.



In June 1917, I Anzac Corps (now 1st, 2nd, and 5th Divisions) was resting and recovering in the Bapaume sector after the battles at Bullecourt in April and May, and was preparing to move north to Flanders.

4th Division had already been moved from I Anzac Corps at Bullecourt and placed under command of II Anzac Corps in southern Belgium (together with 3rd Division, 25th British Division, and the New Zealand Division). II Anzac Corps was one of three corps tasked to attack the Messines-Wytschaete ridge. Its capture was vital to straighten the line and to secure the right flank of the next battles in Flanders. It would be 3rd Division's first-ever battle and they were keen to show their mettle. 4th Division men were "shocked" that they would be committed to another battle again so soon after Bullecourt and denied the rest period that the 1st, 2nd, and 5th Divisions were enjoying.

The Battle of Messines would be the first time since Gallipoli that the Australians and New Zealanders would fight side-by-side. The attack began on 7 June 1917 after seven days artillery bombardment. 21 tunnels under the German positions had been secretly prepared for over a year (the role of 1st Australian Tunneling Company was told in the fairly-recent film *Below Hill 60*). 19 of these mines, packed with High Explosive, were detonated at Zero Hour – the biggest man-made explosion in history, rattling windows in Kent and heard in Downing Street. The battle was a total success, due primarily to the meticulous planning and preparation and sound tactics, but nevertheless there were 6,000 Australian casualties.

In the Palestine campaign, the Australian Light Horse units continued to patrol, raid, and harass the Turks. General Sir Edmund Allenby ("The Bull"), a big, stubborn and energetic cavalryman, assumed command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (replacing General Sir Archibald Murray). He reorganised his forces and staff, and moved his HQ forward to address leadership and communication shortfalls (from the Savoy Hotel in Cairo to the field, 240 kilometres nearer the front line). He inspected everything, from cook houses to training schools, energising the whole force.

In other news: Major General Holmes (GOC 4th Division) was mortally wounded by shellfire on 2 June while escorting the visiting NSW Premier near Messines; Brigadier-General Glasgow was appointed CMG; and the first American troops started to arrive in France, although they would not be battle-ready until October 1917.

A Breath of History

AROUND THE CLUB: NOTABLE VISITORS "Monty"



On 15 July 1947 we hosted our second (and probably last) visitor of Field Marshal rank. "Monty" visited the Club in our new Wickham Terrace premises and was greeted by many hundreds of members. Field Marshal Bernard Law Montgomery, 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, KG, GCB, DSO, PC was Chief of the Imperial General Staff (CIGS) at the time of his visit.

Australians had served under (then) General Montgomery in the North African theatre of World War II (most notably at El Alamein) and he later commanded Allied ground forces during Operation Overlord, from the initial landings until after the Battle of Normandy. He then continued in command of the 21st Army Group or the rest of the campaign in North West Europe. He was created 1st Viscount Montgomery of Alamein in 1946. The week before his visit, the USC committee resolved to make both the Field Marshal and Lord Louis Mountbatten life members.

AROUND THE CLUB: NOTABLE MEMBERS Sir Edwin Tooth MC



The billiard table and cabinet in the Bill Brown Room were donated by Lady Tooth in memory of her husband, Captain Sir Edwin M Tooth MC. Lady Eloise Marguerite Tooth (nee Fuller) was born on 14 July 1893 in the Endeavour River area near Cooktown, Queensland.

Sir Edwin was a remarkable Club member who was well known as a business leader and for his philanthropy. He served on the Western Front and was awarded the Military Cross for his actions near Bellicourt in 1918.

On his way home to Brisbane after the war, he studied the motor industry in the United States and in 1923 he started his long career in the motor industry by forming Austral Motors in Adelaide Street becoming the distributor for Dodge vehicles in Queensland, Northern NSW, and the NT. He later obtained the De Soto, English Standard, and Chrysler-Plymouth franchises, and the agency for Ferguson tractors.

Sir Edwin's philanthropic gestures were legendary giving generously to medical, educational and charitable institutions including the largest donation Legacy had ever received.

He was appointed Knight Bachelor in the 1957 New Year's Honours List for his public and philanthropic services. He died on 17 May 1957, aged 70.



In July 1917, 3rd and 4th Divisions were still in southern Belgium after the successful offensive to capture the Wytschaete-Messines ridge. The British Second Army (General Gough) prepared for and launched the initial battles Third Battle of Ypres to the east of Ypres during late July and August. Although our infantry was not yet involved, Australian artillery supported the British attacks and Captain Macdonald, a USC member, was killed while his battery was in action near Ypres (see story below).

I Australian Corps (1st, 2nd and 5th Divisions) would move north to Flanders to rest areas to the rear of Ypres. All five Australian divisions would be allocated to Fifth Army for the Third Battle of Ypres, a major British offensive comprising the battles of Menin Road Ridge, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde, and Passchendaele during September and October. The intent was to secure all the “high” ground of the ridge, to enable a breakthrough to clear the Channel Ports and beyond, and at the same time, continue to relieve pressure on the demoralised French Army.

In the Palestine campaign, further advance was not possible until the town of Gaza was captured and secured. Two earlier attacks had failed. The new C-in-C, General Allenby, had created a second HQ for the Egypt Expeditionary Force (EEF) – a Battle HQ was established and moved 240 km closer to the front (near Khan Yunis), while the remainder stayed in Cairo as a Rear HQ to deal with the political and administrative aspects of control of Egypt. Allenby had brought new energy, organisation, leadership, and strategy to the theatre and to the campaign. The next stage of the offensive (the Third Battle of Gaza) was scheduled for October. The Light Horse and Camel Corps continued to patrol – to dominate “no man’s land”, to harass the Turks, and to gain information on the right flank of the main British force.

On the Eastern Front the Russian Provisional Government launched the Karensky Offensive in Galacia on 1 July 1917, but it had failed by 16 July and the German counter attack pushed the Russians back 150 miles (240km). The Russian Army collapsed – the troops refused to fight and deserted. The whole affair further weakened the government, strengthened Lenin’s Bolsheviks, and hastened the collapse of the Eastern Front.

The Men on the Board 1914 – 1918

This section provides a glimpse of the USC members killed on the Western Front and other campaigns of the Great War. More detail is available in the History and Heritage Notes available on our website at <http://www.unitedserviceclub.com.au/history/Bolsheviks>, and hastened the collapse of the Eastern Front.



CAPTAIN JAMES SHAW ROSE MACDONALD: 2 FAB

James Shaw Rose Macdonald was born in Brisbane on 8 November 1894 and educated at Bowen House School and Brisbane Grammar School. He was employed by the Bank of New South Wales and served in the Militia (Australian Field Artillery) prior to the war.

He was appointed as Lieutenant, 3 Field Artillery Brigade (3 FAB) in the AIF and reached Gallipoli on 3 September 1915. On the Western Front, he was in battle with 2 FAB at Pozieres, around Flers, supporting the advance/pursuit to the Hindenburg Line, and the attacks at Bullecourt. 2 FAB returned to the Ypres sector, and from 19 to 30 July it began a program of bombardments to support British attacks in the Third Battle of Ypres. On 30 July 1917 it moved forward to Dickebusch (near Ypres) and then further forward again, to the vicinity of Sanctuary Wood, on 31 July. However the batteries came under severe German artillery and machine gun fire as they deployed.

They remained in action throughout the day, but at 9.30am Captain MacDonald was killed by artillery fire while in action with his battery. Captain Macdonald was only 22 years old. He now lies in Dickebusch New Military Cemetery Extension, Ieper (Ypres) Belgium.

A Breath of History



1st DIVISION MEMORIAL, POZIERES

The original 1st Division’s memorial – a large wooden cross – was unveiled in what is now the Pozieres British War Cemetery in July 1917, a year after the Battle of Pozieres (see photo – the cross is still covered by the flag). The 1st Division selected Pozieres, “a ridge more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any other spot on earth”, as the site for the division’s memorial. The AIF had lost 28,000 casualties in a few weeks during the Battle of the Somme, of which 1st Division had suffered 7,700.

All the hard-won ground was to be lost again as the German Spring Offensive swept through in March 1918.

The 1st Division’s wooden cross memorial was replaced in 1919 by the present stone obelisk that stands on the southern outskirts of Pozieres village, near the remains of the Gibraltar blockhouse.



August 1917 was a period of relative quiet and respite for the Australians in both major theatres, with no Australian formations committed to a major battle.

In the Middle East, General Allenby now reorganised his Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) into two infantry corps and a mounted corps. The Desert Mounted Corps was created on 12 August. Major-General Chauvel was promoted to lieutenant-general and appointed its commander (becoming Australia's first lieutenant-general). The Desert Mounted Corps comprised the Anzac Mounted Division, the Australian Mounted Division, and the Yeomanry Mounted Division, with infantry formations attached when required. In the first month of its existence, the corps continued training and patrolling in no man's land, preparing for manoeuvre warfare. Their first major operation would be the attack on Beersheba as part of the Third Battle of Gaza, in late October.

On the Western Front, the five Australian infantry divisions were resting in rear areas in Flanders. Their main task was to recover and prepare for the imminent Third Battle of Ypres and they were occupied by training, sports days, fatigues, leave to Blighty and Paris, and local leave to Poperinge (see below).

A Breath of History



NOTABLE MEMBERS: General Sir Harry Chauvel GCMG, KCB
Henry George Chauvel served in the Boer War, and in the Gallipoli, Sinai, and Palestine Campaigns of the Great War. He was the first Australian to attain the rank of lieutenant-general and later general, and the first Australian to lead a corps. He was also a Member of the United Service Club.

Chauvel was born in Tabulam NSW (about halfway between Lismore and Tenterfield), and in 1886 he was commissioned in the Upper Clarence Light Horse. When the family moved to the Darling Downs he became a second lieutenant in the Queensland Mounted Infantry in 1890. He served during the 1891 shearers' strike and in 1896 he transferred to the Queensland Permanent Forces with the rank of Captain. In 1899 he commanded one of two companies of QMI in the Boer War. When he returned to Australia he found himself an officer of the newly-formed Australian Army and remained in staff appointments in Queensland until 1911 (apart from a short period in South Australia reorganising the mounted troops). During this period, he and Major Brudenell White regularly played tennis with the Jopp family at their home in Newmarket in Brisbane. Lieutenant-Colonel Chauvel married Sybil Jopp in All Saint's Anglican Church in Wickham Terrace (a few hundred metres from our Club House) in 1906.

He served with the Light Horse at Gallipoli. Brigadier-General Chauvel was promoted major-general and took command of the 1st Division on 6 November 1915 and led it through the evacuation and the subsequent expansion of the AIF in Egypt. In December 1915 he was appointed commander of the new Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division. Soon after the unsuccessful Second Battle of Gaza, General Allenby reorganised his army into three corps and appointed Chauvel as commander of the Desert Mounted Corps. He thus became the first Australian to attain the rank of lieutenant-general, and the first Australian to command a corps.

After the war he was appointed Inspector General (then our most-senior post) in 1919 and from 1923 he was concurrently Chief of the General Staff until his retirement in 1930. In November 1929 Chauvel became the first Australian to be promoted to the rank of (full) general. In WW2 General Chauvel served as Inspector-in-Chief of the Volunteer Defence Corps until he died on 4 March 1945.



TALBOT HOUSE (Toc H)

In December 1915 Talbot House opened as a soldier's club in the village of Poperinge, eight miles (13km) west of Ypres, away from the German shellfire. The use of the leased dwelling-house as an "Every-Man's Club" was the brainchild of a British Army Chaplain, the Reverend Philip "Tubby" Clayton. It became a rare place where soldiers could meet and relax regardless of rank. A notice was hung by the front door bearing the message: *"All rank abandon, ye who enter here."*

Soldiers quickly acquired all sorts of pieces of furniture, including a piano, for the house. Gifts of soft furnishings were donated by people in England and books arrived by post or were left by soldiers for the library.

The loft was converted into a chapel and became known as "the Upper Room". It offered a peaceful haven for hundreds of soldiers taking a brief respite from the trenches.

The house was named "Talbot House" in memory of Lieutenant Gilbert WL Talbot, killed in the Ypres Salient in 1915. The name Talbot House soon became known to the soldiers in the shortened form of "Toc H" ("Toc" was the British Army signaller's word for the letter "T").

In 1920, Clayton founded a Christian youth centre in London, also called Toc H, guided by the ethos of the original Talbot House. It developed into an inter-denominational association for Christian social service. Branches of Toc H were established in many countries around the world. In 1929 Lord Wakefield of Hythe bought the house in Poperinge and donated it to the Talbot House Association. It is maintained today as a museum and tourist venue. It still serves the best cup of tea on the Western Front.



centenary of the great war

In September 1917, the Australian infantry divisions would be committed to the Third Battle of Ypres. All five Australian divisions would be involved in turn, in three successful attacks, before the tragic failures in the mud at Passchendaele village. The early days of September were spent preparing in rear areas near Ypres before the troops were moved forward for the Third Battle of Ypres. During this time, roads, tramways, and other systems were built and/or improved to allow the logistics required to support the coming battle.

The aim of the Offensive was to capture the “high ground” in a series of battles with limited objectives. The tactics were sound, relying on a creeping barrage of artillery to support short infantry advances to intermediate objectives, destroy the German counter attacks with artillery fire, and then “leap frog” fresh infantry units through for another short assault, until the final objectives were achieved – “bite and hold” tactics.

In the Battle of Menin Road 1st and 2nd Divisions (on the right and left respectively of the I Anzac Corps frontage) attacked in the early hours of 25 September, a central part of the major British Offensive. The units and brigades in each division leap-frogged through the troops used in the earlier phases until the final objective was secured – on the ridge and just inside Polygon Wood – by later that day.

The next day, the 5th and 4th Divisions passed through the 1st and 2nd Divisions in the Battle of Polygon Wood, another successful attack. There would now be a pause in the Offensive as the artillery was moved forward, ammunition stockpiled, boundaries adjusted, and fresh troops moved forward for the next phase of the Offensive, the Battle of Broodseinde Ridge on 4 October.

In Palestine, the Light Horse units continued their patrols and reconnaissance, and prepared for the third attempt to capture Gaza, planned for October. Its capture was essential to allow the further advance into Palestine and beyond.

In England, London experienced its first air raid by Gotha bombers on the night of 4/5 September. Although Zeppelins had attacked since 1915, this was the first raid by aircraft. Damage from bomb splinters can still be seen on Cleopatra’s Needle and flanking Sphinxes, located on the Victoria Embankment next to the Thames, near the Golden Jubilee Bridges.

The Men on the Board 1914 – 1918

You can find more detail contained in our *Great War Honour Roll History Note* which is available on the Club website at <http://www.unitedserviceclub.com.au/history/>



MAJOR RUPERT REGINALD HOCKLEY DSO (2nd Pioneer Battalion)

Rupert Reginald Hockley was born in Maryborough and educated at Maryborough Grammar School before being employed in the family firm, an engineering foundry. He was very social and popular and was a member of the Technical College Committee. He served in the Militia (Wide Bay Infantry) for nineteen years and was appointed to the AIF as captain, 31st Battalion on 30 August 1915. The AIF expansion in Egypt in early 1916 required the creation of new specialised units and given his technical background, Hockley was promoted and transferred as 2iC of 2nd Pioneer Battalion, a unit which specialised in repair and construction tasks.

Their first major battle was to support the battles at Pozieres and Mouquet Farm. In the pursuit in February 1917 they were used extensively to fix the devastation of the Germans’ “scorched earth” tactics, repairing roads, water supplies, hard-stands etc. Hockley was awarded a DSO for his work at this time. The battalion also supported the first and second Battles of Bullecourt.

On 7 September 1917 they moved to the Swan Chateau area outside Ypres to help in the road and construction works to prepare for the Battle of Menin Road. A German shell severely wounded Major Hockley. He was evacuated but died of wounds the following day, 20 September. He was 39 and now lies in Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinge, Belgium.

A Breath of History



LEGACY and LEGACY WEEK

Legacy is a uniquely Australian organisation that operates through the generosity of the Australian public and corporate donors. Legacy has a proud history of service to Australian families who live with the consequences of sacrifice due to war and service to the Nation.

Legacy was born from a simple yet powerful request from a dying Australian soldier to his mate at the Battle of Pozieres in August 1917: “Look after the missus and kids”. Based on this promise, Legacy commenced operations as a national organisation in 1923. Today there are over 40 Legacy clubs nationally – geographically separated but united in the promise to look after the families of our fallen and incapacitated veterans. Legacy Brisbane was formed in 1928 with 8,000 dependents in care from Logan to Rockhampton, and west to Warwick and Longreach.

More recently, Legacy Brisbane created a Family Assist program to work with families of incapacitated ADF personnel to assist them to care for the incapacitated veteran who continues to suffer because of their service to country.

Legacy Week is a fundraising campaign held each year since 1942. This year it is 27 August–2 September 2017. Legacy is our Club’s charity. Please assist by buying a badge, or contact Legacy Brisbane on (07) 3029 5600 to donate.



October 1917 saw heavy fighting for the Australians in both major theatres. The Offensive known as the Third Battle of Ypres had commenced for the Australians with the successful attacks on Menin Road Ridge and Polygon Wood on 25 and 26 September respectively. After a pause to move the artillery forward and to insert fresh troops, the next step was the Battle of Broodseinde Ridge on 4 October. 1st, 2nd, 3rd Divisions and the NZ Division attacked side-by-side for the first and only time. The Anzac troops formed the centre of the British attack. As they rose to attack at 6am, the Germans on the far side of No Man's Land did likewise but the enemy attack was defeated and all the British objectives were achieved (including Tyne Cot where today's war cemetery is located) at a cost of 6,400 Australian casualties. It was a severe blow to the Germans, whose official record refers to it as the "black day of 4 October".

The final step was to capture Passchendaele village and ridge. The rain had started to fall incessantly on 3 October and conditions in front of Passchendaele deteriorated rapidly. Bringing up artillery, ammunition and supplies, simply moving about, and evacuating casualties became almost impossible – not the conditions required for "bite and hold" tactics.

The first Battle of Passchendaele was launched on 9 October by II Anzac Corps' two British divisions, but that attack failed in the mud. II Anzac Corps' other two divisions – the NZ and 3rd Divisions – tried on 12 October. This attack also failed, bringing huge casualties in the quagmire. The Battle of Passchendaele was a costly failure, costing the Anzacs 7,000 casualties. The Canadians finally took Passchendaele in November, after which the offensive was called-off. A total of 38,000 Australian casualties had been incurred over the eight weeks of the Third Battle of Ypres.

In Palestine, the Third Battle of Gaza was launched on 31 October. The main attack was along the coast on Gaza by infantry and tanks while the mounted troops attacked Beersheba, 47km inland. In a famous late-afternoon charge, the 4th Light Horse Brigade captured Beersheba and its vital wells, thereby threatening to outflank the Turks at Gaza.

There were several USC members at Beersheba, including Lieutenant-General Chauvel, Brigadier-General Grant, Brigadier-General Wilson, Lieutenant-Colonel Cameron, and Major Markwell (killed in the battle – see below).

The Men on the Board 1914 – 1918

You can find more detail contained in our *Great War Honour Roll* History Note which is available on the Club website at <http://www.unitedserviceclub.com.au/history/>



MAJOR WILLIAM ERNEST MARKWELL, DSO – 2nd Light Horse Regiment

William Ernest (Willie) Markwell was born in Beaudesert, volunteered for the AIF on the outbreak of the Great War, and was posted to 2nd Light Horse Regiment which landed as infantry at Gallipoli on 12 May 1915.

Willie survived the Gallipoli campaign without wound or illness, and deployed with his unit to Palestine for mounted operations against the Turks, including many patrols as well as the victories at Romani, El Arish, Maghaba, and Rafa.

He was killed in action on 31 October 1917 during the Battle of Beersheba. He had *"the rather unique record of having served 2½ years on active service without once having to leave the regiment through illness or injury"*.

He was 27 years old and lies today in Beersheba War Cemetery, Be'er Sheva, (now Israel).

A Breath of History



AROUND THE CLUB

When the lift doors open at Level 2, Members and guests arriving at the Club find themselves under the gaze of a bust presented to the Club in 1967 by former members of the 5th Light Horse.

The bust commemorates Sir Donald Charles Cameron CMG, DSO, VD, Order of Nile. He served as the Commanding Officer (CO) of the 5th Light Horse Regiment (LHR) in the Great War. He was a long-time USC Member who served in the Boxer Rebellion, Boer War, Great War, and served on the RAAF recruiting committee in WW2. He became a successful federal politician and was president or patron of many community organisations. He was also a leading spokesman for the interests of ex-servicemen.

In the Great War he served with 5th LHR at Gallipoli (fighting as infantry), commanding his squadron in the battle of Romani on 4-5 August 1916. He was promoted lieutenant-colonel on 30 October 1917 and appointed as CO of the 5th LHR which he led in the attack on Beersheba, the subsequent advance on Jerusalem, and later operations until war's end.

He represented Brisbane in the House of Representatives in 1919-31 and was federal Member for Lilley in 1934-37. In his parliamentary capacity, he represented Australia at the League of Nations Assembly in 1923.

He always had the interests of ex-servicemen at heart and was a leading spokesman in federal parliament for the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia. When a history of the 5th LHR was printed in 1926, he paid the publishing costs and presented a copy to every member of the regiment. He was knighted in 1937 (KCMG) and died on 19 November 1960.



By mid-November 1917 the last Australians had been relieved by the Canadian Corps and the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 5th Divisions were withdrawn from Passchendaele and moved to the Messines sector for a period of rest, rebuilding, retraining, and reorganisation. They still had spells in the line but by then it was a quiet area. The 4th Division was temporarily withdrawn to a rear area near Boulogne and welcomed its long-delayed rest.

The three battles of Menin Road, Polygon Wood and Broodseinde, were the cleanest and most decisive victories the Anzacs had yet fought, but the failures in the mud at Passchendaele provided a morale-boost to the Germans, doubled Australian casualties (to 38,000 in the five divisions in the eight weeks of the Offensive), and left an insoluble problem of reinforcements.

The disbandment of 4th Division was considered as a way to rationalise manpower, but in the end it was decided to group all five Australian divisions together on 1 November 1917 including 4th Division re-rolled as a “depot” division (that would allow it to recover). The “Australian Corps” was under Lieutenant-General Birdwood’s command. The troops were delighted with the new corps grouping.

One of the first orders was for 3rd Division to turn up the brims of their slouch hats – Monash had required, when he became GOC 3rd Division that they be worn with brims down to distinguish 3rd Division men from the others – now they were all together.

In Palestine, the Turks abandoned Gaza on 6 November after heavy fighting, and began an orderly northerly retreat deeper into Palestine. Allenby ordered XXI Corps to advance on the left (in the west, close to the sea) while Chauvel’s Desert Mounted Corps was to conduct mobile operations inland to exploit any breaches in the defensive line between Gaza and Hebron. Sharp actions occurred with the Turks’ rearguards and forces protecting his communications Gaza-Hebron-Jerusalem, including at Tel el Khuweife (1-8 Nov), Huj (8 Nov), Ayun Kara (14 Nov), and Anwas (17 Nov).

In global news, the Second Russian Revolution led to the replacement of the Provisional Government by the Bolsheviks on 7 November. Lenin issued a Decree of Peace and in late November sought an armistice with Germany. Russia’s imminent withdrawal from the war was not good news for the Allies – the Central Powers would then be able to transfer troops to the Western and Southern Fronts.

On our Home Front, on 7 November Prime Minister Hughes announced a second Conscription “Referendum” as a way to address the manpower shortage. It would lead to a repeat of heated public debate and social polarisation across Australia. On 29 November, he was pelted with eggs while campaigning in Warwick. When the local police senior-sergeant declined to act, an enraged Hughes started moves to create the Australian Federal Police.

A Breath of History



AROUND THE CLUB:

Major-General The Honourable Sir Thomas William (Bill) Glasgow

A portrait of Major General The Honourable Sir Thomas William Glasgow, KCB CMG DSO hangs in the Club’s Dining Room which is named in his honour. He was a lifelong member of the United Service Club and led the Anzac Day march in Brisbane for some 20 years.

Bill Glasgow was born in Tiaro, was a store-keeper in Gympie as a young man, served in the Militia – 13th Light Horse Regiment (LHR) He saw action in the Boer War, joined the AIF on the outbreak of the Great War, and served with distinction as a major with 2nd LHR at Gallipoli. By the end of that campaign he was CO of the regiment. He went to the Western Front as a brigadier-general commanding 13th Infantry Brigade and led it in the bloody battles of 1916 and 1917. He became a major-general appointed to command 1st Division on 30 June 1918, and led it during the 100-Days Offensive and the Hindenburg Line battles. Charles Bean thought he was one of our best leaders and best generals.

After the war, he became a senator in 1919 and later a Minister (1926-29), initially for Home Affairs and then Defence. During WW2 he was our first High Commissioner to Canada. His statue now stands in Post Office Square, gazing over Anzac Square.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

11 November 2017 will be the 99th anniversary of the armistice that ended the fighting on the Western Front. (The war did not officially end until the Treaty of Versailles was signed in 1919).

On the 23rd anniversary (11 November 1941) the Australian War Memorial (AWM) was officially opened by the Governor-General, Lord Gowrie – a former soldier whose honours included the VC. Additions to the AWM since then have allowed the remembrance of Australia’s participation in all recent conflicts.

On the 75th anniversary (11 November 1993) our Unknown Australian Soldier, brought back from Adelaide Cemetery near Villers-Bretonneux, was buried in the AWM. Prime Minister Keating’s address was stirring: “We will never know who this Australian was... he was one of the 45,000 Australians who died on the Western Front... one of the 60,000 Australians who died on foreign soil... one of the 100,000 Australians who died in wars this century. He is all of them. And he is one of us.”



centenary of the great war

In the December - January winter of 1917/1918, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 5th Divisions played a quiet but active role in the Messines sector near Hill 60, building or completing their part of new or reorganised defence lines. In what time was left from digging, wiring, and reorganising, the troops rested and trained.

4th Division had no sooner arrived for its rest near Boulogne, than they were rushed back east into close reserve at Peronne (to meet a German counterstroke after the Battle of Cambrai). It was not committed to that battle, but early in January it was moved into the front line near Hill 60, as the left flank of the Australian Corps, meaning all five Australian divisions of the corps were together.

In Palestine, Jerusalem was surrendered by its mayor on 9 December. Both the German/Ottoman and British commanders had avoided battle in the city itself and the focus of the fighting was in the surrounding hills. On 11 December, General Allenby entered the city via the Jaffa Gate to accept the surrender and announce martial law. He entered on foot to show his respect for the Holy City, and in intentional contrast to Kaiser Wilhelm II who had entered via Jaffa Gate mounted on a white horse when he visited the Holy Land in 1898.

Allenby became the first Christian ruler of Jerusalem since the Crusades. He ruled carefully, respecting Jerusalem's traditions and religious significance, and protecting its sites – even using Indian Muslim troops as guards near the Dome of the Rock. Jerusalem's loss was a grave setback to Ottoman prestige in the region; they had already lost the Holy Places of Mecca and Baghdad. British PM Lloyd-George described the capture of Jerusalem as “a Christmas present for the British people.” Its capture was welcome news for the Allies in Europe, offsetting less-satisfying news of enemy successes in Russia, Caporetto, and Cambrai.

On the Eastern Front, on 15 December an armistice between the Russia and Germany took effect. This meant that the Germans could transfer some 900,000 troops to the Western Front.

On the Home Front, on 20 December it was announced that the second Conscription “Referendum” had been defeated. On 8 January Hughes resigned as PM, but due to the convolutions of party politics, formed a new government soon after.

In the US, President Wilson announced his “Fourteen Points” (ie his peace-plan principles) in Congress on 9 January 1917.

A Breath of History



AROUND THE CLUB – Our Founder

Major General John Fletcher Owen was an artillery officer who served in various posts in England, gained recognition for his part in the Zulu War in 1879, and became commandant of the military forces of South Australia from 1885 to 1888. After a year or so back in England as commandant of the Coast Defences School on the Isle of Wight, he returned to Australia in 1891 as Commandant of the Queensland Defence Forces.

Towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Brisbane-based officers of the Queensland Defence Forces met socially in taverns. When Major-General Owen arrived from England to take over as Commandant in 1891 he embraced the idea of forming a registered club for officers, with its own premises as “some place where the officers of the forces might meet more frequently in social intercourse.”

He approached the Home Secretary and the Queensland Colonial Government offered to provide a building for the Club's use plus a grant of £50 per year. The first Club House was in William Street and the official opening took place on 22 December 1892. There was a large attendance of officers of the various branches of the services. The Queensland Government Gazette of 7 October 1893 duly notified “United Service Club, William Street” as a registered club.

General Owen's biography is displayed at the door of the Owen Room. (In May 2017, at the Dinner to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Club's move to our current premises, the Montpelier Room was renamed in his honour.)



AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY

The Australian Red Cross Society was formed just after the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914. It is especially remembered in the provision of “comforts” for soldiers overseas.

A seemingly trivial gift of a bar of chocolate or a pair of dry socks could bring the most profound comfort and relief for a soldier on the Western Front.

Enormous sums of money were raised, and thousands of women volunteers made vast quantities of clothing – socks, vests, mittens, mufflers, pyjamas, and a variety of linen.

Voluntary Aid Detachments (VADs) also provided an important public face for the Australian Red Cross. Young women served in VADs to provide nursing and domestic services in hospitals and convalescent homes. A few served overseas in Britain.

The Australian Red Cross also worked at an international level by establishing agencies overseas dedicated to supplying families in Australia with information about wounded and missing soldiers, and providing information about (and comfort to) those soldiers who were prisoners of war.



On 21 February 1918 the Australian 3rd Light Horse Regiment (3 LHR) captured Jericho in Palestine, nearly 1,200 feet (370m) below sea level. Winter rains had put an end to campaigning after the capture of Jerusalem in December and the lull in the fighting offered the opportunity for General Allenby to secure his open right flank by the capture of territory east of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea. British infantry advanced from the west and ANZAC mounted troops from the south. 3 LHR entered Jericho at about 8am on 21 February to find the Ottoman garrison had withdrawn across the Jordan River. The remainder of the 1st Light Horse Brigade and the NZ Mounted Rifles Brigade secured the area along the Jordan Valley and the north shore of the Dead Sea while the infantry held the high ground to the west of the village.

It had been a tough approach – Captain Frank Hurley, the Official Australian War Photographer (by now in the Middle East and attached to the 1st Light Horse Brigade) wrote: “Even in daylight I should not have dreamt of riding this track, and yet the whole brigade passed along it without mishap. At 11.00pm we were at the arranged position, and... rolled ourselves up in our blankets... bitterly cold... orders having been given to travel light... every man rode with an absolute minimum weight. We are to leave here at 3.30am to attack Neby Musa.”

On the Western Front in February 1917, all five Australian divisions were still resting and rebuilding after Passchendaele. They were deployed near Hill 60 in the now-quiet Messines/Warneton sector. Although there was always danger even in a quiet area, their duties were not overly arduous. The AIF was suffering a manpower crisis as 1917 had been our most costly year in the war; all divisions were well understrength and the supply of reinforcements was drying up. Voting in the second Conscription Referendum had occurred in December 1917 and the result was another “No”.

British commanders and all troops felt confident that they had gained military and moral supremacy over the Germans in late 1917, despite the setbacks at Passchendaele. Field Marshal Haig was planning to renew the Offensive in Flanders after winter had passed. But the British also faced a manpower shortage and were also being stretched thinner. London, fearful of even more casualties: was denying reinforcements to Field Marshall Haig; had forced him to takeover more front from the French; and also directed that he send six divisions to bolster the Italians after their rout at Caporetto.

After the armistice with Russia, two German divisions per week were being transferred from Russia to the Western Front. It was increasingly evident that by the spring the Germans would be able to deliver a most formidable attack somewhere in the west. There was no plan or even any real unity with which the Allies faced this tremendous threat. In fact, each Prime Minister and each C-in-C was working for different plans.

Disunity, understrength and overstretched forces, and an enemy growing stronger each day... what could possibly go wrong?

A Breath of History



LIFE MEMBER:

SQUADRON LEADER HERBERT JOHN LOUIS HINKLER, AFC, DSM

Bert Hinkler, a young Bundaberg-born pilot, landed in Darwin on 22 February 1928, 15 days after leaving London. It was a world-record solo flight. Bert had moved to the UK in 1914 to pursue his interest in aircraft design and flying, and served with the Royal Naval Air Service (RNAS) as an observer-gunner during the Great War and was awarded a Distinguished Service Medal in 1917. After the war he became chief test pilot for the Avro company and established a strong reputation in England as a pilot in races and as an air-travel pioneer, creating many long-distance records.

All over the world aviation heroes were lionised by the public – the photo at left and a large story appeared in the *Illustrated London News* soon after his record-making flight and huge crowds turned out when his record-breaking aircraft was paraded through Brisbane's Queen Street. The plane is now displayed in the Queensland Museum. Hinkler's world-class achievement produced an unexpected bonus when the Australian government gave him £2000, appointed him an honorary squadron leader in the Royal Australian Air Force Reserve, and awarded him the Air Force Cross.

Bert was elected a Life Member of the United Service Club in 1923, but was killed in a crash in the Italian Alps on 7 January 1933, trying to lower the record's time. On Mussolini's orders he was buried in Florence with full military honours.



AROUND THE RIDGES: Jacob's Ladder

Is there any USC member who has not puffed up Jacob's Ladder at least once? Have you ever wondered about the origin and history of this long (sometimes seemingly never-ending) staircase?

Jacob's Ladder enabled the upper crust inhabiting Wickham Terrace (one of Brisbane's premier residential streets in the 19th century) to access the commercial district below. It's not precisely clear when it was established, but there are references to it from as early as 1897.

In its early days it was a just a steep dirt pathway with hand rails but without steps (see photo at left). It was not until the 1920s that steps were constructed and these were reworked in 1961. It's now a Brisbane landmark.



On 21 March 1918 the German Spring Offensive was launched in France, their last major offensive of the war. The first blows were aimed at the junction of the French and British armies near Amiens. The Australians, in Flanders sixty miles north, had heard of the German onslaught on 21 March with entire confidence. But by 25 March men read in the communiqués of the loss of familiar towns, Peronne, Bapaume, Pozieres, and other ruins in the wilderness of the old Somme battlefield. The Germans had opened up a huge gap in the British line and in a few hours had gained as much ground as the British had taken in five months fighting on the Somme.

It was a major crisis. All five divisions of the AIF were rushed south. Two German thrusts were advancing towards Amiens from the north-east (through the Bapaume-Albert area) and from the east (through the Peronne-Villers-Bretonneux area). The Australians were confident they had the better of the enemy and as they marched south in high spirits, their presence and confidence calmed the fleeing refugees and the British troops. The 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Divisions plugged gaps in the line astride the Somme River where they fought at: Hebuterne north-west of Albert (26-27 March); between Albert and Amiens at Dernancourt (28 March and 5 April) and Morlancourt (28 March); east of Amiens at Villers-Bretonneux (4 April and 24/25 April); and at other hotspots. No sooner had 1st Division arrived in Amiens in early April than it was immediately rushed back north to Hazebrouck to stem the second thrust of the Offensive. The 9th Battalion bivouacked on the outskirts of Amiens before entraining again to go back north. The men had received strict instructions to keep out of Amiens – many of them therefore made it their business to go into the town. (There was a common saying in the AIF that the best way to end the war would be to put Berlin out of bounds to the Australians.) One party put on some civilian overcoats and hats over their uniforms, and returned bristling with bottles sticking out from their clothing in all directions.

In Palestine, The Anzac Mounted Division and British infantry launched the First Battle of Amman on 27 March, a strong raid on Turkish forces and aimed at cutting the Hejaz railway. By 25 March the village of Es Salt (22 km west of Amman) and on 27 March Amman were attacked. The raiders blew-up large sections of the railway but the Amman garrison proved too strong and the attackers withdrew. They would return to Es Salt a month later.

On the global scene, on 3 March 1918 the Russians and Germans signed the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, a harshly punitive treaty that formalised Germany's defeat of one of her major enemies and forced the Russians to cede territory to the Central Powers. The Italians, despite reinforcement, were still shaky after their rout at Caporetto.

A Breath of History

AROUND THE CLUB: Notable Visitors of the 1930s

http://www.unitedserviceclub.com.au/files/9614/5368/8076/History.Club_History_Book.section_1._Chapters_1_to_3._v1._Jan_2016.RM.pdf



Indicative of the acclaim then accorded pioneer aviators was the action of the Club (then a strictly totally male domain) in hosting Miss Amy Johnston at a luncheon on 31 May 1931, after her epic flight from England. She was a pioneering British aviator who achieved worldwide recognition when, in 1930, she became the first woman pilot to fly solo from England to Australia. She later set records for London-Moscow, London-Tokyo, and London-South Africa. She died in the Thames Estuary after bailing-out from a RAF aircraft she was delivering on 5 January 1941.

Another notable guest entertained in 1931 was Captain CWA Scott AFC, who became world-famous when he broke the record for a solo flight from England in 1931. Scott was inspired by Bert Hinkler whom he had met (and who later became a Life Member of the Club). He met Amy Johnson when he escorted her across Australia following her record England – Australia flight.

On 13 Dec 1932 an interesting guest was the creator of Sherlock Holmes. He signed the visitors' book as "A Conan Doyle, Massachusetts, USA". The circumstances surrounding his visit are a mystery but it is known that in the latter stages of his life he indulged his preoccupation with the world of the spirits. Note: Holmes would have immediately noticed the mysterious circumstances – Doyle was buried in July 1930. Either there is an error or two in the Club's history book (from which this story is taken), or there was a namesake or a practical joker, or this visit vindicates Doyle's belief in spiritualism. Doyle was in Brisbane on a lecture tour in January 1921 and one newspaper report of his visit observed: "Spiritualism in Australia is stimulated by the visit of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle".

The big social event of 1932 was the annual ball in the City Hall at which 25 debutantes were presented to the Governor General (HE Sir Isaac Isaacs) and the Governor (HE Colonel Sir Leslie Wilson). The Prime Minister, Mr S M Bruce, and Mrs Bruce, were also guests. Despite the difficult economic times the attendance of 676 people was a record.



In early April 1918 the Germans resumed their Spring Offensive after a four-day pause while they brought up ammunition and fresh troops. On 4 April the Germans began to over-run British troops at Villers-Bretonneux. But at a crucial moment the Australian 36th Battalion dashed forward in a spectacular charge and forced the Germans to withdraw. On 5 April the Germans launched a second attack on Dernancourt a few km to the north (their first attack on 28 March had been repulsed by the men of 4th Division). This time they penetrated the Australian position but a brilliant counter-attack that C. E. W. Bean later described as "one of the finest ever carried out by Australian infantry" drove them back. They had defeated three German divisions used in turn over the day. On 9 April the Germans struck their second mighty blow of the Offensive near Armentières. 1st Division had just arrived at Amiens and was immediately rushed back north to plug a gap that had opened up near Hazebrouck. It was engaged there for several months.

On 23 April most of the activity was in air over the Somme sector and the "Red Baron" was shot down over Australian lines at Corbie by Sergeant Cedric Popkin of the 24th MG Company. The Australians buried Richthofen with full military honours at Bertangles a few days later (see story below).

The second Battle of Villers-Bretonneux occurred on 24/25 April 1918. In the dawn mist on 24 April, the Germans attacked with tanks, breaking through the British line. The first-ever tank duel forced three German tanks to withdraw but the infantry took Villers-Bretonneux and nearby woods. Two Australian brigades counter-attacked that night, with Elliott's 15th Brigade forming the northern pincer and Glasgow's 13th Brigade forming the southern pincer, meeting at the eastern end and then clearing the now-surrounded village. This was a remarkable achievement. Glasgow's performance was brilliant and his brigade's battle procedure was perfect – in less than a 12-hour period they marched some 18km south while Glasgow planned the attack, and then succeeded in a complex counter-attack by night over ground that they had not seen before with only very brief verbal orders. Monash later called it "the turning point of the war".

In Palestine, Chauvel again seized the village of Es Salt, 23 kilometres west of Amman, to provide a launching point against the vital railway junction town of Deraa. He used the Australian Mounted Division, the Anzac Mounted Division, and the 60th (London) Division. Initially the operation went perfectly, and on 30 April Es Salt was seized. But serious difficulties arose and Chauvel decided on 3 May to withdraw. It had been a failure, but it did have a valuable outcome in encouraging the enemy to believe (wrongly) that Allenby's next stroke was also planned for his right flank in this area.

The Men on the Board 1914 – 1918

Further detail of the men on our Great War Honour board is available on our website at <http://www.unitedserviceclub.com.au/history/>



CAPTAIN JAMES HERBERT MC – 26th Battalion

Jim Herbert was born in Toowoomba on 4 June 1881, one of 10 children. The family lived at Yuelba and Nerang. Jim was a shopkeeper at one stage but later he represented S. Hoffnung & Co. His interests in later years included duties as Secretary of the Nerang Show Society and the Nerang Race Club. Newspaper reports about his involvement in Rifle Club shoots associated with military interests appeared, but no significant successes were recorded. He married at Nerang on 24 May 1909, but his wife died in 1912 and when he joined the AIF to serve overseas he left his three-year old daughter in the care of his father. Prior to the Great War, he had served for five or six years with 9th Infantry Regiment and was appointed to the AIF as lieutenant, 26th Battalion on 1 May 1915 and was promoted to captain on 12 May 1916.

Jim was wounded at Pozières on the night of 29/30 July 1916 and was evacuated to England to recover. He was awarded a Military Cross for his actions during in the Battle of Broodseinde Ridge on 4/5 October 1917.

On the night of 16/17 April 1918 Jim was hit by sniper fire near Somme-Baizieux and died of his wounds a few hours later. Captain Herbert lies in Warloy-Baillon Communal Cemetery Extension, near Corbie in France.

A Breath of History



THE RED BARON'S FUNERALS

The Australians of No. 3 Squadron AFC organised a full military funeral in the cemetery Bertangles village, near Amiens, in April 1918 (see photo at left). Six of its officers served as pallbearers, and an Australian guard fired a salute. Allied squadrons stationed nearby presented memorial wreaths, one of which was inscribed with the words: "To Our Gallant and Worthy Foe".

In the early 1920s Richthofen was reinterred in a military cemetery for German war dead at Fricourt. In 1925 his youngest brother, recovered the body from Fricourt and took it to Germany. The family's intention was to bury him next to the graves of his father and his brother but the family agreed to a Government request that the body should instead be interred with a state funeral at the Invalidenfriedhof Cemetery in Berlin, with other German military heroes and past leaders. The Third Reich held a further grandiose memorial ceremony at the site of the grave, erecting a massive new tombstone with the single word: "Richthofen". In 1975 he was moved to the Richthofen family grave plot at the Südfriedhof in Wiesbaden where he still lies.



In May 1918 on the Western Front the British were in no shape to launch major attacks after stopping the German Spring Offensive, and the French were under attack or the threat of attack further to the south-east. Any offensive action in the immediate future would be limited to minor actions and raids conducted under local arrangements, and known broadly and unofficially as “peaceful penetration”. The Allied forces developed their skills and tactics for these types of limited operations – aggressive patrolling, the use of small teams operating mainly at night to probe out enemy weaknesses, gain ground, and take prisoners to demoralise the enemy and gain information and limited ground.

At these kinds of tactics Australians were recognised to be very well-suited and highly competent, requiring: “intensive training, a much less hierarchical set of relationships between officers, NCOs and rankers and an emphasis on unit cohesion and mutual support – qualities which were more naturally found in forces with social backgrounds [which] did not cramp individualism (like the formidable Australian Corps)”.

The Second Battle of Morlancourt was a series of small thrusts carried out during 4-9 May 1918 against the new German forward line established between the Ancre and Somme rivers to protect Morlancourt. 9th Brigade (3rd Division) captured the enemy's front-line and took 170 prisoners. A German response on 14 May was defeated. In another successful operation 6th Brigade (2nd Division) passed pincer movements around the northern and southern sides of Ville-sur-Ancre (about 3km south of Dernancourt) before raiding parties were sent through to clear the village itself.

Major-General Monash was promoted to lieutenant-general in May and appointed as commander of the Australian Corps when Birdwood was promoted to general and appointed GOC Fifth Army. Monash's appointment was made despite a shameful attempt by Keith Murdoch and Charles Bean to block it and have Brudenell White appointed instead. “Australianisation” of the command appointments was to follow (eg Glasgow's appointment to GOC 1st Division in June).

On 4 May Palestine the Australian Mounted Division and the Anzac Mounted Division completed the disengagement and withdrawal ordered by Lieutenant-General Chauvel following their unsuccessful action at Es Salt.

A Breath of History



AROUND THE CLUB: ROYAL VISITORS, FUTURE KINGS

Did you know that the Royal visitors to the Club over the years include two princes who would be kings?

In May 1927, HRH Prince Albert, Duke of York visited the Club as part of his Australian tour (photo of his departure from the Club is at left). His primary duty on this tour was to open the Parliament House in Canberra on 9 May 1927.

He had been preceded by a visit to the Club by his older brother, Prince Edward (The Prince of Wales), in August 1920 who was representing the King to thank Australia for its Great War effort. By some muddle in HRH's itinerary, the visit to the Club had to be arranged at the last minute. The Prince graciously agreed to curtail the length of a function that afternoon and arrived at the Club at 5.30 for an hour or so.

Prince Edward became King Albert VIII for a few months in 1936 but abdicated in December so he could marry Wallis Simpson. Prince Albert then assumed the throne as King George VI until his death in 1952 when his daughter became HM Queen Elizabeth II.



AROUND THE CLUB: CRICKET IN THE CAR PARK

The photo at left was taken from about where the jacarandas are in our car park these days, between 1890 (when the Tabernacle was opened) and 1907 (when the Green House was built). The original “Montpelier” (built in 1864 and replaced by the current “Montpelier” in 1910) is just visible on the right.

The girls are pupils from the Brisbane High School for Girls, established in 1899, which operated from the Tabernacle until 1912. It is now Somerville House operating in South Brisbane. The girls seem to be playing cricket (the first reported women's cricket game was 1745, the first club in Yorkshire in 1887, and the first Australian league in 1894), but clearly they also played netball. The keen eye will note there was no hole in the bottom of the net in those days.



During June 1918 the Australians continued their “peaceful penetration” operations through a series of brilliant small-scale actions.

The Third Battle of Morlancourt, was a dusk attack carried out on 10 June (by the 25th, 27th, and 28th Battalions of 2nd Division’s 7th Brigade) against the southern portion of the Morlancourt spur overlooking the village of Sailly-Laurette on the Somme. Launched under cover of an accurate barrage, the operation was a complete success and resulted in the taking of 325 German prisoners.

In this action, Lieutenant Edgar Thomas Towner (who would become a Life Member of the Club) earned a Military Cross while in command of a Machine Gun section. The citation read: “During the operations of South Morlancourt, near Albert, on the night of 10/11th June 1918, this officer was one of the first to reach the objective and got his section of guns into action very quickly, thereby greatly assisting the Right company in gaining and consolidating the new position. He also set up captured enemy machine guns and brought them into action. When one of the posts held by the Infantry on the morning of the 11th was badly blown in by shell fire, he went out in daylight, at great personal risk from machine gun fire and snipers, and helped to reorganise it. By his cheerful and untiring attitude, this officer set a conspicuous example to the NCOs and men around him.”

Another USC member, Lieutenant Colonel Terry McSharry, was appointed CMG in June 1918. He had been awarded the Distinguished Service Order previously. McSharry was CO 15th Battalion and held in high esteem as one of the notable Australian battalion commanders in France. Charles Bean said of him that “there was no wiser head in the force”.

June 1918 also saw Lieutenant-General Monash seeking final approval for an Australian attack he was planning for July. At about one-division strength it was small by Western Front standards but too large to be “peaceful penetration”. As a number of Americans were to be attached to the Australian Corps to gain battle experience, Monash selected 4 July 1918 as Zero Day in their honour.

There was a minor naval action on 1 June 1918 when a large British naval force sent to raid enemy minesweepers was suddenly attacked by two German seaplanes. Although the incident was not generally regarded as significant, it was an early demonstration of the utility of seaborne air power in support of naval operations and the Royal Australian Navy’s first use of air power in combat. It involved aircraft launched from platforms fitted over the forward gun turret of HMAS *Melbourne* and of HMAS *Sydney*. They each launched a plane in response to the enemy’s attack and Sydney’s shot-down one of the German planes.

In Palestine there were Light Horse patrols but no major actions. Some regiments (eg those of 4th Light Horse Brigade) began training in cavalry tactics and were issued cavalry swords.

A Breath of History



LIFE MEMBER: AIR COMMODORE SIR CHARLES KINGSFORD SMITH MC, AFC

On 9 June 1928, an aircraft named “Southern Cross”, piloted by “Smithy”, landed at Eagle Farm after a flight of over 80 flying hours – the first-ever flight from the USA to Australia. She and her four-man crew were welcomed by a crowd of 26,000 and “Smithy” was feted as a global hero. His later feats included the first non-stop flight across Australia, the first Australia-NZ flight, the first west to east crossing of the Atlantic, and first west-to-east crossing of the Pacific.

He was born in Hamilton in Brisbane and served at Gallipoli with the AIF before transferring to RFC and earning his pilot’s wings in 1917. He earned the Military Cross for his gallantry in battle but was shot down in August 1917 and a large part of his injured left foot was amputated. After the war he flew in England and the USA before returning to Australia where he became one of Australia’s first airline pilots (for West Australian Airways).

He was elected as Life Member of the United Service Club in 1931. He and his co-pilot were lost over the Bay of Bengal on 8 October 1935 in an attempt to break the London-Australia record set by Capt CWA Scott. The Southern Cross is on display on the approach road to Brisbane airport.



AROUND TOWN: HECTOR VASYLI

On the preserved sandstone abutment of the old Victoria Bridge (near QPAC) is a memorial to Hector Vasyli, an eleven year-old Greek-Australian boy killed on 9 June 1918 while demonstrating his loyalty to his adopted homeland. This portion of the bridge is a fitting location for the memorial as it is almost where he was killed.

Hector, whose parents kept an oyster saloon in Melbourne Street, would spend all his money earned as a newspaper boy on cigarettes and sweets for the troops – he would toss them into their cars in the welcome parades for wounded soldiers as they passed by over the bridge during the war. He lost his life during one of these parades on 9 June 1918 when one of the 60 cars swerved suddenly and hit him. He died from a fractured skull.

Hector’s funeral was held on 11 June 1918 with students of his school acting as pall-bearers. He is buried in Toowong Cemetery in a once-unmarked grave that now has a brass plaque to mark the site. There is a service for the boy each Anzac Day at the memorial – a boy who saved pennies to bless soldiers.



On the Western Front in July 1918 offensive action was still limited to minor actions under local arrangements, known unofficially as “peaceful penetration” – small scale operations of aggressive patrolling and minor attacks to capture ground and prisoners and to maintain the initiative by keeping the enemy unsettled and unbalanced. By this type of operation usually not more than battalion strength, the Australians had gradually pushed-back the Germans in many places (eg see the story about “Mephisto” below).

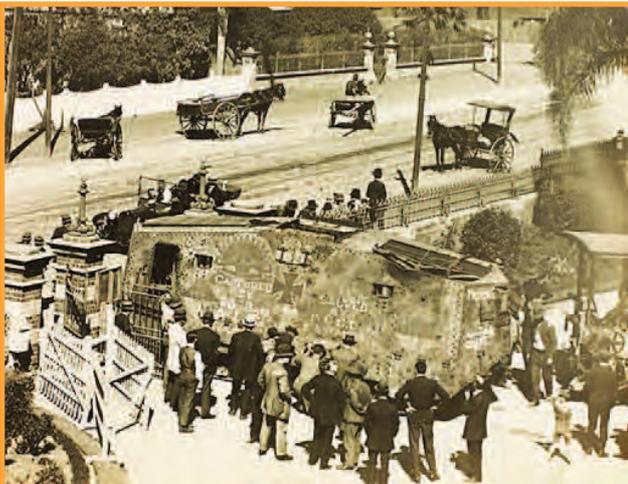
An exception to the string of minor operations was a deliberate attack to capture the village of Le Hamel south of the Somme about 2km to the north of Villers-Bretonneux. The Battle of Hamel on 4 July 1918 was too large to be termed “peaceful penetration” but it was not a big operation in Great War terms. It involved a total of about 10,000 Australians in a surprise dawn attack, with a limited objective and short advance. Monash used a composite assault force of four brigades from different divisions (to reduce the chance of crippling one of his divisions) and a company of Americans, all commanded by HQ 4th Division. A USC member, Lieutenant-Colonel Terry McSharry, commanding 15th Battalion, hosted and mentored one of the American parties and features frequently in the Official History’s narrative detailing this battle; Charles Bean said of him that “there was no wiser head in the force”.

This was the first operation planned and executed by Monash as a corps commander and the Australian Corps’ first significant action together since it was formed. It still stands as a great example of innovative and detailed planning and it included many innovations in the combined use of tanks, aircraft, artillery, and deception. The battle was planned to last 90 minutes – in the event it took 93 minutes.

In Palestine, Allenby’s forces were built-up back to full strength during the summer of 1918. There was a comparative lull in activity while Allenby’s divisions were reorganised and retrained, but they made some local attacks. The 1st Australian Light Horse Brigade, commanded by Brigadier-General Charles Cox (another USC member), was involved in the repulse of a large German and Turkish attack on 14 July 1918 at Abu Tellul, a crucial bastion in the British defensive line along the Jordan Valley. The attack came at about 3.30am with repeated assault by waves of enemy infantry. Cox’s reserve regiment counter-attacked with the bayonet and by 9am the enemy had been pushed back out beyond the outpost line and the situation restored with heavy enemy casualties.

In world news, the Tsar and his family, under house arrest since March 1917, were executed on 16 July 1918.

A Breath of History

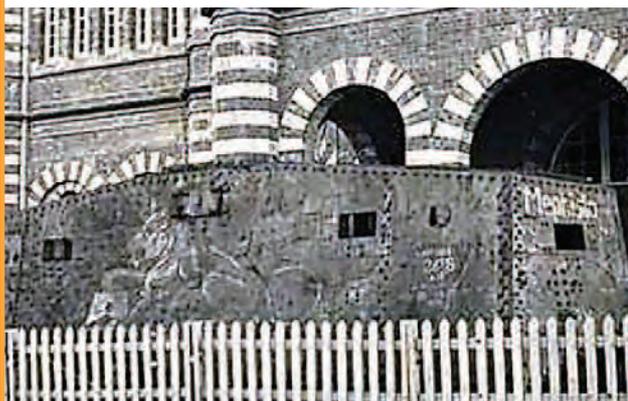


AROUND TOWN: MEPHISTO

Many of our members would have clambered through “Mephisto” at the old Queensland Museum as youngsters. In 1986 it was relocated behind glass at the new museum at Southbank – the glass was more effective as a barrier than the old picket fence, but we had probably lost the full bloom of youth by then anyway. How many of us knew of its story?

By 14 July 1918 after three months of Australian “peaceful penetrations” 7th Brigade had pushed the German line back east of Villers-Bretonneux and beyond “Mephisto”, still stranded and damaged and disabled since the German attack on 24 April. The 30 ton tank was in sight of entrenched German machine gunners, and in easy range of trench mortars and artillery. The acting CO of 26th Battalion, Major James (‘Redge’) Robinson hatched a plan and arranged aircraft, artillery support, and assistance from the British 1st Gun Carrier Company Tank Corps.

26th Battalion captured and recovered Mephisto under fire on the night of 22 July 1918 despite small arms and mustard gas attack. The British planned to send it to London for the Imperial War Museum but somehow it was loaded on a ship bound for Sydney, and somehow it was off-loaded in Brisbane on 2 June 1919. Two steamrollers dragged it from the Petrie Bight wharves to the Museum in Gregory Terrace (see photo above left), chewing-up the bitumen on the roads in the process.



Mephisto is the only surviving A7V tank in the world today. It was a victim of the 2011 floods and underwent extensive conservation and restoration at the Qld Museum’s Railway Workshops at Ipswich. It is now back there after a period on loan to the AWM and is scheduled to return to a purpose-built display area at the Qld Museum at Southbank in 2018.

Mephisto has an interesting side-story. Immediately after its recovery, artwork was quickly painted on its sides to celebrate its capture (see the photos at left). This included a high-quality image of a British lion with the German tank under its paw on Mephisto’s left-hand side. War artist Arthur Streeton (later Sir Arthur Streeton) was working in the sector at this time. Was this unattributed lion Streeton’s (now-lost) work?



In August 1918 the 1st Division was brought south to Amiens and joined the rest of the Australian Corps. Its five divisions would be together for the first time, on the right flank of the British at the junction of the French and British armies. A plan was hatched that would change the face of the war. The British III Corps would attack east along the northern bank of the Somme, the Australians along the southern bank of the Somme with the Canadian Corps on the Australians' right flank and a French Army further south. At dawn on 8 August 1918 the Australian Corps was the central part of the Battle of Amiens, a massive surprise attack of 20 divisions using many of the tactics Monash introduced at Hamel on 4 July. As the morning fog cleared at about 8am, the Australians started to come under increasingly heavy fire from their left (ie from the northern bank of the Somme) – the British had not kept pace. Nevertheless, by mid-afternoon the final objective was secured. General Ludendorff described it as “the Black Day of the German Army”. It would lead to the Hundred Day Offensive and the collapse of the enemy in Europe.

Over the next four days, the victory was exploited and actions at Lihons, Etinehem, Proyart, and Mericourt pushed the Germans still farther back to the east. As they advanced eastward, the Australians captured massive railway guns, at Chuignes and at Harbonnieres. The latter was captured by the Queenslanders of 31st Battalion and its barrel is now displayed outside the AWM as the “Amiens Gun” (see story below). By the end of the Battle of Amiens the Australians had captured 29,000 prisoners, and 338 guns. The King knighted Monash “in the field” at Monash’s HQ at Bertangles – it was not a spontaneous gesture to acknowledge this battle; it had been announced in the Honours List some months before but not conferred until now.

Haig switched the British main effort to the north near Bapaume and the tanks and the extra artillery were sent there but Monash continued to push forward on both banks of the Somme without them. 3rd Division was now responsible for clearing the northern bank and Monash drove it relentlessly, seizing Bray, Suzanne, and Curlu – he wanted to close up on Peronne before the Germans could regain balance and strengthen their defences there. The bridges were impassable but Monash manoeuvred his divisions brilliantly. The 3rd Division cleared the enemy from a choke point at Clery on the north bank just in time for 2nd and part of 5th Division to cross the Somme there to attack Mont St Quentin on 31 August, capturing it and the fortified town of Peronne the next day.

In the Middle East, there was also a massive British Offensive being prepared for September.

The Men on the Board 1914 - 1918

Further detail of the men on our Great War Honour Board is available at <http://www.unitedserviceclub.com.au/history/>



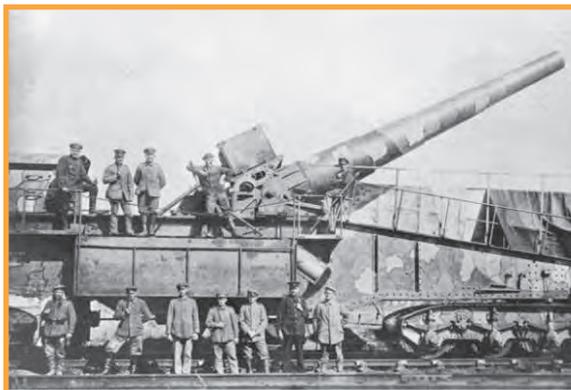
LIEUTENANT COLONEL TERENCE PATRICK McSHARRY CMG DSO* MC (15th Battalion)

Terry McSharry was born in Townsville, one of six children. He was educated at Christian Brothers' St Joseph's College in Brisbane and became a surveyor with Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board by 1912. Terry played football for North Brisbane Harriers and was a boxer. He was described as “cheery and energetic, short, of jockey weight”.

McSharry had served in the militia (Australian Intelligence Corps) and on 21 August 1914 was appointed lieutenant, 2nd Light Horse Regiment which fought as infantry in Gallipoli and was awarded the Military Cross for his exceptional bravery and resource. He was transferred to the 15th Battalion, eventually appointed to command it on 30 August 1916. Terry led the battalion for almost two years, including battles at Stormy Trench, Bullecourt, Messines, Polygon Wood, and Hamel. He was one of the notable Australian battalion commanders in France – “there was no wiser head in the force”. He was awarded the DSO in June 1917 and appointed CMG in June 1918.

In early August 1918 McSharry was mortally wounded in a bombardment while helping a wounded man to shelter at Vaire-sous-Corbie. He died on 6 August 1918, three days short of his 38th birthday. He was remembered as a “lovable comrade... a gallant and intellectual soldier... Outspoken to a degree of bluntness that at times was most alarming, intermingled... with a caustic wit... There are hundreds of stories relating to his contempt for danger... he could tell and appreciate a good joke”. Lieutenant-Colonel McSharry was posthumously awarded a Bar to the DSO and now lies in Corbie Communal Cemetery Extension, France.

A Breath of History



THE “AMIENS GUN”

A broad-gauge train with a railway gun was captured near Harbonnieres on 8 August. The train, the gun, and the crew were captured. This was the gun that the Germans had brought up especially to shell Amiens. The 31st Battalion captured the gun and 8th Field Company (Engineers) later recovered it. Soon after the gun had been taken behind Australian lines a sapper (engineer) painted: CAPTURED BY THE EIGHTH FIELD COMPANY on its side in large letters. As soon as the CO of the 31st Battalion spotted it, the words were repainted to read: CAPTURED BY THE 31st BATTALION.

After the war, the complete gun was displayed at Sydney and Canberra railway stations before its barrel was put on permanent display outside the AWM. Resplendent in its colourful camouflage paint scheme, it is still there to this day.



By the start of September 1918 the five divisions of the Australian Corps, having pushed relentlessly eastward astride the Somme without additional support, were now poised to take the German strongpoint of Peronne. Nearby Mont St Quentin was the key to Peronne's defences. In its first attack 2nd Division's 5th Brigade took the crest of Mont St Quentin but it was too weak to withstand the counter attacks and was pushed back. On 1 September, the next day, its 6th Brigade attacked and captured and held the hill as 5th Division's 14th Brigade attacked and entered Peronne from the north while its 15th Brigade entered from the west, across the Somme. Peronne was cleared and consolidated the next day. It was a brilliant success, "a stunning blow to five German divisions" and "the crowning achievement of the AIF if not the whole war". USCQ Life Member Lieutenant Edgar Thomas Towner was awarded a VC for his actions supporting 6th Brigade – see his story on our website.

The Diggers were exhausted but were at the peak of performance and had clearly gained dominance over the enemy. They pushed him further and further east, defeating his rear guards and harrying his withdrawal to the main defences of the Hindenburg Line.

They captured the Hindenburg Outpost Line by 18 September and then formed the British Fourth Army's main attack as part of a series of hammer blows by the allies all along the German front. This attack was a thrust near Bellicourt, where the St Quentin Canal ran underground in a tunnel. Two US divisions were attached to the Australian Corps – on 28 September the Americans were to seize the Hindenburg Main Line, and then the 3rd and 5th Divisions would pass-through them and seize the Beaurevoir Line further east. But the Australians were drawn into the early fighting and had to secure the American's phase-one objectives before they could undertake their own phase-two tasks. Fighting took place for several days before the Beaurevoir Line was finally taken on 4 October. The Australians were finally relieved for a well-earned rest after capturing the nearby town of Montebrehain a couple of days later, their last action of the war – they were moving back into the line when the Armistice was declared.

In the Middle East, General Allenby launched the Battle of Megiddo at dawn on 19 September 1918. This offensive finally destroyed the Ottoman armies in Palestine. When the British infantry had opened a gap in the Turkish trenches on the plain 16km north of Jaffa, Chauvel's Desert Mounted Corps was passed through. In three days, 15,000 prisoners were taken. Within the fortnight, three complete armies were smashed and there were 75,000 prisoners. Moving rapidly, the mounted troops were closing-in on Damascus. Chauvel planned to capture this historic city by cutting the Turks' escape by the northern route using the Australian Mounted Division, and then pressing into the city from the south. The Australians advanced towards Amman and Damascus, fighting at: Nablus, Wadi Fara Jenin, and Semakh (Palestine); Amman and Ziza (now in Jordan); and Kuneitra and Sasa (Syria).

On 30 September the Australians blocked Barada Gorge and destroyed a huge column of retreating Turkish troops before entering Damascus the next day and accepting its surrender. Despite what the *Lawrence of Arabia* movie would have you believe, Damascus was captured by the Australians, not by Faisal's Arab army which was rushing north to occupy it.

A Breath of History

AROUND TOWN: WAR TROPHY GUNS

THE "SEMAHK GUN"

Outside the 2/14 QMI museum at Gallipoli Barracks stands a 75mm German "Whiz Bang" field gun captured from a combined German and Turkish force during the last Light Horse charge at Semakh. At pre-dawn on 22 September 1918 the 11th Australian Light Horse Regiment charged across two miles of open country to capture the important Syrian rail link town of Semakh on the shore of the Sea of Galilee at its southern-most tip. This charge was made after a hurried ride of some 16km. The 75mm field gun was a trophy of that battle.

The gun had stood for more than thirty years at Sandgate, unveiled by the Governor on 4 August 1923 and moved to New Farm Park in about 1953 before being refurbished and moved to Enoggera in 1984.

BRISBANE GRAMMAR SCHOOL GUN

Another Great War trophy, of heavier calibre, is displayed at Brisbane Grammar School. A Skoda 104mm gun was captured by 3rd Light Horse Brigade at Jenin (Palestine) on 20 September 1918. The commander of the brigade, Brigadier-General LC Wilson CB, CMG, DSO, a Queenslander and an Old Boy of the school requested the authorities to send the gun to Australia as a war trophy. Another Old Boy (and another member of the USCQ) Lieutenant-Colonel DC Cameron and Alderman JF Maxwell persuaded the Australian War Trophies Commission to allot the gun to the school.

It was unveiled by the Governor General on 11 August 1921, restored in 1993, and reinstalled in 1996 slightly closer to the school's Great Hall, where it stands to this day.





By early October 1918 the Diggers in France were absolutely exhausted and their battalions were well understrength. They had managed to keep going for three months since the Battle of Amiens and remained determined to finish the war quickly – victory suddenly seemed to be within reach. They had pushed the enemy farther and farther east, and then formed the British Fourth Army's main attack and penetrated the Hindenburg Line as part of a series of massive French-British-American hammer blows along the German front. The Hindenburg Line and Beaulieu Line had fallen. During the fighting there, Major Wark acting CO of 32nd Battalion, earned a VC that is now displayed in the Club (see below).

In an operation of dubious strategic value, the Australian 2nd Division was tasked to capture Montbrehain on 5 October. It was to be the last Australian action on the Western Front. After the successful attack, 6th Brigade was finally relieved and marched away to join the other Australian divisions resting to the west. The collapse of the enemy's resistance was increasingly apparent but unbeknown to the Allies, Ludendorff had concluded that victory was unattainable after the "Black Day" of 8 August. He had initiated moves in late August to seek an Armistice and by early October, a new German government offered to President Wilson to accept his "Fourteen Points" as peace-terms.

In the Middle East, Damascus fell on 1 October, almost without a fight. The 3rd Light Horse Brigade, which had been shot to pieces at The Nek three years before, rode straight through the city with drawn swords (nine Light Horse regiments were then armed with swords), 10th Light Horse Regiment pausing only to receive its surrender. A single squadron of the 4th Light Horse Regiment took 10,000 prisoners with only a few shots fired and an officer and three men wounded. Soon after 7.00 am they were clear of the city and in vigorous pursuit of the enemy columns in flight to the north.

The great move to the north continued – almost to the Turkish border. On 26 October 1918, Turkish forces withdrew from Aleppo leaving it to the Allied forces to enter without opposition. The auxiliaries from the Northern Arab Army took this as an opportunity to loot the city as had been done in Damascus but this time the 1st Australian Armoured Car Section was employed to suppress the outbreak of lawlessness.

The Turks saw that further resistance was hopeless and signed an armistice on 31 October. The war in the east was over, 11 days before the armistice on the Western Front.

A Breath of History



AROUND THE CLUB: Major Blair Anderson Wark VC DSO

Major Wark's medals are on display in the Military Bar. Although he was not a USC member (he never lived in Queensland) his VC actions read like a "Boy's Own" adventure and are worthy of note. Wark was in temporary command of the 32nd Battalion in the attack against the Hindenburg Line at Bellicourt and the Beaulieu Line, and earned his VC here over several days. He was only 24 years of age.

The battalion's attack on 29 September 1918 was held up by two German machine guns, so Wark ordered a tank to neutralise them. He came across two hundred leaderless Americans, attached them to his battalion, commandeered some nearby tanks and advanced on Nauroy. By 11:30am they had taken the village and 40 prisoners.

Wark and a small party then rushed a German battery and captured four 77mm guns and 10 of the gunners. With two men he pushed forward and captured 50 Germans near Magny-la-Fosse.

At 7.00am the next day they attacked again under heavy shelling and MG fire and established a line near Joncourt. On 1 October, they launched an attack that cut through Joncourt. Leading from the front, Wark dashed forward and silenced machine guns that were causing heavy casualties; enabling 5th Division to complete its task of forcing through to the Beaulieu Line.



AROUND THE CLUB: Trafalgar Day 1905

On 21 October 1905 the Club (then called the "United Service Institution") commemorated the centenary of the Battle of Trafalgar at its premises at 21 North Quay. Precisely at noon on the day, before a large crowd of members and notable citizens, the order to hoist the signal was given by Lieutenant MGG Pascoe, a grandson of Flag Lieutenant Pascoe who gave the original order on HMS Victory exactly one hundred years earlier.

The committee had gone to great trouble to ensure the correctness of every detail, even to the extent of having special, smaller-than-standard-size naval signal flags made because of the limited space available to display Nelson's famous message on the three masts with cross trees which had been erected in front of the club house. That night there was a lecture on the battle to members and Lieutenant Pascoe displayed naval trophies which had come down to him from his grandfather. Members' wives had not been forgotten; they were accommodated at the ladies club next door.

A watercolour of the occasion hangs in today's Clubhouse, in the ante-room outside the Glasgow Room. The premises were a few doors upstream of Queen Street and the keen eye will detect the top of the Treasury building in the right background of the picture.

On 11 November 1918 the fighting in Europe would stop – the Turks had ceased fighting on 31 October, so the Great War would suddenly be effectively over. On 5 November a reply from President Wilson to Germany's October request arrived in Berlin. It said that the Allied governments had indicated their willingness to make peace and advised that Marshal Foch was authorised to communicate the terms of an armistice. The German representatives crossed the lines on 7 November, and were handed the terms by Foch at Compiègne on the morning of 8 November. The terms meant disarming, the kind of terms that the German Government and military leaders had hoped to avoid. But there could now be no question of opposing Foch's terms: the army was beaten and demoralised; an almost-bloodless revolution had occurred in Germany; the Kaiser and Crown Prince were sent into exile; the workers in Berlin rose and the troops there would not fire on them; the navy mutinied. The new Chancellor had to hasten to Foch with his country's acceptance.

On the night of 10 November Foch had ordered all operations were to cease at 11 o'clock next morning. The Armistice was officially signed at 5am on 11 November and Foch's order was confirmed. As soon as the news was known, cities and towns around the world, including Australia, erupted into celebrations.

Fighting continued until the last minute as infantry tried to improve their positions and the artillery fired off their stockpiled ammunition. When 11 o'clock arrived many soldiers wrote of a sense of numbness. One officer wrote: "It was hard to believe the war was over. Everything was just the same, tired troops everywhere and cold drizzly winter weather – just the same as if the war were still on". It took several days for the implications of the Armistice to sink in, to believe fully that this war was over, and that they had survived and would soon be returning home to Australia.

Bringing Australian troops home would be an enormous undertaking. At the time of the armistice, there were 95,951 AIF soldiers in France and a further 58,365 in England, 17,255 in the Middle East plus nurses in Salonika and India, all to be transported home.

The AIF's involvement in the occupation of the former enemies' homelands was limited, to allow their early repatriation. The exceptions were: No 4 Squadron AFC and the 3rd Australian Casualty Clearing Station which participated in the occupation of the Rhineland; and the 7th Light Horse Regiment sent, along with a NZ regiment, to occupy the Gallipoli peninsula for six weeks. About 120 Australians decided to delay their departure and instead joined the British Army to serve in Northern Russia during the Russian Civil War (although officially the Australian government refused to contribute forces to the campaign).

A Breath of History

RAN CRUISERS AT THE SURRENDER OF THE GERMAN FLEET



One of the Armistice's conditions was that the German High Seas Fleet was to be interned at the Royal Navy's northern base at Scapa Flow. When the German fleet crossed the North Sea to surrender on 21 November 1918, the British Grand Fleet sailed out to meet it. Each German vessel was assigned to the custody of a British ship, which sent aboard a party to inspect it for hidden explosives and instruct the captain. The 74 German ships were then escorted to Scapa Flow, where they were interned.

HMAS *Australia* led the port division of the fleet. She then escorted the German battlecruiser SMS *Hindenburg* to Scapa Flow, and was assigned as her guard-ship (The photo to the left shows the crew of HMAS *Australia* in December 1918). HMAS *Melbourne* had responsibility for the German light cruiser *Nurnberg*. (The photo at top right, shows *Melbourne* flying three battle flags and cleared for action on the day when the German High Seas Fleet surrendered). HMAS *Sydney* was also present at the surrender and was again involved with a German ship carrying the name "*Emden*" when she escorted her old enemy's namesake into Scapa Flow for internment. The RAN ships formed part of the force which guarded the High Seas Fleet during late 1918 and early 1919, and spent much of their time either at anchor at Scapa Flow, or conducting patrols in the North Sea.

All the German ships were later scuttled by order of Rear Admiral Von Reuter, the German Commanding Officer at Scapa Flow, on 21 June 1919.



By the end of 1918, the Australians along with the other Dominion divisions were widely viewed as being among the best of the forces in France. In the most successful period of the Australian campaign (27 March-5 October 1918) the AIF made up less than 10% of the entire British forces but captured: 23% of the prisoners; 23.5% of the enemy guns; and 21.5% of the ground wrested from the Germans. This came at a heavy cost, with the AIF sustaining a casualty rate among the highest of any belligerent.

After the Armistice, most had to wait months for a sea passage home. Fortunately plans for an education scheme were well advanced by the Armistice. Officially titled Non-Military Employment, the Diggers referred to the scheme as Non-Military Enjoyment. The last transport departed London on 13 April 1920.

At the risk of imparting a gloomy note to our otherwise-festive December Newsletter, it is appropriate, in the last of our "Centenary of the Great War" pages to pause and reflect for a moment.

The Great War officially ended with the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on 28 June 1919. This war was the most traumatic event in Australia's history and left a vast legacy of sorrow that was felt for generations. Very few families were untouched. 61,720 were killed or died; 156,228 were wounded; and of the nearly 272,000 who survived the war, 170,000 suffered from wounds or illness. Another 60,000 veterans died within ten years of the end of the war.

This series of pages has aimed to not only outline the actions of the AIF but also highlight the contributions of Club Members who served, 22 of whom were killed. The notes have tended to emphasise the Western Front but that was where the main enemy was defeated in the main theatre; involved the greatest number of Australians; produced the highest casualties; and saw many battles that were prolonged and horrific in scale and casualties.

The AIF officially ceased to exist on 1 April 1921.

A Breath of History



THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

Although the armistice signed on 11 November 1918, ended the actual fighting, it took six months of Allied negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference to conclude the peace treaty. The treaty forced Germany to disarm, make substantial territorial concessions, and pay reparations to certain countries that had formed the Entente powers. Others thought these provisions were too harsh. Marshall Foch proposed the idea of the division of Germany and a buffer zone, but his proposals were not adopted. The result of these competing and sometimes conflicting goals among the victors was a compromise that left no one content: Germany was neither pacified nor conciliated, nor was it permanently weakened.

Foch said, somewhat presciently: "This is not a peace. It is an armistice for twenty years."



THE "GALLIPOLI FLAG"

The last flag to be flown at Anzac Cove during the evacuation of the Anzacs from Gallipoli on 19 December 1915. The flag hangs in the South Transept of St John's Cathedral.

During World War I, 22 clergy from the Brisbane Anglican Diocese served as chaplains in the First AIF. One of these was the Reverend Alexander Maxwell (1856-1933), the parish priest at Sandgate. He enlisted on the 8 February 1915 as a chaplain, with the honorary rank of captain, and attached to the 2nd Light Horse Brigade. He was 59 when he enlisted which was highly unusual, as the age limit for chaplains engaged for "continuous service" was 48.

He had taken to the War a flag which he had used in 1903 to commemorate the first hoisting of the British flag over the new colony of Victoria. Maxwell used it in the course of his chaplaincy duties throughout the Gallipoli campaign. On Sunday 19 December the last full day of the evacuation, Maxwell had the flag with him at Anzac Cove while he was helping with casualties and record the names of Anzacs buried at Hell Spit cemetery.

In 1920 he showed the flag to General Birdwood who was on a visit to Brisbane. Birdwood signed his name on its top right hand corner - his signature was later overstitched in cotton. On Anzac Day 1929 Captain Maxwell formally presented the flag to St John's Cathedral at a commemoration service attended by senior government and military representatives. St John's Cathedral is planning to launch a booklet with complete details on 19 December 2018 (see page 1 of this Newsletter for further information).