



ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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567

REPORT ON APRIL MEETING (13.04.2016)

The month of April always leads us to reflect upon the many military battles fought in the past, none being better known than Gallipoli. After a very succinct and easily understood visual presentation of the machinations of the War in 1916, Doug Hunter gave a talk on Albury and the legacy of Gallipoli. His talk conveyed a very personal touch by remembering the stories of the local boys and families affected by this conflict. The photograph of the baby faced Captain Kenneth Mortimer and his poignant message to his mother I think, says it all. (See Page 8.) Michael recommended visiting the exhibition "A Camera on Gallipoli", featuring photographs by soldier and surgeon Sir Charles Ryan and objects from the Light Horse Museum which are on display at the Arts Space, Wodonga.

Emma Williams, the new curator at the LibraryMuseum spoke about the Albury & World War One pop up exhibition. It will be running for three weeks and then travelling around local schools. The exhibition features original objects including uniforms, equipment and documents which tell the stories of local men and women serving on the battlefields of Europe and on the home front. She also asked if any members could provide early photographs of the Five Ways at Lavington for an exhibition at the Lavington Library called "The Changing Face of the Five Ways." Joe Wooding shared several interesting stories about the perils of travel in the 19th century including punts sinking, wheels falling off coaches and men being swept off their horses whilst moving cattle down a flooded roadway.

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY

11 MAY, 2016

7.30pm at Commercial
Club Albury
Recollections of growing
up in Albury.

Speaker:

Lou Lieberman

Blood and Fire, Rotten Eggs
and Gaol

The Persecution of the
Salvation Army in Albury
1884-1894.

Speaker: Howard Jones

ALBURY LIBRARY- MUSEUM

ALBURY & WORLD WAR
ONE
A POP UP EXHIBITION

23 APRIL-15 MAY

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ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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<www.alburyhistory.org.au>

For your reference A&DHS account details are:

BSB 640 000 Acc No 111097776 (Albury & District Historical Society Inc)

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Meetings: 2nd Wednesday of the
month 7.30pm usually at Commercial
Club Albury.
Committee meets 3rd Wednesday of
the month 5pm at the Albury
LibraryMuseum.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$25
Family: \$33
Corporate: Under review.

Research undertaken \$25 first hour.
Enquiries in writing with \$25



Vynor Jones was badly wounded from a bullet in the right leg and was evacuated to Britain. Vynor is the person in bed, not wearing a hat. This photo was taken at Harefield Hospital UK.

ALBURY AND THE LEGACY OF GALLIPOLI

BY DOUG HUNTER

The year 1916 opened a new phase for Australia at war; it was the year the Australian forces entered the European War. But the army which sailed from Egypt to Marseilles in the south of France and journeyed by rail north to the battlefields of the Western Front was a very different army to that of a year earlier. It was an army utterly changed by the campaign of 1915; it was an army and a nation coming to terms with the legacy of Gallipoli.

Early in 1915, Albury boy Vynor Jones was together with 20,000 other young Australians in camp in Egypt when he wrote to his parents in Albury saying how much he was enjoying life. He and his mates in the AIF were having a great time in 'historic old Egypt'. They were training hard; discipline was strict; they were eating well and putting on weight. He concluded his letter: 'We leave here in a few weeks but have not been told where we are going. I hope we are sent straight to the front.'

Jones got his wish. His time at the front however was short, but the legacy was life-long. He landed with his battalion on 25 April, was badly wounded and evacuated to Egypt. There an attempt was made at a bone graft to repair his shattered leg bone. It was unsuccessful, so he was sent on to England where he spent seven months in hospital in Manchester becoming mobile on crutches. He returned to Australia and after further treatment was discharged from the AIF in early 1917 and placed on a pension. This was Vynor Jones' legacy of Gallipoli.

Today the Gallipoli story is well known – the glorious landing, the courageous defence of the beachheads and finally the evacuation eight months later. But for the people in Albury in 1915 the story was very different; not nearly so coherent. Rather it was a collection of snippets garnered from newspapers, soldiers' letters, casualty lists, telegrams and visits from local clergy. There was great uncertainty about what was happening.

Two Albury boys died at the landing: Leonard Smiles and Arthur Potter, but the way in which their parents heard the news was very different. In mid-May the Smiles family in Wilson Street received word their son had died of wounds, but almost immediately further advice came stating he had been wounded. Finally they heard Private Leonard Smiles had died on the 8th of May of wounds received at Gallipoli.

The Potter family by contrast received word their son had been posted as 'missing'. Private Arthur Potter remained on the missing list until June the following year, 1916, when a board of inquiry determined that he had been killed on 25 April, the day of the landing.

CONTINUED: ALBURY AND THE LEGACY OF GALLIPOLI

Letters from wounded soldiers left the community both distressed and yet relieved that their loved one was not dead.

Alf Adams wrote to his parents in Albury: "The bullet in going through, smashed the bone, and splinters of bone come out every day. I am getting on fine, thanks to medical attention which is everything that could be desired. I don't know how I missed being shot on Sunday 25th April, it was that hot. But I came through safe and it was my bad, or should I say good, luck that I was shot in the arm on Saturday evening 8th May at about 6.30 p.m. when we were advancing at Cape Hellas. Our Brigadier and Brigade Major, Colonel McCay and Major Cass are two of the finest men I've met. They were both slightly wounded on Saturday, too." Major Walter Cass was the son of prominent Albury hoteliers, Charles and Katherine Cass and in 1915 his mother was licensee of the Newmarket Hotel. I'll return to Walter Cass later in the story.

Another Albury boy, Roy Clark wrote to his friend Arthur Rhynehart, apologising for his poor writing and explaining: "I got in the way of a few Turk's bullets, but they did not stop me until I had a month of it; then I got one in the right wrist, which shattered it, so they had to take it off at the elbow. Am getting looked after like a lord, and having a great time."

Final casualties on Gallipoli reached 28,350 killed, wounded and sick; a little more than 50% of the total force. Among them were many from the trained pre-war militia.

In July 1916 the Australians launched their first attack on the Western Front near a village called Fromelles. Here in a space of 24 hours the 5th Division suffered 5500 killed, wounded and missing. Much of this disaster was as a legacy of Gallipoli.

The plan was for the three brigades of the 5th Australian Division, lined up side by side, to charge the German line; 8th Brigade on the left, 14th Brigade in the centre and 15th Brigade on the right. They were to capture the enemy main trench then push on to a support trench which could be seen clearly on the aerial photograph and there set up a new defensive position. A British division on the right would attack at the same time. The plan was very simple and easy to understand, but it was flawed.

Firstly the plan was not only known to the newly arrived Australians, but to every tavern and café owner behind the line, and to the German defenders. Second, the 5th Division artillery was not up to the task of destroying the barbed wire entanglements in no-man's-land. Some of the gunners had been infantry or light horse only two weeks before so had had little training. Many of their shells fell short, landing in the crowded trenches of their own front line causing heavy casualties. The third problem emerged when those infantry who did succeed in getting through the main German line, discovered the supposed trench seen on the aerial photograph was in fact a drainage ditch half full of water and almost impossible to defend.

The attack, for the most part failed. The 8th Brigade captured their portion of the main German trench but could not advance much further; the 14th Brigades reached the supposed trenches but it was soon apparent their position was untenable, but they did the best they could. Four men with Albury and district connections were at Fromelles: - Kenneth Mortimer, Norman Brumm, Arthur Hutchinson and Walter Cass. Their experiences uncover the legacy of Gallipoli.

Captain Kenneth Mortimer, a 20 year old from Leneva, just south of Wodonga, was in command of a company, about 200 men, in the 8th Brigade. A little before sundown he took his men forward to reinforce the leading battalion. Things were not going well because the Germans, who had occupied these defences for 12 months and knew the trench system intimately, were infiltrating back into their old front line. Finally at about 4 in the morning the battalion was ordered to retire. Mortimer was last seen trying to organise the withdrawal of his men, but he failed to retire with them, his fate was unknown.

Kenneth Mortimer was born at Leneva and went to primary school there. He continued his education at Wangaratta Agricultural High School and from there obtained a place at the newly established Royal Military College at Duntroon. He arrived in Egypt after the evacuation from Gallipoli and was posted to the 29th Battalion as signals officer. He was promoted to Captain two months later and given command of a company.

This was a very rapid rise in rank and a great lift in responsibility for a very young man. But it was not unusual; it was a legacy of Gallipoli. Following Gallipoli the Australian government had decided to more than double the strength of the AIF. Now this had problems. While recruits were plentiful, trained officers and sergeants were not.

CONTINUED: ALBURY AND THE LEGACY OF GALLIPOLI



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Norman Brumm
Photograph Courtesy: Australian War
Memorial Collection

The two divisions on Gallipoli had drained the pool of trained men from the militia, so officers and NCOs could only be obtained by promoting from what was available. Officers all went up a rank: General McCay had commanded a brigade on Gallipoli, now he commanded a division. His brigade commanders had all commanded battalions. Corporals became sergeants, replacement corporals were promoted from the ranks of Gallipoli veterans. Many were excellent men, but all lacked experience and training in their new roles.

Kenneth Mortimer's body was never found, and to the day of her death, his mother referred to him as 'wounded and missing' and she expected one day he would return and take up where she had last seen him dancing at the Leneva Hall in his uniform just before his departure. Mortimer's death was a legacy of Gallipoli.

Norman Brumm, a nineteen year old from Albury was also at Fromelles with the 29th Battalion. His parents in East Albury first received word he was wounded; several months later this was changed to wounded and missing. In March 1917, his identity disc was among a batch received in London from Germany. They were of soldiers killed in action at Fromelles on the night of the 19th of July 1916. There was no other information.

His burial site therefore was unknown and was to remain so for 93 years until a mass grave was uncovered at Pheasant

Wood near Fromelles. Norman Brumm's body was identified using DNA testing. A relative, Mary Anderson, spoke at our meeting in November 2010 and told of attending the dedication of a new cemetery in Fromelles where Norman

Brumm and 200 others were reinterred in individual graves. Norman Brumm is also remembered on a family tombstone at Albury Pioneer Cemetery.

Major Arthur Justin Sandford Hutchinson was born at Wodonga 25 August 1894. He was the son of the Church of England minister. While still a child, Hutchinson moved with his family to Tasmania where he was educated and, like Mortimer, obtained a place at the Royal Military College at Duntroon.

He served with the 9th Light Horse Regiment at Gallipoli and following the evacuation he obtained a transfer to the 58th Infantry Battalion. He and a number of other young officers in the light horse transferred to infantry and artillery when it became apparent the light horse was to remain in Egypt.

Hutchinson's rise through the ranks was also rapid. In June 1916, at the age of 21 he was promoted to the rank of major and was the senior company commander of the 58th Battalion 15th Brigade and it was in this capacity he entered the battle of Fromelles.

The attack was a disaster for the 15th Brigade. The leading battalions were shattered before they got halfway to the German line. The British battalions on the right met a similar fate, but as night was falling they planned a second assault on the German trenches. It was agreed the 58th Battalion should cooperate and attack at the same time.

Promptly at 9pm, Major Hutchinson led two companies into the attack, tragically unaware that the British attack had been cancelled. In the utter confusion of the battle, and exacerbated by poor communications, non-existent liaison between adjoining units and inexperienced headquarters staff, the message had never reached Hutchinson. His body was never found.

Back home in Launceston, Miss Gladys Forrest wrote to Victoria Barracks in Melbourne seeking clarification of worrying news: "Being engaged to Major AJS Hutchinson" she wrote, "I am naturally very worried at having received a telegram forwarded by Rev Hutchinson saying 'Officially reported missing 20th July'."

Clarification was a long time coming and it was not good news - another legacy of Gallipoli.

CONTINUED: ALBURY AND THE LEGACY OF GALLIPOLI

Lieutenant Colonel Walter Cass was something of a rarity; he was an experienced battalion commander who had served in that capacity for months on Gallipoli. At Fromelles he was in command of the 54th Battalion. The battalion went forward in good order and captured its objective. Cass set up an efficient headquarters in a captured German dugout and was managing very well. Soon, however, he discovered the battalion on his right had suffered badly and was left with only one officer, a 21 year old Captain Charles Arblaster. Cass assumed responsibility for both battalions. Worse, on his left the battalion there had been beaten back, so Cass had to rearrange his men to protect an open flank.

Cass informed his superiors the situation was serious but under control. By dawn on 20 July, Cass' men including Arblaster's group were the only Australians still holding part of the captured German trenches, but the situation was becoming desperate with both flanks under heavy attack. Cass suggested withdrawal but was told to hold on. This he and his men did by super-human efforts, but when permission was finally given to withdraw it was daylight and the Germans were in trenches behind Cass. His losses were unnecessarily heavy.

Cass was distraught when he reached the Australian front line and made his feelings felt about the attack and the decision to leave his men isolated and under constant fire for so long without any possible hope of the attack resuming. He is reported to have said to his brigade commander "I tell you it was wholesale murder. They have murdered my boys." Brigadier Pope responded, "Pull yourself together man, this is war." To which Cass replied, "This is not war; they have murdered my boys."

What did Cass mean 'this is not war'? Cass, a Boer War and Gallipoli veteran was well able to make a judgement as to what was war. It seems the AIF had come to believe its own rhetoric that its performance at Gallipoli had provided them with a formula for war. Tragically they somehow believed unbounded bravery could overcome poor planning, poor training and inexperienced leadership.

The *Albury Daily News*, 23 August, carried an account of the Fromelles battle which had now been downgraded to the status of a raid. It was said to have been entirely successful and reports of high casualties were unfounded.

Walter Cass was born in Albury on 28 August 1876 when his parents Charles and Katherine were licensees of the Turks Head Hotel. Walter attended school at Albury then became a trainee teacher with the Victorian Department of Public Instruction. He taught in several rural schools then in 1901 enlisted in the 5th Victorian Mounted Rifles and served in South Africa. After the war he returned to school-teaching for a time before becoming a permanent soldier in 1906. He served at Gallipoli, where he was wounded twice and made a Companion of the Order of St Michael and St George (CMG), and finally at Fromelles. After the war Cass continued in the permanent forces reaching the rank of Brigadier. He died in Melbourne 6 November 1931. It was said of him, "his capacity as an instructor left its mark on many young officers." Perhaps it was his way of ensuring in a future war 'his boys would not again be murdered.'

The legacy of Gallipoli was individual: - Vynor Jones' leg; Roy Clark's arm. It was family:- the Smiles and Potters, and Mrs Mortimer. It was wives and sweethearts:- Gladys Forrest; and it was the AIF which seemed to take two years to rid itself of a collective madness that its supreme bravery could make up for the military skills and experience it lacked. Not till 1918 when a new commander harnessed their courage and merged it with training, thorough planning and preparedness was the legacy of Gallipoli laid to rest.



Studio portrait of Lt Col WEH Cass, CMG. Photo from AWM, copyright expired.

YARRAWONGA
MULWALA
BUS TRIP

REPORTED BY
JUNE
SHANAHAN



On Saturday 9 April 2016, members of the Albury & District Historical Society and guests enjoyed a day trip to the Yarrowonga/Mulwala area. It was a lovely Autumn day and our driver Matt Kane took us on a bus trip to remember. I am sure everyone enjoyed it as much I did. Before we left Albury Leo Coyle suggested that we stop on our way outside a property by the name of Collendina, midway between Corowa and Mulwala. Leo gave us some history about the property, it is one of the Riverina's oldest stations, at its peak it stretched across 18,000 ha and was first taken up by Robert Brown in 1841. William Hay and sons Alfred and Henry bought the pastoral lease in 1873 with Henry building the 30 room, 115 square homestead in 1891. It is presently owned by Rodger and Kim Matthews. They have a Merino sheep stud on the property. At Mulwala we spent some time at the Pioneer museum which has a huge number of exhibits related to the pioneering days of the district. It is a credit to the Yarrowonga/ Mulwala Historical Society and I would highly recommend a visit. We then went on to see the 121 year old Yarrowonga railway station which is a perfect example of what can be achieved in the restoration and reuse of old buildings. They have added lovely timber decking which replaced the old platform on the back of the building. The railway station is used for functions and community meetings.

We headed west of Yarrowonga for a light lunch and a tour of the Byramine Homestead. The homestead was originally nestled within the Yarrowonga Run, a large station of 35,000 hectares in size running sheep and cattle. Today it is surrounded by one of the largest vegetables farms in Australia. It is assumed the house was built in 1842. This assumption is based on accounts of Elizabeth Hume personally travelling to the property in 1842 accompanied by a party which included skilled building tradesmen and carrying a plan for a house which had been prepared by an English architect for use in India. The famous explorer Hamilton Hume helped his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Hume and her nine children take up the Yarroweya (Yarrowonga) run after her husband was murdered by bushrangers, in Gunning NSW. The house is said to be the oldest rural house in Victoria and is National Trust Classified "To be conserved at all costs." There is a central room, known as the fortress room which allowed a clear view from all angles in case of attack from bush rangers or natives. A beautiful garden was established around the homestead. When Hamilton Hume visited he was thrilled to see the Elm trees growing from seeds carried by Elizabeth Hume from his home in Gunning. They are said to be the oldest Elm trees in Victoria.

Visitors are able to enjoy exploring the Byramine Homestead and its surrounds. There is a small brewery with a display and history of the Burramine Football Club and the Burramine Sports Club which commenced with the Burramine Gift in 1951.

YARRAWONGA /MULWALA BUS TRIP



BYRAMINE HOMESTEAD: Showing the front of the unusually shaped building and part of the external kitchen.
Photograph Courtesy: Faye Stevenson

Notes by Faye Stevenson.

Hamilton Hume established Byramine station for his sister-in-law in March 1842 bringing cattle from Barnawartha and applying & getting the licence for it. It was the first licence granted for the left bank of the Murray River below the Ovens River junction. Hamilton took an active part in running it for many years afterwards.

There was a boundary dispute between Rowans who owned Peechelba and Humes Yarrowomatta stations in 1850. Sworn evidence was heard from persons who worked for both families. In that evidence Andrew Hamilton Hume [Elizabeth's oldest son] stated that he first visited the Hume station in 1845 or 1846. He came to reside there in May 1848. [The other son was born in 1841]. This means that Elizabeth Hume could not have brought her family there before 1850. Records indicate that Elizabeth Hume was still residing at her home, Collingwood at Gunning until 1850. She came later than that.

JOURNEYING THROUGH THE JOURNALS

Ances-Tree– Burwood – Mar' 16.

Irish Roman Catholic Parish Register now online. Link to register: registers.nli.ie

Government – Assisted German Immigrants (Vinedresser Families) to NSW 1849-1856 – Part 1.

Descent – Society Australian Genealogists – Mar' 16. – (Online)

Autosomal DNA

RAHS History Magazine- Mar' 16.

Three papers on the first Irishman, Sir Richard Bourke, to govern an Australian colony. Sydney Bus Museum.

DUE TO THE INCREASED COST OF POSTAGE, ARE THERE ARE ANY MEMBERS WHO ARE RECEIVING THEIR BULLETIN BY POST WHO WOULD BE HAPPY CHANGING TO EMAIL? PLEASE CONTACT THE EDITOR



**CAPTAIN KENNETH
MORTIMER**

**THE INSCRIPTION ON
THE PHOTO READS:**

**TO MOTHER WITH
FONDEST LOVE &
KISSES 3-10-15**

**NINE MONTHS LATER
HE WAS KILLED AT
FLEURBAIX, FRANCE.
HE WAS 20 YEARS OLD.**

**“He did his bit.”
“Until the day breaks and
the shadows flee away.”**



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P11688.001

COMMITTEE SNIPPETS

Members are asked to consider nominating for Committee as we are in need of new people on the executive. These nominations should be in by 17 May. The AGM will be held on 8 June.

Chris McQuellin has recently had an article on Sir John Hoad (who lived and worked in the Albury area from 1860-1881) published in the Friends Of St Kilda Cemetery Newsletter.

<http://foskc.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/FOSKC-Newsletter-April-20161.pdf>

Special thanks to the Commercial Club Albury Ltd for supplying a meeting room for many years and also for their continued support. Please click on the logo below to access their website.



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Facebook

You can now find the Albury District Historical Society on Facebook.

Our Facebook page has now received over 1000 likes!

To view our popular page please go to <https://www.facebook.com/Albury.DHS>