

ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC BULLETIN

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497

REPORT ON THE NOVEMBER MEETING (11/11/09)

Our November meeting, falling as it did on Remembrance Day followed a WW1 theme. Doug Hunter spoke on the topic The Road to Noreuil and the Albury Battery; Five other members, Catherine Browne, John Craig, Jan Hunter, Doug Royal and Chris McQuellin, spoke about individual soldiers of the Great War. The variety of experiences was extraordinary ranging from Cape Hellas to Noreuil; from a small cemetery at a country estate in England to the Red Baron. SBS advertises "six billion stories" which reminds us of four hundred thousand AIF stories, most still to be told.

Doug Royal displayed a poster containing the colour patches of the Australian Imperial Force, the light horse regiments of the two mounted divisions and the battalions of the five infantry divisions together with their artillery, transport and other support units. All AIF units wore the rising sun badge, so colour patches were the distinguishing feature that identified a particular battalion, regiment or divisional artillery unit. Colour patches were a source of great pride among soldiers, and families at home.

Doug Hunter brought along three items from the 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles Museum at North Bandiana: a WW1 uniform worn by a sergeant in the 13th Battery Australian Field Artillery; a set of medals issued to a driver in the 13th Battery; and a portion of the sight from an 18 pounder field gun engraved "Noreuil 2.4.17."

It was pleasing to welcome to the meeting several members of the public who had read of the meeting in the community diary section in the *Border Mail*.

NEXT MEETING

WEDNESDAY
9 DECEMBER 2009
7.30pm at Commercial Club
Albury

Bring & Tell.

**This is an opportunity to talk
about an item that you found
interesting or puzzling, so
please participate.**

REMINDER

Christmas Dinner
Sat 12 December
6.30 for 7p.m. \$33

Also

Please bring a gift, value
not exceeding \$5 for a
gift game.

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ALBURY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

Single: \$22

Family: \$30

Corporate: \$50

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

History Meetings: 2nd Wednesday
of the month 7.30pm at Commercial
Club Albury.

Committee meets 3rd Wednesday of
the month 5.15pm at Albury
LibraryMuseum.

A&DHS website:

www.alburyhistory.org.au

ANSWER TO QUESTION OF THE MONTH

What do you know about the Albury War Memorial Bowl?

Members knew very little about the Bowl in Memorial Drive. In fact, there seemed little to know. The project began with high hopes. Architects A C & C H Macknight are quoted in the *Border Morning Mail* of 25 October 1946:

As far as can be gleaned from the small section of the people whose opinions are obtainable, it would seem that most of them are in favour of some form of memorial which would be of use to the public, and if this can be made to blend in with the present Monument, so much the better.

The newspaper article went on:

Fortunately nature has provided a plateau half way up Monument Hill, central with Dean Street and the Monument, which is ideal for forming into a bowl similar to the ones which have proved such successes in other places. ... In a great bowl under the shadow of the monument would be an ideal place to finish the Anzac and other ceremonial marches. ... the whole setting would be most thrilling.

Construction of the Bowl occurred in 1954 culminating with a grand opening in November. From there regrettably it was all downhill. Access and lack of parking were the major drawbacks.



One of two identical bronze plaques attached to the wall at the Memorial Bowl. This one, on the inside of the bowl, has been damaged and partially levered from its setting.

The Floral Festival parade finished at the Memorial Bowl for one year only. Some members remembered the debacle of low-slung floats trying to negotiate the road narrowed by cars parked on the verge and the sharp dip in the entry to the arena itself. Floats disintegrated and queens and attendants clung for their lives to the pitching superstructures.

The festival did not come again and the Bowl faded like old soldiers and the War Memorial Civic Theatre which opened in May 1964 supplanted it as the city's WW2 memorial.

A children's playground has been built beside

the Bowl and a collection of picnic tables added. One could say, that though the vision of grandeur paled, an ambience of space and peace so close to the centre of the city is not to be undervalued.

HAROLD RAYMOND GEORGE EDWARDS

By Catherine Browne

Tonight I would like to tell you of my relative Harold Raymond George Edwards who served during WW1 and kept a detailed diary of every day of service he experienced. Harold was the first cousin of my grandfather making him my first cousin twice removed.

Harold was born in 1896 at Bendigo, one of eight children born into a very religious family, and was apprenticed to his father James for six years to learn the watch-making trade.

Late in 1916 when his watch-making apprenticeship was finished, Harold felt it was time to enlist in WW 1 even though his father had told him he would not give his consent until Harold turned 21. He wanted to be in the Flying Corps - there was no Air Force. Aircraft units were part of the Army. His father's reluctance stemmed from the fact that Harold's older brother Lieutenant Noel Edwards had been killed at Lone Pine by a Turkish sniper on 6 August 1915. When Noel had enlisted at age 20 Father had raised no objection, when Harold voiced his desires to enlist Father made his views quite clear, but when youngest son Cyril came to enlist Father signed the papers - it was not for him to enjoy living on the kindness and sacrifice of others. Cyril's enlistment papers were deliberately destroyed by Victoria's Chief Recruiting Officer, Captain Gilbert Dyett. He knew a brother had died alongside him at Lone Pine and that Harold was serving in France. Mother's attitude was that the Motherland was in peril so no personal sacrifice was too high to safeguard Britain - she loved her sons none-the-less however.

Harold, being just a little over the age of 20 years, wrote a letter to the Flying Corps Headquarters asking if there were any vacancies for instrument fitters. Before posting the letter he showed it to his father who added "You can tell them that references could be sent if desired," which Harold took as his father's consent. The Corp's reply was favourable.

AUSTRALIAN FLYING CORPS

So it was that Harold enlisted on 7 February 1917 at the age of 20 years, 8 months and 27 days and was sent for a practical test at Laver-ton. He was required to make a bracket with a pinion turned to fit it. Following three months training at Point Cook he moved to Broadmeadows Army Camp to await embarkation for Europe. Harold sailed for Europe on his 21st

birthday.

Around mid-1918, Harold was posted to the front in France to join No 3 Squadron of the Flying Corps. The squadron was conducting air reconnaissance of the area. Scores of small photos of the battlefield were taken and then fitted together to make a large collage of the area. By this method, commanders of armies were kept up to date with any changes in the actual front line. As an instrument fitter, Harold was attached to the Headquarters Unit and his transport section was kept busy servicing three flights, motorcycles for the dispatch riders, light motor tenders and heavy tenders capable of relocating the canvas hangers for the planes.

ONE EVENTFUL DAY

Harold's time spent in France would have been no more remarkable than any other serviceman during WW1 except for one eventful day and I quote:

"On 21st April, 1918, our squadron was sent out as a salvage party. The following extract from letters of mine published in the Bendigo paper on 25th June 1918 give more detail.

"The next day was a great one for flying. Our machines were very busy taking photos and spotting enemy guns etc., from 6000 to 10000 feet. The scouts and flying buses were up above and encountered a circus, as the collection of Hun machines is called. One of the enemy buses, a triplane, was painted red; the others each had red nose caps. One of the Royal Naval Air Service machines, a scout, was in the circle, and the red plane went for him. Feigning to be hit, the scout went down in a nose dive or falling leaf style, I do not know which, but the Hun followed and during the downward flight they passed one of our machines, which was not slow to have a shot, and when I tell you that it brought down the greatest German aviator to date, you will then understand why I have told you about this flight. The pilot's name was Manfred; his title is Baron von Richthofen. Other machines had fired shots at this bus, and so had some land batteries, and our observer's claim did not go uncontested. Claims went in from all squadrons in the sector pretty well and at one time it seemed as though the Royal Naval Air Service were to have the honour, but a second post mortem was held on the

body, and whether that had anything to do with it I cannot tell, but the Baron's machine was at length attributed to our observer, H Barrow. The pilot's name is Garrett. The observer sits with his back to the pilot and has a machine gun so mounted that he can shoot in almost every direction but straight ahead. The pilot has one that fires in the same direction that the bus is travelling so he can command the front. I heard that four of that circus of Huns' planes were brought down that day. The Baron's bus fell in the front of our advanced line, I think and the party that went out to salvage it had to desist until midnight. They got the body out by one of the boys going out and fastening a rope around it, and they pulled it to cover. He was brought to the 'drome that afternoon and the machine was collected during the night. I saw the wounds -

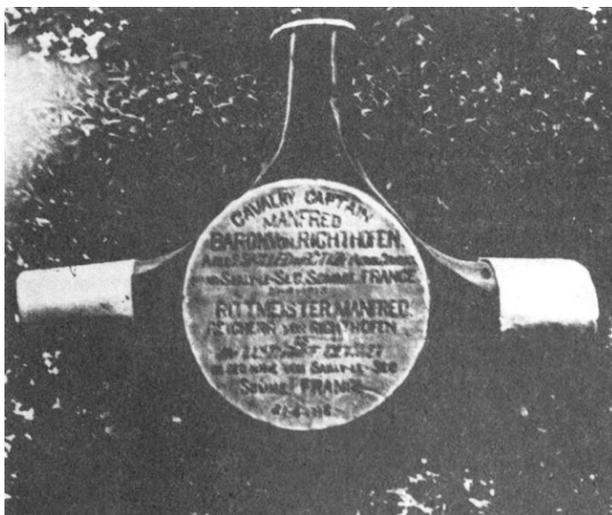
the bullets went in below the right arm and emerged at the left breast and I claim that he was instead shot by ground fire from an unknown soldier rather than from an aircraft.

"Certification of the death of the Enemy's chief airman was necessary; this meant British and French identification so the body was held under guard until that could be concluded next day.

"My first part of particular interest in the incident was to guard the body, alternatively

with another lad, Scotty Melville. Subsequently it transpired that Richthofen had 2,000 francs in an inner pouch; Scotty and I had violently differing opinions respecting souveniring that money - enough said!

"The Baron's face was typical of the Huns, but the shabby clothes he had on were indeed a surprise to me. Just a day or two before his death his 79th and 80th planes (victims) had been recorded. There is doubt expressed as to whether he had personally brought down all of these, for his note book began at no. 20. He was recognized as a great airman and clean fighter, and accordingly he was buried with full military honours. A coffin was supplied, four large wreaths were brought from various squadrons and a number of our boys



Memorial plaque for Captain Manfred Baron von Richthofen engraved by Private Edwards and fixed as the centrepiece of a cross made from an aircraft propeller stub.

went as a firing party. There were a large number of officers, some of whom were staff, in attendance at the funeral, and several reporters and three or four official photographers, one of them having a cinema camera. Our officers provided the pall bearers and were taken in all of the official views, so I guess we, as a squadron, have the honour, although in the paper it says the 'British Flying Corps'.

"A further part that fell to me in the matter was to engrave two plates with appropriate particulars, one to be placed on the Baron's coffin. This plate of aluminum was about 9 inches by 12 inches; also a circular plate about 10 inches in diameter to place on the hub of the cross made from one of our plane propellers, three of its four blades being cut short. I was not a trained engraver nor did I have normal gravers for the work but just ones I had made from steel wire, goodness knows where I got it. The inscription on each plate was first in English on the upper half, then in German on the lower:

*Cavalry Captain Manfred, Baron
von Richthofen.*

*Aged 25 Killed In Action (Aerial
Combat)*

*Near Sailly-le-Sec Somme,
France. 21/4/1918*

"While doing the engraving I wished it were for the Kaiser. Many of the French were very vexed that we did the fallen foe such honour. I suppose they find it hard to fathom the British, but in this case I think we are but reciprocating the honour they paid one of our great airmen, Albert Ball, whom they brought down. I hear they buried him with military honours and placed flowers on his grave once a month and sent his mother a photo each month. The Baron was said to be 25 years of age. If this is correct, then I think he was brought up in a very stern school."

AFTER THE WAR

After the events concerning the Baron, Harold's military service returned to normality. Harold was discharged on 16 July 1919 and returned home.

He then busied himself by becoming a lay preacher with the Methodist and Uniting Churches, preaching well into his 90s. He was a chorister until age 101; a founding member

of Legacy in Victoria and of the Australian Branch of the Gideon Bible Association. Harold was also a former head of the Optometrists Association in Victoria.

RETURN TO THE BATTLEFIELD

In 1989 at the grand age of 93, Harold was one of 60 former diggers chosen by the Government to return to Gallipoli to visit the grave of his brother Noel who had fallen 72 years earlier. "My brother and I were extra close. Seeing the final resting place will be the fulfillment of a lifelong dream". At that time he was the only surviving member of the 3 Squadron Australian Flying Corps.

Harold passed away on 9 August 1998, in Brisbane, aged 102 years, 2 months and 29 days. His funeral was attended by top brass from the RAAF and Army Aviation and the latter provided a guard of honour and a firing party. He was honoured at his funeral by a fly over of three RAAF F18 Hornets.

THOMAS WILLIAM BERTRAM MILLER 1899?-1968

Information and photos given by Thomas (Tommy) Miller Jr. to Jan Hunter, 2004

Thomas Miller, an orphan, came from County Cork, Ireland, aged 11. He accompanied a relative, a wireless operator on a ship, who abandoned him in Melbourne. Undeterred, Tommy made his way, working with bullock trains, driving buggies and sulkies, and as an employee of Jaspers at Rutherglen. He became a tailor, a carpenter and a motor trimmer. He signed up in WW1, lying about his age and spent his 16th birthday at Gallipoli.

Tommy's story is an example of how family stories can differ in detail from official records.

His war records available on the National Archives website show that he enlisted in May 1916 at 18 years 11 months, giving his sister in Ireland as his next of kin. His medical examination was done in Rutherglen. He was 5 feet 3 inches tall and of very slight build. He was allotted Regimental Number 5694A and posted to 24th Depot Battalion at Royal Park. He embarked on the *Shropshire* in September 1915 with 13th Reinforcements to 24th Battalion, landing at Plymouth in November. He went to France in December 1916. He was in and out of hospital several times during his service.

In 1919 he was transferred to AIF Administra-



5694A Private T W B Miller 24th Battalion AIF. Miller was clarinettist in the Battalion Band. Photo taken in Dublin Ireland

tive HQ in London for a few months. It is assumed that he visited his sister in Ireland at this time as photos of him were taken at "The French Photo Cie" 37 Grafton Street Dublin.

He returned to France until repatriation to Melbourne in May 1919. In 1960 Tommy applied for a replacement of his discharge certificate. Cost was four shillings.

Tommy was 19 when he came home from the war. After his marriage to Hannah Priscilla ? (Stella) they came to Albury and lived at 370 Buckingham Street. They then shifted to 334 Smith Street in 1938.

Tommy played the clarinet in an army band and later was part of the Albury town band. He also played for silent movies.

During WW2 there was a shortage of materials to make side curtains or car canopies so he worked with builder, Les Chick. One job was constructing houses for the Army at Wirlinga. As the style of cars changed to hard roofs and wind-up windows, Tommy made covers for utilities and canopies, and did other canvas or leather jobs.

He never took out Australian citizenship. The Smith Street house stayed in the family for nearly sixty years.

JAMES DESMOND MCCARTHY

By Chris McQuellin

No 18707, Gunner James Desmond McCarthy was a member of the 26th Battery 7th Field Artillery Brigade AIF. He joined the AIF on the 9 January 1916 at Victoria Barracks, Sydney. The McCarthy brothers were all gunners in the 26th Battery. They had sequential regimental numbers: Bede 18706, Des 18707 and Les 18708.

In his enlistment papers, James Desmond is described as being 30 yrs 11 months old and 5 foot 7 inches tall (172 cm). He had fair complexion blue eyes and brown hair. His vision was recorded as 6/6 in both eyes.



Bugler sounds the Last Post at the funeral of 18707 Gunner James Desmond McCarthy, 26th Battery AIF at Harefield (St Marys) Cemetery England, November 1917

Gunner McCarthy fought with his Battery at Armentieres and later in the battles of Menin Road, Broodseinde and Passchendaele.

James became sick while on active service in France and was evacuated to hospital in England where he died 2 November 1917.

He was buried with full military honours in the Harefield (St Mary's) Cemetery in Middlesex.

The Australian Service Corps (ASC) depot at Hounslow supplied the gun carriage. Bearers were from No 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital, Harefield. A bugler from Kit Store, Fulham, sounded the 'Last Post'. Mr and Mrs Billyard-Leeke, owners of Harefield Park where the 1st AAH was located, sent a floral wreath.

CAPTAIN PHILLIP HARRIMAN HEYWOOD

By Doug Hunter

Phillip Heywood's career with the 16th Battalion Manchester Regiment in WW1 has been written in earlier issues of the *Bulletin*, but extracts from two letters, one written to his old school, Melbourne Grammar and the other to his father are interesting. Heywood left school and went straight into the army. He returned to Australia after three years of war on the Western Front aged 22. The letters reflect an experience limited to school and war.

May 1917 written from Queen Alexandra Military Hospital for Officers:

Just a line from here to the old School to say I am alright and expect to be out of here any day. ...Many congratulations to the crew of 1916, and my wishes are that 1917 will result in the same way. While I was on the Somme I met a few OMs [Old Melburnians]. It was quite good getting into some of Fritz's dugouts; it's wonderful how we ever got them out of some of the places. When our battalion took one lot of German trenches, the German regiment commander said he didn't know how he ever could let only boys take his trenches. The adjutant got a bit above himself, so he got his ticket, and the others did just what we wanted. Please remember me to the masters and any old friends.

December 1918, following release from Prisoner-of-War camp in Germany, he wrote to his father:

... And to think Grammar won the boat race is just great. There are six OMs in this camp. We old Grammarians were saying it takes the Kids after all to show us, but I suppose they are all big fellows; one forgets that we have also tacked on a few years since we were there. How can I ever thank or repay you for what that great school has done for me? I am just breaking my neck to get back.



Passport photo of Phillip Heywood aged 19 having left Melbourne Grammar School and on his way to England to join the British Army

Phillip Heywood returned to the family home at *Orleigh Park*, Dandenong, but his health had suffered owing to having been gassed in France. His doctor advised he live in a drier climate, so in November 1919, his father purchased *Hawksview* on the Riverina Highway 10 km east of Albury. Phillip Heywood lived at *Hawksview* till his death on 26 April 1971.

TIMELINE ALBURY BATTERY

Information is drawn from *The Albury Battery: Albury's Citizen Soldiers 1903-1940*, by Douglas Hunter, 2008, available in the Albury Library.

1903-1914 Militia Battery at Albury
 August 1914 WW1 breaks out. 19 members of Battery volunteer for AIF
 September 1915 Major Shellshear appointed to command 13th Battery AIF. 50 more members of Militia battery volunteer for AIF. Most join 13th Battery. 13th Battery adopted by Albury & district as 'The Albury Battery'.
 November 1915 13th Battery (The Albury Battery) sails for Middle East.
 March 1916 Battery arrives in France
 April 1916 Armentieres
 July 1916 Pozieres
 October 1916 Ypres
 March 1917 Bullecourt & Noreuil
 July 1917 Ypres
 March 1918 Somme
 July 1918 Hamel
 August 1918 Amiens
 September 1918 Mont St Quentin

October 1918 Hindenburg Line
 June 1919 Welcome Home celebration Albury
 1919 Militia training resumes
 September 1939 WW2 breaks out. Battery called up for fulltime training. Many volunteer for 2nd AIF. Albury claims 2/23rd Infantry Battalion as Albury's Own.
 1948 Citizen Military Forces training resumes. The Albury Battery replaced by 8th/13th Victorian Mounted Rifles, a tank regiment.

JOURNEYING THROUGH THE JOURNALS

By John Craig

Richmond River (Lismore) HS Bulletin, December 09.

- James Stocks, Chemist, Businessman and Citizen.

Murrumbidgee Ancestor: Wagga Wagga FHS Journal, October 09.

- Australia and WW2 beginnings 70 years ago September 1939 and December 1941;
- The day Wagga celebrated war's end.

Links'N'Chains: Liverpool GS Journal, November 09.

- Redcoats on the Northern Coast, continued from August Journal;
- Story of two soldiers 80 years apart.

Insites: Historical Houses Trust of NSW Magazine, Summer 09.

- Macquarie: the great improver;
 - John Thomas Bigge, Imperial civil servant.
- Wagga Wagga HS Newsletter*, October/November 09.

- Wagga Wagga Society's Annual Report, September 09.

Stockman's Hall of Fame Newsletter, October 09.

- Indigenous Heritage Project;
- Drover's story from aged 13, by Azzie Fazulla.

Valley Genealogist: Bega Valley GS Newsletter, Nos 1,2 & 3 09.

- The Bundian Way: ancient aboriginal pathway nominated for Heritage listing, February issue;
- German Raider SMS *Wolf* off our coast, 1917. October issue.

DON'T FORGET: BRING, SHOW & TELL NEXT MEETING 9 DECEMBER AT COMMERCIAL CLUB 7.30 PM