

Chapter 2

First World War

The Men on the Roll of Honour

*Under a byzantine roof
we serious twelve wait for light
to fall on sacred stone*

*lest we forget
war's glory was a trumped up charge
settled with mud*

blood among blood-red poppies

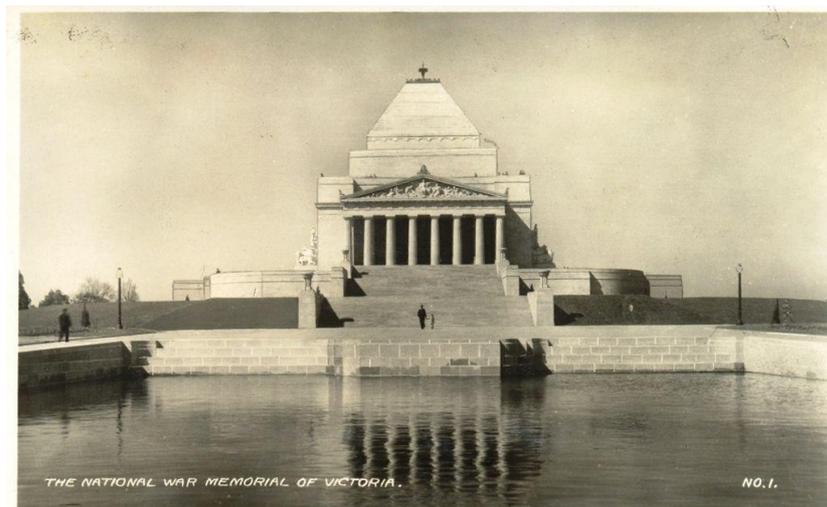
*of men lined up
in cursive ranks along
the cool corridors*

*each interrupted life
now on parade
in perfect calligraphy*

INTO THE WORLD'S LIGHT
William Rush

After the First World War, every community in Australia erected a monument of some sort to commemorate those from their district who served. Organisations such as fire brigades, churches, schools, clubs and employers erected Rolls of Honour to be displayed in their midst, and on a larger scale, monuments were erected in prominent positions in the cities, towns and hamlets. Every town in Australia has a monument to their brave sons and daughters who served their country.

The grandest of these was the Shrine of Remembrance in Melbourne. It was controversial in its concept and design; championed by Sir John Monash and opposed by Keith Murdoch. The concept of building a war memorial to honour the men and women of Victoria who served in the First World War was first mooted in the early 1920s. Monash, an engineer, took control of its construction but died in 1931, three years before its completion. It now serves as a memorial to all Australians who have served in any war.



The Shrine in the 1930s showing the reflecting pool in front of the north face, where the World War II forecourt is now located.

The Australian War Memorial in Canberra is an even larger memorial which was opened in 1941. It was intended as a memorial for the First World War and was extended to incorporate the Second World War, opening in 1952.

But the essence of grandiosity does not fit the true Australian spirit of remembrance. The most moving tributes can be found in the small settlements spread over the continent. They have a distinct communal spirit where family members of the district could remember their beloved sons and daughters in the hearth of their families. In some cases, monuments were erected in fields

where no towns exist. One example is the Chatsworth War memorial near Caramut in Western Victoria. It stands in an open field by the side of the road surrounded by countryside. Chatsworth was a large rural holding but there is no town there now.



The Chatsworth War Memorial on the Caramut – Chatsworth Road.

There are seven names on it and shows that three of them made the supreme sacrifice. They were N. Beggs, J. Boswell and P. Crane. The simple monument must have been a heart-breaking reminder to the small community of the loss of nearly half their boys.

Another form of memorial initiated in Victoria was the planting of Avenues of Honour. There are over one hundred of them in Victoria, the largest being at Ballarat. However, the first one was planted in Eurack, near Beac in the Colac district of Victoria. This avenue was planted in May 1916, on Arbour Day, by George Leigh Pentreath, who was the teacher at the local school. He left Eurack two months later to join the AIF and served with distinction in France. He was awarded a Military Cross at Polygon Wood. He was a lieutenant who led his men in attacking a German strong point taking 100 prisoners. The tallest tree in the Eurack Avenue was planted in memory of Kitchener.

Like the Chatsworth memorial, the avenue stands on its own in the countryside. The small village that once stood there has disappeared. The school was removed more than 40 years ago. The church has gone too, and the post office that adjoined the teacher's residence is no more. But the Avenue of Honour remains as a testament to the sons of the district. There are six pairs of brothers in the avenue.

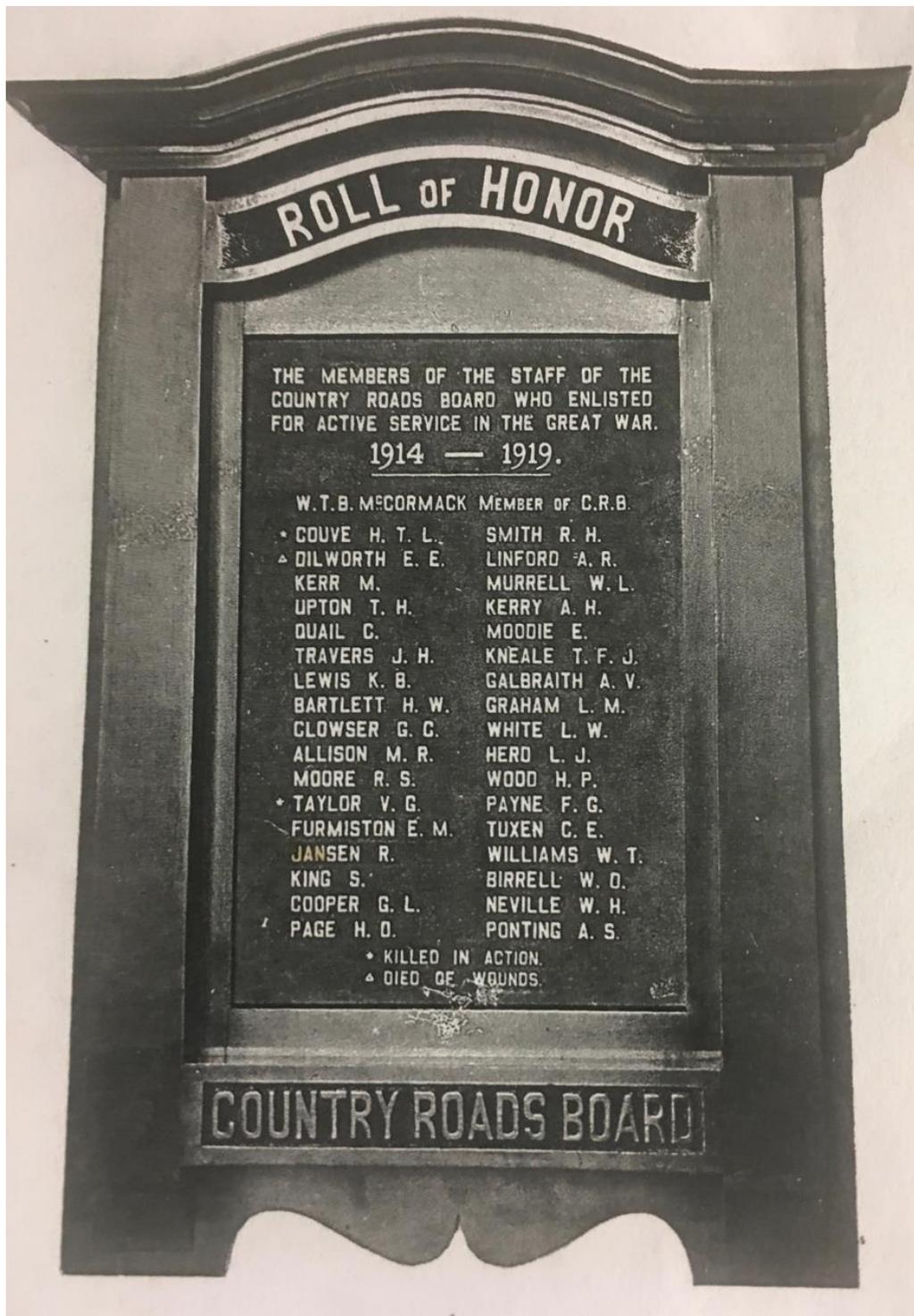


George Leigh Pentreath.



The Eurack Avenue of Honour.

The Country Roads Board's memorial is a Roll of Honour – or 'Honor' as they spelt it. Those who enlisted for war service in the First World War are shown below. The asterisk denotes killed in action and the diamond, died of wounds.



The original First World War Roll of Honour.

Of the 35 people listed, only two names are familiar to me – William McCormack and William (Bill) H. Neville. McCormack was a member of the original Country Roads Board (CRB) appointed in 1913. He was Deputy Chairman to William Calder and after Calder’s retirement, he served as Chairman between 1928 and 1938. Neville was a member of the Board from 1956 to 1962 so he was still working at the CRB when I started as a callow youth in 1961.

W.T.B. McCormack is listed first, no doubt because he was the most senior officer to enlist. The remaining names are in the order they enlisted. The Fifth Annual Report of the CRB (1918) provided the following details of “*Officers and Employees who have enlisted for active service in The Australian Imperial Force*”.

Name	Position	Rank	Unit	Date of Enlistment
Couve, H.T.L.	Clerk	Lieutenant	8th Battalion	22.8.14
Dilworth, E.E.	Assistant Engineer	Captain	2nd Field Company Engineers	22.8.14
Kerr, M.	Chainman	Private	7th Battalion	22.8.14
Upton, T.H.	Assistant Engineer	Captain	Royal Engineers	24.9.14
Quail, C.	Chainman	Corporal	Head-Quarters Staff, 3rd Brigade	16.9.14
Travers, J.H.	Chainman	Sergeant	Staff Pay Office, London	28.10.14
Lewis, K.B.	Draughtsman	Lieutenant	5th Tunnelling Company	11.1.15
Bartlett, H.W.	Chainman	Driver	6th Machine Gun Company, 21 st Battalion	3.2.15
Clowser, G.C.	Clerk	Lieutenant	Anzac Motor Transport	22.2.15
Allison, M.R.	Chainman	Corporal	2nd Battalion	1.3.15
Moore, R.S.	Surveyor’s Assistant	Lieutenant	10th Field Company Engineers	17.5.15
Taylor, V.G.	Chainman	Private	5th Battalion	7.7.15
Furmiston, E.M.	Chainman	Private	24th Battalion	7.7.15
Jansen, R.	Clerk	Sergeant	Administrative Head-Quarters, London	8.7.15
King, S.	Roller Driver	Driver	2nd Field Company Engineers	10.7.15
Cooper, G.L.	Overseer	Sapper	12th Field Company Engineers	21.8.15
Page, H.D.	Tally Clerk	Private	14th Battalion	18.9.15
Smith, R.H.	Overseer	Corporal	2nd Field Company Engineers	1.10.15
Linford, A.R.	Clerk	Sapper	10th Field Company Engineers	29.11.15
Murrell, W.L.	Assistant Engineer	Lieutenant	2nd Battalion, Australian Pioneer Engineers	15.1.16
Kerry, A.H.	Clerk	Lance Corporal	10th Field Company Engineers	8.2.16
Moodie, E.	Roller Driver	Lance Corporal	3rd Pioneer Battalion	9.2.16
Kneale, T.F.J.	Tally Clerk	Sapper	10th Field Company Engineers	14.2.16

Galbraith, A.V.	Senior Clerk	Captain	24th Company, Army Service Corps	18.2.16
Graham, L.V.	Draughtsman	Lieutenant	10th Field Company Engineers	9.3.16
White, L.W.	Junior Draughtsman	Private	15th Field Ambulance	29.3.16
Herd, L.J.	Clerk	Driver	21st Battery, Field Artillery Brigade	30.9.16
Wood, H.P.	Draughtsman	Air Mechanic	No. 71 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps	9.11.16
Payne, F.G.	Clerk	Gunner	Artillery	26.3.17
Tuxen, C.E.	Surveyor's Assistant	Sapper	1st Draft Reinforcements to Field Engineers	2.4.17
Williams, W.T.	Survey Draughtsman	Sapper	Field Engineers	11.7.17
Birrell, W. D.	Clerk	Corporal	24th Battalion	19.10.17
Neville, W. H.	Clerk	Sergeant	6th General Service Reinforcements	19.12.17
Ponting, A.S.	Engineering Pupil	Sergeant	6th General Service Reinforcements	26.10.18

The number of enlistments was a significant proportion of the men who worked for the CRB at the time of the First World War. In 1914, just a year after the CRB was formed, a lot of its work was suspended. Although I can't find any definitive information on staffing levels, I expect that the full staff complement of the CRB during the First World War would have been in the order of 50 to 60 people.

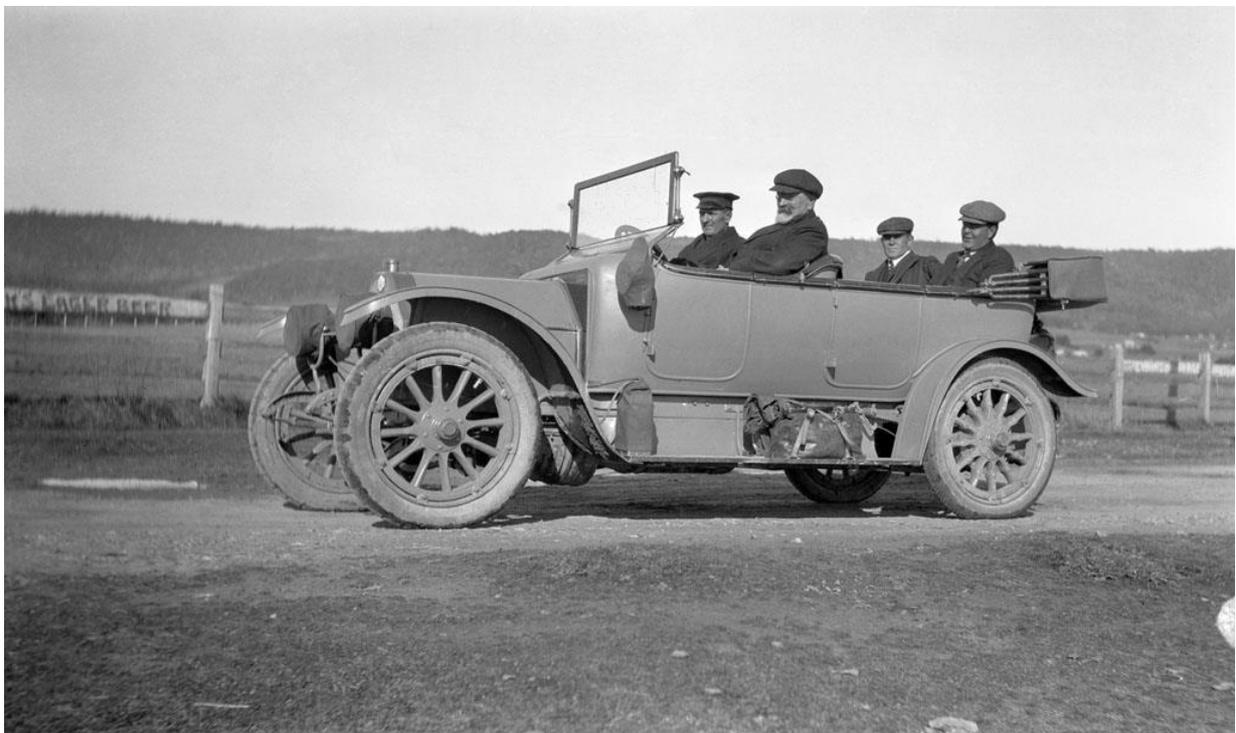
When William Calder first chaired the CRB in 1913, little did he know that one year later 'the War to end all wars' would break out. The following four years meant shortages of manpower, money and materials and roadworks were put into a holding pattern. Calder himself was too old to enlist, but he was acknowledged as a champion shot and he assisted in military training in the Moorooduc area during the Great War.

I investigated every name on the roll but for a few, I cannot be 100 per cent sure that I have identified the right person. All I can say is that I am fairly certain. Where there are discrepancies between the Board's tabulation and the Australian Archives, I have adopted the data in the Archives. I have shown the service number next to each name, where there is one. Commissioned officers did not have a service number.

Major William Thomas Bartholomew McCormack, Croix de Guerre, 6541

McCormack was born on New Year's Day, 1879, at Heathcote. His father, Thomas, was an Irish-born publican. He worked as a clerk in the shire office at Seymour before being appointed in 1902 as Secretary and Shire Engineer at Mirboo, Gippsland. He was certificated as a municipal surveyor, hydraulic engineer, municipal clerk and engineer. He had stints as shire engineer at Lockhart, NSW, and Korumburra, before being appointed in 1909 to the Public Works Department as Assistant Engineer, engaged in constructing roads and levees and reclaiming swamps. He was an honorary lecturer in engineering at the University of Melbourne in 1913-15, a foundation member of the Institution of Engineers, Australia, and a member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, London.

In March 1913, McCormack was appointed one of the three foundation members of the CRB – the others being William Calder (Chairman) and Frederick Fricke. In 1913-15 they travelled widely around Victoria by car - but frequently on horseback - to identify and lay the foundation of the State's road network. McCormack's knowledge of local government, his diplomatic skills and quiet, equable personality made him a successful ambassador for the Board in its negotiations with sometimes fractious shire councils.



The Country Roads Board on the road to Dromana – 1913. McCormack is on the extreme right sitting behind Calder in the front seat. The car was an Italia – nicknamed 'Prudence'.



The Country Roads Board consulting plans at East Tarwin Bridge, Mirboo South – 1913.

McCormack is second from the left.

McCormack was a Lieutenant in the Australian Intelligence Corps between 1911 and 1914. He enlisted in the AIF in January 1916 and soon after, he was appointed Major commanding the 10th Field Company, Engineers (10FE). He immediately made a start with the organisation of the unit, which was entirely recruited from the 3rd Military District comprising Victoria and that part of NSW south of the Murrumbidgee River. The headquarters were established at the Domain Camp, Melbourne, and were afterwards removed to Seymour, where the company went through a strenuous course of training.

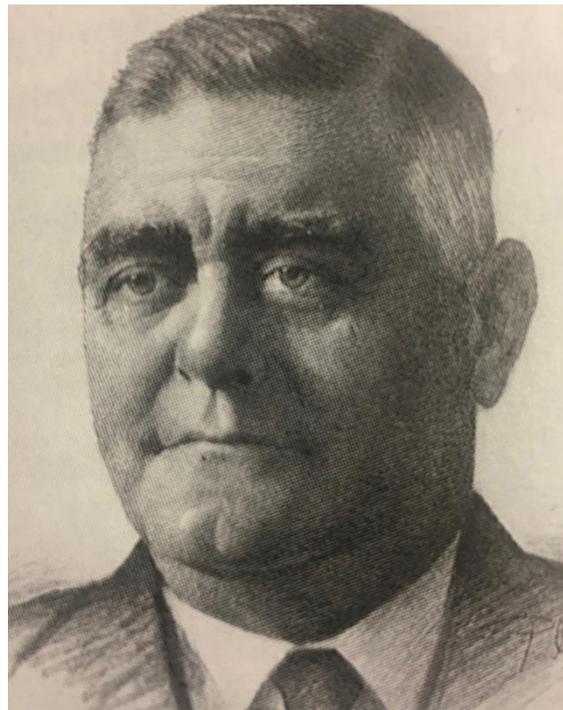
The training of sappers included: knotting, splicing and lashing; barrel pier construction; semaphore and Morse signalling; construction of trestles, shear legs, derricks, etc.; construction of a barrel pier bridge across the Goulburn River; construction of trestle bridges across dry gullies; laying out and digging trenches (including island traverses dug at right-angles to the main trench to provide shelter from invasion or bombardment); demolitions; infantry drill; musketry; training, night and day operations; use of prismatic compass and map reading; range-finding by means of mekometers (devices that measured distance by the measurement of polarization of a reflected beam of light); field company drill; field geometry; road surveys and construction.

The training of drivers included: driving, riding and horse management; care and cleaning of harness; musketry; semaphore signalling; field geometry; knotting, splicing, and lashing.

McCormack was the commanding engineer under Lieutenant General (Sir) John Monash. He was mentioned in dispatches in the Battle of Messines and was also awarded a *Croix de Guerre* at Corbie-Hamel. 10FE also fought campaigns in the Battles of Amiens, Ypres and the Somme. During the Battle of the Somme, McCormack contracted typhoid and was hospitalised.

Sapper Donald Darwin served under McCormack in 10 FE and his life was to later intertwine with McCormack's as they both became Chairmen of the CRB after the war.

Other men who had served with McCormack had either volunteered from the CRB or worked there later. Of the 35 names listed on the CRB's Roll of Honour, four others served in 10 FE, viz. Robert Moore, Leslie Graham, Arthur Kerry and Thomas Kneale. Nine served in various other Field Engineer units, tunnelling companies or in related units, viz. George Cooper, Edward Dilworth, Alfred Galbraith, Simon King, William Murrell, Cedric Tuxen, Thomas Upton and Wesley Williams.



Drawing of Major William McCormack – date unknown.

After the war, McCormack remained in England to study road construction, town planning, and sewerage and water supply. He resumed his work with the CRB in April 1919, taking charge of the construction of the Great Ocean Road – a project intended to employ repatriated soldiers returning from the war.

McCormack succeeded William Calder as Chairman of the CRB in 1928 and he died in office in 1938.



William McCormack on the site of the Great Ocean Road - 1930.

William was also a talented pianist and composer of dance music.

He died of pneumonia in January 1938.

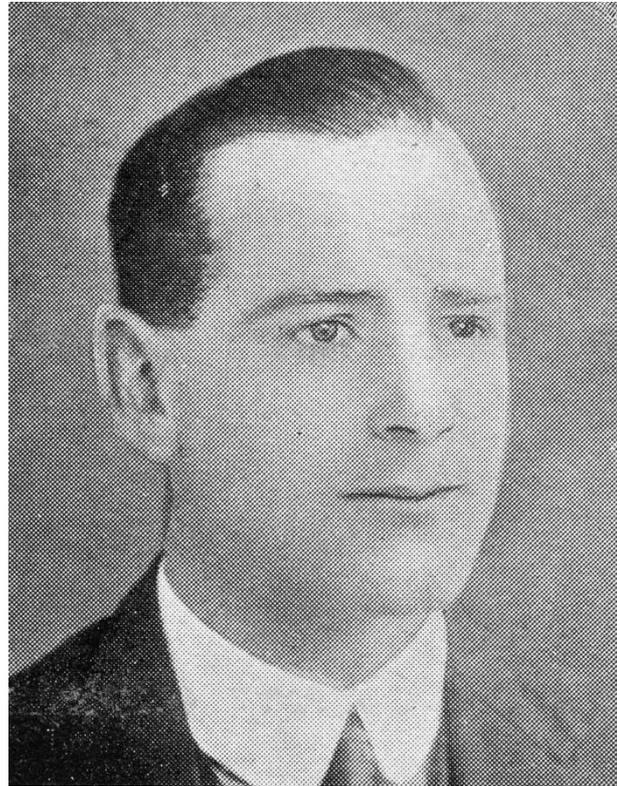
His son William (b. 1914), joined the RAAF in the Second World War and rose to the rank of Flying Officer. He was killed in a training accident at RAF Moreton in Marsh, Gloucestershire, on 5 May 1943, aged 29 years.

Lieutenant Henry Thomas (Tom) Ladson Couve, 285

Henry Couve, along with Edward Dilworth, enlisted on 21 August 1914. They were the first CRB officers to enlist. Couve described himself as a civil servant and Dilworth as a civil engineer. Couve was two years older than Dilworth. They were colleagues and it is likely they were friends for them to enlist together. Dilworth was tall with a fair complexion whereas Couve was short with a dark complexion. Both perished in the war.

Tom was posted to the 8th Infantry Battalion. Poor Tom's record is short. It shows him promoted from Sergeant to Second Lieutenant at Gallipoli on 28 April 1915 and that he was killed at Cape

Helles a little over a fortnight later. Only two entries. The brevity of his record is obscene but his loss would have been as tragic as for all the others who failed to come back. So these two mates who departed Australia with such high hopes were finally to come together eternally on the CRB's Roll of Honour, each with a dreaded asterisk by his name.



Henry (Tom) Couve – holding his rifle while skinning fruit in the desert and in civilian life.

Tom embarked for the Middle East with C Company from Melbourne on 19 October 1914 aboard HMAT *Benalla* (A24). After a stopover in Albany, Western Australia, they arrived in Egypt on 2 December 1914. Following further training in Egypt, the Battalion took part in the Gallipoli landings on 25 April 1915 as part of the second wave. Tom was killed in action on 8 May 1915 and is commemorated on the Helles Memorial at Cape Helles, Gallipoli, Turkey, with others who have no known grave.

The Helles Memorial serves the dual function of Commonwealth battle memorial for the whole Gallipoli campaign as well as a place of commemoration for many of those Commonwealth servicemen who, like Tom, died there and have no known grave.



The Helles Memorial, Gallipoli.



Outdoor portrait of Lieutenant Rupert Barrett from Ballarat, Victoria (sitting) and Sergeant Henry (Tom) Couve from Dandenong, Victoria, (standing beside the horse).

But there is an even sadder twist to Tom's story. His 21-year old brother, Alan Crawford Couve, who enlisted a week later than Tom, also died of wounds at Gallipoli. He received a gunshot wound to the head on 25 April 1915 (Anzac Day) and died the following day. He is buried in the Beach Cemetery, Gallipoli at the southern point of Anzac Cove.

The images of Tom (above) are from the collection of the brothers – now held at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. They photographed members of their unit in Egypt prior to serving at Gallipoli. They embarked for war together and both were on the beachhead on Anzac Day. They were killed in action within weeks of each other – two handsome, fit and promising young men.

The Couve family was devastated. I cannot imagine the despair of losing a beloved son, let alone two, in such a cruel way. There is some heartbreaking correspondence in Alan Couve's archive written by his sister, Eileen, who also worked at the CRB. Eileen is shown in the photograph of the CRB staff taken at the Titles Office in 1921 – included in Background to the Country Roads Board of this narrative.

When I first read her letter I burst into tears.

Date	From whom received	casualties, etc., during active service, as reported on Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or in other official documents. The authority to be quoted in each case.	Place	Date	Remarks taken from Army Form B. 213, Army Form A. 36, or other official documents.
13/5/15.	C/O 8TH. BATTN. 2ND. INF. BDE.	WOUNDED. G.S.W. SKULL.	GALLIPOLI.	25/4/15.	Bn. List Dated 1/5/15. B2137032 2/5/15
14/5/15.	C/O 8TH. BATTN. 2ND. INF. BDE.	DIED OF WOUNDS.	DO.	26/4/15.	D.O. 36. 115 MFC. 2445/16 - 15/5/15 M.F.A. 421.
3/5/17		Buried Beach Cemetery, Gallipoli at Southern Point of Anzac Cove			See honours Death Card.
					D.G.R. L. 5/5/288

This is an excerpt from Alan Couve's file in the Australian Archives showing the details of his death.



Eileen Couve – from the CRB staff photograph of 1921.

On 12 January 1920, Eileen Couve wrote to the Officer in Charge, Switzerland Headquarters, Allied Forces, as follows:

Dear Sir,

I am informed that an internment camp exists in Switzerland in which soldiers and rescued prisoners of war, suffering from loss of memory and whose identity is uncertain, are being kept for treatment.

Acting on this information, I am forwarding herewith particulars and a description of my brother, Lieutenant A. C. Couve, 8th Battalion A.I.F.

My brother was reported missing the day after the landing at Gallipoli, 26th April 1915, and many rumours have been told to us by returning men, of his probable fate. Just lately we have been told that it was thought that he had been captured by the Turks, and later on when Turkey capitulated, been rescued and brought to Switzerland for treatment. We know that he was wounded in the head, his N.C.O. thought it was comparatively slight, and taken to the dressing station on the beach. From then all authentic information ceases, and for nearly 5 years we have had to mourn him as dead with just a tiny seed of hope that someday something might give us a clue.

It has been doubly hard on my parents as my only (other) brother was killed 10 days later at Cape Helles. You will perhaps understand then, how much this rumour means to us, and how desirous we are to clear the matter up one way or another.

I would be extremely grateful if you could forward to the proper authorities the enclosed particulars and photos, with a view to the possible establishment of my brother's identity, and if you would kindly communicate to me any steps it may be necessary to take, or any result of the enquiries that I trust you will make for me. My brother was a brave officer and gentleman and will you please accept, in return for any efforts you make on his behalf, the grateful thanks of his only sister.

(Sgd) Eileen Couve

And this is the description she wrote of her beloved brother.

*Description of Lieutenant ALAN CRAWFORD COUVE, 7th Platoon, B Company,
8th Infantry Battalion, Australian Imperial Force, also latest
known details concerning him.*

Heavy, powerful build, well-proportioned with high-arched feet; light brown hair, tanned complexion, grey-blue eyes inclined to be round, well-shaped mouth, full face; height about 5 ft. 9 ½ or 10 inches, exceptionally muscular, with good carriage, good teeth, some gold filled.

Had tip of sword embedded at base of toes in one foot, probably the left one; had had two ribs broken in 1913, one of which penetrated the lung; several scars on the back of the neck from boils; age 26; was 21 when landing took place, but looked 3 years older.

Wound said to be near the top of the head, the bullet going in near the top of forehead over the right eye and coming out somewhere about the crown of the head; the wound thought to be superficial when examined by his Sergeant immediately it occurred.

An all-round athlete, being a fine shot, footballer and tennis player, also a good bowler at cricket; fine untrained baritone voice, with a gift for entertaining a company or crowd.

Sensitive hands; had been in training as a chemist and had good knowledge of drugs, bandaging etc.

Nicknamed "Dutch" or "Dutchy"; enlisted in August 1914 from Dandenong, Victoria, Australia, where he lived with parents, elder brother called Tom who also left with him for Gallipoli in October 1914 in the 8th Battalion, on the H.M.A.T. Benalla as Sergeant. Had sister called Eileen, sometimes called Sue. House was called

ALLOWAH. Was betrothed to Millie Veal whose father was the local Vicar. Her photo enclosed, Father's a chemist. Left Australia as a Second Lieutenant, was promoted to First Lieut. in Egypt; was in Mena camp with the 1st Australian Division. In Mena Hospital for 5 weeks, owing to accidental sword thrust in foot; left for Lemnos on the "Clan McGillivray". Was wounded early on the morning of 26th April 1915; wound examined and bound up by his Sergeant who thought it comparatively slight and who, with a private soldier, carried him to a dressing station on the beach, expecting him back in 3 or 4 days.

A month later he was posted dead, but no one can be found who saw him die or know where he was buried. From the moment he was left unconscious at the dressing station on the beach at the Anzac landing at Gallipoli, no authentic information can be obtained.

Enclosed: photos of himself in civilian and military clothes; his fiancée; and sister, father, mother and brother.

There was much correspondence on the file reflecting the desperation of the Couve family losing their two beloved sons (and brothers) within days of each other. A week earlier Eileen had hand written a letter to Colonel Bolton which said:

"You have probably forgotten me, though I do not think you will have forgotten my brother, Lieut. Alan Couve, who was with you in Egypt and at the Landing. It is of him I am writing.

We received an intimation from the Defence Dept. that he was wounded, and then a second notice that he was wounded, been in hospital, recovered in a few days and returned to the lines where he was immediately killed. We now know that report was wrong; that he never rejoined his Battalion.

The men of the 8th and of his Company "B" who have been returning these last two or three years have brought back with them so many varied stories of his death and burial, and also one rumour that he did not die, but was somehow made prisoner of war and is now in Switzerland, being treated for loss of memory; that I have felt impelled to write and ask if you would kindly obtain for me a record of his death as officially set out in the war diary of his Company. I understand that each Company has such a diary.

You can well believe that such reports are very unsettling, and I should be glad of the official record. If you are unable to obtain it for me, would you please tell me where I should apply for it.

My father is in very bad health and we have not told him the rumours of my brother being alive so would you please address your answer to me c/o Country Roads Board, Titles Office, City. You will perhaps remember that my brother was in the Country Roads Board before enlisting. I am working there now. Dad might otherwise see your letter and be curious.

I trust you will forgive me worrying you with this matter, but you will understand how my mother and I feel in this matter.”

The matter was finally concluded by The Commandant, Australian Imperial Force Headquarters who said:

“It is much regretted that it is impossible to hold out any hope that any officers and men missing in Gallipoli will be found to be still living. The rumour which Miss Couve heard is like many similar rumours entirely without foundation, and she should be advised to pay no attention to it.”

Alan was a 20 year old chemist’s apprentice prior to being appointed a Second Lieutenant on 24 August 1914. He embarked for overseas with G Company aboard the same ship as his brother, Henry. Alan was wounded in action on the first day and died from his wounds on 26 April 1915. He is buried in Beach Cemetery, Gallipoli, Turkey. The image below is also from the collection of the brothers.



Lieutenant Alan Crawford (Dutch or Dutchy) Couve, 8th Battalion



Beach Cemetery, Gallipoli, where Alan is buried.

Tom and Alan were not only brothers in arms on the battlefield in Gallipoli, they are still mourned to this day by the Dandenong Football Club. The two brothers were inseparable on the footy field as well as in the Army. They were commemorated by the club on the Centenary of the Anzac landing. Born to Josen Marie Couve, a pharmacist who emigrated from Mauritius, and Minian “Minnie” Couve (nee Ladson), the brothers excelled at whatever they tried.

They were raised in the local pharmacy. Football was their great passion and they had an immediate impact when they joined the ‘Redlegs’ – the Dandenong Football Club. Tom served as honorary secretary for the club as well as being a league delegate – and he played in the 1912 premiership alongside his brother. The duo celebrated the 1912 Berwick District Football Association grand final victory – with the Redlegs winning 3.10 (28) over Pakenham 4.3 (27). Dutchy was the star of the Redlegs’ success that day – he booted all three of Dandenong’s goals to bring home the premiership.

Tom played longer than Dutchy, finishing up in the 1914 grand final loss to Pakenham, with his last match only a month before the pair set off across the seas to the Middle East. Their legacy lives on through the series of photographs highlighting their involvement in the Expeditionary Forces.

From the outpouring of grief printed in papers across the Dandenong region, it seemed as if the

entire community wept for their passing – their lads, taken far too soon and robbed of their futures.

On 20 May 1915, *The Journal* reported:

“On Tuesday morning widespread regret was expressed when it became known that Lt Alan Couve had succumbed to the wounds received whilst fighting with the 8th Battalion at the Dardanelles, and many messages of condolence have been received by the sorrowing relatives. The flag on the Town Hall was at half mast, in honour of the local volunteer and mourning was displayed outside the business premises in Lonsdale St.”

A later report described the grief felt by the congregation at St James Church.

“Last Sunday very impressive intercessory services were held in St. James Church of England, Dandenong. The sad news of Lt Couve’s death cast a shadow over the whole congregation, in fact the whole township.”

The Dandenong Shire Council also felt the burden of bereavement by starting the call for the council to create a Dandenong Roll of Honour, which to this day remains in the Drum Theatre.

“At the Dandenong Shire Council meeting on Monday, the president (Cr Rain) said that before proceeding with the business of the council, he regretted to state that a second son of Mr Couve of Dandenong had been killed in action, whilst fighting for the Empire at the Dardanelles,” the report said.

“It was hard indeed for Mr (Josen) Couve to have lost both his sons, and he would also move that a letter of condolence be sent from the council. Every councillor present spoke in support of the motion. The president directed the secretary to ‘forward letters of condolence to the relatives of those who had been killed in action, and intimated that notice of motion would be given in regard to obtaining a Roll of Honour for the municipality’.”

The final word about the well-loved Couve brothers was left to family friend Jack Walker, who published in the *South Bourke and Mornington Post* a sad edict in the 21 October 1915 edition to inform the wider Dandenong community about their passing.

“Lastly, and with great reluctance, I refer to the sad loss sustained by Mr and Mrs Couve, and by many Dandenong friends, on the death of Tommy and Dutchy Couve. I can add a little to what has been said about them by telling you that from my own personal knowledge they were greatly admired by all ranks. Again and again I have talked

over their short life in the AIF, with men who were under them, men who were above them and their equals in rank in the forces, and all have the same good things to tell me about them.”

How could the loss of two beloved sons and brothers ever be healed? Memories would never leave them in peace. And yet there were many Australian families who suffered similar plights. It makes a mockery of saying that the war was won.

And what became of Eileen? She left the Country Roads Board when her family shifted to Red Cliffs in the northern Mallee district, 15 kilometres south of Mildura. Somewhat ironically, the town was largely created after the First World War when returning soldiers were offered 15 acres of land and the tools to plant and grow vines for the production of sultanas. Eileen's family established a vineyard although her father also established the first pharmacy in the town. Eileen took a great interest in the plant life of the region and was an enthusiastic collector of plant specimens of the local flora. Her collection was recognized as the finest collection of Mallee plants in Victoria. It is now held in the Melbourne Herbarium.

Eileen grieved for her two younger brothers. On Anzac Day she would never attend any of the ceremonies. She preferred to wander into the bush alone and recall memories of them in her own private grief.

In 1938, Eileen married a widower, Walter Ramsay. She was a prolific writer of prose and poetry. She was local correspondent for the *Riverlander*, a raconteur, and she was always accompanied by her two hounds no matter what the occasion. She met a much younger, local entomologist, John Plant, and together they explored the bush - he in search of butterflies and beetles and she, for new plants. Eileen died in November 1961.



John Plant and Eileen (Couve) Ramsay exploring nature in the Mallee.

Alan Couve's fiancée, Millie Veal, never recovered from her loss. She was described by a friend of the family as "such a lovely person ... so gentle and interesting, and so sad that she never married after Dutchy was killed".

What a tragedy!

In 2019, Eddie Schubert – a Heritage Officer in VicRoads - was invited to a Monash University service where descendants of soldiers studying pharmacy who fought during the First World War were presented with posthumous degrees. Alan was one of them. At the service Eddie met a descendant of Alan (and Henry) and invited her, and Monash Pharmacy School personnel, to VicRoads' Head Office in Kew. They presented VicRoads with a painting by Christine Johnson and read a poem written by Eileen in the foyer beneath the Roll of Honour. Their presentation was dedicated to the memory of Henry and Alan Couve.

Lieutenant Edward Erskine Dilworth, MC, 171

Edward Erskine Dilworth was remembered as a valued and efficient member of the engineering staff of the CRB. He was born in Harcourt near Castlemaine and enlisted at the age of 22. He served very late in the Anzac campaign but remained in the Middle East until April 1916 when he embarked for Marseilles. After just three months in France, he was sent to England to Officer Training School and in December 1916 he was sent back to France.

He was awarded a Military Cross¹ in France in 1917 and was later wounded in May 1918 and died of his wounds. Because of his engineering background – he had military training in bridgeworks - he was posted to the 2nd Field Company Australian Engineers.

Originally across the services, for similar acts of gallantry, officers received a Military Cross, and other ranks a Military Medal, thus perpetuating the prejudice of the traditional British class system (in my view). The only exception to this rule was the Victoria Cross (VC), which was awarded regardless of rank. The VC was also the only decoration which could be awarded posthumously. So, many acts of gallantry leading to death went unrecognized. However, in 1979, the Queen approved a proposal that a number of awards, including the Military Cross, could be recommended posthumously

Edward's gallantry was first noted on 30 September 1917 as follows:

Conspicuous gallantry, ability and devotion to duty under very heavy fire. (East of Ypres 20 September 1917).

The citation for his Military Cross said:

During the operations east of YPRES on 4th October, 1917, this officer was engaged in the construction of a Strong point near HOLEHAARELSTHOEK. To reach this site it was necessary to pass through several heavy barrages. Through his able leadership and magnificent devotion to duty all was accomplished as required. Having set his party to work he personally reconnoitred his surrounding and captured a German Officer and batman in a dug-out. By searching the officer and his belongings, DILWORTH was enabled to obtain and send back to Brigade headquarters some valuable information including many maps. Later on when his work was subjected to exceedingly heavy shelling he set a magnificent example of devotion to duty and personal bravery getting all his men into safe positions.

There are numerous reports of Edward's death held by the Australian War memorial but I will quote only one of them written by Matron Doris Jekyll of the Huddersfield War Hospital.

¹ In the Board's Annual Report of 1918 it stated that his rank was Captain and that he was awarded a Military Medal. Although a Military Medal was mentioned once in the archives, all other references were of a Military Cross including on the copy of the citation. There was also one reference to him being a Captain but all other references to him were as a Lieutenant.

With reference to Lieutenant E.E. Dilworth, 2 Field Coy Engineers, Australians who is reported to have died of wounds 6-5-18. This officer was I am informed fatally wounded by the same shell as Major H.V. Gould, whom I knew well. The particulars are as follows: During the early hours of the morning of 6th May last, the Germans put down a heavy barrage in the trenches occupied by the 2 Field Coy. After doing all they could for the safety of their men, 6 officers were returning to their own shelter when a shell fell amongst them. Of the 6, 3 died of wounds. One lost a leg and part of both hands, one was slightly wounded and one escaped. Major Gould (and they believe Mr Dilworth) were both taken to the 15th C.C.S. where they died. Mr Dilworth is buried beside Major Gould at Ebbingham British Cemetery, near Hazebrouk, a quiet little spot beside a small wood where the sound of the guns is only a murmur. A cross was erected over his grave.

Another of the reports described Edward as a brilliant officer who was awarded the MC at Ypres. In Edward's war records is an inventory of his effects forwarded to his mother, who had responded to the army's request about the distribution of war medals, describing him as '... my gallant and dearly loved son'. The effects were forwarded to her in a:

'Green Valise (sealed) containing :- 1 F.S Pocket Book, 1 Rug, 1 S.D. Tunic, Pr. Leggings, Pr. Breeches, 1 Razor, 1 Brush, Book on French, 1 Sam Browne Belt, 2 Shirts, Pr. Spurs, Pr. Putties, 1 F.S. Cap, hair Brush, Soap Tin, Clothes Brush, 1 Elastic Knee Cap, Small Attache Case containing :- 1 Wallet, Sketch Book, 1 Pair of Gloves, Magnifying Glass, 1 Tie, Sketches, 1 Pr. Tussore Silk Shorts, 1 Safety Razor and Strop, 1 Molesworth Pocket Book, 1 Piece of Ypres Bell, 1 Diary, 2 Small Books of Poems, Letters, Guide Book to Monaco, 1 Cancelled Pay Book, Italian Book, 1 Pr. Spurs, 1 Souvenir Ink Stand, 1 Housewife, 3 Keys, 1 Clothes Brush, Ash Tray, 1 Small French Dictionary, 1 Small Paint Brush. Shipped per Barunga 20.6.1918.'

Later, a sealed envelope containing a disc and chain and a gold ring was despatched.

Imagine his poor mother receiving the effects of her son who died at the age of 26. This was what was left to her. It revealed his life for its last three years. It must have broken her heart. Her last memory would have been of him leaving the bright sunlight and warmth of Harcourt only for him to be buried on the other side of the world with little chance of her ever being able to visit his grave.

Another letter on his file hardly disguises her grief. She wrote:

Dear Sir

In reference to a printed form which I received from Defence Depart. March 21st saying His Majesty the King had awarded the M.C. for gallantry etc in the field and signed Captain Edward Erskine Dilworth, I have been wondering why that should be when it is always just Lieut. E.E. Dilworth 2nd Field Company Engineers and another thing I should like to know. The papers had in the list twice wounded. I have been very anxious for the only material I have had is that he died of wounds on 6/5/18. I was just anxious in case I may have been able to send him a message. I know the paper makes many mistakes but I would feel more satisfied if I knew. Will you kindly let me know any particulars which come to hand? These are dark times for many homes.

Yours very sincerely

Mrs H. Dilworth'

Poor woman. She was bemoaning the fact that she could have sent a message to him if she had known he was wounded. The record shows that he had been hospitalised twice - not from wounds but with sore eyes (conjunctivitis). And they made a mistake about his rank. He was a Lieutenant and not a Captain.



Edward Dilworth and his Military Cross.



Ebblesham Military Cemetery, France, where Edward is buried.

His headstone is inscribed *'There'll be no dark valley when Jesus comes to gather his loved ones'*.



Edward Dilworth's memorial in Harcourt.

Corporal Martin Brown Kerr, 661

The Honour Roll cites 'M. Kerr' and the only person that fitted this description is Martin Brown Kerr. All the others with the initial 'M' either came from interstate or their job descriptions were inappropriate or their unit did not fit. So, while I can't be certain, Martin Brown Kerr seems to fit the bill.

In the CRB tabulation he is named as a chainman, but on his enlistment form he described himself as a labourer. He was born in Castlemaine but lived in South Melbourne and was 23 years old when he signed up on 22 August 1914. He was allocated to the 7th Battalion F Company. His story is a sad one.

He left Australia on the on 21 October 1914 and disembarked at Alexandria in Egypt. He sailed on SS *Galeka* from Alexandria to join the first wave of the Gallipoli Campaign and was wounded on landing. He was evacuated on the HMAT *Clan McGillivray* to Malta and after his recovery he returned to Gallipoli in May 1915. He was hospitalised in August with concussion. But he was evacuated back to St Andrew's hospital in Malta with severe dysentery and this was to be the beginning of a debilitating history. They transferred him to England, firstly to the King George Hospital and the Military Convalescent Hospital at Epsom, but after two relapses he went to the County of London War Hospital.

He went back to Alexandria on 5 March 1916 to join his unit and he landed in Marseilles on the 31st. He went to hospital in the field in France for various complaints including diarrhoea, scabies, colitis and trench foot. His entire history in France was peppered with short stints at the front between hospital stays. And these were not trivial – many of them described as severe and some of them described as 'Debility'. He kept going back to France from England but during one stay in England he attended a Rifle Course and received a 1st Class with a fair working knowledge of the Lewis Gun. During this period he was promoted from Private to Corporal. Back in France in April 1918 he was wounded in action twice with a gunshot wound in the arm and shrapnel wounds causing laceration of muscles. He was again evacuated to England.

In July 1918 he was charged with a crime – 'Failing to salute an officer of His Majesty's Forces' for which he was reprimanded by Lt. Col. D.A. Lane. In August 1918 he was discharged as being unfit for duty due to chronic colitis.

There are numerous documents alluding to his failing health. They stated things like '*History of amoebic dysentery, probably cystic colitis aggravated by service during the present war*'. Martin is a classic example of one of thousands of men whose most aggressive enemy was the filth and unsanitary conditions of war – not only in the field but also on the troopships. Many of their stories reveal soldiers disembarking at their destinations and going straight to hospital – and remember that the Spanish flu was just around the corner.

In Martin's file are numerous health reports describing his condition as chronic, severe and dangerous. One finding said that he was 'temporarily unfit for all services for more than 6 months'. Another said 'Incapacity one half. Permanent Medical Referee Board recommends discharge as permanently unfit'. This latter assessment was dated one week before the Armistice.

The final report said: 'History of amoebic dysentery. Still gets attacks of dysentery, on and off, probably cystic colitis, with mucus and blood. Lost about 14 lbs weight. Has definite thickening of the colon for its whole length. Still passes blood and mucus. Is constipated followed by diarrhoea'.

Martin died in 1958 at the age of 67.

Captain Thomas Haynes Upton, OBE

I searched the Australian Archives and I could find no trace of Thomas Upton and when you read on you will understand why. Thomas Haynes Upton was born in Hawthorn in 1889. He was an exceptional student and won a scholarship to Wesley College. He was awarded an Exhibition and entered Ormond College to study civil engineering at the University of Melbourne (BSc 1910; MSc 1912; BCE 1912; MCE 1919). He graduated BSc in 1910 with first-class honours and he gained practical engineering experience working for John Monash – later Sir John Monash.



Thomas Upton – date unknown.

In 1913 he went to England and gained experience in designing fabricated steel and reinforced concrete bridges and in 1914, while still in England, he was appointed as an Assistant Engineer in the CRB. He was instructed to brief himself on modern road-making practices and materials in Britain and the United States of America before returning to Australia.

When the war broke out, Thomas was granted leave by the CRB. He enlisted in the British Army in September 1914, and was posted to the Royal Naval Division as a Sapper. In December he was appointed Temporary Lieutenant, Royal Engineers (RE). He served on the Western Front with the 130th Field Company until he was wounded in February 1916 and evacuated to England. Back in action with the 74th Field Company, RE, from August, he was again wounded in March 1917, and brought back to England to recover. He was attached to the RE Bridging School, Aire (later Monchy Cayeux), France, in December 1917 as Acting Captain. From March 1918, he performed staff duties at General Headquarters and later that year he returned to the Bridging School as chief instructor. He was mentioned in dispatches in 1916, 1918 and 1919. Demobilized from the army in April 1919, he was the recipient of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) that year.

He re-joined the CRB and completed the task he was originally given - interrupted by the war - by returning to Australia via the USA studying the latest developments in road engineering. On his return, among other things, he worked on the design and construction of the bridge over the Barwon River in Geelong.



Thomas Upton – from the CRB staff photograph 1921.

In 1925 he left the CRB when he was appointed to the Main Roads Board (MRB) in New South Wales (NSW). Under Thomas' guidance, the MRB organized the design and construction of NSW's state-wide system of roads. The MRB was dissolved in 1932 and the Department of Main Roads was formed whereupon Upton was gazetted as Assistant Commissioner.

In 1935 Thomas was transferred to the Metropolitan Water, Sewerage and Drainage Board as President. Under his direction, the Board was well on the way to eliminating a large backlog of works when the Second World War broke out. Thereafter, many of its design and construction resources were diverted to the war effort. The largest of these works was the Captain Cook Graving Dock at Garden Island for the Royal Australian Navy. After 1945 the Board reverted to its statutory responsibilities – mainly to augment Sydney's water supply by the construction of Warragamba Dam on the Nepean River, which was nearing completion when Thomas retired in April 1955.

Thomas Upton died in October 1956.

Corporal Charles Quail, 12

Charles was born in Buchan (in East Gippsland) and described himself as a surveyor's assistant. He enlisted in September 1914 as a Trooper and embarked for the Middle East on the transport (A16) *Star of Victoria* on 25 February 1915 with the 3rd Light Horse Brigade. He was 21 years old at the time of his embarkation. He arrived in Alexandria nine days before the first landing on Gallipoli. I couldn't see when he landed in Gallipoli but, in August 1915, he was evacuated to a hospital in Heliopolis (Egypt) with severe diarrhoea. He was transferred to Helouan (Egypt) and re-joined his unit at Gallipoli in November 1915. A few weeks before the retreat from Gallipoli he was transferred to the New Zealand and Australian Division for Police and his entire war was spent in the Middle East. He was detached to the Royal Engineers Signals Base Depot as a signals instructor in Moascar in Egypt and he returned to Australia in July 1919.

Charles' history is littered with admissions to hospital with gonorrhoea – in Malna, Mazar, Abbassia, Kantara and Masaid. The first entry for this illness was 16 December 1916 and in an entry on the 10 February 1917, it was noted 'VD ceased'. However, it persisted throughout his service and was possibly one of the reasons why he did not join most of the Australian forces in France. In August 1917 he was hospitalised with urethritis – an affliction that is sexually transmitted.

I suspect his whole life was affected by this terrible experience. When I was researching the stories of the other men of the CRB, there were others who bore this same affliction, but I have chosen not to mention it – except for one other case.

Charles died in 1940 at the early age of 46.

In 1967, Charles' wife, Ida, applied for and was granted the Gallipoli Medallion to which Charles was entitled.

Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant James Arthur Travers, 141

James is incorrectly designated in the CRB tabulation and the Roll of Honour as J. H. Travers. I searched for 'J. H. Travers' in the Australian Archives and could only find one, but his details did

not match those recorded in the CRB's 5th Annual Report. However, I found James Arthur Travers whose enlistment date and posting matches the CRB tabulation so I am certain that he is the right one.

James was born in Ilford in Essex and was aged 30 when he enlisted. He came from Toora in South Gippsland near Leongatha and described himself as a farmer. This does not gel with his occupation in the CRB tabulation which cites him as a chainman but it is likely that he started work with the CRB after carrying out farming work. Elsewhere in the archives he is described as an orchardist. However, his enlistment date of 28 October 1914 is consistent and he eventually wound up in the Army Pay Corp – which is also consistent with the CRB table. Before the war, he served in civilian militia forces – five years in the 1st Essex Volunteer Force and 18 months in the Wellington Guards in New Zealand.

James was initially attached to the 55th Battalion as a Driver and two months after his enlistment embarked for overseas. There is no record of the ship he travelled on nor where he disembarked. He was transferred to the Australian Army Pay Corps (AAPC) in December 1915 and promoted to Corporal, and three months later he was promoted again to Lance Sergeant. My guess is that he was in Egypt at this time because the file records that he embarked on the SS *Euripides* from Alexandria in Egypt in May 1916 and taken on strength of the AAPC London.

There is nothing on James' file to indicate that he saw active service but, nonetheless, his role in administering the distribution of pay to the soldiers in the field (and elsewhere) was a very important one.

With regards to soldier's pay, each soldier was issued with a Pay Book. It was about the size of a passport and contained personal particulars – sometimes with a photograph taken at enlistment. It had instructions written in a blunt, military style and particulars of next of kin. The pay book stated that the soldier was paid a daily rate of six shillings from which one shilling was deducted (for no stated reason) and another three shillings were deducted as a “deferred allotment”. On the following page it showed that the “allotment or compulsory stoppage” was paid to the soldier's next of kin. The remaining two shillings was paid to the soldier in the field. The shilling deducted was, in fact, deferred pay issued on completion of service.

Each soldier was paid in shillings except in France where they were paid in francs. The recorded places of payment was a history of the soldier's experience – on the ship that brought him from

Australia and all the places in the field. If the soldier had pay deducted for a misdemeanour, the deduction was written in red ink. At the very back of the book was a form for the soldier to fill out as a will.

Soldiers in the Australian Army were the most generously paid of all the allied troops. They earned six shillings a day. Equivalent New Zealanders received five shillings, Americans four shillings and seven pence and the British, one shilling and later three shillings. In 1914, in NSW, the Basic Wage for a family of five was 48 shillings per week which is about \$4.80 in today's currency.

In August 1916 James was taken on strength of No 1 Command Depot in England and remained in the UK for the rest of his service – although in different postings including the Ordnance Corps and 55th Battalion. Postings mentioned are Perham Downs, London, Tidworth, and Hurdcott. Perham Downs is in Wiltshire near the cathedral city of Salisbury and I think this posting changed James' life forever. In July 1917, James married Florence Steeds from Salisbury. He was 32 and she was 23. The wedding took place at the Established Church (Anglican) in Southampton although I note that James was a Catholic.

The latter part of James' service was as a Quartermaster in the Ordnance Corps. This is a regimental officer, usually commissioned from the ranks, responsible for administering barracks, laying out the camp, and looking after supplies. It goes without saying that this is an important function to keep the system 'well-oiled'.

He returned to Australia in June 1919 with his wife, and they disembarked in Adelaide. So, he didn't return to the CRB after the war but I found on a South Australian Government record that he was granted a Soldier Settlement allotment on 30 February 1921. In the file it described it as 'Adelaide Section pt 309'. Then in 1924, James wrote to the Army requesting that his war medals be sent to his home address in Campbelltown, South Australia. Campbelltown is an outer North Eastern suburb of Adelaide and perhaps this allotment was not a farm – as I had assumed – but rather a block of land on which they were to build a home. We will never know.

I was unable to find a date of death for James.

Lieutenant Keith Bannatyne Lewis

Keith graduated with a Diploma of Mining Engineering from the University of Melbourne in 1913. He was born in Windsor in 1890 and enlisted on 6 January 1915 at the age of nearly 25. He

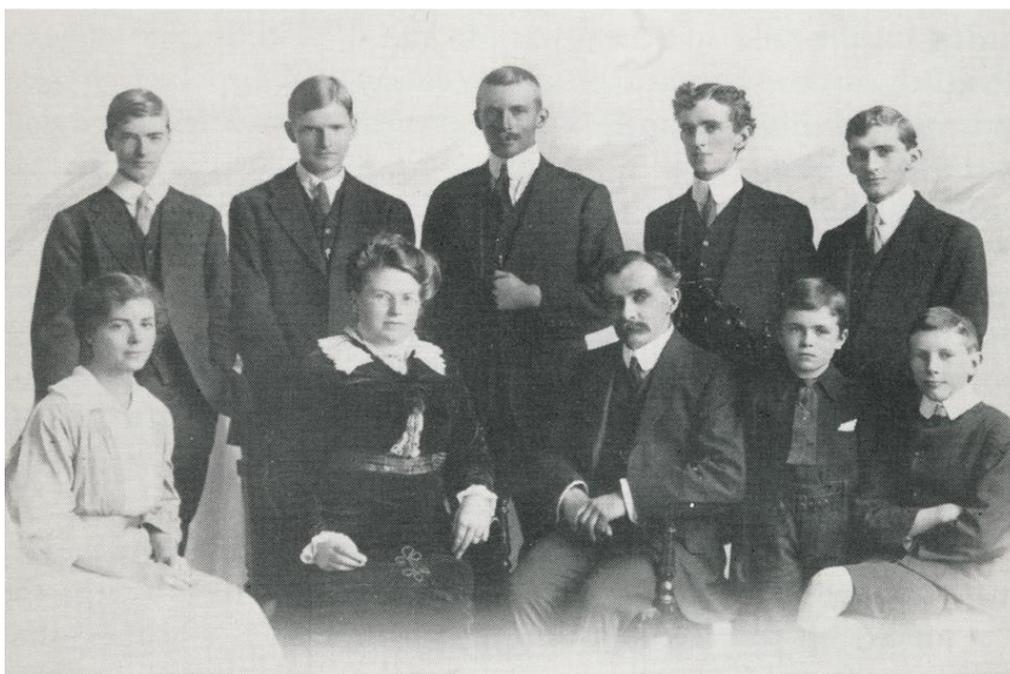
described himself as a mining engineer and then crossed out 'mining'. He was engaged by the CRB as a draughtsman.



Keith Bannatyne Lewis - 1915.

Keith was a member of an upper middle class, Presbyterian family whose fortune had been acquired through mining. They lived in a two-storey family home in Armadale. At the start of the war, Keith was already working at the CRB, while Athol, Phyllis and Owen were at university, Ralph was studying geology prior to entering university, and Ronnie and Neil were at Wesley College with Brian, at eight years of age, expected to follow them.

In Brian Lewis' family history, *'Our War'*, it stated that Keith enlisted from a deep moral compulsion in contrast with 'those who went in because they were out of work and the pay was very good'. He was a typical product of the staunchly patriotic Protestant public school system.



The Lewis family in May 1915: (back, left to right) Ronnie, Owen, Keith, Athol, Ralph; (front, left to right) Phyllis, Edith (mother), James (father), Brian, Neil.

From Brian Lewis, *Our War* (1980). Reproduced courtesy Estate of Brian Lewis.

In *Our War*, Brian Lewis described his family's first report of the Gallipoli campaign thus:

'On 8 May we got the first description from a British war correspondent, Ashmead-Bartlett. The Turks had been hurled back by splendid bayonet charges and there had been no finer feat in the war than the storming of the heights. That gave us the picture, lines of men charging forward with fixed bayonets and astonishing heroism. The dispatch was ordered to be read in all Victorian schools.'

Truth is the first casualty of war.

Keith Lewis had been commissioned in the Citizen Forces and wanted to join the Engineers. However, he got tired of waiting to be called up, so he enlisted in the infantry as a Private in January 1915 but by May, he had been promoted to Second Lieutenant.

No doubt because of his mining engineering expertise, Keith was attached to the 5th Tunnelling Company. The AIF's tunnelling units were occupied in offensive and defensive mining involving the placing and maintaining of mines under enemy lines, as well as other underground work such as the construction of deep dugouts for troop accommodation, the digging of subways, saps

(narrow trenches dug to approach enemy trenches), cable trenches, and underground chambers for signals and medical services.

Keith embarked for the Middle East in July 1915 and arrived in Suez in August. He proceeded to Gallipoli to join the 4th Field Company Engineers but after two months he was evacuated to hospital in Malta with enteric fever (typhoid). Risk factors for typhoid include limited access to clean drinking water, and poor sanitation. News of this disturbed his family back home and the evacuation of Gallipoli deflated them. Keith was in hospital for six weeks and on 14 December 1915 he embarked for Australia via the Hospital Ship A63 *Karoola* for recovery.

He disappointed his father on his return as he told no tales of heroics or the glory of war - and he preferred to wear mufti rather than uniform. While on leave in Melbourne, a woman had given him a white feather. He told his family that he had seen Turks but he had not shot any. He had a good chance when one got out of his trench a hundred yards away to relieve himself but Keith had regarded this as “out of season”.

On 25 April 1916, Keith sailed for England on the HMAT *Warilda* 469. He was posted to the 2nd Tunnelling Company and, in May 1916, he was promoted to Lieutenant.

In the meantime, Keith's brothers, Owen, Athol and Ralph had joined up from a sense of obligation. In May 1916 Keith embarked for Plymouth back to France. His archive shows that he was in France for the entire period (except for two periods of leave) but it provides no clues as to where he was located. The Australian War Memorial indicates that the 2nd Tunnelling Company operated at Vimy, the Ypres Salient, Messines and the Belgian Coast.

In 1916 – 1917 four of the Lewis boys were in action in France and Belgium - Keith and Ralph as tunnellers, Athol an artilleryman, and Owen was in the Australian Flying Corps. Ralph was the first casualty. His family was informed that his leg would be saved but a head wound hospitalised him for six months. He was the lone survivor of a heavy bombardment – his face heavily scarred and dented by shrapnel. Ralph was repatriated in 1918 suffering from shell shock. He made a remarkable recovery in the quiet of home and the great hole behind his knee filled out so that he could resume playing football.

Owen was the next casualty. He was wounded twice – the second time more severe than the first. He was flying as an observer and his pilot had taken off on a misty morning and climbed up into the clear sunlight leaving the smoky lines of trenches hidden below. Thirty German planes hunting in a pack dived on to his slower plane, machine guns blazing. Owen’s pilot got the plane back to the ground safely, shot full of holes. Owen had 26 bullet holes and lost two toes. He was patched up and sent back to the front. Four months later he was killed. He had just turned 21.



Owen Lewis.

On 27 April 1915, Owen wrote to his father, from Queen’s College at the University of Melbourne, seeking his consent to enlist and giving his reasons for wanting to go. He said (in part):

“What comes home to me a great deal is, that I am abiding here in comfort while others perhaps having people dependent on them are fighting my battles and giving their lives for me. Death must come to us all sooner or later and there is no way so noble of leaving than that in which you ‘Lay down your life for your friends.’”

Following Owen’s death, General John Monash, commanding the 3rd Division, then holding the German advance, wrote to Keith in the field, asking him to accept his sympathy, and to convey it to Athol – who was in the same Company as Keith. James Lewis (the father of the boys) was grateful when Monash – a friend from engineering days at the University of Melbourne – removed Athol from danger.

In April 1918, during the defence of Amiens, Keith nearly lost his life. He did not tell his family, but others did later. The 2nd Tunnelling Company had been isolated as the line was pushed back, and most of them tried to get back to their own line through the new German line. Keith was in a covered trench between the two lines when two shells landed on either side of him and buried him. He took quite a time to dig himself out and it was a couple of days before he got back.

A fortnight later, Athol wrote:

“Keith came in. He wasn’t looking as well as usual – he had had a very rough time at Riblmont – been there over a month and spent most of the time under shelter in cellars; his batman, Breen, had gone off his head and finally when Keith was getting full up with the thing, they sent up an officer to relieve him. The same officer was killed five hours later. They had left the billet and returning found it badly damaged by a shell – a little further down the road they heard a shell coming and threw themselves down; it landed a couple of feet from Keith who was stretched out flat; the other officer was on the other side of Keith but apparently hadn’t got right down for he was killed on the spot. Keith was sent down for a week’s rest as his nerves were badly shaken.”

Keith did not return to the CRB. At the end of the war he was granted extended leave on pay to study geology at the Royal School of Mines in South Kensington. His address in 1920 was care of the Maude and Yellow Girl Reefs gold mine in Glen Willis, Victoria. He married Doris Charlesworth in 1921, in Lottah, Tasmania and remained in Tasmania for the rest of his life.

There are two other stories to tell. Phyllis Lewis, sister of Keith, was engaged to the future Prime Minister of Australia, Bob Menzies, during the war. Menzies was eligible to enlist but gave no sign of doing so. Menzies’ two elder brothers had enlisted but his parents decided to withhold Bob to provide support for them. Phyllis and her family could not understand Bob’s staunch support for conscription. They felt it was odd that he wanted to send unwilling men to war. Tension about the engagement grew when Owen was killed while Bob was safe at home. The engagement was broken off. Apparently, Bob Menzies’ dignity had been so disturbed that he did not want to tell his parents and asked Phyllis to do so.

The second story relates to Keith’s son, Donald. He became a Spitfire pilot during the Second World War and was tragically lost shortly before his 20th birthday. Donald served in No 452 Squadron of the RAAF with William Douglas Willis who also worked for the CRB before enlisting. His tragic story is told in Chapter 5 under the entry for William Willis.

In 1966 Keith applied to the Repatriation Department for benefits due to ill health under the requirements of the Repatriation Act. I can only surmise that it may have been due to gassing.

He died on 15 June 1984 at the age of 93.

Driver William Andrew Bartlett, 794

William is shown as 'W.H. Bartlett' on the Roll of Honour but on his Attestation Form he is shown simply as 'William Bartlett'. On the nominal roll for the First World War in the Australian War Memorial, there are five 'William Bartletts'. I am certain I have found the right one as his date of enlistment and his Battalion are exactly as shown in the CRB tabulation. There is another anomaly however, in that he indicated he was a labourer whereas the CRB tabulation described him as a driver.

William was born in Forrest in the heart of the Otway Forest. He was a bachelor and was comparatively old at enlistment in February 1915 at 29 years. I found a birth certificate for William Andrew Bartlett born at Birregurra in 1886. Forrest is near Birregurra and the date matches the Attestation Form so I'm sure his second name is Andrew.

He originally served in the 6th Machine Gun Regiment of the 21st Battalion but in March 1918 it was reformed into the 2nd Machine Gun Battalion. The battalion consisted of 64 medium machine guns and took part in the final stages of the war, seeing action in the Allied defensive operations during the German Spring Offensive and, later, the Allied Hundred Days Offensive which finally brought an end to the war.



1916. Australian machine gunners of the 6th Machine Gun Company probably walking along a road near Pozières.

William's file is difficult to decipher but it looks as if he disembarked in Alexandria, Egypt, in July 1915. There is no indication that he went to Gallipoli but he joined the British Expeditionary Force in Alexandria on 19 March 1916 and disembarked at Marseilles three days later. In France he was initially mustered as a driver. He had a couple of hospitalisations in St Omer for unspecified sicknesses and for a sprained ankle but there is no mention of battle wounds nor is there mention of where he was.

Fortunately, William seemed to have an injury free war. At war's end, in January 1919, he returned to England to the charming Wiltshire villages of Sutton Veny and Codford where units from the AIF were housed in camps along the Wylde River. The Anzac Badge was cut into the chalk hillside which dominates the road (the A36) running along the valley bottom between Warminster and Salisbury. In recognition of Australia's contribution to the war, this badge is still maintained today and can be seen from many kilometres away.



The Anzac badge in Wiltshire.

William returned to Australia aboard the SS *Ypiranga* in August 1919.

William's death notice shows he died in Coon, Victoria, in 1954. I have not been able to find a place called Coon so that is another conundrum in his story.

Lieutenant George Charles Clowser, 6960

George was a clerk at the CRB. He was 22 years old when he enlisted in February 1915. George's history is tragic. He served in the Supply Column of the 1st Anzac Corps Troops. In October 1915 he disembarked at Rouen in France. He was a Lance Corporal. He was appointed Sergeant a year later and a Second Lieutenant a few months later.



Studio portrait of Lieutenant George Charles Clowser.

He was admitted to hospital in the field in December 1916 with influenza and again in March 1918 with general debility described as 'severe'. He was admitted to hospital in Boulogne and then the London General Hospital in Wandsworth. He was struck off the strength and returned to Australia. His record finishes with just one word written in capital letters – NEUROSIS.

This condition was coined 'Shell Shock' during the First World War to describe the sort of stress disorder many soldiers suffered during the war. It was a reaction to the intensity of bombardment and fighting that produced a helplessness appearing variously as panic, terror, flight, or an inability to reason, sleep, walk or talk.

During the War, the concept of shell shock was ill-defined. Cases of shell shock could be interpreted as either a physical or psychological injury, or simply as a lack of moral fibre. The term shell shock is still used by some, but mostly it has entered into common parlance and is often identified as the signature injury of the First World War.

In 1915 the British Army was instructed that:

Shell-shock and shell concussion cases should have the letter 'W' prefixed to the report of the casualty, if it was due to the enemy; in that case the patient would be entitled to rank as 'wounded' and to wear on his arm a 'wound stripe'. If, however, the man's breakdown did not follow a shell explosion, it was not thought to be 'due to the enemy', and he was to [be] labelled 'Shell-shock' or 'S' (for sickness) and was not entitled to a wound stripe or a pension.

Officially, 4,984 members of the 1st AIF were discharged from the service because of war-related psychological trauma. However, the true number will never be known as medics did not always recognise the symptoms so that many psychological casualties did not enter the historical record. Probably, too, many others did not approach authorities at all and so will forever remain anonymous. More importantly, vital statistical evidence has been destroyed.²

Siegfried Sassoon wrote in *'Long Journey: Selections from the Sherston Memoirs'*:

'Shell shock. How many a brief bombardment had its long-delayed after-effect in the minds of those survivors, many of whom had looked at their companions and laughed while inferno did its best to destroy them. Not then was their evil hour; but now; now, in the sweating suffocation of nightmare, in paralysis of limbs, in the stammering of dislocated speech. Worst of all in the disintegration of those qualities through which they had been so gallant and selfless and uncomplaining - this, in the finer types of men, was the unspeakable tragedy of shell-shock. In the name of civilisation these soldiers had been martyred, and it remained for civilisation to prove that their martyrdom was not a dirty swindle.'

In Germany, 'Shell Shock' was not considered an acceptable diagnosis. Instead, men who came back from the war with psychological trauma were dubbed 'hysterical' - with disastrous consequences. Male hysteria was not new in Germany.

In 1920, George obtained a soldier settlement farm of over 1,500 acres at Myall in the Mallee. He farmed it until 1952. He served in the Citizen Military Forces in the Second World War as a Captain (V85785) with the 9th Garrison Battalion.

He died on Anzac Day in 1981 at the age of 88.

² This information was gained from Richard Lindstrom's Ph.D. Thesis, Victoria University of Technology, 1997.

Corporal Matthew Robert Allison, 1312

Matthew was a surveyor's chainman at the CRB. He was born in Buninyong and was nearly 25 when he enlisted in November 1914. He left Australia in February 1915 with the 5th Battalion aboard the HMAT A46 *Clan MacGillivray*. He contracted measles and was confined in Cyprus until August 1915 after which he re-joined his Battalion in the Dardanelles. He was further hospitalised at Gallipoli with diarrhoea and an unspecified illness and later, in Egypt (Heliopolis), with frost bite. He left the Gallipoli Peninsula in early December 1915.

In July 1916 he was again admitted to hospital in Rouen in France for gunshot wounds in the arm and buttocks, and was evacuated to England. He also suffered herpes, dysentery and shingles. He returned to France in September and was appointed Lance Corporal. For some reason he was sent back to England in 1917 and while there, he attended a rifle course at the School of Musketry in Tidworth and qualified as first class. He was promoted to Sergeant and proceeded back to France in December 1917.

The archives give no information of where Matthew was based but the 5th Battalion was rotated in and out of the front line and took part in a number of significant battles including at Pozières, Ypres, Amiens and the Hindenburg Line.

He was discharged in March 1919 and on his return to Australia he went to live in Beaufort.

Matthew Allison died in Berwick in July 1956.



The Battle of Pozieres – Diorama by Charles Web Gilbert.
Australian War Memorial.

Lieutenant Robert Stirling Moore, MC

Robert was a civil engineer with the CRB. His occupation is incorrectly cited as Surveyor's Assistant in the CRB's table. He lived in St Kilda and was 23 when he enlisted in 1915 - although he had been rejected earlier because of his eyesight. He had completed an Officer's Training course and became a Sergeant prior to being appointed a 2nd Lieutenant on 18 May 1915. He embarked from Melbourne aboard HMAT *Runic* (A54) on 20 June 1916. After arriving in England, he proceeded to France in November and was promoted to Lieutenant on 1 January 1917. On the night of 8 October 1917, east of Ypres, his actions under heavy shell fire displayed initiative and inspired confidence in those following him, leading to the award of a Military Cross. The citation read:

'For conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty guiding a brigade to its assembly position for an attack. Owing to heavy shell fire on the roads, he led the brigade across country, his intimate knowledge of which enabled him to accomplish a very difficult task.'

He was hospitalised a number of times – in the ship's hospital, in the field and in St Omer, Havre and Rouen (Northern France). The cause of one of these is mentioned. He had tonsillitis in Rouen.

The other entries just say “sick” so I don’t think he was being treated for wounds. I suspect that sickness dogged his life and it was probably due to gassing. In 1960 he made an application to the Repatriation Department for benefits under the Repatriation Act.



Studio portrait of Lieutenant Robert Stirling Moore.

He returned to Australia and his appointment was terminated on 27 July 1919.

I don’t know if Robert returned to the CRB. There was an Assistant District Engineer named Robert Moore who helped to establish the short-lived Stawell Division in 1924 – but I can’t be sure it was him. However I am sure that he lived in Canterbury Road with his wife, Ruth, who was a medical doctor.

He later served in the Second World War in a non-combatant role – refer to Chapter 6.

Robert died in 1960.

Lance Corporal Vivian George Taylor, 2811

There was only one V.G. Taylor in the Australian Archives for the First World War – Vivian George. There is no record that he worked for the CRB but that is not unusual. Few of the others I investigated mentioned it either. However, you can be fairly confident when they describe themselves as an engineer, public servant, accountant or the like. The date of his enlistment in the archive does not gel with the date in the CRB listing (21/7/1917 c.f. 7/7/1915), but he passed his physical test on the 7 July 1915 so there is some correlation there. I am confident that Vivian George is the Taylor V.G. on the CRB Roll of Honour.

Taylor was born in Healesville and joined when he was 24 years old. He described himself as a labourer but in a CRB Annual Report reporting his death it indicated that Taylor was a chainman in a survey gang. He was a Lance Corporal in the 6/23rd Battalion although the CRB listing states that he was attached to the 5th Battalion. However, both battalions were formed at the same time and served in the same theatres.

He embarked from Australia in October 1916 for Egypt. It is clear that Vivian suffered ill health. He was not a robust man. He was five feet seven inches tall, ten stone in weight and had a chest measurement of 34 inches. His Service and Casualty Form shows that he was hospitalised eleven times in Tell el Kebir, Cairo, Heliopolis, Alexandria, Tell el Kebir (again), England, Étaples, Belgium, Havre as well as in the field in France. In the second hospitalisation at Tell el Kebir it recorded ‘permanently in sanitary section’. In Cairo it said “rheumatism”. In Heliopolis it said “congestion of lung severe”. In Havre, he spent 27 days in hospital. In August 1916 it says he was wounded in action but provides no further details.

His last hospitalisation was in December 1917 and the last entry in his record said: “Killed in Action” with a date of 5/7/18. He was 27. He completed a will leaving all his effects to his mother. These were: 2 wallets, 2 coins, photos, cards, 1 fountain pen, 1 Y.M.C.A. wallet and letters. It breaks your heart.



Lance Corporal Vivian George Taylor.

He enlisted with his younger brother, Jack, in 1915. He fought in some of the most historic and bloodiest battles of the war – at Pozieres where three Australian divisions suffered a combined 23,000 casualties, Bapaume, the 2nd Battle of Bullecourt, Menin Road, and Poelcappelle. He entered the Battle of Hamel on July 4, 1918, before being killed the next day.



In the foreground is the grave of Herman Ernest Otto Buhmann of the AIF killed on 4 July 1918 and behind it, on the left, is the grave of Vivian George Taylor killed on the following day.

The archive states that he was buried in an isolated grave $\frac{3}{4}$ mile East North East of Villers-Bretonneux but was later reinterred in Crucifix Cemetery Plot 9 Row F Grave 8. But this was crossed out and a note inserted 'Memorial Cross Crucifix Cemetery'. However, the Commonwealth War Graves had the final word by declaring that he is buried at the Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery.



Villers-Bretonneux Military Cemetery.

But there is another story about Vivian's place of burial. I found the following entry on the Discovering Anzac/National Archives website.

"The remains of a World War I soldier that lay beneath an unmarked tombstone in France for almost a century have been identified as a Healesville man. Lance Corporal Vivian George Taylor, 27, born in Healesville in 1891, was killed in action on July 5, 1918, after fighting in some of the most historic battles on the Western Front. He was thought to be lost forever, but researchers Dennis Frank and Andrew Pittaway from Fallen Diggers have found the final resting place of Lance-Cpl Taylor, whose grave in the Villers-Bretonneux War Cemetery in France had been labelled as "unknown". Mr Frank said the pair were able to cross reference unknown graves with Lance-Cpl Taylor's date and location of death, his battalion number and his service history to pinpoint his burial location."

A new headstone has been erected to commemorate Vivian. The only image of it that I could find is on the site of the Virtual War Memorial and the quality is not good. It is shown below. It is engraved with the Australian Service Badge, his service number, rank, name – initials and surname

– unit, date of death and age. Below the cross is a personal inscription chosen by relatives. In Vivian’s case, it reads: “A Loyal Soldier Lost, Loved and Never Forgotten – Lest We Forget.”



Vivian Taylor’s new headstone at the Villers-Bretonneux cemetery.

If ever I go back to Villers-Bretonneux I pledge that I will visit his gravesite.

Post script – The Virtual War Memorial Australia website confirms he worked with the CRB.

Private Edward Mitchell Furmston, 2460

I had trouble finding an archive for Edward because both the CRB tabulation and the Roll of Honour misspelt his name as ‘Furmiston’.

Like Vivian Taylor above, Edward was born in Healesville. He was 27 years old when he enlisted in July 1915. His occupation was a labourer - as were so many others who enlisted. He was attached to the 24th Battalion, 5th Reinforcements. This battalion was raised in May 1915 at Broadmeadows, Victoria. It had originally been planned that it would be formed elsewhere and

draw its recruits from the less populous states of Queensland, Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia. However, due to the large number of recruits from Victorian volunteers it was decided to raise the battalion in Broadmeadows using only Victorian volunteers. As a result of the hasty decision to raise the battalion, very little training was carried out before the battalion sailed from Melbourne on board RMS *Osterley* in September 1915.

Once in Egypt, he spent 19 days in hospital in Abassia. Later he was to spend another 87 days in England receiving treatment. He joined his unit in France in July 1916 when the battalion was involved in the battles at Pozieres and Mouquet Farm where the Australians suffered terrible casualties. In December he entered hospital in France with bronchitis and this appeared to dog him for some time. He was repatriated to Aldershot in England and after a month of treatment he was given a month's furlough.

He returned to France in July 1917 and shortly after, he was charged with being absent without leave for five days for which he was confined for five days and forfeited 13 day's pay. In March 1918, during the German Spring Offensive, he was severely gassed and transferred to a French hospital which, in turn, transferred him back to hospitals at Ipswich and Dartford in England. He had recovered by May but not long after he was hospitalised again for another 27 days. He returned to France in September 1918 and was hospitalised almost immediately on his return with an inguinal hernia. This was the cause of his discharge from the AIF as medically unfit.



Corporal Edward Mitchell Furmston.

Edward's brother, Harold, enlisted a week after Edward. He joined the same Battalion and they embarked for Egypt together. Harold did not fare as well as Edward. He was discharged in July 1917 as medically unfit for further military service due to wounds received while on active service. He sustained gunshot wounds to both legs and his left shoulder.

Edward returned to Australia on 28 March 1919.

He died in Deniliquin in December 1956 at the age of 68.

Warrant Officer Rolf Frederick Jansen, MSM, 91

After leaving school, Rolf worked in the office of a merchant before joining the Town Clerk's office of Melbourne City Council. However, when the CRB invited applications for a clerical position in 1915, Rolf was successful. On joining the Board, he renewed his relationship with W.L. (Les) Dale with whom he worked in the Town Clerk's Office and who was the first Secretary of the CRB. Only five months later, he enlisted when he was nearly 25 years old. He served with the AIF abroad until his return in 1919. He served in Egypt from May 1916 to November 1916 and then he was transferred to England. There, he was promoted to Staff Sergeant and later, Warrant Officer. He put his clerical skills to work in the Australian Army Pay Corps and was awarded a Meritorious Service Medal.



Rolf Jansen – from the CRB staff photograph of 1921.

He resumed working with the CRB on his return to Australia.

Rolf was appointed Assistant Secretary to the Board in 1920 and then Secretary in 1929. He served as a Member of the Board from 1945 to 1955. In fact, his signature appears on many of the papers I researched of CRB officers who served in the Second World War.



Rolf Jansen – circa 1950s

During the Second World War, Jansen joined the Volunteer Defence Corps and served as a Commissioned Officer. He was a skilled cabinet maker and as a personal contribution to the local war effort, he made over 300 hospital bedside lockers and other equipment.

Rolf died in 1959.

Driver Simon King, 2494

Simon was born in Dorset, England, and was 30 years old when he enlisted in July 1915. I suspect he came to Australia as an infant³. He described himself as an Engine Driver (Traction). He was a small man – 5 feet 3 ½ inches tall and 9 stone 10 lbs in weight.

³ In the Passenger Lists in the Public Records Office of Victoria, only the adults are named and there is no Simon King. Child passengers are not named. They are listed as “ ... child with” or “boy with”.

His archive is brief. He left Australia in December 1915 and served in France until the end of hostilities. The file does not mention where he was located in France but his battalion was involved in most of the major battles on the Western Front. He was a truck driver in the 2nd Field Company Engineers, 12th Reinforcement.

The Engineers' duties covered functions such as mobility, counter mobility and construction as well as survey and mapping, and specialised tunnelling and mining operations. More specifically, they undertook a broad range of tasks including preparation and supervision of the construction of defensive and gun positions, excavation of trenches and dugouts, erection of wire and other obstacles, preparation of command posts, signalling and water supply, field engineering, road and bridge construction and route maintenance. They also undertook obstacle breaching and crossing. For example, in the lead up to the attack at Mont St Quentin the Engineers were required to carry out two river crossing and bridging operations.

Engineers also had responsibility for signalling although this function became more specialised as the war progressed, eventually leading to the creation of a separate Signals Corps

Simon embarked from Sydney for France aboard the RMS *Mooltan* in December 1915. He was hospitalised twice during this time – each time for 'sickness' and he was promoted to Lance Corporal in January 1919. He arrived home in June 1919 aboard the HT *Soudan*.

In 1923 he wrote to the army requesting that his war medals be sent to him at his address in Dandenong.

There is a death record of Simon King dying in Melbourne in 1964 but I can't verify if it is our Simon.

Lance Corporal George James Cooper, 2472

Compared to others, George's archive is fairly sparse.

George was nearly 40 when he enlisted at the end of July 1915. He described himself as a Road Inspector. He was born in Heathcote but his mother, his next of kin, lived in Woori Yallock. George was not married.

He originally served as a Sapper in the 2nd Field Company Engineers, 12th Reinforcements and embarked for France in December 1915. The name of the troop ship is not recorded. He was also hospitalised in Heliopolis *en route* to France with a fever.

Once in France he transferred to the 12th Field Company Engineers and in September 1917 he was detached to the Australian Electrical Mechanical Mining and Boring Company. Because of its initials – AEMMB – it was referred to as Alphabetical Company.

He was wounded in February 1918 – a gunshot wound in the elbow according to the archive. He was evacuated to England and sent back to France in October 1918 just before the Armistice. I have found the Company's War Diary that records George being wounded. It states under the heading of casualties on 7 February 1918 that George was wounded 'on the job by H.E.' and that Sapper H. T. Fredericks was killed 'on the job by H.E.' H.E. stands for High Explosives meaning that he was wounded by shrapnel rather than by bullets as recorded in his archive. I noticed that on the following day another was wounded and another was killed. The diary does not state where the Company was at the time but the daily nature of work that they were doing was revetting (lining and strengthening walls with rock or timber), cleaning, widening, duck-boarding, raising parapets, wiring, building up breast works, excavating, draining and benching. This work was necessary to provide protection for the troops and those involved in it were frequently exposed to danger.

At the time of his discharge, George was a Lance Corporal. George returned to Australia in April 1919 aboard the SS *Armagh*.

George's brother, Ernest, also served (and survived) and was awarded a Military Medal.

George died in 1951.

Private Harold Dunstan Page, 5191

Harold was a tally clerk. He was born in Bathurst NSW and was 25 when he enlisted at the end of 1915. He was a Staff Sergeant attached to the 14th Battalion. He embarked from Melbourne on board HMAT *Anchises* on 14 March 1916.

His file is somewhat enigmatic in that he seems to have served overseas in Egypt and England only. France is not mentioned. Although initially attached to the 14th Battalion, his file later quotes him as being in the AIF Depots Headquarters. These headquarters managed a range of logistical duties including *inter alia* supply, personnel administration, training, hospital management, motor transport, detention, survey schools and ordnance. From its humble beginnings, the support, logistic and administrative units of the AIF developed into a large and sophisticated organisation, capable of sustaining the AIF overseas and the Australian Corps in the field.



Administrative Headquarters of the AIF Depots in the United Kingdom at Bhurtpore Barracks in Wiltshire. At right is a stone drawing of a kangaroo, map of Australia and emu in front of the Australian flag.

Harold was hospitalised in England a number of times with illnesses such as stomach complaints. This leads me to think that Harold suffered from ill health which probably debarred him from active service. He achieved steady promotion throughout his service in England but one of the last entries on the file provides a bit of a clue to the puzzle. Regarding his return to Australia in July 1918, it states the reason for the discharge as ‘General discharge’. This has then been crossed out and replaced by ‘Debility’.

Harold died in the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital in 1952 at age 61.

Corporal Robert Hazel Smith, 1960

Robert described himself as a road engineer (as distinct from an overseer as stated in the CRB tabulation). He was born in Coleraine and he was 40 in October 1915 when he joined up. He was a widower with one child. He was initially sent to Egypt after the AIF withdrawal from Gallipoli where he joined the 8th Field Company.

The 8th Field Company Engineers was formed in Egypt during February 1916 as part of the 5th Division and allocated to II Anzac Corps. Following training in the Suez Canal area, they arrived in France in July 1916, the last of the four Divisions from Egypt to arrive. Nevertheless, they were the first to see major action during the ill-conceived Battle for Fromelles.

Robert suffered from myalgia and rheumatism. Between September 1916 and February 1917 he was hospitalised in Boulogne, Étaples and Balise in France and finally in England.



8th Field Company Sappers laying a mule track at Albania Wood near Ypres.

On 2 May 1917 the following entry was placed on file.

'This is to certify that Sapper Robert Hazel Smith, 8th Field Company Engineers. Australian Imperial Force, was transferred to England, and admitted to 3rd Western General Hospital on 29th September 1916 suffering with

Myalgia; returned to Australia per Hospital Ship "Karoola", which reached Melbourne on 10th April 1917, illness being specified as Myalgia and Shell Shock.'

My heart breaks for him. He was living in Mt Evelyn in 1931 when he wrote to the army seeking delivery of his war medals.

Robert died in 1964.

Sapper Alfred Reginald Linford, V44365

Alfred was 24 when he enlisted in May 1916. He was born in Yarrawonga and described himself as a civil servant. He had initially been discharged as medically unfit but was successful the second time around. In fact, from November 1915 he was a Sergeant in the Pay Corps. His records show that he joined the 10th Field Engineers but, because of persistent ill health he was exempted from active service and discharged later in 1916.

Despite his ill health, Alfred lived a long life and died in 1980.

Lieutenant William Lee Murrell, MC

William was born in Castlemaine in 1893 and educated at Caulfield Grammar. He was nearly 23 when he enlisted in January 1916. He had a BCE from the University of Melbourne. In his attestation form it states that he was involved in 'Design of reinforced concrete and timber bridges, road grading and testing of materials. Country Roads Board.' He attained the rank of Lieutenant and was attached to the 2nd Pioneer Battalion, Reinforcement 8.

The 2nd Pioneer Battalion was an infantry and light engineering unit raised in Egypt in 1916. The battalion served on the Western Front in France and Belgium and fought in most of the major battles in which the AIF participated between mid-1916 and the end of the war in November 1918.

William Murrell embarked for England on HMAT A7 *Medic* in December 1916 and was initially billeted at Fovant in Wiltshire, England – I presume for training – and in June 1917 he proceeded

to France where he served continuously until the end of the war. He was awarded a Military Cross. The citation read:

'On the morning of 5th October, 1918, near MONTEBREHAIN, North of St. Quentin, when leading his platoon in an advance under heavy fire, he saw a wide gap caused in the line of the Coy on his right. He immediately swung his platoon into the breach, covered the withdrawal of a threatened flank, and dug in on the final objective line, thus saving a threatened position.

He constantly exposed himself going along the line encouraging his men and setting a splendid example throughout, being untiring in his efforts. His courage and initiative under heavy fire were most conspicuous.'

William was hospitalised a few times due to influenza and at the end of the war, on 6 December 1918, he was hospitalised in Rouen, France, 'suffering from pyrexia of uncertain origin, seriously ill'. Pyrexia is the medical term for fever. He was taken off the seriously ill list on 27 December 1918.

In June 1919, William applied for membership of the Institution of Civil Engineers in London. It was noted that he had successfully completed a refresher course in civil engineering at King's College at the University of London between January and June 1919 and his Associate membership was conferred on him, *in absentia*, in January 1920. He was granted leave with pay including a subsistence fee, from 15 January 1919 to 30 June 1919, together with a sum of 11 guineas, while he was studying. This leave was granted by the Demobilisation Department.

He married his wife, Sybil Jessie Hall, in Surbiton on 19 June 1919, and they left England for Australia in August 1919. His archive records his marriage to Sybil on the very front page of his Attestation Form – with large handwriting in distinctive red ink. It also gave his address (after 20 November 1919) as c/o Major Hall MC, Public Works Department, Ramnagar, Bihar/Orissa, India. This was marked on his file on 27 October 1919. Although supposition on my part, I suspect that William's appointment in India had been arranged while he was London. I felt that he and Sybil might even have travelled directly to India from England but his file states 'R.T.A. per "Quebils?" ex England 23/8/19'. I have interpreted this as Return to Australia from England departing 23 August 1919. The name of the ship is indecipherable. If I am right, they probably stayed only a short time in Australia before setting sail for India.

William became the Executive Engineer for the Indian Service of Engineers, Patna, Bihar, Orissa, India. While there, he was burgled and wrote to the army to see if they could reissue his war medals that were stolen. I am pleased to report that he was issued with new medals. William and Sybil lived in India until it gained its independence from Britain in August 1947. Both of their sons were born in India. Between 1947 and the early 1950s they lived in Toorak before moving to Beaumaris where they lived until his death in 1971. Reportedly a fine yachtsman, William was involved in the establishment of the Beaumaris Yacht Club. He was also a prolific writer of letters to the newspapers.

He photographed many of the roads in the Beaumaris district and his collection is held within the State Library of Victoria.

Lance Corporal Arthur Henry Kerry, 10283

Like Simon King (above), Arthur was born in England – in Oxford. He was a clerk in the CRB and was 34 years old when he enlisted. He was attached to the 10th Field Company as a ‘Loader and Guide’. A guide worked with a Gunnery Officer in determining where artillery is placed in the field and how it will be delivered to the site. They would have to take into account access for maintaining the supply of munitions, the range of the guns, protection from enemy assault, and the topography and ground conditions. A loader assists in the loading of the guns.

Arthur embarked from Melbourne aboard the HMAT *Runic* in June 1916 and disembarked at Plymouth in August. His file in the Australian Archive is one of the most difficult to read because of illegible handwriting. He was hospitalised once with influenza. However, I don’t think he saw action in the field although there is mention of him being in France. The only medal he received was the Victory Medal – issued to him in 1924.

His file is, however, definite about him being in France after the armistice to attend the Australian Corps Central School. This school operated from January to April 1919. There are a number of monographs in the collection of the Australian War Memorial regarding the school but they have not been digitized. I suspect that it aimed to provide further education to servicemen to better equip them finding employment when they returned home to Australia.

Arthur was discharged in May 1919. He returned to the CRB after the war and is in the CRB staff photographs taken in 1921 and 1930.



Arthur Kerry – taken in the CRB Staff photographs – 1921 and 1930.

Arthur died in 1966 aged 84.

Lance Corporal Edgar Moodie, 274

Edgar was an engine driver who was born in Bannockburn – a small town near Geelong. He enlisted in March 1916 at the age of 26. He was in the 3rd Australian Pioneer Battalion. Edgar arrived in France in November 1916 and, like many of his mates, he struggled with sickness. He contracted mumps soon after his arrival in the field. He was promoted from Lance Corporal to Sergeant in August 1917.

The 3rd Australian Pioneer Battalion served in some of the major battles on the Western Front. After a brief period of acclimatisation in a "nursery sector" around Armentieres, the battalion's first major action came around Messines in June 1917, during which several of the battalion's companies were assigned to the assaulting companies to dig communication trenches. Other troops were assigned general engineering duties such as road clearance, tramway maintenance, anti-aircraft defence, and water supply - by laying pipes and ensuring that they were maintained throughout the battle.

The battalion's next major battle of 1917 was the Third Battle of Ypres. The battalion wintered around Messines, during which time it provided reinforcements to the Australian tunnelling

companies as well as helping construct and maintain the divisional tramway systems. In early 1918, the battalion took part against the German Spring Offensive after which it was dispatched to the Somme, taking over from the 4th Pioneers around Villers-Bretonneux. They then took part in the Battle of Hamel. It was during the August offensive that the 3rd Pioneers went into action as infantry for the first time. The battalion's final actions of the war came against the Hindenburg Line, around the St. Quentin Canal in early October 1918. The battalion was subsequently withdrawn and moved back to the Abbeville area. They did not see further action before the Armistice came into effect on 11 November 1918.



Sergeant Edgar Moodie.

Edgar Moodie was severely gassed and was twice wounded in action requiring him to be evacuated to England to hospital in Oxford. He was sent back to the front and saw out the remainder of the war.

In 1961 he sought assistance from the Repatriation Department, no doubt for the severe gassing he suffered.

Edgar's brother, Bill, seven years older than Edgar, was also an Engine Driver with the CRB. Bill and Edgar and their other brothers worked in the family chaff business but Bill's first job away from home was with the Corio Shire Council as an engine driver before he joined the CRB.

Edgar died in 1964.

Sapper Thomas Frederick John Kneale, 10285

Thomas was born in Ararat but lived in Prahran. He was 25 at enlistment in Wangaratta in March 1916 and was a clerk with the CRB. A Sapper in 10th Field Engineers under the command of Major William McCormack, he arrived in France on 23 November 1916 but, after a week, was sent to hospital in Boulogne with pneumonia. He was then invalided to the 1st Southern General Hospital at Kings Heath in Birmingham with 'acute lobar pneumonia (SEVERE)' until 4 January 1917. The Medical Report on an Invalid is almost indecipherable in a doctor's hand-writing but I can discern 'Is short of breath on exertion'. The opinion of the Medical Board was that he would be fit for service after six months.

Another document indicated he had influenza and in another report, it stated bronchitis. In yet another report it states 'calculus bladder' which is a propensity for the development of bladder stones. After a long period of recuperation in various posts in England he returned to France on 3 October 1918. In February 1919 he was demobilised to England and then returned to Australia.

Thomas's war was dogged by illness but he was not alone. Most Australian troops who succumbed to disease during the war died from respiratory tract infections – commonly influenza and pneumonia. Combined, they claimed some 3,300 Australian lives and many more were debilitated by the effects long afterwards. By 1930, almost 8,000 were receiving disability pensions for asthma, bronchitis, pleurisy or pneumonia. Thomas was one of these. In 1961 he applied for repatriation benefits – at about the same time as many of his CRB fellow soldiers – leading me to think that the deadly gas used during the war also played a part.

There is also another aspect which may have contributed. These were soldiers from a warm climate in Australia who were mobilised to France in what was one of the coldest winters Europe had experienced. I wonder whether they were kitted out properly?

Thomas died in 1973 when he was 81.

Captain Alfred Vernon Galbraith

Alfred Vernon Galbraith was born in Geelong and was 25 when he enlisted in 1916. He was appointed Assistant Town Clerk of Geelong when only 21 and then he joined the CRB as Chief Clerk.

He embarked for overseas in May 1916. He was sent to Salisbury and was hospitalised there with an unnamed sickness. Later, in France, he was gassed in July 1917 at Messines and thereafter his record shows a lot of hospitalization. In September 1918 he was diagnosed with glycosuria and spent more time in hospital. This is a condition that affects blood sugar levels. He had pneumonia in both lungs. He left for England in a hospital ship in February 1919 and in July 1919 he was discharged from hospital to undertake vocational training. One report said that 'he looks rather pallid and he coughs at night and in the mornings. He has walked half a mile and his heart is rather rapid after slight exertion'. He was also diagnosed with diabetes. I suspect Alfred's war extended well beyond Armistice Day in 1918.

Alfred did not return to the CRB but was recruited as the Secretary to the newly established three-person Forests Commission Victoria. In 1927, Galbraith was elevated to Chairman, a position he held until his death in 1949. He was Chairman throughout the worst fires in the Department's history in the late 1930s, the Great Depression, World War 2 and the civil rehabilitation period which followed it.

Although revenue from timber sales declined during the Depression, Galbraith channelled substantial government funds for unemployment relief works which were well suited to unskilled manual labour such as firebreak slashing, silvicultural thinning, weed spraying and rabbit control. By 1935-36 the Forests Commission was employing almost 9,000 men in relief works and a further 1,200 boys under a "Youth for Conservation Plan".



1940 - Alfred Galbraith, Chairman, Forest Commission Victoria from 1927 to 1949.

Galbraith was widely known throughout Australia and overseas. He organised the 1928 British Empire Forestry Conference in Australia and represented Victoria at a similar conference in 1935. He planned to attend the 1947 conference in England but was forced to withdraw due to failing health.

Alfred was an Australian Rules Football enthusiast. He supported Essendon and was a member of the Victorian Football League Tribunal.

He died in 1949.

Lieutenant Leslie Montrose Graham, 10194

The Honour Roll says L.V. Graham but out of 842 Grahams listed in the National Archives I could not find 'L.V.'. But I found L.M. and I'm pretty certain he is our man. He is described as a draughtsman in the CRB tabulation but in his enlistment papers he described himself as a civil engineer.

Leslie was born in Beechworth but his address on enlistment was Brighton Beach. He enlisted in March 1916 when he was 24 years old. He was placed in the 10th Field Engineers as a Sapper and then progressed through the ranks of Lance Corporal, Corporal and eventually Lieutenant.

He left Australia on 20 June 1916 aboard HMAAT *Runic* arriving in Plymouth on 10 August 1916. He landed in France on 23 November. He spent a week in hospital with diarrhoea in Le Havre but there are no further entries about illness and wounds.

In January 1918 he was sent back to a Training School in England regarding gas warfare – he was attached to the Corps Gas School. He returned to France on 1 February 1918 and saw out the rest of the war returning to London in March 1919. He then undertook some training in road surface treatments. His file contained the following note:

‘Under the authority of the Director-General of Repatriation and Demobilisation the above named officer has been granted leave of absence with pay and subsistence allowance at the rate of 6s. per day for the period from the 3rd March to 17th April 1919, to enable him to be attached to the laboratory of Col. Crompton, M.I.C.E., Consulting Engineer to the Government Roads Board, London.’

In his Medical Report dated 13 May 1919 prior to embarkation for Australia it said:

‘He feels quite well. No serious illness. No serious wounds. No serious gassing.’

I don’t know if Leslie returned to the CRB. Given the special leave granted him in London, it is likely but it can’t be substantiated. He is not in the CRB staff photograph taken in 1921.

He married Kathleen Mary MacAnsh in 1922 but I cannot find a record of his death.

Private Leslie (Les) Wilkens White, 17922

Leslie was a 20 year old draughtsman from Ivanhoe who joined up in March 1916. He served in the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps (RAAMC) 15th Field Ambulance.



Les White – from the CRB staff photographs taken in 1930.

As the name implies, the RAAMC is the branch of the Australian Army responsible for providing medical care to Army personnel. Formed in 1902 through the amalgamation of medical units of the various Australian colonies, it was first deployed to South Africa during the Second Boer War. The corps has participated in every Australian Army operation since then, including wars and peacekeeping operations.

The 15th Field Ambulance was part of a largely Victorian Brigade. It was responsible for 'Second Line' casualty evacuation from 'First Line' Regimental Aid Posts (RAP) in each battalion. The RAP belonged to the Battalion and was manned by the Regimental Medical Officer (RMO), a qualified doctor supported by several non-commissioned officers and a number of medical orderlies. They in turn were supported by unit stretcher bearers. These men would be trained to administer First Aid sufficient to clear airways, staunch bleeding and perhaps splint fractures so that casualties could be evacuated to the Battalion RAP.

Casualties were hand carried - requiring at least four men but more like eight - over any distance for each casualty. Hand carts were also used but the rough terrain of the battlefield generally meant stretchers were more commonly used. When mass casualties occurred, such as through

major shelling or an attack (by either side), decisions would have to be made about the priority of evacuation. The RMO would assess the casualties and decide whether they were to be evacuated and in what priority. Grievous wounds with little chance of survival would generally have a low priority when evacuation resources were scarce. When an attack or advance was undertaken, the RAP would follow behind the advance troops and were thus exposed to enemy direct fire (rifles and machine guns) and indirect fire (artillery, mortar and even gas).



September 1917 – Casualty Clearing Station, Menin Road, Ypres.

The Field Ambulance had personnel deployed forward to retrieve casualties from the RAP to the Field Ambulance Advanced Dressing Station and then to a Casualty Clearing Station (CCS). They would have to deploy forward to reach the RAP, and thus came under the same risks as the front line combat troops. Sometimes they had other means to assist in casualty evacuation such as light rail, horse drawn vehicles and even motor vehicles, but they were mostly stretcher borne, or on hand drawn carts.

Soldiers with serious wounds who needed surgery had the so-called “Golden Hour” to receive the treatment they needed. After an hour their chances of survival diminished rapidly. Evacuation times were extended considerably by inclement weather, mud, the detritus of battle, shell torn ground and enemy action. Infection, often described as 'sepsis', was also a great risk as there was no penicillin and other antibiotics to treat patients.

Once a patient reached the CCS, additional Medical Officers and supporting personnel were available to carry out surgery. More serious casualties might, after initial treatment, be evacuated further to the rear. The tragic fact was that many men died at the CCS from serious wounds and indeed many of the cemeteries scattered through Northern France and Belgium originally began alongside a CCS.

From a CCS, casualties might be taken to a Field Hospital or straight to a General Hospital. In France, the evacuation chain would eventually see serious casualties sent quickly to the United Kingdom. In some circumstances Australian casualties may have been sent home for rehabilitation. Significant numbers of casualties at Gallipoli who were stricken with enteric fever (typhoid) were returned to Australia, with a great many of those returning to the Western Front. In the process of seaborne evacuation, many of the wounded succumbed to their wounds in transit. They would be buried at sea in the traditional naval fashion or, in the case of Gallipoli, at intermediate ports of call, particularly Malta.

It is quite remarkable that some men who were wounded multiple times, kept returning to the front when they would have been deemed to have done their duty. However, many men felt compelled to return to support their mates, particularly as the war drew on and reinforcements began to slow down.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

P09328.001

An informal group portrait of members of the 15th Field Ambulance of which Leslie was a member.

Les trained initially at various hospitals in Melbourne – RAAMC Royal Park, Glenroy Isolation, No. 5 Australian Infectious Diseases Hospital, C.H. Queenscliff (RAAMC), Clearing Hospital Broadmeadows, No. 11 General Hospital, Clearing Hospital Seymour and a few others that are indecipherable. All this training took the best part of 14 months and for this period he was a Private.

I can't find a record of his disembarkation but, on his arrival in the UK, he proceeded to Glasgow where he did another month of training in the RAAMC Training centre, before moving to Rouelles in France in November 1917.

The training that Leslie underwent was very comprehensive and he had to sit exams for which he received a 70% grade which is apparently very good. Apart from para-medical training he also studied camp sanitation, kitchens, latrines and incinerators. He also did infantry training and, of course, transport of the wounded.

The archive doesn't identify where Leslie served but his unit was attached to the 15th Brigade which, in the last year of the war, when Leslie arrived at the front, fought in the Battles of Villers-Bretonneux, St Quentin Canal and the Beurevoir Line – the last of a series of German defensive lines collectively termed the Hindenburg Line.

He spent six days in hospital in January 1918 with an unspecified illness and remained in the field in France until he returned to Australia via England in June 1919.

He received the three medals that most the other veterans received – the Victory Medal, the British War Medal and the 1914/18 Star. However he lost one of them under the following circumstances:

'My daughter lost my Victory Medal whilst wearing it to school on Anzac Day 1935. It became detached from her jumper as she was jumping Elster Canal, Brighton. As the canal was carrying much water at the time I had to wait until the water subsided before I could look for it, but later after much searching I could not find it.'

A duplicate medal was forwarded to him.

Les returned to the CRB and worked in the Plans and Survey Division. He retired in 1961 after 46 years' service with the Board and died in 1968.

Driver Leonard James Herd, 32368

Leonard was the youngest staff member of the CRB to enlist. He was just 18. He was a clerk. His father was a manager of the English Scottish and Australian Bank, and Leonard and his two brothers attended Scotch College. Leonard joined up in October 1916 and arrived in Plymouth in April 1917. In September 1917 he went to France as a Driver in the Field Artillery Brigade. In December he became a Gunner but in March 1918 he was returned to England for early discharge and embarkation to Australia.

At first, I was puzzled by his early discharge but the following letter in the archive provided the explanation. It was written by Leonard's father to Mr A. Watt the Minister for Defence. It said:

In reference to our conversation about my son now at Salisbury Plains, I thought I would write and tell you the following facts. My eldest son Rupert, after 2 ½ years' service in the AIF was killed on the 16th June last (result of an aeroplane accident). My second son, David, was killed on 22 August last in Egypt after 15 months service. Leonard my youngest and only surviving son enlisted on his 18th birthday and sailed for England on 14th February this year. He will be 19 years old in October.

My wife and I feel the loss of our two boys keenly and are naturally apprehensive as to the safety of the third and would like to see him engaged on home service. The boy's patriotism and loyalty is so pronounced we are loth to raise the question, but I would like to know if it would be possible to keep him out of the firing line by giving him duties in England.'

In arriving at a decision, it was revealed that Rupert – aged 25 - was accidentally killed in in an air crash in England and David - aged 23 - was found drowned in the Nile. The Army acceded to Mr Herd's request and Leonard was withdrawn from service in France.



Leonard's brothers – Rupert and David.

Leonard's eldest brother, Lieutenant Rupert Holton Herd, left Melbourne in November 1915 to join the 13th Light Horse Regiment in Egypt. The following May he was in France with the 2nd Division Cycling Corps and served in Armentieres, Ypres and the Somme. The Australian Cycling Corps was formed in Egypt in 1916 as part of the AIF and fought on the Western Front in France and Belgium. They were used mainly as despatch riders, while also conducting reconnaissance and patrolling.

At his own request, Rupert was given permission to leave France and join the Australian Flying Corps in England. In December 1916 Rupert was at the Royal Flying Corps School of Military Aeronautics in Reading, England, preparatory to joining the Australian Flying Corps. He had just finished his training when in June 1917 he was involved in an accident at the Eastbourne Aerodrome in England. During a training flight Rupert was a passenger acting as observer in an Avro 504A flown by a British pilot. The aircraft stalled and nose-dived in a fiery crash. The pilot received only minor facial injuries and scrambled away, but Rupert was pinned underneath and received injuries to the skull and burns that proved fatal.

Rupert's funeral with full military honours was held on 20 June 1917. His brother Leonard was in attendance.

Leonard's second brother, Sergeant David Birrell Herd, of the 2nd Australian Light Horse Regiment, embarked from Sydney on 4th October, 1915. He was found drowned in the Nile River,

Egypt, on 22 August 1916. He is buried in the Cairo War Memorial Cemetery. A court of enquiry was held into the cause of his death. The post mortem report revealed that his body had been in the water for some days but there were no signs of injury. The circumstances of his death could not be determined.

Leonard wrote a letter from Belgium in October, 1917 to Headquarters asking for help in getting removed from the front as his two older brothers had died and he was the last remaining son. He stated at that time he had been in the AIF for a year and spent five weeks in France as a Driver. He also stated in the letter that *“The sorrow and despair of my Mother and Father is intolerable to me. So I decided to write to you putting the situation clearly before you, asking to be removed from the front, to a base where I could perhaps do work equally as useful as I am doing now.”*

Gunner Leonard James Herd was returned to Australia from England on 5 April, 1918. He was entitled to the British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

Leonard married Margaret Fairlie in 1929 but I cannot find his date of death.

Air Mechanic Harold Peachey Wood, 1048

Harold was born at Hawthorn, in 1893. As a boy he took a great interest in aviation and made model aeroplanes before the first manned flight in Australia. In 1910 he made a model monoplane of his own design with a 36-inch main wingspan, forward-mounted elevator and two counter-rotating rearward-facing propellers powered by twisted strands of square rubber. A report in the Melbourne 'Argus' on 14 November 1910 described demonstration flights of Wood's model at Mont Albert, commenting that the model had achieved flights of up to 175 yards at altitudes of 60 feet.

He demonstrated a model flight at the Austral Wheel Race meeting, at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, where it was reported to have knocked the hat off a spectator in the upper stands.

In 1912, Harold claimed a world record for model aircraft with a sustained flight of 118 seconds covering a distance of over half a mile in a straight line, at a speed of 25 miles per hour. Harold built 33 model aircraft and achieved flights lasting up to nine minutes reaching heights of 2,000 ft.



Harold Wood showing some of his model aircraft – circa 1930s.

(Courtesy Museums Victoria)

Harold joined the CRB in January 1914, less than a year after the Board was formed. His first appointment was as a junior draughtsman. At that time, the staff complement at the CRB was 15 people.

In 1916, at 23 years of age, Harold Wood - who described himself as engineer/draughtsman at the CRB - enlisted. Not surprisingly, he was sent to the Australian Flying Corps. He arrived in Plymouth in March 1917 and started at the AFC Depot in Perham Downs and the file designated him as a motor cyclist in August 1917.

He embarked for France in December 1917 where he served with the Australian Flying Corps in B Flight, No.4 Squadron - first as a motorcycle dispatch rider, then later as a rigger, engine mechanic and finally in the stores and equipment section. Wood was engaged to make minute examinations of any captured enemy aircraft, taking samples of fuel and lubricants and keeping tabs on any new German instruments or methods of construction, reporting on items of interest to the British Headquarters.

After the Armistice, No. 4 Squadron was moved to Bickendorf Aerodrome, near Cologne, Germany, to take possession of German aircraft surrendered to the allies. Here he began building models in his spare time and conceived the idea of building a series of museum display models to document some of the key developments in aviation.

The first model he delivered to Melbourne Museum in 1923 was the 1:16 scale model of the Vickers Vimy plane flown by Keith and Ross Smith on the first Britain to Australia flight in 1919-1920. The plane was housed in the Australian War Museum in the Exhibition Building in Melbourne – and the model was built from measurements from the original aircraft.



The Vickers Vimy model built by Harold Wood.



This model of a Roe IV triplane was made in 1924.

When Harold returned from the war, he re-joined the CRB. He was affectionately known throughout his career as ‘HP’.



Harold Wood – from the CRB staff photograph of 1921.

In 1927 Harold moved to Benalla, eventually becoming the CRB's District Engineer. The District Engineer was the forerunner to the Divisional Engineer and Harold actually became the first Divisional Engineer in Benalla in 1941. It was during this time that he built and improved the roads to Victoria's alpine ski resorts of Mt Hotham, Mt Buffalo and Mt Bogong. His work also facilitated the construction of the Kiewa Valley Hydroelectric Scheme by the construction of a quality road replacing the old pack-horse trail. It was only 26 miles long but it took four years to build.

He continued building model aircraft in his spare time including models of Kingsford Smith's Fokker monoplane, *Southern Cross*, and the DH88 Comet for the Museum. When Kingsford Smith and Charles Ulm's Australian National Airways plane once landed at Benalla, Harold rushed to the airfield to take measurements of the aircraft for the Southern Cross model. Wood continued making detailed scale models for the Museum over the next 43 years, producing 21 models in total, documenting key events and designs in the history of aviation from the 1890s to the late 1950s. These models form a large part of Museum Victoria's aviation collection today.

In 1948 Harold was transferred back to Head Office in the Exhibition Building where he became the CRB's Highway Engineer. In this position, he was responsible for the state-wide road program and held that position until he retired in 1958 after 44 years' service. He was held in the highest regard in the industry and had a reputation for high ethical standards and professional practice.



Harold (left) celebrating his retirement with his son, Ken, (centre), his wife, Eileen, and his father, Harry, seated in the centre. The others are probably CRB personnel.

Harold has another claim to fame in CRB history in that he was the person who designed the CRB 'football' logo. This occurred when he was the Divisional Engineer in Benalla in the mid 1930s. Harold was an expert draughtsman and he placed the gold, oval sticker on the door of his official Board car, a Ford Coupe V8.

He died in September 1982.



The CRB football logo designed by Harold Wood.

Gunner Fred Goran Payne, V63311

Fred was a clerk from St Kilda who enrolled in March 1917 when he was 18 years and 9 months old. Across the top of his enrolment form, written in red ink, is “Not to embark until he attains the age of 19 years”. Across the form is a diagonal line with ‘Cancelled’ stamped on it.

He was a Gunner in the Field Artillery. He passed his musketry training in Maribyrnong. Delving further into his records, I found a document called Statement of Service on which it was noted, “Discharged Maribyrnong.” After more delving, I found another document entitled Statement of Service which said, “21/6/17. By direction of Divisional Headquarter. He being under 18 years of age and having given false answer to same on attestation.”

There was also another document on file written by the AIF to Fred’s father to the effect that Fred had produced a document purporting to give his father’s permission for Fred to enlist. It then asked if his father was willing for Fred to proceed to active service before the age of 19.

Even later in the file is a letter dated 21 May 1917 written by Fred’s father to the 3rd Military District saying:

‘Re my son F.G. Payne who is in military training at Maribyrnong Camp and has not yet reached the age of 18 years. I gave my consent for him to enter the forces provided that he would not sail before he reached the age of 19 years, but I did not know at the time that he had put on his papers that he was 18 years and 9 months, his right age being then 17 years and 9 months. He told me that he would be kept in Australia until he was 19 years of age, he came home last night and told us that he had been allotted to May reinforcements and he would probably sail in some time June next. We wish him to be held in Australia until he is 19 years of age which he will reach on the 17th of June 1918 next.

My wife and I will be willing to let him sail when he reaches that age.’

Fred was discharged and had to pay back the money he was paid by the Army. He wrote to the Army in 1940 seeking a copy of his discharge papers which he needed because he wanted to join up again. However, there is no record of him having joined up for the Second World War.

He died in 1985.

Sapper Cedric Einer Tuxen, 21908

Cedric stated on his enlistment papers that he was an engineer but the CRB tabulation described him as a surveyor's assistant. He lived in Power Street, Hawthorn and was 24 in March 1917 when he enlisted. He was a Sapper in the 8th Field Company. I noticed too that he was tall – 6 feet. All the others listed so far were below that figure although I noticed in another entry that he was 5 feet 10 inches.

He embarked from Sydney in May 1918 for active service and spent the rest of the war in England. He proceeded to France in January 1919, after the cessation of hostilities. I suspect the sappers were involved in clearing up especially in relation to land mines. He finally arrived back in Melbourne in June 1919.

Cedric's brother, Saxil, took over their father's surveying and mining engineering practice in 1913, and went on to become one of Australia's leading town planners. He worked with Walter Burley Griffin on the Ranelagh Estate design, an early example of a non-grid layout, and also was responsible for more than 30 suburban subdivisions around Melbourne, many of which attempted to follow the novel garden suburb ideas coming out of the UK at that time.

Cedric joined his brother's practice briefly as a cadet engineer. An entry in the History of the Municipal Engineering Foundation Victoria clarifies his professional standing around the war years, and his role at the CRB:

“He was appointed Assistant Engineer to the Shire of Glenelg in Western Victoria in 1913, a position he held for only six months when he was invited to join the newly formed Country Roads Board. He was Assistant Engineer and Personal Assistant to a Member of the Board from 1913 to 1922, with a break of three years in the 8th Field Company of Engineers in France. During his period of service with the CRB Cedric spent much of his time locating new roads in the East Gippsland area of Victoria under very difficult and primitive conditions.”

Cedric then went to the City of Brighton and was the City Engineer for more than 40 years. He played a key role in the Local Government Engineers Association of Victoria, and the Municipal Engineering Foundation Medal for Excellence in Engineering is named after him.



Cedric Tuxen.

In 1923, Cedric was appointed a Special Constable in Brighton during the Great Police Strike. He was issued with a short length of 25 mm rubber hose fitted with a wooden handle and a loop of cord and given the chief task of keeping an eye on the Terminus Hotel at Brighton Beach, to see that it was cleared at closing time. Fortunately, the patrons treated him as something of a joke and were kindly disposed towards his efforts.

Cedric was a driving force behind the development of Victoria's Building Control Regulations. He drafted the first major by-laws and served as Chairman of the Building Regulations Commission from 1940 to 1943 and the Municipal Building Surveyors Board of Victoria from 1943 to 1975. He chaired many other committees of inquiry into such matters as the testing of materials and other items related to Building Regulation.

Cedric died in 1985.

Sapper Wesley Talbot Williams, 22216

On his enrolment form he stated that he was born in Fryerstown in north-west Victoria and was a 'public servant (survey draughtsman)'. He was 31 and married with one child. He enlisted in July

1917 as a Sapper in the Engineer Reinforcements but I was relieved to see he did not see active service and was discharged in April 1918 being no longer required – ‘not due to misconduct’. He appeared to have spent most of his time in Broadmeadows and Bendigo.

His file was unusual in that it contained many pages regarding his dental conditions – although he was declared ‘Dentally Fit’.



Wesley Williams – from the CRB Staff photographs of 1921 and 1930.

Wesley returned to the CRB after the war and died in 1951.

Corporal William Dickie Birrell, MBE, 51307

An 18 year old clerk, William enlisted in November 1917. He came from Albert Park. He commenced as a Private but in February 1918 was promoted to Corporal. William attended an Isolation Camp in Ascot Vale for a fortnight and for the rest of his training was based at the Broadmeadows Camp.

He embarked on H.M.T. *Euripides* for England in May 1918, via America. In New York he was transferred to H.M.S. *Tentonic* bound for Liverpool. He disembarked in July 1918 and was stationed at Fovant in Wiltshire. Temporary camps were built in this area to handle training and medical treatment of soldiers and, later, their demobilisation. One of the camps, Hurdcott Camp, was a depot of the Australian Imperial Force. On his arrival at Fovant, he was promoted to Lance

Corporal and was hospitalised there for a week. Sent to France in February 1919, he was further hospitalised in June 1919 and was transferred back to the 1st Australian Hospital at Sutton Veny near Salisbury. Discharged after a few weeks here, he returned to normal duties, and in July 1919 he left England bound for Australia on HT *Sewic*. William was discharged from the AIF in October 1919.

He returned to the CRB after the war.



William Birrell – from the CRB staff photograph of 1921

In 1921, he was appointed Assistant Town Clerk at the City of Kew and, later, in 1938, he was appointed Town Clerk and City Treasurer – roles in which he gave outstanding service. William's knowledge of municipal administration was acknowledged by the Government calling on his services to advise on amendments to the Local Government Act. He was president of the Town Clerks Institute, and on the nomination of that body, was honoured by Her Majesty the Queen in 1958 with the award of the MBE.



William Birrell, MBE – Town Clerk, Kew.

William played an influential role at Trinity Grammar School – a private school for boys in Kew. He served on the school council from 1945 until 1974. There is an oval at the school named in his honour and also a Birrell Street in Kew in recognition of his services.

He died in 1974.

Sergeant William (Bill) Henry Neville, 55424

Bill lived in Albert Park and was a clerk with the CRB later becoming a Member of the Board. He was 20 when he joined up in the 6th General Service Reinforcements. Bill was promoted to Corporal in January 1918 just a month after he enlisted. At around the same time, he disembarked for 'service abroad' but at Cape Town he was put into hospital with influenza and placed on the 'Dangerously ill' list. He was transferred to another hospital which described his condition as pneumonia 'dangerously ill'.

He was struck off the dangerously ill list in October 1918 and declared medically unfit – disability caused by military service. He returned to Australia from Cape Town in December 1918.



W. H. Neville in the 1930 CRB staff photograph and in 1962.

Bill joined the staff as a junior clerk in January 1914 and, apart from his war service, spent the whole of his working life with the CRB. He was appointed Assistant Secretary in 1930, Secretary in 1949, and a Board Member in 1956. He retired in August 1962 and died just four months later. Bill Neville would have had a very close working relationship with Rolf Jansen as he succeeded him as Secretary to the Board and later, as a Member of the Board.

Sergeant Arthur Stuart Ponting, V81409

Arthur designated himself as a 'surveyor (Country Roads Board)' although the CRB tabulation called him an engineering pupil. He is the last on the Roll of Honour meaning he was the last from the CRB to enrol. In fact, it was very close to the end of the war – October 1918. Arthur came from Warrnambool and was 18 years and 4 months at enlistment but he had tried to enlist earlier but was withdrawn by his parents, probably because they had two sons already serving. He was demobilized in December 1918.

He married Eileen May O'Brien in 1930 and died in 1973.