

Phillip Islanders during World Wars I and II

*Experiences and challenges – in the forces
and on the home front*



John Jansson and Christine Grayden
with Mary Bourke

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and on the home front*

Compiled from research, essays, talks, oral histories,
memoirs and exhibition material in the collection of the
Phillip Island & District Historical Society

John Jansson and Christine Grayden
with extra text by Mary Bourke

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Phillip Islanders during World Wars I & II. Experiences and challenges in the forces and on the home front.

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Written by: Grayden, Christine; Jansson, John.

Excerpts from: Bourke, Mary. *Keeping the Spirit Alive: The Story of the Phillip Island RSL*. 2008. Used with the author's permission.

Edited, compiled and designed by Christine Grayden using content from the website: pidhs.org.au and other sources.

ISBN: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

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Front cover photo: Servicemen at Cowes Hall 1922. From left: Bruce McHenry; Jacko Dixon; Arthur Webster; C Clarke; Clarry Williams. Photo: John Jansson collection.

Back cover photo: Bert Saunders and Allan McFee heading off to WWI service on board the ferry *Vixen*, with crew member Charlie Richardson in cabin, 1915. Photo: Ossie Underdown.

For further information about the Phillip Island and District Historical Society inc. see:

<https://phillipislandhistory.org.au>

To see many more images from the society's collection: <https://victoriancollections.net.au/>

To watch the society's videos see here:

<https://www.youtube.com/@phillipislanddistricthisto9047>

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and learn, the Bunurong and Boonwurrung people. We pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their Elders past, present and emerging. The Phillip Island and District Historical Society Inc honours Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island people's unique cultural and spiritual relationship to the land, waters and seas.

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A note of appreciation from the writers

After many years of research and writing by society members John Jansson and Christine Grayden, and local writer Mary Bourke who wrote the history of the Phillip Island RSL club, these essays appeared on the society's original website, and were also used in online exhibitions, YouTube videos and commemorative public displays. John's body of research on the First World War was recognised by presentation of an award at the Phillip Island RSL Anzac Day service, while Christine's multi-media World War II project was short-listed in the Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria annual awards. Mary's book has received much acclaim and is still widely read.

Many sources were used, including a 1995 video of interviews produced by the Phillip Island & District Historical Society Inc, where Phillip Island residents shared their experiences of World War II in the forces and on the home front. Mary also interviewed many Phillip Island RSL members for her book. All three researchers scoured the wonderful archives available through the National Archives of Australia, the Australian War Museum, Wikipedia and the websites of the various battalions and POW camp prisoners. Family of the servicemen and community members generously shared many photos and family stories of these men's war experiences, and experiences of those at home on Phillip Island.

The World War II work was undertaken during the Covid pandemic, further emphasizing the importance of these online resources and the collegial nature of archivists, researchers and historians; often only an email or phone call away. The writers are grateful to them all.

World War I

Phillip Islanders in WWI campaigns

James Joseph Beirn

3529 Pte. James Joseph Beirne was born on 12 July 1871 in Elphin, Roscommon, Ireland to James Beirne and Catherine Walsh. He was a labourer on Phillip Island probably at 'Innis Howen' with the McHenrys before the war. He enlisted first at Cowes on 30 July 1915 then at Melbourne on 6 August 1915.

He embarked Australia on HMAT *Nestor* on 11 October 1915. He was taken on strength of the 6th Battalion at Tel el Kabir Egypt on 21 January 1916, the 58th Battalion at Serapeum on 17 February 1916, and the 59th Battalion on 15 March 1916.

He embarked Alexandria on 21 June 1916 on HT *Ivernia* and disembarked at Marseilles on 30 June.

He was detached for duty with 2nd Anzac Headquarters on 29 December 1916.

He marched in from detachment, to the 5th Australian Division Base Depot, Havre, on 28 October 1917 and was taken on strength of the Army Veterinary Hospital for duty at Calais on 7 November 1917.

In April 1917 an Australian Veterinary Hospital was established near Calais. The hospital could accommodate 1,250 horses and had an establishment of seven officers and 459

men. Twenty five thousand animals were treated during the eighteen months of its existence.

Australian Veterinary History Record.

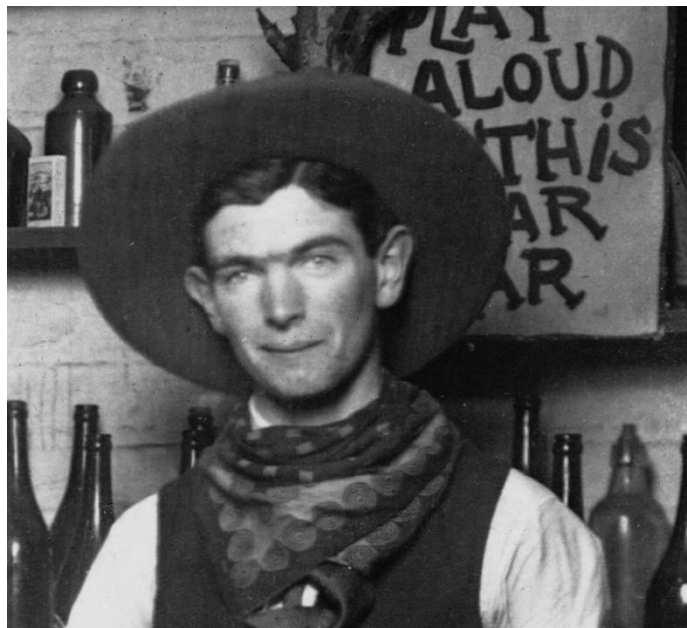
James was admitted to the Army Veterinary Hospital on 18 March 1918 (sick). He was discharged from hospital and rejoined the unit on 29 March 1918.

He commenced the return to Australia on board *HT 'D19'* on 8 August 1918 and disembarked Melbourne on 4 October. He was discharged on 19 October 1918, medically unfit: premature senility.

James was a returned soldier at Cowes in 1919 and was living at Flagstaff Gardens in 1924 and Fitzroy South in 1931 working as a labourer.

James died in June 1932 at Prahran and was buried in The Necropolis, Springvale.

Sydney Arnold Bell



3306 Pte. Sydney Arnold Bell was born in 1896 at Catford, Kent to Harry and Beatrice Bell. His occupation was office boy on the 1911 census. He embarked from London on the *SS Miltiades* and arrived at Melbourne on 5 June 1913.

He was a farmer at Rhyll working for George Lock when he enlisted on 30 July 1915 with the 7/23rd Battalion. His medical examination was done on Phillip Island on 16 July. He embarked on *HMAT Commonwealth* on 26 November 1915.

Sydney transferred to the 2nd Pioneer Battalion at Moascar on 13 March 1916 then proceeded to Marseilles, France disembarking on 26 March. The 2nd Pioneer Battalion was part of the 2nd Division and was under direct command of Divisional HQ. The Battalion took part in the Battle of Pozières, Battle of Mouquet Farm and the Second Battle of Bullecourt.

As part of the final throes of the British Army's Arras offensive, a renewed attempt was made to secure the fortified village of Bullecourt in the period 3 – 17 May. The Australian 2nd Division (5th and 6th Brigades) and the British 62nd Division attacked at 3.45 am on 3 May 1917. The Australians penetrated the German line but met determined opposition which frustrated the envelopment plan. Drawing more and more forces in, renewed efforts on 7 May succeeded in linking British and Australian forces, but inspired a series of ferocious and costly German counter-attacks over the next week and a half. Following the repulse of the counter-attack of 15 May, the Germans withdrew from the remnants of the village. Although the locality was of little or no strategic importance, the actions were nevertheless extremely costly: AIF casualties totalled 7,482 from three Australian Divisions.

Australian War Memorial website.

Sydney was killed in action by shell fire on 6 May 1917 at Bullecourt, France during the Second Battle of Bullecourt. He has no known grave. Australian Red Cross files give his story:

Bell was in my Plat. (No. 15) D. Coy. and I knew him well, he was a very fine fellow. On the 3 May we had been carrying bombs over to the front line and he was just in front of me. This was about 10.0 a.m. We returned safely and on our return journey he was again ahead of me going back to the dump. We got so far on our way and rested for a bit in the sunk road at Noreuil. When we were there, he went off in the direction of some cook houses a few yards down the road and when he was there, these cook houses were blown to bits by 3 or 4 shells which dropped on them. He never came back and we all concluded that he had been blown to bits by the same shells that had smashed up the cook houses.

Reference:- Pte. H. Morrow, 2403, 15 Pl, D. Coy)

Sydney Arnold Bell is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and the Villers-Bretonneux Memorial, Villers-Bretonneux, Picardie, France.

Robert Clark Miller Britton

179 ER/Cpl Robert Clark Miller Britton was born on 23 May 1891 in Edinburgh, Scotland to Patrick Britton and Margaret Jane Clark. He was a farmer in Scotland and was in the 7th Battalion Royal Scots for two years.

Robert departed London for Melbourne on 18 September 1912 on the S.S. *Wilcannia*. In 1914 he was working as a labourer at Cowes for Tom Richardson.

He enlisted on 20 July 1915 in Melbourne with A Company, 29th Battalion and embarked on HMAT *Ascanius* on 10 November 1915, disembarking at Suez on 7 December.

Robert was taken on strength with the 45th Battalion on 2 April 1916 and proceeded to join the British Expeditionary Force, ex Alexandria on 2 June.

They disembarked at Marseilles on 8 June 1916.

The battalion fought in its first major battle at Pozieres in August 1916, defending ground previously captured by the 2nd Australian Division. After Pozieres the battalion spent the period until March 1917 alternating between duty in the trenches and training and rest behind the lines, first around Ypres in Belgium, and then in the Somme Valley in France.



Robert was admitted to the 8th Australian Field Ambulance with pleurisy and embarked for England 26 Feb 1917. He was admitted to the War Hospital, Reading on 27 February and was discharged from hospital for furlough on 11 May 1917.

He marched into No. 3 Com. Depot, Hurdcott on 26 May 1917 and proceeded overseas to France on 14 June and joined the 4th Australian Divisional Base Depot, Havre. He was classified PB, unfit for active service.

He embarked for Southampton, England on 25 June, fit for clerical or sedentary jobs.

Robert left England on 25 September 1919 for return to Australia on the *Port Denison* and was discharged medically unfit from the AIF at Melbourne on 28 February 1920 suffering from disorderly action of the heart.

He returned to Phillip Island to work again for Tom Richardson and was working as a labourer in Shepparton in 1925 and Homebush, New South Wales in 1930. His last mention in the electoral roll was in 1943 at Homebush, working as an engineer. Robert died on 5th January 1971 at St Leonards, New South Wales and was buried at the Macquarie Park Cemetery and Crematorium, North Ryde.

Robert is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour.

Duncan Campbell



127 L/Cpl Duncan Campbell (at right) was born in 1893 in Beaulieu, Inverness-shire, Scotland to Simon Campbell of Fornest, Streetherrick, Inverness-shire. He spent two years with the Territorials Cameron Highlanders. He enlisted on 8 May 1915 at Melbourne with A Company of the 24th Battalion. At the time of enlistment he was a farm servant at Glen Isla, Cowes. A regular payment of money from his army pay was made to D. McKenzie of Glen Isla, Cowes.

The 24th Battalion was raised in a hurry. The original intent was to raise the 4th Battalion of the 6th Brigade from the 'outer states', but a surplus of recruits at Broadmeadows Camp in Victoria led to a decision being made to raise it there. The battalion was formed during the first week of May 1915, and sailed from Melbourne at the end of that week.

Training shortfalls were made up in Egypt in July and August, and on 4 September 1915 the Battalion went ashore at Gallipoli. It spent the next 16 weeks sharing duty in the Lone Pine trenches with the 23rd Battalion. The fighting at Lone Pine was so dangerous and exhausting that battalions rotated every day.

Australian War Memorial website.

Duncan was sent to hospital suffering from shock on 1 December and didn't rejoin the unit until 14 February 1916. The Battalion was reunited in Egypt in early 1916 and he rejoined it in the Canal Zone. They proceeded to France in March.

It took part in its first major offensive around Pozières and Mouquet Farm in July and August 1916. The Battalion got little rest during the bleak winter of 1916-17 alternating between the front and labouring tasks. When patrolling no-man's land the men of the 24th adopted a unique form of snow camouflage - large white nighties bought in Amiens.

In May 1917 the battalion participated in the successful, but costly, Second Battle of Bullecourt. It was involved for only a single day 3 May but suffered almost 80 per cent casualties. The AIF's focus for the rest of the year was the Ypres sector in Belgium, and the 24th's major engagement there was the seizure of Broodseinde Ridge."

Australian War Memorial website.

Duncan was wounded in action on 27 July while in the Cemetery Trench at Pozières and was evacuated to the 1st Canadian Hospital. He returned to duty on 28 August 1917.

Like many AIF battalions, the 24th was very weak at the beginning of 1918, but still played its part in turning back the German offensive in April. When the Allies took to the offensive, the 24th fulfilled supporting roles during the battles of Hamel and Amiens. At Mont St Quentin, however, it played a major role by recapturing the main German strong point atop the summit on 1 September. A diorama at the Australian War Memorial depicts this attack.

The battalion's last battles of the war were at Beurevoir on 3 October and Montbrehain on 5 October. It left the front line for the last time on 6 October 1918 and disbanded in May 1919.

Australian War Memorial website.

Duncan returned to Australia on the *Kashmir* on 30 April 1919. He was at Cowes in 1919 and by January 1922 he was in Cambridge, New Zealand. Electoral rolls for 1924 to 1968 have Duncan farming at 'The Croft', Main Ridge, Red Hill, Victoria and he retired to Dromana after this. He married Amelia Elsie Brown in 1934. They had no children. Duncan died at Shoreham on 19 September 1986 at the age of 94 and was buried at the Dromana Cemetery. He was the last surviving of the Phillip Island servicemen.

Duncan is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour.

Charles Craft



520 Pte. Charles Craft was born in 1895 in Poplar, Middlesex, England. Charles spent 10 months on the Training Ship *Arethusa*. The ship was used to train young boys for a career in the Royal Navy or Merchant Navy. He emigrated from London arriving at Sydney on the *Wakool* on 16 December 1911. He was a farmer at Ventnor probably working for the McHenry's at 'Inishowen' before the war. He enlisted in Melbourne on 23 February 1915 and joined C Company, 23rd Battalion.

The 23rd Battalion was raised in Victoria in March 1915 as the 3rd Battalion of the 6th Brigade. After initial training, Charles left Australia on 10 May 1915 on the *Euripides* and arrived in Egypt, where the Battalion would complete its advanced training, in June.

As part of the 2nd Australian Division, the 6th Brigade landed at ANZAC Cove in early September. The 23rd Battalion was soon manning one of the most trying parts of the Anzac front line - Lone Pine. The fighting here was so dangerous and exhausting that battalions were relieved every day. The 23rd manned Lone Pine, alternating with the 24th Battalion, until they left Gallipoli in December 1915.

The battalion was next 'in the line' on 10 April 1916, when it occupied forward trenches of the Armentières sector in northern France.

Australian War Memorial website.

On the night of 29-30 June 1916 at Rue de Bois near Hazebrouck France, Charles was part of a raiding party on enemy trenches in which 80 enemy were killed. Only one of the 23rd Battalion was killed and four were wounded. One of those wounded was Charles who received a severely shattered femur from a gunshot. He was admitted to the Brook War Hospital, Woolwich, England.

He embarked on the *Euripides* on 21 July 1917 from England for return to Australia. He was admitted to the 11th Australia General Hospital at Caulfield on 20 September 1917 and was discharged from the Army on the 26 December 1917.

In 1926 he married Alice Beatrice Richardson of Cowes. His occupation on the Electoral Roll was farm labourer. Charles died on 18 April 1969. He was cremated at Springvale.

Charles' brother Pte. John George Clarke was in the British Navy for 15 years before enlisting from Swan Hill in the Australian Army on 23 November 1914. He was medically unfit and returned to Australia and was discharged on 6 July 1915. He died at Canning Town, England on 24 November 1918.

Charles is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Francis Joseph Dominick

7232 Pte. Francis Joseph Dominick was born in South Melbourne in 1893 to Croatian born Paolo Domancic and Lucy Helena Perkins. Francis was working for Janet Watson (Jessie McGregor) on her farm near Pyramid Rock on Phillip Island. The Dominick family was living on a property on Back Beach Road.

Francis enlisted with the 24/5th Battalion on the 27 October 1916. He embarked from Melbourne for Devonport England on H.M.A.T. *Ballarat* on 19 February 1917. His brother Percival enlisted with the 23/6th Battalion.

He served in France from 20 August 1917 joining the 21st Battalion soon after on 1 September and was killed in action on 4 October at Passchendaele Ridge, Ypres, Belgium. The battalion was participating in a 3-kilometer advance that captured Broodseinde Ridge, east of Ypres. He has no known grave. The Red Cross Files give details of his death:

"I knew Casualty, he was of ruddy complexion, 22 years of age, and stout. Casualty was in the advance at Passchendaele Ridge, Ypres, and was carrying Stokes Trench Mortars to the guns, when a shell landed nearby, killing Casualty and several others. I do not know if he was buried."

Informant:- Braithwaite, J.F. 539

Francis Joseph Dominick is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and the Ypres Menin Gate Memorial Belgium.

Percival James Dominick

6991 Pte. Percival James Dominick was born in South Melbourne in 1889 to Croatian born Paolo Domancic and Lucy Helena Perkins. He was working for Janet Watson (Jessie McGregor) on her farm near Pyramid Rock on Phillip Island.

He enlisted on 4 October 1916 at Melbourne with the 23/6th Battalion and embarked from Melbourne on 23 November 1916 on HMAT *Hororata* and disembarked Plymouth 29 January 1917.

He undertook training with the 2nd Training Battalion then proceeded overseas to France on 25 April 1917. He was taken on strength of 6th Battalion on 12 May 1917.

After Pozières the battalion fought near Ypres, in Flanders, returning to the Somme for winter. In 1917, the battalion participated in the operations that followed-up the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, and then returned to Belgium to join the great offensive launched to the east of Ypres. During the battle of Menin Road in September 1917, Lieutenant Frederick Birks earned the 6th Battalion's only Victoria Cross. Birks was killed by a shell burst the next day while trying to rescue men buried during a bombardment.

In March and April 1918 the battalion helped stop the German spring offensive.

Australian War Memorial website.

Percival was admitted to No. 2 Australian Field Ambulance with trench fever on 24 March 1918.

He embarked for England and was admitted to the 2nd Southern General Hospital on 8 April 1918 with acute appendicitis. He was discharged from hospital on 7 August and was admitted to hospital for three more short periods. He embarked on 8 November 1918 to Australia on HT *Gaika* still suffering from the appendicitis.

He married Myrtle Skinner at Burnley on 27 July 1919 and lived in St Kilda and later in Prahran.

Percival enlisted in the Second War with the 6th Supply Personnel Company at Royal Park on 17 June 1940, stating his birth date as 22 February 1910. His Army No. was V84663 and he worked as a cook in Melbourne.

The Australian Army established 39 labour or employment companies during the war, 11 of which were comprised of aliens. They were responsible for a wide range of general labouring tasks for the Australian Defence Force for which specialist skills were not required."

Virtual Reading Room website.

He was discharged medically unfit at Caulfield on 27 June 1942.

George Osborne Dorward



1083 Gnr. George Osborne Dorward was born in 1888 in Echuca to James Mann Dorward and Sarah Elsie Osborne. James owned a grazing property at Elimdaleon Tumudgerie Creek near Deniliquin. In 1914 he bought a farm at Rhyll consisting of CA 115, 116 and 118, which he named 'Tumudgerie'. The family moved to Rhyll and George worked with his father on the farm. George's grandfather Captain George Dorward was one of the pioneers on the Murray River, having accompanied Captain Cadell on the *Lady Darling*, being the first vessel to reach Echuca. Captain Dorward traded with paddle steamers for many years on both the Murray and Murrumbidgee Rivers.

George enlisted with the 15/36th Australian Heavy Artillery Group at the Royal Australian Garrison Artillery Barracks, Queenscliff on 26 June 1917. After training in Sydney at the School of Gunnery, South Head, he embarked from Sydney on HMAT *Wiltshire* on 2 February 1918 with the rank of VO Sergeant. He did more training at the Heavy Artillery Training Depot at St Budeaux, Devonport then left for France on 5 June 1918 and served in the Ypres area.

The heavy artillery gunners did not see a lot of their countrymen. The two batteries were Army Troops and could be employed anywhere they were required along the front. At different times they could be under British, French, Australian or Canadian command, and sometimes also supported New Zealand, South African or Belgian troops. The batteries and their headquarters were not always together; they were mostly associated with, and developed an affinity with, British units of the Royal Artillery.

Only the 1st Australian Division stayed on in Flanders, not rejoining the rest of the Australian Corps on the Somme until August 1918. There were some occasions when the

Australian heavy howitzers fired in support of the division's operations. This work in the Strazeele-Hazebrouck sector, during May and June, was mentioned in the award of the Distinguished Service Order to Lieutenant Colonel Hurst. It was the last occasion that the guns were involved in assisting the Australian infantry. The big howitzers remained a part of the overall British firepower in the Ypres area, supporting operations there until the end of the war.

The Australian Heavy Artillery Brigade was a very small part of the AIF's contribution to the war on the Western Front. Still, it had done good work, having been heavily committed in action for a total of 860 days, during which it suffered 71 fatal casualties and had almost 300 wounded.

Australian War Memorial website.

James had a serious breakdown in his health and George got permission to return home four months earlier than his turn and embarked from Southampton for Melbourne on the *City of Poona* on the 28 March 1919.

George bought the farm from his father in 1920 under the Closer Settlement Acts as varied by the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Acts. He returned to farming and in 1928 built a slipway at Rhyll to service the local ferries and ketches. Unfortunately there was not enough business due to the high slipway charges and the onset of the depression, and it only ran for a short time.

George served a term as Councillor on the newly formed Shire of Phillip Island from 1928.

His parents moved back to the Elimdale property in the early 1930's and George returned there around 1936. George married Janet Mary McDonald at Toorak in 1938 and they had a son Iain George.

They moved to Geelong in the 1940's and later to Ocean Grove. George died at Geelong in 1969.

George's adopted sister Lucy married British First War soldier Carl Bussell in 1924 and lived on Phillip Island until their divorce in the late 1930's.

George Osborne Dorward is commemorated on the Deniliquin War Memorial, the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour.

George Edsall

5012 Pte. George Edsall was born at Cobden in 1882 to Charles James Edsall and Janet Gemmell. He was a farmer on Phillip Island with his father when he enlisted on 1 March 1916 at Melbourne with the 13/21st Battalion. The unit embarked from Melbourne on 3 July 1916 on HMAT *Ayrshire* and disembarked at Plymouth on 2 September. He was taken on strength with the 6th Training Battalion on 3 September.

George proceeded overseas to France from Folkstone on 12 November 1916 and was taken on strength of the 21st Battalion on 22 November at Dernancourt. During an attack on Noreuil on 20 March 1917 he was wounded in action with a severe gunshot wound to the right arm and was admitted to the Kitchener Military Hospital Brighton, on 24 March. On 14 May he was transferred from Middlesex War Hospital, London to the 3rd Auxilliary Hospital, Dartford. He was discharged from the 3rd Auxiliary Hospital to furlough and repatriation at Wareham on 19 June.

He proceeded overseas to France on 24 July 1918 and rejoined the Battalion on 29 July.

George was wounded in action on 8 August 1918, the first day of the Battle of Amiens, the start of the Hundred Days Offensive. He was hit by a shell during the attack at Villers-Bretonneux with both bones broken in the left leg. He was admitted to the General Military Hospital, Edmonton on 22 August. He transferred to the 3rd Auxilliary Hospital Dartford on 2 April and was discharged on 6 May 1919. He embarked for Australia the same day on HT *Karoola*.

He returned to farming on the island until the early twenties when he moved to Drysdale then Longwarry. He married Florence Louisa Johnson in 1940 and moved to Brighton where he was a timber worker.

George died on 22 September 1958 at Heidelberg. He was cremated at The Necropolis, Springvale.

Alexander Ernest Fahmel

2187 Pte. Alexander Fahmel was born in 1895 at Burrumbuttock near Albury, N.S.W. to German born August Frederich Fahmel and Agnes Anna Paula Piarott. He worked as a farm labourer for Mr. Tom Richardson of Ventnor. He came to Phillip Island as a boy, with his mother and two sisters – Irma and Sophia. Alex's mother Agnes worked as a housekeeper for David Burton of Back Beach Road, Ventnor.

The outbreak of war in 1914 must have been particularly traumatic for the Fahmel family, for his mother and sister Irma were strongly pro-German in sympathy, whilst Alex and Sophia supported the Allies. Alex initially applied to enlist at San Remo on 29 March 1916 and had his medical examination at Cowes the same day. He enlisted at Melbourne on 26 April and left on *Orontes* on 16 August 1916. He joined the unit in France on 27 January 1917.

After Pozières, (August 1916) the battalion spent the period up until March 1917 alternating between duty in the trenches and training and rest behind the lines. On 11 April it took part in the attack mounted against the heavily defended village of Bullecourt – part of the formidable Hindenburg Line to which the Germans had retreated during February and March. Devoid of surprise, and dependent upon the support of unreliable tanks, the attack had little chance of success; after managing to fight through to its objectives, the 46th was forced to withdraw with heavy casualties.

Australian War Memorial website.

Fahmel was in the same infantry battalion as Herbert Holdsworth, and both were killed on the 11 April 1917 in the First Battle of Bullecourt. Fahmel was killed by an enemy shell and was initially reported as missing. His remains were found in 1922 and were buried at the Tilloy British Cemetery, Tilloy-les-Mofflaines, France.

Alexander Ernest Fahmel is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and the Cowes Primary School Roll of Honour.

Source: *Forgotten Names, Phillip Island War Memorials* by Andrew Box.

John Lock George

2062 Pte. John Lock George was born at Ventnor in 1891 to William Henry George and Elizabeth nee Lock. They had recently bought the farm on Nobbies Road, later owned by the Justice family. John (known as Leo) was the youngest of six children: Owen, Catherine, Frank, Margaret, Jane and John.

William George was a councillor for the Phillip Island Riding of the Shire of Phillip Island and Woolamai.

John enlisted on 3 March 1915 and was allotted to A Company of the 5th Battalion AIF. He left on the *Hororata* on the 17 April 1915. After training in Egypt he embarked from Alexandria for the Dardanelles on the *Seang Choon* on 8 June 1915 and was taken on strength on 17 June. The 5th Battalion had already landed at Gallipoli on 25 April and had taken part in struggle for the heights and gullies.

On the morning of 6 of August the attack on a Turkish strongpoint, now known as 'Lone Pine', began. The Turkish trenches were covered overhead by pine logs and the Australians had to break this defence whilst under intense fire. This was done by mid-morning, at frightful cost. The exhausted attackers were relieved, and John George took his place in the trenches as part of the relieving force. Fierce counter attacks were mounted by the Turks in the late afternoon and evening. It was during these attacks that John George was mortally wounded.

Allan Box, 1984.

John died at sea on board the *Gloucester Castle* on the 7 August 1915 and was buried at sea.

John Lock George was the second Phillip Islander to be killed in the Great War and was one of two Islanders who died as a result of wounds at Gallipoli. The other was Island born Lance-corporal Raymond Slade Thornton.

The family sold their Ventnor farm to the Repatriation Department in 1919. The clearing sale was held at the Ventnor Hall.

John Lock George is commemorated on the Lone Pine Memorial, Gallipoli – together with 3,480 of his comrades – the Cowes Obelisk, the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour, the Cowes Primary School Roll of Honour and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Source: *Forgotten Names, Phillip Island War Memorials* by Andrew Box.

William Henry Gothorp

3306 Pte. William Henry Cox Gothorp was born at Cowes in 1896 to William Gothorp and Emily Cox. He was a grandson of Sandy Point and Cowes boatman George Cox. His mother died in 1908 and his father had apparently deserted the family before this. William was brought up by the Matthews family of Cowes. He was a shop assistant at Cowes when he enlisted with the 8/37th Battalion in Melbourne on 6 September 1917. He embarked on the *Ulysses* on 22nd December 1917 and disembarked at Southampton on 14 February 1918. He joined the 37th Battalion in France on 9 May 1918.



The Battalion was rushed south to France in late March 1918 to meet the German Army's Spring Offensive. The Allies launched their own offensive on 8 August 1918, but the 37th Battalion was in reserve on this day and was not ordered into action. It was involved, however, in an ill-conceived attack that failed to capture the village of Proyart on 10 August. The battalion nevertheless continued to play an active role throughout August and early September in the 3rd Division's advance along the Somme Valley.

Australian War Memorial.

William was wounded in action on 9 September at Tincourt during the Battalion's advance along the Somme valley and was admitted to the 3rd Western General Hospital at Cardiff, Wales on 17 September with a gun-shot wound to the right arm.

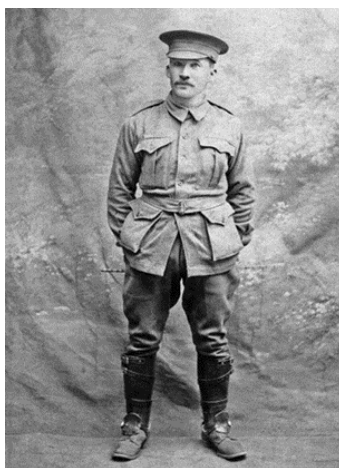
He returned to Australia on the *Nestor* on 12 December 1918. Sometime later he began work at the Carisbrooke Guest House for the Thornborrow family.

William enlisted in the 23rd Battalion of the Volunteer Defence Corps at Cowes on 25 March 1942. His service number was V.355146 and he was in area 22 on part time duty. He was discharged on 30 June 1945.

William died suddenly at Grenfell, New South Wales on 18 July 1955 and was buried in the Phillip Island Cemetery. William's aunt Alice Cox married James Leeson and there are a number of relatives on the Island from this marriage.

William is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island Roll of Honour and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Charles John Grachan



1568 Tpr. Charles John Grachan, 8th Light Horse Regiment, was a 38 year old labourer of 101 Tope Street South Melbourne.

Born in Georgetown, Tasmania on 20 July 1877, the second child of Martin and Elizabeth Grachan, he came to South Melbourne with his parents in 1889. His brother bought part of the Harbison property on Phillip Island in 1912, and Charles worked on his brother's farm prior to volunteering for service in 1915.

Charles Grachan enlisted on 28 August 1915 as part of the 12th Reinforcements to the 8th Light Horse. He embarked at Melbourne for service overseas on board HMAT A11 *Ascanius* in November 1915. After training in Egypt, Charles Grachan saw service in the Middle East at Romani, Rafa, Magdhara and Jaffa. He was killed in action in Palestine during a brief action near El Burj. During the early morning of 1 December 1917, part of the regiment to which he was attached as a medical orderly was attacked by the Turks. After being reinforced by the 1/4th Royal Scots Fusiliers, the force was beaten off. The 8th Light Horse suffered 39 casualties.

Pte. Grachan was killed during this action. He was buried at El Burj, 17 miles NW of Jerusalem.

Charles John Grachan is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour.

Oskar Hansen

513A Pte. Oskar Hansen MM was born 19 February 1890 in Odder, Jutland, Denmark to Johannes S. Hansen. He arrived in Melbourne from East Africa via India on the SS *Gracchus* on 12 January 1914.

Oskar was living at Bayview Guest House at Cowes and his occupation was listed as planter when he enlisted in Melbourne on 13 October 1916 with the 8/6th Machine Gun Company. He was also naturalized on the 13 October.

He left on the HMAT *Medic* on the 16 December 1916 and disembarked on the 18 February 1917 at Plymouth.

They were sent out to the Machine Gun Training Depot, Belton Park, Lincolnshire on 23 February 1917.

Oskar proceeded overseas to France from Folkestone on 27 April 1917 to reinforce the 22 Machine Gun Company and was taken on strength with the 4th Machine Gun Company, part of the 4th Brigade, on 5 May 1917.

They took part in the Battle of Messines on 7 June and the Battle of Polygon Wood in September.

The 4th Machine Gun Company left the 4th Brigade to join 4th Machine Gun Battalion, part of the 4th Division in February 1918.

The Fourth Division was rushed to the Somme region to stem the German Spring Offensive and the 4th Machine Gun Battalion took part in the Battles of Hebuterne and Dernancourt.

The Battle of Hamel followed in July with Lieutenant General John Monash in charge of the Australian Corps for the first time.

The 100 Days Offensive was the final Allied offensive and the Battalion took part in the Battles of Amiens and Epehy and the Hindenburg Line.

Oskar was awarded the Military Medal on 14 May 1918, for bravery in the field during action between Monument Wood and Villers-Bretonneux, France.

He was discharged from the AIF in London on 30 August 1919. His last known place of residence was New Compton Street, 65, West End, London.

John Henry Hawkins



6332 Pte. John Henry Hawkins was born in 1898 in Subiaco, Western Australia to John Roderick Hawkins and Matilda Elizabeth Smith. His father died in 1900 and Matilda married George Thomas Leeson (born in Cowes) in 1901. Leeson died in 1902 and Matilda married Hermann Scherwitz in 1907.

John was a farm hand at Cowes when he enlisted on 21 October 1916 in Melbourne with the 18/21st Battalion. He embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Hororata* on 23 November 1916 and disembarked at Plymouth on 29 January 1917. On 31 January he marched into the 6th Training Battalion at Larkhill.

He was transferred to Australian Army Medical Corps Training Depot, Parkhouse on 28 June 1917.

He was attached to the 6th Training Battalion at Rolleston on the Salisbury Plain for duty on 11 September 1917.

He marched out to the Australian Army Medical Corps Training Depot, Parkhouse on 2nd November 1917 and proceeded overseas to France on 28 November.

John was attached for duty to the 79th General Hospital Taranto, Italy on 17 February 1918.

Taranto was used as a base by the Royal Navy immediately after the Italian declaration of war (May 1915), but its importance to Commonwealth troops dates from the summer of 1917, when the Mediterranean lines of communication were established. These lines ran from the eastern theatres of war through Taranto, Turin, Lyons and Le Mans to Cherbourg. A base and rest camp were made at Taranto and labour units, including the 8th, 10th and 11th Battalions, British West Indies Regiment, were brought in. No. 79 General and No. 6 Labour Hospitals followed.

Lieut. Colonel David Porter, Great War Forum website.

He was detached from the 79th General Hospital on 25 August 1918 and proceeded to Australian General Base Depot, Havre.

On 20 September 1918 John was transferred from the Australian Army Medical Corps Details and was taken on strength with the Australian General Base Depot, Havre.

Australian soldiers arriving in France, whether reinforcements or “casual” (those returning from hospitals), went to Base Depots before deployment to the front. All drafts, although they had already passed in England as fully trained, were subjected to further tests, a strict medical test, and at least ten days of additional training. Originally built in Etaples, France, the Australian Base Depots moved to Harfleur, near Le Havre, in June 1917, in order to save shipping time. Base Depots were built for each Division, and the General Base Depot was used for those not assigned to divisions (except infantry and pioneers).

Source: Springfield College Digital Collections website.

John returned to Australia on HT *Plassy* and disembarked on 25 October 1919.

He worked as a farm labourer at Cowes when he returned and from 1922 he was working as a painter at Warragul. He married Hazel Isobel Hadlow in 1924.

John enlisted twice in World War II, at Royal Park, Victoria and Warwick, Queensland but no details are known.

John died in November 1962 at Heidelberg. He was cremated at Springvale.

John Henry Hawkins is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and St Philip’s Church Roll of Honour.

Henry (Harry) Hastings Heard



561 Sgt. Henry Hasting Heard was born in Carlton in 1884 to Emma and Robert Heard. He was educated at Princes Hill State School and his occupation in 1909 was a fitter. He lived at Rhyll prior to enlistment, where he was oystering with Bob White, who also enlisted, and they served together. He enlisted as a Private with B Company, 29th Battalion on 7 July 1915.

The 29th Battalion was raised as part of the 8th Brigade at Broadmeadows Camp in Victoria on 10 August 1915. Having enlisted as part of the recruitment drive that followed the landing at Gallipoli, and having seen the casualty lists, these were men who had offered themselves in full knowledge of their potential fate.

The 8th Brigade joined the newly raised 5th Australian Division in Egypt and proceeded to France, destined for the Western Front, in June 1916. The 29th Battalion fought its first major battle at Fromelles on 19 July 1916. The nature of this battle was summed up by one 29th soldiers: "the novelty of being a soldier wore off in about five seconds, it

was like a bloody butcher's shop." Although it still spent periods in the front line, the 29th played no major offensive role for the rest of the year.

In early 1917, the German Army withdrew to the Hindenburg Line, allowing the British front to be advanced. The Germans, however, made selected stands to delay this advance and the 28th Battalion was involved in defeating a counter-attack at Beaumetz on 23 March. The battalion subsequently missed the heavy fighting to breach the Hindenburg Line during the Second Battle of Bullecourt as the 8th Brigade was deployed to protect the Division's flank. The only large battle in 1917 in which the 29th Battalion played a major role was Polygon Wood, fought in the Ypres sector in Belgium on 26 September.

Australian War Memorial website.

Sergeant Heard was killed in action on 26/27 September 1917 during the battle for Polygon Wood near Ypres. The Red Cross Files have the story of his death:

"I was in the same company and with him on the morning of 26 September 1917, when, we made an attack on Polygon Wood, near Ypres. We had taken our first objective and after Sergt. Heard had reorganized his platoon, we began the advance to our second objective, having begun the advance to our second objective, having gone only a short distance, when he was hit by a piece of H.E. shell in the back of the head killing him instantly. As we moved forward I did not again see him. As far as I can ascertain he was buried where he fell in the field."

*Pte. R.E.P. McGill,
B Coy.,
29thBattn., A.I.F.*

Harry was buried in the vicinity of Polygon Wood but has no known grave.

Divisional historian Captain Ellis described the battle as a 'fine success' and Charles Bean wrote of this 'clean, strong blow'. Bean attributed it, however, to the 'most perfect barrage that had ever protected Australian troops' rolling ahead of them like a 'Gippsland bushfire'. However, like all success on the Western Front, Polygon Wood was won at great cost.

Henry Hastings Heard is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and the Ypres Menin Gate Memorial Belgium.

From Forgiven Names, Phillip Island War Memorials by Andrew Box.

Charles James Hewland

177A Sgt. Charles James Hewland was born about 1888 in Hull, Yorkshire, England to James Hewland and Mary Isa Hewland.

His occupation was butcher and he spent three years with the 1st East Yorkshire Regiment.

Charles arrived at Fremantle on the SS *Otway* on 6 Feb 1912.

He was living on a farm at Brentwood in South Australia in 1914 and apparently enlisted in the army as there was a notice in the Police Gazette of a Charles Hewland deserting from the AIF at Oaklands on 8 February 1915.

Charles was farming on Phillip Island when he enlisted on 11 April 1916 at Melbourne with the 3rd Division Cyclist Company.

He embarked Australia on the 18 May 1916 on SS *Demosthenes* and proceeded overseas to France on the 15 September 1916 and was allotted to the 7th Battalion which was manning trenches at Ypres.

In late August, the 7th Battalion, with a frontage equal to just over half its authorised strength, was transferred to Ypres, in Belgium, where they manned trenches near the Ypres–Commines canal. During this time they were not involved in any major attacks, however, each night they sent patrols out into no man's land and established listening posts to gather intelligence. On 30 September, the 7th Battalion, along with its sister battalion, the 8th Battalion, mounted a raid on the German line at Hollebeke with a force roughly equivalent to two platoons. The raid was a great success, with the Australians overwhelming the defenders and capturing a section of the German line and killing up to 13 Germans, before withdrawing.

In October, the battalion returned to the Somme where they spent the winter months manning trenches and training.

Wikipedia.

Charles marched out to the Anzac Section, 3rd Echelon, British Expeditionary Force at Rouen on 6 February 1917 and was appointed Orderly Room Sergeant. The 3rd Echelon's role was to maintain all personnel and other records. War diaries were sent in every three months. Each unit left its orderly-room sergeant as part of the 3rd Echelon, dealing with the men of their own units. They took their instructions from Army Head Quarters.

Charles was transferred to the 39th Battalion and taken on strength on 31 January 1918 at The Catacombs in Belgium.

The battalion was involved in the German Spring offensive of late March, April and May. The Germans realized their only chance remaining to win the war was to defeat the Allies before the Americans arrived.

Charles was promoted to Sergeant on 18 May 1918.

In August the allies began a counter-offensive against the Germans:

When the Allies launched their own offensive – the Hundred Days Offensive – on 8 August 1918, the battalion along with the rest of the 10th Brigade, was serving as the divisional reserve and they did not participate in the advance that has since become known as one of the greatest days for the Allies on the Western Front. On 10 August, the battalion was committed to battle once more, undertaking an attack on the village of Proyart; but this attack was ill-conceived and ultimately failed. Despite this, the battalion

remained in the line throughout August and early September as the 3rd Division advanced through the Somme Valley.

Wikipedia.

Charles was Mentioned in Sir Douglas Haig's Despatch of 16 March 1919:

"For consistent good work and devotion to duty. This N.C.O. has been with the Battalion since January 1918 and in February he was appointed Orderly Room Sergeant. He has carried out his duties in a manner worthy of the highest praise. His untiring labour and zeal under the most trying circumstances throughout and previous to the Somme fighting have been of the greatest value to the Unit.

He was recommended for gallant conduct in the operations at La Flaque and Proyart, August 10 where he rendered great service in directing wounded, collecting stragglers and continually volunteering for any job that arose.

His initiative, resource and conscientious work has set an example to those under him which has greatly helped to maintain the efficiency of the Battalion."

Charles was wounded in action (gas) on 25 August 1918 and was admitted to Graylingwell War Hospital, Chichester on 28 August.

He proceeded overseas to France on 30 October 1918 and rejoined the unit on 3 November. He marched in to Codford from France 9 May 1919 and marched out to Scotland (duty) on 2 June.

He returned to Australia on 11 October 1919 on the S.S. *Adjana* and was share farming at Cowes in 1919.

Charles married Ivy Amelia Slatter in 1920 and re-enlisted as a permanent member of the military in Victoria. He rose to the rank of Major with service no. VP7483. No military records were available post First War.

Charles died on 27 February 1956 at St Kilda. His ashes were scattered at The Necropolis, Springvale.

Walter Jenner



Photo: Walter Jenner on the right.

4572 Pte. Walter Jenner was born in 1891 at Cowes to Henry Jenner and Mary Ann Walton. His medical examination was done at Cowes on 10 August 1915. He enlisted at Cowes with the 11/23rd Battalion on the 30 August and embarked on RMS *Malwa* on 23 April 1916.

He joined the 23rd Battalion, 2nd Division in France on 1 October 1916. The Australian 1st, 2nd and 4th Divisions had suffered 6300 casualties (90% of men) in the Battle of Mouquet Farm over August-September and were so depleted they had to be taken off the front for two months.

The Battalion took over the line from the 31st Battalion on 4 November at Luisenhof Farm. Walter was wounded on 14 November and was sent to hospital in England. He was discharged from hospital on 7 March 1917.

Walter transferred to the newly formed 67th Battalion, 17th Infantry Brigade, on 28 April 1917. The 67th never saw action and was disbanded soon after. He rejoined the 23rd Battalion on 12 September 1917 when the 67th was disbanded.

The Battalion moved into positions around Ypres, Belgium, and participated in the Battle of Broodseinde on 4 October. During this battle, the 6th Brigade was positioned to the south of Zonnebeke Lake, and the 23rd Battalion lost three officers and 101 other ranks killed or wounded, some of which were inflicted when an intense German mortar barrage fell upon their waiting line prior to the attack. Nevertheless, the attack which followed after overcoming an encounter with a German regiment, the 212th, in no man's land, resulted in success as the Australians captured the ridge.

In early 1918, Russian resistance on the Eastern Front collapsed in the wake of the October Revolution and, as a result, the Germans were able to transfer a large number of troops to the Western Front. This greatly improved the German strength in the west and, as a result, in March, they launched their Spring Offensive. With the Germans making rapid gains, many Australian units, including the 23rd Battalion, were thrown into the line to blunt the attack in early April, as the 6th Brigade relieved the 12th around Dernancourt.

Wikipedia.

The 23rd Battalion moved via train to Steenwerck then route march to Canteen Corner on 7th March and began relieving the 39th Battalion at the 'Catacombs'.

Walter died of wounds at the Catacombs, Belgium, 28 March 1918 as reported in the Red Cross Files:

"He was wounded by a shell when in a support trench at the "Catacombs" near Warneton at about 8 a.m. in March/18 with Cpl "Ike" Jones and Pte. Taylor who belonged to his platoon in D. Co. (XIII?). He was quite conscious and jolly and not in much pain when I saw him taken on a stretcher to the A.D.S. at Red Lodge. I was told by S.B. Bensell, 23rdBattn. A.I.F. D XVI who bandaged him up and remained with him to the end, that he died in a quarter of an hour. His thigh had been badly shattered and he must have died from loss of blood. He was buried the same day at Red Lodge Cemetery. The padre of the 23rd A.I.F. officiated and Lt. Anderson O.C. D.Co. 23rd A.I.F. was in charge. Jenner was in D. Co. XIII Platoon? A fairish man about 30 about 5ft. 8. He came with about the 14th reinforcement but had been sick and had only joined about 6 months.

Inf. Pte. R.J. Parsons. 23rdBattn. A.I.F.

Walter was buried at the Pont-D'Achelles Military Cemetery, Nieppe, Nord pas de Calais, France.

Walter Jenner is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour, Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, Cowes Primary School Roll of Honour and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Mortimer Rex Johnson

1936 Pte. Mortimer Rex Johnson was born in 1885 at Mount Gambier, son of Dr. John Johnson and Mary Isabella Mayme. He was a farm hand at Rhyll before enlisting on 26 February 1916 at Melbourne with the 3/50th Battalion. He embarked from Adelaide on 13 July 1916 on HMAT *Seang Bee* and disembarked at Plymouth on 9 September 1916.

He was sick to Salisbury Hospital with diphtheria on 12 April 1917.

He was sick again and sent to the Group Hospital, Codford with rheumatism on 31 July 1917.

Mortimer returned to Australia on HS *Borda* on 16 September 1917, and disembarked 21 November.

He was discharged medically unfit on 4 Jan 1918 and returned to the farm at Rhyll.

Mortimer was a dairyman at Ky-valley, Kyabram from 1919. He was accidently killed there on 29 May 1942 when struck by a car while riding his bicycle and was buried in the Kyabram Cemetery.

Mortimer Rex Johnson is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour.

Harry Justice



1807 L/Cpl Harry Justice was born in Thoona near Benalla in 1897 and moved with his family to Cowes early in the 1900's. He was a farmer when he enlisted in Melbourne on 21 September 1915 with the 12th Reinforcements 1st Divisional Signal Company. The Signal Companies were part of the signal engineers who handled wire and radio communications. He embarked on the *Wandilla* on 9 November 1915 and joined the Division at Serapeum, Egypt on 1 February 1916.

Harry transferred to the 4th Divisional Signal Company at Tel el Kebir on its formation on 9th March 1916. He was re-mustered as a driver at Serapeum on 1 April 1916. The Division patrolled telegraph lines, maintained communications and extended lines. He embarked from Alexandria on the *Kingstonian* on 2 June 1916 dis-embarking at Marseilles four days later. They took over communications for the 4th Australian Division at Merris in, France on 11 June. Harry was appointed Lance Corporal in the field on 15 October 1917. The Unit was represented in the following battles in France and Flanders:

Somme, September October 1916.

Advance on Hindenburg Line, February March 1917.

Bullecourt, April 1917.

Messines, June 1917.

Ypres, 1917.

Passchendaele, September October November 1917.

Dernancourt, 27 March 1918 and 5 April 1918.

Hebuterne, April 1918.

Retaking Villers-Bretonneux, May 1918. Villers-Bretonneux onwards, August 8 1918 and subsequent advance to the Somme.

Hindenburg Outpost line, September 1918. Hindenburg line, September and October 1918.

Joncourt Montrebrehan Premont Busigny.

Crossing of Selle River Baznel. Pommeroy and the crossing of the Canal De La Sombre 'a Oise. The last Units of the Company withdrew from the line on 4 November 1918.

The Unit ceased to exist on the 10 May and Harry left for Australia on the *Port Napier* on 12 May 1919. Harry returned to farming at Ventnor. He married Sybil McColl in 1923 and had six children: David, John, Robert, Sybil McRae, Peter and Winsome Williams.

Harry enlisted again in the Second War but no details are known.

He died at Cowes on 24 July 1959 and was buried in the Phillip Island Cemetery.

Harry Justice is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour.

Roy David Justice

3537 Stoker Roy David Justice was born in 1895 at Thoona, Victoria to David Charles Justice and Isabella Miller. They settled on Phillip Island in the early 1900's. Roy enlisted with the Royal Australian Navy on 15 December 1913. He was the only Island resident to enlist with the RAN and the first Islander to serve overseas in the First War.

After initial training on HMAS *Cerberus* (temporary Royal Australian Naval College at Geelong) he was transferred to HMAS *Protector* (gunboat) on 31 January 1914 then HMAS *Australia* on 27 February 1914.

With the outbreak of the First World War, *Australia* became the flagship of the force that captured the German colonies in the southern Pacific. She led a force which captured Rabaul on 13 September 1914 before proceeding to Samoa.

With no German forces left in the South Pacific, *Australia* was deployed to the United Kingdom. En route she sank the German auxiliary *Eleanore Woermann*. On 8 February 1915 she became flagship of the 2nd Battle-cruiser Squadron of the Royal Navy's Grand Fleet.

Australia's service with the Grand Fleet consisted of a series of frequent patrols and exercises.

Australian War Memorial web site.

It was in Scapa Flow at Rosyth that Roy was asphyxiated whilst on board a naval pinnace – (a small steam driven launch) on 5 March 1916. He was buried at Queensferry Cemetery, Queensferry, Scotland.

TWO SEAMEN ARE FOUND SUFFOCATED IN STOKEHOLE OF BARGE AT ROSYTH

A tragic discovery was made yesterday morning on a steam barge at H. M. Dockyard, Rosyth, two seamen being found suffocated in the stokehole of the vessel.

The men were Walter Matthews (31) and Roy David Justice (20), both of whom are understood to belong to London. They were last seen alive at a late hour on Saturday night. It is thought that when they entered the stokehole, the weather being cold, they closed ventilators and fell asleep.

About seven o'clock next morning a fellow seaman entered the stokehole and found the two lifeless bodies of the men, death having taken place several hours previously. It was certified that the cause of death was suffocation.

Dundee Courier, Dundee, Angus, Scotland, 6 March, 1916

Roy David Justice is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and the Cowes Primary School Honour Roll.

August Larson



26686 Gnr. August Larson was born in Gavle, Sweden on 4 July 1878 to Lars Larson. He arrived in Australia from England on the S.S. *Clearpool* in 1910 and worked at Bass, Glen Forbes, and Warburton, probably as a farm labourer. He settled at Rhyll in 1914, working as a cray fisherman with another Swede, John Norling. He was naturalized on 19 July 1915.

August enlisted on 20 December 1915 with the 3/8th Field Artillery Brigade, part of the 3rd Division Artillery. He embarked from Melbourne on HMAT *Port Sydney* on 7 September 1916 and disembarked at Plymouth on 29 October.

He marched in to Australian Army Training Depot, Park House near Tidworth, on 7 November 1916. He sailed overseas to the Australian General Base Depot, Etaples, France for further training.

He served in France from 9 January 1917 with the 3rd Divisional Artillery Details.

He was taken on strength with the 3rd Divisional Ammunition Column, part of the 3rd Division Artillery on 10 March 1917.

He transferred to the Australian General Base Depot on 20 March 1917.

He was taken on strength with the 8th Battery, 3rd Field Artillery Brigade, part of the 1st Division, on 28 April 1917.

In May the 1st Division relieved the Second Division in the Second Battle of Bullecourt.

After a rest spell, the division returned to the Ypres Salient and participated in the Third Battle of Ypres, in which it fought with great success at Menin Road in September and Broodeseinde in October.

In April 1918 the 1st Division halted the German offensive at Hazebrouck. It remained there, apart from the other divisions for four months, engaging in a spirited and active

campaign against the enemy. It rejoined the Australian Corps in the Somme region in 1918 in time to participate in the Battle of Amiens and fought on to the Hindenburg Line.

<http://www.diggerhistory.info/>

August was admitted to 1st Auxilliary Hospital Harefield with influenza whilst on leave on from France on 26 October 1918. He embarked for Australia on HT *Nestor* on 12 December and disembarked on 1 February 1919, still suffering from influenza.

After the war he returned to crayfishing and in 1922 with Jack Burgess bought the crayfishing ketch *Rachel Thompson* from John Norling only to lose it in Bass Strait soon after.

He was working as a lighterman in the 1930's on the lighter *Carmen* and was living on board. His last job was as a rigger at Williamstown, probably at the dockyard there.

Mr A. LARSON. The death took place on Thursday last at the Williamstown Hospital of Mr August Larson after an illness of some weeks' duration. Deceased, a native of Sweden, was 68 years of age, and had resided at 15 Ann St. for many years. He saw service in the last war with the 8th Battery, 3rd Divisional Artillery, A.I.F., and out of respect to his memory the flags at the town hall and Memorial Hall were flown at half-mast. The funeral, private, which was largely attended, took place on Saturday morning, leaving Ernest W. Jackson's chapel for the Williamstown Cemetery. The coffin, covered with the Union Jack, on which rested his Digger's hat and a laurel and poppy wreath from the dockyard branch of the R.S.S. & A.I.L.A., was carried to the grave by his returned comrades. The Rev. R. St Jenrquist held a service at the chapel and cemetery, and at the conclusion of the returned soldiers' burial service the Last Post and Reveille were sounded.

Williamstown Chronicle, 1 October 1945.

August Larson is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island Roll of Honour and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour, Cowes.

Albert Henry Griffin Leeson



1674 Albert Henry Griffiths Leeson was born at Ventnor in 1886 to Thomas Leeson and Rachel Ellen Griffin. Albert was a grandson of early Western Port settler James Leeson. He was a labourer at Cowes. He enlisted with the 1/59th Battalion on 2 March 1916 and embarked on HMAT *Port Lincoln* on 4 May 1916 landing at Suez on 10 June for training in Egypt.

Albert embarked Alexandria for Marseilles on HT *France* on 2 August 1916 and proceeded to England for training. He marched out to active service with the Battalion from the Australian Divisional Base Depot at Étaples, France on 18 December 1916.

The 59th spent the winter of 1916-17 rotating in and out of the front line. In March 1917 the battalion participated in the advance that followed the German retreat to the Hindenburg Line, but was spared having to assault it. It did, however, defend gains made during the Second Battle of Bullecourt. Later in the year, the AIF's focus of operations switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium. The 59th's major battle there was at Polygon Wood on 26 September.

With the collapse of Russia in October 1917, a major German offensive on the Western Front was expected in early 1918. This came in late March and the 5th Division moved to defend the sector around Corbie. During this defence, the 59th Battalion participated in the now legendary counter-attack at Villers-Bretonneux on 25 April.

After the German offensive was halted, a brief period of lull followed during which the Allies sought to regain the initiative, and in early July, the 59th took part in a diversionary attack on the Ancre River during the Battle of Hamel. Later in the year, the Allies launched their own offensive, the Hundred Days Offensive, and the battalion took part in the fighting at Amiens on 8 August. A series of advances followed, resulting in further battles: the Battle of Mont Saint Quentin and Péronne on 31 August and lastly the Battle of St. Quentin Canal on 29 September. The British Fourth Army's commander, General Henry Rawlinson, described the Australian advances of August 31–September 4 as the greatest

military achievement of the war. The offensive was planned by General John Monash.

Australian War Memorial website.

Albert was killed in action at Mont Saint Quentin on 31 August 1918 and was buried at Assevillers New British Cemetery, 5 miles West South West of Peronne.

Albert Henry Griffin Leeson is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour, the Cowes Primary School Roll of Honour, and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Arthur James Leeson

4225A Pte. Arthur James Leeson was born in Cowes in 1893 to James Leeson and Alice Cox. He was a grandson of early Western Port settlers James Leeson and George Cox. He was farming at Cowes when he enlisted in Melbourne on 20 July 1915. He joined D Company 11th Battalion on 20 August 1915, C Company 10th Battalion on 4 Nov 1915 and 13/7th Battalion on 24 Nov 1915.

He embarked on HMAT *Demosthenes* on 29 December 1915 for Egypt.

He was taken on strength with the newly formed 1st Pioneer Battalion at Serapeum on 19 March 1916.

Trained as infantrymen, the pioneers were tasked with light combat engineer functions in the field, with a large number of personnel possessing trades from civilian life.

After a short period of training at Serapeum, in Egypt, in late March 1916 the 1st Pioneer Battalion embarked on HMAT *Ballarat* from the port of Alexandria, bound for Marseilles. After landing in France, they boarded a train and were subsequently transported to the Somme. From there, the 1st Pioneers moved to Armentières where they established a camp, in an area which was dubbed a "nursery" sector by the Allies, where newly arrived units could gain their first experience of fighting on the Western Front. They subsequently entered the front line around Fleurbaix.

Wikipedia.

Arthur was wounded in his neck 14 June 1916 and was admitted to the 13th General Hospital Boulogne on 18 June. He was transferred to the 2nd Western General Hospital Manchester then to the No. 1 Australian Auxiliary Hospital Harefield. He was discharged to No. 1 Command Depot, Perham Downs on 31 July for convalescing and was taken on strength of No. 11 Pioneer Training Battalion, Parkhouse on 24 August. He proceeded overseas to France on *Princess Victoria* on 4 December and rejoined the unit on 23 December.

Arthur was sent to hospital with scabies on 7 February 1917 and rejoined the unit on 4 March.

He was on leave on 10 January 1918 and rejoined on 27 January.

Arthur was wounded in action, gassed on 20 March 1918. He embarked for England and was admitted to Central Military Hospital Eastbourne on 26 March. He transferred to the 3rd Auxiliary Hospital, Dartford on 24 April. He proceeded overseas to France and rejoined the Battalion on 5 July 1918.

After the defeat of the German offensive, a lull period followed during which the Allied armies sought to regain the initiative through a series of small scale actions dubbed peaceful penetrations, which were carried out throughout June and July 1918. During the Allied Hundred Days Offensive that was launched in August, which finally brought about an end to the war in late 1918, the pioneers took part in the Allied offensive around Amiens, taking part in the capture of Lihons and then exploitation beyond Proyart, losing around 80 casualties during the month. The following month they followed up the drive through the Somme until the 1st Division was withdrawn from the line in late September 1918. They remained out of the line until the armistice in November 1918 and did not see any further action.

Wikipedia.

Arthur embarked Southampton on 28 March 1919 on the *City of Poona* and disembarked at Melbourne on 14 May.

He returned to Cowes working as a labourer until the 1930's when he moved to Footscray North. He married Beatrice Irene Buse in 1933.

Arthur died on 23 February 1967 at West Footscray and was buried in the Altona Memorial Park.

Arthur James Leeson is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and the Cowes School Roll of Honour.

Allan Cecil McFee



3098 Pte. Allan Cecil McFee was born in Murrumbena in 1894 to William Thomas McFee and Annie Aspinall. He was educated at Rhyll State School and at the time of enlistment he was oystering at Rhyll with his brother Len. He joined up with the 10/6th Infantry Battalion on 4 July 1915.

McFee encamped in with other Victorian reinforcements on a flat dusty plain at Broadmeadows, serviced by a rail line and single road. Each tent contained 10 men of which on average less than half would return to Australia unharmed. Drills, route marches, new uniforms, new weapons, leave and visits from admiring relatives came and went.

After initial training, Allan McFee embarked aboard the troop transport TT *Osterley* for Egypt. The deck on which McFee and his mates were accommodated was well below the waterline. He messed at tables for twelve and slung his hammock above the table. By the time his transport had entered the Australian Bight disease had broken out for sanitary arrangements were primitive for 2,500 men and horses.

Allan Box (1984)

Allan McFee became seriously ill and died of measles on 12 October 1915. He was buried at sea. Allan McFee is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour, and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

From *Forgotten Names, Phillip Island War Memorials* by Andrew Box.

Leonard Cleveland McFee



3343 Pte. Leonard Cleveland McFee was born in Hawthorn in 1887 to William Thomas McFee and Annie Aspinall. He had worked for Captain Lock on the ketch *Trucanini* and was oystering at Rhyll with his brother Allan at the start of the war.

He enlisted with the 10/14th Battalion on 5 July 1915 and trained at Broadmeadows. He transferred to the 10/6th Battalion on 2 August then 7/22nd on 25 November. Len embarked for Egypt on HMAT *Commonwealth* on 26 November 1915. He transferred to the 7th Battalion at Serapeum, Egypt on 24 February 1916.

He embarked Alexandria for Marseilles 23 March 1916 and entered the front line trenches in France on 3 May. The battalion's first major action was at Pozières in the Somme between 23-27 July. Len was admitted to the 5th General Hospital Rouen with shell shock on 26 July. He rejoined the unit in Belgium on 3 September.

After Pozières the battalion manned trenches in the Ypres salient in Belgium, before returning to the Somme valley. It saw out the horrendous winter of 1916-1917 rotating between training, working parties and duty in the trenches.

Australian War Memorial web site.

Len was sick to hospital on 9 January and was admitted to the 3rd London General Hospital Wandsworth with trench feet on 25 January 1917.

He marched in to No. 2 Com. Depot Weymouth from Perham Downs on 5 March 1917.

Len transferred to the 17th Field Ambulance, part of the newly formed 6th Division on 16 June 1917 however the Division was short lived as a result of manpower shortages and it was disbanded in September 1917 without seeing action.

Len returned early to Australia on HMAT *Port Darwin* in January 1918 suffering from trench feet.

He married Margaret Galvin Hawse in 1923 at Ballarat and they lived in the former Heard home at Rhyll. After the war Len worked on the local ferries and gained his River and Bay Masters Certificate in 1929. He was master of the ferries *Plover*, *Ventnor*, *Genista*, *Narrabeen*, *Alvina* and *Estelle Star*.

He enlisted again in the Second World War on 26 June 1941 serving at Ballarat, Victoria as a Sapper with the 5 Army Troops Coy.

Len died in May 1963 and was cremated at The Necropolis, Springvale.

Leonard Cleveland McFee is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour.

Terence Vere McHenry



5803 Dvr. Terence Vere McHenry was born in 1891 in Essendon. He was farming at Innis Howen, Ventnor, before enlisting in Melbourne on 30 Jul 1915 with the 11th Reinforcements of the 1st Divisional Ammunition Column, part of the 1st Division. They embarked on HMAT *Nestor* on 11 October 1915.

He was taken on strength of the Divisional Ammunition Column and posted to No. 3 Section, Canal Defences, Cairo, on 12 November 1915.

The Division proceeded to join the British Expeditionary Force on 26 March and disembarked at Marseilles on 2 April.

In March 1916 the Division moved to France, taking over part of the line in the “nursery sector” around Armentières. On 23 July 1916, it joined the Somme Offensive, capturing the town of Pozières at great cost. A second tour of Pozières followed in August and a third at Flers in October after a rest break in the Ypres sector.

In 1917 it was involved in the pursuit of the Germans to the Hindenburg Line. While maintaining outposts close to that line around Lagnicourt, the division was struck by a powerful German counterattack on 15 April 1917 and beat it off. In May it relieved the 2nd Division in the 2nd Battle of Bullecourt.

After a rest spell, the division returned to the Ypres Salient and participated in the 3rd Battle of Ypres, in which it fought with great success at Menin Road in September and Broodseinde in October 1917.

www.diggerhistory

He was taken on strength of the 13th Field Artillery Brigade, 5th Division and posted to Brigade Headquarters on 5 Feb 1918.

In March 1918 the 5th Division was rushed to the Somme region to help stem the German Offensive. There it guarded the vital Somme River bridges. In April it counterattacked at Villers-Bretonneux, recovering the town.

The 5th Division fought in the Battles of Hamel in July and Amiens in August.

www.diggerhistory

Terence was granted leave to the UK on 10 August and was admitted to the 1st Australian Dermatological Hospital on 22 August 1918. He was discharged from hospital to the Central Training Depot, Park House, on 28 September 1918. Park House, situated close to Tidworth, became a depot for the AIF, housing training battalions as well as engineers and signallers, its Army Service Corps and Army Medical Corps.

He marched into No. 1 Command Depot, Sutton Veny on 8 October and marched out to the Overseas Training Brigade at Longbridge Deverill on 15 October to harden up for life back in the trenches.

On 1 November he marched into the Reserve Brigade Australian Artillery at Heytesbury, an artillery training base on the edge of Salisbury Plain.

McHenry proceeded overseas to France, via Southampton on 21 November and marched into Australian General Base Depot, Le Havre 22 Nov.

Australian soldiers arriving in France, whether reinforcements or "casuals" (those returning from hospitals), went to Base Depots before deployment to the front. All drafts, although they had already passed in England as fully trained, were subjected to further tests, a strict medical check, and at least ten days of additional training.

Springfield College web site.

He rejoined the 13th Field Artillery Brigade at St Souplet in France on 18 December.

Terence marched out to England 14 Feb 1919 and left for Australia on HT *Wyreema* on 13 April, disembarking at Melbourne on 31 May.

He returned to farming at Cowes and moved to Lilydale around 1930 continuing farming. He died at Healesville on 23 July 1966 and was cremated at Springvale.

Terence is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and the St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Alexander Thomas McLardy



298 L/Cpl Alexander Thomas McLardy was born in 1894 at Cowes. He was a carpenter at Cowes when he enlisted with A Company 29th Battalion in Melbourne on 20 July 1915. He embarked for Egypt on the *Ascanius* on 10 November 1915.

Alex embarked at Alexandria to join British Expeditionary Force on 16 Jun 1916 arriving at Marseilles 23 June.

The 8th Brigade joined the newly raised 5th Australian Division in Egypt and proceeded to France, destined for the Western Front, in June 1916. The 29th Battalion fought its first major battle at Fromelles on 19 July 1916. The nature of this battle was summed up by one 29th soldier: "the novelty of being a soldier wore off in about five seconds, it was like a bloody butcher's shop". Although it still spent periods in the front line, the 29th played no major offensive role for the rest of the year.

Australian War Memorial website.

Alex was wounded in action at Fromelles on 20 July and was admitted to the 3rd Canadian General Hospital at Boulogne then the 4th London General Hospital with mild gunshot wounds to legs. He was discharged on 5 December 1916.

He spent several periods in hospital then spent 7 months with the 8th Training Battalion at Hurdcott, Southampton. He spent two periods with the 8th Brigade Works Unit then rejoined the Battalion on 22 February 1918 at Kemmel. Alex went to the Army Rest Camp on 25 July and rejoined on 23 August at Morcourt. He was promoted to Lance Corporal on 29 September. The 29th Battalion was disbanded on 12 October to provide reinforcements for other 8th Brigade units and Alex was transferred to the 32nd Battalion at Ramburelles.

Alex embarked for Plymouth, England on 14 February 1919 and left Liverpool for return to Australia on HMAT *Wyreema* on 13 April 1919.

Alex returned to Cowes after the war and continued as a carpenter. He married Beatrice Walton at Cowes in 1921. In 1927 he was a boarding house proprietor at Glencoe, Cowes and in 1931 was in South Yarra working as a painter.

He enlisted in the Second World War but no details are known. Alex and Beatrice returned to live in Cowes in the 1960's.

Alexander died at Canterbury on 3 January 1971 and his ashes are at the Phillip Island Cemetery.

Alexander Thomas McLardy is commemorated in the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour, the Cowes School Roll of Honour and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

William Stewart McLardy

268 L/Cpl William Stewart McLardy was born in 1891 in Cowes. He was a carpenter there when he enlisted with A Company, 3rd Pioneer Battalion in Melbourne on 12 February 1916.

The 3rd Pioneers were raised in Victoria, in March 1916, from volunteers drawn from Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, and Western Australia and was subsequently assigned to the 3rd Division. They were trained as infantrymen but also could do light engineering works in the field as most were qualified tradesmen. Their work included digging trenches, labouring, constructing strong points, tramway maintenance and water supply.



The battalion began concentrating at Campbellfield in April 1916 where detailed training began. They embarked on the *Wandilla* on 6 June 1916 and disembarked at Plymouth on 26 July. The battalion joined the rest of the 3rd Division at Larkhill and undertook intensive

training between July and November 1916. On 25 November they left by train for Southampton and crossed the Channel by ferry to Le Havre.

They served on the Western Front from late 1916 to the end of the war. Battles they fought in included Messines in June 1917, Third Battle of Ypres from July, and the Battle of Broodseinde in October. They wintered around Messines and were able to provide reinforcements to the Australian engineer tunnelling companies and maintain the tramway systems. Between March and May they took part in the fighting against the German Spring Offensive. The 3rd Pioneers were sent to the Somme to replace the 4th Pioneers around Villers-Bretonneux. They took part in the Battle of Hamel before joining the Hundred Days Offensive beginning on 8 August. It was during this offensive that William sustained a gunshot wound to his left hand and right leg on 22 August and was transferred to England on the Hospital Ship *Gloucester Castle*. He was admitted to the Duchess of Connaught Canadian Red Cross Hospital in Taplow, England.

William returned to Australia on the *Ceramic* on 25 January 1919. He resumed his work as a carpenter at Cowes until moving to South Melbourne round 1940. He died there on 17 October 1960. His ashes are at the Springvale Botanical Cemetery.

William Stewart McLardy is commemorated in the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour, the Cowes School Roll of Honour and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Wikipedia.

Walter George Richardson



702 Pte. Walter George Richardson, youngest son of Joseph Richardson and Sarah Arbuckle was born at Cowes in 1869. He was a farmer and fisherman at Cowes and with his wife ran Bayview Guest House. He enlisted in the 24th Battalion 1st A.I.F. on 16 March 1915. After doing basic training, Richardson was posted to C Company of the 24th Battalion A.I.F.

The battalion trained in Melbourne and Richardson sailed for Egypt aboard the transport *Euripides* on 8 May. After further brief training in Egypt, the battalion sailed for the Gallipoli Peninsula and went into action on 5 September 1915, during the latter stages of the campaign.

Richardson was suffering from pyrexia (fever) and sciatica and was evacuated to hospital at Malta on 15 October. His condition deteriorated and on 25 October he was sent to England.

He was admitted to the 2nd Birmingham War Hospital, Birmingham on 1 November with symptoms of enteric fever but soon developed tuberculosis which soon spread over his body. He died on Christmas Day 1915 leaving a wife and child at Phillip Island.

Walter was buried at Lodge Hill Cemetery, Birmingham on 30 December.

The funeral took place from the Hospital to the Cemetery, a distance of 4 miles, in a hearse, the coffin being of polished oak which was enshrouded in a Union Jack. Mourners were Major Horseman, representing No. 2 Birmingham Hospital, medical orderlies, 6 bearers comrades of the deceased, and many other comrades and friends who knew him when in hospital, and as already stated, Captain Fisher.

Full military honours were accorded, and a large cross had been erected at the burial ground inscribed - 'For our brave soldiers who have given their lives for the country.'

Officer in Charge of Military Records.

Walter Richardson is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour, the Cowes School Roll of Honour, and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Source: *Forgotten Names, Phillip Island War Memorials*, by Andrew Box.

Herbert James (Bert) Saunders

3128 Pte. Herbert James Saunders was born in 1886 at Mt. Pleasant, South Australia to John Saunders and Annie Gibbons.

He was a sailor on HMS *Challenger* when on 22 November 1905 he deserted the ship at Portland, Victoria.

He was a labourer at Rhyll before and after the war and was a brother of Mrs. William Reid of Rhyll. Two of his brothers John Thomas and William Arthur also served in the war and both lived at Rhyll at different times. Another brother Alfred George Charles was listed as a soldier at Cowes in 1919 but no military records could be found.

Herbert enlisted on 5 July 1915 with the 10/6th Battalion and embarked on the ship *Pera* on 9th September 1915. He joined the 6th Battalion at Serapeum in Egypt and served with fellow Islander James Smith in Egypt and France.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt where they received reinforcements and carried out defensive duties. During this time the AIF was reorganised and expanded as fresh divisions were raised. In order to spread experience

across the new units, the existing units were split up and the 6th Battalion provided half its experienced officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) to the 58th Battalion. In March 1916, it sailed to France and deployed to the Somme, where it was sent to a quiet sector near Fleurbaix. Its first combat came on 12 June when the battalion launched a trench raid on the Germans opposite their position.

Wikipedia.

Bert was attached to the 2nd Infantry Brigade Headquarters as a Military Policeman from 21 June to 25 October 1916.

He rejoined the Battalion on the Somme and was admitted to hospital on 22 December. On discharge from hospital he joined the 1st Australian Base Depot on 13 January 1917.

He proceeded to England on 13 February and marched in to No. 2 Australian Command Depot.

Bert embarked for Australia on HT *Themistocles* on 4 May 1917 suffering from disorderly action of the heart (DAH) and bronchitis.

Bert returned to Rhyll but was in Stawell in 1918 and doesn't show up again on records until 1937 at Murray Bridge. He married about 1930 in South Australia. Bert died at Springbank, South Australia on 24 November 1951. He was buried in the AIF Cemetery, West Terrace, Adelaide.

Ernest Ronald ('Ron') Scott



6888A Pte. Ernest Ronald Scott was born in April 1892 in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, England to John Scott a pharmacist and Catherine Scott. He was the youngest of seven children.

He embarked for Australia on the S.S. *Benalla* on 15 September 1913. His occupation on the passenger list was chemist. In the 1914 census he was a farm hand at Cowes working for farmer Ernest Moore on his property on Settlement Road.

Ernest enlisted with the 20/22nd Battalion at Cowes on 9 July 1917. After training at Broadmeadows and the Domain he embarked on HMAT *Nestor* on 21 November 1917. He disembarked at Suez, Egypt on 15 December 1917 for the Australian Camp at Suez for further training.

He embarked from Port Said on RMS *Kashgar* on 9 January, and dis-embarked at Taranto, Italy on the 20 then went by train to Cherbourg.

Here he embarked on the PS *Monas Queen* on 31 January, arriving at Southampton on 2 February.

He went straight to the 6th Training Battalion at Fovant and transferred to the 5th Training Battalion on 22 April also at Fovant.

He proceeded overseas to France via Folkstone on 6 May and marched in to Etaples on 7 May. He was taken on strength with the 22nd Battalion in the field on 11 May.

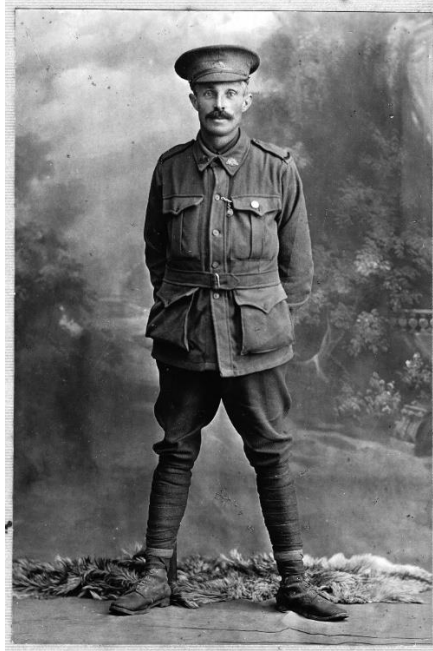
On the 19 May he was wounded in action with a gunshot wound to the back during the attack on Ville-Sur-Ancre and admitted to the Casualty Clearing Station. He was admitted to the 21st General Hospital at Etaples on 31 May and invalided to the UK on 2 June. He returned to Australia on 21 July 1918 on HT *Boonah*.

Ron married Ida Moore at the Registry Office in Melbourne on 6 September 1933. The Registrar was Percy Filmore Clarke, son of the writer Marcus Clarke. Ron was an accountant by this time and worked for the Shire of Phillip Island. (Ron also shared the role of Air Warden for Cowes east during World War II.)

Ron died on 20 July 1947 at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital and was buried at the Fawkner Cemetery.

Ernest Ronald Scott is commemorated in the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island Roll of Honour and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Samuel James Shaw



222 Pte. Samuel James Shaw was born on 5 February 1876 at St Helenes, Lancashire, England to Thomas Shaw and Jane Roberts. He was working as a colliery labourer in 1911.

He served with the Imperial Royal Garrison Artillery from 1906.

Samuel arrived at Melbourne from Plymouth on the *Katoomba* on 30 August 1913.

He was a farm hand at Rhyll when he enlisted on 10 February 1916 at Melbourne with A Company of the 39th Battalion.

Samuel embarked on HMAT *Ascanius* on 27 May 1916 landing at Plymouth on 18 July. He undertook four months training at Larkhill then proceeded overseas to France attached to 3rd Division Head Quarters on 23 November.

Samuel was detached from 3rd Division Headquarters to the 39th Battalion at Rouen on 4 May 1917.

The Battalion took part in the Battles of Messines, Broodseinde Ridge and Passchendaele:

The battalion's first major engagement came at Messines, in Belgium in early June 1917. The battle began badly for the 39th. Near Ploegsteert Corner, during the march to the line of departure, the battalion suffered a high number of casualties following a German gas attack which subsequently resulted the 39th only being able to muster about a third of its manpower for the attack, amounting to an assault force of only 120 men. Despite this, the 39th was quickly re-organized into a single wave, and attacking on the 10th Brigade's right, it subsequently overcame the initial German opposition facing them and then, during the second phase of the battle advanced south of Douve, on the southern edge of the Messines Ridge. It was involved in further fighting north of Grey Farm, where they

were initially held up by German machine-gun fire, but after this was overcome they continued to advance to their final objective, eventually digging-in 100 yards beyond the farm, having managed to capture all of its objectives. Later, in October, the 39th Battalion took part in two other major attacks in that same sector, firstly at Broodseinde and then at Passchendaele, the first of which was a brilliant success, while the second was a disastrous failure.

Wikipedia.

The Battalion then held the line in Belgium from October to March 1918 then took part in the Spring Offensive on the Somme from March to June. The Allies then launched their Hundred Days Offensive on 8 August 1918 with the 39th in reserve. The Battalion remained in the line with the 3rd Division advancing through the Somme Valley until early September. Their last major battle was at St Quentin Canal at the end of September.

Samuel returned to Australia on 6 November 1918 on HMT *Marathon* suffering from chronic rheumatism and returned to farming at Rhyll for a couple of years then left the Island.

He was living in Melbourne West when he died on 22 October 1939 at Heidelberg and was buried at Springvale.

Samuel James Shaw is commemorated on the Phillip Island Book of Honour, the Phillip Island Roll of Honour and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

William Percival Sheen

707 Gnr. William Percival Sheen was born at Cowes in 1897 to James Sheen and Susannah Walton. He was a grandson of early settlers George and Harriet Walton. He was a labourer at Cowes when he enlisted on 8 December 1914 in Melbourne as a Trouper with the 3/8th Light Horse Regiment. The unit embarked Melbourne on board HMAT A4 *Pera* on 8 February 1915 and joined the 8th Light Horse Regiment in Egypt.



When the Australian infantry units were dispatched to Gallipoli, it was thought the terrain was unsuitable for mounted troops, and the light horse regiments remained in Egypt. However, heavy casualties amongst the Australian infantry battalions resulted in the deployment of the 3rd Light Horse Brigade as reinforcements in May 1915.

Wikipedia.

There is no record of William fighting at Gallipoli. He was invalided to Australia from Egypt on the *Ceramic* on 26 May 1915. On becoming fit for duty he was sent to Seymour for re-allotment on 11 June.

William was living at Dunolly with his mother and re-enlisted as 1109 Pte. W. P. Sheen with the 5/13th Light Horse Regiment and embarked on the *Ballarat* for Egypt on 9 September 1915.

In November 1915 William was transferred to the Composite Light Horse Regiment. This regiment was formed in just 12 hours to be ready for operations in the Western Desert. Recruits came from Light Horse reinforcements undergoing training in Egypt and those recovering from illness or wounds. Their task was to put down an uprising of the Senussi tribe.

He was taken on strength with the 13th Light Horse Regiment and on 18 March 1916 was transferred to the 2nd Divisional Artillery Column, part of the 2nd Division, at the training base at Zeitoun.

William embarked with the 2nd Division from Alexandria on 20 March, and disembarked at Marseilles on 27 March 1916. In April the Division was sent to a quiet sector south of Armentières to acclimatise to the Western Front conditions.

William was admitted to No. 7 General Hospital with mumps on 25 April, and was discharged 16 May. He was transferred to Base Details, Calais on 20 May.

He rejoined the 2nd Divisional Ammunition Column in France on 29 July 1916,

They took over from the 1st Divisional Ammunition Column at Senlis on 30 July to supply the guns of the 1st and 2nd Division Artillery during the attack on Pozières.

William transferred to the 22nd Field Artillery Brigade on 23 August 1916 at Long Valley.

After a brief rest, the 2nd Division relieved the Australian 1st Division from its position beyond Pozières (in front of Mouquet Farm) on 22 August (the Battle of Mouquet Farm). Attacking on 26 August, the 2nd Division succeeded in penetrating past the fortifications at Mouquet Farm only to be attacked from the rear as troops from the German Guards Reserve Corps emerged from the fortified underground positions at Mouquet Farm. These counterattacks succeeded in forcing the 2nd Division back from Mouquet Farm. After sustaining 1,268 casualties, the 2nd Division was relieved by the Australian 4th Division on 26 August.

Wikipedia.

William was transferred to 10th Battery, 4th Field Artillery Brigade on 27 January 1917.

In March 1917 the Germans withdrew to the Hindenburg Line and the 4th Brigade moved forward to Bullecourt. The Brigade moved to Flanders in June and was in constant action to November, supporting allied attacks on Messines, Menin Road, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde, and then Passchendaele, as part of the Third Battle of Ypres. During this period, the brigade suffered its heaviest casualties of the war, 151 in October and 145 in November, including killed, wounded, and evacuated ill.

Australian War Memorial website.

In March 1918 the 2nd Division helped halt the German offensive in the Somme region. William was gassed on 23 March 1918 and was in hospital for two months. He was transferred to the 2nd Divisional Ammunition Column on 25 May 1918 and taken on strength with the 12th Battery 4th Field Artillery Brigade on 28 May.

In April the Germans broke through to Villers-Brettoneux and the 4th Brigade moved to the Somme.

In August, when the Australian offensive began, the Brigade supported the infantry, as the 1 Australia Corps moved through Peronne, Mont St Quentin, Bellecourt the Hindenburg Line. Exhausted from combat and illness, the brigade was relieved on 18 October.

Australian War Memorial website.

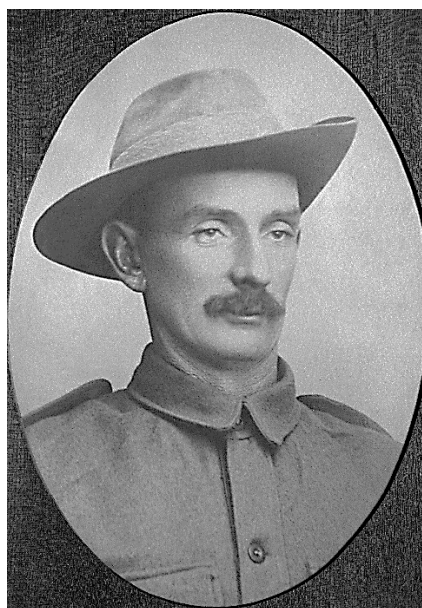
William proceeded to England on 7 December and returned to Australia on the *Berrima* embarking 14 December 1918. He was discharged on 30 March 1919 and he returned to Maryborough working as a labourer.

He married Lillian May Roberts on 21 November 1921.

William died on 18 September 1971 at Maryborough and was buried in the Maryborough Cemetery.

William is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Cowes School Roll of Honour.

James Smith



3137 Pte. James Smith was born at Kyneton in 1879 to David Smith and Elizabeth Gardner Smith. He was a farrier and was a second cousin of the Forrest family of Phillip Island. He was a farmer on Phillip Island when he enlisted on 5 July 1915 with the 10/6th Battalion. He embarked with his chum Allan McFee on the *Osterley* on 20 September 1915. He was taken on strength with the 6th Battalion at El Kebir, 7 January 1916.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt where they received reinforcements and carried out defensive duties. During this time the AIF was reorganised and expanded as fresh divisions were raised. In order to spread experience across the new units, the existing units were split up and the 6th Battalion provided half its experienced officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) to the 58th Battalion. In March 1916, it sailed to France and deployed to the Somme, where it was sent to a quiet sector near Fleurbaix. Its first combat came on 12 June when the battalion launched a trench raid on the Germans opposite their position. Their first major action in France came later, however, at Pozières in July 1916, during which time they lost 102 men killed. Later the battalion fought at Ypres, in Belgium, before returning to the Somme in winter, during which time they undertook defensive duties as well as patrols into no man's land.

Wikipedia.

James died on 14 September 1916 at No. 3 Canadian Casualty Clearing Station, Belgium from wounds received in action at Ypres. He was buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Belgium.

James' half-brother 2950 Pte. George Hubert Vincent Smith, 7th Battalion, was killed in action at Ypres on 4 October 1917.

James Smith is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour.

Henry Thomas Eric Stiles

T/2nd Cpl. Henry Thomas Eric Stiles was born in 1896 at Putney, Surrey, England. He served in the Territorials until departing for Australia. He arrived in Sydney, on the SS *Commonwealth* on 9th July 1914. His occupation was listed as a farmer in England and on coming to Phillip Island he worked for the Jeffrey brothers and David Grayden on their farms. He had his medical examination at Cowes and enlisted there on 30 July 1915. The President of the Shire of Phillip Island and Woolamai Allan McIlwraith was the attesting officer. He was appointed to the 10th Battery of the 4th Field Artillery Brigade on 22 September 1915.

Eric embarked Melbourne on HMAT *Wiltshire* on 18 November 1915 and disembarked at Suez on 15 December 1915. He then proceeded to join the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

He transferred to the 5th Divisional Artillery at Tel el Kebir on 3 March 1916. He was appointed Acting Driver and was taken on strength with the 2nd Divisional Ammunition Column at Zeitoun Camp on 20 March 1916. This was part of the 2nd Division which had been formed in Egypt the previous year and had served at Gallipoli. The Division was made up of units training in Egypt. The 2nd Division was the first division to move to France and Eric embarked Alexandria on 20 March for Marseilles on HT *Magdalene*.

The division first took over part of the 'nursery' sector around Armentières. Eric was taken on strength with the 22nd Field Artillery (Howitzer) Brigade on 11 April 1916.

On 27 July 1916, it relieved the First Division at Pozières and captured the Pozières Heights at great cost. Two more tours of the Somme followed in August and November.

www.diggerhistory

The Howitzer Brigade was broken up and the 105th Battery was transferred to the 5th Field Artillery Brigade on 27 January 1917 and Eric transferred soon after.

In March 1917 a flying column of the Second Division pursued the Germans to the Hindenburg Line. At Lagnicourt on 15 April 1917, it was struck by a powerful German counterattack, which it repelled. On 3 May 1917 the Division assaulted the Hindenburg Line in the Second Battle of Bullecourt, holding the breach thus gained against furious counterattacks. During the Third Battle of Ypres, it fought with great success at Menin Road in September and Broodseinde in October.

In March 1918 the Second Division helped halt the German offensive in the Somme region and fought in the Battle of Hamel in July and the Battle of Amiens in August.

In September 1918 it took Mont Saint Quentin by storm in one of the finest feats of fighting of the war. It fought on to the Hindenburg Line and beyond, becoming the last division to be withdrawn.

www.diggerhistory

Eric marched out to England on 22 February 1919 and left Australia on the *Wahehe* on 30 March 1920.

He applied for a Soldier Settlement Block on returning to the Island in 1920 and was granted Allotment 128 of 241 acres. He married Bertha Taylor at Cowes in 1921.

By 1931 they were living in Caulfield and Eric was working as a chauffeur to State Ministers of the Victorian Parliament.

He died on 27 February 1952 at the Alfred Hospital after a long illness and was cremated at Springvale. His ashes are buried with those of his wife and two daughters.

Henry Thomas Eric Stiles is commemorated in the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Harry Wall

5462 Pte. Harry Wall was born about 1890 in West Ham, Essex to Cornelius Wall and Mahala Clark. He was listed as a green grocer on the 1911 census, living at Forest Gate, London. He may be the Harry Wall who left London on the *Narrungon* 14 September 1911 bound for Melbourne. His occupation was stated as farm worker on the ship's register.

Harry was working as a farm labourer at Cowes before enlisting. He enlisted with the 18/5th Battalion in Melbourne on 26 February 1916 and embarked from Australia on HMAT *Ayrshire* on 3 July 1916. He transferred to the 67th Battalion on 5 May 1917 but this was disbanded without seeing action and Harry was transferred to the 5th Battalion on 19 September 1917.

In 1917, the battalion participated in the operations that followed-up the German withdrawal to the Hindenburg Line, and then returned to Belgium to join the great offensive launched to the east of Ypres. In March and April 1918, the battalion helped to stop the German spring offensive.

Australian War Memorial website.

Harry was killed in action 14 June 1918 and buried at La Kreule Military Cemetery, Hazebrouck, Nord Pas de Calais, France.

Harry Wall is commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour.

Robert White

648 Sgt. Robert White was born in Shere, Surrey, England in 1883 to Scottish born artist John White and Emma Homewood Saunders.

John White came to Melbourne as a boy with his parents in 1856. He studied art at the National Gallery School under Eugene von Guerard. John returned to Scotland and studied at the Royal Scottish Academy in 1873-79. From 1877 his paintings were hung at the Royal Academy and most of the other major exhibition venues in London. John married Emma in 1877 at Shere and Robert was the fourth child.

Robert emigrated to Australia in 1908 and first appears on the electoral roll in 1914 as a carpenter at Rhyll but he was oystering with Henry Hastings (Harry) Heard when he enlisted with B Company 29th Battal on 9 July 1915. Harry enlisted in the same Battalion and they undertook initial training at Seymour and Broadmeadows.



The Battalion left on the *Ascanius* on 10 November 1915 and disembarked at Port Suez, Egypt where they undertook defensive duties along the Canal and did further training. They departed Egypt on HMAT *Tunisian* on 16 June 1916 and arrived at Marseilles, France on the 23 June.

The 29th Battalion fought its first major battle at Fromelles on 19 July 1916. The nature of this battle was summed up by one 29th soldier: "the novelty of being a soldier wore off in about five seconds, it was like a bloody butcher's shop". Although it still spent periods in the front line, the 29th played no major offensive role for the rest of the year.

In early 1917, the German Army withdrew to the Hindenburg Line, allowing the British front to be advanced. The Germans, however, made selected stands to delay this advance and the 28th Battalion was involved in defeating a counter-attack at Beaumont on 23 March.

Australian War Memorial website.

Robert was wounded in action at Beaumont and rejoined the Battalion on 12 April.

The battalion subsequently missed the heavy fighting to breach the Hindenburg Line during the Second Battle of Bullecourt as the 8th Brigade was deployed to protect the Division's flank.

Robert was promoted to Sergeant on 9 June. He undertook training, qualifying as an instructor at the Southern Command Bombing School and returned to the Battalion on 15 November 1917.

Unlike some AIF battalions, the 29th had a relatively quiet time during the German Spring Offensive of 1918 as the 5th Division was in reserve for a lot of the time. When the Allies took to the offensive again, the 29th fought in a minor attack at Morlancourt on 29 July.

Robert was wounded in action during the attack at Morlancourt on 29 July and had his left arm amputated at the Beaufort War Hospital. He embarked for Australia on SS *Ormonde* on 1 August 1919.

After the war he became an Inspector of Works, first with the Country Roads Board then with the Public Works Department at Bendigo.

Robert married Ivy Edith Daisy Lemmin 1920 and had two daughters. He died of tuberculosis at home in Bendigo on 12 February 1928 and was buried in the Bendigo Cemetery. The tuberculosis was probably contracted during the war.

Gallipoli Soldiers of Phillip Island

A talk researched, written and presented to the Society by **John Jansson**. Presented at a General Meeting of the Phillip Island and District Historical Society on Wednesday 8 April 2015

Most of the men recruited into the Australian Imperial Force at the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 were sent to Egypt to meet the threat which the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) posed to British interests in the Middle East and to the Suez Canal. After four and a half months of training near Cairo, the Australians departed by ship for the Gallipoli peninsula, together with troops from New Zealand, Britain, and France. The aim of this deployment was to assist a British naval operation which aimed to force the Dardanelles Strait and capture the Turkish capital, Constantinople.

The Australians landed at what became known as Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915, and they established a tenuous foothold on the steep slopes above the beach.

During the early days of the campaign, the allies tried to break through the Turkish lines and the Turks tried to drive the allied troops off the peninsula. Concerted but unsuccessful allied attempts to break through in August included the Australian attacks at Lone Pine and the Nek. All attempts ended in failure for both sides, and the ensuing stalemate continued for the remainder of 1915.

The most successful operation of the campaign was the evacuation of the troops on 19 and 20 December under cover of a comprehensive deception operation. As a result, the Turks were unable to inflict more than a very few casualties on the retreating forces. The whole Gallipoli operation, however, cost 26,111 Australian casualties, including 8,141 deaths. Despite this, it has been said that Gallipoli had no influence on the course of the war.

Pte. Leonard Theodore Bagley

Leonard was born in Northcote in 1888 to James Latrobe Bagley, a legal manager and Mary Louisa Fuller. Leonard was working as a librarian at St Kilda before the war. He enlisted on 19th August 1914 at Melbourne with the 2nd Field Ambulance of the Australian Army Medical Corps.

After training at Broadmeadows the 2nd Field Ambulance embarked Melbourne on HMAT *Wiltshire* on 19 October arriving in Egypt in December. Several months training was done in the desert in Egypt. Leonard embarked from Alexandria for Lemnos on HMAT *Seang Choong*.

The work of the Field Ambulance at Gallipoli involved the evacuation of wounded soldiers from the battlefield to the ships by the stretcher bearers under extremely difficult conditions. The units tent subdivision provided surgical and nursing treatment on the ships. C. E. W. Bean took this photo of wounded soldiers and stretcher bearers on 26 April at the 3rd Battalion dressing station in Shrapnel Gully.

Leonard was admitted to the 1st Australian General Hospital at Heliopolis, Egypt on 25 August 1915 suffering from heart strain and was invalided to Australia on 4 November on the *Karoola*. Leonard married Mary Anderson Potter at St Philip's Church Cowes in 1917 and took on fishing with the boat *Dawn*. Leonard died at San Remo on 12 December 1949 and was buried in the San Remo Cemetery.

L/Cpl. William Edward Lionel Butcher

William was born in 1893 in Hammersmith, London, England to William Henry Butcher, an optologist and Ada. He embarked from London on the *SS Geelong* on 28 August 1913 arriving Melbourne on 17 October. William was working as a farm labourer at Bena for Arthur Romanes Tulloch. He enlisted with the 8th Battalion on 18 August 1914. After training at Broadmeadows William embarked for Egypt on HMAT *Benalla* on 19 October 1914.

The *Benalla* arrived at Egypt on 2 December 1914. The Battalion undertook further training and briefly took part in the defence of the Suez Canal from the Turks following the First Suez Offensive. The Turkish offensive ended before the battalion could see any action. Following this, the battalion remained in Egypt before being transported to Lemnos Island in early April in preparation for their involvement in the Gallipoli campaign.

The Battalion took part in the ANZAC landing on 25 April 1915, as part of the second wave. Ten days after the landing, the 2nd Brigade was transferred from ANZAC to Cape Helles to help in the attack on the village of Krithia. The attack captured little ground but cost the brigade almost a third of its strength. The Victorian battalions returned to ANZAC to help defend the beachhead.

William received a gunshot wound to his arm during the battle for Krithia and was transferred to a hospital in Malta. He re-joined the Battalion at Lemnos on 9 September 1915.

After the withdrawal from Gallipoli, the battalion returned to Egypt. In March 1916, it sailed for France and the Western Front. From then until 1918 the battalion was heavily involved in operations against the German Army. The battalion's first major action in France was at Pozières in the Somme valley in July 1916. After Pozières, the battalion fought at Ypres, in Flanders, in October, returning to the Somme for winter. On 27 April 1917 William received a gunshot wound to the head at Lagnicourt, France. A piece of shell grazed the top of his head, grooving the bone and lacerating his scalp.

William was unconscious for two days and was admitted to the 1st Birmingham War Hospital in England. He was permanently unfit for general service and on 21 December 1917 returned home to Australia on the *Persic*. He is amongst the servicemen in the photo taken at Cowes in 1920. He returned to England to live in the 1920's. William is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour.

Pte Charles Craft

Charles was born in Poplar, Middlesex, England in 1893 to John George Craft a corn porter and Sarah Jane Leverett. On the 1911 census Charles's occupation was seaman. He emigrated from London on the *Warkool* arriving at Melbourne on 16 December 1911. He was a farmer at Ventnor working for the McHenrys at 'Inishowen' when he enlisted with the 23rd Battalion on 23 February 1915. James Joseph Beirne also worked at Inishowen and enlisted with the 11/6th Battalion on 5 August. The Battalion left for Egypt on 8 May.

As part of the 2nd Australian Division Charles landed at Anzac Cove in early September. They fought at Lone Pine. The fighting here was so dangerous and exhausting that battalions were relieved every day, alternating with the 24th Battalion.

The Battalion embarked Alexandria for Marseilles on 20 March 1916. The Battalions next action was in the forward trenches of the Armentières sector in northern France. On the night of 29-30 June 1916 near Hazebrouck France, Charles was part of a raiding party on enemy trenches in which 80 enemy were killed. Charles received a severely shattered femur from a gunshot and was admitted to the Brook War Hospital, Woolwich, England.

Charles embarked for Australia on the *Euripides* on 21 July 1917. He returned to the Island and married Alice Beatrice Richardson in 1926. He was a farm labourer at Cowes on the Electoral Roll. Charles died at Cowes on 18 April 1969. Charles is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and the St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Pte. John Lock George

John Lock George was born at Ventnor in 1891 to William Henry George and Elizabeth Lock. They had recently bought a farm on Nobbies Road. John was working as a labourer at Cowes when he enlisted with A Company of the 5th Battalion on 3 March 1915. He left on HMAT *Hororata* on 17 April. After training in Egypt John embarked for the Dardanelles on the *Seang Choon* on 8 June 1915.

He joined the Battalion in the trenches at Anzac Cove and fought at the battle of Lone Pine in August.

On the morning of the 6 of August the attack on a Turkish strongpoint, now known as 'Lone Pine', began. The Turkish trenches were covered overhead by pine logs and the Australians had to break this defence whilst under intense fire. This was done by mid-morning, at frightful cost. The exhausted attackers were relieved, and John George took his place in the trenches as part of the relieving force. Fierce counter attacks were mounted by the Turks in the late afternoon and evening. It was during these attacks that John George was mortally wounded. *Allan Box (1984).*

John died at sea on HMHS *Gloucester Castle* on 7 August 1915 and was buried at sea. He was the second Islander to lose his life in the war. John is commemorated on the Lone Pine

Memorial, Gallipoli, the Cowes Obelisk, Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour, Cowes School Roll of Honour, and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Tpr. Frederick Aspinall McFee

Fred was born in Emerald Hill in 1877 to William Thomas McFee, an ironmonger and Annie Aspinall. He was a fireman on the ferry *Genista* and living at Rhyll with his family. Fred enlisted with the 5th Mounted Victorian Rifles Contingent in the Boer War in 1901 spending 15 months there. By 1914 Fred was a labourer at Carlton and he enlisted for the First War on 20 August with A Squadron, 4th Light Horse Regiment.

The Regiment left on HMAT *Wiltshire* on 19 October arriving Alexandria on 8 December. They proceeded by train to Mena Camp near the pyramids for training. 'A' squadron 4th Light Horse Regiment landed at Gallipoli without their horses on 21 May and the squadrons were initially scattered to reinforce the infantry battalions already ashore. The regiment was not reunited until 11 June.

Much of the regiment's time at Gallipoli was spent defending the precarious ANZAC position, most frequently around Ryrie's Post, but its squadrons were involved in several minor attacks. Fred received a bad shrapnel wound on the right shoulder at Monash Valley on 11 July. Fred was evacuated to Malta, then London, spending about 12 weeks in hospital.

He then returned to Australia on the *Ascanius* arriving back in May 1916. The Medical Board recommended him as fit for home service and light duties in Australia.

Nearly 150 people assembled in the Rhyll hall on the evening of May 10 to give a cordial welcome to Fred. McFee, son of Cr McFee, a wounded soldier who has returned from the war to recuperate. Songs and recitations were rendered by Messrs D. Robb and J. McIlwraith, and valuable assistance was given at the piano by Mrs C. McFee, Mrs Boyes and Miss Walton. Dancing was kept up till 4 a.m. Sergt. Walker, a mate of Fred. McFee, gave a humorous recitation composed in the trenches at Gallipoli, which found great favor with the audience, to whom he appealed to send men to the colors. Before the interval for refreshments Cr McIlwraith presented Fred. McFee with a wristlet watch. The leading feature of the evening was Fred. McFee's half-hour narration of his moving accidents by flood and field, including the excitement among the transports on the despatch of the *Sydney* to meet the *Emden*, the landing at Gallipoli, the Lone Pine charge, etc. Some gruesome details were largely relieved by humorous incidents, while two months in the hospital in Malta, (with a bullet in the shoulder), with six and half months in English hospital left opportunity for agreeable discussive remarks illustrative of the high appreciation of the English people of the Anzacs.

Powlett Express and Victorian State Coalfields Advertiser, 19 May 1916.

Fred enlisted again on 15 January 1917 with the No.2nd Section Railway Unit, embarking from Melbourne for Devonport, England on HMAT *Ballarat* on 19 February.

Ballarat was approaching Southern England, off The Lizard, when she was torpedoed by a U-boat just after 2pm on April 25, the second Anzac Day. The 1600 men of the 24th

Reinforcements Regiment had lunched, and officers were planning an Anzac Day service later in the day. All 1720 souls aboard *Ballarat* survived and were landed at Devonport that day. Horatio J Kookaburra.

Flickr website.

Fred served in France with the unit renamed the 1st Australian Light Rail Operating Company. The Company operated the 2ft. gauge railway to distribute goods to the fighting areas from the broad gauge railway depots. Fred returned to Australia on HMAT *Nestor* on 20 May 1919.

He returned to Carlton and in 1920 married Minnie Aileen Dalton. He worked as a labourer, caretaker and driver. His last residence was at Thornbury where he died in 1960. Two of Fred's brothers, Len and Alan also enlisted in the First War. Alan died of measles on the ship between Fremantle and Colombo and was buried at sea.

Fred is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Driver William Henry (Harry) Picking

William was born in North Melbourne in 1884 to Louis Picking, a foreman and Lucy Greyling.

He was a railway employee when he enlisted with the 2nd Field Ambulance on 19 August.

He embarked on the HMAT *Wiltshire* on 19 August 1915 with Leonard Bagley and Raymond Thornton. The Field Ambulance served at Gallipoli tending to casualties at actions at Krithia and Lone Pine until the evacuation in December.

They did further training in Egypt before moving to the Western Front in April 1916. Here they saw action at Pozières, Bullecourt, Ypres, Lihons and Herleville. He returned to Australia on 15 August 1918 and had various jobs including farming at Mardan in the 1920's and cartage contracting around Melbourne.

Harry was living at Rhyll with his second wife in 1949 in the former McFee home. He died at Newhaven on 17 February 1971 and was buried with his first wife at Mirboo North Cemetery.

Pte. Walter George Richardson

Walter George Richardson was born at Cowes in 1870, the youngest son of Joseph Richardson and Sarah Arbuckle. Walter was a farmer and fisherman and with his wife Evelyn ran the Bay View Guest House at Cowes. Walter enlisted with C Company 24th Battalion on 16 March 1915. He embarked Melbourne on the *Euripides* on 8 May.

After brief training in Egypt, the battalion sailed for the Gallipoli Peninsula and went into action on 5 September, 1915 during the latter stages of the campaign. Richardson was suffering from pyrexia (fever) and sciatica and was evacuated to hospital at Malta on HMHS *Formosa* on 15 October. His condition deteriorated and on 25 October he was sent to England on HMHS *Brasile*.

Walter was admitted to the 2nd Birmingham War Hospital, Birmingham on 1 November with symptoms of enteric fever but soon developed tuberculosis which spread over his body. He died on Christmas Day 1915 leaving a wife and child at Phillip Island.

Walter was buried at Lodge Hill Cemetery, Birmingham on 30 December:

The funeral took place from the Hospital to the Cemetery, a distance of 4 miles, in a hearse, the coffin being of polished oak which was enshrouded in a Union Jack. Mourners were Major Horseman, representing No. 2 Birmingham Hospital, medical orderlies, 6 bearers comrades of the deceased, and many other comrades and friends who knew him when in hospital, and as already stated, Captain Fisher. Full military honours were accorded, and a large cross had been erected at the burial ground inscribed - 'For our brave soldiers who have given their lives for the country.'

Walter Richardson is also commemorated on the Cowes Obelisk, Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour, Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour, Cowes School Roll of Honour, and St Philip's Church Roll of Honour.

Tpr. Martin Alfred Sheen

Martin Alfred Sheen was born in 1895 in Cowes to James Sheen and Susannah Walton. He was working as a farm labour at Cowes. Martin and his brother William enlisted on 8 December 1914 at Broadmeadows with C Squadron of the 3/8th Light Horse Regiment. They left Melbourne on HMAT *Pera* on 8 February 1915 and arrived in Egypt on the 14 March.

The light horse were considered unsuitable for the initial operations at Gallipoli, but were subsequently deployed without their horses. The 3rd Light Horse Brigade landed in late May 1915 and was attached to the New Zealand and Australian Division. The 8th formed the first two waves for the Brigade's disastrous attack on the Nek on 7 August and suffered heavily.

Of the three hundred men who staged the charge on the Nek, twelve officers and 142 men were killed with a further four officers and 77 men wounded. A first-hand account of the events of the charge, and the death of Major Redford, is contained in an entry in Major Redford's diary.

It is believed to have been written after the charge by Major William McGrath of the 8th Light Horse:

At 0400 on the morning of the 7th a short bombardment by howitzers and warships, which did no damage, was succeeded by the word being passed around for the attack. B Squadron (100 bayonets) plus 50 bayonets from A [Squadron] took from the extreme left to the top of the ridge.

Everyman sprang out of the trench eagerly and crawled carefully for a few yards. Suddenly as they stood up to run forward, and got silhouetted on the skyline, a terrific fire from machine guns by the enemy (at range of 10 yards), swept everything down. Men were shot down in wonderful fashion and never before have I heard such a terrific volume of fire. Those not hit, promptly fell down, but the enemy played all along the ground with terrible effect and slaughter supplemented with dozens and dozens of hand grenades. No man unless in hollow ground escaped.

Martin must have been badly affected by the experience of the slaughter at the Nek as he shot himself in the right leg and hand, at Lone Pine on 13 August 1915. He was severely injured and was admitted to the 17th General Hospital, Alexandria. He was sent to England on 19 August 1915. Martin was reported fit for duty at Weymouth Depot on 4 January 1916.

He went absent without leave from Weymouth on 7 April 1917 until he was apprehended on 11 June at Bradford on Avon. He was court marshalled and sentenced to 130 days detention and forfeiture of 205 days' pay. Martin's brother William returned to Australia on 26 May with venereal disease, which possibly saved his life. He re-enlisted with the 5/13th Light Horse and fought on the Western Front.

Martin returned to Australia on the *Berrima* on 30 October 1917 and was discharged on 1 February 1918. He was living at Eaglehawk and died at Bendigo on the 11 May 1976 and was buried at Eaglehawk Cemetery. Martin was one of six brothers who enlisted in the First War. His brother James died of wounds received at Fromelles, France on 20 July 1916. Martin is commemorated on the Cowes School Roll of Honour.

L/Cpl. Raymond Slade Thornton

Raymond was born at Cowes, son of the mounted local Police Constable and grandson of Captain John Lock of Rhyll.

He was a relieving letter carrier at St Kilda and Windsor at time of enlisting with the 2nd Field Ambulance of the Australian Army Medical Corps on 19 August 1915. This was the same day and same unit as Leonard Bagley. Raymond embarked from Melbourne with the 2nd Field Ambulance on HMAT *Wiltshire* on 19 October 1914, landing at Egypt. After several months training in the desert they landed at Gallipoli with the 2nd Brigade on 25 April. Raymond was in charge of a stretcher squad in the field at Gallipoli.

Raymond received a gunshot wound on the right side through the lung and was evacuated to the *Dunluce Castle*. He died on board on the 26 May 1915, the first Islander to die in the war. Raymond was buried with others in the East Mudros Military Cemetery, Lemnos Island, "a green beautiful spot".

Lieut. Clarence Stanley Williams

Clarence was born in Daylesford in 1892 the second son to George Williams, a blacksmith and Lucy Elizabeth Baker. He was working as a salesman when he enlisted with the 8/7th Battalion

on 14 June 1915. He embarked for Egypt on HMAT *Anchises* on the 26 August 1915. After further training they embarked for Lemnos.

The Battalion landed at Anzac on 26 November and took over the trenches at Silt Spur on 11 December. They remained in the trenches until they were evacuated to Lemnos on the 20 December. They embarked Lemnos for Alexandria on the *Empress of Britain* on the 2 January 1916. Further training was done at Tel el Kebir and Serapeum. Clarence was transferred to the 2nd Machine Gun Company, part of the 2nd Brigade, and embarked for Marseilles in late March.

Arriving at Marseilles a few days later, they took up positions in the trenches of the Western Front.

Clarence fought in the Battle of Lagnicourt on 15 April 1917, the Second Battle of Bullecourt in May and the Battle of Hazebrouck on 12-15 April 1918. The Battalion fought in the final British offensive which began with the Battle of Amiens on 8 August 1918 and in September the Battle of Epehy. It was during this final offensive that Clarence won an award for bravery.

Clarence was awarded the Order of the Star of Roumania – Chevalier (Knight) by the King of Roumania:

“Throughout the operations of August and September 1918 Lieutenant WILLIAMS at all times displayed great courage and devotion to duty and was a constant example to his Section. On 18th September during the attack on HARGICOURT, his section was attacked. 1st Aust. Inf. Battalion was detailed to support them in the advance, owing to the fog and our own and enemy barrage of smoke, great difficulty was experienced in getting forward and casualties through the violent barrage were considerable, still, Lieut. WILLIAMS managed to keep up and on three separate occasions brought fire to bear supporting the advance. Again on 21 Sept. 1918, though extremely fatigued, by his cheerfulness and ability to command he led his Section to the final objective and consolidated although only 107 of Infantry detailed reached this Objective.” *Date of recommendation: 7 January 1919.*

Clarence embarked for Melbourne on the *Ypiranga* on 5 March 1919 and married Esther James on 18 October 1919 at Brunswick. He ran a grocery shop in Cowes with his father George and was very active in the community.

Clarence's only brother George enlisted with the 12/7th Battalion and was killed in action at Passchendaele on 21 October 1917. Clarence and Esther had a son George who was killed when HMAS *Vampire* was sunk by Japanese aircraft in the Bay of Bengal on 9 April 1942.

Esther died in 1923 and Clarence married Linda Burke, widow of William Burke who was killed at Bullecourt on 3 May 1917. They returned to Carlton in the mid 1930's and retired to McCrae in 1963. Clarence died at McCrae on 23 February 1967. Clarence is commemorated on the Phillip Island RSL Book of Honour and the Phillip Island RSL Roll of Honour.

Conclusion:

The attack on the Dardanelles was not undertaken for military gain but for political expediency. It was conceived in haste to ensure Russia's continued commitment to the war, but crafted to protect long-term British Imperial ambitions in the Middle and Near East. Seen purely as a military objective the Dardanelles expedition was stunningly ill-advised and bound to fail. As a political gesture to keep Russia in the war it was deceptively brilliant.

Gerry Docherty, Jim MacGregor. *Hidden History: The Secret Origins of the First World War*.
September 1, 2014

World War II

Some Phillip Islanders who served during World War II

Garnet Frank 'Snow' Dixon

4th Reserve Motor Transport Company

VX26074

POW Singapore, Malaya, Japan

AIF 1940 – 1945

17.6.1940 Enlisted Caulfield, 21 years old

15.10.40 Transferred to Motor Transport during training in Melbourne

17.10.40 – May 1941 Under 4th Military Division, based in Alice Springs and other parts of Central Australia.

Early May 41 Back in Melbourne

7.5.41 – 22.5.41 Pre-embarkation leave

30.7.41 Embarked from Melbourne

16.8.41 Disembarked Singapore

5.9.41 Into 4th Reserve Motor Transport Company, Malaya

30.3.1942 Reported Missing

- 19.5.1943 Reported POW in Malaya
- April 1942 – October 1945 POW –
 - Changi area (not main Changi Prison), Singapore: work parties – several months
 - Thai-Burma Railway – 14 months
 - Japanese coal mine POW camp – Omuta, Fukuoka on Kyushu Island – 14 months
- 6.6.1942 Embarked for Japan
- 6.8.1945 Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima
- 9.8.45 Atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki – Snow 56 kilometres away and saw the flash
- 15.8.45 Emperor Hirohito announced surrender of Imperial Japan
- 2.9.45 Formal end of WW2 hostilities
- 5.10.45 Embarked per British aircraft carrier: *Formidable* from Manilla
- 13.10.45 Disembarked Sydney
- 15.10.45 Arrived POW wing, Watsonia Barracks, Melbourne
- 21.12.1945 Discharged from Royal Park Barracks

The following text is mainly from **Mary Bourke's book: *Keeping the Spirit Alive: The Story of the Phillip Island RSL***. 2008. Additional text by **Christine Grayden**.

Snow Dixon was in the army for a total of five and a half years, almost the duration of the Second World War. While others were gallantly fighting to save their country, Snow was among twenty-one thousand Australian soldiers who were fighting desperately to stay alive. They were the prisoners of war, POWs, of the Imperial Japanese Army, which did not abide by the Geneva Convention governing treatment of POWs.

Snow's story is one of true survival. For three and a half years, after the Fall of Singapore in 1942, he was without a gun in his hand or the pride in wearing a uniform. Instead, he slaved on a railway, dressed in rags and battling disease; then was crammed into a stinking hull of a ship and tossed through the waves of the South China Sea to the dank underworld of the coal mines of Japan.

Unlike many of his mates who succumbed to these appalling conditions, Snow survived and was able to savor the joy and exhilaration of freedom when peace was finally declared in August 1945.

To try and describe Snow's war time experiences is a difficult task, for these POWs fought a war like no other, and only they can tell their story.

The Thai Burma Railway

"We were transported from Singapore to Thailand in trucks, steel cattle trucks. They had one door on either side and they were as hot as blazers! You would have to take it in turns to stand up or lie down. You got used to it after a while but everybody was determined that 'they'd never get us.'

We never knew where we were going, we never had a clue; except when we arrived at Ban Pong station and had to march up to Kanburi (Kanchanaburi). The British had been there

before us and they'd built a trestle bridge, over the River Kwai. It was the first bridge to be built over this river. Word had got around that we were going to be building a railway. We didn't feel good about itbut, that's all there is to it!

"From here we were forced to march, at night because it was too stinking hot in the day, up to Kinsaiyok where we were put into working parties. We would work in groups of six, and the Japs would come out and say "six of you here and six there" and we'd be sent either to the north or to the south of the camp.

"Camps were dotted at intervals along the 258-mile jungle route that was to become the railway. The overall idea of this scheme was for each stage of the line to eventually join up. This meant that the prisoners, both Western and Asian, were constantly on the move, and over time, were severely depleted in numbers. The camps themselves were appalling sites filled with disease, insects and despair.

"In some places we had to put bridges over swampy areas, so we had to drive the piles in but first, we'd have to get the timber for these, out of the jungle. Generally, an embankment would take a long time to build as you'd have to dig soil on either side of it and then cart it up in baskets or as with a stretcher, put two baskets on a bag and have two fellows on each end. You'd then have to fill these bags up. The work was hard and we'd swap over and take it in turns. The trouble was, the higher the embankment, the harder it got because you had to climb up to the top; and when the monsoons came, it would all be washed down and you'd have to go over it again and again!

"Rice was our only ration, just rice, nothing else. Our cooks came with us when we were in Kinsaiyok and they not only cooked our rice but they had to carry all the cooking equipment as well. When you had your breakfast in the morning, which was rice, you'd fill up a little box with a little bit of rice, and that was your lunch. Then when you came back at night, you would get rice again. Everyone was starving, but we were all in the same boat. You just did it, day after day.

"When we finished one job on the Line, we were moved along to a different camp to the north. Kinsaiyok wasn't far from Hell Fire Pass and we were working there at one time starting on the cutting with the hammer and tap, and drilling and blasting the rocks out of the cliff face.

"A typical day could be anything. You could be dragged out at 6 o'clock in the morning and not get back till 8 o'clock at night. It got to the stage that the guards never knew what anyone could do as far as the embankment work went, as they started off with "one man, one meter." It finished up being "one man, ten meters." You would measure out ten meters on the ground and that's what each man did. So if there were six blokes, it was sixty meters.

"The men often got sick; dysentery was the worst disease in our camp in Thailand. I got dysentery and went to the hospital in Tamarkan for a while. We were damned lucky we didn't get tangled up with cholera, as that was the worst you could get. The hospital camps were just made up of huts, like everything else – it was just that all the hospital patients were in there. Many were the ulcer cases so they were in a special ward which was one long hut. The smell there was shocking!



POWs working on the Thai-Burma railway. Australian War Memorial

To the Coal Mines

“On the 5th and 6th of June, we were put on the ship. Each of us had to collect two blocks of rubber. They had handles on them, and we carried these blocks into the hull of the ship. This rubber was being shipped back to Japan, and we had to load it. In the end, the hull was three parts full of rubber, and one part full of men. It took us ten days to reach Morji in Japan, but we had been chased by American submarines and had to sneak up along the coast of China.

The living conditions at the coal mine POW camp were much better as they had reasonably good huts, with floors and matting that you could lie on. We got a blanket but we had very cold winters with snow and freezing winds. There were fifty men to a hut. We worked for fifteen days and had one day off. Each shift took us twelve hours – two hours to get there and back, and eight hours working in the mines.”



Work in a Japanese coal mine during WWII.

Lola had been waiting anxiously for him all through the war. As 'fifteen' is their lucky number, they were married on 25 November, 1945, one month after Snow had returned home. They lived in Cowes for the rest of their lives. Snow joined the Phillip Island RSL in 1946.



Snow and Lola Dixon in later life. Mary Bourke: Dixon collection.

Corporal Lesley William Findlay

VX34186

Les Findlay's Australian service:

1.7.1940 Enlisted at Royal Park, Melbourne, 24 years old.

Trained Colac and Puckapunyal, posted to 2/14th Field Regiment

July 1941 Arrived Darwin for tactical training, calibration shoots, and regimental shoots.
(Total 18 months). Gun layer

21.7.41 – 25.1.43 Hospitalised total 4 weeks with measles, dengue fever

19.2.42: Japanese bombing of Darwin. (Darwin bombed total 64 times until November 1943)

22.7.43 Transferred to AEME: Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

30.8.43 Promoted to Corporal

14.10.43 – 2.1.44 Training in Queensland with 2/14 Light Aid Detachment

30.10.43 Transferred to 2/83 LAD

Les Findlay's New Guinea campaign service:

30.10.43 Transferred to 2/83 LAD

15.1.44 – 16.1.45 New Guinea service:

Finschaven, Fortification Point, South Alexishafen, Madang - Huon Peninsula - 2/83 LAD, attached to 2/14 field regiment.

8.3.44 Appointed to Armourer Group 1 (NFO)

16.1.45 Embarked Madang

18.1.45 Disembarked Jacquino Bay, New Britain

Working in area between Open and Wide Bays supporting patrols.

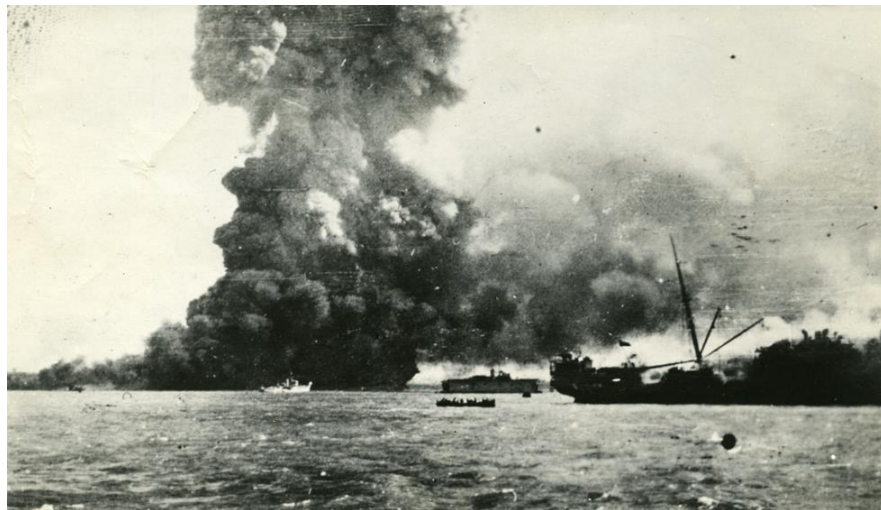
September 45 – formed part of Garrison force following surrender of Japanese

5.12.45 Embarked Rabaul

8.2.46 Discharged Melbourne. AMRO 253A (R184A) N: on account of demobilization.

Les Findlay served in Darwin from July 1941 until 25 January, 1943. There he was infected by the common tropical viruses, malaria and dengue fever. Disease took a big toll on both sides in the New Guinea campaign to follow.

Darwin was bombed over 60 times between the first two major aerial bombardments on 19 February until November, 1943. Darwin was unprepared for the first attack, although 2,000 civilians had already evacuated, and a build of troops and materials had already been occurring. Approximately two to three hundred people were killed, eleven ships in the harbour were damaged or sunk, buildings and airport were destroyed and planes lost. Les never forgot the awful experience of that day.



Bombing of Darwin Harbor 19th November 1943. Library and Archives of the Northern Territory



*Gunners scramble to fire on Japanese aircraft during the bombing of Darwin.
Library and Archives of the Northern Territory*

He then served in the New Guinea campaign from January 1944 to January 1945. Rabaul, in the Australian Mandated Territory of New Guinea, had fallen to the Japanese 23 January, 1942. By summer 1943 Japan had over 100,000 troops stationed in New Guinea, the aim being to cut off supplies to Australia. After a brutal war of attrition and manoeuvring, the Allies finally took back New Guinea at the end of March, 1944.

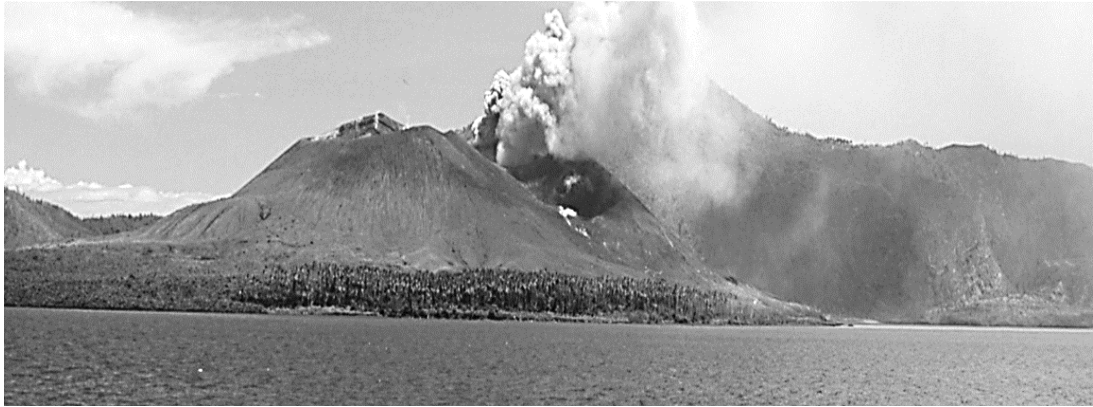
Les Findlay and the rest of the 2/14th supported the 5th Division's advance to clear the Huon Peninsula of remaining Japanese troops after earlier successful tough offensives by other Australians. The 2/14 provided necessary artillery support for the infantry and training. The guns of the regiment were located between Madang and Alexishafen.

Damion Fenton of the Australian War Memorial described conditions during the war in New Guinea as:

The New Guinea environment inflicted great physical hardship upon the soldiers of both sides. Everything used by the soldiers had to be shipped in from offshore at great risk and expense. Getting those supplies from the ports to the fighting troops was even more difficult. The harsh terrain, tropical diseases and fragile supply lines made New Guinea one of the most difficult places to fight in the world.

Australian War Memorial

Les then served in New Britain; an island of mountains, flats, rivers and active volcanoes located 60 miles east of the main island. Les was there from January until December, 1945. There the 2/14 was attached to the 5th Division and patrolled extensively in the area between Open Bay and Wide Bay as the only field regiment supporting the 5th, engaged in a series of limited offensive against the Japanese. They were also heavily engaged in fighting around Waitavalo in March, 1945.



New Britain. Wikitravel

After the Japanese surrendered on 2 September, the 2/14 joined the 11th Division to form a garrisoning force at Rabaul. They remained there until the end of 1945.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

096644

Government House, Rabaul, following surrender of Japanese . Australian War Memorial

During the war in New Guinea, up to one quarter of the local people died in some parts as a result of starvation, injuries or murder. Of the 2,500 Papuans and New Guineans to serve in the Pacific Island Regiment, 65 were killed, 16 were missing, and 75 died of other causes.

Australia had approximately 7,500 known service personnel killed, and 2,000 remain unaccounted for.

Japan committed 350,000 of its best troops to the New Guinea campaign, but lost 220,100; many from starvation and disease as Allied forces outmanoeuvred and trapped them, blocking off their supplies.



Areas of Les Findlay's war service in New Guinea. Wikipedia and Christine Grayden.

Les Findlay survived active service in some of the most difficult theatres in World War II. He later married Hazel Maude (nee Hall) and lived at Newhaven. He became a well-known professional fisherman in Western Port.



Les Findlay as a professional fisherman in Western Port in later life. John Jansson collection.

Text by Christine Grayden, 2020. Images: John Jansson, Australian War Memorial, Library and Archives Northern Territory, Wikitravel.

Hugh Grigg, war record and POW experience

VX8911

AASC; detached to duty – 6th Division, 17th Brigade, 2/7 Battalion

Artillery/Composite

Egypt, Greece, Crete

POW Austria

28.11.1939 Enlisted Melbourne, 17 years old

Trained at Puckapunyal, Victoria

11.1.1940 Embarked from Melbourne

14.2.40 Disembarked Qantara (Kantara), Egypt

19.6.40 Detached for duty with 2/7 Battalion, Kantara

16.11.40 Transferred to Ammunition Company (transporting ammunition and equipment)

January 1941 – 2/7 Battalion first saw action against Italians

12.3.41 Ammunition Company - Transferred to 17th Brigade Composite Company Army Service Corps

30.3.41 Embarked for Greece

3.6.41 Reported as missing, possibly casualty

21.6.41 Confirmed POW in Greece

16.9.41 Confirmed POW Stalag XVIII A (18A), Wolfsberg, Austria

21.5.45 "Recovered POW, arrived UK ex-Western Europe"

2.7.45 1 AIF Transit Camp UK - Transport Officer, Home Service

Early July 1945 Embarked UK

8.8.45 Arrived in Australia – NSW, Ballarat, Melbourne: General Divisional Duties

22.9.1945 Discharged from Royal Park Barracks, AMR&O 253A (R.184A) (1) (j) At his own request on compassionate grounds (ex-POW)



Hugh Grigg soon after enlistment

Hugh enlisted in Melbourne in November 1939. After barely six weeks training, he embarked for service abroad on the 11 January, 1940. The ship arrived in Kantara, Egypt, on 14 February where Hugh served in the Australian Army Service Corps delivering supplies of ammunition and

equipment, food and mail, to the different field sites. This was by truck and even by camel train.



Hugh leading a camel train of supplies to the front in Middle East

He was in Egypt until 30 March 1941, when he embarked as part of the 17th Brigade Composite Company Army Service Corps for battle in Greece and Crete to try to shore up the Greek forces in their defence against the Germans and Italians, who swept quickly through the country.



Soldiers crammed on board a ship in transit from Middle East to Greece

Allied troops were transferred to Crete in an attempt to hold the island, but were forced to retreat from Crete as well. Chaos followed as the Royal Navy attempted evacuation of Allied troops while under heavy German attack. Some evacuation ships were sunk and while some troops were rescued from the water and taken onto other ships, thousands of troops were left

on shore and forced to either surrender or attempt to escape. Hugh was reported as missing, possibly as a casualty, on 3 June, then officially recorded as a POW in Greece on 21 of June.



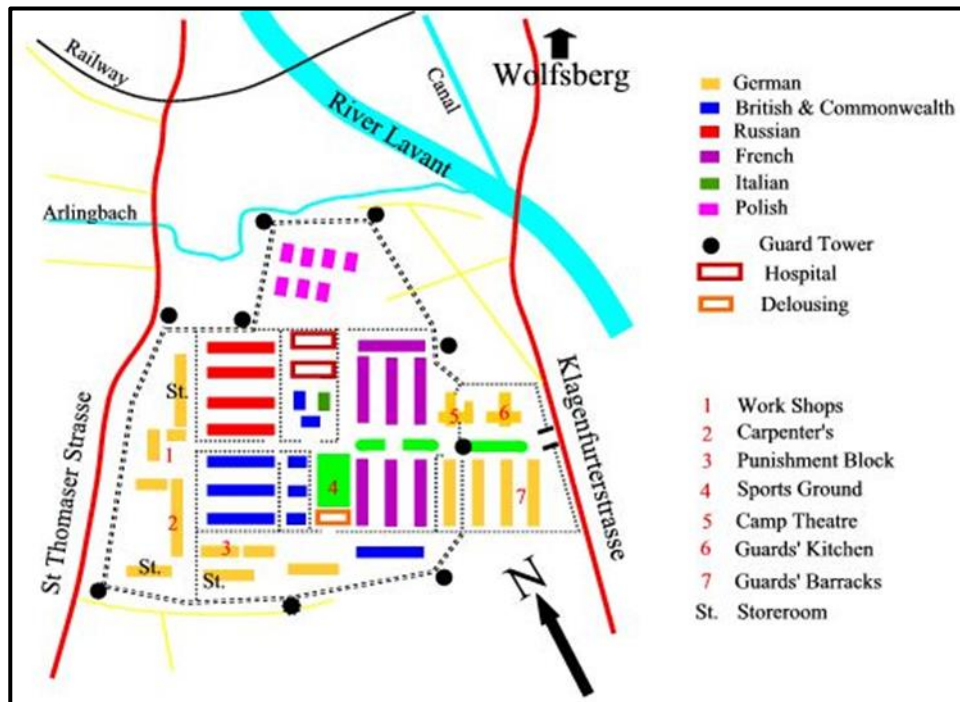
Exhausted Allied POWs being marched to POW camp in Crete

Hugh spent three months in at least one transit camp in Greece before being moved north. Food was short, consisting of a little dried or salt fish, lentils or rice, a little oil, and a hard army biscuit or one-ninth of a loaf of bread. Eventually the Greek Red Cross was able to provide extra food, and some POWs were given food through the fence by sympathetic local Greeks.

Thousands of POWs were crammed into the main camp with no beds or blankets. Toilet facilities consisted of an open trench about 200 yards long, so dysentery quickly became a big problem.

Thousands of Allied POWs were then sent by train north into German and Austrian camps. In their weakened condition, they had to march miles with their packs to the nearest railway station, then were crowded together in the sweltering heat into enclosed cattle trucks, with so many sick men suffering from diarrhoea, Hugh included. It was impossible to lie down to rest during the week-long trip north. There were no sanitary facilities whatsoever. Apart from a few stops when a meagre meal was provided, they had no sustenance for the week.

Hugh was interred as POW number 3786 from the 6th Division of the Australian Army Service Corp in the Austrian POW camp Staleg 18A in Wolfsberg, in the southern Austrian state of Carinthia 16 September, 1941.



Map of Stalag 18A

Food in the camp decreased over time, but was supplemented by Red Cross parcels. Hugh's POW camp ration included watery cabbage soup every day, and he could not face cabbage for the rest of his life. For a man of 6ft 4inches he weighed about 65kg at the end of his time as a POW.

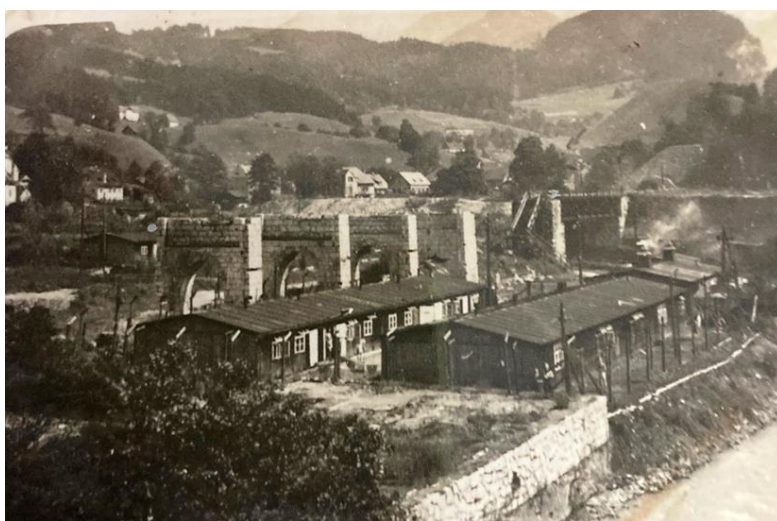
Hugh worked in construction in one of the 31 work parties from the camp. If they managed to get extra food somehow, it was cooked using little stoves made from the metal boxes Red Cross parcels sometimes arrived in, and shared around.

When the POWs were not working, the monotony was broken by games of Two Up, revues, debates, educational lectures and classes put on by the POWs. Books from the Red Cross and families were welcome. With co-operation from the Commandant, a newsletter called the POW WOW was produced by some of the men and distributed widely. Due to the multi-cultural nature of the occupants, the men even devised their own language, known as Lager Deutsch.

Somehow Hugh managed to have a camera with him during his experiences. Some of his photos provided by his family are featured here.



Church Service in Staleg 18A. Grigg family collection.



A View of part of the POW camp. Grigg family collection.

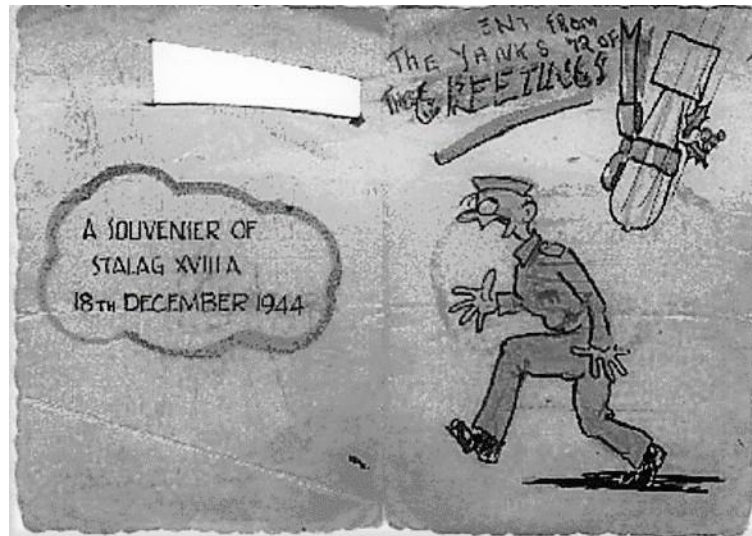
Hugh tried to escape three times and was unsuccessful twice. He was threatened with execution after each recapture, but he survived; although after the second attempt he was held in an underground hole in solitary confinement for weeks.



Christmas card from POWs in Staleg 18A showing musicians in one of revues put together by the POWs to provide entertainment in the camp. Grigg family collection.

On 18 December, 1944, the camp was hit accidentally with 36 bombs by the US Air Force who

apparently thought it was a German military camp. More than 40 men were killed, many wounded, and many buildings destroyed, including the camp hospital.



*Even under awful circumstances the POWs managed to retain some sense of humour.
Grigg family collection.*

Weeks before the end of the war, the German command gave the order to march the POWs to so-called safer areas as the Russians began invading. Thousands of the men were marched out for many weeks, living off the land as they marched and sleeping on the roadsides. Many escaped during the marches, but to an uncertain fate due to the presence of both Hitler Youth and marauding Russian POWs.

While we do not know if Hugh was forced to march, he did say that he finally managed to escape and found his way to Salzburg, where he was helped by Americans.

Hugh's record shows him as a "recovered POW arrived UK ex Western Europe" on 21 May 1945. From there Hugh finally arrived home and was discharged officially from Royal Park, Melbourne, on 24 September, 1945. He had been a POW for over four years and in the army for a total of almost 6 years.

Hugh went on to marry Joy Grummisch and live on Phillip Island where he worked on the second Phillip Island bridge and drove the fish truck to market for many years. He also worked on the West Gate Bridge and narrowly avoided death on the date of its collapse when he left the lunch room to retrieve his thermos from his car in the car park, just as the span collapsed and fell on the lunch room. He helped retrieve many alive and dead from the rubble, and never returned to the bridge. Hugh was president of the Phillip Island RSL for several terms, including some crucial ones for the direction of the club. His wife predeceased him by a few months. He then went to live with one of their daughters in Tasmania, and passed away there.

VICTORIA L OF C AREA Local Form A1,
 PROCEEDINGS ON DISCHARGE 6 Hugh Davidson
 Ann Bay Agsc

PART A - To be compiled by Vic. Ech. & Rec.

1. Army No. VX8911 Rank Pte Unit 4th Light Trench Coy
 Name: GRIGG Hugh (In full, Surname in BLOCK letters)
 Vic. L of C Auth: 20136 Date: 18 SEP 1945 AMRC 253A(1)

REASON FOR DISCHARGE: (in words) Companionship pension
our regard - Ex POW

2. TRADE GROUP: In which employed at time of DISCHARGE: _____

3. MARITAL CONDITION: Single DATE OF BIRTH: 27/8/1919
 COMPUTED AS AT: 70 Sep 45

4. PERIOD OF SERVICE: (showing CMP, AIF, etc. separately) Total Eff. Service
 (a) Enlisted for the AIF on 28/1/39 and who served on CONTINUOUS FULL TIME WAR SERVICE: - - (which included)
 with AIF from 28/1/39 to _____ A/S IN Australia.
 and _____ from _____ to _____ 41 45 days.
 and _____ from _____ to _____ A/S w/s Australia.
 2037 7037 days.

(b) NON EFFECTIVE SERVICE: (Consecutive periods of 21 days or over for which member NOT entitled to receive pay, to be shown ONLY).

A.W.L. NOT involving DETENTION		DAYS	DETENTION ETC. including automatic forfeitures.		DAYS	LEAVE WITHOUT PAY		DATE
FROM	TO		FROM	TO		FROM	TO	
/	/		/	/		/	/	

5. SERVICE QUALIFYING WAR BADGE:
 Overseas Destination Inc. Emb. FROM Disembarked Date Northern Territory
 Torres Strait Is. Aust. IN Aust.

(a) AIF 1/1/40 8/8/45 2037 Stationed at _____
 (b) _____ / / / / from / /
 (c) _____ / / / / to / /

6. DECORATIONS & AWARDS: _____

7. DISABILITY: _____

Medical CLASSIFICATION: 91 Degree of Disability: 4

"x" COMPILED BY: W. J. Davidson For. Records Sect.
 "x" COMPUTATIONS BY: W. J. Davidson Disch. & R/S Sect.
 "x" CHECKED BY: W. J. Davidson Disch. & R/S Sect.
 "x" FINAL COMPUTATIONS BY: W. J. Davidson Vic. Ech. & Rec. Sect.
 "x" (STATE - Army Number, Rank and Name) U.D.D. HC/MI FORM

National Archives of Australia NA 5885 VX891

Hugh's discharge paper

Images: Australian War Memorial and the Grigg family. Memories website of Staleg 18A With thanks to the Grigg family for the further information in this essay.

Clyde Jones war record and POW experience

Essay written by **Christine Grayden**.

VX 46864

7th then 9th Division, 26th Brigade, 2/24th Infantry Battalion

MIDDLE EAST, NORTH AFRICA – TOBRUK

POW ITALY

15.7.1940 Enlisted Caulfield, Melbourne, 22 years old

22.4.40 15th Infantry Training Battalion, Shepparton

11.9.40 Posted to 2/24th Battalion, Wangaratta

16.11.40 Embarked from Melbourne aboard *HMT Strathmore*

17.12.40 Disembarked Middle East

30.4.1941 Surrounded by German tanks, Tobruk

1.5.41 No ammunition left, surrendered

May 41 – Sep 41 In transit at sea and POW transit camps in Italy

26.4.41 – 25.4.1943 POW In notorious campo 57 Grupignano near Udine

26.4.43 – 9.9.43 POW in further two Italian POW Work Camps.

9.9.43 Escaped from POW Campo 106, Vercelli, Northern Italy. Headed for the Alps

13.10.43 Reported as arrived in Switzerland over the Alps on foot

11.10.1944 Embarked from Italy for Australia via Middle East and Bombay

17.11.44 Disembarked *USS General A E Anderson troop ship* Melbourne

Nov 44 – April 1945 several months in hospitals and rehabilitation, then General Divisional Duties

29.1.1945 Discharge approved: "AMR&O 253A (R.184A) (1) (h)" - for employment in an essential service.

6.4.1945 Discharged from Royal Park barracks, Melbourne

During the war, Clyde David Jones had a vastly different experience to his old classmate Nip West. Instead of fighting in a jungle environment as Nip had done, Clyde was in desert, then spent three long, freezing winters in Italy before crossing the Alps by foot to Switzerland.

Clyde Jones was a well-known Phillip Island footballer destined for top-class competition when he volunteered in mid-July, 1940, and joined the 2nd Australian Imperial Force. He was posted to the 2/24th Battalion on 10 September, 1940, but soon after was hospitalised with serious mumps for two weeks. After just a few months of training, Clyde embarked with the rest of the 2nd/24th in November 1940 on board the *HMT Strathmore*.

The Battalion defended the strategically important and besieged port of Tobruk for eight months from April until October, 1941. They had been scornfully named the Rats of Tobruk by the German propagandist William Joyce, aka 'Lord Haw Haw', because they made use of the system of below-ground dug-outs built by the Italian army at Tobruk before the war.



Clyde Jones enlistment photo.

But on the night of the 30 April, Clyde found himself in an impossible situation. He reported that: "I was surrounded by German tanks on the night of April 30th. On morning of May 1st, out of ammunition. Was in hopeless position, so surrendered."

After being 'in transit' between 1 May and 4 September 1941, Clyde was held over the next two years in various Italian POW camps. After the transit camp in Capua, he spent 18 months in the notorious campo 57 Grupignano near Udin, 130 kilometres north east of Venice, which was commanded by the sadistic Fascist fanatic Colonel Vittorio Calcaterra.

Food was scarce at campo 57 and although the death rate from hunger was low, that was only so because of food parcels provided by the Red Cross. To prevent hoarding of tins of food from the parcels in preparation for escape attempts, guards punctured the food cans, often affecting the contents.

The guards frequently inflicted brutal punishments. Neuroses spread through the POWs as they never knew who would be victimised by Calcaterra and his guards next. Calcaterra is believed to have eventually been killed by Italian partisans later in the war, so never faced a war crimes tribunal.

To supplement the labour force, it was common practice to use POWs as forced labour. Clyde was sent to campo 106, which had 25 Work Party camps around Vercelli, Northern Italy to help in the nearby rice fields. This was very hard work after 18 months in an enclosed prison camp,

and still not much food. The men mostly slept on hay in sheds on the farms and often worked eight-hour days without a break.



View of the POW camp, Camp 106. Australian War Memorial.

In summarising conditions in the Italian POW camps, Clyde stated that the general living conditions were “all bad”, the rations were “very bad”, and the only clothing and footwear he had was “what was issued by the Red Cross”. Bathing and sanitary conditions were “all bad”, and although the reading material provided to the POWs was “good” (thanks to the Red Cross), the sporting facilities were “all bad”. Clyde was paid one lira per day during his time as a POW, and used this money to buy food whenever possible.

The Italians capitulated on 8 September, 1943. Although German forces quickly overran Italy, many Allied POWs took the opportunity to escape, some with success and others to be quickly recaptured, or to perish.

Clyde was attached to Campo 106 until 9 September, 1943, when he apparently managed to escape during the turmoil that followed Italian capitulation when none of the POWs knew if they would be rescued or even if Allied forces were nearby.

With a group of others, he made for Switzerland over the Alps. He was among 420 Australian POWs Infantry to cross to Switzerland over the period of the war. Many of them only succeeded because of the shelter, food and guidance given to them by sympathetic Italians along the way. Many of these Italians paid with their lives when the Germans found out.

Clyde described how his group kept their spirits up as they hiked, by passing the football he had been sent from Phillip Island when in the POW camp. In a 1995 interview, Ruth Ryan (nee Harris) recalled how she and the other pupils of Ventnor State School (which Clyde had attended) did all sorts of fundraising, such as bottle drives, to raise enough money to buy Clyde the football, to remind him of his halcyon days of playing football for the island.

Clyde’s record shows him as arriving in Switzerland on 13 October, 1943, having spent 24 days crossing the Alps to relative safety. Ruth related how, when he returned to Phillip Island and talked of his fleeing over the Alps, he said how his boots had worn out on the mountainous terrain. When the locals asked him why he had not used the football to repair his boots, Clyde

responded: "Oh, I couldn't do that!" He said the football was what kept them going, as they handpassed it and played with it as they kept doggedly on over the forbidding mountains.

Although Clyde never talked much about his time in Switzerland, he did apparently become very close to at least one Swiss national in his time there.

Almost one year later, Clyde was recorded as being back in Italy for embarkation to Australia, which was via the Middle East and Bombay, arriving in Melbourne on board the *USS General A E Anderson* troop ship. She had a capacity of over 5,000 troops and somehow managed to escape damage during the war, despite carrying troops in the waters around North Africa, the UK, India and the Pacific.

Clyde arrived on the 17 November, 1944. Due to chronic bronchitis he spent some months still in the Army, in and out of the repatriation hospitals at Heidelberg and Ballarat, with a few stints on general duties. He was assessed as being Medical Classification A1 at the end of March, 1945, which meant he was officially fit to return to service. However, he was finally discharged from Royal Park on 9 April, 1945. The reason for his discharge was not medical, but may have been one of the reasons allowable under the discharge regulations of the time, such as:

- (e) That he is considered unsuitable for any further military service; or....
- (h) To enable him to take up employment in an industry or occupation his employment in which is necessary in the interests of the defence of the Commonwealth, the more effectual prosecution of any war in which His Majesty is engaged or for maintaining supplies and services essential to the life of the community; or....
- (j) At his own request on compassionate grounds; (Regulation 253, Statutory Rules 1943, No. 249, gazetted on 30 September 1943.)

After almost five years of Hell, Clyde Jones was eventually met off the ferry in Cowes with relieved hugs and kisses from friends and family.

Flight Captain Les Lester

Text from **Mary Bourke's** book: *Keeping the Spirit Alive: The Story of the Phillip Island RSL*. 2008. Images: Lester family, Australian War Memorial, National Archives of Australia.

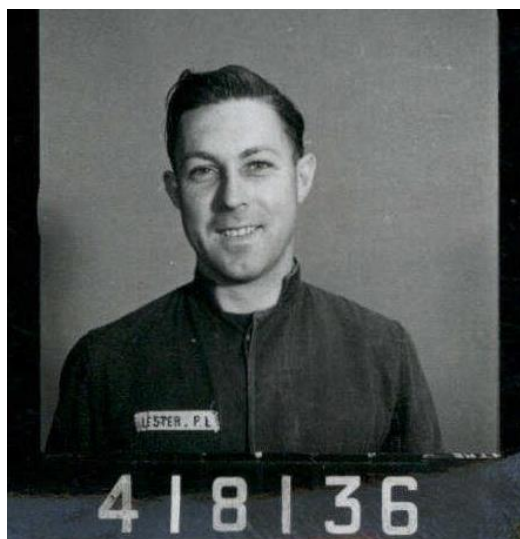
Former Phillip Island RSL president Les Lester had what it took to be a Lancaster pilot. He was daring, he was courageous, he loved a good time and most of all, he confronted challenges full on.

Les was leadership material from the controls of a heavily laden bomber plane; who travelled the skies of Europe in dangerous missions, hell bent on destroying the strongholds of Hitler.

Les was one of life's colourful characters whose company was enjoyed by all, and who made the most of any situation. Les Lester belonged to an elite group of servicemen, the courageous and skilled aircrew of the RAF Bomber Command.

This Command was created in the early stages of the war during the Battle of Britain when Britain was forced to save her shores from the incessant bombardments of the powerful German, Luftwaffe, Air Force.

It was in the latter three years of the war - 1943,'44 and '45 - that Bomber Command played an effective and often under-rated role in the final capitulation of the German Empire.



Les Lester's enlistment photo

On paper, Les Lester's squadron, the respected and distinguished RAAF 460 squadron, was wiped out five times! In reality it was a case of life or death, as crew members knew that each sortie could be their last. With the odds stacked against them, the crews from Bomber Command lived and played hard, enjoying life to the fullest, at every opportunity.

Each mission was thwart with danger, and coming home safely was every airman's prayer.



RAAF 460 Squadron posed on and in front of a Lancaster bomber.

The daily flying roster was checked each morning by Lester and his crew of six, to see if they would be taking off that day. If N-Nan was listed, they would spring into action. This would involve checking the plane, and then being briefed on the details of the night's operation.

After the aircraft was loaded with its deadly cargo, often up to three tonnes of bombs, the crew would have a quick bite to eat before climbing inside.



Loading a Lancaster with the biggest bomb they carried. Australian War Memorial

Even the act of taking off had its own hazards, as it could take up to one hour for the heavy plane to climb to a height of 22,000 feet. Out they would go through the dark, over the choppy waters of the English Channel, and into the dangerous skies of Europe.

Many were pickings for the searchlights and planes of the awaiting German armies. Precision and plain good luck played a huge part in these missions, as enemy planes would be at the ready to at all times. This, and the fear of colliding with their own planes, was the difference between life and death.

Each raid took between six and seven hours.....hours of concentrated flying and skilful teamwork. Conditions in the plane were less than ideal especially in the depths of winter when temperatures plummeted and the crew was chilled to the bone.



A flight engineer, situated alongside pilot, is shown rugged up against the freezing conditions inside the cockpit, checking the panel of Lancaster bomber's controls. Devon S A (Flt Lt), Royal Air Force official photographer, Imperial War Museums collection.



*Poster in support of the Bomber Command.
Australian War Memorial*

Although he survived the war, Les Lester was never the same when he returned home to his family. Like so many of his time, Les took a long time to settle down and return to the routine and normality of family life. Les and his wife Nell retired to Phillip Island in 1977, and almost immediately became involved in the social life of the Phillip Island RSL club.

Les was president of the Phillip Island RSL club from 1997 until 2002. Nell was also involved in the Phillip Island RSL Ladies Auxiliary.

Les passed away on Anzac Day 2003 at the age of 84 years. He was one of life's true characters.



*Left:
Committee
members
enjoying a drink
in the club rooms
(L-R)
Ken Lang,
Ernie Kimber
(secretary),
Harry Denton
and Les Lester
(president).*

Malcolm McFee

One Phillip Islander from Rhyll who had a totally different experience of war service was Malcolm McFee, son of Stan McFee senior and Isobel May. Malcolm lived and farmed with the family at 'Long Point', in McFee's Road, Rhyll. They had worked horses there for years. Malcolm was a 'born horseman', who never raised a finger or his voice to a horse in his whole life. So at the start of the war when "things were looking pretty crook", he decided to join the Light Horse based in Berwick.

By WW2, the once-famous and revered Australian Light Horse had mostly been disbanded or converted to other types of service such as tanks.

Exceptions were the hastily formed mounted 30-member section of the 6th Divisional Cavalry Regiment, who made history by converting from tanks to horses during the Syrian campaign. They were known as the Kelly Gang and included a radio operator, a cook and a gunner. The Kelly Gang used well-trained cavalry horses captured from the Vichy French, or Arab-breed horses acquired locally. They mainly patrolled in otherwise inaccessible Syrian terrain collecting intelligence on enemy positions.



The Kelly Gang on their acquired Arabian horses in Syria

In the New Guinea Campaign, the Independent Light Horse Troop did patrol duty and carried supplies where trucks or porters could not manage.



Independent Light Troopers on patrol in New Guinea.

Australian War Memorial

In Australia, officials thought a well-trained militia Light Horse with experienced horsemen such as Malcolm, could be useful for search and rescue and patrol on home soil in the event of a Japanese invasion.

But once Japan entered the war and Australia's focus shifted to resourcing the Pacific War effort, a mounted Light Horse was not considered useful, and the Berwick group was disbanded.

In a video interview from 1995, Malcolm described the Light Horse at Berwick as "more or less a militia force". The men were not in camp permanently, but had training sessions about once per month. When they were drilling there were 48 horses in each section, one behind the other, similar to a Police 'musical ride' with criss-crossing, or in groups of four forming lines and revolving around a centre, and then all horses moving together at all paces as one long row. This required a great deal of discipline from both horses and riders.

The Australian Light Horse carried a proud tradition from WW1 from the famous Australian Light Horse charges. Possibly the most well-known is the 4th Light Horse charge at Beersheba when 800 horsemen in three widely spaced and disciplined lines cantered across three kilometres of open ground before all breaking into a gallop with bayonets drawn and over-running the shocked Turks in their trenches who were expecting the horsemen to dismount and engage in hand to hand combat. The 4th Light Horse then captured the vital town, even though their superb Whaler horses had been without water for 48 hours.

Because of the impossibility of stabling horses in war zones, horses were tied in horse lines, by ropes from their halters at the front, and by one back leg so that they did not swing around and kick each other.



Horse line of Light Horse in Australia, c.1940. Australian War Memorial

When not riding and training, Malcolm was involved with many aspects of the horses' care. Due to the rigors of their training, some horses were injured or got sick, and Malcolm, being so familiar with horses from riding and using draught horses on the farm, was often called upon to assist the veterinarian. He also helped the farrier, and was later able to pass on the skills he learnt at Berwick to his son, Jim, who then obtained formal qualifications and was a local farrier for many years. Malcolm described these aspects of his service as "a lot of very interesting work, as you can imagine".

Malcolm was in the Remount section, and was involved in training the horses, which had to be of a special temperament and extremely fit. The classic manual: *The Training of a Remount* by Lieutenant SJ Hardy, Royal Scots Greys, described the aim of producing a horse which could: "...march long distances with a heavy weight on his back, without losing condition. Then he must be used to exposure and privation; be capable of being ridden with only one hand at all paces and over all manner of country, in company and alone; be indifferent to the noise of firing, and able to stand still as well as gallop. In fact, we require the hardiness of a Basuto pony, the handiness of a polo pony, the steadiness of a good hack, and the spirit and energy of a hunter."

This meant many hours in the saddle for Malcolm, including with horses just new to the horse line, young horses, and those recovered from injury or sickness. Training for horses and rider included groups of four horseman galloping to a battle zone, three dismounting and the fourth taking all horses in hand and riding them clear of the battle action until they were required by their riders again, when the handler would gallop all four horses back again. This required highly skilled riding, and highly trained horses.



A Horseholder training for action on the battlefield. 15th NRL Rutherford camp, 1940.

Another necessary part of the training for both men and horses was going on bivouacs, camping out for four days at a time. For one bivouac in the Western District they got caught in three days of non-stop rain, and only had one night under cover in a hayshed. "That was an exercise everyone was glad to see finish!" Malcolm declared.

Although Malcolm was sad to see the Light Horse groups either disbanded or converted to armoured units, he applied many of the lessons learnt in that period to his life after mounted militia service. Even in his seventies he was an active horseman, competing in horse events such as Quarter Horse cutting competitions, after purchasing his part-bred Quarter Horse 'Rebel' from Bill Davis, the first person to import Quarter Horses into Australia.

Phillip Islanders who attended the Bicentennial street parade in 1988 in Cowes may well remember Malcolm mounted on Rebel, as they calmly walked down the main street among bands, trucks, clapping crowds, honking horns, revving cars and motor bikes; sometimes having to halt and stand still for several minutes. The image of Malcolm sitting deep in the saddle, totally relaxed, with Rebel on a fairly loose rein, alert but calmly looking around, has certainly stayed in my mind.

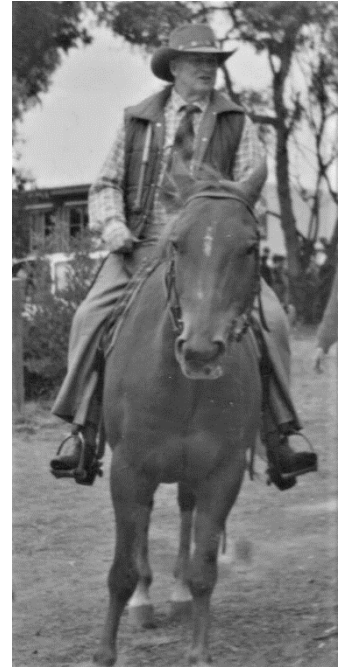
Malcolm's son Jim, himself a horseman for many years, remembers Malcolm working teams of draught horses on the farm. The working horses were essential during WWII when petrol rationing rendered farm tractors useless; although tractors certainly played an important role in war zones throughout the Pacific war. In his 1995 interview, Malcolm relates how petrol rationing meant an allowance of about 4 gallons per month, and tyres were unprocurable once the Japanese had gained control of 90 per cent of the world's rubber plantations.

Interestingly, Malcolm never really talked to his family during his life about his short period of war service with the Light Horse. He returned full time to the farm, where the family had a

contract growing carrots for the services and continued in farming on his Rhyll property for the rest of his life.



*Malcolm (circled) in local cricket team, 1950s.
Phillip Island and District Historical Society collection.*



*Malcolm in later life riding Rebel in a
very noisy Cowes street parade.
Phillip Island and District Historical Society collection.*

John Keith 'Jack' Morrison

Essay by Christine Grayden.

VX113778

22nd Battalion, 4th Brigade.
5th Division, 9th Division

19.3.1941: enlisted in Melbourne, 21 years old

Trained at Seymour then Bonegilla

28.3.1943 embarked SS *Taroona* from Townsville

31.3.43 Arrived Milne Bay, New Guinea

5 months with 22nd Battalion around Milne Bay – forward patrol scout

26.8.43 Developed “Pyrexia of unknown origin” where he ran a high temperature for weeks– high temperature evacuated to casualty stations, hospital

General Depot by 18 Sep, presumably on light duties

7.11.43 Back in action with 22nd Battalion

31.12.43 Temperature high again, fever, evacuated to Australian Casualty Clearing Stations 2/2 and then 106

4.1.44 Diagnosed with malaria transferred around various medical facilities. “Benign Tertian Malaria” where the fever spikes every 3 days

21.2.44. Diagnosed with Scrub Typhus

13.3.44 Transferred to *AHS Wanganella* and sent home from Port Moresby

During her period as *HMAHS Wanganella* travelled 251,611 nautical miles and carried 13,389 patients.

20.3.44 Arrived Sydney, transferred to Ambulance train

21.3.44 Arrived Bonegilla to 106 Australian General Hospital

Transferred to several different hospital and convalescent hospitals

14.7.44 Classified B1 by the Medical Board on B1 = “Medically fit, but, by reason of disabilities of a non-permanent nature, employable only on certain duties requiring restricted medical fitness, or not employable in certain climates”

Moved around to various medical facilities with Benign Tertian Malaria (fever coming and going every few days)

6th July 1944 On General Divisional Duties

31.1.44 Relapse of Scrub Typhus symptoms

11.2.44 General Divisional Duties at Royal Park

15.8.44 Discharged on “Compassionate Grounds” at Royal Park Barracks.

Days of service: 356 Abroad; 453 in Australia

Jack Morrison enlisted in March, 1941, and was in 22nd Battalion which embarked from Townsville on 28 March 1943 for Milne Bay.

From *Australian War Memorial* website:

In March 1943 the 4th Brigade was transferred to Milne Bay in Papua and spent the next 16 months in the islands. The 22nd carried out intensive jungle training, conducted patrols, and was used as a source of labour for work parties. In March the 4th Brigade joined the 5th Division, later becoming part of the 9th Division, with which it saw action. The brigade returned to the 5th Division later in the war.

In September the 22nd and the rest of the 4th Brigade left Milne Bay for Lae in New Guinea. Moving by landing craft, the brigade was to protect Red Beach and support the 9th Division, in preparation for the Huon Peninsula campaign. The 22nd's role was to advance from Lae, follow the coast, and cross the mountains to Finschhafen.

The 4th Brigade saw extensive service in New Guinea. After patrolling the rugged country behind Sattelberg, from December to April 1944, the 4th Brigade pushed on to Gusika,

Lakona, and Fortification Point. Between April and August the brigade garrisoned the Madang area and carried out numerous patrols.

Jack embarked Port Moresby on 20 March 1944 for Sydney suffering from malaria and scrub typhus. He had served a total of 809 days active service, including 356 days in New Guinea.



22nd Battalion in the New Guinea jungle. Australian War Memorial.

The malaria epidemic at Milne Bay, where Jack spent from March to September 1943, was described as among the worst ever suffered by the Australian Army.

In later life, Jack related to his family how he had been a forward patrol scout in New Guinea. This was one of the most horrible jobs as he was sent ahead to seek out the Japanese, and was the first to encounter desperate enemy in the dense jungle, or bodies of the many who had starved when their supply lines were cut off.

Jack was evacuated by the hospital ship *Wanganella* back to Australia. After recovering from the worst, he struggled with malaria relapses for months in and out of hospital settings, between doing light duties. He was then assessed as being not fit enough to return to New Guinea and was discharged in August 1944.

Jack was one of tens of thousands of troops on both sides to suffer terribly from the effects of Malaria and Scrub Typhus. Having relapses for years later and chronic ill health was not uncommon for them.

Jack returned to Phillip Island, where his family ran the local fruit shop in Cowes. He married his sweetheart Leila on 7 August 1946. He continued in the fruit shop business where he was a well-known Phillip Island identity.



Jack Morrison outside the family fruit shop, and with Leila after the war. Morrison family collection

Albert Charles 'Nip' West

War record and experience

VX28813

8th Australian Division, AIF: 2/29th Australian Infantry Battalion

Singapore, Malaya

2.7.1940 Enlisted Caulfield, Melbourne, 24 years old

Early training Mount Martha, Bonagilla, Bathurst

29.11.40 Transferred from training unit to 2/29th Battalion; continued training

Several periods of leave during training period in Australia

30.7.41 Embarked Melbourne aboard *EMT EE*

15.8.41 Disembarked Singapore

Mid-September 41: 2/29th Battalion moved to Segamet, Malaya

23.11.41 Training in Malaya

27.11.41 Hospitalised with Malaria

8.1.1942 Discharged to General Base Depot then convalescence

16.1.42 Rejoined 2/29th Battalion

17.1.42 2/29th reached Bakri and assumed defensive position

19.1.42 2/19th Battalion arrived and held out long enough along Muar Road for the Indian Units and 2/29th Battalion to attempt to withdraw

20.1.42 All Australian/Indians outflanked by Japanese. 2/29th attempted to withdraw towards Parit Sulong, stopped at 98 road block.

Nip West KIA on this day.

Albert West, known as 'Nip', from a farm at Ventnor, Phillip Island, enlisted and was Taken on Strength on 2 July, 1940 with the service number of XV28813. He and his brother Gordon both wanted to enlist, but because they were farmers they were in an 'essential service', and not allowed to both go. They had to choose which one would go. The two young brothers had flipped a coin at their farm on Phillip Island to see which one would enlist. Gordon was a crack shot, and his sister Elsie related in a 1995 interview how he had a double-sided penny to toss. But in the end Nip enlisted instead.

Nip was in the 8th Division, 27th Brigade, and was eventually transferred to the 2/29 Infantry Battalion at the last stages of his training at Bonagilla towards the end of 1940. Nip married Bessie Forrest, daughter of farmers Bob and Marian Forrest from one of Phillip Island's early settler families, on 16 October, 1940 in East Melbourne and he then returned to camp.



Nip West and Bessie Forrest on their wedding day

While he was attached to camp in Australia for 12 months, Nip's records show that he took a total of over three months' leave between April and June, 1941. His brother, Gordon, had developed what we now would call Meningitis, so Nip had to take leave to go back to the island to harvest and deal with the chicory crop and tend the farm until Gordon recovered sufficiently to take over again.

Along with the rest of the 2nd/29th Battalion – and other Phillip Islanders Snow Dixon and Arthur Luke – Nip embarked for Singapore on 30 July, 1941, aboard the *Marnix van St. Aldegonde*. This ship, escorted by *HMAS Perth*, had been requisitioned for troop and POW transport, having only been built in 1930 as a luxury liner for the Netherlands Company. She was later torpedoed in the Mediterranean, then collided with another ship which was also being towed to safety and both sank, but with no loss of life.

They arrived in Singapore on 15 August 1941. The 2nd/29th was then sent to Malaya to continue training. However, malaria struck Nip badly and he was in hospital and then convalescing from 23 November 1941 until 8 January 1942. During that time the Imperial Japanese Army had landed in Malaya just after midnight on 8 December, thereby starting the war in the Pacific just hours before their attack on Pearl Harbour. The Allied forces fought hard but the Japanese were too strong.

Nip had been ill in Malaya and out of action 6 weeks before entering battle eight days later with the 2/29th on 16 January 1942. They had been sent in with the 2/19 to relieve the Indian units trying to defend the area between Muar and Bakri. The Japanese attacked from land and air and began encircling all of the Allied troops, who were forced to take to the jungle to retreat for their lives. The Japanese pressed so hard that the Allied troops could not carry the wounded and were forced to leave them behind.

With Nip's lack of training time and weakness from his severe bout of malaria, he was not really prepared for what he encountered that fateful January.

Nip's record on the 26 January indicates that as far as they knew he was killed in action on 20 January, 1942 - four days after going into action against the Japanese.

Nip West was killed during the withdrawal, in the area along the Muar Road from Parit Sulong. The Allies seemed to have seriously under-estimated the strength and determination of their enemy, and the speed at which they would advance down through Malaya. Nor did the Japanese abide by the rules of the 1929 Geneva Convention of Prisoners of War, which the Japanese Empire had signed but never ratified; as hundreds and thousands of Allied prisoners and wounded were to discover as the war raged.

Retreating, the Australian and Indian forces fought their way through a succession of roadblocks; but Nip was among the many Australian and Indian soldiers killed by the Japanese at the impenetrable 98-mile roadblock on 20 January. Most of the dead and wounded had to be left there as the rest attempted to retreat through the jungle.

An Indian named Mr Gopal, buried the dead from the battlefield in a mass grave in a rubber plantation at Mile 101. As he did so, he removed the identification tags, making it impossible to identify the remains when later exhumed for proper burial. Nip's remains were then interred with the others in Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore, where a headstone commemorates his name.

In a terrible incident, a group of the wounded were murdered by the Japanese in the Parit Sulong Massacre a few days after. Their bodies have never been found; possibly washed away by the river.

In Mary Bourke's book *Keeping the Spirit Alive, a history of the RSL*, her chapter on Nip West relates how Nip's mother, known as 'old Mrs West',

...was met at the ferry by Reverend Hall as she alighted at the Cowes jetty. She looked at the minister and instinctively knew her boy had been killed.

"Nip's gone, hasn't he?" she asked. "I knew it"

She then took Reverend Hall's arm and said, "Don't let me fall," and walked off the jetty, head erect.'

A rectangular aluminium plaque at Kranji War Cemetery, Singapore, was fashioned by an unknown Australian POW at Changi after February 1942. Nip West's name is the last on this honour roll. (p.182)

While Nip's story is terrible enough, his death had a shattering effect on the island community; especially at Ventnor, where he was much-loved. The small, rural community had fared badly during the Depression and survived financially during the war by growing chicory which was used to supplement coffee supplies and manufactured into essence to make a coffee type drink popular with the American forces then stationed in Australia. Some Phillip Island farmers also had contracts to grow carrots and other vegetables, which were dehydrated and used for the Australian forces. With what money the Ventnor community could spare, they purchased a plaque and tree to locate in the Ventnor School grounds. The plaque is now to be seen in the Commemorative area on the Blue Wren Walk at the Phillip Island Cemetery.



Christine Grayden, 25.10.2020

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William Victor “Bill” White

VX65945

Supplies and Transport

2/108 General Transport Company

2/45 Light Aid Detachment – Transport

2/12 Infantry

2/2 Pioneer Battalion

Alice Springs; Queensland; Morotai; Balikpapan

12.11.194 Enlisted, Taken on Strength, Royal Park, Melbourne, 19 years old

6.3.41 Detained to Northern Territory

Driving Army supply trucks Alice Springs to Darwin return

30.8.1943 Entrained for Victoria from Mount Isa

September 43 – March 1944 Training at Seymour and Fishermen’s Bend

16.6.1944 Transferred to 2/45 Transport Platoon

Mid-June 1944-August 18.44 Atherton Tablelands, Trinity Beach, Queensland

Training in mechanics, then handling US military vehicles in all conditions, including amphibious landings and establishing Beach Heads. - GMC 6x6 trucks and jeeps

Training in Beach Landings

16.3.1945 Embarked Cairns aboard *USAT Sea Barb*

28.3.45 Disembarked Morotai

22.4.45 Embarked Morotai to Tarakan aboard an LST (Landing Ship, Tank – amphibious landing vessel)

18.5.45 Returned from Tarakan to Morotai

22.6.45 Embarked from Morotai to Balikpapan, southern coast of Dutch Borneo, aboard *LCT 1308* (Landing Craft Tank – amphibious landing vessel)

June 45-January 1946: Service in Balikpapan with 2/45 Australian Transport Platoon; 2/12 Infantry; 2/2 Pioneer-

Beach Head defence, transport of ammunition, labor.

14.8.45 Japanese surrendered

4.2.46 Disembarked Australia

22.3.46 Discharged from Royal Park Barracks, Victoria. AMRO 253A (R184A) N: on account of demobilization.



Members of Bill White's transport unit on the road from Alice Springs to Darwin, 1942. Australian War Memorial.



Bill White in uniform soon after enlistment.

From Mary Bourke: *Keeping the Spirit Alive: the story of the Phillip Island RSL*. 2008:

After Bill's initial transport service (taking equipment from Alice Springs to Darwin after the first Japanese bombing of Darwin) in the Northern Territory, he returned to Queensland where after special training he became part of a Beach Group, comprising of sections of infantry, engineers, artillery, medical and transport which trained together for beach landing exercises; these were important strategies in the Allies' bid to recapture the Pacific islands now under Japanese control.

Landings in Borneo

Bill spent time in Morotai, a small island to the south east of the Philippines. It was of significant strategic importance to the Allies because of its large air strip. The Americans had already taken Morotai by the time the Australians landed there in 1945 but it was its air strip that was of most value to the Australian forces in their quest to retake Borneo. This strip was its stepping stone.

Borneo, on the other hand, was of military importance to both sides because of its natural resources – it produced oil, high in quality and quantity; therefore guaranteeing a rich supply of fuel.

Bill recalls that "The oil on Tarakan was so pure that they used to take it out of the ground and put it straight into their ships!"

The landings in which Bill was a part of began in Morotai early in 1945, then at Tarakan (north east Borneo) in the May before heading back to Morotai to prepare for their final offensive with the 7th Division at Balikpapan (south east Borneo). In total, some 40,000 troops took part. It was while crossing the Sulawesi Sea to Tarakan that Bill holds his fondest memory of Anzac Day. Perhaps it was the thought of his father being in a similar situation some thirty years earlier that this memory is so dear to him. Bill recalled

It was Anzac Day 1945, and we were on the water (the Sulawesi Sea) going to Tarakan. We were about a few days out from the landing on the 1 May. I'll never forget the Anzac Service on the ship. It was just about sunset. It was a very, very poignant moment for me.

On landing at Tarakan early in the morning, the Australian troops stepped straight into the firing line of the well-entrenched Japanese forces who had been lying in wait. Over two hundred Australians lost their lives in this battle. Such was the intensity shown by the Australians that one VC was awarded, and another awarded posthumously. 'Diver' Derrick who had received his VC during the New Guinea campaign was among those who lost their lives at Tarakan.

Bill: "At Tarakan we were in a large landing craft which carried about three thousand troops.

"We were all Australians but the ships and the Air Force were American. The Japs were very well entrenched (in all places); they would be shelling us as we landed. Tarakan was only a small town but the island was virtually all jungle. Their oil wells weren't huge but they had pipes running down to the tanks on the beach. I suppose the pipes were gravity fed. Our job was to make a foothold for the rest of our troops who had the job of pushing the Japanese back and to stop them from using the oil. We were there for about three weeks.

Balikpapan

"When we went to Balikpapan (with the 7th Division), we had five trucks placed in a small craft; and we were towed behind a large ship all the way from Morotai to Balikpapan. This took about six or seven days before we were cast off. Our job was to go in behind the initial landing force: we landed thirty minutes after the infantry. We were loaded with mortar shells and had to find a certain mortar company. It was pretty hairy but, on landing, we eventually found them and unloaded our goods. We then returned to the beach, reloaded and repeated this operation.



*The landing at Balikpapan, taken from a troop carrier.
Australian War Memorial.*

"They knew exactly what to do from their training days in Queensland. Bill and his mates had been drilled and moulded into a well-organized

unit and undertook these operations with efficiency and precision. They had also been trained in the task of establishing functional living conditions. Part of Bill's job was to help set up the cooking facilities.

"We were well organized. Cook houses were set them up and meals were ready on the first night. We had to carry in our own supplies which was enough for a couple of meals. Being able to provide these meals certainly helped morale - it was excellent. You're all in it; that's it!"

Pilgrimage

A highlight for Bill in his post-war years was the opportunity to take part in a pilgrimage back with 30 other veterans to Borneo, Tarakan and Balikpapan in 1995 to say his final Good-Byes to his fallen mates. In each of the landing sites, a memorial was laid and a solemn Service conducted. But the high point for Bill was at Sandakan, north Borneo, where the horrific Death March of the remaining and emaciated Australian POWs had commenced at the closing stages of the war. These POWs were literally starved and marched to their deaths under their cruel Japanese captors. Only six prisoners escaped to freedom.

Bill stated: "The high point was at Sandakan as we were there when the memorial was dedicated.

"That was really, really dramatic for me, to be in the same area where all these people had been so badly treated. The day after, we were driven down the two-hundred-mile track along which the POWs were forced to march; many to their death."

Bill White counts himself lucky to be among the ones who retained their freedom but he could never forget those who were not so fortunate. He dedicated the rest of his life to the welfare of the families affected by war through his tireless work for Legacy.

On the Home Front – Phillip Island during World War II

Transcripts of selections from interviews from the 1995 video 'Phillip Island Remembers'. (These segments of the video were used in the 2020 YouTube video.)

Introduction

Social historian Allan Box:

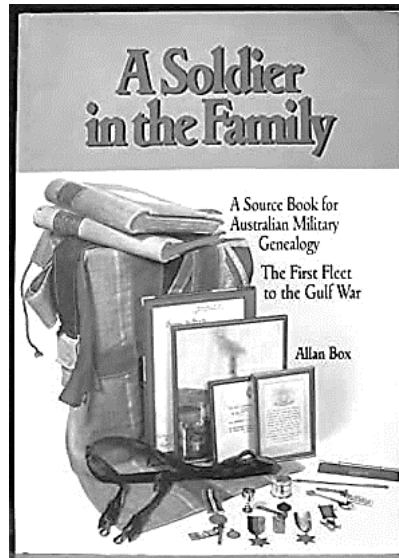
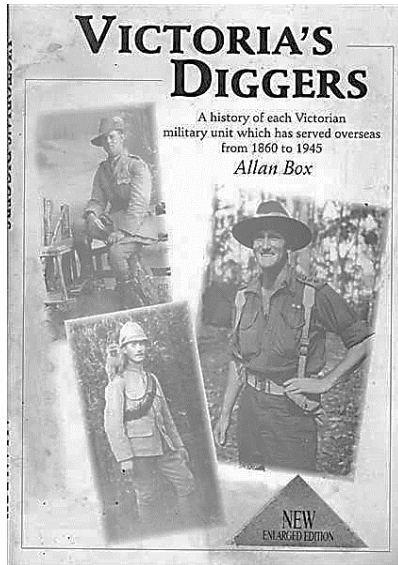
Phillip Island was a rural community of about 1100 people with a number of small hamlets. Mainly fishing and farming. So it was a very small rural community, fairly isolated; although there were connections to the mainland across Western Port.



The Phillip Island community relied on the daily ferry services for decades.

Photo: John Jansson collection.

They did the same things that many parts of Australia did. Many of the men went off to war – about 30% of Australia's population between the ages of 18 and 30 went to war. The women took over the jobs that had been left behind. Some men could not go to war because of the manpower situation. Both older and younger men found they had more responsibility. The whole area joined together in order to strengthen the war effort. I suppose what it did was bring little communities like Phillip Island into connection with the outside world – a world that they had not had much experience of before. Apart from going to war it meant that people worked well together, people carried out different tasks they had not done before.



War books written by Allan Box

Reaction to announcement of war

Edna Thompson:

I was sitting with my mother and father in the kitchen of the family home, 'Carisbrooke', listening to the radio; no television in those days.



A family listens anxiously to Menzies announcing the declaration of war against Germany.

A radio announcer came on to say there was going to be an especial announcement by Bob Menzies who was the Prime Minister at the time, that Great Britain had declared war on Germany, and that meant that we were at war with Germany.



Robert 'Bob' Menzies, left, Prime Minister of Australia at start of war in Europe. John Curtin, right, Prime Minister of Australia who announced that Japan had come into the war and our efforts would transfer from Europe to Asia-Pacific.

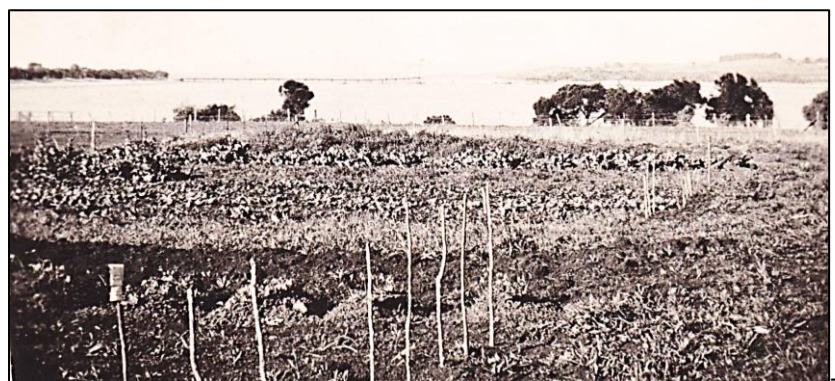
Elsie Johnson:

Millie, who lived on the next farm, and I were together when the war was declared. I remember sitting on the front veranda, talking endlessly about this war, about how terrible and that we couldn't believe it could possibly last. When people said two months I remember thinking *oh, I couldn't possibly live through that.*

Farming

Harry Cleeland:

It was very hard. We were dairying at the time and the whole property amounted to about 2000 acres. It was a lot of work for one man. My sister Pat Bryant was still living at Woolamai House and she was a great help. My mother went to Melbourne and got some young lads on a couple of occasions to help but they wouldn't ever stay long; they didn't like country life. But one lad in particular did stay. He was only 16 but he got the urge – like all young lads, keen to go to war. So one day he told us he would like to go to war. He went to Melbourne, put up his age to 18, joined the army, and a few months later we read where he had been killed in Egypt. He was only a boy.



Vegetable garden at Cleeland House. Image: Cleeland family collection.

Harry Harris:

As the war went on and I left school at 15, we were farming and labour was short so I got back into the business of farming. We were dairying, milking cows and growing chicory which was in great demand by the American army who were out here at the time. Chicory is used to make 'coffee and chicory', though you can get just coffee beans of course. But coffee and chicory was in great demand for the 'Yanks' as we called them. We also grew vegetables like carrots, a few potatoes and beets. Those vegetables were dehydrated then sent to feed the troops.



Chicory harvest on Harris farm. Harris family collection

Malcolm McFee:

Things were pretty tough. You couldn't get manpower. The girls used to help on the farm. It was pretty serious times. Everybody wondered what was going to happen and when it was going to end.

Edith Jeffery:

Our contract during the war was of growing carrots for the forces. That was rather marvelous because it brought us a rather good income. Bob's brother was living with us at the time, so I think Bob had in about 8 acres of carrots – a tremendous amount! However, it saved the day because financially it was pretty good.

Cherry McFee:

When I left school my brother (Stan Jr) joined the army and one of my sisters (Marjorie) was away working. So my other sister (Kath) and I helped our father who had a contract for growing carrots for the forces. We were a type of 'Land Army' girls I guess (see photo below). So we used to help him harvest the carrots. We had to sow the crop, it had to be hoed (for weeding) then harvested and cropped.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Young women weeding a carrot crop in Gippsland. Australian War Museum.

Rationing

Edna Thompson:

Life changed a lot during the war. People didn't move around as much. There was petrol rationing so there would be only one boat a day and the cars didn't move around very much unless they had these charcoal burners (pictured) on them which were always a danger in the summertime because of bushfires. But it created the gas that made the cars go.



Charcoal burner for a car, WWII. Australian War Memorial

There was clothing rationing, meat rationing. Clothing in particular was one of the biggest things with the children. Sugar and butter were rationed. So you really had to think out what you were going to do, sort of make do with vegetables; you grew your own vegetables. If you wanted to go somewhere in particular you had to save your petrol rationing tickets up. But there was one good thing about having a baby: if you had a baby you were given extra petrol rationing tickets, so that was quite an incentive!

Edith Jeffery:

I well remember the rationing. We had rationing: clothing rationing, food rationing and petrol rationing. Coupons for this that and the other, but we all seemed to get by. On the farm we had sufficient coupons to keep us going. We had wonderful neighbours in Jimmy Roberts and his wife Gertie, and the Luke family. We had a barter system that worked very, very well – extremely well. I was having babies at the time of course; three children born in the war years!



Edith, with children during WWII. Jeffery family collection.

However, we did manage to have enough food and enough coupons because on the farm you have your own eggs and milk and butter and so on.

Commonwealth of Australia
1949
TEA and BUTTER V C 113660
RATION CARD

Name *R. A. Parrett*
Address *Manilla, Corby St
Mt. Balmorhea*

Holder's name and address must be inserted immediately upon receipt of card

FOLD HERE

If this Card is found it must be returned at once to the Deputy Director of Rationing, Melbourne

1949 BUTTER 60
1949 BUTTER 59

T77 1949 T78 1949 T79 1949 T80 1949

Tea and butter, and clothing ration coupon cards. Victorian Collections.

Millie Whiteman:

We had to make many sacrifices. We didn't have all the luxuries. You learned to economize. Coupons for everything. We were all growing up just wanting to go to dances. Our frocks we had to wash in Shellite – it's a wonder we didn't get blown up! Because there was no dry-cleaning, no mod cons. Our frocks we had to order through mail order service in Melbourne.

Malcolm McFee:

Of course there was rationing.... Petrol you couldn't get. There was a certain amount but I think it was only 2 or 3 gallons a month. You didn't go very far on that of course!



Petrol coupons WWII. Victorian Collections.

Harry Cleeland:

We were self-sufficient on the farm. We grew our own vegetables and had a big orchard. We killed a sheep for meat and lived off the land. Rabbits were plentiful and mutton birds. Although the (mutton bird gathering) season was closed, we still took the risk and got a feed of mutton birds every year. Picked up the (mutton bird) eggs as many an islander did to supplement the diet.

Entertainment

Malcolm McFee:

In the army (Light Horse) we never had much spare time of course. We may have had one or two cricket and football matches. But here sport was pretty strong. We used to have cricket in the summer and football in the winter, but with the war that all stopped. We never had the manpower to carry on with it. Football started up again in 1944 when Wonthaggi started a comp and we joined that and have been with that ever since. The cricket started up again at much the same time. We used to create a lot of entertainment for raising money for the troops with dances and all that sort of thing. We used to have a dance in the Shire Hall in Cowes one Friday night and then the next Friday night they'd have one at Ventnor in the Ventnor hall. That

was the only entertainment we had. It was a different lifestyle. Everywhere we went we either had to push a bike, or ride a horse or something like that.



Typical war-time country town dance, held at Drouin Hall.

I remember one incident that was rather funny, although we didn't think it was funny at the time. We had an old Dodge car. And one night we had it parked at the front while we had tea. All of a sudden there was a tremendous BANG! as one of the tyres blew out. So that was the end of that because you couldn't buy tyres. The car was pushed into the shed and there it stayed.

School children



Ventnor State School No. 3895. School Student Photograph 1941.

Back Row L-R: Mr Patrick Healy, Harry Harris, Alberta Harris, Alice Clark, Una Coels, Joan Hunter, Shirley Hunter, Ken Clark.

Middle Row L-R: Bill Trew, Ruth Harris, Cefn Price, Adele Justice, Beryl Hunter, Isobel Justice.

Front Row L-R: Peter Justice, Sylvie Trew, Adele Jenner, Audrey Harris.

Ruth Ryan:

I was going to school at Ventnor on Phillip Island at the time and I can remember clearly when war was announced, thinking there was something exciting about war that there wasn't about Depression. We were coming out of the Great Depression. Our school got ready then for our war effort. We built a trench, an air raid shelter along the front of the school. We used to have practice. The teacher would blow the whistle and we all rushed to this air raid shelter and rushed to fall in. It's a wonder the air raid shelter didn't fall in on top of us! As a war effort we decided to collect bottles. We decided to have a day collecting bottles at the tip and we'd sell those and make money for the war effort.

Harry Harris:

What I remember most about the war were not the best things to remember as a small schoolboy. It was a shock when war was announced, but a bigger shock when the Japanese came into the war and we were very conscious of what could have happened, even though we were many miles away from the actual war zones. As a schoolboy we set up the Junior Red Cross and did a fair bit of work raising money to send parcels to former Ventnor pupils who were either POWs or away in the army. That gave us a great deal of satisfaction when we got a note back from some of them to say that they had received the parcel. But it was very sad when we had to plant a tree in memory of one of the former Ventnor students that was killed in Malaya. (Charles 'Nip' West) That was a very sad time.



*Phillip Island school children with tyres collected for the war effort.
Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection.*

Blackouts

Edna Thompson:

They started organising blackouts. They thought we would have aircraft flying over us and bombing us, so all the houses had to have blackouts. My father and a man who was just down the road here in Church Street, Ron Scott, were the Air Wardens for the eastern part of Cowes, east of Thompson Avenue. Each night they would go around to make sure the houses were properly blacked out. I remember particularly one night my father coming home and just about hitting the roof because we were the only house showing a light through the big skylight in the ceiling at Carisbrooke and we showed everything! Anyway that didn't happen again.

Cherry McFee:

The thing I remember most was the blackouts. Every window had to be blacked out and the car lights had to be blacked out so there was just a split of light showing. The council painted the trunks of the cypress trees white (Thompson Avenue Golden cypress trees), so that anyone driving into the town would know where they were.

Edith Jeffery:

We coped very well with the blackout. I was able to buy unbleached calico and got some condie's crystals and was able to dye the calico dark and put that all up the windows. The cars all had to be hooded so that there would be no lights seen from inside the car windows. But we had it really well set up here with the VDC (Volunteer Defence Corps), the coast-watchers along the coast, the aircraft spotters. As Peter will remember, we were really at war weren't we? We were really defending our little island. And I believe if the Japanese had really arrived – and we heard there were submarines out in Bass Strait – if they had really landed they would have got a very, very noisy and very 'good' reception!



Badges worn by members of the Volunteer Air Observers aircraft spotters and Volunteer Defence Corps, who did coastal patrols. Victorian Collections

Women on the Home Front during World War II

Edna Thompson:

I had just finished my nurse training: general training and midwifery training at the women's Hospital, and infant welfare. I had done a bit of infant welfare work. I came back to the island to help my mother and father and my aunt who had guest houses here at Carisbrooke and over the road at Broadwater. There's a housing estate there now. I did the first aid demonstrations on the island.



First aid class in the US during WWII. Edna Thompson delivered similar classes on Phillip Island, San Remo and even in parts of West Gippsland during WWII.

That went on for quite a long time; I think everybody came. Then I did the home nursing training after that also to San Remo, Drouin and Warragul. I trained people to look after other people if there had been a disaster here and then, if need be, look after the sick in their own homes. I was asked to teach the islanders first aid. So we had lots of meetings in the old Shire Hall which was in Thompson Avenue.

It's not there now, it's been demolished, but it was opposite the pharmacy. We had the use of the lower Town Hall, and had the lectures there. People came from all over the island and San Remo. After that there was home nursing lectures. That all took quite a long time.

My mother was head of the Red Cross here at the time, but she didn't feel she was qualified to advise the council on the well-being of the citizens. So I took her place. I used to sit up there in the council meetings next to Bob Davies' grandfather, Mr Dawson Davie. When something came up there about the care of the island people, I was asked and I used to give my advice.



Phillip Island Shire hall, Thompson Ave. Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection

There were about 100 women and children here brought down from Java and the other islands up there when they first arrived into Australia after the Japanese invasion. Just after they arrived there was a big fire at Oswin Roberts sanctuary where there were a great number of koalas. A lot of them were burnt but not killed, and they were brought into Broadwater where my aunt Florence had hammocks put up for these badly burnt koalas to be in. These Dutch ladies tucked in and helped look after these very badly burnt koalas. Most of those koalas recovered from their constant nursing. The doctor we had at the time, Doctor Williams, was able to produce some very, very new antiseptic ointment, which is probably very common now. But it was wonderful in the healing of the wounds that these koalas had. After that the koalas were put back into the wild. These ladies had a school there at the Broadwater guesthouse and they stayed for some months.

Another thing my mother did as Red Cross commandant on the island at the time was organised the making of camouflage nets. The army used to put these great big nets over the tanks and the tents where the army used to stay. My mother had the makings of two camouflage nets out here under the tree where there was a veranda, and anybody visiting would be given a shuttle and taken out onto the veranda and add to the camouflage net. They made dozens of them! People coming down particularly to make these camouflage nets. They would have a cup of tea and a chat and make these nets.

And also there was a centre here for making bandages to send overseas. Strangely, we demolished a building a few years back and here was a box of these bandages, still in beautiful order, that had not been sent away overseas. They were heavy calico bandages finished off with a safety pin already to undo and use.

My brother, John Thornburgh, enlisted in the Army. I can remember he came home to say that "I'm still here". But my mother was devastated that he was going off (overseas to war). I can remember us standing down at Erehwon Point Cowes on the rocks, watching this ferry go off with John waving. And my poor mother was breaking her heart.

Cherry McFee:

A typical day would be helping my father on the farm and also making fruitcakes to send overseas for the soldiers. We also used to sit of an evening knitting socks for the soldiers. But I couldn't turn the heel of the sock properly so my mother said: "No way! The soldiers will get blisters from those socks on their feet." So my socks were never sent away.



WWII sock knitting pattern in Australian Women's Weekly, 1940. Image: Trove

Edith Jeffery:

The barber was called up so it became my lot to get some clippers and some good scissors and do a bit of hair cutting for the locals. Short back and sides only! But it earned me 2/- (2 shillings, or \$0.20) a haircut.

Bombs and Mines

Harry Harris:

The Navy used to have gunnery practice, ack ack (anti-aircraft gun) practice, from the Peninsula at Cerberus Navy Base. They used to shoot at a target towed by a small plane which I think came from the base at Somers. An ack ack shell is set to go off at a certain height, but some of these shells must have been duds and they were landing around our place at Ventnor. You'd be walking around and all of sudden BANG! One of these things would explode. Anyhow it got that hectic towards the end that we had to notify the Navy, the Defence Department, so they

shifted the target so we weren't in direct line any more. One of our neighbours was repairing the gate – into his cow yard I think it was. When he was working there he was called away to a telephone. Anyway one of these shells landed in the gateway. Had he still been there he would have been lucky to have still been alive.

Another time I was looking at some rabbit traps and there was a heck of a bang out at Bass Strait and a big flash in the sky. I was quite convinced the Japs were landing at that time, but they weren't.

Ruth Ryan:

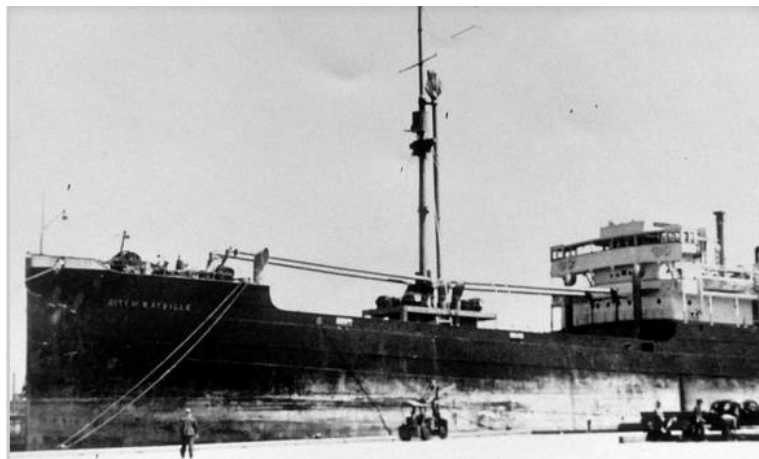
Well we *were* bombed. The naval base were practising and the shells landed round the island and near the Ventnor school. Oh, there was much excitement that we were being attacked by our own Navy! I think in the end our father got in touch with the Minister. But that was very frightening because they were live shells, so the Navy came over and disposed of them.



*Rupert Harris supervises a commemorative event at Ventnor State School.
Harris family collection.*

Harry Cleeland:

One day a mate and I were riding horseback along Cape Woolamai on the ocean beach and we came across this big name plate that had *City of Rayville* on it. I decided I would bring the draught horses down and tow it home. It was a huge thing with letters carved into it two inches deep. But by the time I got down to it again it had apparently washed off and I never saw it again. But it always worried me and some 50 years later in 1990 the story was written in the *Age* newspaper, which I happen to see, about the *City of Rayville*. So I read it right through. A most interesting story.



City of Rayville. Wikipedia

It appears that the *City of Rayville* hit the mine off Cape Otway and the fishermen of Cape Otway set out in three small barracuda boats, you would call them, about 22 foot (6.7m) long. They rescued the crew who were in lifeboats. One man lost his life – at the last minute he went back to get something and he went down with the ship.

Prior to that the German raider *Pinguin* captured a Norwegian trader *Storstad* which they renamed *Passat* and loaded it with mines, which they set from the east coast of Tasmania to Cape Otway. The first casualty was a ship called *SS Cambridge* off Wilson's Promontory on the 7th November 1940, where one sailor lost his life. The next casualty was the *City of Rayville*.

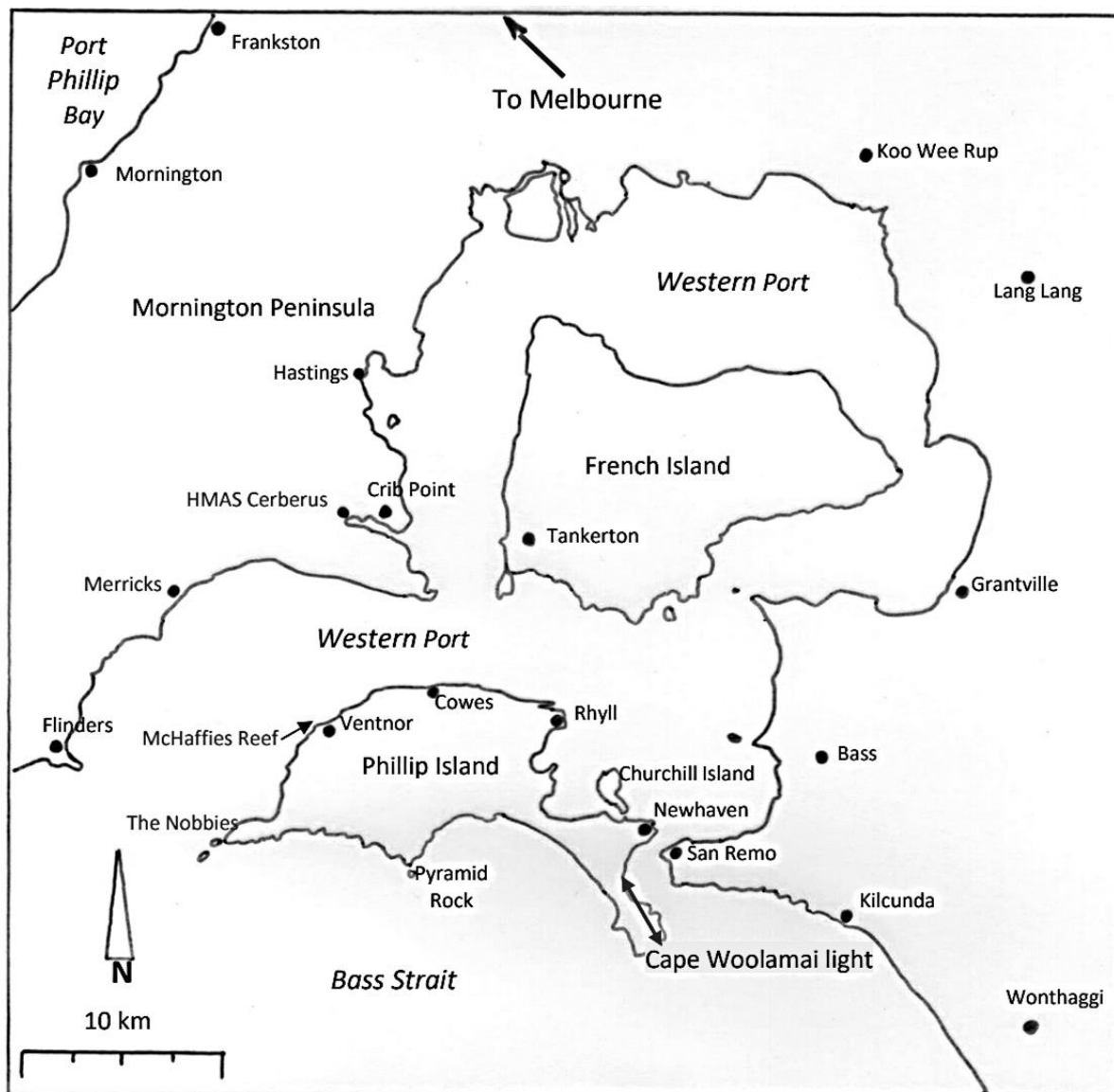
Will we be invaded?

Edna Thompson:

At that time they were planning to blow up the bridge which was quite new at the time – the first bridge, not the current bridge. The evacuation of the islanders would be by fishing boats. This was all because they were quite certain that Western Port Bay was going to be invaded because of Crib Point Naval Base over here near Hastings, which was a very important planning centre at that stage. We had a lot of ships going in and out of that centre. That's why they thought the island would be invaded. Also just over here on the Mornington Peninsula at Balnarring near Merricks, there was a big army centre and that had to be protected too. As soon as General MacArthur came down from the Philippines that was decided then that the Japanese would not get down this far.

Harry Harris:

With the naval base at Hastings, Crib Point way, there was always the threat of invasion here. There was always the thought that they would blow up the bridge. But when you think about it I don't know what good the island would have served the Japanese if they had arrived here. But we were all behind the war effort. We had the VDC and as a youngster I tried to get in but was too young to do patrol work. We had some army personnel stationed out near home (Ventnor) for quite some time. They were signallers with the AIF.



Western Port, showing the main targets if the Japanese had invaded.

Wikipedia, Christine Grayden.

Harry Cleeland:

I was living at Cleeland House and farming on my parents' property at Cape Woolamai and one night – on the 11th of December 1940 – my father got a telegram from the Ports and Harbours to put the Cape Woolamai light out immediately. I was sound asleep in bed. It was 10 or 11 o'clock at night and the thought of going up to Cape Woolamai on such a terrible night – it was blowing a howling south-west gale and the rain was pouring down. I wanted to put it off until morning but my father wouldn't have a bar of that, and said "It has got to be done tonight". The first problem was to catch a horse. The horses were fed on chaff which we usually carried out in a tin, so I just walked into a small paddock where the horses were and rattled a tin and they all came up. So I caught one and saddled him up and set off up to Cape Woolamai.



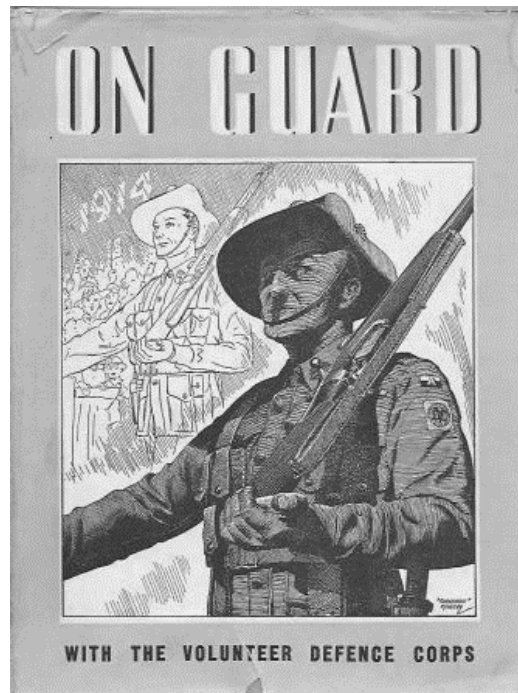
Horse and pony yard at Cleeland House. Cleeland family collection

Well the first part of the journey wasn't too bad along the beach, 4 km on the beach of white sand and I could see where I was going. But once I got onto the Cape itself with the black sand, tussocks and marram grass, I couldn't see a thing. All I could see through the blinding rain was a light that flashed every 12 seconds. So I headed for that. But it was pretty gruesome because Cape Woolamai is undermined with mutton bird burrows as you know. Not a very nice place to ride a horse. Anyway I eventually got there, but there was nowhere to tie the horse up. The light was very close to the cliff with a 400 foot drop (122 m) so I had to hold the horse with one hand and work with tools to turn the light out. The rain didn't ease up and the wind didn't ease up, but we got the job done and eventually headed for home. It was an uneasy feeling because everything was kept secret. I was half-expecting to meet the enemy on the beach on the way home.



*Harry Cleeland (left) and friends at the Cape Woolamai light after WWII.
Cleeland family collection.*

Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC)



Raymond Grayden:

I was a member, I was one of the first to enlist in the local Volunteer Defence Corps platoon of 54 men. It involved training by military personnel from the mainland in the art of guerilla warfare in case we were needed. We were even trained in unarmed combat. We were even taught how easy it was to overcome a man who was charging at you with a fixed bayonet and you only had your bare hands. All you had to do was push the bayonet to one side and push the rifle butt up under his chin and break his neck.



Training session for a rural VDC unit. Australian War Memorial

Our first news of a casualty was Private Charles ('Nip') West, who I went to school with at Ventnor. He was killed in action on the Malayan Peninsula. One of our first sad duties which we had to perform as the Volunteer Defence Corps platoon, was to form a guard of honor while Reverend George Hall, who was at that time principal at the St Paul's Boys Home (at Newhaven) and also the vicar at Cowes, conducted the memorial service. We did lose a few young men who were taken prisoner and died an unfortunate death.

Edith Jeffery:

Bob, my late husband, took it very, very seriously. He was in the VDC and said: "Righto, I'm in this, and if the Japanese come they're going to cop a bit of you know what."



A VDC unit marching before they received their uniforms. Australian War Memorial.

I remember first of all uniforms. That's how they got the nickname of 'dad's army' because first of all they were sloppy old uniforms. Then after a while they got decent uniforms and they really looked the part. But I can picture Bob cleaning the rifle, polishing his boots and getting ready for all the practice and drill they had to do and so on. Very, very proud moment for me when he came home and said: "I am now a Lance Corporal."

Ernie Booth:

I was storekeeper at the time, and the blacksmith opposite was Jack Williams who was captain of the VDC here at Bass. All I had to do was to supply the goods and chattels that would be used here by the VDC on Phillip Island, such as rifles, ammunition and stuff like that. And uniforms. I helped to conduct the shoots that were held on Phillip Island for personnel from Bass and Phillip Island, and sometimes the rest of the crowd would come in from Archie's Creek, Kilcunda, Bass, Dalyston and Glen Alvie. The best people were mainly made up from

people from Bass, a few from Corinella, a few from Kilcunda, from Glen Alvie and from Woolamai.

We had the Bass bridge mined, or loaded up to be blown up. If it had been blown it would have been a farce because the bridge as you know is a small bridge, and the width of the river – it's a small river so you could jump over it anyway. I'll mention two things. One is a joke actually. We got sixpence a day (\$0.05) when you had to do duty. We were on 12 hours on and 12 hours off. They put us on to watch the bridge over Bourne Creek at Kilcunda on Christmas day and Boxing Day, and we weren't allowed to let anyone cross over it. So what happened? We were taken off after Christmas and Boxing Day and you could go across at your leisure.

The other thing, we had a shootout at the rifle range with machine guns, and it was summertime when we were not supposed to use tracer bullets on account of fire. We had three submachine guns – Lewis type – and I was in charge of one of the machine guns. Unbeknownst to everyone else they had loaded the traces in, so you can imagine as underneath the ordinary rifle shots going over their heads, these tracer bullets started going over as well. It frightened the heck out of them!

The Phillip Island men were stationed down at the Narrows when they observed something peculiar out at sea. Shortly after that observation was made known to the authorities, the people who were stationed down at the Powlett River seafront observed something foreign out at sea. At that time there was nothing in the way of military substance to have been in that area, so it was reported to be a submarine. The amount of work that all these VDC fellows put in – I don't think you could even give an estimation of that amount of time and effort they put in for nothing. Well the big sum of sixpence (5 cents) per day! It was decided by the fellows who had to go on duty to put it into platoon funds. I don't know whether it ever got spent or not. There was roughly each night six or seven fellows and three of us during the day, so it cost the government a total of 5/- or 6/- (5 or 6 shillings - 50-60 cents) a 24-hour day.

When I mention the Bourne Creek Bridge at Kilcunda – most of the fellows carried rifles or shotguns of their own, and between all the fellows we had between us one 303 rifle, and one cartridge, which was also farcical really. But I would like to emphasise the fact that a few 303 rifles became available and they were all once they had taken off people throughout the state for these uses. Eventually we became equipped with American rifles which were 300s and they were fantastic rifles after the 303s. There were quite a lot of shoots done on Phillip Island, particularly with the new rifle to become acquainted with it. It was interesting to note that when we were firing at the range – a range of 200 yards was on one side of the road, and anything beyond that was on the other side of the road, so we had to put flags up on the road warning people not to proceed that there was a shoot on.

The other thing was that – while we are on the shooting: at home at the store I had 20 boxes of hand grenades unprimed in storage in the shed, and about 5000 rounds of ammunition under my two daughters' beds.

They taught us how to use gelignite underwater at Toora at the old pier because all able-bodied men had to stay behind in the event of Japanese approach. The other people were to make their way to Shuntoff, at the back of Grantville, and make for the hills at the back of the Warragul area.



Rural VDC personnel during hand grenade training. Australian War Memorial.



Rural VDC unit in practice. Australian War Memorial.

Julie Box:

I think in a way the VDC, although it was taken very seriously by the community, was a time for a lot of the men to get off the farm and onto the beach. They were supplied with all these lovely warm coats. My father never had such a lovely, warm woollen coat as this. At night time it was a kind of social outing. They met the other farmers, because everything in the way of dances and things had been curtailed a bit.

Raymond Grayden:

Our first bridge was opened between San Remo and Newhaven in November 1940. That was a wonderful for the island, but I think I've mentioned before that the Japanese were observed photographing that bridge about May 1940. Before they came into the war they were photographing our coastline. It was confirmed that they were Japanese and not Chinese. The bridge was mined so that in the event of any enemy coming onto our territory it could be immediately blown up. But fortunately we never had to do that.

Peter Forrest:

Word got around that the bridge had been mined. But as far as I know it was never mined, because we were through the paces of blowing it down. That was going to be the VDC's job: to cut the cables well with gelignite, and the whole suspension would collapse and the whole bridge would collapse. We did a trial run up the back of the cemetery with cables (left over from) off the bridge construction. I don't know how much gelignite was used but it was a terrific amount. They laid the piece of cable over a stump and packed the gelignite all around it and it certainly cut it through.



Peter Forrest at home on his farm, Phillip Island. Forrest family collection.

You can imagine with the weight of the bridge on it, the span of the bridge, that it would not have to be that much to cut it through because the weight would tear it apart. I'm not sure if they were also going to blow up the approaches to the bridge because we were shown how to drill holes in the timbers which they did as a trial on trees about 18 inches through and they just fell down. So I don't know what the rest of the process would be.

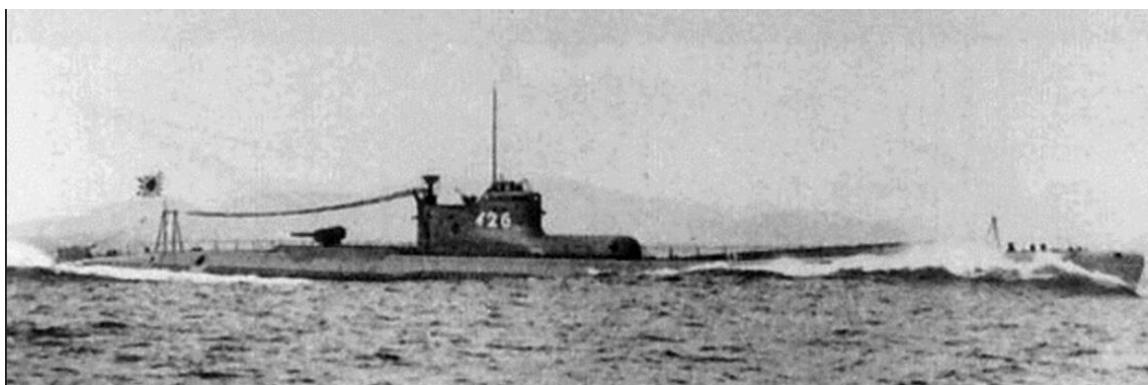
Malcolm McFee:

When the VDC troops were marching over the bridge they had to break step because the bridge used to bounce up and down because you remember it was swung on those cables. It used to bounce about a foot or even 18 inches! (45.7 cm)

Edna Thompson:

The other thing we had to do for the men (who had not already gone off to the war) – like the farmers or people in special industries, or older men – they formed a group for coast watching called the Volunteer Defence Corps and they used to patrol the beaches for signs of invasion or anything like that. At the same time we had to watch for any aircraft that flew overhead. We had to report them to headquarters; describe the sort of plane and the time it flew over. It wasn't generally known then and I don't know if it's known now, but a lot of ships were sunk off Wilson's Promontory. Coastal ships. Ships coming around to Melbourne and maybe Adelaide. There were Japanese submarines out in Bass Strait and my husband was living at the Gippsland Lakes at the time and he was in the VDC. Four or five nights a week he would be out patrolling with other men along the 90-Mile Beach. They would see these lights out at sea were possibly the submarines were recharging their batteries. Sometimes they would sight footsteps



at low tide coming up into the sand dunes they supposed were Japanese looking for water or possibly a contact. They would get the Commonwealth Police down from Melbourne who would search the area, staying in the area for some time. It was a very worrying time to think that these Japanese submarines were there, so we didn't know what could be happening. It was just before the Coral Sea battle – the one that really saved Australia.



Japanese submarine similar to those seen in Bass Strait.

Peter Forrest:

We did go out to Surf Beach coast watching. We took it in turns but it was a continuous job every night. We were broken into parties so that so many went down there to keep an eye on what was happening or what was not happening. I remember one night that caused a bit of a stir, when we saw a boat going along. It was in the blackout days, and we saw a light from a ship going along towards Melbourne, though there was not supposed to be any lights in those blackout days. So we reported that to I'm not sure where. Anyway it was a porthole in a steamer. Somebody had left the porthole out. It was right out in the Straits but I don't know how far out. Also the ones who were watching out at the Nobbies reported it, so we weren't seeing things.

World War Two Service		
LANCE CORPORAL PETER FORREST V389095		
	SERVICE	AUSTRALIAN ARMY
	DATE OF BIRTH	22 FEBRUARY 1912
	PLACE OF BIRTH	COWES
	DATE OF ENLISTMENT	26 JANUARY 1942
	LOCALITY ON ENLISTMENT	COWES, VIC
	PLACE OF ENLISTMENT	COWES, VIC
	NEXT OF KIN	FORREST, ETHEL
	DATE OF DISCHARGE	15 OCTOBER 1945
POSTING AT DISCHARGE	23 BATTALION VOLUNTEER DEFENCE CORPS	
 COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS		

Peter Forrest's VDC war service record summary. National Archives of Australia

Volunteer Air Observers Corp

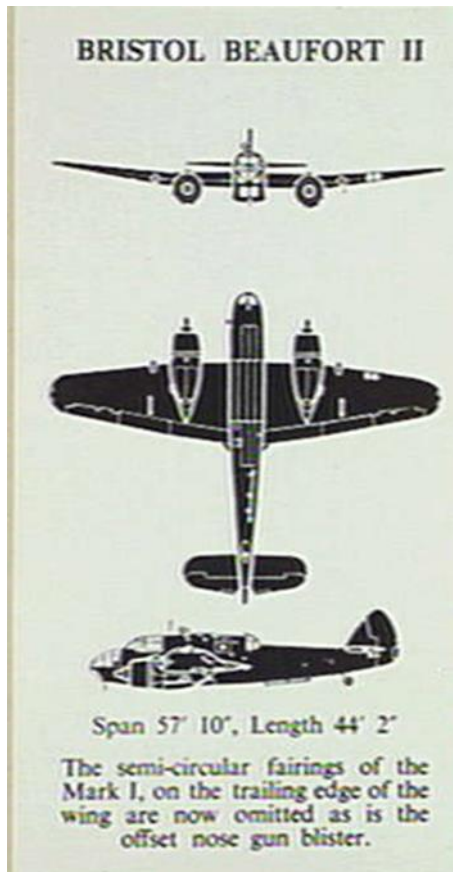
VAOC

A VAOC station was formed in Cowes. Australia-wide the Corps had an 18,000 strong membership in Australia, all under the control of the Royal Australian Air Force. Most of the civilian volunteers ran their observation post in whatever suitable location and venue available to them. The Phillip Island VAOC headquarters were inside a stripped-out body of an early model bus on a vacant block of land in the middle of the Cowes shopping area. The inside of the bus was decked out with identification posters, cloud recognition charts and numerous model aircraft made by Arthur Goodall, the mechanic in charge of the council-operated Cowes electricity supply. The Phillip Islanders were rostered on to cover the whole 24 hours per day – teenagers and women in daylight hours and men during the night.



The bus body that was used on Phillip Island during WWII as the headquarters of the Phillip Island VAOC. Phillip Island & District Historical Society collection.

The VAOC volunteers' role was to keep watch on the skies overhead, both for allied planes passing by on routine flights, and also for enemy aircraft. When a sighting was made, Airflash messages were sent by phone to the National Herbarium in the Royal Botanic Gardens, which sent them on to Air Defence Headquarters in Preston Town Hall. One of the Phillip Island VAOC post volunteers recalled that Phillip Island spotters were kept very busy because not only did pilots use the island as a navigation point, but it was also a turning point for Liberator bombers on training flights from Tocumwal. Catalina flying boats also came over en route to Point Cook or Lake Boga. The RAAF Beaufighters, known as Whispering Death, would fly at wave-top height over the water between Rhyll, French and Phillip Islands. These aircraft had a distinctive snub-nose design, and would be long gone before the sound of the engines was heard. This could be quite disconcerting for anyone who could hear the aircraft but not see it.



Bristol Beaufort II bomber on identification silhouette poster (left) and Catalina flying boat (right) were often recorded by Phillip Island VAOC spotters. Australian War Memorial.

Julie Box

We had aircraft spotters, particularly with the spotters' station was next to what became the kindergarten in Chapel Street East (currently Phillip Island and District Genealogical Society) next to the Denham family.

Beryl Denham was my lifelong friend though she died last year. Her mother Eva Denham ran that spotters' station and was there all day. She received a wonderful certificate from the Royal Australian Air Force, which says:

"As a record in appreciation of the patriotic response to the call of country in serving in the Volunteer Air Observers Corp"

This is for three years of service and it's from Air Vice Marshal Sir George Jones and unit commanding officer W D Heath. These are names I know because George Jones had a retirement home down here at some time near the Cowes Primary School. That was an interesting certificate.

Mrs Denham was one of those quiet people who just did her job and her work and would have been a most reliable and dependent person. The family still have the logbooks which she kept quite meticulously.



Certificate presented to Eva Denham in appreciation of her three years of coordination of the Phillip Island VAOC volunteers. Julie Box collection.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

044863

*Typical setup inside a VAOC office. The woman standing is holding binoculars to watch the skies and recognise individual aircraft. Common aircraft are depicted on posters on the walls. The woman on the phone is reporting an aircraft sighting to headquarters in Melbourne.
Australian War Memorial.*



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

140785

*A training and conference session being held at VAOC headquarters during WWII.
Australian War Memorial*

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The World War I essays by John Jansson in this book are derived from both a physical exhibition curated by John, an Online Exhibition curated by Christine, and talks presented by John to General Meetings of the Phillip Island & District Historical Society website.

The Second World War essays resulted from research as part of the 'At Home and At War – Phillip Island' series of videos project, 2020, which was supported by the Victorian Government. The videos can be viewed on the Phillip Island & District Historical Society's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@phillipislanddistricthisto9047>

Project Coordinator, Producer: Christine Grayden

Digital Editor and Video/Audio Engineer: Simon Eddy

Narrators: Ashley Reed, John Eddy

Script: Mary Bourke, Christine Grayden

Extracts from the video: 'Phillip Island Remembers', 1995, by Phillip Island & District Historical Society Inc.

1995 Video/Editor: Robert McKay

Interviews by students of Newhaven College and members of the Phillip Island & District Historical Society

For additional information, sincere thanks to:

The Phillip Island residents interviewed in the 1995 video
Family members and friends of people featured

Members of the Phillip Island & District Historical Society Inc. and Phillip Island community for further information and images
Mary Bourke for permission to use excerpts from *Keeping the Spirit Alive: The Story of the Phillip Island RSL*. 2008.

Research for video series: Christine Grayden, John Jansson, Julie Box

Images, archival records and further information courtesy of:

Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs Anzac Portal

Australian War Memorial (AWM)

Imperial War Museums

Library and Archives, Northern Territory

Museums Victoria

National Archives of Australia (NAA)

Phillip Island Returned and Services League (RSL)

State Library of Victoria

TROVE – National Library of Australia

Websites of various battalions, companies, squadrons, Prisoner of War camps and others

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Phillip Islanders during World Wars I and II

Experiences and challenges – in the forces and on the home front

Essays from the Phillip Island & District Historical Society

These essays were originally written to commemorate several events in Australia's history: the centenary of the landing at Gallipoli, the centenary of the end of World War I, and 75 years since the end of World War II. The Phillip Island & District Historical Society members wished to commemorate the Phillip Islanders who lived and died in these terrible wars, and those who stayed at home to grow food, and contribute to the war effort in many other ways. Most of the local men who served in World War I are represented here, while nine of the men who served in World War II are featured. Aspects of the life on the Home Front are described in the words of those who lived on Phillip Island during WWII.



Readers will find much detail on the lives and fates of the servicemen, many of whom did not live to return to Australia. Others returned to build lives of purpose and value on Phillip Island and elsewhere, although for many years after the wars they rarely shared their war experiences – even with those close to them. John Jansson, Christine Grayden and Mary Bourke have tried to speak for them here....